



**THE PARTNERSHIP FOR  
ECONOMIC PROGRESS**



*A partnership between the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and the President's Council, State Universities of Michigan.*



■ ■ ■ THE PARTNERSHIP FOR ECONOMIC PROGRESS

The Partnership for Economic Progress is a strategic alliance of Michigan’s 15 public universities and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). Created in recognition of the important role Michigan universities play in economic development, the Partnership’s purpose is to strengthen Michigan’s economy in an increasingly competitive workplace.

Michigan has made great strides in diversifying its economy and creating new jobs. The importance of the university community to the state’s economic well being is dramatically underlined in a study commissioned by MEDC and the Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan. It found that these four-year institutions annually contribute some \$39 billion to the state’s economy, returning \$26 for each dollar invested. Factored in are the impact on the economic base of business spin-offs and technology transfer from university to commercial sector. It includes spending by faculty, students and visitors and the higher earnings of those with college degrees.

While our universities traditionally have contributed significantly to the state’s economic growth, new partnerships could realize even greater economic impact. The Partnership will provide the framework to regularly assess progress and set goals to improve Michigan’s economy.

States with vibrant, entrepreneurial economies have a number of assets in common. Arguably the most significant is the presence of a university that serves as an incubator or laboratory producing ideas and people that create businesses, make investments and hire workers. Examples of

this exist across America in San Jose and Stanford University, Boston and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Raleigh/Durham Research Triangle and Duke University, the University of North Carolina and North Carolina State University.

Michigan’s economic future depends upon our ability to grow and expand existing businesses, as well as to attract businesses to relocate here. The Partnership for Economic Progress has embraced an aggressive agenda and will focus efforts in four areas to achieve its overall goals:

- Attracting and Retaining Superior Talent
- Commercialization of Ideas
- Supporting Entrepreneurial Culture
- Creating Entrepreneurial Infrastructure

**Public Universities of Michigan**

- Central Michigan University
- Eastern Michigan University
- Ferris State University
- Grand Valley State University
- Lake Superior State University
- Michigan State University
- Michigan Technological University
- Northern Michigan University
- Oakland University
- Saginaw Valley State University
- The University of Michigan - Ann Arbor
- The University of Michigan - Dearborn
- The University of Michigan - Flint
- Wayne State University
- Western Michigan University

■ ATTRACTING AND RETAINING SUPERIOR TALENT

Michigan’s economic base continues to diversify as technology-oriented firms expand or locate in our state. In addition, traditional industry sectors are diversifying and computerizing their work processes, employing more engineers, scientists and computer-literate employees.

Businesses must have smart, highly skilled workers to keep them competitive in the global marketplace. Universities are key to assuring a steady supply of knowledge workers. Tracking of migration patterns shows that Michigan is retaining more than 79 percent of its graduates in the emerging high-tech industries, a success rate attained by only 10 other states. The Partnership will continue to work on strategies to attract more students to attend our universities and enroll in high-tech fields of study.

## ■ COMMERCIALIZATION OF IDEAS

A strong economy depends on the creation of new products and businesses, and universities often generate the crucial research needed to support such success. The Partnership for Economic Progress has conducted a benchmarking study on technology transfer, comparing Michigan's public universities against both national averages, and universities considered to be best-in-class for technology transfer. Findings of the study indicate that Michigan universities are, in aggregate, on par with national averages using measurements from the Association of University Technology Managers. But being average or on par is not where we strive to be in Michigan; we set our sights higher and benchmark ourselves against those universities considered best-in-class. When compared to those universities considered best-in-class for tech transfer, Michigan has more to accomplish. Michigan universities recognize the need for improvement and are committed to becoming best-in-class. The MEDC is aiding in this effort by providing university technology transfer support through various grant and funding initiatives. The Partnership will continue to explore ways to accelerate commercialization through annual workshops, recognition programs and continuous benchmarking.

## ■ SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE

Another focus of the Partnership for Economic Progress is to create an entrepreneurial environment in the state. The Partnership will serve as a framework to promote necessary networking between universities, state and local government, private companies and venture capitalists.

One example is the Great Lakes Entrepreneur's Quest (GLEQ), now in its third year, a real-world business plan competition and training vehicle for the next generation of technology leaders. It awards a total of \$175,000 in prizes and involves nearly every major venture capital fund in the state. To date, more than half of the state's universities are sponsoring GLEQ training, mentoring and coaching activities around the state, on campus and by interactive video conferencing.

## ■ CREATING ENTREPRENEURIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

In order to support the development of an entrepreneurial environment, a favorable infrastructure is critical. The Partnership for Economic Progress is working to enhance the efforts already begun for this purpose. Programs such as the Michigan Life Sciences Corridor<sup>SM</sup> and SmartZones<sup>SM</sup> will stimulate the growth of technology-based jobs by aiding in the creation of recognized clusters of new and emerging businesses primarily focused on commercializing ideas, patents, and other opportunities surrounding university or private research institute R&D efforts.

Another effort in this direction is the Michigan Entrepreneurship Education Network created to strengthen entrepreneurship education. University of Michigan's Zell Lurie Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies will assess and benchmark entrepreneurial education programs in Michigan and develop new program templates, foster collaboration with universities and high-tech clustering SmartZones, and administer a new University Entrepreneurship Program Development Fund.

## ■ CONCLUSION

The role of the universities is integral in our state's economic success. The Partnership for Economic Progress will help strengthen Michigan's economy ensuring that the Great Lakes States is recognized as a leader in the 21st Century.



State Universities of Michigan

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