

INSPIRED

Increasing Student Participation in Research Development
A Broadening Participation in Computing Demonstration Project
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Lamar University's INSPIRED Program seeks to increase the participation of women and underrepresented minorities in computing. The INSPIRED vision is to engage these students in computing through an enriched undergraduate experience and transform them into a powerful force for attracting others like them to the field. Activities include:

- **Team research** to engage undergraduates early
- **Mentoring and tutoring** from faculty team leaders and peers
- **Professional conferences** where students present their research
- **Research seminars** that bring recognized researchers to campus to inspire students
- **Career forums** that expose students to successful computer scientists and the rich diversity of careers in computing
- **Career counseling** to help transition students to advanced degrees or careers in computing
- **Outreach** to university, high school, and middle school students in on-campus events, Road Shows, and Computing Academies that INSPIRED students help design, organize and conduct.



INSPIRED undergrads teach girls and boys to program robots and create web pages in high school academies.

The INSPIRED experience improves students' technical, organizational, and communication skills. It also gives them valuable experience in teamwork and leadership and a sense of

community. This boosts their confidence, aids in their retention, and helps prepare them for the computing workforce. In outreach, INSPIRED students show others that computing is fun, inclusive, and offers many rewarding opportunities to benefit society.



INSPIRED undergrads teach girls to program robots in Sally Ride Festival workshops.

Results after two years:

- Ninety-one percent of INSPIRED students were retained as CS majors.
- Two of three INSPIRED graduates are pursuing graduate degrees. The third is enjoying a career in computing with a local employer.

Proudest accomplishments:

- INSPIRED hosted academies for 74 middle school students and 19 high school students in 2009.
- INSPIRED undergraduates won first place in the student poster competition at a state conference in 2009; and first and third places in 2008.
- INSPIRED hosted two Sally Ride Festival workshops in 2009 for over 40 fifth through eighth grade girls.

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