

NSF grant to fund engineering scholarship/leadership program

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Alfred University (AU) will receive more than \$570,000 from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to provide scholarships for engineering students who will also be part of special leadership program called E-LEAD (Engineering Leadership Education and Development). "Leadership and teamwork skills are needed for a successful engineering career," said Doreen Edwards, dean of the Kazuo Inamori School of Engineering at Alfred University. "This grant provides us an opportunity to develop a leadership program for engineering students." The E-LEAD program will be a collaborative effort between the Inamori School of Engineering and Alfred University's Division of Student Affairs. Julia Overton-Healy, director of the Women's Leadership Center, will work with Edwards to develop the leadership component. "This is a wonderful opportunity to provide special leadership training and opportunities to our engineering students," said Overton-Healy. "I couldn't be more delighted about receiving the NSF grant," said Kathy Woughter, vice president for Student Affairs. "This new joint venture between our School of Engineering, Women's Leadership Center, Career Development Center and service learning programs are the type of groundbreaking, collaborative program that AU does so well. Alfred's history of women's advocacy and leadership development, combined with the excellence in our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) programs, will mean great outcomes for the scholarship students we will soon be recruiting to join our community." The \$570,693 will be awarded over a five-year period beginning in September. The first year, Overton-Healy said, will be spent on program development and recruitment of the first group of E-LEAD scholars. In total, the grant is expected to assist 16 students. In addition to providing scholarships for both men and women, the E-LEAD project will support outreach activities aimed at increasing the number of female students in engineering. "The outreach activities supported by this grant will allow engineering students to develop leadership skills while recruiting high school girls to the field of engineering," said Edwards. The leadership component of E-LEAD will be centered around community building, leadership training and career development. The community building component will involve peer mentoring, co-located student housing and networking events. Building upon the activities already offered by the Women's Leadership Center, the leadership training will include seminars, workshops, a two-credit course and outreach activities with high school students. Career development activities will include on-campus research opportunities for first-year students, resume and interviewing workshops and optional co-op educational experiences and summer internships. Edwards and Overton-Healy view the NSF funding as seed money to launch a long-term effort to enhance leadership skills among engineering students. The Inamori School of Engineering at Alfred University offers undergraduate degrees in biomedical materials science engineering, ceramic engineering, glass science, materials science and mechanical engineering. A minor in renewable energy engineering will be offered in the fall, with a major in that field expected to be offered beginning in fall 2012.