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Southeastern college administrators explore partnerships with Birmingham's leading tech employers

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – April 26, 2018 – The Birmingham Business Alliance (BBA) hosted leaders from 16 Southeastern colleges and universities on Friday at its inaugural Birmingham Tech Connect, an industry and higher education forum designed to increase awareness of Birmingham's technology ecosystem and build strategic partnerships to increase the local technology talent pipeline.

Academic deans, department chairs and employer relations specialists from some of the top tech programs in the Southeast participated in the event, including Alabama A&M University, Auburn University, Birmingham-Southern College, Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia State University, Miles College, Morehouse College, Samford University, Tuskegee University, University of Alabama, University of Alabama at Birmingham, University of Alabama in Huntsville, University of North Alabama, University of Tennessee, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and University of West Alabama.

Attendees visited a few of Birmingham's leading tech employers, including Shipt, Innovation Depot and Altec, to meet with chief information officers, talent acquisition leads and software developers to discuss partnerships that will help attract tech talent to Birmingham.

"Seeing Birmingham for the first time, I would never have guessed it was so forward-looking with a great, connected energy," said Dr. John Augusto, associate dean for strategic initiatives at the College of Arts and Sciences at Georgia State University. "Clearly the business and education community are in sync and wanting to achieve big goals. It's a great example of how a community can rally behind strong leadership and create a wonderful living, learning and thriving community."

The event concluded at Barber Motorsports Park, in conjunction with the Honda Indy Grand Prix, where academic leaders met with local employers and tech organizations, including TechBirmingham, BBVA Compass, Regions Bank, Protective Life Corp. and SterisIMS, to discuss how Birmingham companies can best brand themselves with soon-to-be graduates at their universities.

“The diverse gathering came at a pivotal time for us at Altec, as we are seeing a tremendous need for strong and local IT talent,” said Stacia Gaines, Altec’s talent acquisition manager. “With the varied group of individuals in attendance, we were able to walk away from the event with a number of new ideas for supporting the growth of technical talent for both the city of Birmingham, along with the growth of talent for Altec.”

Brittney Smith, manager of workforce development at the BBA, said events like this are important so that academic leaders can see all the city has to offer.

“Forming these strategic partnerships between industry and universities is important to attracting tech talent to Birmingham,” Smith said. “We are creating ambassadors for our city by providing these administrators positive and useful information about Birmingham – information straight from the companies that are hiring. They now have first-hand knowledge to advise students on where the jobs are and where they should consider launching their careers.”

The Birmingham Business Alliance is the lead economic development organization for the Birmingham region. For more information about the BBA visit its website at www.birminghambusinessalliance.com.

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