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Triton College

For immediate release: **Feb. 16, 2023**

Triton College Welcomes New PLUS Lab

PLUS Lab Allows Students to Conduct University-Level Research

RIVER GROVE, Ill. – Dr. Sheldon Turner, chairperson of Triton College’s Science Department, believes that given the right tools and guidance, Triton College students are capable of conducting university-level research. Dr. Turner’s commitment to this belief spearheaded the creation of Triton’s new Physical and Life Science Undergraduate Student (known as the PLUS Lab), located in Room- D210 (D Building). He’s proud that he was able to bring this vision to life on campus.

Unlike a regular classroom that is used only for specific courses, the PLUS Lab is an open space with a modular design that can be easily moved around and utilized for all different types of scientific analysis across science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

The lab has a 3D printer, 3D scanner, hydroponic equipment, chemical analysis equipment, and more, and can accommodate many other pieces of scientific instrumentation in the future.

“The PLUS Lab offers more than a regular classroom,” said Dr. Turner. “It is versatile space and can be used for a variety of projects and research”.

Students and staff can reserve the lab for different experiments and projects. Multiple groups can use the lab simultaneously when needed. Students can benefit from this because it allows them to engage in scientific research in a more authentic way.

“The PLUS Lab was approved and built from a campus-innovation award because our students had so much success in research with the GENIUS Program and other projects,” Dr. Turner explained. “Our students continued to win conference presentation awards year after year and we realized that we could do amazing things to further our scientific research at Triton College if we had a dedicated lab.”

The GENIUS Program (**Geo-EN**gineering Innovations through **U**ndergraduate **S**cholarship) was a National Science Foundation grant that provided full-ride scholarships, mentoring and research opportunities for low-income, academically gifted students in STEM disciplines. Over 40 students participated in this program and of the 16 that conducted research and presented at conferences, all of them are continuing careers or transferred to universities in a STEM discipline.

Dr. Turner began teaching at Triton College in the fall of 2015 as a full-time faculty member in geology and environmental science. He currently teaches earth science, physical geology, evolution of the earth and environmental geology, and has proudly served as the department chair since January 2022.

Growing up nearby in Rockford, Ill., his family liked to go hiking in Rock Cut, Matthiessen and Starved Rock state parks, and he fondly remembers visiting natural history and science museums. Turner's love of science came at an early age.

Dr. Turner attended Beloit College in Wisconsin and majored in geology and physics. He attended Michigan State University for his Ph.D. in geological science with a specialization in environmental science and policy.

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ABOUT TRITON COLLEGE

Triton College is a two-year college dedicated to helping members of the 25 Western Cook County communities in our district and beyond to achieve educational, professional and personal success. Located in River Grove, Ill., Triton offers more than 120 degree and certificate programs on its 110-acre campus, featuring a comfortable, friendly and diverse atmosphere. Triton also holds classes at satellite locations and offers online learning opportunities. Triton's dedicated faculty and staff work to provide high quality, convenient and affordable educational opportunities to more than 14,000 students each year. Triton College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Learn more at <http://www.triton.edu/>.