

Presidents Panel



Greater St. Cloud (GSC) is committed to uniting regional resources, fostering collaboration, and making Greater St. Cloud a top place to live and work. We work closely with post-secondary partners to enhance the student experience and strengthen our community. To support this mission, we invited College and University Presidents to share campus updates, post-education outlooks, and collaborative efforts to engage the community and retain talent. Each President also debunked a common myth about their institution with supporting evidence.

KEY CONTACTS

- Educational Institution Contacts:
 - St. Cloud State University: Interim President Larry Dietz - 320-308-2122
 - St. Cloud Technical and Community College: President Lori Kloos - 320-308-5022
 - College St. Benedict's/St. Johns University: President Brian Bruess - 320-363-2244
- Gail Cruikshank, Talent Director, GSDC, gcruikshank@greaterstcloud.com

KEY THEMES & TAKEAWAYS

Theme 1: Employer-Education Collaborations Driving Workforce Success

- SCTCC - Partnership with the Wedum Center for Student Success and community members who support through providing a matching gift to support our 1st generation students and multi-language learners.
- CSB/SJU - The work of our Honors Program with dozens of local nonprofits to help them build capacity, including strategies for direct service, volunteer management, program development, communications, organizational development, research, and assessment.
- SCSU - Collaboration and partnership with SCTCC including ADVANTAGE 2 + 2 plans, housing opportunities, transportation between campuses, and more.

Theme 2: Increasing Student-Employer Interactions

- Create business related courses into more majors to help broaden the student scope/experience/understanding of the materials.
- Encourage student engagement/service within community organizations.
- Create Student/Ambassador networks.

Theme 3: Supporting Education Institutions for Regional Growth

- Reach out to local institutions with a challenge or problem you would like support from our students to achieve.
- Participate and engage in college events showcasing their students to gain the facetime to learn about and potentially engage with your business.
- Strengthen promotion of our variety of astute post secondary education institutions to strengthen enrollment and economic growth for our region.
- Create easily accessible fact sheets for institutions to help the community correct the narrative and debunk myths.

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Shared Collaboration & Student Success Stories
 - District 742's Future 100 Program. All three institutions supported the District working towards the goal that 100% of their high school graduates will have a defined plan upon graduation including college acceptance, employment, military, etc.
 - CSB/SJU Institute of Humanity students obtain real life experiences and engagement within our community applying the education they are learning in the classroom.
2. Addressing the Evolving Student Landscape
 - SCSU Online MBA program. Allowing students at any time in their career to participate further developing their skill set.
 - K-12 partnerships like Future 100, Employer Advisory Councils, Mentoring along with providing opportunities for post secondary students to engage in the workplace through job shadowing, internship, or project work to apply the skills they are learning in the classroom.
 - Offerings for students to build on education between institutions and programs to provide flexibility and opportunities any student may be seeking.
3. Strengthening Local Partnerships
 - Aviation Maintenance Technician Program at SCTCC.
 - EPIC initiatives throughout all student ages.
 - Credit transferability between colleges and universities to allow for timely education opportunities for students.

ACTIONABLE NEXT STEPS

1. Expand Employer Engagement
 - Increase business participation in classroom settings and career fairs.
 - Business leaders should collaborate with faculty to integrate real-world projects and case studies into their coursework.
 - Provide and promote internship and mentorship opportunities.
2. Address Barriers to Student Participation
 - Improve transportation access to job sites and networking events.
 - Provide employer resources to educate students on career paths.
 - Better articulation of job opportunities and career paths available to help students understand the local job market.
3. Increase the number of interaction opportunities for students with employers/community experts
 - Expand hands on learning and early career exposure.
 - Regional outreach efforts to inform prospective students, families and businesses about local higher education opportunities.
 - Encourage high school and middle school students to explore local industries early to build stronger workforce pipelines.
4. Strengthen Institutional Support
 - Encourage businesses to invest in student scholarships, philanthropic partnerships, and equipment funding.
 - Employers and community leaders need to help dispel myths about higher education.
 - Showcase student success stories and positive impacts on the local economy will improve public perceptions.
 - Host more networking events, industry panels and open houses to create more organic interaction opportunities between students and employers.
 - Create community boards within institutions to facilitate continuous employer engagement strengthening long-term partnerships and engagement.
 - Advocate for expanded student well-being initiatives

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[AI Table Discussion Note Summary.pdf](#)