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Envisioning Engineering Success

University of Dayton

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Envisioning Engineering Success

The University of Dayton School of Engineering will create a center to bolster engineering education at the University.

The Visioneering Center will focus on developing new active, collaborative and project-based learning strategies for students and enhancing student learning with technology like 3-D visualization, virtual and team collaboration tools, technology enabled learning spaces and hands-on makerspaces.

Through the center, the School of Engineering also will work with the University of Dayton College of Arts and Sciences and business, education and law schools to help students develop professional and business skills for engineering careers.

The Learning Teaching Center will support both the technology and curricular efforts with an eye on innovation in learning and teaching.

"For years, the School of Engineering has worked to instill in our students hands-on experience, entrepreneurial mindsets and experience in disciplines outside of engineering to develop well-rounded engineers. The Visioneering Center will consolidate our resources and expertise to take the way we educate our engineers to the next level," said Eddy Rojas, dean of the School of Engineering.

The center, which will launch next month with University funds, will reside in existing space in the School of Engineering's Kettering Laboratories.

Ken Bloemer will direct the center after serving four years as University of Dayton School of Engineering Innovation Center director. While leading the Innovation Center, Bloemer helped secure more than $2.3 million in funding from the Kern Entrepreneurial Engineering Network (KEEN), Ohio
Means Interns & Co-ops, the Air Force Research Laboratory and Innovation Center clients.

A KEEN grant of $1.2 million earlier this year initiated the largest faculty and curriculum development program in the history of the University of Dayton School of Engineering. With the grant, 50 faculty will participate in workshops to learn more about activity-based, project-based and entrepreneurially minded learning to enhance their courses. For students, Bloemer said, "the KEEN grant will engage them in learning experiences that stimulate their curiosity and teach them to make connections between seemingly unrelated information. Together, these skills will enable students to not only create value for their employers, but for society at large."

Although no KEEN money will be used for the new center, Bloemer said, "We want to build off the momentum of KEEN and leverage KEEN to accelerate our transformation of engineering education." KEEN has long considered the University of Dayton "best in class" in graduating engineers equipped with an entrepreneurial mindset who will transform the U.S. workforce. The network presented the School of Engineering the 2013 KEEN Best in Class Award at KEEN's winter conference in January.

Becky Blust, currently serving as Innovation Center coordinator, will be promoted to fill Bloemer's place as director of the center.

Blust, a School of Engineering faculty member since 1996, came to the University after a career specializing in lean manufacturing and industrial project management. At the University of Dayton, she has taught manufacturing courses in Germany and China and has served as the assistant director of the Industrial Assessment Center and coordinator of the Design and Manufacturing Clinic (DMC). Blust also has served as the principal investigator for a $200,000 National Science Foundation Grant to foster innovation and design in the STEM fields and has, along with her team, helped generate more than $1.2 million in industrial sponsorship for the Innovation Center.

"Becky has been highly instrumental in achieving the milestone of more than 1,000 projects with more than 200 clients in the DMC and Innovation Center, and the Innovation Center will continue to prosper under her guidance and leadership," Rojas said.

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