

# Center for Excellence conference focuses on faculty

July 31

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Project Lead the Way is a national not-for-profit organization established to help schools give students the knowledge they need to excel in the high-tech fields of engineering and manufacturing.

Today, with over half of the country's engineers and scientists at or near retirement, U.S. technical industries are in need of more than one million engineers and technical workers to meet the needs of an increasingly changing and competitive technological culture. Current university and technical college graduation rates in these fields fall short of industry's needs. Industry has turned to schools to help turn the tide.

"PLTW is a rigorous and reality-based pre-engineering program for middle and high school students. From national experience in other states, we know that even one or two PLTW courses help prepare students for the rigors of university and technical college engineering courses," says Jim Mecklenburg, Project Lead the Way Program Director. "The hands-on project/problem-based approach to instruction adds relevance and reinforcement to science and math."

The conference, which will host faculties from throughout the Twin Cities and south central Minnesota, will outline PLTW programs and open discussions to strategic partnering among middle schools, high schools, colleges, universities, the business/industry community and PLTW.

Minnesota's Project Lead the Way is sponsored by the Minnesota Center for Engineering & Manufacturing Excellence. The center 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.

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.

**For MSU events:** individuals with a disability, who need reasonable accommodation to participate in this event, are asked to contact the [Office of Accessibility Resources](#) at 507-389-2825 (V/TTD), 800-627-3529 or 711 (MRS/TTD) at least five days prior to the event.