

April 6, 2009

Engineering students prepare for lift off in PACER program

A trio of Albany State University students will soon learn if they have what it takes to become NASA engineers.

This summer Dr. Atin Sinha, along with three engineering majors, will travel to Baton Rouge, La., to participate in the PACER program. The program, "Physics & Aerospace Catalyst Experience in Research," was organized by Louisiana State University under the sponsorship of Louisiana Space Consortium and National Science Foundation.

PACER's goal is "to motivate science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) students from minority institutions by immersing them in practical project experiments emulating a realistic NASA mission."

Sinha and students Ashle' Perry, Nedgby Marcelin and Jeremy Robinson will work in Louisiana for two months. There they will design and fabricate a scientific payload for a helium-filled latex balloon that will be launched from the National Scientific Balloon Facility in Palestine, Texas.

Sinha, a professor in the College of Sciences and Health Professions, said he is really excited and wants his students to learn a lot from the program.

"I want the students to have the opportunity to gain a real life experience in how to develop a scientific payload and launch," he said.

Sinha said this opportunity will bring the students as close to a real space flight as possible.

"I want to gain the experience and the upper hand," said Robinson, an 18-year-old freshman from Stone Mountain. "Participating in this experience can be the difference in me getting a job in the future as opposed to someone else."

Marcelin, a 19-year-old from Miami, Fla., said, "I just want to gain the experience."

After he graduates, Marcelin plans on attending Georgia Tech to complete his graduate work.

"I want to go not only for the hands-on experience, but also for the fun," said Perry, a 19-year-old sophomore from Americus.

As part of PACER, the program provides each student with a \$4,000 stipend and covers housing, travel and project supplies.

For more information, contact Dr. Atin Sinha at 430-4820 or atin.sinha@asurams.edu.



Photo caption: Engineering majors (from left, seated) Nedgby Marcelin, Ashle' Perry and Jeremy Robinson will join Dr. Atin Sinha (back) in Baton Rouge, La., this summer to participate in the PACER program.