

LDCC, LA Tech, and Partners Share Work Nationally

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L to R: Dr. Will Long (LA Tech), Rebekah Long (LDCC), Alicia Kiremire (FlowStream), Dr. Krystal Cruse (LA Tech), Wendi Plants (BPSTIL), Gerry Caskey (LDCC)

Representatives from Louisiana Delta Community College and Louisiana Tech University recently shared their work at the American Society for Engineering Education conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The team has collaborated over the last four years on Project COMPLETE, funded by a \$600,000 grant from the National Science Foundation.

The project's Principal Investigator was Mr. Gerry Caskey, an Industrial Instrumentation Technology Instructor at LDCC's Ruston campus. Mr. Caskey shared about the project's goals: "There is currently a crisis in US industries due to a shortage of STEM workers. There are many more technical jobs available than there are trained workers to fill them. One of the primary goals of Project COMPLETE was to increase the awareness of Industrial Instrumentation as a career among high school students." The project also provided pathways to the relevant programs at LDCC and LA Tech.

Dr. Krystal Cruse, the First-Year Engineering Programs Coordinator at LA Tech and a Co-PI on the project, shared, "Throughout working on Project COMPLETE, our team not only was able to develop innovative and engaging content to immerse students in the field of instrumentation, but we were also proud to use the national platform of ASEE to showcase the work we accomplished while also contributing to the greater education community."

Ms. Wendi Plants also attended the conference, representing the project's pilot high school Bossier Parish School for Technology & Innovative Learning (BPSTIL). Ms. Plants shared about her conference experience: "As the Career and Technical Education Coordinator for Bossier Parish Schools, it was refreshing to push out of my comfort zone into a world I rarely get to experience... Hoping to learn effective practices of recruiting minorities and under-represented populations to engineering and STEM programs,... I was provided several thought provoking concepts that have inspired me to dig deeper."

The Project COMPLETE team reached over 40 teachers/counselors and 750 students from 30 schools. Partners included FlowStream Management, Union Pacific, Weyerhaeuser, Benteler, PCI, Setpoint Integrated Solutions, AJ Weller, the Louisiana Ag Teachers Association, Propel America, and Mr. Sam Speed.

Project COMPLETE was supported by the National Science Foundation's Advanced Technological Education Program under Grant No. 1801177. For more details, see the project website at (<https://atecentral.net/msites/completenesspathways>) or email Mr. Gerry Caskey (gerrycaskey1@ladelta.edu).