

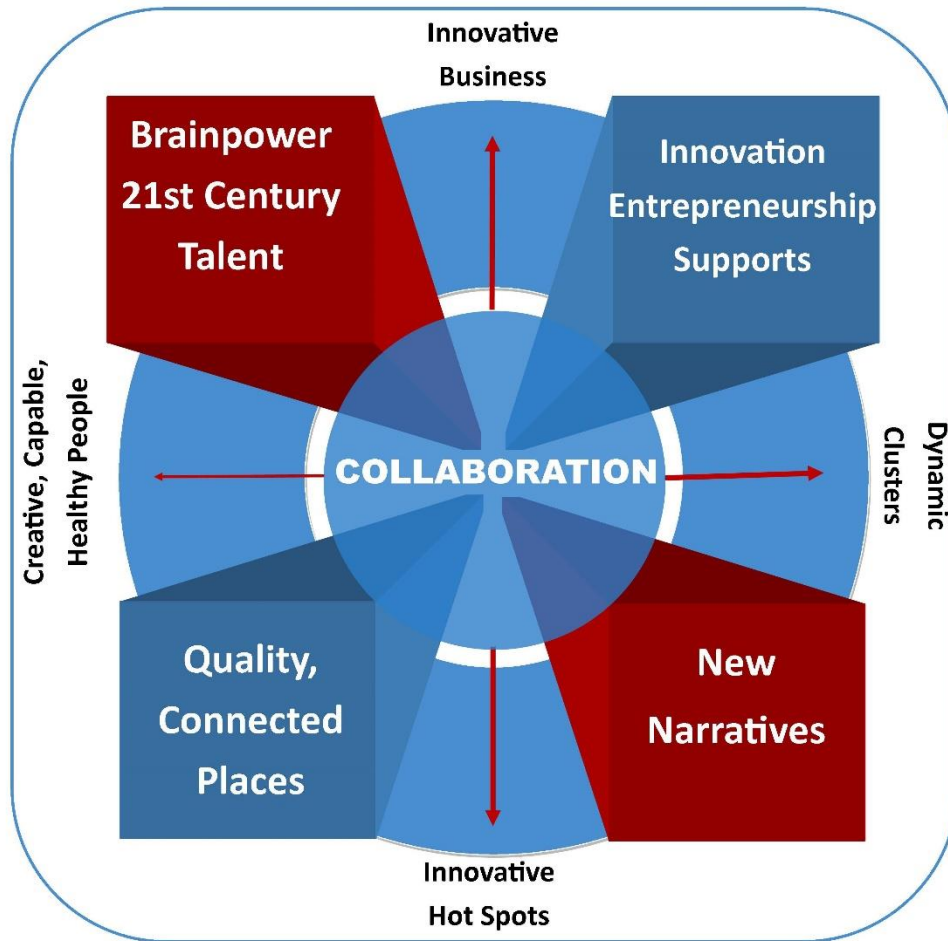


Northern Illinois University

Data-Driven Collaboration at the Regional Level: Economic and Workforce Development in Rockford, Illinois

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Creating a Thriving Region



Understanding the Current State of the Regional Economy and Workforce



- Identify regional industry clusters
- Place clusters in national/international context
- Engage with regional industry leaders
- Articulate evidence-based challenges and opportunities
- Connect the dots



Addressing the Challenges



- Industry partners report 50% of engineering workforce turning over in the next five years
- Student college and career readiness lacking in local public school outcomes
- Public education and safety issues make it difficult for companies to attract and retain talent
- Innovation and entrepreneurship efforts not well organized or supported



Maximizing the Opportunities



- Rockford region has more than 200 aerospace companies, including several Tier One providers
- Tier One and supply chain companies organized into Rockford Area Aerospace Network
- Federal grant helped energize collaboration around innovation, cluster branding, small business development and workforce development
- \$200 million Woodward expansion creates job and generates optimism



Collaboration Accelerators



- Develop a shared vision
- Inspire involvement of familiar leaders and nurture emerging leaders



- Tap into and transform functional networks
- Link and leverage resources and attract new resources as needed



Growing our Own Regional Engineering Workforce



**NIU &
RVC**

ENGINEERING OUR FUTURE
(be)tter together

- Higher education, industry and economic development leaders developed collaborative workforce development solution
- NIU baccalaureate completion program in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, delivered on the campus of Rock Valley College
- Guaranteed internship interviews and employment interviews with local industries
- Experiential learning and labs at local manufacturers
- Student support/pipeline development with local K-12 schools
- Industry partners leading \$6 million "Engineering Our Future" fundraising campaign (\$4.5 million pledged to date) for facility renovation, faculty and scholarships

Wait, there's more...



NIU EIGERlab Innovation Network

Innovation, acceleration and product development in the Northern Illinois Region



DMDII
ROCKFORD CHAPTER

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