STEM Hub opens on main campus with computers & free tutoring

BAYTOWN, TX — Lee College students tackling science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) assignments have a new place on campus to access computers loaded with instructional and professional software, and receive free tutoring for everything from algebra to anatomy.

The college and community celebrated this week the grand opening of the STEM Hub, an expanded facility in the heart of campus that provides space for students to focus on what many consider their most challenging subjects.

The hub includes both PCs and Macs equipped with programs students use in their classrooms and labs, like AutoCAD, MatLab, Visual Studio and the Microsoft Suite. There is also ample room for tutors to work with students individually and in groups on biology, chemistry, engineering, human anatomy and physiology, all levels of math, physics and process technology, as well as free printing for up to 10 pages of material through the fall semester to help those impacted by Hurricane Harvey.

“We wanted students to have a space where STEM can be more engaging and more fun, where they can see math and science in a different light,” said Victoria Marron, executive director of HSI Initiatives. “There is no reason for a student to say they can’t be successful because they don’t have something. We will provide the resources they need.”

Funding for the STEM Hub came from a multimillion-dollar grant awarded to the college by the Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) division of the U.S. Department of Education to increase awareness, enrollment and completion of STEM degrees for Hispanic and other underserved student populations. The college was selected to receive HSI STEM grants in both 2011 and 2016, and used grant funds to establish the first STEM Center on campus in 2013. Student feedback from the original STEM Center helped administrators plan the additions and improvements at the new hub.

“It’s a dream to have the hub located in the center of campus, accessible to all students at any time,” said Executive Vice Pres. Dr. Christina Ponce. “Our team designed a first-class space and hired the best tutors to support students in getting into STEM degrees and completing STEM degrees.”

Karen Chavez, a former Lee College student now pursuing a degree in surgical technology, knows firsthand how overwhelming STEM courses can seem. Now a tutor for human anatomy and physiology courses, she tries to keep students focused on what they want to achieve by finishing their degree program.

“I always ask students what they’re going for, because it keeps them interested in STEM when they think about how to apply what they’re learning to what they want to accomplish,” Chavez said. “We didn’t have anything like the STEM Hub when I first started college, and the fact that we have all this available now is amazing.”