September 5, 2013

A community-based student learning project at Michigan State University will receive $25,000 as part of the 2013 Ford College Community Challenge (Ford C3), the Ford Motor Company Fund announced Sept. 5.

MSU’s project is one of only nine in the nation selected for a Ford C3 grant this year. Ford Motor Company Fund will award a total of $225,000 in support of the growing trend of service learning on college campuses.

At Michigan State, students in the College of Engineering will develop and test a teaching module, software libraries and cloud support to enable high school students in the Lansing, Mich., area to create Java programs that gather information about local energy usage.

Kaitlin Davis, a Computer Science senior from Port Huron, Mich., leads the Ford C3 student learning project at MSU. “We will be piloting an after-school enrichment program on mobile computing at a local high school that will be focused on building a mobile energy-awareness application,” Davis said. “We will design and implement an application programming interface that interacts with the Android Software Development Kit, create instructional materials and a project website, then promote the program to students. We will also create measures to assess learning outcomes and impact on students’ interest in computing.”

See Davis explain MSU’s award-winning proposal, Technology For Social Good at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8W4MDzU0uZQ

Charles Owen and Laura Dillon of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering helped Davis secure the Ford C3 Award.

“Programming isn’t something that you can really explain to someone with zero experience and have them fully grasp what it is,” Davis explained. “I wanted to get involved because I am very passionate about both teaching and programming, and I think this workshop is a great opportunity to give students’ a more in-depth experience in programming before college – something that they may not have been able to get otherwise.”

Davis said the development work for “Technology For Social Good” is planned for fall semester, with the high school workshop set for the spring.

Ford C3 is a national challenge grant competition that recognizes colleges and universities that utilize a school’s resources to address an urgent community need related to the grant’s theme: Building Sustainable Communities. Unlike many college grant programs, Ford C3 requires colleges to create proposals that have significant student input, involvement and leadership from beginning to end.

“The Ford College Community Challenge is designed to leverage the talents and creativity of students to drive meaningful change in their communities,” said Mike Schmidt, director of education programs, Ford Motor Company Fund. “We applaud these universities and colleges that are making student-led, community engagement a priority.”

Campus Compact, the only national higher education association dedicated to campus-based civic engagement, partnered with Ford Fund on this year’s grant program. MSU is a member of Michigan Campus Compact.

Along with Michigan State, the 2013 Ford C3 winners are:
Arizona State University
Brown University
College for Creative Studies
Essex County College
University of Michigan
University of Texas at Arlington
Virginia Commonwealth University
Wayne State University

Related Website: 2013 Ford C3
YouTube video: Technology for Social Good

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