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University of Siegen to sign memorandum with North Country partners

Unique STEM program comes highly applauded among educators and manufacturers alike

By **News Report** Apr 06, 2022 3:37 PM









Recently CV-TEC officials joined their German counterparts (in foreground), along with the four local students (facing camera) involved with an international STEM engineering pilot project. Left to right are students Catherine Harmon (Crown Point Central School), Walton Pelkey (Crown Point Central School), Megan Quinn (Keene Central School), and Declan Valentine (Moriah Central School). That collaboration will have lasting impacts.



PLATTSBURGH | Innovation in education and workforce development is happening in the North Country.

On Feb. 4, Schluter-Systems unveiled a STEM-based manufacturing problem for New Vision in Applied Engineering students at CV-TEC's Mineville

Campus and their counterpart in Olpe, Germany to solve, as part of participating in the Authentic STEM Connect Us program in partnership with the University of Siegen, Germany and the North Country Workforce Partnership, Inc. (NCWP).

Dr. Gero Stoffels and Dr. Ingo Witzke of the Institute of Mathematics Education at the University of Siegen in Germany will now be visiting the North Country April 13-15 to sign a Memorandum of Understanding in partnership with the North Country Chamber of Commerce, Champlain Valley Education Center (CVES), Schluter Systems and the NCWP. The MOU will formalize the goals and objectives of Authentic STEM Connect Us and the role of the lead organizations involved in the project.

"This is innovation; this is the future of workforce development and education," said NCWP Executive Director Sylvie Nelson.

"Authentic STEM Connect Us allows students to practice what they learn in the classroom in partnership with their peers in Olpe, Germany, and with Schluter-Systems, a German company that has its North American headquarters in

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Plattsburgh. How cool is that?"

Presently, workforce development relies on funding from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) through services provided at the region's OneWorkSource Centers. Unfortunately, those funds can only be used to serve a specific section of the population. Authentic STEM Connect Us is designed to be inclusive of all students, which is a novel approach. The Partnership hopes to leverage this Memorandum to secure robust funding for this project.

"As educators, If we are serious about playing our role in solving the workforce shortage and increasing its quality, we have to engage all of our students," said CV-TEC Director of Career and Technical Education Michele Friedman. "This program creates meaningful partnerships between students, teachers, schools, and businesses as everyone gains by participating. Not to mention it brings an international aspect to our students that reflects the global reality our businesses operate in."

Already, the program has garnered significant interest, locally and across the state and nation. SUNY Plattsburgh's Upward Bound program will be the second cohort of Authentic STEM Connect Us in the North Country this summer and the partnership will expand it to both CV-TEC's campuses with the possibility of other schools participating in September.

"Upward Bound is extremely excited to be able to participate in Phase II of the Authentic STEM project this coming summer," said Director Brian Post.

"Having the opportunity to connect our students with students from Germany while working together to solve real-world industry solutions...what could be better?"

A signing ceremony is scheduled for 1 p.m. Thursday, April 14, 2022, at the Clinton OneWorkSource Center located at 194 U.S. Oval in Plattsburgh.

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