

SPARK STUDENT INTEREST IN STEM

Making STEM Teaching Relevant Using Industry Partnerships

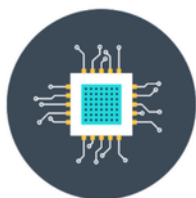
June 15-19, 2026

8 a.m. - 4p.m. at the University of St. Francis, Joliet
WITH SITE VISITS TO LOCAL HOST BUSINESSES

Professional learning opportunity for educators serving
students in grades 6-12
SCIENCE, MATH, CAREER AND TECHNICAL COUNSELORS



SCIENCE



TECHNOLOGY



ENGINEERING



MATHEMATICS

Course Information

- Earn three (3) graduate credit hours
- \$400 per attendee
- Register at stfrancis.edu/real/courses under Science Education | STEM. Choose the course registration for **“REAL 694: Industry STEM in the Classroom”**
- Syllabus: stfrancis.edu/real/experiential
- Contact for details: (real@stfrancis.edu | 815-740-3699)

SCAN ME



stfrancis.edu/real/courses

Explore how STEM content matter is applied in exemplar area businesses.*

- **CITGO Lemont Refinery**
- **DuPont**
- *...more to come!*

Connect with leading-edge research, applied science, integrated cannabis/medical marijuana, and technology applications.

Explore industrial Internet of Things applications.

Discover ways environmental science and chemistry combine to keep people and communities safe.

Share STEM lessons and connections to motivate and teach students.

Enhance your ability to prepare students for future success as highly-skilled employees in a global workforce.

Increase your understanding of essential skills with real world, relevant examples to enhance instruction.

*USF is an approved professional development provider with the Illinois State Board of Education. Business noted are subject to change.



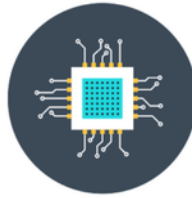
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This summer, educators from across the region participated in a dynamic, week-long professional development course at the University of St. Francis in Joliet. Designed to connect classroom learning with the demands of today's workforce, the course offered graduate credit or professional development units and featured immersive visits to major local employers such as CITGO Lemont Refinery, DuPont & more.

Throughout the week, teachers and school counselors explored how STEM principles are applied in real-world settings—directly observing energy production, data analytics, chemical refining, and design processes in action. Meeting with engineers, technicians, and plant operators, participants gained insights into skill requirements, job pathways, and the crucial role of communication, teamwork, and responsibility across industries.

Educators left energized with new ideas for classroom instruction, from thermodynamics and data analysis to AutoCAD projects and robotics. Many shared plans to incorporate industry-inspired projects, such as optimizing trail mix formulas or modeling pipe systems, into their lessons. One standout takeaway was the strong emphasis on soft skills and career readiness—key traits highlighted by every employer visited.

Teachers also found inspiration in the young professionals they met—individuals who shared personal career journeys and spoke candidly about their challenges and successes. These stories sparked the launch of new initiatives, including a Girls in STEM program and student panels to highlight local opportunities in science and technology fields.

“This experience opened my eyes to the incredible science-based careers right in our own community,” said one participant. “I’m returning to the classroom with practical tools and a stronger sense of purpose.”

The course wrapped with reflection and a shared commitment to bridge the gap between school and work—not just for students, but for educators as well. With strong support from the University of St. Francis, TREP, and local businesses, this initiative will continue to empower teachers to bring real-world relevance to their classrooms.

To learn more about future offerings, contact Maisie Vrba at maisie@trma.org.