

USF Opens Cutting-Edge Lab Aimed at Rapidly Providing Military Solutions



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TAMPA, Fla. (March 25, 2024) – The University of South Florida has opened a cutting-edge lab aimed at providing quick, innovative solutions to the different challenges facing the U.S. Department of Defense. Managed by USF’s Institute of Applied Engineering, the new Rapid Experimentation Lab (REL) provides a unique, collaborative space to rapidly test concepts.

As one of nation’s [most research-intensive universities](#), USF is helping to solve problems throughout society, and the facility is a key part of those efforts.

“Our new lab will further enhance the University of South Florida’s focus on developing technologies and providing innovative solutions that address critical global and national security challenges,” USF President Rhea Law said. “This facility will provide research opportunities for our faculty, hands-on learning experiences for our students and help grow important partnerships with governmental agencies and private industry.”

The state-of-the-art facility is part of a five-year, \$85 million contract with the Department of Defense. It aims to streamline the prototyping process by bringing together engineers from a wide range of disciplines under one roof, significantly reducing development timelines.

“The lab provides the necessary infrastructure, tools and

collaborative environment to enable the curious and inspired to design, build and test technologies for today and tomorrow,” said Peter Jorgensen, the associate director of engineering for the IAE. “More than just a makerspace, the REL is a playground for mechanical, electronics, sensors, communications, and software teams to quickly iterate on designs to solve problems, invent new products and rapidly deliver cutting-edge capabilities.”

The new 8,000-square-foot facility will be utilized not just by USF faculty and student engineers, but also partners in the Department of Defense and private industry, who are working to support missions ranging from the battlefield, to the oceans and to space. The lab houses various equipment, including electrical and mechanical computer design and analysis tools, communications networks to support testing, electronics and circuit boards, as well as manufacturing technology. It will allow multiple engineers to collaborate, test and retest an idea or product before presenting it to the Department of Defense for consideration.

The IAE also plans to work with the USF Technology Transfer Office to identify start-up companies interested in utilizing the lab for development of their own inventions.

Partners who would like more information can email info-iae@usf.edu.