



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Ohio Northern University and AEP take the lead on advanced energy education initiative**

ADA — The Ohio Northern University T.J. Smull College of Engineering is set to lead a new educational initiative to develop and implement an advanced energy curriculum program with the support of an American Electric Power (AEP) Foundation grant. Representatives from AEP and the AEP Foundation will present the grant award to representatives from Ohio Northern University on Dec. 21 at 11:30 a.m.

This \$500,000 grant allows Ohio Northern to develop the program over a three-year period and addresses AEP Foundation's focus area to "improve lives through education from early childhood through higher education."

Dr. Eric T. Baumgartner, dean of the College of Engineering and professor of mechanical engineering, will manage the program. Other key partners in the initiative include the Ohio Energy & Advanced Manufacturing Center (OEAMC), American Trim LLC, Crown Equipment Corporation, and MetoKote Corporation.

The primary objective of the program is to develop an integrated advanced energy curriculum that addresses the continuum of workforce needs across all skill levels and all education levels for those individuals and companies who currently work or seek to work within the advanced energy industry.

"My colleagues and I are looking forward to working with the AEP Foundation for the development of an advanced energy curriculum," said Baumgartner. "Through this effort, we hope to positively impact the education of those individuals who will bring their skills and knowledge to the alternative and advanced energy economy."

"Today's economic challenges require us to think more creatively about how to fulfill our sustainability commitments to protect people and the environment," stated Michael G. Morris,

AEP chairman, president and chief executive officer. “This includes continuing to ensure that we have the talent and resources to develop new technologies that will meet our customers’ needs in the future. It is important to engage young people on college campuses in discussions about what it will take to ensure our nation’s energy security and address the deepening challenge of meeting the growing demand for electricity while protecting the environment. They are our future leaders. AEP believes energy education is vital to an informed energy future in the United States and around the world.”

Joe Hamrock, AEP Ohio president and chief operating officer, stated, “The AEP Foundation is making a major commitment not only to the future of the Western Ohio District but to the electric industry as a whole. Supporting communities where we serve and live has been an important initiative for AEP, and this project will benefit the entire community and surrounding areas.”

The new curriculum will initially impact those companies and educational institutions within the AEP Ohio Western Region, which is comprised of Allen, Auglaize, Crawford, Hardin, Hancock, Paulding, Putnam, Seneca, Van Wert and Wyandot counties.

The proposed grant funds will be used to support a curriculum development specialist, faculty within the College of Engineering and ONU’s Center for Teacher Education, and workshops and travel support for the recruitment of additional companies to participate in this endeavor.

Fully developed, the program will include emphasis on educating students about alternative and advanced energy systems (including wind, solar, and fuel cell systems) as well as technologies that electric companies utilize for increasing energy efficiency and reducing the environmental impacts of power generation. Eventually, the program is expected to expand to the rest of Ohio and nationwide.

The cooperation of additional educational institutions will include the development of high school pre-engineering programs through four-year bachelor’s degrees. The program will also lay the foundation for additional opportunities for students in vocational schools and career centers as well as two-year associate’s degree programs.

ONU’s College of Engineering has been accredited continually since the 1950s by the Accreditation Board for Engineering & Technology (ABET). Furthermore, its western Ohio location is in an area of many manufacturing-based companies, including those with an emphasis on automotive supply chains, refining and chemical production, appliance manufacturing, agriculture and, increasingly, alternative energy manufacturing.

*Ohio Northern University’s quality, student-centered education distinctively combines the liberal arts with professional programs for more than 3,600 students in its five colleges: Arts & Sciences, Business Administration, Engineering, Pharmacy and Law.*