



MISSISSIPPI STATE
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APLU recognizes MSU for innovation, economic development

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STARKVILLE, Miss.--A new designation from a national organization further affirms the unique role Mississippi's flagship research university plays in economic development throughout the state and beyond.

On Wednesday [June 24], the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities and its Commission on Innovation, Competitiveness and Economic Prosperity (CICEP) recognized Mississippi State as an Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) University.

After an intensive review process, the APLU identified MSU and other IEP institutions for "working to advance the engagement and economic well-being of their states, regions, and the nation."

"Public universities serve as economic engines for their local communities and states by conducting cutting edge research to reach new breakthroughs, and by developing the talent to help existing businesses grow stronger and enabling new ones to develop and thrive," APLU President Peter McPherson said.

"The 18 institutions in the 2015 class of Innovation and Economic Prosperity Universities serve as wonderful models of how public research universities extend beyond their campuses to engage their communities in economic development that create jobs and improve lives," he said.

Mississippi State is among 18 leading universities receiving the 2015 Innovation and Economic Prosperity University designation, and one of only two Southeastern Conference institutions in the third-annual class.

Economic development is an integral part of MSU's tri-fold mission of teaching, research and service, according to President Mark E. Keenum.

"Mississippi State University's research enterprise and economic development outreach programs are vital to the growth and sustainability of our state's economy," he said.

Since the late 1990s, the university has worked closely with local, state and federal officials to help recruit industries and domestic and international investments to the Magnolia State.

"We have had a number of high-profile success stories, including Nissan, Toyota, Yokohama Tire, American Eurocopter, PACCAR, GE-Aviation, Stark Aerospace and Aurora Flight Sciences," Keenum said.

The land-grant institution's central economic development objective is to strengthen collaborations between the university, economic development organizations and businesses to create high-wage jobs and to leverage its robust research activities through increasing licensing agreements and building other profitable relationships with both existing industries and university startup companies, according to MSU's chief research officer.

"Our research enterprise is creating jobs, enhancing quality of life and providing real world opportunities for our students, who are the next generation of innovators, inventors and leaders," said David Shaw, vice president for research and economic development.

"We are working to provide opportunities for our research to be utilized by business and industry to create jobs and economic opportunities that benefit all of us," he said.

Additionally, the university is home to the Thad Cochran Research, Technology and Economic Development Park -- the state's largest research park and a research- and innovation-based economic development hub, according to Kathy Gelston.

"Cochran Research Park complements all of our other efforts," the associate vice president for corporate engagement and economic development said.

The 272-acre park is a joint venture of the City of Starkville, Oktibbeha County and the university, with the MSU Research and Technology Corporation responsible for day-to-day management. The park is home to more than 1,500 employees, 12 buildings and a diverse lineup of tenants, including private businesses, start-up companies, government offices and research centers and institutes.

A recent expansion added an additional 45 acres complete with roads, dual-fiber capabilities and utilities.

"There's nothing else like the park anywhere in Mississippi, and it is a significant economic development resource for our state," Gelston said.

Applications for the IEP designation were scored by a panel of reviewers representing other universities and also national partners, including the Association of University Research Parks, the Association of University Technology Managers, the Biotechnology Industry Organization, the Business Higher Education Forum, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Innovosource, the Lemelson Foundation, the University Economic Development Association, the National Association of System Heads and VentureWell, the APLU noted.

Scoring was based on a range of criteria emphasizing universities' development of their economic engagement enterprise, their planning efforts around economic engagement, strategic communications around these efforts, and participation in encouraging economic engagement among peer institutions.

Representing 238 public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and related organizations, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities is the nation's oldest higher education association with member institutions in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, four U.S. territories, Canada, and Mexico. Annually, APLU member campuses enroll 4.8 million undergraduates and 1.3 million graduate students, award 1.2 million degrees, employ 1.4 million faculty and staff, and conduct \$41.4 billion in university-based research. For additional information about the APLU, visit <http://www.aplu.org>.

As the state's flagship research university, MSU is a recognized leader in a number of fields, and well known for productive partnerships, real-world impact, and offering undergraduate and graduate students unique research opportunities. In FY 2013, MSU's research and development expenditures totaled \$206 million -- representing nearly half of all R&D by higher education in the state, according to National Science Foundation data.

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