



News release

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**Innovators from across the nation expected
to attend Gateway-hosted Fab Lab conference**

Gateway Technical College will host an international symposium for a group focused on innovation, science and technology education as well as working with entrepreneurs and inventors, at its SC Johnson integrated Manufacturing and Engineering Technology Center March 23 to March 25.

The college will host the United States Fab Lab Network Symposium 2015, bringing together Fab Lab experts, a member of Congress and others working on the innovative and invention capabilities these technological workshops have for colleges, communities and business.

The innovative Fab Labs – fabrication laboratories – provide spaces for inventors, entrepreneurs, business owners and educators to access tools for digital fabrication.

There will also be several hands-on demonstrations of innovative Fab Lab equipment.

This year's theme will focus on the financial stability and growth of Fab Labs and feature, among other speakers, Congressman Bill Foster (D-Ill.); Dr. Neil Gershenfield of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Center for Bits

and Atoms and a developer of the first Fab Lab; and Wisconsin Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch.

Event topics include such items as intellectual property, marketing, 3D printing and how it is used in technology and business, turning inventors into entrepreneurs and a best-practices event showcasing the innovative ways Fab Labs are being used across the United States.

Part of it will also focus on how Fab Labs can reach out to area school districts to provide learning opportunities in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math – often called STEM education – which something Gateway has done with success.

“Many Fab Labs are seeking to bring the STEM education to the middle school and high school classrooms,” says Gateway’s Fab Lab coordinator Greg Herker. “Many times, schools simply don’t have the resources to do that – but a Fab Lab does. Working together brings relevancy and a ‘wow’ factor to STEM and technical education for educators in those grades.”

Herker is also the coordinator of the national event.

What is a Fab Lab?

Fab Labs are a global network of local labs, helping inventors and entrepreneurs by providing access to tools for digital fabrication. They are available as a community resource, offering open access for individuals as well as scheduled access for programs.

Gateway’s Industrial Design Fab Lab is a work space containing a variety of computer controlled tools that allow for the manufacture of nearly

anything an individual can conceive. The college links current program courses with the lab, as well as a resource for area inventors, entrepreneurs, K12 school districts and youth groups.

At Gateway, a student or industry professional can conceptualize and design a product using 3D design software in the mechanical design classroom working with programs such as Solidworks, print a prototype next door in the FabLab and then have access to the flexible manufacturing lab where it can be created to scale.

Gateway Technical College collaborates with communities in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties to ensure economic growth and viability by providing education, training, leadership and technological resources to meet the changing needs of students, employers and communities.

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