

SW Florida's Consortium of Colleges on Creative Coast boosting student opportunities



BY DR. CAROL PROBSTFELD
Special to the Herald

For the Consortium of the Colleges on the Creative Coast (C4), the start of the New Year is the time to expand on its 2016 accomplishments and increase its ability to collaborate and create more opportunities for our region's students.

Formed three years ago and comprised of New College of Florida; Ringling College of Art and Design; State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota; the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee; FSU/The Ringling and Eckerd College, the C4 is a higher education collaborative that broadens educational experiences through unique but complementary programs, services and philosophies. This shared community cultivates the pursuit of knowledge and establishes our region as a destination for academic excellence.

A year ago our consortium received the support of a local foundation partnership, including the Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, and the Gulf Coast Community Foundation, greatly expanding our ability to pursue our initiatives. This community support demonstrated the belief in our concept and the potential of a collective higher education enterprise.

Now, in 2017, we welcome the Manatee Community Foundation to our partnership as we continue our efforts to enhance student experiences and market our region as an education destination.

We expect to double the number of students in our cross-registration program in the coming year. This innovative program allows students to take classes on a space-available basis at another institution while paying tuition and fees to their home campus. Students can pursue an elective course, such as a foreign language, not offered at their home institution, or a course that allows them to branch out into another area of interest. Cross registration allows our institutions to work in a complementary fashion instead of duplicating the same classes at each school.

In addition to providing academic opportunities, the C4 also seeks to enhance the collective "campus life" of our students. Events such as Ringling Underground on Feb. 2 bring our students together for live music and a collegial atmosphere.

Our faculties also will be encouraged to collaborate on research, grant opportunities, conferences and the pursuit of shared interests. The five-year, \$750,000 Mellon Foundation grant awarded to New College to support arts and humanities faculty collaboration is an early example of our consortium's potential.

Our career advisers will expand career and internship opportunities for our students. These advisers continue to focus on students from their own campus, but work collectively to refer students from other colleges and share opportunities with businesses and organizations in our region seeking local talent.

The Manatee Community Foundation — the C4’s newest partner — is supporting this career collaboration initiative through its Knight Donor Advised Fund. This contribution will make C4’s new talent connector tool a reality, ensuring that local students can connect with the opportunities that will keep their talents in Manatee and Sarasota counties.

This will be a year of expansion and collaboration for the C4, bringing countless benefits to our students as we build on our past success and continue to make this region an educational destination for Florida and the nation.

Dr. Carol Probstfeld is the president of State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota.



MORE OPINION COLUMNS & BLOGS

SUGGESTED FOR YOU

COMMENTS

0 Comments

Sort by Newest



Add a comment...

[Facebook Comments Plugin](#)



SPONSORED CONTENT

Live Like the Vanderbilts: Two Estate Hotels That Have It All

In the late 1800s, Biltmore Estate — and its main family home, the largest such residence in the United States — was built by George Washington...

By Biltmore
