



## St. Cloud State to host Winter Institute on economics



**Vicki Ikeogu, vikeogu@stcloudtimes.com** 9:56 a.m. CST February 9, 2015

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Reaching out to the community is one of the main goals for event organizers behind the 53rd annual economics Winter Institute at St. Cloud State University.

With free and ticketed events, the two-day conference gives the general public access to information on economic conditions and issues facing Central Minnesota. It takes place Feb. 18 and 19.

"We are using this opportunity to branch out and to create a stronger outreach with the community," Winter Institute director and economics professor Ming Lo said.

New to the institute this year are themed breakout sessions to reach three different audiences during the Thursday morning portion.

"We are trying to pull in different people from different audiences and trying to bring more people to campus," Director of Economic Education at SCSU Cindy Fitzthum said. "In the past the institute has been very separate. It has been primarily focused on teachers and faculty members talking to each other."

With sessions focused on kindergarten through 12th-grade education, community engagement and public policy research, Fitzthum said the goal of this year's institute is to make it more like a full-fledged conference.

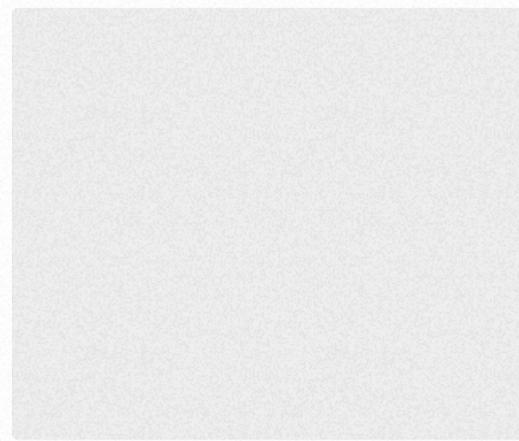
"In the past we did do K-12 teaching session, but now we are wanting to bring in more of the community," Fitzthum said.

"We are looking for topics that are related to issues that are topical or concerns in the community," Lo said.

Each of the three tracks will include two sessions, the first starting at 9 a.m. and the second starting at 10:30 a.m. Featuring discussions on topics such as transportation in children's literature, the effects of minimum wage on local businesses and the impact of homelessness in St. Cloud, each session will feature a speaker. All of the breakout sessions will require pre-registration and a ticket to enter.

After the sessions, a ticketed lunch featuring a panel of local business leaders will be held on the topic of job creation in Central Minnesota. That's followed by a free keynote address by University of Minnesota Professor of Civil, Environmental and Geo-engineering David Levinson .

Panelists at the noon to 1:30 p.m. luncheon include President of Seitz Stainless Jeff



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Haviland, Columbia Gear Corp. Human Resources Director Jim Hill, Electrolux Major Appliances North America Human Resources Director Lynn Mosely and C4 Welding Chief Executive Bob Sexton .

Levinson, a leading exporter in transportation, will speak from 2-3 p.m. with an hourlong question-and-answer session to follow. Admission to this portion of the Winter Institute is free and open to the public.

Thursday's portion will take place in the Atwood Memorial Center on the campus of SCSU. With the exception of the keynote speaker, all of Thursday's events will require pre-registration and a ticket to be admitted.

Follow Vicki Ikeogu on Twitter @VickiSCTimes or call her at 320-259-3662.

**If you go ...**

**Wednesday, Feb. 18**

- Economic Outlook presented by SCSU economist King Banaian and state economist Laura Kalambokidis.
- 5-6:30 p.m. at Best Western Kelly Inn.
- Free and open to the public.

**Thursday, Feb. 19**

- Ticketed breakfast, breakout sessions and lunch with panel discussion.
- Session one: 9-10:15 a.m.
- Session two: 10:30-11:45 a.m.
- Lunch and panel discussion: 12-1:30 p.m.
- Free keynote speaker presentation and question-and-answer session with professor David Levinson from 2-4 p.m.
- Location: Atwood Memorial Center, St. Cloud State University.

Those interested in attending the ticketed events should register at [www.stcloudstate.edu/winterinstitute](http://www.stcloudstate.edu/winterinstitute). The deadline for registration is Friday.

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