

Q&A

Greg Jones, Director of New Corporate Concierge Program, Talks about Future of Partnerships with the U

Greg Jones is the director of the U's new Corporate Concierge Program, which will help coordinate and promote partnerships between the university and companies. The U has many partnerships involving everything from internships to corporate sponsored research. Jones is also the associate director at the U's Scientific Computing and Imaging (SCI) Institute. He has years of experience working in government, universities and private industry.

Q: What is the mission of the Corporate Concierge Program?

The Concierge Program will help the University of Utah's corporate partners leverage the university's entire set of capabilities. From student scholarship and internship programs to engaging with student entrepreneurs or gaining access to some of the top researchers in the world to help companies create the next game-changing innovation, the U offers a variety of ways to help companies grow and succeed.

Q: How did the office get started?

We are really just forming the idea of the "corporate concierge" at the university. Senior administrators at the U wanted to find a way to increase the ease and efficiency of creating effective university cor-

porate relationships. One company might have three different relationships on campus with different departments, and some companies might want to get something specific from the university.

Sometimes licensing or contractual issues come up and companies have no idea who to talk to. We want to coordinate these partnerships and connect companies with the right resources.

Q: Why are corporate partnerships important for the U?

The University of Utah is an economic development engine. We want to keep the state innovating at a very high level. We want to keep our students educated right at the cutting edge with the companies so when they graduate they are ready to innovate with the companies and ready to work with the companies. We want to stay closely aligned with our community.

Q: What do you hope the office can accomplish?

The office is part outreach and

part coordination in three main areas. We are looking at workforce development — how do we make sure companies know what graduates are available? That's what the University of Utah provides

the state — a highly educated, highly effective workforce of young people with degrees. ... Second, universities are innovation hubs. We innovate, and we are looking at how to innovate with our

state's ecosystem and with companies nationally and internationally. ... The third area is how do we take existing relationships and how do we make them even better for the companies?

Q: How does this office compare to what the U has already been doing?

The U has a large number of partnerships, and the majority of those partnerships are very effective and won't change. The Concierge Program will attempt to steer companies to existing resources. It will also work to improve those

relationships where it makes sense. We want to explore deeper relationships with our corporate partners.

Q: What are your greatest hopes for the office?

We want to help make sure every student has a chance at an internship, which will help to achieve a high placement rate for graduates. We are also seeking to create a continuous stream of innovations to companies in our state and the U.S. We want every faculty member, if they want, to have the opportunity to get corporate sponsored research as part of their research portfolio. We also want to see the next generation of research centers, collaborating with industry, in Utah.

Q: Why is the U a unique place for innovation?

We have a world-class university in a relatively small state where everyone knows everyone. ... Every CEO in the state and every faculty member at a world-class university are two phone calls away.



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