



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 22, 2017

Contacts:

Joe Steele

David Edelson

LIFT

APLU

313-309-9132

202-478-6072 (office)

jsteele@lift.technology dedelson@aplu.org

LIFT, APLU, and NCMS Create Expert Educator Team to Align Higher Education Curricula with Manufacturing Workforce Needs

The initiative will engage educators and manufacturing scientists to ensure instruction includes the latest technology

DETROIT – LIFT - Lightweight Innovations For Tomorrow, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), and the National Center for Manufacturing Sciences (NCMS) named six educators to its Expert Educator Team (EET). The EET will collaborate with LIFT's technology project teams to identify how colleges and universities can modify their curricula and related industry certifications to meet the knowledge, skills, and abilities workers will need for jobs deploying the new lightweighting technologies, materials, and processes being developed by LIFT.

The six expert educators were selected from APLU's member universities and other LIFT university research partners because of their significant knowledge of manufacturing technologies and experience within the manufacturing industry.

The Expert Educator Team includes:

- *Fazleena Badurdeen*, director of graduate studies in manufacturing systems engineering, University of Kentucky
- *Amy Clarke*, associate professor and site director, Center for Advanced Non-Ferrous Structural Alloys, Colorado School of Mines
- *Chad Duty*, associate professor, Department of Mechanical, Aerospace, and Biomedical Engineering, University of Tennessee Knoxville
- *Muhammad Jahan*, assistant professor, Miami (Ohio) University

- *Gene Liao*, professor and director electric-drive vehicle engineering and alternative energy technology, Wayne State University
- *Kelly Zelesnik*, dean, engineering, business, and information technologies, Lorain County Community College

In addition, the team will be led by Jim Woodell, Vice President for Economic Development and Community Engagement at APLU, and Rebecca Taylor, Senior Vice President at NCMS.

“The key to developing a workforce with the skills employers are looking for is closing the gap between the information and technology taught in the classroom and the advanced technology being deployed by industry,” said Emily Stover DeRocco, education and workforce development director at LIFT. “The experience of this team and the impressive array of researchers and engineers working on LIFT projects will create the vital connections between technology and education to develop a definitively skilled pipeline of workers to meet future demand.”

The EET will begin its work at a kickoff meeting in Detroit with LIFT’s technology project leaders. The teams will review several technology projects underway; identify the knowledge, skills and abilities these new technologies will require in both the design and production workforces, and begin to determine where gaps in curricula exist. Closing these gaps will provide students the right knowledge and skills needed for jobs working with new technologies. In addition to identifying those in-demand skills, the team will work to develop recommendations for effective technology-aligned education strategies and will review the LIFT technology portfolio to recommend additional education and workforce development initiatives.

“This initiative aims to catalyze participation in the critical manufacturing sector by fully realizing the role higher education institutions can play in defining education and workforce strategies,” Woodell said.

NCMS will co-lead the Education Expert Team and provide input as the largest cross-industry collaborative research and development consortium in North America, innovating in commercial, defense, robotics and sustainable manufacturing.

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ABOUT LIFT

LIFT is a Detroit-based, public-private partnership committed to the development and deployment of advanced lightweight metal manufacturing technologies, and implementing education and training initiatives to better prepare the workforce today and in the future. LIFT is one of the founding institutes of [Manufacturing USA](#), and is funded in part by the Department of Defense with management through the Office of Naval Research. Visit www.lift.technology to learn more.

ABOUT APLU

APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. With a membership of 235 public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations, APLU’s agenda is built on the three pillars of increasing degree completion and academic success, advancing scientific

research, and expanding engagement. Annually, member campuses enroll 4.8 million undergraduates and 1.3 million graduate students, award 1.2 million degrees, employ 1.2 million faculty and staff, and conduct \$43.2 billion in university-based research.

ABOUT NCMS

The National Center for Manufacturing Sciences (NCMS) is the largest cross industry collaborative research & development consortium in North America, and is dedicated to driving innovation in commercial, defense, robotics and environmentally sustainable manufacturing.