

November 19, 2008 Illinois PLTW Counselors, Teachers, Administrators Conference Features National PLTW Staff Director

The University of Illinois hosted its fourth Illinois Project Lead the Way Counselors Conference on November 19, 2008 at the I-Hotel and Conference Center in Champaign. More than 200 attendees representing 75 schools from around the state included high school counselors, administrators, and teachers; university and career center faculty; and representatives from business, industry, and Illinois state government agencies.

Conference keynote presenters included national Project Lead The Way regional Director of Corporate and State Relations Terri Schulz, who spoke on "Forging the Innovation Generation" and "PLTW Biomedical Curriculum Overview", and John Deere Technology Innovation Center administrator Ashley Greer who shared "Innovation: Creative Problem-Solving Past, Present, and Future."

Fourteen students and several staff from Danville High School, Morton High School, Normal Community High School, Normal Community West High School, and Oswego East High School were featured guest presenters at the conference, demonstrating classroom projects and discussing their experiences with attendees.

Two special awards were presented during the Conference luncheon. University of Illinois Assistant Vice President Charles Evans recognized two Illinois Project Lead the Way high schools which have been honored in the past year as two of 30 "model PLTW programs" nationwide. Morton High School (Morton) and Thornton High School (Harvey) are featured in the 2007 and 2008 "PLTW in Action Model Schools Yearbook" editions, respectively. Dr. Evans presented representatives of each school with an enlarged color poster copy of its yearbook feature article.

During the day, more than 60 of the state's 175 trained PLTW teachers attended networking and curriculum update sessions facilitated by Illinois Master Teachers and University of Illinois Chicago and Urbana-Champaign engineering and math/science faculty, as well as sessions on math in the PLTW curriculum. Presenters included Deb Clinebell (Waterloo Junior High School), Dr. Johnell Bentz (UIUC College of Education Department of Special Education), Michael Sinde (Thornton District #205), Master Teachers Dara Randerson (Oswego East HS) and Bill Christian (Thornton HS), and University of Illinois Affiliate Instructors Jana Sebestik, Bob Becker, Wally Goncharoff, and Richard Keane.

Administrators, counselors, and community partners benefited from insights about counseling students and involving community partners in local and regional PLTW programs. Speakers included Jeff Jerdee and Michael Geist (District 214 and Wheeling High School), DeAnna Myers (Sargent & Lundy Engineers, Chicago), Karrin Hawkins and Marty Tarmann (McLean County Unit 5), Polly Knudsen (Buffalo Grove High School), and Scott Deutsch (Elk Grove High School).

Illinois Project Lead the Way is an active participant in the Illinois STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Equity Pipeline Task Force. Task Force member Lisa Matejka (Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support) shared programs and resources to promote STEM and PLTW program participation diversity.

The Conference included displays of student work, exhibits providing information about statewide PLTW participation and teacher resources, and a panel and displays of engineering higher education programs offered by PLTW Affiliate University of Illinois (Chicago and Urbana-Champaign) and PLTW Associate Bradley University.

For further information about this or other Illinois professional development activities, contact University of Illinois PLTW Affiliate Director [Brenda Pacey](#).

To view 2008 Conference highlight photos and speaker powerpoint presentations, please click [here](#).

