



CENTRAL
STATE UNIVERSITY

John W. Garland
College of Engineering, Science,
Technology, and Agriculture

NEWS

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JOHN W. GARLAND COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY, AND AGRICULTURE AWARDED NEARLY \$90,000 TO FUND DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

WILBERFORCE, OH — The Central State University John W. Garland College of Science, Engineering, Technology, and Agriculture (JWGCESTA) was recently awarded nearly \$90,000 in funding and in-kind gifts to bolster efforts to embed diversity, equity, and inclusion in technology development.

Eighteen universities and colleges, including Central State, will share \$2.3 million from the Public Interest Technology University Network (PIT-UN). Grants will be used to fund interdisciplinary teaching, career pipeline development, experiential learning, and network building to advance social and racial justice, climate action, cybersecurity, data equity, and human rights.

The announcement was made at the 2022 Public Interest Tech University Network (PIT-UN) Convening, hosted by City University of New York, on Oct. 28-29.

The 18 universities that have been awarded grants this year include Cal Poly State University, Case Western Reserve, Cleveland State University, George Washington University, Georgetown University, Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia State University, Howard University, LeMoyne-Owen College, Miami Dade College, Northeastern University, Rochester Institute of Technology, Stillman College, The Ohio State University/Central State University partnership, University of California Santa Cruz, University of Chicago, University of Michigan, and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

According to Abayomi Ajayi-Majebi, Ph.D., and PE, professor of Manufacturing Engineering at Central State University (CSU), the CSU Manufacturing Engineering Department is working synergistically with The Ohio State University Translational Data Analytics Institute (TDAI), led by Emily Nutwell Ph.D., and OSU TDAI program director. "This project will provide an experiential learning opportunity for CSU minority students through a PIT-UN sponsored new partnership between The Ohio State University (OSU) and Central State University (CSU)," said Dr. Ajayi-Majebi.

"Through this partnership we will develop a paid internship program for at least four CSU undergraduate students who will work together with OSU students to address a public interest challenge," added Dr. Ajayi-Majebi.

The program will increase exposure to data science and analytics methods and techniques for students attending a minority serving institution and address minority gaps in the workforce. It is hoped that student participants will gain an appreciation of how systematic problem solving through science can be applied to address public health problems. Students will also have opportunities to present their experiential learning findings and research results at local and regional professional conferences.

"The United States workforce will reach its optimum production capacity when all the nation's talent is fully engaged," said Morakinyo Kuti, Ph.D., dean of JWGCESTA, and director of Land-Grant Programs at CSU. "Central State University is proud to collaborate with other institutions of higher education to provide opportunities for underrepresented groups in the technology space," he added.

The Public Interest Technology University Network is a partnership of 48 colleges and universities convened by New America, the Ford Foundation, and the Hewlett Foundation. The network and challenge grants are funded through the support of the Ford Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, and Mastercard Impact Fund; with support from the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, The Raikes Foundation, Schmidt Futures, and The Siegel Family Endowment. PIT-UN is dedicated to building the field of public interest technology through curriculum development, faculty research opportunities, and experiential learning programs, to inspire a new generation of civic-minded technologists and policy leaders.

According to a press release issued by PIT-UN, technology plays a significant role in shaping our perspectives and collective culture. If not designed and used responsibly, it can inflict harm on people, especially vulnerable communities who are often left out of technology and policy decision-making.

PIT-UN award recipients work to prepare the next generation of technologists who can critically assess technology’s impact on society and use it as a tool for the public good. “The Network Challenge projects incentivize university students and professors to consider the impact of technology on society as they are developing the next generation of tools and products,” said Paul Butler, president, and chief transformation officer for New America. “The work they do embodies New America’s vision of a more just and equitable society. From community building to empowering marginalized communities, PIT-UN and its grantees build on the strength of our nation’s diversity and stand as models for technological development into the future.”

The Network Challenge grants are exclusively available via application to members of PIT-UN, comprising 48 academic institutions working to strengthen public interest technology as a discipline and a career. It brings together students and educators from multiple disciplines to solve the toughest challenges our country and world face. Over the past three years, the Challenge has funded 123 projects totaling more than \$14 million.

For more information, visit www.CentralState.edu/csuextension.

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About Central State University: Central State University, located in Wilberforce, Ohio, is a regionally accredited 1890 Land-Grant University with a 134-year tradition of preparing students from diverse backgrounds and experiences for leadership, research and service. The University, which has been named HBCU of the Year by HBCU Digest, fosters academic excellence within a nurturing environment and provides a strong liberal arts foundation and STEM-Ag curriculum leading to professional careers and advanced studies globally.

EEO Statement: Central State University, an 1890 Land-Grant Institution, is committed to the full inclusion of all people, and does not discriminate based on race, age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, marital or family status, military status, national origin, political beliefs, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. If reasonable accommodations are needed, please contact the Department of Human Resources at 937-376-6540. Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity institution.

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