

On a Mission: IMPROVING TEACHERS' SKILLS

BARBARA HOUTZ, a former science teacher, has big plans. As the new director of outreach in the Eberly College of Science and author of the book "Teaching Science Today" (Shell Education, 2008), she hopes to apply her extensive experience as a science educator to expand the role of outreach in the college.

"I have traveled the country providing professional development programs to science teachers and have experienced firsthand the dire need to improve teachers' skills," said Houtz, adding that her eventual goal is to extend a wide range of educational programs



Michael Zeman

Houtz has worked with educators nationwide.

to learners around the country. Some upcoming programs include:

- **Science – U:** This summer science camp series from June 21 through July 31 for K–12 students will offer such topics as "Busted! Myth Meets Science."
- **Summer Experience in the Eberly College of Science:** This program from late June through July enables select students from the Upward Bound Math and Science program (which brings to campus minority high school students from the poorest schools in the state) to participate in an authentic research project.
- **Family Science Nights:** Interactive displays are designed to help parents encourage their children to achieve in math and science in school and to choose a career in a science field. There were two events last fall, and one is planned for the spring, all held in local schools.
- **Science and Math Teacher Professional Development Workshops:** An upcoming weeklong course (June



For Science – U summer camp information go to <http://www.sciencecamps.psu.edu>.

21–27) will bring high school teachers up to speed on the latest techniques used by forensic scientists. A two-day course on the subject will be held for law enforcement professionals and judges during that week.

- **Partnership with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) DNA Day:** A new partnership with NIH promotes National DNA Day (April 25), when Penn State scientists interact with students and teachers across the nation through live Web-based broadcasts and online chats.

For more information, contact Barbara Houtz at beh179@psu.edu or **814-865-4158**.

What's New Online: MASTER'S DEGREE IN SYSTEMS ENGINEERING

A NEW ONLINE MASTER'S DEGREE in systems engineering is being offered through Penn State World Campus. According to lead faculty Dr. James Nemes, professor of mechanical engineering at Penn

State Great Valley, systems engineering has been important in the aerospace and defense industries for some time, but more recently it is gaining interest among engineers in the automotive, pharmaceutical and telecom-

munications sectors. "We're especially targeting working professionals who want to advance in their careers," he said. For more information, go to <http://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/MasterInSystemsEngineering.shtml>.