



Das



Okogbaa

USF STARS Receives Outstanding Educator Award

The 2011 award recognizes grades K-12 STEM outreach.

TAMPA, Fla. (November 1, 2011) – The Students, Teachers and Resources in the Sciences (STARS) program developed in the Industrial and Management Systems Engineering Dept. received the 2011 Outstanding Science Educator of the Year award from the Florida Association of Science Teachers (FAST) at the annual conference held in Orlando from Oct 20-22. The conference theme was Celebrating Science in Our World.

STARS is an NSF-funded Grades K-12 project directed by professors Tapas Das and Geoffrey Okogbaa. The STARS Program was initially funded by the Dept. of Graduate Education (DGE) of NSF for \$1.65 million in 2002. The STARS program places USF graduate students from various engineering disciplines in local elementary schools to partner with science teachers. The objective of STARS is to develop a unique collaborative model among elementary schools, school district administration, and the University of South Florida to:

- Foster systemic change in elementary curricula with the potential to fundamentally change math, science and long term professional development of science and mathematics teachers, and
- Infuse science and engineering principles as well cutting-edge technology (such as nanotechnology, optics, computer vision, etc.) into the elementary grade curriculum.

The Florida Association of Science Teachers (FAST) is the state's largest non-profit professional organization dedicated to improving science education at all levels, pre-school through college. The association's membership includes science teachers, science supervisors, administrators, scientists, representatives of business and industry, and others interested in science education.

For more information about STARS: <http://stars.eng.usf.edu/>

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The University of South Florida is a high-impact, global research university dedicated to student success. USF is classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in the top tier of research universities, a distinction attained by only 2.2 percent of all universities. The Carnegie Foundation also classifies USF as a

community engaged university. It is ranked 44th in total research expenditures and 34th in federal research expenditures for public universities by the National Science Foundation. The USF System has an annual budget of \$1.5 billion, an annual economic impact of \$3.7 billion, and serves 47,000 students in Tampa, St. Petersburg, Sarasota-Manatee and Lakeland.

Janet Gillis
Communications Officer
USF College of Engineering
813-974-3485
janetgillis@usf.edu