

2026 STEM Symposium

Clayton State University - College of Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics

The College of Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics at Clayton State University held their 5th annual Symposium "Think Fast, Think Deep: STEM insights for a Changing World" in March of 2026. The two-day event focuses on STEM insights for a Changing World and featured presentations by guest industry speakers, faculty, and current students, plus panels covering topics for both current students and alumni. The Symposium hosted over 850 students, faculty, alumni, and industry leaders. The Symposium helped create undergraduate scholarships for CSU students in STEM.



Key Note Speakers: *David Byrd* is a Director for Google Cloud, specializing in GCP Security and Regulated Cloud. He is a technical executive with a distinguished three-decade career in the industry. For the last five years, he has driven customer success at Google, following more than 20 years at IBM where he served as a Distinguished Engineer and co-authored numerous technology books. David is an alum of Clayton State University.



Representative Regina Lewis-Ward was elected to the Georgia General Assembly in 2020 and serves the 115th District, which includes parts of Henry and DeKalb counties. A native of Brooklyn, New York, she holds a Master of Arts in political science from Clayton State University, a Bachelor of Business Administration in computer systems from Bernard M. Baruch College and an Associate of Applied Science in data processing from LaGuardia Community College. Representative Lewis-Ward has a diverse background and experience spanning decades, working with emerging data processes across multiple environments. She began her professional journey in 1982 as a programmer analyst with the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, where she developed systems for efficiently storing and retrieving data related to artifact preservation. Later, she designed and implemented automated employee time and leave management systems at the NYC Transit Authority, improving record keeping and paycheck accuracy. After moving to Georgia, Representative Lewis-Ward collaborated with Georgia Tech's Enterprise Innovation Institute and the Advanced Technology Development Center in 2016 to evaluate and pilot a technology incubator to support small businesses in the region. Building on her experience in technology, Rep. Lewis-Ward channels her efforts into academic research, focusing her dissertation on The United States Federal Government and lags in protecting personally identifiable information. Representative Lewis-Ward commits deeply to using innovative technologies to drive progress, promote growth, and encourage sustainable development in both business and community initiatives.



Karis Townsend serves as the Human Resources Outreach Coordinator for the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), where she supports workforce development and community outreach across the region. In her role, she collaborates with schools, colleges, and community organizations to increase awareness of the many careers that keep public transportation moving—careers spanning engineering, technology, planning, logistics, safety, operations, customer experience, and skilled trades. Karis is passionate about helping students connect what they're learning in the classroom to real-world opportunities and impact, and she works to strengthen early exposure and career readiness through meaningful partnerships and programming. Karis earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Hampton University and a Master's Degree in Professional Studies from Georgetown University. She is also a Certified Master Professional Life Coach, bringing a student-centered, strengths-based approach to helping young people build confidence, curiosity, and a vision for their future. She is proud to represent MARTA and speak on behalf of the organization, highlighting how STEM fuels mobility, opportunity, and community connection.



THANK YOU For your Support

REGISTER TODAY!

MARCH 25: RESEARCH AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

MARCH 26: K-12 STEM EXPLORATION

College of Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics (CSTEM)

5th Annual Symposium

Think Fast, Think Deep: STEM Insights for a Changing World

2026 STEM Faculty of the Year Award-Dr. Vivian Padin-Irizarry Biology Professor

Research and Career Development Wednesday, March 25, 2026
Athletic Center: Loch and Mason Barfield Court 2000 Clayton State BLVD, Morrow, GA 30260

Time	Event	Person
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Event Check-In	Athletic Center
9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	Welcome Host: Bernice Santana	Dean: Dr. Ebrahim Khosravi President: Dr. Georj Lewis Provost: Dr. Jill Drake
9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Keynote Address	Google- David Byrd
10:00 a.m. – 10:20 a.m.	Faculty Presentation	Dr. Stephen Burnett
10:20 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Industry Presentation	Georgia Game Developers Association- Andrew Greenberg
10:30 a.m. – 11:05 a.m.	Industry Presentation	Truist Bank
11:05 a.m. – 11:35 a.m.	Industry Partner Presentation	Allium- Colton Magant, Steven Rimmer
11:35 a.m. – 11:55 a.m.	Faculty Presentation	Dr. David Murray-Stoker
11:55 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Brief Announcements	
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Break	On your own
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	STEM Advisory Council Meeting By Invitation	Dean's Conference Room
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Student Poster Session	College of STEM Students
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Industry Leader Panel	Josathan Kyle- TenSparrows, David Byrd- Google, Steven Rimmer- Allium Ryan Lawler- BioSparks and more.
3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	Break	
3:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Student Presentation	Latevi Jonae Lawson
3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Industry Partner Presentation	BioSpark Lab- Ryan Lawler
4:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.	Student Presentation	Genzalo La Chica Maldonado and Md Sazidul Islam
4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Student Presentation	Tyler Zihlmann
4:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.	Student Presentation	Alexandra Tengue and Kossi Sesson
4:45p.m. – 5:00p.m.	Symposium Day 1 Closing	Dean Khosravi and Symposium Chairs

- College of STEM 21st Annual Student Awards**
- Information Technology Outstanding Scholar Award**
- AAISIT - Dave Mastin
 - BIT - Melissa Mendoza-Mora
- Computer Science Outstanding Scholar Award:**
- BSCS - Kossi Sessou
- Annita Hunt Award:**
- Jasmin Ordaz-Garcia
- Billy R. Nail Award:**
- James Scott
- Billy R. Nail Scholarship:**
- Mary Sims
- Rising Senior Award:**
- Spencer Roberson
- Dr. Helen Davis Brown Endowed Scholarship for Biology:**
- Minal Nisar
- O.C. Lam III Award for Excellence in the Biological Sciences:**
- Anistasia Keoseng
- Jim Braun Award for Excellence in Chemistry:**
- Oluwafunmilola Adebisi Raji
- CRC Press Chemistry Achievement Award:**
- Gabriela Bonomi
- Recognition of the Dean's and President's Students:**
- Dr. Ebrahim Khosravi
- Catherine Aust for best all- Around CSTEM Major Award:**
- Anzlett Goggans
- 2025 CSTEM Faculty of the Year Award:**
- Vivian Padin-Irizarry
- 2025 CSTEM Staff of the Year Award:**
- Genesis Polo
- 6:00 - 6:30pm **Keynote Speaker** Representative Regina Lewis-Ward



Student Awards Banquet

Symposium Highlights

Faculty, Staff & Student Presentation

- Title:** Preliminary Assessment of Water Quality Parameters at Reynolds Nature Preserve
Abstract: Freshwater quality in the United States is taken for granted compared to many regions worldwide. This study evaluated key water quality parameters in a freshwater stream at Reynolds Nature Preserve in Morrow, Georgia. Using a commercial testing kit, researchers analyzed 17 parameters across four treatments ($n = 3/\text{treatment}$): stream water from two locations along the stream, distilled water (control), and tap water. Significant differences were detected among treatments in water hardness, NaCl concentration, total alkalinity, and total dissolved solids ($P < 0.05$). These findings highlight measurable variation in basic water chemistry across common freshwater sources. Future work will incorporate larger sample sizes to improve analytical robustness and will examine how these chemical parameters correlate with microbiological data collected from the same site. -Dr. Clint Edmunds, Dr. Vivian Padín-Irizarry, Dr. Paul Melvin
- Title:** Development of an Informational Chatbot to Support Student Navigation of University Academic Resources
Abstract: Clayton State University website has many information available for students; however, the amount of information could be overwhelming to find specific information. The problem I am trying to solve is the navigation tool for the Clayton State University website. The institution website does have a search tool but would load up only several webpages of relevant information. Therefore, my solution is to create a no-code academic support chatbot designed specifically to guide Clayton State University students to campus resources that promote academic success. By creating this chatbot as a navigation tool on the university website, it simplifies how students can find support services and academic resources, which can influence students' performance. It is also especially beneficial for first-generation college students as they can quickly find accurate information on their own and receive support early, which strengthens their sense of belonging within the university environment. -Melissa Seng



Thank You! Planning Team Symposium Planning Committee

Dr. Ebrahim Khosravi **Director**, Dr. Jere Boudell **Committee Chair**
Committee Members: Genesis Polo, Christopher Morgan, Dr. Elliot Krop, Dr. Xiangdong An, Dr. Paul Melvin, Jillain Morgan, Penny Cliff, Dr. Louisa Catalano, Dr. Dmitriy Beznosko, Dr. John Meyers, Dr. Ken Nguyen, Dr. Stephen Burnett.

CSU Alumni Panel

CSIT: Aziz Contractor, SOS: Nyla Gilmore

K-12 STEM Exploration Day

Time	Event	Person
9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	Event Check-In	Athletic Center
9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.	Welcome	Dean: Dr. Ebrahim Khosravi
	Host: Minh Tran	President: Dr. Georj Lewis Provost: Dr. Jill Drake
9:45 a.m. – 10:05 a.m.	Keynote Address	MARTA- Karis Townsend
10:05am-10:15am	STEM Research Introduction	Dr. Stephen Klusza
10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	STEM Programs and Scholarships	Department Chair of Mathematics: Dr. Elliot Krop Department Chair Computer Science: Dr. Xiangdong An Biology/Chemistry/Physics: Dr. Paul Melvin
10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	CSTEMSS Student/Alumni Panel	CSIT: Juwan Hollingsworth Mathematics: TBA SOS: Nyla Gilmore
10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Enrollment Information	Admissions Financial Aid Housing
11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Exploration Stations	Campus Tour Exploration Stations
12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Farewell with Lunch	Dean & Symposium Chair Athletic Center



Over 850 guests were in attendance at the STEM 5th Annual Symposium!



Industry partners, community leaders, CSU faculty, staff, students and southern Atlanta high schools.



Industry Partner Presentation

BioSparks Lab, Georgia Gaming Association, Altium Packaging

Industry Partner Panel

Steve Rimmer- Altium Packaging, Jonathan Kyle- TenSparrows, Ryan Lawler- BioSparks Lab, David Byrd- Google Cloud, Aziz Contractor- AWS, SRGT Rukiya Parsons- National Gaurd



High School students got a taste of the different STEM programs through robotics, mathematical games, chemistry, biology and physics stations

