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## School

# NFCC awarded grant for middle school STEM program

*\$1.1 million to be awarded from the National Science Foundation*

*Story submitted*

North Florida Community College (NFCC) will begin a new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) outreach program for area middle schools this fall thanks to a \$1.1 million federal grant award by the National Science Foundation (NSF).

The mission of the program is to enhance STEM awareness, motivation and skills for rural, middle school youth in Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee and Taylor counties. Selected middle school students will participate in engineering challenges using remote controlled robotic vehicles. Challenges will be performed on sea (water), air and land (SEAL). Each student will design and build their own robot and, equipped with a microcomputer, learn how to remotely control and move the robot. Students will also learn how to attach actuators and sensors to the robotic vehicle in preparation for a final STEM SEALs competition between participants. School and

college faculty will serve as mentors throughout the project.

“The NFCC STEM SEALs program provides an exceptional opportunity to teachers and students in our district,” said NFCC professor Dr. Guenter Maresch, the grants principal investigator. “The grant funding allows NFCC to raise the educational experience while providing creative learning incentives that expose middle school students and teachers to practical applications of the science and mathematics curriculum. I applaud NFCC’s faculty for helping secure this federal-level grant and bring this exciting initiative to our community and students.”

Teams of middle school students and teachers will form during NFCC’s fall term, late August through December 2019. Selected students will design, construct and optimize their robotic vehicles during the college’s 2020 spring semester, January through May. In the summer of 2020, the first NFCC STEM SEALs Engineering Competition will be held on the NFCC campus in Madison, Fla. Applications will be made available to area middle schools this fall.

The NSF grant was awarded to NFCC on April 1, 2019 and extends over a three-year period through March 21, 2022. For more information, contact Dr. Guenter Maresch at (850) 973-1632 or [mareschg@nfcc.edu](mailto:mareschg@nfcc.edu).

