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Contact:

Cass Bruton-Ward

(201) 216-5238 or cbrutonw@stevens-tech.edu

Stevens' Center for Improved Engineering and Science Education creates new educational programs in Central and South America

HOBOKEN, N.J. — In an important move that exports **Stevens Institute of Technology's** renowned expertise abroad, Stevens' **Center for Improved Engineering and Science Education** (CIESE) has recently begun a project with schools in Central and South America for the common goal of improving and modernizing 8th and 9th grade education there.

CIESE is working with schools in Peru, Ecuador and Costa Rica toward developing in students a deeper understanding of science and the ability to use technology in education. As in its U.S. programs, this project, "**Proyecto Ciberaprendiz**," uses data from the Internet and specially designed, Internet-based curriculum units in the classroom. In addition, CIESE is advising the three countries, all of whose ministers of education are integrally involved in this project, to help them grasp the important role of the Internet in education and the competitive edge it can create in each country's population.

This project is funded by a \$300,000 grant from the **Inter-American Development Bank** to the **Omar Dengo Foundation** in Costa Rica. CIESE's personnel, expertise and curriculum resources are providing the core educational and training components for the program. A total of six schools – two schools (one public and one private) in a major city in each country – are involved. CIESE is working with its U.S. partners, such as **Miami Dade Community College**, to implement the program. The focus will be on training teachers to implement a total of four curriculum units developed by CIESE. Materials are being translated into Spanish in Costa Rica. **Schools Online**, which was founded in the US and now has a broad international reach, is funding equipment and connections for schools that do not already have the necessary hardware.

"One of the keys to this project is interaction between public and private schools, which is something the Inter-American Bank has challenged us to foster," says **Dr. Ed Friedman**, Director of CIESE. "Cross-pollination among these schools is a key factor to dramatically energizing the societies and economies of these countries.

"We are enthused to be working with partners who have such excellent foresight, including the Inter-American Development Bank's leadership and the Omar Dengo Foundation and its Executive Director **Clotilde Fonseca**."

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Training is under way for two curriculum units and will continue next year with two more. The training empowers teachers to use real-time data, such as seismic and weather data, to teach science lessons relevant to students and pertinent to current real-world issues. The lessons will involve meaningful, collaborative science investigations and student-to-expert communications. About 35 people are directly involved with the training, including principals and teachers from the schools, CIESE staff, and personnel from the Omar Dengo Foundation, Miami Dade Community College, Schools Online, the University of San Pablo, Arequipa, Peru; and the Escuela Superior Politecnica del Litoral, Guayaquil, Ecuador.

The three cities with schools involved in this new program are San Jose, Costa Rica; Lima Peru, and Guayaquil Ecuador.

Dr. Friedman, who will deliver the national education address on Oct. 17 in Costa Rica, made an invited presentation at the United States' 2001 National Education Summit, held in New York State. The Stevens program was among only six selected by U.S. summit organizers to show how classroom curriculum can be improved with technology.

CIESE was established in 1988 to help bring the Stevens' technology experience to the K-12 sector. The center has pioneered the development of award-winning, Internet-based lessons for schoolchildren. It has already helped train more than 10,000 teachers of more than a quarter of a million children in the United States and abroad.

"We're honored to be part of Proyecto Ciberaprendiz, in the same way as we were honored to present at the U.S. 2001 National Education Summit," said Dr. Friedman. "We also presented at the Latin American summit in Miami earlier in 2001, and through all these experiences we have been gratified to see intense interest in the kind of unique and compelling Internet applications we can now create and train teachers to use for K-12 education."

At Stevens' CIESE, Dr. Friedman works collaboratively with teachers, schools system administrators and other educational stakeholders to provide intensive, hands-on training, support and counsel to infuse technology in meaningful ways into the curriculum. Prior to founding CIESE, Dr. Friedman served as Dean of the College of Stevens, where he oversaw groundbreaking programs to integrate computers and networking into college science and engineering instruction.

More information on CIESE is available at: <http://www.k12science.org/>. For more on "Proyecto Ciberaprendiz," visit www.ciberaprendiz.org.

Established in 1870, Stevens offers baccalaureate, master's and doctoral degrees in engineering, science, computer science, management and technology management, as well as a baccalaureate in the humanities and liberal arts. The university, located directly across the Hudson River from New York City, has a total enrollment of about 1,600 undergraduates and 2,600 graduate students. Additional information may be obtained from its web page at <http://www.stevens-tech.edu>. For news about Stevens visit www.StevensNewsService.com

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