



The Textile Gateway - Connecting The Textile Industry To Students

February 19, 2024; Winter Park, Florida – The FabricLink Network (FLN) announces it is working with leaders in the textile industry to connect the industry to students through The Textile Gateway, and help find the next generation of leaders, innovators, and entrepreneurs.

Tom Swantko, FLN director of the Gateway program, explained, "The mission of The Textile Gateway is to educate and encourage students at all levels; to outreach and promote career paths in the industry; and, serve as a catalyst for future innovation."

FLN is overseeing the development of the program. However, the program is for the benefit of the textile industry and its success depends on the active support and participation of the industry as a whole. The Textile Gateway website will be launched in summer 2024.

The website will connect textile students with industry professionals, who share their knowledge and insights through videos, webinars, panel discussions, interviews, podcasts, and tours of textile facilities. Students will get a real world perspective regarding the changing needs of the industry and the skills necessary to be successful. The site will also encourage the industry to develop active relationships with universities through collaboration, mentoring and internships.

Outreach is also a primary focus. The industry and universities need to work together to help elementary and high school students learn about the textile industry and get excited about careers.

In the US States have Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and Family & Consumer Science (FACS) curriculum for middle & high school students, to develop basic skills and learn about a range of careers. However, these program often lack resources for textiles. So little is being done to educate young students about textiles and its many career paths.

The Textile Gateway outreach program will also extend to community colleges, and trade schools. Swantko added, "We've already met with administrators involved with CTE/FACS programs, who were excited to hear about what we are doing and want to know how they can help. There is a real opportunity to promote the textile industry."

Outreach is also required at universities. Swantko explained, "There is a growing need for science & engineering disciplines to be involved in the research & development of future textile innovations. Schools and the industry need to reach out and accommodate students, who never considered being involved with textiles."

At the recent Functional Fabric Fair in Portland, the FLN held two panel events on the mission of The Textile Gateway. Panelists from major suppliers, mills, design, and universities included: Parkdale Mills, Draper Knitting Company, Unifi, Schoeller, Active Sports Design & Consulting, Texbase, University of Oregon and Utah State. Information about the panels can be found [here](#).

Call to Action

For more information on The Textile Gateway and to find out how you can help, please contact Tom Swantko at toms@fabriclink.com. Additional information can also be found at [The Textile Gateway](#).

About The FabricLink Network

The FabricLink Network consists of two websites dedicated to the education, promotional and networking needs of the textile industry. FabricLink.com is trade to consumer education, and TheTechnicalCenter.com is a trade to trade site for the textile supply chain. Online for over 25 years, the sites contain over 1,500 pages of educational information and receive a combined 1 million annual visitors.

About The Textile Gateway

The FabricLink Network created the Textile Gateway with a mission to: connect students to textile industry professionals, who share their knowledge and insights through webinars, panels, video presentations, podcasts and facility tours; provide a means for the industry to collaborate with schools and convey a real world perspective of its needs to both schools and students; and, develop an outreach program to educate and promote careers in the textile industry to: elementary & high schools, trade schools, community colleges and communities at large.

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