Welcome to the April 2014 issue of the Illinois PLTW Newsletter! Our newsletters are now published on the Illinois PLTW website!

Important 2014 Illinois PLTW Activities and Dates

Summer Core Training Registration is now open! U of Illinois core training sessions and information are available here. Core training for Biomedical Science and some specialty courses are out of state; these training options and information are available here. Teachers register themselves for core training via the Extranet. Please contact Brenda Pacey with any core training questions.

Roundtables have been scheduled for early May. Registration is available on-line at the Illinois PLTW website.

- **Tuesday, May 6th from 4 to 6:30pm at Scullen MS (Indian Prairie SD 204).** Focus is on LMS, student notebook/project documentation for Gateway programs. Gateway Master Teachers Patrick Kirk and Kathryn Rabolt will lead this roundtable.
- **Wednesday, May 7th from 4 to 6:30pm at Fremd HS (Palatine Schaumburg SD 211).** Focus is on idea sharing for Gateway and Engineering programs.
- **Thursday, May 8th from 4 to 6:30pm at John Marshall Harlan Academy (CPS).** Focus is on idea sharing for Gateway, Engineering and Biomedical Sciences programs among Chicago and nearby suburban PLTW schools.

Chicago Public Schools is hosting a CPS CTE Pre-Engineering Junior/Senior Capstone Event on May 16th at UIC. This event will showcase the knowledge learned and demonstrate projects of CPS PLTW students. Please contact Kye-Anne Wilborn (kwwilborn@cps.edu) or Kenneth Clark (kjclark@cps.edu) for more information.

Annual Illinois PLTW HS and MS student enrollment online summary survey. Reminder to Illinois PLTW School District Delegates to complete this annual survey; this information provides valuable summary information which is used for statewide partnership planning. Brenda Pacey is following up with reminders to schools for which we have not yet received summary data. Please contact Brenda Pacey for further information.

Digital Electronics (DE) Hardware Platform Update. As announced in the February Action Bulletin, there will be a new hardware platform and revised curriculum for the 2014-15 school year release of Digital Electronics. See the DE Course Revision FAQ guide for more information. U of Illinois PLTW will be surveying current DE
schools to assess best dates for one-day DE update trainings to be offered to Illinois teachers during summer and fall 2014. For more information, please contact Brenda Pacey.

Statewide Counselor and Administrator Conference and PLTW Teacher Conference Workshops will be held on December 2nd - 3rd in Champaign. More details, including an opportunity to be part of the planning committee and how to submit presentation proposals, will be forthcoming as it becomes available in the coming weeks.

Check the Illinois PLTW website for up-to-date information.

New Student Recognition Opportunity for Class of 2014

Project Lead The Way is pleased to announce a new recognition opportunity for the Class of 2014. PLTW graduation apparel is now available to students who have demonstrated leadership and academic success in PLTW courses or program of study. Schools can order cords, stoles, and lab coats to honor students' achievements in PLTW.

PLTW has proposed recognition guidelines to establish standard criteria for honoring PLTW students across the country. PLTW schools may elect to adopt the suggested guidelines or follow individual school policy to recognize students with the commemorative items of their choice. Click here to access the recommended recognition guidelines. Click here to access the PLTW recognition apparel order form.

Illinois PLTW Happenings

PLTW growth in Illinois is tremendous! More than 40 new schools in over 20 new districts have registered for the fall, along with over 30 new schools or programs in existing districts! Thank you to all of you who have opened your classrooms to share all that is PLTW with our newcomers! Here is a great article about the planned introduction of PLTW Gateway at Lincoln Hall MS in Lincolnwood District 74.

Congratulations to recent grant winners and a big thank you to the Dart Foundation for its generous donations. Urbana High School will receive a grant from PLTW made possible by funding from the Dart Foundation to support the implementation of PLTW Engineering. Read more about the grant here. Additionally, Catalyst-Maria School (Catalyst Network) and Danville CSD #118 will each receive STEM RFP grants directly from the Dart Foundation to support their PLTW programs.

Watch some Design and Modeling / Gateway students at Park View School in Morton Grove SD 70 test their skimmers here. Thanks to teacher Kat Harrison for sharing this great video!

Congratulations to Pat Feulner, who teaches IED and CEA at Metea Valley HS in Indian Prairie CUSD #204, for receiving the Teacher Excellence Award at the ITEEA Annual Conference!

What great PLTW things are happening in your school? We would love to feature your PLTW news, events or information in future issues so please share them with us! Are you hosting special events? Do you have a unique
Sandra Gonzales' story - PLTW Student, Maine West High School, Des Plaines

The following narrative by Sandra, who is now an engineering student at UIUC, was shared with us via Martha Eldredge Stark (Executive Director, NSERVE):

My name is Sandra Gonzalez and I graduated last year in June 2013 from Maine West High School. I am currently majoring in Mechanical Engineering (and probably getting a math minor) at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign.

Throughout high school, I took a couple of Project Lead the Way (PLTW) pre-engineering classes. My sophomore year in high school, I took IED (Introduction to Engineering Design) and learned how to use Autodesk Inventor as well as how to properly document and draw engineering projects. My senior year, I took CIM (Computer Integrated Manufacturing) and learned a lot about the several manufacturing processes, as well as working on a couple of group projects. I loved both of these classes! Both of these PLTW classes were really interesting because I was exposed to real life engineering tasks and skills. These two classes were also extremely helpful for college!

My first semester at U of I, I took a class called ME 170. This class is for freshmen mechanical engineers and introduces them to the designing software called Creo in our labs, as well as going over the different manufacturing processes in lecture. I had already used Inventor (basically the same as Creo) in PLTW so I knew exactly how to use that software. Honestly, the software we used for this class is kind of hard getting used to at first, so if I hadn’t already learned how to use it in PLTW I would have been really confused and my assignments would have taken me a lot more time. In ME 170, we also learned a couple of different manufacturing processes but (lucky me) I had already learned about most of them in CIM! My final project for this class was with a partner, and we had to design something of our choice that moves as well as writing up a huge report documenting how to manufacture and sell our product. In this report, we also had to include annotated detailed drawings with dimensions. I had already done several similar reports for my projects in IED so, while some students in my ME 170 class that had never been exposed to this material were kind of struggling, I already knew exactly how to write up this report!

This is a lot of technical terms but basically PLTW classes were extremely helpful. Although ME 170 is the only actual engineering class I have taken so far, I have to say that PLTW definitely helped me out in that class! PLTW also helped build my team and leadership skills, as well as engineering skills. In the PLTW classes I took, we worked on several group projects that required teamwork and communication. For example, in CIM we worked on a team to simulate an assembly line. In this project, just like a real engineering project, we all worked together to plan how we were going to approach and design this project. We then split up and everybody had their own job, like coding or building or design, but throughout the whole project we kept constant communications among all of us. This was one of the several projects in the class that really built on my teamwork, communication, documenting, and technical skills - all of which are important engineering skills.

My high school schedule consisted of a lot of AP classes, so I unfortunately was never able to take too many free elective classes but if I could have, I definitely would have taken more PLTW classes. All these classes were meant to build the knowledge and skills for future engineers.

I am not exactly sure how, but one of my professors at U of I for my TAM 210 class (Statics) is involved with PLTW, and on our fist exam he asked us a yes or no question about whether we were involved in PLTW in high school. I was proud to have been able to put yes! Also, just last week I had a job shadow with an engineering company in
Naperville and they actually used a program called Autodesk Revit. I never used this software but I know for a fact that a couple of the other PLTW classes use this software a lot.

PLTW classes are extremely helpful classes. They not only taught me the technical skills I am using now, but also the leadership and teamwork skills that are necessary for any engineer!

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**Marketing Materials**

PLTW bi-fold brochures are great for open houses or spring visits with incoming students – or parents who want to know more about PLTW programs. You can view them under Related Links on the bottom right of this page. Please contact Sena Cooper if you would like to order any brochures.

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**Illinois State Leadership Team**

The re-energized Illinois PLTW State Leadership Team, chaired by Marilyn Marshall, University of Illinois Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, met on April 14th in Naperville. The team is continuing to focus on opportunities and challenges as they relate to PLTW growth in the state of Illinois and will meet again in August.

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**Illinois PLTW Team**

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