



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NASA Awards \$1.2 Million Grant to NC-MSEN Pre-College Program

NEWS RELEASE: February 24, 2010

For more information, please contact:

Dr. Rita L. Fuller

Associate Director, NC-MSEN Pre-College Program

(919) 966-3202

rfuller@northcarolina.edu

The North Carolina Mathematics and Science Education Network's Pre-College Program, in collaboration with the University of North Carolina General Administration, has received \$1.2 million from NASA for an innovative two-year project that will use NASA content related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (commonly referred to as STEM) to recruit high school students into engineering majors. Students Preparing to Advance into Careers in Engineering (SPACE) is the latest in a series of resoundingly successful Pre-College Program initiatives by NC-MSEN, a constituent program of the UNC Center for School Leadership Development. Based in Chapel Hill, NC-MSEN coordinates Pre-College Programs on seven UNC campuses across North Carolina.

The award is one of 13 proposals NASA funded to round out its K-12 Cooperative Agreements Notice for 2009. Starting in the summer of 2010, NC-MSEN will accept 210 ninth-graders from across the state to participate in the NASA/NC-MSEN SPACE project through the end of their eleventh-grade school year. Over those two years the students will spend 200 hours outside school engaged in intensive hands-on experiences of NASA-related engineering, astronomy, physics, mathematics and robotics. The project involves classroom teachers who will receive specialized training, and the students' parents. This strategy is an extension of the NC-MSEN Pre-College Program model, which has a 23-year history of encouraging students to go to college and study STEM majors.

“(SPACE) will help to improve students’ understanding of STEM by enhancing their attitudes about and their understanding of science and mathematics,” said Dr. Rita L. Fuller, Associate Director of the NC-MSEN Pre-College Program, and Principal Investigator for SPACE. “Among the expected outcomes is the smooth transition of participants into high school and advanced level mathematics and science courses in preparation for postsecondary STEM majors and subsequent careers, all of which support NASA’s education (goals).”

NASA/NC-MSEN SPACE partners will be the Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute (PARI), the Internet Community Action Network (I-CAN), Knowledge Network Solutions (KNS) and the North Carolina Alliance to Create Opportunity Through Education (NC OPT-ED).

NC-MSEN has two primary components: teacher professional development and a Pre-College Program. It provides statewide leadership for the improvement of mathematics and science teaching and learning in order to: 1) strengthen the quality and increase the size of the teaching base in science and mathematics education and 2) increase the pool of students who graduate from North Carolina’s high schools prepared to pursue majors that lead to careers in mathematics, science, technology, engineering and teaching.

For more information about NC-MSEN, visit www.unc.edu/depts/msen.