

KENAN HATIPOGLU, Dept. of Electrical and Computer Engineering, West Virginia University Institute of Technology, Beckley, WV, 25801, SANISH RAI, Dept. of Computer Science and Information Systems, West Virginia University Institute of Technology, Beckley, WV, 25801, and YOGENDRA M. PANTA, Dept. of Mechanical Engineering, West Virginia University Institute of Technology, Beckley, WV, 25801. NSF S-STEM Program - Supporting Undergraduate Cohorts of Career-Ready Engineering and Science Scholars (SUCCESS) Project at WVU Tech – Year 1 updates.

The goal of the SUCCESS project is to recruit, retain, and graduate low-income STEM students with high motivation and entrepreneurial mindset that will increase the likelihood of employment in technology-based businesses and/or the creation of technology-based start-up ventures in the region. The program will contribute to society by increasing the number of career-ready STEM graduates from low-income and underrepresented populations and strengthening the pipeline of qualified engineers and scientists, improving the home state, the Appalachian region, and the U.S. economic competitiveness. So far, the project provided scholarships to eight (8) student “scholars” for the cohort in year 1. We are currently in the process of recruiting new students for the second cohort in year 2. Faculty mentors from Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) and Computer Science and Information Systems (CSIS) departments are regularly meeting with the scholars to ensure they are making good progress to achieve student success. To facilitate early introduction to research, entrepreneurship, and STEM careers, the scholars were assigned to industrial mentors, encouraged to attend and get involved with campus activities including career fairs, student organizations, senior design seminars, and entrepreneurship courses. SUCCESS team is regularly collecting and analyzing feedback from scholars to ensure that the necessary improvements are implemented. Every semester, scholars’ feedback is collected through pre-, mid- and post- surveys. These surveys provide insights on scholars’ course/program performance, career updates, and also the level of persistence towards their program of study and entrepreneurship minor.

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