

Center for Excellence hires director, staff

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Press release, Minnesota Center for Engineering & Manufacturing Excellence [7/21/2006]

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"With the addition of these three individuals, the Minnesota Center for Engineering & Manufacturing Excellence will stimulate strong partnerships between higher education and industry to improve workforce training in Minnesota, and to attract new business to Minnesota," said Minnesota State Mankato President Richard Davenport.

Dr. Kuma Takamura, executive director, most recently served as advisor and engineer in the research and development office for the SuSumu Company of Japan, parent company of Thin Film, North Mankato. His industrial experience includes upper-level management, research and development, quality assurance and quality control, manufacturing of thin film passive electronics components, consultation, and service as an advisory board member to the College of Science, Engineering & Technology at Minnesota State Mankato.

Jim Mecklenburg serves as program director for Project Lead the Way, a key Center for Excellence middle and high school program. Nationally established, the program is intended to help schools give students the knowledge they need to excel in the high-tech fields of engineering and manufacturing. Mecklenburg brings to the position 31 years of experience in education as a teacher, special needs facilitator and administrator. He has served as state supervisor for career and technical education in the trades and industry areas at the Minnesota Department of Education for nearly seven years. Since 1999 he has served as the Minnesota State Leader for Project Lead the Way.

Judith Evans, director of marketing and communications, has served in the non-profit sector developing and directing marketing and communications strategies for over 15 years. She most recently served as director of admissions and communications for Loyola Catholic School, Mankato, and communications director for the School Sisters of Notre Dame during the height of their national and international attention in the study of aging and Alzheimer's disease.

Using acclaimed customized training programs, nationally recognized pre-engineering programs, and cutting-edge applied research and industry collaboration, the center will help prepare engineering and engineering technology students and manufacturing technicians to assist Minnesota companies to compete in a competitive, changing global market.

It is one of four centers of excellence established by the Minnesota Legislature.

The Minnesota Center for Engineering & Manufacturing Excellence is made up of lead university Minnesota State Mankato; Alexandria, Anoka, and Hennepin Technical Colleges; Normandale Community College; South Central College; and the Northeast Higher Education District, all members of the Minnesota State Colleges & Universities system. More information about the center is available at <http://mnceme.org/>

The system comprises 32 state universities and community and technical colleges serving the higher education needs of Minnesota. The system serves about 240,000 students per year in credit-based courses and an additional 130,000 students in non-credit courses.