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UNH's Leitzel Center Launches BioFab Educational Workforce Development Project

Wednesday, May 8, 2019

(HTTPS://WWW.UNH.EDU/UNHTODAY/NEWS/2019/05/08/UNHS-LEITZEL-CENTER-CENTER-CENTER-LAUNCHES-NCHE-NCHE-NCHE-BIOFAB-BIOFAB-BIOFAB-EDUCATIONAL-EDUCATIONAL-EDUCATIONAL-WORKFORCE-DEVELOPMENT-DEVELOPMENT-DEVELOPMENT)

DURHAM, N.H.—The Building Stronger Workforce Alliances for BioFabrication & BioEngineering Through K-12 Education and Enrichment project at the University of New Hampshire will launch an educational workforce development project that shares the expertise of science educators, industry scientists and engineers to build awareness of the emerging biofabrication and life sciences resources in the state to support the state's science standards for K-12 students.

UNH's Joan and James Leitzel Center for Mathematics, Science and Engineering Education is partnering with the Advanced Regenerative Manufacturing Institute (ARMI) on this initiative to expand awareness of this relatively new industry. ARMI's mission is to make practical the large-scale manufacturing of engineered and tissue-related technologies to benefit existing industries and grow new ones.

"This project will serve as a national model for collaboration across education, outreach and business to advance current science awareness, knowledge and understanding," said Stephen Hale, project director at the Leitzel Center and principal investigator on the project. The center will also work with NHPBS, UNH Cooperative Extension, the N.H. Science Teachers Association and DEKA Research and Development.

"Cellular therapies and engineered solutions bring greater quality of life to many and we hope this project will allow students to envision themselves in future careers in this industry," said Mary Stewart, director of education workforce development for ARMI.

The goal of the project is twofold. The initial focus is on developing high-quality science materials for teachers in New Hampshire and then the programs will become models that can be scaled up for schools and educators across the country.

"These resources will provide K-12 classrooms with robust learning experiences that build students' foundational knowledge and skills with science," said Barbara Hopkins, former director of science education at the N.H. Department of Education and project director. "The resources will align directly with the state science standards to provide the critical thinking needed in science and engineering, and the soft skills required for employees across career pathways, including problem solving, communication, computation, and collaboration."

UNH's Joan and James Leitzel Center develops and implements science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) educational activities at the local, state and national level. The center creates, designs and offers STEM professional development programs ranging from pre-K through graduate education.



