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Media Relations

September 23, 2015

Unique Partnership Seeks to Increase and Retain K-12 STEM Teachers in the State

DURHAM, N.H. – The University of New Hampshire and Albany International Corp. have joined forces to increase the number of K-12 teachers in the state with strong knowledge in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), launching a pilot program in the Rochester schools and advancing a statewide initiative to meet the needs of businesses for a skilled workforce.

Albany International Corp.'s grant of \$300,000 over three years will support the hiring of a master teacher to lead the STEM Teachers Collaborative, focusing on increasing K-12 teachers' expertise in STEM fields and extending the impact of STEM teachers to more students throughout the state. The UNH collaborative will help to address the critical shortage of STEM teachers in the state.

"From our vantage point, there is no greater source of long-term competitive advantage than talent, especially STEM talent, and no better way for a state to promote long-term economic development than by investing in its STEM infrastructure," said Albany International Corp. President & CEO Joe Morone. "We completely agree with the report of the Governor's Task Force on K-12 STEM Education that business has a responsibility to form educational partnerships that help build that infrastructure, and we very much hope that our collaboration with UNH and the Rochester schools will be duplicated by other companies with other school districts in other parts of the state."

According to a recent report by the N.H. Governor's Task Force on K-12 STEM Education, the state needed to hire 184 science and math teachers for the 2012-13 school year but there were only 91 teacher prep candidates qualified to teach the subjects.

Governor Maggie Hassan expressed her pleasure at seeing the report result in action. "Innovative partnerships between business and education are critical to strengthening the workforce pipeline that will help New Hampshire lead the way in the 21st century economy. We have re-established our STEM Task Force to help implement its initial recommendations, and this partnership between Albany and UNH will build on those efforts."

"This is a great example of how working together really can make a difference," said UNH President Mark Huddleston. "By providing K-12 teachers in the state with the resources and expertise they need we can begin to shape the future. It is exciting to imagine the pipeline of skilled workers we're beginning to develop today with this partnership."

UNH was recently selected as a national partner in the 100Kin10 initiative, started by the Carnegie Corporation of New York to prepare 100,000 STEM teachers by 2021. UNH is the only organization in

the state to be invited to join based on its strong leadership in STEM education and commitment to expanding and improving the nation's STEM teaching force.

"Having more STEM teachers in New Hampshire is essential to inspiring the next generation of innovators," said U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.). "STEM education is critical to our state's economic competitiveness and I applaud this investment in our future workforce from Albany International Corp."

"This partnership makes it possible for us to move our effort forward in a way that will have a larger impact," said Ruth Varner, director of the Joan and James Leitzel Center for Mathematics, Science and Engineering Education at UNH. "K-12 education is the key to future success because we know that to make a scientist or engineer you can't wait until college. The new director will meet with schools and create a program that directly meets their needs."

Leslie Couse, associate professor of education at UNH, added that the partnership allows the vision to come to fruition. "This will allow us to provide a more cohesive approach to expanding and extending the knowledge of teachers. Teachers are like any licensed professional; you don't finish a degree and know everything. It's an ongoing process, and this position will ultimately allow us to change outcomes for students by providing the coaching and mentoring teachers need to deepen and expand their knowledge."

In addition to the pilot program in the Rochester schools efforts are underway to offer a STEM education certificate program at UNH and to create a web portal for teachers anywhere.

"We are very excited about this partnership with Albany International and UNH," said Michael Hopkins, superintendent of the Rochester schools. "We believe STEM training and education is one key to a successful future, and training our teachers is the first step to improving STEM opportunities for our students. Eighty percent of the fastest growing occupations in the United States require significant mathematics and science training."

An additional grant by Albany International Corp. of \$75,000 to the Rochester schools will help offset STEM teacher training expenses.

The STEM Teachers Collaborative is the result of a university-wide collaboration including partners from The Joan and James Leitzel Center for Mathematics, Science and Engineering Education; the Department of Education; the STEM Discovery Lab at UNH Manchester, UNH Cooperative Extension; the science and engineering colleges; the Interoperability Lab; and the office of the senior vice provost, engagement and academic outreach.

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The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 13,000 undergraduate and 2,500 graduate students. For more information about the collaborative call (603) 862-0718 or visit www.leitzelcenter.unh.edu
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