

Alfred University installs engineering computer lab in Scholes Library

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Students Yanfeng Zhao (right) and Yuqi Gao at one of the new computers in Scholes Library.

ALFRED, NY – Alfred University’s Inamori School of Engineering has installed a special computer lab in Scholes Library that will provide students with a better understanding of engineering design and enhance existing tutoring opportunities.

The University has a license for the computer software SolidWorks, which provides instruction on three-dimensional engineering design concepts. The program has been available to students on computers in Seidlin Annex. The new three-computer workstation lab in Scholes Library, made possible by funding through the Provost’s Office, will provide more students access to the SolidWorks program.

Xingwu Wang, professor of electrical and renewable engineering, said the new lab will be beneficial to first-year engineering students, many of whom have had little or no exposure to computer-aided design programs while in high school.

“Students have difficulty understanding the concept of engineering design, especially at the first-year level. Those students are coming in having to learn not only a new concept, but a new program” in SolidWorks, Wang explained.

Having the new lab at Scholes Library gives students a place to “practice” on the SolidWorks program and work on homework assignments that require use of the software. Wang noted that tutoring services will be enhanced since there will be more workstations available for teaching assistants.

“The teaching assistants are older students. There are some grad students but most are undergraduate,” Wang explained. “They can relate to the difficulties the (younger) students are going through because they’ve gone through them.”

Wang said the Scholes Library SolidWorks lab will serve to complement existing tutoring service that are offered in courses like physics, math, chemistry and biology at a lab at Herrick Library. Like those services, tutoring offered at the SolidWorks lab in Scholes Library will aid in student retention efforts.

The Inamori School of Engineering is accredited through ABET (Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology), which Wang said requires “a continuing improvement process for teaching/learning experiences.” Educators met with engineering students last year and feedback they received – the need for better computers that could assist in tutoring – resulted in the School pursuing the lab at Scholes.