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## **Governor McDonnell Announces Commonwealth STEM Industry Internship Program**

**– New program will connect Virginia students with high quality internships in the STEM industry –**

**RICHMOND** – College and University students majoring in science, engineering, technology and math (STEM) related fields have a free new resource for summer 2013 internships, as do companies who wish to hire them.

The newly established Commonwealth STEM Industry Internship Program (CSIPP), announced this morning at the Northern Virginia Technology Council Titans of Technology breakfast, offers a no-cost, centralized, online application system that allows students majoring in STEM fields at accredited Virginia colleges and universities, or Virginia students attending out-of-state accredited colleges and universities, the ability to search and apply for paid, STEM-related summer internships with Virginia companies. Additionally, it provides Virginia companies with free access to a large state-wide pool of qualified students for their summer internship opportunities. Students provide one comprehensive application that can be reviewed by potentially hundreds of companies throughout the state.

Speaking about the CSIPP, Governor McDonnell said, "A good education is the key to a good job. The Commonwealth STEM Industry Internship Program will help to prepare our students for the high-quality, high-paying jobs of the future. By better aligning higher education and the business sector, we are working to give every Virginian graduate a path to success. We must continue to develop the pipeline between Virginia's excellent community colleges and universities and the business sector. This program, and programs like it, will enable more Virginia students to engage and learn the much-needed skills that so many careers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century require."

The Commonwealth STEM Industry Internship Program directly links to the governor's 'Top Jobs' higher education legislation, which unanimously passed the General Assembly in 2011. The landmark education reforms have a focus on the need to train and retain more STEM workers in the Commonwealth to fill the high-demand, high-income jobs 21<sup>st</sup> Century and calls for the creation of a STEM public-private partnership. This internship program is just one example of a unique partnership that will provide more opportunity and experience for Virginia students in the fast-growing career fields that are flourishing in the Commonwealth.

"The Commonwealth STEM Industry Internship Program works in concert with the governor's focus on growing opportunity for more Virginians. CSIPP will provide the much-needed quality STEM students to employers while giving those students the access to the experience they will need to succeed," said Secretary of Education Laura Fornash. "By providing quality opportunities for the next generation of Virginia leaders in the STEM industry, this program will make the critical connection between Virginia's exceptional STEM students and Virginia's growing high-tech business community."

"CSIPP will help to close the gap between the needs of employers in high growth fields like science, technology, engineering and math and the skill sets of our new graduates," said Secretary of Technology Jim Duffey. "Virginia has the highest concentration of high-tech jobs in the country and ensuring that our college students are prepared for the workplace is essential to their future and the future of the Commonwealth."

With funding from the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Virginia Space Grant Consortium (VSGC) created CSIPP in partnership with Virginia's regional technology councils. The regional technology councils throughout Virginia are serving as the programs' conduit to member companies who will register and post internships at the CSIPP online sites. Career Services offices at Virginia's colleges and community colleges are collaborating with the VSGC to make students aware of CSIPP. The Virginia Manufacturers Association's Dream It, Do It® Virginia network is also collaborating to spread the word on the program.

Students can express interest in specific internships or submit their application for broad consideration. They can also express interest in specific regions of the state. Participating companies will be able to search the applicant pool via a sophisticated search and sort tool. Companies will make selections, interview, and hire students directly. Hourly rates will be determined by the company, but a minimum rate has been established.

Companies doing business in Virginia can register and list internships at the CSIPP online site right now and are encouraged to do so before Oct. 31. The application process will be opened to students on Nov. 1, 2012. Student applications are due on Jan. 31, 2013 and the application database will be opened to participating companies on Feb. 11, 2013. Visit the site at <http://www.csipp.spacegrant.org/> to learn more.

VSGC has placed more than 4,200 interns in paid positions through past programs. VSGC Director Mary Sandy said, "CSIPP is a major step to help Virginia companies address their pressing need for STEM workers. Internships are an excellent way for students to do early work in their fields and a great way for companies to try out young talent for potential future employment. Students frequently tell us how challenging it is to learn about internships and to apply for them, and companies tell us that securing a diverse pool of qualified applications can be difficult as well. We hope that CSIPP can facilitate making these workforce connections."

The program is open to full-time undergraduate students who are taking at least 12 credit hours per semester at an accredited Virginia university, college, or community college or an accredited out-of-state college or university. Students must be at least 18 years of age, and majoring in STEM disciplines. Prior to starting their summer 2013 internship, they must have completed at least 30 or more post-secondary education credits and must be at least a rising sophomore. *Seniors graduating at the end of the spring semester 2013 are also*

eligible to participate. Students must also have a GPA of at least 2.7 on a 4.0 scale, and must be either a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.

The Virginia Space Grant Consortium is a coalition of five Virginia colleges and universities, two NASA centers, state educational agencies, including the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and the Virginia Community College System, Virginia's Center for Innovative Technology, and other institutions representing diverse aerospace and high technology education, workforce development and research interests. Part of NASA's Space Grant program, the VSGC acts as an umbrella organization, coordinating and developing high technology educational, workforce development and research efforts throughout the Commonwealth and connecting Virginia's effort to a national community of shared aerospace and high tech interests. Other VSGC offerings include: scholarships, fellowships, NASA internships, teacher/faculty professional development, student flight programs, pre-college student programs, and informal educational programs. Visit the VSGC website at [www.vsgc.odu.edu](http://www.vsgc.odu.edu).

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