

GEORGE BLANKS

Dr. George Blanks is Director of K-12 Engineering Outreach for the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering at Auburn University and Executive Director of BEST Middle and High School Robotics Competition, which is headquartered at Auburn. BEST (*"Boosting Engineering, Science, and Technology"*) is a non-profit, volunteer-based program whose mission is to engage, excite, and inspire students to pursue careers in these fields through participation in a project-based, hands-on robotics competition. In 2009, BEST operated 35 hubs (local competition sites) in 13 states with over 750 schools and 11,500 students participating.

As Executive Director, Dr. Blanks' primary duties include establishing educational partnerships with corporations and professional engineering societies; recruiting national sponsors to help fund its hubs; raising awareness of BEST as a K-12 workforce development program; and recruiting engineering schools and two-year technical colleges to host BEST competitions on their campuses.

George earned an undergraduate degree in Communications from Samford University, a master's degree in Counseling Psychology from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and a doctorate in Educational Leadership from Auburn University.