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USFSP HOSTS USF SYSTEM STEM SUMMIT

USF St. Petersburg hosted the third **USF System STEM Summit** on April 11. The interactive dialogue highlighted the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in careers and the business environment. The summit also featured leaders from companies like Tech Data, Citi, The Florida Aquarium, Southwest Florida Water Management District, Raymond James, Gehant & Associates, Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital, and Jabil.

As a key initiative of the **USF System STEM Collaborative**, the summit aims to assess the current state of STEM across the greater Tampa Bay area with regard to education, research, innovation, collaboration, and economic expansion. It also serves to determine ways to integrate the USF System with the community as a leader in STEM education and research, and to strengthen Florida's STEM workforce, situating the region as a hub for innovation in those high-demand fields.

"This summit focuses on two panel topics: the value and challenges of internships, and the skills students should be equipped with when leaving the university system," said **Heather Judkins**, assistant professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at USFSP. Judkins has served on the STEM Collaborative Steering Committee since 2014. Representatives from USFSP, USF, USFSM, St. Petersburg College, Eckerd College, New College of Florida, and the University of Tampa were on hand to discuss the importance and value of STEM internships.

"STEM-related careers represent some of the fastest-growing sectors of the U.S. job market," said Regional Chancellor Sophia Wisniewska. "This summit is timely as we develop instructional strategies to improve academic achievement and create a 'culture of STEM' at USFSP to meet a critical need for skilled employees."

This occasion marked the first time the USF System STEM Summit has been held at USFSP. The event previously was held in downtown Tampa and at USF.



From right: Ryan McNulty from Tech Data; Erica Litchfield from Citi; Debbi Stone from The Florida Aquarium; and Alicia Branon from Southwest Florida Water Management.

View more photos from the event in the [USFSP Facebook photo gallery](#).

From left: USF Assistant Vice Provost of Strategic Initiatives Peter Stiling, USFSP Regional Chancellor Sophia Wisniewska, USFSP Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences Heather Judkins, and Associate Professor of Mental Health Law & Policy Gregory Teague.

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