

5 things you may not know about Staten Island's new Technology Incubator



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STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- A Technology Incubator -- designed to help innovative tech-related startups get off the ground and find success -- recently opened in St. George.

The facility -- launched by the College of Staten Island -- is located at 60 Bay St. in St. George, and was able to get underway with \$500,000 in funding from the City Council.

"We are looking at a vision of St. George as a hub -- or a significant accumulation point for education and training in technology and innovation," said Michael Kress, CSI's vice president for economic development and technology systems.

The college is currently in the process of renovating the first floor of 120 Stuyvesant Pl, opposite Borough Hall. Work on the satellite location is expected to be complete for the fall 2016 semester.



College of Staten Island to offer classes in St. George

Here are five things you may not know about the new Technology Incubator:

SUMMERTIME AT THE INCUBATOR

The Technology Incubator is planning to host various events over the summer. There will be a focus on small business mentoring through lunchtime seminars. There are also plans for two to three hack-a-thons -- each one with a specific focus.

Details on these events are still being worked out, but Kress explained that one idea is to have a hack-a-thon activity focused on women.

"We want to offer opportunities for women to get involved on a business level..." Kress explained, adding that the goal is to offer opportunities for women to develop skill sets in careers related to technology fields.

WHAT'S A CORE MEMBERSHIP?

Starting in the fall, the Technology Incubator's core membership plan will allow startups to use the facility's space and resources full-time. Kress explained that the core membership will consist of a model in which the startup will follow a prescribed sequence of activities, working with various experts, including local business leaders and CSI faculty members.

Ideally, the incubator will have between 10 and 16 core members at a time, with the idea that each member can accomplish his or her goals and get on the road to success in six months to a year.

Why the time limit? "We have looked at other incubators which have similar time limit expectations and since we have limited space, we feel that this is a good place to start," explained Kress. "Our Incubator, itself, is in a start-up phase so we will be flexible with the time period and provide additional time to members who show significant promise for success and require it to accomplish their goals."

Additional membership levels consist of a drop-in option, in which entrepreneurs can stop in when they need a specific service, and a virtual option, in which members can access resources via computer.

THOSE INTERESTED NEED TO APPLY

With all of the resources the incubator has to offer, core membership is not open to everyone. Those interested must fill out an application, which will be reviewed by a committee made up of faculty and business leaders.

"We feel we can offer the resources of the incubator at an affordable rate," said Kress. "It is important that in that affordability we have a mechanism of diversity and complementary relationships between potential core members, and a sense of success in terms of can the potential business accomplish its goals with six months to a year."

SCHOLARSHIPS WILL BE OFFERED

While there will be a fee for membership (details on pricing have not been released), the Technology Incubator will also offer scholarships -- and each scholarship will have a focus.

A potential area of focus is self-sufficiency -- scholarship applicants would present startup ideas that would allow Staten Island to be self-sufficient during a disaster.

"We feel resiliency is important -- understanding how to develop new ideas and products that will help Staten Island in its resilience," explained Kress, who added that the incubator would have a particular interest in ideas that would give the borough self-sufficiency as an island in terms of catastrophic energy demand.

THERE ARE CHALLENGES

So, what sort of challenges must CSI face to find success with the Technology Incubator?

One of the biggest tasks, according to Kress, is aligning faculty members with potential entrepreneurs/inventors.

"We want to have a parallel process. ...," he said. "We'll review proposals for how they would work together ... how they would come together to help solve some of the challenging areas we have on Staten Island."



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