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USFSP and Dali Museum to explore deepening ties

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USF St. Petersburg and the [Dali Museum](#) have entered into a formal memorandum of support aimed at deepening the ties between the two institutions located blocks apart along the downtown St. Petersburg waterfront.

The goal is to increase collaboration between the university and the museum across all disciplines the way Salvador Dali approached his work. Although Dali is best known as a surrealist painter, his interests were deep and broad, taking in film, photography, sculpture, science and more.

“The memorandum is a first step in formalizing the growing relationship between USF St. Petersburg and the Dali Museum,” said Norine Noonan, Ph.D., the university’s vice chancellor for academic affairs. She pointed out that students, faculty and staff already enjoy free admission to the museum, faculty members have given lectures there and museum staff have lectured in classes at USFSP.

“We believe the memorandum of support will benefit both institutions,” Noonan said.

The memorandum of support is the result of a series of faculty meetings over the past year led by Frank Biafora, dean of the USFSP [College of Arts and Sciences](#), and Hank Hine, executive director of the Dali Museum. Biafora said he was looking for ways to unite the curricula of the university’s three colleges – Arts and Sciences, [Business](#), and [Education](#) – and offer students unique and innovative learning experiences.

The discussions began over a hamburger lunch at a downtown St. Petersburg restaurant.

“On the hamburger a fried egg was perched, breaking the categories of the hard and the soft, breakfast and lunch, knowledge and culture, school and enjoyment,” Hine recalls. “That was our signal to begin this project, which has been so generously received by the faculties of the Dali and USFSP, by students and administrators.”

Biafora said he is excited about the possibilities. “The sky is the limit with this collaboration,” Biafora said. “This project, which we have dubbed ‘The Edge,’ is unlike anything we have done before and we don’t know exactly where we will end up. But the possibilities are energizing and our students will be the greatest beneficiaries.”

Biafora and Hine agree that fostering an interdisciplinary culture is essential today, in both academia and the global workplace.

Hine already is teaching an [honors course](#) this semester at the museum, with USFSP professors from all three colleges serving as guest lecturers. The subjects encompass math, media, psychology, history and art.

The liaison for the USFSP/Dali initiative will be Nathan Schwalger, entrepreneurship instructor and creative-in-residence at the College of Business. He said his goal is to “blur the lines between the two institutions and reduce the physical and mental barriers separating them.”

USF St. Petersburg students are studying ideas to physically join the adjacent campuses of USFSP and the Dali, such as stenciling campus sidewalks with Dali motifs.

Future steps include workshops on business innovation that harness the newest research in industrial psychology with Dali's creative methods, and a series of lectures at the museum by USFSP scholars called The Genius Next focusing on the latest research in their fields.