

**LAWSON STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Lawson State Receives Major NASA Grant Award to Advance STEM Projects**

Cooperative Agreement Award Totals Nearly \$1 Million for Two Colleges

(BIRMINGHAM, Alabama – June 6, 2014) - NASA announced today that Lawson State Community College has been selected as one of two colleges in the nation to each receive nearly \$500,000 in grant awards aimed to bolster education in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The New York City College of Technology in Brooklyn and Lawson State were selected out of 49 proposals for the opportunity.

"We are delighted and very fortunate to be in a position to inspire tomorrow's leaders in science and engineering through a partnership with Dr. Larry DeLucas, former Chief Scientist for the International Space Station at NASA headquarters," said Dr. Perry W. Ward, president of Lawson State Community College. "This NASA award will allow science and engineering majors at Lawson State to use experiments conducted in the International Space Station to provide a comprehensive understanding of the underlying theories and experimental techniques utilized in microgravity research. This is a wonderful opportunity for our students to experience world class scientific techniques and I am confident this will excel them to greater heights."

According to a NASA release, the MUREP Other Opportunities (MOO) solicitation challenged schools to propose innovative ways to create and implement STEM activities, with a goal of increasing the number of historically underserved students studying STEM fields relevant to NASA's diverse exploration missions.

"Science and engineering courses are often seen by students as abstract concepts that have little practical value. Thus, many students lose interest in these fields," said Dr. Tracey Wilson, biology instructor and chairperson of the Department of Natural Sciences at Lawson State and principal investigator of the grant. "This project is designed to encourage community college students to pursue degrees and ultimately careers in STEM by early engagement in space related research opportunities."

“There is a direct correlation between our nation’s economic competitiveness and STEM education’s ability to support the next generation of scientist and innovators,” said Wilson. “This project involves early exposure to STEM programs for high school students, NASA relevant coursework for 1st and 2nd year college students, space-related research projects, and summer internship experiences that will increase the readiness of students to complete four year STEM degrees.”

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**ABOUT LAWSON STATE**

***Lawson State Community College – host to President Barack Obama (March 2015); ranked the Nation’s #5 Community College (2013); recognized as a “Champion of Change” by the White House (2011); ranked as one of “America’s 50 Best Community Colleges.” (2010)***

*Lawson State Community College, with campuses in Birmingham and Bessemer, seeks to provide accessible, quality educational opportunities, promote economic growth, and enhance the quality of life for students. The college is dedicated to providing affordable and accessible lifelong learning opportunities in order to prepare students for employment and career advancement, enable students to transfer to senior colleges and universities, and provide customized training needs for business and industry.*

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