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## Science

### Summer research experience helps bring science of optics to Colo. middle schools

July 16, 2009

Colorado middle school teachers are participating in a Research Experience for Teachers at the National Science Foundation's Engineering Research Center for Extreme Ultraviolet Science and Technology at Colorado State University this summer.

#### Building long-term collaborative partnerships

The six-week program allows teachers to collaborate with faculty and graduate students on cutting-edge laser and optical science projects using state-of-the-art equipment to advance science in middle schools.

The effort came about by combining resources between NSF's [ERC for Extreme Ultraviolet Science and Technology](#) and the Alliance Program. The university's Alliance program is a partnership with 10 Colorado high schools that aims to encourage high school students to attend college. Through the initiative, Colorado State collaborates with the schools and their communities to align efforts at the high schools with the expectations of the university.



#### Pass on experience to students

Two teachers from CSU's Alliance schools were chosen to participate in this year's [Research Experience for Teachers](#). Brian Riccatone (*pictured at right*) of Centauri Middle School in La Jara, and Rob Behrens of Fort Lupton Middle School were assigned to do research at CSU and CU-Boulder respectively. Riccatone and Behrens took active parts in a research project at both universities.

"As a teacher, this program was invaluable to me," said Riccatone. "It provided a true hands-on research experience that I will now be able to pass on to my students. With practical education like this you are actually the one doing it, learning it and then better able to teach it."

#### Teachers receive science kit and \$3,000 for classroom materials

As part of the grant, the teachers receive a stipend for their work contribution, graduate credit, a science kit with hands-on activities for their students involving light, optics and color and about \$3,000 for additional materials for their classroom.

"The goal of the program is to help build long-term collaborative partnerships among K-12 science, technology, engineering and mathematics teachers, community college faculty and the National Science Foundation university research community by involving the teachers in engineering research and helping them translate their research experiences and new knowledge of engineering into classroom activities," said Karrin Goncz, the director of the [Education Outreach](#) effort at the

ERC EUV at Colorado State. “Partnerships with inner-city schools or other high-need schools are especially encouraged.”

## Second summer for grant program on campus

The Engineering Research Center for Extreme Ultraviolet Science and Technology received the Research Experience for Teachers grant in 2008 and has been hosting teachers for the past two summers. The ERC EUV operates at three locations – Colorado State University, the University of Colorado-Boulder and the University of California- Berkeley. Professors [Jorge Rocca](#) and [Carmen Menoni](#) of Colorado State’s [Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering](#) head up the grant at Colorado State. Professors [Mario Marconi](#) and [Elliot Bernstein](#) also assist with the program.

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