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### **GSU Robotics Team Provides Job Skills at State Fair**

Office of Marketing and Communications

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# GSU Robotics Team Provides Job Skills at State Fair



[Governors State University's](#) robotics and artificial intelligence experts from the [College of Arts and Sciences](#) provided an unplanned —but timely —lesson to young techies at the 2021 Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.

Visitors to the fair's STEAM EXPO booth, worked with robotic MI-JACK crane simulators to “pick up and move” shipping containers as part of the university's innovation showcase.

“They were timed, too,” said Professor Aslam “Sam” Shahid, who co-coaches the university's two First Tech Challenge (FTC) robotics teams. “They were learning important skills that are coming into play right now as the world faces a supply and demand shortage crisis,” he said.

Shahid and Dr. Mary Carrington, Chair in the Division of Science, Mathematics and Technology, along with Luke Helm, GSU's Steam Camp Coordinator, joined STEAM forces at the fair to engage youth with FTC and First Robotics Competition (FRC), aviation technology, including Python programmable drones and MIT Python Turtle Programming.



Hazel Crest-based MI-JACK crane manufacturer, which partners with the university, assisted GSU's innovation showcase with thrilling hands-on experiences, said Shahid.

"The students were so excited and asking me questions about our upcoming robotics program. I really learn so much from them. They make me wish I was born in this era."

Shahid and Dr. Xueqing "Clare" Tang coach two FTC robotics teams of seventh-through 12th-graders who were finalists in [a 2020 contest](#). Next January, they will compete again at GSU.

In addition to the university's robotics expertise, the fair's STEAM EXPO also highlighted the institution's participation in the Illinois Innovation Network, a collaboration among the state's 15 public universities to promote expertise and innovation. Through the network, GSU's [College of Business](#) (COB) has launched the state's only supply chain hub with the [Supply Chain Innovation Business Center Incubator](#).

Dean Zhao said the fair demonstrated interdisciplinary ideals at work.

"This was another great example of cross disciplinary, cross-college collaboration to showcase GSU's innovative STEAM programs as well as its business partnership," Zhao said.

