



The Don Ryan Center For Innovation (DRCI) Partners with the Savannah's College of Art and Design (SCAD); DRCI Will Teach Monthly Business Skills Seminars to Prospective Innovators

Starting in January, innovators and facilitators at the Don Ryan Center for Innovation will teach and facilitate monthly business skills seminars to students at the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD).

This partnership emerged after the DRCI's Board of Directors toured the school in October and both DRCI and SCAD representatives realized a partnership would provide students with business skill instruction as SCAD could introduce potential innovators to DRCI's resources.

"Bluffton's vision for the Don Ryan Center for Innovation is to be a conduit to improve the regional economy," David Nelems, executive director of the Don Ryan Center for Innovation, said. "This partnership is a perfect complement to our mission; the Center has access to creative minds who may be future business owners in our area and SCAD students can hone their business skills before graduating."

The first seminar, which will be free and open to all students, will be held January 22nd from noon to 2:30 p.m. The seminar will cover best practices, ideas, recommendations and personal experiences of how to begin as an entrepreneur while highlighting the basic stages of transforming one's idea into an enterprising business.

The seminar will be conducted by Executive Director David Nelems and Patricia Breen, a former Northern Virginia-based CEO and business development consultant. Breen, who has recently relocated to Bluffton, said she hopes the entrepreneurial course curriculum can be used for other schools, organizations and venues.

"The Don Ryan Center can provide the infrastructure for future innovators and we hope the SCAD partnership is the first of many," Breen said. "SCAD students personify today's economy; they are young, energetic and creative. They want to leave their professional fingerprint in the marketplace without the constraints and uncertainty of a corporate culture. However, they may also need to learn how to transform their craft into a paycheck; that's the bridge the Don Ryan Center can provide."

Media Release



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About the Don Ryan Center for Innovation:

The Don Ryan Center for Innovation is a private-public partnership between the Town of Bluffton and Clemson University Institute for Economic and Community Development. The Town of Bluffton was the first non-metropolitan municipality to partner with Clemson to advance regional economic development.

Located in the CareCore National building in Buckwalter Place, the Center provides regional start-up companies with consulting, resources and office space to accelerate their business growth. Currently, the Center has nine innovators. Since opening in May 2012, the Center has incubated 19 local companies. The current and graduate companies which have been a part of the Center collectively employ 64 people with an annual payroll of \$2,975,000.