



Universities As Economic Engines

Universities convene faculty, students, researchers, investors, entrepreneurs and others who can share ideas and dream up new ventures.

“As Idaho prepares to lead the nation out of this recession, public/private partnerships like this [Positron Systems, Inc. and Idaho State University’s Idaho Accelerator Center] will help drive our economic future.” – Idaho Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter

- Universities and medical centers – “eds and meds” – are more than just steadfast employers and major land developers. They are “the generators of development across the city,” coming to shape local economies through the research and activities they sponsor. Universities and research institutions support “networks of knowledge and entrepreneurship that create new products and processes.”
- Coupled with the stable incomes they provide and the cultural vibrancy they stimulate, it’s no surprise that universities have come to anchor many cities’ prospects for growth.
- Idaho State University research generates \$31 million per year in external funds from federal, state, and business sources. ISU’s College of Pharmacy – the only pharmacy school in Idaho – is one of the few in the nation that trains students in the area of nuclear pharmacy, where medical isotopes are prepared and used for diagnostic and treatment procedures.
- Association of American Medical Colleges has called for a 30 percent increase in the training and preparation of new physicians by 2015 to meet the U.S. demand.
- Retention of physicians is strongest when they receive both their medical school training and their residency training in the same state. “If students stay in one state for medical school and their residencies, there is an 80 percent chance that they will stay there.” [Medical Education Study Final Report submitted to Idaho State Board of Education by MGT of America, Inc.]
- Health care will be Idaho’s fastest-growing, largest and highest paying industry between now and 2016, with nursing and pharmacy as the hottest occupations.
- According to the Idaho Department of Labor, Idaho will need for more than 500 registered nurses every year through 2016. Pharmacists, medical technicians and therapists will also be in high demand, and more physicians and surgeons will be needed across the state.
- Idaho’s growth ratio of physicians per capita, a key indicator of physician access, is 49th in the U.S. – an indicator that Idaho makes inadequate investment in the health sciences.

- Although health care is becoming an increasingly important component of the economy, it is relatively underrepresented in the Idaho gross state product; Idaho ranks 35th in the nation in this important statistic – suggests that a disproportionate share of spending on health care is leaving the state rather than being retained in Idaho to help build the economy.
- Adverse economic impact can be based on health care dollars leaving Idaho as its residents choose care in other states and from the inability to fully participate in growing bio-tech industries.
- Idaho's economic vitality is directly linked to its ability to attract, retain and expand science and technology assets and leverage them for economic development.

