Wichita State dedicates Westar Energy power systems lab

Representatives of Wichita State University and Westar Energy held a dedication ceremony today for an expanded and updated laboratory where WSU College of Engineering students learn about power systems.

The facility in Wallace Hall has been named the Westar Energy Lab to recognize the utility’s pledge of $125,000 to support the lab over a five-year period. The funds are being used to buy new equipment and tools to teach students about smart grids, synchrophasors, power quality and advanced system modeling, among other facets of electrical engineering.

“This support from Westar Energy is a wonderful example of how our corporate friends are willing to invest in educational excellence so that students are fully prepared to succeed in their chosen fields upon graduation,” said Elizabeth King, president and CEO of the WSU Foundation.

The lab will give WSU engineering students real-world experience with equipment relevant to today’s electric industry, said Kelly Harrison, vice president for transmission at Westar Energy.

“Westar Energy is delighted to partner with Wichita State University on the addition of this power systems lab to its engineering program,” Harrison said. “Partnerships like this between a Kansas-based business and an institution of higher learning help ensure that the technical skills students are acquiring align with the needs of businesses like Westar’s.”

John Watkins, chair of the WSU Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Department, thanked Westar Energy for its contribution.

“As the lab will be used in a broad range of electric energy classes, it will provide many students more hands-on experience,” Watkins said. “It is truly preparing our students for work in the power industry of the 21st century.”

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Media note: A photograph can be found after 2 p.m. today at www.wichita.edu/foundationphotos
Event recognizes Westar Energy’s contribution to WSU electrical engineering program

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