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Graduates need reasons to stay put

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For recent area high school graduates, this time of year is when they get a taste of "the real world." But for many Cincinnati employers and families, this time is full of disappointment and dismay.

Too often, Cincinnati's best and brightest jump at the chance to leave our community behind.



A new collaborative effort, known as the Inter-Alliance of Greater Cincinnati, has emerged to expose the area's talented youngsters to job possibilities right in their back yard, particularly those that are technology-based. While the initiative is a good start, this is a challenge that deserves the support and commitment of every employer in the region.

Too Many Going Away Parties
Thousands of young adults are firming up plans to leave southwest Ohio at summer's end to pursue their college educations somewhere far away. Many do not even include Cincinnati in their list of prospective school choices. And of

those who leave, many never return.

Several news stories over the last few years have reported that the exodus of young adults from the Greater Cincinnati region may be among the highest in the United States. For instance, census data show that Hamilton County lost more Gen-Xers than any urban county in the Midwest in the 1990s.

This problem may be particularly acute in the technology domain. Much of the young talent that leaves Cincinnati mistakenly believes that there is a lack of technology jobs available in the market.

According to the Wall Street Journal, Cincinnati is home to more Fortune 500 corporations per capita than any other city in the nation. That alone should make the city competitive as students consider their future careers.

Taking Action

To keep Cincinnati an attractive market for companies that currently call it home, they must have access to educated and experienced technology employees. And in order to do that, we need to give young students a compelling reason to stay in southwest Ohio.

Grass-roots organizations, as well as Cincinnati City Council have spearheaded social and cultural initiatives to appeal to younger generations. But this campaign is far from over and additional support is needed.

What can the region's business community do? A new collaborative effort, known as the Inter-Alliance of Greater Cincinnati, is a good example of how businesses, educational institutions and other entities can come together to inspire today's youth and arm them with the tools necessary to prosper as the homegrown work force of tomorrow.

The InterAlliance is a collaborative effort that started with [Atos Origin](#), [Procter & Gamble Co.](#), and the [University of Cincinnati's](#) College of Business before expanding to organizations such as [Chiquita Brands International](#), [Cintas Corp.](#), [Fifth Third Bank](#), [Ethicon Endo-Surgery](#) and Toyota.

Next month, the partnering companies and organizations in the Inter-Alliance will be immersing students from six of Cincinnati's leading college-prep high schools in an IT careers camp that will provide students with a unique insider's view of local technology career opportunities and hands-on experience. During camp sessions, students will get tangible technology experience at local businesses and institutions, including:

- Behind-the-scenes tours and experiential encounters with such devices as the da Vinci surgery robot at the UC Experimental IT Center for Surgical Innovation.
- Using virtual reality to explore the impact of product design on consumer buying decisions at Procter & Gamble's Winton Hill Envision Center.
- Participating in simulations to solve real-world business problems with IT solutions at Cintas Corp.'s headquarters in Mason.
- Practicing on real surgery training simulators at Ethicon Endo-Surgery.
- Editing video footage using the latest computer technology at UC's College Conservatory of Music.

In addition to field trips and practical experience, students will be joined for lunch each day by a senior IT executive who will share information about the industry and offer perspectives about career opportunities throughout the Greater Cincinnati region.

The facts and statistics are already in our favor. Now let's capture the imaginations of our young people and put them in the driver's seat.

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