

THREE EDUCATORS. THREE YEARS. UNLIMITED POTENTIAL.

For seventh-graders, seeing is believing. That's why three Clemson professors are opening young eyes to possibilities they might never have imagined otherwise.

Working across disciplines, Sean Williams (English), Debi Switzer (education) and Ken Weaver (computing) teach students to create virtual worlds and interact with others in virtual societies. "They're already good at gaming and socializing electronically," Williams explains. "We push the boundaries to generate social aptitude and critical thinking skills."

A three-year grant from the National Science Foundation funds this ambitious teaching experiment, designed to excite seventh-graders about careers in science, technology, engineering and math. "We have high hopes that, in time, this will reinforce the knowledge economy base in South Carolina," says Weaver.

Operating in a virtual environment lets students visualize how math and science can be applied to solve real-life problems. "Being able to do anything you can imagine in a virtual world helps you do things more imaginatively in the real world," Williams says. "Imagination is, after all, a cognitive skill."

Leading Faculty

Recruiting and retaining the best faculty members – like Professors Williams, Switzer and Weaver – can truly define a university's future. Attract the right talent, and every university stakeholder benefits: students through engaged learning and access to great minds; the university in boosting the overall academic climate and reputation; and the state through increased economic development activity.



The Reality

Clemson's unique focus on cross-disciplinary collaboration, engagement and enrichment prompted *The Scientist* magazine to name the University the 2007 No. 1 place to work in academia. But, to reach its full potential as a top-tier research institution, Clemson must recruit and retain eminent scholars, teachers and researchers, and continue the tradition of excellence established by current faculty.

Endowed chairs and professorships are the key in attracting these promising faculty members. Without these respected positions, Clemson will lose the most talented to rival schools. And at the world-class level on which Clemson University competes for faculty, these positions are no longer a perk – they are an expectation.

Clemson wants to recruit and retain these eminent scholars for our students, academic programs, research and, indeed, as a pivotal factor in the economic prosperity of our state.

The Need

Clemson University needs to raise private gifts to support endowed chairs and professorships in areas strategically tied to the University's road map. Key positions critical to advancing Clemson are located throughout the University:

- College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences
- College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities
- College of Business and Behavioral Science
- College of Engineering and Science
- College of Health, Education and Human Development
- Libraries
- Public Service Activities

Recognizing the role that world-class faculty play in building a knowledge-based economy, the state of South Carolina has created a program to match – dollar for dollar – private funding for endowed chairs related to economic development. Clemson University will seek approval for endowed chairs to qualify for this match. What this means is that, in some cases, a \$2 million private investment for an endowed chair could turn into a \$4 million chair, doubling the initial investment.

The Impact

The entire Clemson University Family, as well as the state of South Carolina, will benefit from the recruitment of faculty members like Professors Williams, Switzer and Weaver, who not only conduct research and teach classes, but who contribute to the greater good of society. Funding these endowed chairs and professorships will:

- Import the intellectual capital needed to put the University at the pinnacle of academic research.
- Bring the world's leading researchers and scholars to South Carolina, which will enhance economic opportunities for individuals and industries throughout the state and increase the quality of life.
- Recruit more of the nation's top students to Clemson, which will ultimately propel Clemson into the top 20.