



## VIRGINIA SPACE GRANT CONSORTIUM

### National Science Foundation Provides Funding to Support Virginia Community College Students and Faculty in Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems

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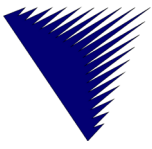
The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded the Virginia Space Grant Consortium (VSGC) \$179,884 to supplement workforce development and education in small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS) in partnership with Virginia's community colleges and Virginia Tech. The funding will supplement the VSGC's current NSF-funded Geospatial Technician Education-UAS ([GeoTed-UAS](#)) project to provide six community college students with four-week sUAS internships during summer 2022 in partnership with the Center for UAS (C-UAS) at Virginia Tech. Four Virginia community college faculty will each also participate in one-week internships and work with the students while gaining experience and hands-on training to further improve their ability to teach sUAS courses.

This one year of funding will expand GeoTed-UAS to provide students and faculty with real-world experience and hands-on training in support of the research and flight testing led by the C-UAS. Thomas Nelson Community College (becoming Virginia Peninsula Community College), the Virginia Community College System, Virginia Tech's College of Natural Resources and Environment, and several faculty consultants are also partners in the project. The C-UAS is a multi-university research center sponsored by the NSF and several other government and industry sponsors. The Virginia Tech site is led by Dr. Craig Woolsey whose research interests include aircraft flight dynamic modeling and control. The mission of the GeoTed-UAS project is to develop and implement academic pathways and train community college faculty to prepare the future sUAS operations technician (sUAS-OT) workforce.

The six student interns come from five different community colleges and the four faculty represent three different community colleges. The table below summarizes the participants.

First Name	Last Name	Community College	Role
Ranger	Matthew	Reynolds Community College	Student Intern
Christian	Kandiyeli	Tidewater Community College	Student Intern
Nicholas	Stoll	New River Community College	Student Intern
Reid	Buchanan	Virginia Highlands Community College	Student Intern
Jayda	Hughes	Thomas Nelson Community College	Student Intern
Katrina	Shaffer	Thomas Nelson Community College	Student Intern
Julie	Young	Thomas Nelson Community College	Faculty
Tamara	Lasley	Virginia Highlands Community College	Faculty
Maury	Wrightson	Germanna Community College	Faculty
Sandra	Lovell	Germanna Community College	Faculty

Other faculty and high school teacher consultants will play a critical role in providing leadership and instruction during the project. These consultants include: Cherie Aukland (Thomas Nelson); David Webb (Retired Community College Faculty); Shawn Shields Lyons (Germanna



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Community College); Veronica Spradlin (Blacksburg High School); Pete Berquist (Thomas Nelson); and Dr. Scott Bellows (VSGC Technical Programs Coordinator).

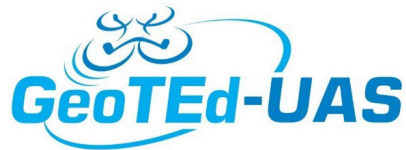
To prepare the students and faculty for the internships, Thomas Nelson will offer two unmanned systems (UMS) courses and the project will fund the tuition for all participants. The project is preparing students who need their FAA Part 107 Remote Pilot Certificate through an online UMS course led by Young and Bellows. The project team will also develop and offer a custom online UMS 111 (Introduction to sUAS) course through Thomas Nelson for all students and faculty participants. This course will be instructed by Daniel Cross, project associate with the Virginia Tech College of Natural Resources and Environment and Thomas Nelson adjunct faculty member, and will include three in-person sUAS training sessions to provide the knowledge and flying experience necessary to support the C-UAS's specific needs during the internship period. This course will serve as a model for future similar courses throughout the Commonwealth.

In addition to tuition support, travel funding, and operating supplies, student interns will earn a stipend of \$4,000 for completing the internship. The NSF funding is provided through a special supplemental funding opportunity titled Skills Training in Advanced Research and Technology (START). START provides students and faculty from two-year institutions of higher education who are participating in NSF Advanced Technological Education (ATE) projects with experiential learning opportunities through research internships that involve partnerships with Industry-University Cooperative Research Centers (IUCRC). The C-UAS is the only UAS-focused IUCRC funded by the NSF. The six student internships are being coordinated through the VSGC-led Commonwealth STEM Industry Internship Program (CSIIP).

The Virginia Space Grant Consortium, a NASA/state partnership, is a coalition of Virginia universities, NASA Centers, state education agencies and other organizations with a focus in aviation, aerospace and STEM education, workforce development and research. For more information on the Virginia Space Grant Consortium and its wide range of programming, visit <https://vsgc.edu.edu>. For more information about the GeoTEd-UAS project, visit <http://geoted-uas.org/>.



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