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USF St. Petersburg and C1 Bank collaborate on new Banking Institute

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The University of South Florida St. Petersburg, C1 Bank, the Florida High Tech Corridor Council and Workforce Pinellas today announced an important new collaboration to develop innovative ways to teach key banking principles.

The USFSP Banking Institute, run by the College of Business, provides management training for the C1 Bank Management Associate Program at the bank's new headquarters in downtown St. Petersburg. The institute is financed through grants from C1 Bank, Work Force Pinellas and the Florida High Tech Corridor Council.

More than 100 employees work in the C1 Bank headquarters, located on the first floor of the *Tampa Bay Times* building. More workers are expected to be added as the bank expands across the state.

C1 Bank, with \$937M in assets as of December 31, 2012, has 21 locations across Tampa Bay and a loan production office in Miami.

The partnership is designed to ensure C1 Bank's continued excellence in staffing and customer service. The new course delivery system benefits both partners by training key bank associates while providing hands-on experience for USFSP students in mobile design, systems administration and instructional design and technology.

The Florida High Tech Corridor Council provided \$80,000 in matching funds toward development of the program. C1 Bank paid USFSP for the remaining development costs and for the faculty and operating costs of delivering the program.

Faculty and students from the USFSP College of Business developed a technology-based course delivery system to teach banking executives the key banking principles. Among the components of the program is the creation of an iPad based, web-interfaced learning system. The material is developed on the iBook platform using iAuthor from Apple and includes dynamic video, audio and demonstrations so that students can interact with the material. The system will also include a web-interface so that students have ready access to text, cases and the banking simulation.

“This is the kind of work that exemplifies USF St. Petersburg because it will benefit both students and an important community partner,” said USF St. Petersburg Interim Regional Chancellor Bill Hogarth.

C1 Bank CEO Trevor Burgess said the company is happy with its downtown location and its partnership with USF St. Petersburg. “We are thrilled to be in downtown St. Pete. The vibrancy of the city is a key ingredient in making it possible for C1 Bank to attract the best and brightest young talent,” said C1 Bank CEO Trevor Burgess. “The program has exceeded everyone’s expectations and has proved to be a huge success in providing real world training through education which is key to starting a successful career.”

C1 Bank President Katie Pemble added: “We are committed to maintaining the highest quality of employees and products to serve our clients. This unique collaboration with USF St. Petersburg enables us to accomplish that goal.”

Randy Berridge, President of the Florida High Tech Corridor Council (FHTCC), a critical partner in the collaboration, said: “Partnering with C1 Bank through our FHTCC Matching Grants Research Program exemplifies our best efforts to help attract, retain and grow high-tech industry in our 23 county Corridor region.”

Rick Baker, former USF Vice President for Economic Development, led the effort to bring C1 Bank and the USFSP College of Business together. “This is a win-win result,” he said. “It is exactly what universities and businesses need to be doing – collaborating in ways that grow jobs in our State and provide unique educational opportunities for our future generations.”

USFSP College of Business Dean Maling Ebrahimpour said the initiative underscores the university’s commitment to work with businesses in the community to grow the economy. “Florida has many thriving businesses and the USFSP College of Business wants to work with them,” Dr. Ebrahimpour said.

Local leaders also embraced the announcement.

“We are excited that C1 Bank is downtown and we are excited that USFSP is collaborating to help them grow and prosper,” said St. Petersburg Mayor Bill Foster.

Added Pinellas County Commissioner John Morroni: “Collaborations are the way to strengthen our business community. I applaud C1 Bank and USFSP on their efforts to come together to expand our job base.”

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