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Saint Leo University Developing Pipeline of New Talent for Computer Science and Mathematics Fields; Interns Available

ST. LEO, FL – Saint Leo University (www.saintleo.edu) has combined academic initiatives with recent scholarship support from a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to prepare high-achieving computer science and mathematics majors for careers at Florida companies. Up to 17 of the 18 students enrolled in a special Saint Leo program, in fact, will be available for internships during the summer of 2019.

Saint Leo has had strong demand for its [computer science](#) bachelor's degree holders since its first class of bachelor's degree recipients graduated in 2015, said Vyas Krishnan, PhD, associate professor of computer science. (Saint Leo already had in place a computer information systems degree program, which continues.) Saint Leo is able to do even more now to meet demand in Florida for workers with technological skills.

An infusion of grant support to Saint Leo from the NSF has helped nurture the talents of academically promising students with financial need and prepare them for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers. The grant is the predominant source of funding for a generous scholarship program that was launched in August 2017. The university has named the recipients of these scholarships Emerging Mathematics and Computer Science scholars, or EMACS scholars. These students are required to maintain strong grades and participate in group activities to continue receiving the scholarship.

All of the EMACS scholars will graduate with a bachelor's degree in computer science or mathematics. A few are on an accelerated track that will enable them to earn a bachelor's degree in computer science and a master's degree in cybersecurity within a four-year time frame. In addition to the financial support, these scholarship recipients also benefit from enhanced faculty mentoring and career advice.

"They are not only academically strong, they are multi-talented individuals," said Vyas Krishnan, PhD, the computer science faculty member assigned to oversee Saint Leo's EMACS scholars.

The students' campus interests and hobbies cover a wide range, including equestrian activities, student drama productions, student musical groups, the student campus ministry team, athletic teams, and student advisor positions in residence halls. Some hold leadership positions in groups and clubs.

The EMACS scholars also participate in community service and outreach activities, such as hosting a robotics or coding classes for middle-school students to get them excited about STEM fields. The college students have also developed an ethic of being supportive and encouraging of one another, Krishnan noted. Consequently, he said, workplaces that request EMACS scholars as interns will be getting well-rounded individuals with solid social and communications skills.

Saint Leo's efforts to expand the pipeline of people with strong analytical and technical skills, who are also well-rounded thinkers, dovetails with the Florida Chamber's drive to elevate the qualifications of the Florida workforce.

The experience Saint Leo is providing the current students demonstrates that a university with a strong degree curriculum and small campus environment can be an excellent choice for a student considering a STEM career, Krishnan said. "The level of mentoring that our school affords is sometimes difficult for undergraduates to get at large universities," he said. "Being in a university where you have close faculty support is highly beneficial."

Executives and companies interested in learning more about interns available from the Saint Leo EMACS scholars program may reach Vyas Krishnan at vyas.krishnan@saintleo.edu.

About Saint Leo University

Saint Leo University (www.saintleo.edu) is a modern Catholic teaching university that is firmly grounded in the liberal arts tradition and the timeless Benedictine wisdom that seeks balanced growth of mind, body, and spirit. The Saint Leo University of today is a private, nonprofit institution that creates hospitable learning communities wherever students want to be or need to be, whether that is a campus classroom, a web-based environment, an employer's worksite, a military base, or an office park. Saint Leo welcomes people of all faiths and of no religious affiliation, and encourages learners of all generations. The university is committed to providing educational opportunities to the nation's armed forces, veterans, and their families. Saint Leo is regionally accredited to award degrees ranging from the associate to the doctorate, and the faculty and staff guide all students to develop their capacities for critical thinking, moral reflection, and lifelong learning and leadership.

The university remains the faithful steward of the beautiful lakeside University Campus in the Tampa Bay region of Florida, where its founding monks created the first Catholic college in the state in 1889. Serving nearly 12,000 students, Saint Leo has expanded to downtown Tampa, to other sites in Florida and beyond, and maintains a physical presence in seven states. The university provides highly respected online learning programs to students nationally and internationally. More than 93,000 alumni reside in all 50 states, in Washington, DC, in three U.S. territories, and in 76 countries.

Media contact only: Jo-Ann Johnston, academic communications manager at Saint Leo University at jo-ann.johnston@saintleo.edu or (352) 588-8237.