

# Engineering: ONE GIRL AT A TIME

**WHILE ATTENDING A CONFERENCE**, David Meredith struck up a conversation with the woman sitting beside him and discovered that she was an engineer for a large cosmetics company. “How did you become interested in engineering?” he asked. “Well,” she said, “when I was in fifth grade, you came to my class to talk about engineering. Your message was inspiring, and it stuck with me.”

Meredith, associate professor of engineering at Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus, said that moments like this are what motivate him to continue science outreach to girls. Since 1995, he has conducted programs that introduce girls to engineering—a field historically low in numbers of women. In fact, for his efforts, he won the 2009 Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day Award (from the Women in Engineering ProActive Network), given to exemplary individuals who encourage young girls to pursue science, math and engineering.

“Girrl Power,” Meredith’s most successful outreach program for girls, is aimed at middle school students and is held each winter. The program focuses on topics such as how civil engineers use metal detectors to find underground pipes and how GPS systems are made. The program also includes visits by professional engineers. For example, one year the first female to climb poles for a telephone company talked to the girls about the challenges she faced in a male-dominated career.

“I hope to see as many females as males registering for my college-level thermodynamics class before I retire,” said Meredith.

Meredith’s other programs run the gamut from summer camps to professional development for teachers—all reflective of the University’s commitment to the Pennsylvania Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Initiative, one of six U.S. public-private partnerships aimed at increasing students in STEM careers and training the current workforce.



Efforts encourage girls to pursue a male-dominated career.

## WEB 2.0 COURSE 101

**JUST2IT!**, a new online training program in Web 2.0 technologies for faculty and staff, takes its name from Nike’s popular “Just Do It!” slogan.

“Sometimes people hesitate to try new technologies until they’re encouraged to ‘just do it,’” said Lawrence Ragan, director of faculty development for Penn State Outreach’s Continuing and Distance Education. “Our course is presented as a low-stakes experience that enables faculty and staff to test the technology waters.”

Developed by a team from ITS Training Services, Continuing and Distance Education and the College of the Liberal Arts, the course delves into the technologies for Wikis, micro-blogging, video- and photo-sharing, and social networking, among others.

“As Web 2.0 technologies become more commonplace in our work and learning spaces, it is important that faculty and staff be exposed to these tools and consider how they might impact the teaching and learning at Penn State, as well as the work of staff,” said Ragan.

The course was piloted last spring and has been offered as an eight-week course this fall. For more information about Just2It! or to register for the course, contact Ragan at [lcr1@psu.edu](mailto:lcr1@psu.edu).