



UTEP, El Paso Electric Unveil Next Phase of Partnership to Prepare Youth for STEM-Related Careers

Discover-E Engineering and Computing Lab classroom provides hands-on K-12 education on the road

EL PASO, Texas (May 23, 2022) – The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) and El Paso Electric (EPE) unveiled additions to the UTEP mobile, 26-foot-long, hands-on K-12 classroom designed to teach energy and engineering concepts and their real-world relevance while encouraging students to pursue STEM-related careers.

The electricity project additions to the Discover-E Engineering and Computing Lab classroom is a product of the memorandum of understanding signed last year by UTEP President Heather Wilson and EPE President and CEO Kelly A. Tomblin to enhance energy research and improve education in the El Paso region.

"We are proud to unveil this powerful collaboration with UTEP to better prepare our youth for jobs in the energy and engineering industry," Tomblin said. "At El Paso Electric it is our mission to transform our energy landscape by leveraging technology and propelling growth in our region. With this new mobile classroom we will generate meaningful community connections and inspire the next generation of engineers who will help us reach this strategic mission."

"Engaged learning will help the K-12 students in our region get excited about careers in engineering and STEM fields," Wilson said. "The Discover-E Engineering and Computing Lab classroom with new additions from our partners at El Paso Electric will create those opportunities to inspire future engineers."

The Discover-E mobile classroom is powered by six 400-watt solar panels mounted on the roof of the trailer. It also features a 5 kW battery storage system to store energy for use during times of high cloud coverage or at night. Inside the Discover-E Engineering and Computing Lab, with new projects from El Paso Electric, K-12 students will discover how energy is generated, distributed and consumed, learn about energy efficiency, sustainability, smart thermostats, solar panels, battery storage, electric vehicles (EVs) and more.

UTEP and EPE continue to collaborate on other initiatives in energy research, human capital exchange, guided student research and community engagement.

Energy Research: Yuanrui Sang, Ph.D., UTEP assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering, will lead the Spatial-Temporal Emission Tracking from the Electric Power Grid project. Its aim is to develop models to track power systems emissions in real time at specific locations.

Human Capital Exchange: Paras Mandal, Ph.D., UTEP associate professor of electrical and computer engineering, alongside visiting lecturers from El Paso Electric, will co-teach a course incorporating real-life industry challenges.

Guided Student Research: Rodrigo Romero, Ph.D., professor of practice in electrical and computer engineering; and Chris Roberts, Ph.D., assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering, will oversee senior capstone student projects to explore the use of electric vehicles as a charging alternative to reduce grid load during peak times, as well as a consumer-side mobile power source.

Community Engagement: UTEP and El Paso Electric will engage the community through the Discover-E Engineering and Computing Lab.

About El Paso Electric

El Paso Electric is a regional electric utility providing generation, transmission and distribution service to approximately 450,000 retail and wholesale customers in a 10,000-square mile area of the Rio Grande valley in west Texas and southern New Mexico.

About The University of Texas at El Paso

The University of Texas at El Paso is America's leading Hispanic-serving university. Located at the westernmost tip of Texas, where three states and two countries converge along the Rio Grande, 94% of our more than 24,000 students are minorities, and half are the first in their families to go to college. UTEP offers 169 bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs at the only open-access, top tier research university in America.

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