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# The New Community Catalyst Team

## Strategic economics

By Jason Dehart

Mike Pate is jazzed about a new community-based study group hoping to change the way Tallahassee thinks about economic development.

The Knight Foundation – in conjunction with the Knight Creative Communities Group – has recruited approximately 100 local volunteers, known as the Tallahassee Community Catalyst Team, to put their thinking caps on.

“These people will be working with friends and neighbors in the community to try and understand what the issues in the community are,” said Pate, who is standing in the photo, addressing the team members.

One of the issues facing Tallahassee is that very few university graduates stay here after college. Pate said a study by economic theorist Richard Florida suggests that the economic engine of a city can change by doing the things that attract young, creative people – such as improving cultural amenities.

“Florida’s concept is to make sure that you have a community that has a sense of place for these young professionals,” Pate said.

The local group will create a strategic view of what Tallahassee should look like from an economic standpoint, Pate said.

“Then they will take that research and develop what we are calling a series of initiatives that will relate to this strategy that’s been developed,” he said. These initiatives will be developed over the course of a year.