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For Immediate Release

SRNS partners with Winthrop University to spark talent pipeline

Recruiting, training and retaining the future of the Savannah River Site

AIKEN, S.C. – (March 21, 2024) – [Winthrop University](https://www.winthrop.edu/) faculty and staff recently toured the Savannah River Site (SRS) after signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) that supports SRS workforce development needs and missions.



SRNS Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer Sean Alford, Ph.D., shares career opportunities with Winthrop University faculty and staff during a tour of the Savannah River Site.

To date, SRNS officials have established MOUs with 15 local colleges, universities and veteran programs. In November 2023, Winthrop University and SRNS agreed to paid internships in information technology, cyber security, business operations and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

“SRNS seeks to bridge the gap between academic study and professional practice through this partnership,” said Sean Alford, Ph.D., SRNS Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer. “We are not only connecting with new candidates from Winthrop, but helping the entire institution increase their capacity. Together, we can build a stronger workforce to support key missions at SRS.”

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The visitors toured the SRNS Environmental Bioassay Laboratory and nuclear materials management and storage facilities. The tour focused on a broad range of SRS career disciplines, internships and potential collaborative opportunities for students and faculty.

“Witnessing the one-of-a-kind industrial architecture and historical dimensions of the Site was the highlight of my trip,” said Gregory Oakes, Ph.D., Winthrop University Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. “I gained a better understanding of the key skills and experience that SRS is looking for and can align our curriculum with existing missions and workforce needs.”

Sebastian van Delden, Ph.D., Winthrop University Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Professor of Computer Science, is looking forward to deepening relationships with SRNS after establishing the valuable MOU.

“Our forthcoming strategic plan has a significant focus on community and industry engagement, and providing more experiential learning so our students are ready for ‘real-world’ opportunities,” said van Delden. “We look forward to our partnership with SRNS in training the next generation of leaders in these fields and enhancing the talent pipeline. It’s a win-win for both organizations.”



Rachael Simon, Acting Manager for SRNS Talent Acquisition & HR Data and Analytics, right, shares internship information with Winthrop University visitors Willie Aiken, Department of Chemistry Operations Manager, left, and Kristi Westover, Ph.D., Department of Biology Chair.

Approximately 2,000 employees will be needed in a variety of occupations to support Pit Production Operations, an enduring mission projected to be in operation for a minimum of 50 years. Efforts to recruit, train and retain knowledgeable employees to support the Pit Production mission continues as SRS leadership establishes partnerships with additional educational institutions.

“We are constantly looking for ways to leverage the student pipeline within our region and state to support and accelerate the Pit Production mission and requirements from the Department of Energy,”

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said Erika Baeza-Wisdom, SRNS Deputy Vice President, National Nuclear Security Administration Plutonium Programs and Operations. “The creativity and innovation that Winthrop graduates could bring to the table will keep us on track to meet these goals.”

As part of the MOU agreement, SRNS donated \$5,000 to support students in Winthrop’s [Eagle-STEM Scholars Program](#). SRNS personnel remain active on Winthrop campuses, promoting on-site opportunities at career fairs and meetings. Winthrop’s Office of Career Development and Internships and SRNS will provide resume writing and interview preparation workshops for interested students.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, a Fluor and HII partnership company, is responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site, located near Aiken, South Carolina.

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