Lehigh's International Materials Institute for New Functionality in Glass (IMI-NFG) was founded in 2004 on a program by the same name and sponsored by the National Science Foundation under an initiative to advance materials research globally by enhancing coordinated international collaboration between U.S. researchers and educators and their counterparts worldwide. The Institute's long term goal is the creation of a worldwide network in glass research for new applications, and the development of a new generation of scientists and engineers with enhanced international leadership capabilities. Specifically on campus, it promotes new activities in glass research through international and national collaborations, and the development of new approaches to the education of glass. Faculty and students from various Departments of Rossin College of Engineering and Applied Science, and College of Arts and Sciences participate in its activities listed below.

Half of the 20 most significant inventions of the 20th century, as identified by the National Academy of Engineering, would not have materialized without glass. The solutions to 12 of the 14 grand engineering challenges of this century depend on the availability of glass either as a support material or as an active component for sensing, information storage, treatment delivery, etc. The discovery of new phenomena, along with continually improving properties and processing methods, will keep glass at the cutting-edge of technology. Unfortunately, in recent decades glass education has fragmented with the result that a larger number of students is exposed to glassy materials, but with relatively shallow, cursory knowledge that does not prepare them to become a professional glass scientist or engineer. To meet these challenges IMI-NFG is pooling together resources of educational institutions, leading glass companies, national laboratories and professional organizations from across the globe. Thus, it is promoting research through synergistic collaborations and international exchange of researchers at undergraduate to faculty level as well as training glass professionals through internet and other education technology to create a new generation of scientists and engineers with enhanced leadership capabilities.

To promote international research collaborations for new uses of glass, and to make glass education available without geographical boundaries, IMI-NFG sponsors and provides support for the following program:

GLASS EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL
Development of Educational Material such as video DVDs and hands-on demonstrations by the leading international glass experts to promote the understanding of glass at all levels. A variety of over 300 video tutorial lectures and overviews of the latest progress is available via Internet to interested students without charge. For example, a full semester course on Optical and Photonic Glasses consisting of 39 lectures is accessible from IMI-NFG's web site. The teachers at Lehigh and other universities and colleges will find this collection a useful resource for their lectures. Professionals in industry can learn the subject by studying these lectures.

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