Consumers Energy Partners with College's Residential Program

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Consumers Energy and the Consumers Energy Foundation are partnering with Michigan State University’s College of Engineering in support of a new initiative within the Residential Experience for Spartan Engineering and Cornerstone Engineering programs.

With a $150,000 gift, Consumers Energy is the first corporate sponsor in the Engineering Theme Partnership program. The gift will include support for the program’s student design projects, supplies, graduate teaching assistants, undergraduate mentors, a co-curricular adviser and computer lab equipment.

“Consumers Energy believes in higher education, in the development of our young people," said David Joos, president and CEO of CMS Energy and of its principal subsidiary, Consumers Energy. “We think this new model – this residential program – is an excellent way to accomplish that in a very effective manner. It develops the young people, and it develops our relationships with them. It’s good for us, it’s good for the students and it’s good for the state.”

As part of the partnership program, Consumers Energy will present an engineering problem or theme each year, and then immerse students in learning about the industry. Student involvement could include developing ideas to solve energy industry issues, leading environmental initiatives, working on energy-related projects that emphasize an interest in technology with a low carbon footprint, job shadowing and field trips to Consumers Energy facilities.

“We know that the number of jobs in America’s emerging clean energy economy is growing more than twice as fast as employment in general,” said MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon. “Thanks to corporate partners such as Consumers Energy, we will have additional resources to prepare students for the highest-value energy jobs and simultaneously add to the state of Michigan’s portfolio of assets for a 21st-century work force.”

Consumers Energy will benefit from this partnership as well. “We need good, bright engineers to help fuel the future growth and success of our company,” said Joos. “This is a great opportunity for companies to work more closely with the university, to get exactly what they need in the long run in the way of talent.”

With the sponsorship of the partnership program, Consumers Energy and the Consumers Energy Foundation have provided more than $3 million in support for Michigan State.

“I am convinced that this partnership will be a great way to educate our students about the power industry and encourage them to consider pursuing careers in this field,” said Satish Udpa, dean of the College of Engineering. “We are eager to partner with Consumers Energy in developing materials and programs that will convey the excitement of working in an industry that is vital for our economic security.”

Students in the Residential Experience program live in Wilson Hall with other engineering students as well as those from other majors and colleges, promoting cross-disciplinary interactions. They learn from each other and through hands-on and co-curricular activities. They learn how to function in a collaborative, team-based, diverse and increasingly global setting.

“This support from Consumers Energy will provide new experiences for our students, enabling them to explore solutions to key problems in the energy field,” said Neeraj Buch, director of the Residential Experience and Cornerstone Engineering. “Consumers Energy will be helping us build the next generation of Spartan engineers.”

For video and audio interviews, go to http://news.msu.edu/story/7426/

To learn more about the Engineering Residential and Cornerstone Experience, visit www.egr.msu.edu/core