

Sherry Bates, President, Scranton
Greta Rouse, President Pro Tem, Emmetsburg
Robert Cramer, Adel
Nancy Dunkel, Dyersville
Lucy Gipple, New Sharon
Christine Hensley, Des Moines
JC Risewick, Johnston
Kurt Tjaden, Bettendorf

Mark J. Braun, EdD, Executive Director

November 14, 2025

Mr. Charlie Smithson
Secretary of the Senate
State Capitol Building
Des Moines IA 50319

Ms. Meghan Nelson
Chief Clerk of the House
State Capitol Building
Des Moines IA 50319

Tim McDermott, Director
Legislative Services Agency
State Capitol Building
Des Moines IA 50319

Dear Members of the Iowa General Assembly:

Pursuant to Iowa Code and Iowa Acts, the enclosed annual report includes information from the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, the University of Northern Iowa, and their respective research foundations as follows:

Iowa Code §262B.3(3)

Patents and Licenses for FY 2025

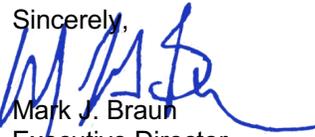
2025 Senate File SF645 §11
2025 Iowa Acts, Ch. 155.11
2017 Iowa Acts, Ch. 169.32
2017 Iowa Acts, Ch. 169.17

Activities, Projects, and Programs Funded with
Board of Regents Innovation Fund Approp,
Technology Commercialization, Entrepreneurship,
Regional Development, and Market Research
Report

Collectively, in FY 2025, the three Regent universities provided \$1.291 billion dollars in total sponsored funding to the state of Iowa, including \$626.9 million from competitive federal grants and awards. The Regent universities aid businesses and start-up companies across Iowa. The numbers fluctuate on an annual basis, but generally have been stable over several years.

In FY 2025, there were 3,490 employees in the 235 companies located in the university research parks and incubators, 189 license and option agreements on institutional intellectual property were executed, and 156 patents were awarded. For FY 2025, the Iowa General Assembly appropriated nearly \$13.5 million in total funding for economic development, technology transfer and commercialization of research to the three universities.

If you have any questions or need more information, please don't hesitate to contact this office.

Sincerely,

Mark J. Braun
Executive Director

\\Box Sync\Board of Regents Shared\BF\Legislative\2025 session\Reports\

Attachments

ANNUAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER REPORT

Action Requested: Receive the report.

Full Reports Available: The FY 2025 annual reports from the University of Iowa (UI), Iowa State University (ISU) and the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) are available on the Board of Regents website and will be provided to the General Assembly, Governor's Office, Legislative Services Agency and the Iowa Economic Development Authority as required by law.

Executive Summary: Iowa's three public universities collaborate with business and industry and with each other to foster success for economic development and entrepreneurship efforts in Iowa. They significantly impact Iowa daily and demonstrate to the public the value of research through research-based expertise and business assistance directly to Iowa's people, industry and communities in all 99 counties. Conducting academic research also results in intellectual property discoveries and innovations available to business, industry and the marketplace; and it provides Iowa with an educated workforce. Research and scholarship from faculty and staff at the Regent universities often lead to the discovery of innovations that can improve the quality of life for people in the state, the nation, and worldwide.

The Regent universities research and economic activities outlined in their reports meet the Board of Regents Strategic Plan, Priority 2, Objective 2.3: The Regent Enterprise will build strategic collaborations among universities and with outside entities to foster opportunities for innovation and economic development. Each institution shall report annually on significant partnership and/or collaboration activities. This includes both quantitative and qualitative metrics that demonstrate the impact of these activities.

FY 2025 Highlights: Collectively, in FY 2025, the three universities provided \$1.291 billion dollars in total sponsored funding to the state of Iowa, including \$626.9 million from competitive federal grants and awards. The Regent universities work diligently to develop breakthroughs that help to improve Iowa's economy through economic development, technology transfer and commercialization of research. The Regent universities faculty and researchers compete with other faculty and researchers from around the world to win this funding for their work. Students are the beneficiaries of this hard work as they get hands-on experience participating in this research.

Externally sponsored projects supplement the instruction, research, scholarship and public services provided by the Regent universities. These funds do not supplant state general fund dollars. This is true for all external funding (federal or non-federal) because it is required by federal regulation that external funds shall supplement and not supplant state dollars.

The Regent universities aid Iowa businesses and start-up companies across Iowa. The numbers fluctuate on an annual basis, but generally have been stable over several years. In FY 2025, there were 3,490 employees in the 235 companies located in the university research parks and incubators, 189 license and option agreements on institutional intellectual property were executed, and 156 patents were awarded. These numbers only tell part of the story. The value added by aiding licensees and startup companies as they take these typically early-stage research ideas and turn them into revenue is not reflected. In addition, information on revenue from licensed patents is only collected during the patent term, which results in an underreporting of revenue generated from products that contain university technology. Nonetheless, these

statistics reflect excellent performance when compared to similar institutions and reflect the economic value the Regent universities provide to the State of Iowa.

The below charts show the combined statistics for the three universities over the past five fiscal years. See the chart at end of the docket item for the details from each university.

Licenses, Intellectual Property and Patents	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Patent applications filed	239	284	289	253	257
Patents awarded	158	150	158	150	156
Disclosures of intellectual property	256	197	215	201	209
Total license and option agreements executed on institutional intellectual property	96	84	136	56	111
License and option agreements executed on institutional intellectual property in Iowa	30	16	27	21	23
License and option agreements yielding income	217	208	201	215	189
Revenue to Iowa companies as a result of licensed technology	\$6.9 M	\$12.1 M	\$11.5 M	\$13.2 M	\$32.2 M
Royalties and license fee income	\$4.8 M	\$6.5 M	\$5.3 M	\$5.3 M	\$6.1 M

Companies	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Total startup companies formed through licensing activities	15	5	7	8	4
Startup companies formed in Iowa through licensing activities	12	3	6	8	4
Startup companies formed through UNI assistance	107	98	75	107	77
Companies in research parks and incubators	277	274	287	272	235
New companies in research parks and incubators	73	95	102	85	60
Employees in companies in research parks and incubators	3,266	3,231	3,828	3,956	3,490

Income and Funding	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Total sponsored funding	\$1.449 B*	\$1,515 B	\$1.277 B	\$1.390 B	\$1.291 B
Sponsored funding from federal grants	\$790.3 M*	\$617 M	\$687.8 M	\$632 M	\$626.9 M
Total corporate-sponsored funding	\$159.8 M	\$199.9 M	\$203.0 M	\$229.3 M	\$175.9 M
Corporate-sponsored funding in Iowa	\$20.59 M	\$27.6 M	\$32.6 M	\$30.9 M	\$24.5 M

*FY 2021 sponsored funding includes federal Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (COVID Relief) funding

State Appropriations: Stable state dollars allow the Regent universities to grow Iowa's economy. In many cases sponsored projects, including many federally sourced projects, require cost share (match) funds so that the sponsor and the university have a financial stake in the project. In order to provide cost share, some state dollars are used and in doing so the Regent

universities are able to make every state dollar have twice, and sometimes more, of an impact on the university's instruction, research and public service.

Additionally, federal agencies will only invest in institutions that are financially healthy, compliant with federal regulations that have cutting edge technology and instrumentation, robust public service portfolios, and that have top-tier scholars and researchers. State funding supplies these resources, allowing the Regent universities to attract federal and non-federal funds so that every state dollar invested in the Regent universities has double or more of an impact on Iowa's communities and economy.

For FY 2025, the Iowa General Assembly appropriated nearly \$13.5 million in total funding for economic development, technology transfer and commercialization of research to the three Regent universities, which was the same amount as the FY 2024 state appropriation. The two state general fund appropriations for FY 2025 totaling nearly \$4.4 million, are divided as follows:

- Nearly \$4.0 million to ISU and UI for the biosciences innovation program (divided \$2,963,995 to ISU and \$1,000,000 to UI), which is the same as FY 2024. The funding continues the four bioscience platforms identified in the TEconomy report where Iowa has the greatest likelihood of achieving a differentiated leadership position to grow and diversify the state's economy: biobased chemicals, precision and digital agriculture, vaccines and immunotherapeutics, and medical devices. The funding will facilitate technology transfer, incubate start-ups and accelerate technology transfer, attract external funding and provide innovation ecosystem services, and develop a skilled workforce.
- \$394,321 to UNI for Metal Casting Center's foundry 4.0 initiatives related to investment castings technology, automation, IoT sensors, and industry support, which is the same as FY 2024. This program was initially funded at \$400,000 in FY 2020.

The remaining \$9.1 million is allocated to the Regent universities from the Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund (SWJCF):

- \$3 million to the Regents Innovation Fund, which is used in the areas related to technology commercialization, marketing, entrepreneurship, business growth, and infrastructure projects and programs needed to assist in implantation of activities under Iowa Code chapter 262B (Commercialization of Research). The Regent universities invest the funds received from the legislature in opportunities that yield successful startups, innovative business assistance, and critical research leading to commercialization. The universities are required to match the funding on a one-to-one basis from non-state resources. Research grants, private investors or companies interested in a project, and other university funds are often used as match dollars. The legislation divides the funding as follows: 35% to UI, 35% to ISU, and 30% to UNI.
- \$2 million to UI for implementing the entrepreneurship and economic growth initiative. The appropriation is used to expand public/private partnerships and programming through the Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center.
- \$209,279 to UI for the UI Research Park, Technology Innovation Center and UI Pharmaceuticals (formerly Advanced Drug Development program). UI must direct expenditures for research toward projects that will provide economic stimulus for Iowa and emphasize providing services to Iowa-based companies.
- \$2.42 million to ISU for small business development centers, the ISU Research Park and the Center for Industrial Research and Service. At least \$735,728 must be allocated for purposes of funding small business development centers. ISU is to direct expenditures for research toward projects that will provide economic stimulus for Iowa and emphasize

providing services to Iowa-based companies. The industrial incentive program must focus on Iowa industrial sectors and seek contributions and in-kind donations from businesses, industrial foundations, and trade associations, and that money for the Center for Industrial Research and Service industrial incentive program can only be allocated for projects which are matched by private sector money for directed contract research or for nondirected research. The match required of small businesses for directed contract research or for nondirected research shall be \$1 for each \$3 of state funds. The match required for other businesses for directed contract research or for nondirected research shall be \$1 for each \$1 of state funds. The match required of industrial foundations or trade associations shall be \$1 for each \$1 of state funds.

- \$1.47 million to UNI for the Metal Casting Center and Foundry 4.0 Centers, Family Business Center, the Center for Business Growth and Innovation, and the Institute for Decision Making. UNI must direct expenditures for research toward projects that will provide economic stimulus for Iowa and emphasize providing services to Iowa-based companies.

Annual Report Highlights

The University of Iowa secured \$705.6 million in external funding in FY 2025, including \$533.7 million in funds to support research, scholarship and creative activities at the university. The federal government remained the strongest supporter of the institution, totaling \$300 million, or 43 percent of external funding. University of Iowa scholars secured support for more than 2,300 projects in FY 2025, pursuing research aimed at developing cancer treatments and patient care, advancing brain science and mental health, and building healthier and more resilient Iowa communities.

Iowa State University secured \$549.3 million in total external funding for FY 2025, an increase of \$4.7 million over the previous year. ISU researchers attracted \$329.9 million to support their projects, the third straight year of more than \$300 million. The research support over FY 2025 included record funding from three federal agencies: the Department of Energy for university projects and the Ames National Laboratory (\$125.2 million), the National Science Foundation (\$45.3 million), and the Department of Transportation (\$10.1 million). Entities like the ISU Research Park, CIRAS and the Small Business Development Center also made a huge impact by helping hundreds of companies last year in some fashion.

The University of Northern Iowa provided economic development assistance to all of Iowa's 99 counties for the 26th consecutive year. UNI's economic development outreach programs are housed in the Business and Community Services (BCS) division and work toward supporting UNI strategic goal 3, to "Empower Communities to Shape Their Future." Since 2000, BCS has engaged the entire university community in its outreach efforts, including faculty, staff, students and alumni – all of whom play a critical role in Building a Better Iowa. Unique client interaction in FY2025 was 4,662, a record high for BCS outreach centers and programs.

Indicators	FY 2021				FY 2022				FY 2023				FY 2024				FY 2025			
	ISU	SUI	UNI	Regents Total	ISU	SUI	UNI	Regents Total	ISU	SUI	UNI	Regents Total	ISU	SUI	UNI	Regents Total	ISU	SUI	UNI	Regents Total
Number of disclosures of intellectual property	144	101	11	256	82	103	12	197	130	72	13	215	101	87	13	201	101	95	13	209
Number of patent applications filed	114	123	2	239	94	188	2	284	112	175	2	289	129	121	3	253	131	124	2	257
Number of patents awarded	50 US only; 71 total	86	1	158	69	80	1	150	97	59	2	158	64 US only; 79 total	69	2	150	48-US only; 58 total	97	1	156
Number of license and option agreements executed on institutional intellectual property in total	47	47	2	96	34	48	2	84	87	47	2	136	25	29	2	56	57	53	1	111
Number of license and option agreements executed on institutional intellectual property in Iowa	22	7	1	30	10	5	1	16	14	12	1	27	13	7	1	21	18	14	1	23
Number of license and option agreements yielding income	118	87	12	217	113	83	12	208	113	76	12	201	111	92	12	215	108	71	10	189
Revenue to Iowa companies as a result of licensed technology	\$1.7 million	\$1.1 million	\$4.1 million	\$6.9 million	\$5.5 million	2.32 million	\$4.3 million	12.1 million	\$3.0 million	\$4.0 million	\$4.5 million	\$11.5 million	\$3.6 million	\$4.4 million	\$5.2 million	\$13.2 million	\$15.3 million	\$12.4 million	\$4.5 million	\$32.2 million
Number of startup companies formed, in total (through licensing activities)	8	6	1	15	1	3	1	5	1	5	1	7	5	2	1	8	1	2	1	4
Number of startup companies formed, in Iowa (through licensing activities)	8	3	1	12	1	1	1	3	1	4	1	6	5	2	1	8	1	2	1	4
Number of startup companies formed through UNI assistance	--	--	107	107	--	--	98	98	--	--	75	75	--	--	107	107	--	--	77	77
Number of companies in research parks and incubators	134	124	19	277	142	112	20	274	159	105	23	287	146	108	18	272	132	91	12	235
Number of new companies in research parks and incubators	35	23	15	73	45	42	8	95	48	42	12	102	24	54	7	85	15	37	8	60
Number of employees in companies in research parks and incubators	1,913	1,266	47	3,266	1,945	1,253	33	3,231	2,491	1,300	37	3,828	2,651	1,283	22	3,956	2,483	1,027	25	3,490
Royalties and license fee income	\$2.9 million	\$1.81 million	\$63,400	\$4.8 million	\$2.8 million	\$3.65 million	\$35,600	\$6.5 million	\$3.1 million	\$2.16 million	\$49,068	\$5.3 million	\$3.0 million	\$2.3 million	\$68,810	\$5.3 million	\$4.5 million	\$1.6 million	\$33,200	\$6.1 million
Total sponsored funding	\$559.1 million*	\$818.04 million*	\$72.4 million*	\$1.449 billion*	\$601.7 million	\$867.2 million	\$46.5 million	\$1.515 billion	\$530.5 million	\$704.1 million	\$42.7 million	\$1.277 billion	\$544.6 million	\$811.0 million	\$35.1 million	\$1.390 billion	\$549.3 million	\$705.5 million	\$36.3 million	\$1.291 billion
Sponsored funding from federal grants	\$303.5 million*	\$431.3 million*	\$55.5 million*	\$790.3 million*	\$251.7 million	\$343.1 million	\$22.2 million	\$617 million	\$261.3 million	\$366.3 million	\$20.2 million	\$647.8 million	\$298.7 million	\$314.3 million	\$19 million	\$632 million	\$303.0 million	\$300.2 million	\$23.7 million	\$626.9 million
Corporate-sponsored funding in total	\$51.5 million	\$107.1 million	\$1.2 million	\$159.8 million	\$62 million	\$136.6 million	\$1.27 million	\$199.9 million	\$67.6 million	\$134.2 million	\$1.22 million	\$203.0 million	\$70.5 million	\$157.7 million	\$1.12 million	\$229.3 million	\$55.3 million	\$119.6 million	\$1.03 million	\$175.9 million
Corporate-sponsored funding in Iowa	\$12.2 million	\$7.49 million	\$900,000	\$20.59 million	\$18.8 million	\$8 million	\$800,000	\$27.6 million	\$22.8 million	\$8.8 million	\$950,000	\$32.6 million	\$19.4 million	\$10.7 million	\$825,000	\$30.9 million	\$15.1 million	\$8.57 million	\$781,000	\$24.5 million

* FY 2021 total sponsored funding includes CARES Act: Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (COVID Relief) funding

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

FY25 ANNUAL ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY
TRANSFER REPORT TO BOARD OF
REGENTS, STATE OF IOWA

PRESENTED BY:

David Spalding
Vice President, Office of Economic Development and Industry Relations
October 1, 2025

Iowa State University

Annual Economic Development and Technology Transfer Report – FY2025

Iowa State University exemplifies the land-grant ideals of putting science, technology, and human creativity into the Iowa economy, and the world. In Iowa, Iowa State's Economic Development and Industry Relations (EDIR) team in partnership with Iowa State Vice President of Research (VPR) and Iowa State Extension are focused on innovation and economic prosperity in all 99 Iowa counties.

Economic development is a top priority at Iowa State, and the university is proud of the impact it has on both the lives of its students and our state economy. Iowa State's economic development programs, services and initiatives contribute to the overall positive net impact the university creates on Iowa's business community and the return on investment it generates for students, taxpayers, and society. President Wendy Wintersteen's Innovation and Entrepreneurship Initiative has embedded innovation and entrepreneurship more deeply into our culture and curriculum across every college. This has amplified our teams' work across campus, brought additional exposure to the state and region, and attracted new business to Iowa: from home-grown entrepreneurs, to existing and new Iowa-based companies, to international collaborators seeking resources and spaces to test their products and grow.

Iowans can count on Iowa State to serve as a trusted resource, using our core strengths— innovation, science-based extension and outreach, research, and education. Our economic development, entrepreneurship, and innovation efforts repeatedly are recognized nationally and globally.

EDIR consists of the following key university economic development units that provide integrated and comprehensive business, technical, entrepreneurial support, and educational services to Iowa State's clients and partners:

- Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS)
- Iowa State University Research Park (ISURP)
- Office of Innovation Commercialization (OIC)
- Iowa's Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)
- Pappajohn Center for Entrepreneurship (JPEC)

EDIR's core units are focused on innovation and economic prosperity for all 99 Iowa counties. They are also focused on collaboration, working closely with colleagues at Iowa State Extension, and the Vice President for Research office. EDIR was designed as a one-stop shop for businesses and entrepreneurs who want to work with Iowa State. As it has matured as an organization, the groups above, and others across campus collaborate in a team-based engagement model to serve the needs of businesses proactively and strategically. There are countless ways for businesses, founders, and innovators to engage with Iowa State and the entities in EDIR, VPR and Iowa State Extension are many times the starting point. Our focus is on initiating, broadening, and strengthening these interactions into meaningful engagement opportunities across campus for the betterment of the state economy.

We have been recognized both nationally and globally for our work in Economic Development and innovation. Iowa State won the 2023 Innovation and Economic Prosperity Connection Award from the

Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, which is their top award for Economic Development. This is our fifth award from the group in the last eight years.

Financially, Iowa State has a major impact on the Iowa economy. This is backed up by an analysis of Iowa State University's economic impact on the state of Iowa for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022.

- Iowa State produced a \$5 billion impact that year.
- Iowa State supports 57,142 jobs – or 1 out of every 36 jobs in Iowa.
- ISU research spending and activities created a net total of \$235.3 million in added income for the state economy.

We are one of the leading research universities in the United States. Last year Iowa State ranked in the top 3% in research funding among all universities that don't have a medical school. Our students benefit from studying at a major research university because the faculty who teach them need to be at the leading edge of their fields, and they bring that knowledge back into the classroom. Many of those researchers also get engaged in industry research projects. Areas where we engage with companies include:

WORKFORCE: Iowa State graduated more than 8,000 students this past academic year, and we provide more graduates who stay in Iowa than any other university. We work closely with industry to meet their hiring needs and achieve successful placement outcomes. Our teams partner with businesses to meet their needs by developing workforce pipeline programs, internship opportunities, speaking opportunities, engaging with student organizations, and positioning them to reach graduates at every level of their time at Iowa State. Many companies utilize our research park as a workforce training hub and innovation office to help them retain interns and to serve as a continuing pipeline into workforce. We also work with corporate partners on continuing education outside of our traditional graduate programs; through immersion programs, bootcamps, custom education, and certification training courses.

RESEARCH: Typically aligned with meeting workforce needs as an entry point, research is also a driving force behind economic development at Iowa State. Our team-based engagement approach allows businesses to access a wide range of researchers and connect with services to help businesses grow and thrive, oftentimes after they have realized a return on their investment through workforce pipelining. Multiple businesses have set up innovation and technical scouting offices at our research park for a closer view of the intellectual property being generated both at the university and by our startup and innovation community. Chief Technology Officers embedded in the state's economic development focus areas work across engagement teams to provide subject matter expertise, know the research portfolio in their platform areas, and at times provide funding to jumpstart activities with targeted partners.

Groups like the Digital Ag Innovation Lab at Iowa State are another example of research leading corporate engagement. With pillars focused on Innovation, Education and Service, this team has collectively generated 90 unique patents and tech transfer outcomes and has a 99 county impact in service led education programming for everyone from farmers to ag teachers.

In addition to attending university led events on next generation technologies, businesses can access faculty expertise across the university by engaging directly with our scientific and research community through sponsored research, hiring graduate students, or a variety of other means.

UPSKILL, RESKILL, CONTINUING EDUCATION: Iowa State offers tailored curriculum and programs to upskill, reskill and support leaders with continuing education, such as the Executive MBA program and the Ivy College of Business custom education program. We also offer a variety of fully online programs for working professionals including masters of Seed Technology and Business; masters of Business Analytics; masters of Engineering Management; and MBA. At our research park, the Digital Ag Innovation team leads bootcamps to expose and train students and corporate employees in on-vehicle technology systems. This team partners with Iowa State Extension to reach farmers in every Iowa county through courses like “Planter University.” An additional partnership between the research park and the vaccine and immunotherapies and products CTO offers lab-based skills certification courses, offered to both professionals and graduate students interested in future lab-based career pathways.

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT: Iowa State also has facilities and equipment available for industry partners to access via a fee for service model. Oftentimes, there are pieces of equipment that are costly to purchase that a company might only need to use periodically, and those can be accessed for public use. This could include anything from scale up facilities, to test field access, to milling and grinding equipment, gene sequencers and more. Examples are an Off-Highway Vehicle Chassis Dynamometer for testing vehicles, or the fermentation scale up facilities located both on campus and at the Iowa State BioCentury Research Farm.

A closer look at our EDIR organizations and partners:

The Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS) helps Iowa businesses solve complex problems and stay one step ahead by providing expertise, connections, and the confidence to move forward. CIRAS works with business and industry across all 99 counties to enhance their performance through customized service offerings in executive strategy, growth, operational excellence, and workforce. CIRAS leverages five federal funding programs with state and private resources, and has staff and partners located across campus and across the state. Over the past five years, CIRAS and its partners have reported impact from companies totaling more than \$2.8 billion and more than 33,900 jobs created or retained because of the assistance they received.

CIRAS FY24 HIGHLIGHTS: Last year, 1,771 businesses from 99 counties in the state received assistance on projects or attended educational workshops from CIRAS staff or partners.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping business, and CIRAS is leading efforts to help Iowa industry respond. After launching initial AI efforts in 2023, CIRAS rapidly expanded internal capabilities and leveraged partnerships with Iowa State University’s Translational AI Center (TrAC) and the Ivy College of Business, the University of Iowa’s HAWK-AI Institute, the Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI), and the Technology Association of Iowa (TAI) to ensure that Iowa businesses have access to practical training tailored to Iowa industry. The Iowa AI Summit for Industry, held in fall 2024 and spring 2025, attracted a combined 317 attendees across more than 20 expert-led sessions focused on automation, marketing, and decision-making. “This event provided practical, relevant information and left me with new ideas to consider,” shared one participant. To date, CIRAS has hosted 23 AI-focused events and

reached more than 1,400 professionals. Plans are underway to bring AI literacy directly to industry across the state, showcasing how AI can help solve problems, improve performance, and remain competitive.

Blue-9 Pet Products, based in Maquoketa, turned to CIRAS when a key supplier shut down, jeopardizing production of its KLIMB® dog-training platform. Through the MEP National Network™, CIRAS connected the company with a new supplier, helping restore operations quickly. “They found places I didn’t know about,” said owner David Blake. “It was extremely beneficial.” CIRAS also provided support with product testing, commercialization, and marketing strategy. Blue-9 reported \$250,000 in retained sales as a result of this support.

BizReps, a Davenport-based sales agency focused on sustainable technology, secured a \$41,000 contract with the state of Hawaii to deliver solar-powered surveillance equipment for use in parks. The opportunity was identified through CIRAS APEX’s customized BidMatch service. “Without [the APEX team’s] help—from getting us certified for government contracting to helping with our capabilities statement—we would’ve missed some great opportunities,” said managing partner Tim Woods.

Timberline Manufacturing in Marion revived a stalled automation initiative with assistance from CIRAS after internal leadership transitions left the project in limbo. CIRAS conducted time studies, presented viable solutions, and coordinated vendor bids. “They had the bandwidth and the experience to put it all together,” said Director Jim Kivell.

Mi-T-M Corporation in Peosta collaborated with CIRAS and Iowa State engineering students on a capstone project to evaluate the addition of an automated deburring machine. The student team analyzed workflows, conducted vendor research, and confirmed the equipment would exceed performance goals, boosting throughput by 79%. “Their work will help improve efficiency in our laser-bed area, and we’re excited to implement their recommendations,” said Dennis Hoffman, director of fabrication.

For more than a decade, Walsh Door & Security in Des Moines has relied on CIRAS to support its operational growth and workforce strategies. Most recently, the company revamped its onboarding process to improve employee retention and engaged CIRAS to plan the layout of a new 80,000-square-foot facility. “CIRAS knows us, yet they also bring fresh perspectives, which is invaluable,” said VP Brady Warrick.

Farmers Cooperative Society in Sioux Center launched Member’s Cut, a retail meat market featuring locally raised pork and beef, after partnering with CIRAS to evaluate the concept and conduct regional consumer research. “We didn’t fully realize the knowledge base CIRAS had until we started digging into this project together,” said Jared Terpstra.

The Iowa State University Research Park (ISURP) provides a resource-rich environment where innovators flourish. ISURP is a bricks and mortar real estate development, but its value to its tenants lies in concierge-style engagement and connections across Iowa State. The value for Iowa State and the Iowa economy is in offering partners thought leadership, access to next generation technology solutions, pipelining workforce that stays in the state, offering graduates opportunities to enhance career readiness, a like-minded community to learn and grow from, and in offering a host of tools, assets and minds to help businesses be successful. This includes both proximity and easy access for both start-ups and established companies that range from growing entrepreneurial ventures to global corporations.

ISURP offers high quality labs and office space, as well as numerous community events, services and amenities that support the efforts of science- and technology-based organizations.

ISURP FY25 HIGHLIGHTS: FY25 has been a remarkable period for the ISU Research Park (ISURP), marked by significant achievements and milestones that have further solidified our position as one of the nation's leading innovation campuses. This year, ISURP has continued to foster a dynamic environment that supports the growth and success of our tenant companies, researchers, and the broader community through a campus wide holistic engagement model.

Standout highlights for this fiscal year have included unprecedented engagement in terms of inbound lead generation from Iowa-based companies, agtech companies, and international companies seeking a foothold in the North American market. These opportunities have resulted in a robust pipeline of both new tenants, and prospects to fuel our next generation of growth. Additionally, the research park has experienced growth from within, as multiple current tenants outgrew space and expanded to larger spaces. ISURP also completed a large construction project, launched construction on two new projects, and maintains an impressive pipeline of future projects.

The 86,000 square foot Alliant Agriculture Innovation Lab was completed and opened in December, 2025. This facility is home to Iowa State's Digital Agriculture Innovation Lab and represents the first time in ISURP history that a corporate partner stepped in to help defray construction costs with a naming gift. This Alliant Energy gift and partnership enabled the construction of additional teaching, and communal spaces intended to create collisions amongst stakeholders in the ag tech spaces, and it has already accomplished just that. In the first quarter of 2025 alone, more than 2500 individuals from corporate partners, community, and university researchers convened meetings in the spaces with continued growth projected.

The addition of the PivotBio facility in 2024 and the Alliant Agriculture Innovation Lab added 120,000 square feet of capacity to ISURP, expanding it by 15% to more than one million square feet of developed space. The construction pipeline remains strong with \$70 million in construction projects currently underway, and another \$270 million in projects in our pipeline, with either FY25-26 starts or completion planned.

Projects underway include a standalone facility for Strand Engineering, with estimated completion in December, the McFarland Clinic flagship facility in CyTown, and the first housing starts in ISURP history, with additional amenities and retail on the first floor. This will create a true "live, work, play" environment on the ISURP campus and align with best practices for innovation campus and research park environments globally.

The \$270M of pipeline projects include additional housing starts in ISURP, the remainder of the CyTown facilities, a significant expansion project in the agtech space, and a fermentation scale up facility ("BioMade"). The BioMade facility is part of a robust and unique partnership model between the Department of Defense, Iowa Economic Development Authority, Iowa State's BioCentury Research Farm, and the ISU Research Park. This project will position both the state of Iowa and Iowa State squarely in the scale up fermentation business, as a full continuum of service offerings in the space will allow companies of scale or startups to access the equipment they need to validate products for market readiness—a critical gap that was previously lacking throughout the U.S. Many of these products will

also explore the critical need for additional revenue streams for Iowa farmers from the use of byproducts.

Our commitment to fostering innovation and collaboration has also been evident through the numerous events and programs hosted at ISURP. This year, it organized nearly 30 events, including workshops, seminars, and networking sessions, attracting thousands of participants. These events have provided valuable opportunities for knowledge exchange, skill development, and partnership building.

In terms of economic impact, ISURP continues to be a significant contributor to the local and state economy. Its tenant companies have collectively generated hundreds of millions in state revenue and created thousands of high-quality jobs.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the prospects for ISURP. The CyTown entertainment district pipeline will bring critical entertainment and visitor options to the community and open additional opportunities for our corporate partners to host events in our community. It will also provide additional premium research park office space to expand our portfolio of available property to lease partner tenants.

In conclusion, the fiscal year 2024-25 has been a year of growth, innovation, and impact for ISU Research Park. We are proud of our achievements and look forward to continuing our mission of fostering innovation, collaboration, and economic development in the years to come.

The Office of Innovation Commercialization (OIC) serves the Iowa State University community and the state of Iowa by commercializing intellectual property resulting from the research activities at ISU. Consisting of the Iowa State University Research Foundation (ISURF) and the Office of Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer (OIPTT), OIC develops and executes appropriate protection and licensing strategies for both pre-partnered innovations (funded by industry-sponsored research agreements) and un-partnered technologies (primarily funded through federally sponsored research programs). Both established and startup companies benefit from licensing intellectual property rights from ISURF by creating new products, decreasing manufacturing costs, improving revenue streams, and increasing market share.

OIC FY25 HIGHLIGHTS: Iowa State University researchers submitted 101 intellectual property disclosures (not including datasets) and ISURF filed 131 patent applications. In calendar year 2024, Iowa State was recognized for having 60 issued U.S. utility patents, ranking 36th of the top 100 U.S. universities and 57th of the top 100 worldwide universities granted U.S. utility patents by the National Academy of Inventors.

In FY25, Iowa State was awarded 48 U.S. utility patents and an additional 10 patents from foreign countries for an overall total of 58. ISURF executed 57 license and option agreements for ISU technologies in FY25, 18 of which were with Iowa companies. ISURF currently has 108 license and option agreement which are yielding income. Iowa companies reported \$15.3 million of revenues from ISU-licensed technologies in fiscal year 2025, and one startup company was formed during that time period to commercialize ISU technologies. Global sales of licensed technologies exceeded \$136 million. ISURF has been self-supported since 1992 through returns on its licensed technology portfolio; in addition, ISURF has returned over \$7.1 million over the last ten years to Iowa State and the Ames National Laboratory to support further investments in the research enterprise. ISURF distributes royalty revenue in accordance with the royalty sharing policy to technology inventors.

The Office of Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer negotiates and executes sponsored research agreements for ISU with industry partners and commodity groups, as well as non-disclosure agreements and material transfer agreements for Iowa State University. In FY24, OIPTT handled in excess of 900 agreements.

Iowa State University researchers have developed technology that dramatically improves the efficiency of plant transformation. By developing an improved barrel to enhance biolistic gene delivery into plant material as well as novel particles for binding genetic material to use with the gene gun, these researchers have demonstrated up to a 22-fold improvement in transformation efficiency in hard to transform plants such as wheat and barley. A new startup company has been formed to commercialize the technology and has already begun generating revenue on the licensed technology.

Current processing of most of the world's rare earth minerals, regardless of where they are mined or recovered, is performed in China because of the dangerous and environmentally challenging conditions. Ames National Laboratory researchers have developed an innovative new process to convert rare earth oxide materials into rare earth metals in an environmentally responsible manner, accelerating the ability for rare earth material refining to be performed in the United States. This technology has been optioned to a newly formed company and additional work is being performed at Ames National Laboratory to scale up the process and demonstrate manufacture of critical neo magnets from the recovered materials.

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC), at Iowa State University

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC), administered by Iowa State University, comprises 15 regional centers that collectively serve all 99 counties in Iowa. These centers assist individuals launching new businesses and provide advisory services to existing small businesses across the state. Their support helps clients address management challenges, enhance operations, secure financing, and explore new opportunities. Iowa State University also directly operates two of these regional centers.

SBDC FY25 HIGHLIGHTS: In calendar year 2024, Iowa's Small Business Development Center supported 4,958 businesses across the state—reaching at least five unique clients in every single Iowa county. These businesses span a wide range of industries and stages of development.

SBDC delivers support through services such as business planning, customer discovery, financial analysis, cash flow projections, loan and capital request preparation, growth strategy development, marketing strategy, startup and export assistance, and market research. The 4,958 businesses supported this year generated:

- \$87,994,113 in new capital across 665 capital events
- \$174 million in increased sales
- 1,795 jobs created
- 255 new business starts

Each year, SBDC Iowa recognizes outstanding entrepreneurial achievement through two statewide awards:

This year's recipient of the Deb Dalziel Entrepreneur of the Year Award is Sierra Elbert, Co-founder of Groom Curriculum. Sierra is redefining the dog grooming industry through advocacy and accessible education. Motivated by her mother and her own professional journey, she co-launched the nation's first nationally accredited, collegiate-approved workforce program for dog grooming in 2022. The 10-week program equips underserved populations, including the unemployed and justice-impacted individuals—with tools to enter high-paying, sustainable careers. Groom Curriculum is elevating professional standards and supporting animal shelters across the U.S.

The Neal Smith Entrepreneur of the Year Award honoree is Abe Sandquist, owner of Natural Fertilizer. Abe is revolutionizing agricultural waste management by applying innovation and deep industry expertise. Leveraging his USDA background, he built a business focused on soil nutrient planning and coordinating manure exchange logistics between livestock and crop operations. He also developed *AgSimplified*, a web platform that simplifies compliance and logistics. A Certified Crop Advisor for over 20 years, Abe has consulted on more than 100,000 acres and supports youth agricultural education through Ignite Pathways. With guidance from America's SBDC Iowa, Natural Fertilizer Services continues to advance sustainable agriculture practices.

The Pappajohn Center for Entrepreneurship (JPEC) serves entrepreneurs on campus and in the community, providing entrepreneurial opportunities, including a statewide tech startup incubator, student accelerator, statewide and local business plan and pitch competitions, and participates in university-wide academic programs in entrepreneurship ranging from a cross-campus minor to a PhD program in entrepreneurship. JPEC has locations at the ISU Research Park and on campus in the Student Innovation Center. Flagship programs include the Iowa State Startup Factory incubator, CYstarters student accelerator, and CyBIZ Lab student consulting program, among many other experiential programs.

JPEC FY25 HIGHLIGHTS:

Iowa State remains one of the top 15 undergraduate entrepreneurship programs in the nation as rated by the Princeton Review and Entrepreneur Magazine. In the fall of 2024, Iowa State University was awarded the prestigious Award for Exceptional Contributions in Entrepreneurship Research by the Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers (GCEC). In spring 2025, Iowa State was a finalist for Excellence in Co-Curricular Innovation as recognized by the U.S. Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE). Iowa State is a finalist for Global Entrepreneurship and Innovation Ecosystem of the Year to be awarded by the Accreditation Council of Entrepreneurial and Engaged Universities (ACEEU) in summer 2025.

The ISU Pappajohn Center touched more than 4,600 people through its programs, workshops, competitions, and student programs (not including academic courses). More than \$268,000 was awarded to young entrepreneurs, including \$32,300 in national prize awards that helped seed new startups. Programs focus on pitching, business model canvas, food insecurity, innovation, and other topics. The Center also connects entrepreneurs to professional service providers.

With a broad-reaching academic program and more than 100 courses with an entrepreneurship focus or component across all six undergraduate colleges, over 20,000 students took entrepreneurship courses in the past academic year. The Ivy College of Business reported 193 entrepreneurship majors

and 202 entrepreneurship minors this academic year. Many of these students participate in the Pappajohn Center's co-curricular programming opportunities or are involved in student organizations focused on entrepreneurship.

CyBIZ Lab, our interdisciplinary student consulting agency, served 35 companies plus facilitated 7 service learning projects with non-profit organizations in partnership with the Ivy MBA program. CyBIZ Lab employed 41 unique students in 2025 and engaged 33 MBA students through service learning projects, providing excellent job preparedness experiences for 74 students. CyBIZ Lab provides the opportunity for cross-functional teams of undergraduate and graduate students to work on fee-based business and organizational projects. It also gives founders, entrepreneurs, and businesses a chance to solve a business problem, while working alongside student consultants. CyBIZ partners with ISU economic development to provide market validation services that support tech faculty intending to commercialize their discoveries.

Iowa State Startup Factory is a startup incubator helping researchers and inventors develop a roadmap to realize the societal and economic impact of their high-tech innovations. In FY25, Iowa State Startup Factory served 19 companies (31 participants) that attracted \$17.2M in capital. Since its inception in 2016, 156 companies have completed the program. The startups have self-reported \$107,034,031 in dilutive and non-dilutive funding raised since 2016. Program staff and Entrepreneurs-in-Residence contributed just shy of 1,000 hours of individual mentoring support to companies as part of the Venture Mentoring Service, an MIT-modeled program focused on team-based mentorship for startup founders and entrepreneurs. Iowa State Startup Factory's footprint extends beyond Iowa, with collaborations in Kenyatta University in Kenya.

When Iowa State Startup Factory companies complete the program, they are oftentimes not mature enough to seek external investment. Iowa Go-To-Market (G2M), a partnership between BioConnect Iowa, the Iowa State University Startup Factory, and VentureNet Iowa, provides follow-on support for Iowa entrepreneurs who are developing technology-driven innovative products or services and need additional support to increase their livelihood of commercial success. In 2024-25, G2M served 5 companies (11 participants) that received \$1,500,000 in new funding. Program staff and the G2M EIRs contributed close to 700 hours of individual mentoring to participating companies. To date, 22 G2M companies have reported \$23,653,000 in funding raised.

CYstarters is an 11-week summer accelerator for Iowa State students or recent graduates to focus on their startup or business idea. In August, the summer accelerator completed its annual 11-week immersive training program for 14 student ventures (15 participants). Staff and professional service providers in the community contributed more than 250 hours of education and individual mentoring to program participants. An additional 60 professionals, alumni, and peer mentors volunteered time supporting the student ventures.

In July 2025, Iowa State hosted the second ever U.S. Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE) Rural Entrepreneurship Symposium. Attendees from 22 states came to learn, share, and connect. Participants had the opportunity to meet several Iowa rural small business owners, participate in Iowa's agritourism, connect with faculty, and celebrate rural entrepreneurship.

RESEARCH

Iowa State University topped \$300 million in [external research funding](#) for the third consecutive year, despite rapidly evolving federal priorities that fueled a reshaping of the federal funding landscape over the last six months of the 2025 fiscal year. The \$329.9 million received in FY25 is second only to the record-setting \$346.2 million received in FY24. [Total external funding](#) for the university closed at \$549.3 million, up \$4.7 million or 0.9% compared to the FY24 total amount of \$544.6 million.

Iowa State established a new benchmark for [federal research funding](#) in the 2025 fiscal year. The \$240.1 million received exceeded the previous record of \$236.3 million – set in FY24 – by \$3.8 million or 1.6%. This is the fourth consecutive year that Iowa State has established new records for federal research funding. The three agencies contributing the most to the new federal funding record were . . .

- **The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE):** the \$125.2 million received by Iowa State and partner Ames National Laboratory – a DOE National Laboratory – exceeded the previous record of \$111.9 million established in FY24;
- **The National Science Foundation (NSF):** The \$45.3 million Iowa State received in FY25 is an all-time high from the agency. It surpassed the \$37.3 million received in FY24 by \$8 million or 21.4%; and
- **The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT):** The \$10.1 million in FY25 is the most the university has received from the agency in the past five fiscal years and was an increase of \$7.1 million or 236.5% over the amount received in FY24.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided a striking example of the impact of changing federal priorities. Iowa State received just \$24.5 million in agency research funding in FY25, the lowest amount the university has received over the past five fiscal years, and \$24.4 million or 49.8% below FY24's landmark total of \$48.9 million. From January through May of 2025, Iowa State received only capacity research funding; no new competitive research grants were awarded.

Iowa State received \$89.8 million in non-federal research funding in FY25. The \$110 million in non-federal funding in FY24 was the largest amount the university ever received, by a wide margin. The 2025 fiscal year amount is more consistent with the totals of three of the four previous fiscal years.

BIOSCIENCES-BASED INITIATIVES Iowa State continues to expand the impact of the university's Biosciences-focused Innovation Ecosystems supported through the Iowa Legislature support, and in partnership with [BioConnect Iowa](#). The legislature allocated \$2.96M for FY25 to support Iowa State's research and development efforts across three Biosciences platforms: Biobased Products; Digital and Precision Agriculture; and Vaccines, Diagnostics, and Immunotherapeutics.

The state's investment has resulted in platform dollars being invested in a variety of ways to create additional opportunities in each targeted area including leveraging funds to win federal research and development awards, providing seed funds to university startups for scale up opportunities, and the purchase of shared equipment to support research and entrepreneurial scale up. Some outcomes include:

- The three platforms and their chief technology officers, and the Iowa State Research Park partnered to host the [inaugural Iowa Biosciences Showcase](#) in September 2024. The showcase was for potential companies with products or services relative to the State of Iowa economic

development strategy – agriculture, advanced manufacturing, vaccines, sensors/diagnostics, immunotherapies, precision agriculture, precision livestock management, precision conservation and natural systems management, and plant-based products and solutions. More than 75 innovators, representing 15 early-stage startup companies, participated.

- The [Biobased Products platform](#) received a record number of proposals for its FY25 innovation grant program and 10 were awarded. Partner companies included Iowa Select Farms, VIA Biofuels, Kent Corp, and new Iowa State startup company, ImPETus. The platform also continued to focus on adding scale-up capability and infrastructure that supports biobased products commercialization, and it is playing a critical role in Iowa State’s pursuit of an [NSF Engines program](#) award. The project – [RuralSTAMINA](#) – has a significant bioprocessing and biomanufacturing focus.
- The [Vaccines, Diagnostics, and Immunotherapeutics platform](#) provided seed funding for 11 research projects and approved commercial fellowships for Halide Biologics and ImmunoNanoMed. These fellowships are intended to help retain top talent and bridge the gap between grant-based funding and venture capital. The CYVAX commercial development lab at ISU Research Park continues to be a key platform initiative. In addition to supporting early-stage scale-up and manufacture, CYVAX is also a valuable wet lab training site. The facility has hosted four workforce development wet labs, with more than 100 participants representing 12 Iowa-based companies.
- The [Digital and Precision Agriculture](#) platform made a more concerted effort to increase seed grant applications in FY25. Previously, the DPA platform had an average of three successful seed grant applications a year. This year, 20 applications were submitted and 11 were selected for funding, representing a broad spectrum of technologies, while engaging with company partners in six counties across Iowa. The platform also emphasized supporting the research park’s new Alliant Energy Agriculture Innovation Lab’s [Digital Ag Innovation](#) research team, providing specialized equipment that will accelerate translation of research into commercial products and partnerships with Iowa-based ag companies.

IOWA STATE EXTENSION AND OUTREACH spurs economic and workforce development across Iowa. Extension programs in Agriculture and Natural Resources, Community and Economic Development, Health and Human Sciences, and 4-H Youth Development have prompted more than \$48 million in statewide economic activity through securing contracts, donations, fees, grants, and mobilizing volunteers, resulting in more than 985,000 educational exchanges and over 10,700 educational events with Iowans in the past year.

Profitable farms lead to vibrant local economies and thriving rural communities. For the past four years, **Planter University** has taught more than 900 farmers and ag industry professionals how to optimize technology and improve planter efficiency, resulting in increased profitability. With a sample of participants reporting values of \$10-\$20 per acre gained from the workshop, the estimated economic impact of Planter University tops \$725,000 for 2025 participants, with more than \$3.3 million cumulative impact for the program.

When rural communities can address their housing concerns, more Iowans have access to safe, affordable places to live. Extension’s **Rural Housing Readiness Assessment program** has empowered 62

d. Number of license and option agreements executed on institutional technologies: in total	57
in Iowa	18
e. Number of license and option agreements yielding income	108
f. Revenue to Iowa companies as a result of licensed technology (FY25))	\$15.3M
g. Number of startup companies formed (through licensing activities)	
in total	1
in Iowa	1
h. Number of companies in research park and incubators	132
pre-incubator companies private (paying tenant)	37
university related	22
i. Number of new companies in research park and incubators	15
new pre-incubator companies private (SUF, G2M)	24
new university related	0
j. Number of employees in companies in research park and incubators	2,494
k. Royalties and license fee income	\$4.5M
l. Total sponsored funding received	\$549.3 million
How much of this is for research	\$329.9 million
m. Corporate sponsored funding received for research and economic development: in total	\$55.3 million
in Iowa	\$15.1 million

n. Iowa appropriations for economic development, in total	\$3.473 million
SBDC	\$0.936M
CIRAS Technology Assistance Program	\$1.365M
ISU Research Park	\$0.122M
Regents Innovation Fund	\$1.050M
o. Research expenditures (federal, state and local; business; nonprofit; institution funds; all other sources, FY25):	\$356.5 million
p. Licenses and options executed per \$10 million research expenditures (2023 AUTM Survey)	2.0
q. Sales of licensed products by Iowa-based companies (FY25)	\$15.3M

Regents Innovation Funding (RIF) supports both entrepreneurial infrastructure as well as faculty founders. Nearly half of the Economic Development & Industry Relations RIF funding supports the Innovation Acceleration Fund (IAF), a highly competitive program that awards grants up to \$50,000 to ISU faculty working on marketable research discoveries across campus. A summary of this year's grant projects is provided below.

Summary of FY25 RIF Commercialization Program Projects

Principal Investigator	FY25 RIF Commercialization Program Projects (\$413,974 of \$1,050,000 RIF Allocation) <i>All projects required a 1:1 funding match</i>	Award Amount
Dr. Nicolas Argibay (Ames Lab)	Demonstration of high-temperature strength retention in a castable refractory alloy with room-temperature ductility	\$49,000
Dr. Jared Anderson (Chemistry)	Miniaturized and Portable Detectors for Rapid Mycotoxin Analysis	\$50,000
Dhananjay Dileep and Dr. Eric Cochran (Chemical and Biological Engineering)	A continuous process for the chemical recycling of poly(ethylene) terephthalate.	\$50,000
Dr. Jun Cui (Ames Lab)	Heavy Rare Earth Free Nanograin Neo Magnet for EV Motors	\$44,974

Dr. Tannon Daugaard (Bioeconomy Institute)	Autothermal Pyrolysis of Wastewater Solids to Produce Biochar and Destroy PFAS	\$35,000
Bahar Esfahani (Apparel, Events, and Hospitality Management)	Anchoring System for Upper Limb Body-Powered Prosthetics Harness	\$50,000
Dr. Ihor Hlova (Ames Lab)	Chemical Dismantling of Permanent Magnet Materials: Scale up and Commercial Viability	\$35,000
Dr. Shan Jiang (Materials Science and Engineering)	Biobased Synthesis of Silver Nanowires for Flexible Transparent Electronics	\$50,000
Dr. Aaron Sadow (Chemistry)	Sustainable diesel from chemical recycling of polyolefin waste	\$50,000

The University of Iowa

FY25 Annual Economic Development Report

The University of Iowa (UI), founded in 1847, is the state of Iowa's oldest higher education institution. Of three missions assigned the institution by the state legislature, one directly tasks the UI is to "bring learning and discovery into the service of the people of the state of Iowa, the nation, and the world, improving lives through education, health care, arts and culture, and community and economic vitality".

The University's contribution begins foremost through its educational mission. The UI educates more than 32,000 students annually (approximately 23,000 undergraduates and 9,000 graduate students and postgraduate scholars). In fulfilling this educational role, the UI trains the talent that is critical to Iowa's prosperity. In addition to educating the preponderance of the State's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, lawyers, and teachers, the UI provides accreditation and continuing education used by those professionals to maintain their skills.

A recent State Board of Regents assessment of the University's economic impact on the State found that the UI has a total economic impact of \$8 billion in annual added value with a specific economic development impact of \$551 million and research spending impact of \$369 million.

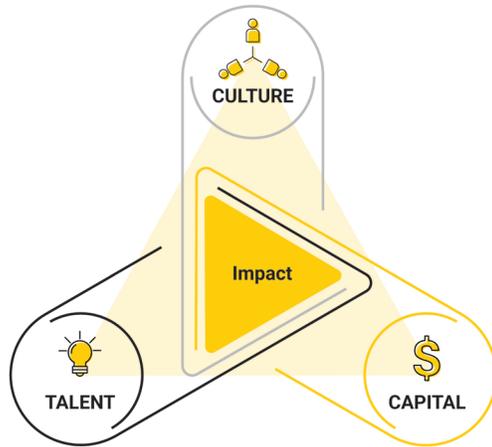
The UI receives \$700+ million in external research support, which fuels its research and innovative activities. Initiatives spearheaded by the Office of Innovation and the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (JPEC) in the College of Business help translate ideas arising from this research towards viable commercialization pathways or other avenues (tech transfer, start-ups) to greater public use. These organizations offer central support open to the entire UI community to connect with resources, information networks, and bring best practices into the UI.

The UI is deepening relationships with key sectors in the state to provide students with enhanced experiential opportunities while fostering broader engagement with industry leaders. For each of the sectors designated "Iowa's Leading Industries" by the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) (Insurance and Fintech, Biosciences, and Advanced Manufacturing), the UI is connecting with industry leaders to improve skills needed by students to successfully pursue careers in those sectors and engage faculty, staff and students to increase translation of research and innovative ideas relevant to industry/community needs. For example, new focus at the Vaughan Institute for Risk Management is connecting UI students and faculty with alumni, state regulators, industry executives, innovators, and other centers of excellence to position UI students for successful careers in Iowa's insurance sector. The JPEC's extensive student business consulting service offers experiential opportunities to UI undergraduate students while helping Iowa businesses address their challenges. The Office of Innovation's Chemurgy initiative developed content to highlight career opportunities in the BioSciences.

The University's 2022-2027 strategic plan specifically calls on campus to "Accelerate entrepreneurship and support broader economic development through innovative engagement and partnerships with industry and community organizations." This strategy is implemented by:

- Creating increased opportunities for entrepreneurial education, new venture creation, technology transfer, with a specific focus in medtech innovation, and
- Connecting faculty, staff, and students to organizations and subject matter experts to solve unmet needs in social, health, technical, and business.

SUPPORTING FACULTY, STAFF AND GRAD STUDENTS
STRIVING TO SOLVE UNMET NEEDS FOR HUMANKIND



IOWA | Office of Innovation

The UI’s strategy to promote research translation and application of knowledge for positive economic outcomes directly supports faculty, staff and students by helping them to access Talent and Capital while changing Culture. Appropriate Talent (meaning individuals who have successfully started and scaled high technology enterprises) often is unknown or inaccessible to UI innovators. Risk Capital is low in the state and that which is in the state frequently does not match with the technical ventures being developed at the UI. Consequently, programs at the Office of Innovation and the JPEC are focused on connecting faculty, staff and students with appropriate individuals who can offer

guidance, experience, and access to networks of expertise and capital. At the same time, programs and activities help change the institutional Culture to create conditions where prospective innovators feel empowered to bring ideas forward and are encouraged to do so.

I. Support Economic Development

The Chief Innovation Officer, who reports to the Vice President for External Relations with a dotted-line report to the University President, oversees and coordinates the economic development activities for faculty, staff and graduate students at the University of Iowa. The Chief Innovation Officer oversees: Protostudios, UI Research Park, Translational Research Incubator, UI Ventures, MADE, and Nurse Innovators. JPEC sits within the Tippie College of Business serving the undergraduate student body and select faculty and graduate students via the NSF I-CORP and Venture School programs.

In FY25, several broad themes served as the central organizing principles, including:

Establishing the Medical Innovation Hub. With the support of an \$8 million grant from the Governor’s office, the Office of Innovation will open the Medical Innovation Launch Laboratory (MILL) located adjacent to the UI’s Hospitals & Clinics and healthcare campus. The Hub will

become the gathering place for healthcare innovators and industry. There they can access unique equipment, resources, wet lab space and expertise while also commingling with other innovative faculty, staff and graduate students. A key success factor in similar spaces elsewhere is proximity to the “day jobs” of those clinicians, researchers, and graduate students eager to take advantage of this offering. Creating an innovation hub within the healthcare complex is a major cultural breakthrough that will reduce the bottleneck of faculty seeking start-up company wet lab space while propelling nascent entrepreneurs forward. Construction on the Medical Innovation Launch Laboratory was ongoing during FY25 and is targeted for completion with a scheduled Grand Opening in spring 2026.

Seeding Interest in Translational Activities with Next Generation. The Iowa Innovation Leadership Fellows program continues with its third cohort in FY25. The FY25 cohort consisted of 11 competitively selected graduate students, post-doctoral researchers, and trainees from medicine, engineering, and public health to teach the significance of translational research outcomes, how to go about solving unmet needs and gaining exposure and connections to industry experts. They learn about the programs available to support entrepreneurial activities and commercialization efforts on campus. They interact with UI faculty, alumni, and entrepreneurs with experience in commercializing academic research. The Fellows offer the Office of Innovation unique insights to help shape communications with academic departments, identify opportunities to engage with those departments, and encourage their colleagues to consider translational activities when appropriate.

Extending the UI Innovation Support Structure Across Iowa. The Nurse Innovators program, which is designed to encourage nurses to bring forward solutions to unmet needs, continued into its second year which saw the number of direct engagement of nurses expand to over 1,000 surfacing many project ideas moving through prototype development. The program began to receive regional and national attention as it graduated its first 2 nurses and expanded into a Critical Access Hospital in Davis County. Through the program, the Office of Innovation guides and assists nurses with concept development, providing them an outlet and agency to solve challenges they face in their clinical practice. This project intends to work with nurses throughout the State of Iowa and across a variety of nursing professions, exposing underserved healthcare communities and workers to the support that the Office of Innovation can extend to innovators outside the university. Besides empowering nurses with tools and resources to solve unmet needs in clinical practice, the program aims to impact job satisfaction, retention and nurse recruitment as well as an economic impact when these inventions reach the healthcare marketplace.

Application of Innovation Funding Programs. Encouraging proof of concept and translational projects is a key building block in the Economic Development pipeline. UI Ventures continued to deploy innovation funding to promising medical innovations in FY25. The program awarded full or partial awards to 20 projects totaling over \$400,000.

Creation of Hawkeye Ventures Seed Fund. Following 2021 legislation (Iowa Code 262.14(3)(f)) allowing Regents institutions to invest in private enterprises, the University of Iowa’s Tippie

College of Business, through the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (JPEC), launched Hawkeye Ventures. The donor-powered seed fund will provide early-stage equity investments of \$25,000–\$250,000 to University of Iowa–affiliated startups (students, faculty, staff, and alumni). The fund is overseen by an investment board of experienced investors, with profits from exits reinvested to sustain future rounds. Institutional approval to proceed was granted in the spring of 2024, and fundraising is underway toward an initial \$10 million target (with a longer-term goal of \$25 million) via the UI Center for Advancement. First investments are targeted for FY26, positioning Iowa to address funding challenges for early start-ups as well as to better align with peer and Big Ten institutions’ venture funds.

Changing Culture and Inspiring Students. Through a grant awarded to the ISU-UI under the NSF EPSCOR program, the Office of Innovation worked with students from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication to prepare a series of videos and related social media content highlighting the careers, activities and personalities of the UI’s Bioscience innovators. These videos are distributed via Office of Innovation social media, shared with NSF, and provide useful tools to explain what the biosciences are, how they are supported in Iowa, and why students should consider careers in the field.

II. University of Iowa Economic Development Infrastructure

<p>University of Iowa Research Foundation (UIRF)</p>	<p>Researchers at the University of Iowa continue to develop innovative solutions to address the world’s most pressing issues, while entrusting their inventions to the UI Research Foundation (UIRF) for patenting and licensing into the commercial market. UI researchers have seen great success over the last year both in the lab and through commercial efforts. Companies licensing UI-invented technologies are making strides in developing products in areas traditionally associated with academic technology transfer at UI—human health care and engineering—but also in the fields of education and even some in the agricultural and animal health arenas.</p> <p>Revenue from the licensing agreements UIRF negotiates with company partners is shared with inventors and supports department, collegiate, and cross-campus research efforts. Many licensing relationships also lead to sponsored research at the university. And in fact, the connection between research grants and inventions goes both ways—federal agencies, non-profit-foundations, and corporations usually include intellectual property provisions in their grants, and UIRF takes the lead in helping researchers satisfy these requirements.</p> <p>Naturally, participation from our university researchers is a critical first step in this process, and UIRF engages them to inspire and support their</p>
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	<p>interest in the commercialization process. Two new initiatives launched in FY25:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology Analyst Program. This program engages graduate students and post-doctoral researchers who are either inventors on a new invention disclosure or are working with a faculty member who has recently disclosed to UIRF. The students have an opportunity to participate in the evaluation, marketing, and licensing of their technology. At the same time, UIRF benefits from timely and insightful feedback from those who know the technology well. The program is six to ten months in length for each student. • National Academy of Inventors. In collaboration with the Office of the Vice President for Research, UIRF has formed the University of Iowa chapter of the National Academy of Inventors (NAI). The NAI was founded to recognize and encourage inventors with U.S. patents, enhance the visibility of academic technology and innovation, encourage the disclosure of intellectual property, educate and mentor innovative students, and to create wider public understanding of how its members' inventions benefit society.
<p>Protostudios</p>	<p>Protostudios (https://protostudios.uiowa.edu/) is a state-of-the-art, rapid-prototyping facility located in the MERGE co-working space in downtown Iowa City, Van Allen Hall and at UIHC. It works with UI researchers, researchers from other Iowa universities and healthcare institutions and community members to develop fully functional prototypes of product ideas, allowing innovators to test, redesign, and determine manufacturing paths and demonstrate usability to investors. Protostudios primary focus is on biomedical and electronics prototyping with access to 3D printers (plastics, metals, ceramics) milling, laser/wet jet cutter, printed circuit board fabrication, and consulting from on-staff industrial designers and engineers. Anatomical modeling of human organs prior to complex surgeries is developing into a key value add of Protostudios.</p>
<p>University of Iowa Research Park</p>	<p>The Iowa Research Park (IRP) has evolved into a dynamic hub where entrepreneurs, start-ups, and industry leaders connect with world-class university resources to accelerate growth and innovation. By leasing sites and flexible space tailored to technology-driven companies, the Park provides an ideal environment for businesses that require sustained collaboration with the University of Iowa.</p> <p>Since its founding, the Park's business incubator has supported more than 100 UI start-ups and emerging ventures. Today, IRP offers more than space - it delivers access to the University's extensive research and</p>

	<p>business resources, including UI library systems, hazardous waste management services, SBIR/STTR grant support, educational programming, networking opportunities, and logistical support. These assets create a strong foundation for companies to scale quickly and effectively.</p> <p>At the heart of the Park is the BioVentures Center (BVC), which provides flexible wet-lab and office space to life sciences, medtech, engineering, and technology-based companies. Demand for wet lab space remains high, with the BVC at capacity with a waiting list, underscoring the Park’s role as a critical resource for Iowa’s growing bioscience sector.</p> <p>In addition, the Park is home to three of the University’s specialized core facilities, each serving as a unique asset for both start-ups and established industry partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center for Biocatalysis and Bioprocessing (CBB): Offers expertise in microbial fermentation, upstream and downstream bioprocessing, and process scale-up for products ranging from food and biofuels to biopharmaceuticals and advanced biotechnology. • Driving Safety Research Institute (DSRI): Conducts cutting-edge research and development on driving safety for government, military, and private industry partners. • State Hygienic Laboratory (SHL): Iowa’s environmental and public health laboratory, serving all 99 counties and regional clients through infectious disease testing, tracking, and public health innovation. <p>Together, these facilities, companies, and university resources create a vibrant ecosystem where ideas become products, discoveries become companies, and Iowa strengthens its role as a leader in research-driven economic growth.</p>
<p>UI Ventures</p>	<p>UI Ventures (https://uiventures.uiowa.edu/) assists university faculty and staff in transforming their research into successful business endeavors so that their technologies can reach the population it was intended to help. As part of the Office of Innovation, UI Ventures supports cultural transformation on campus and provides access to capital and world-class talent to build successful companies around innovations originating from research at the university. As faculty develop technology, they are often left with an unknown question of “What’s next?” as their research evolves beyond basic principles and requires additional expertise and funding beyond what is available at the University. UI Ventures supports this transition through deployment of GAP funds to address specific business validation questions and utilizes a robust network of experts who have successfully started, scaled, and exited companies in the same areas as our faculty entrepreneurs. If faculty choose to start a new company, UI</p>

	<p>Ventures facilitates connections with industry-specific executives and funding resources to launch and grow their companies as well as serving as a liaison between the company and university services. UI Ventures routinely brings venture capitalists and successful entrepreneurs from around the country to campus so that faculty may directly engage with those who have direct experience. In addition, UI Ventures manages the TRI incubator, Nurse Innovators program, and operates the MADE program to encourage faculty and staff innovation and entrepreneurship throughout campus.</p>
<p>Translational Research Incubator</p>	<p>The Translational Research Incubator (TRI) (https://uiventures.uiowa.edu/translational-research-incubator) serves a critical role in launching medtech companies by providing 1) a physical location for the company in close proximity to clinical founders; and 2) shared lab equipment so companies can focus their limited resources on technology-specific development to maximize their funding. Much of the support for TRI goes to purchasing and maintaining equipment that can be shared among the company tenants with an in-kind contribution of at-cost facility space.</p> <p>The TRI space, located in the Medical Laboratories building, can house up to four early-stage research-based biomedical or life science companies focused on commercializing technology developed at the University of Iowa. The space is ideal for small start-ups that need to conduct early-stage proof-of-concept experiments, often with SBIR/STTR funding, to attract the investment needed to expand operations at the UI Research Park and other locations. The TRI has proven successful in helping companies secure over \$12 million in both federal (SBIR/STTR) and private grants. These companies have gone on to raise over \$57 million in equity funding.</p>
<p>Iowa MADE</p>	<p>Iowa MADE (https://iowamade.org/) is a first of its kind program in the nation as an FDA registered Class I manufacturing entity sitting within a university, whose mission is to encourage and facilitate the UI community to bring innovative products to market addressing a specific unmet need in healthcare delivery with the goal of enhancing economic development at the university and improving patient care as an extension of research and scholarship.</p> <p>MADE is a manufacturing and e-commerce initiative launched in FY18 with 3 objectives: 1) bring simple, low volume technology to market utilizing local Iowa manufacturing whenever possible; 2) contribute to a cultural transformation around innovation on campus; and 3) provide students with an opportunity to learn first-hand the tools necessary to bring a product to market. The program crosses several departments with products from Ophthalmology, Anesthesiology, Dentistry, Cardiothoracic</p>

	<p>Surgery, and General Surgery. Products are available for sale through the iowamade.org website and revenue is used to reimburse development costs to encourage continued support of innovation and development. All technologies remain available for licensing to an external company through UIRF.</p> <p>Largely driven by engineering students, the undergraduate student operations team maintains the FDA compliant quality system, manufacturing, product management, marketing, and sales. These students have the unique opportunity to gain in depth real-world experience and leadership skills on campus to complement their classroom education.</p>
<p>John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (Iowa JPEC)</p>	<p>The John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (Iowa JPEC) (https://www.iowajpec.org/) is an engine for entrepreneurship, innovation, and statewide economic growth. Ranked #15 in the nation by <i>The Princeton Review</i>, JPEC is recognized as one of the country’s premier entrepreneurship programs equipping students from every discipline with the mindset and skills to launch ventures, drive innovation, and lead organizations. Academic offerings span the BBA in Entrepreneurship, the BA in Enterprise Leadership (on-campus and online), and undergraduate and graduate certificates - including Entrepreneurial Management, Technological Entrepreneurship, and Innovation - reaching more than 2,000 students annually with applied, team-based, and capstone-driven learning. In addition, JPEC extends entrepreneurship education to the next generation, impacting 23,354 K–12 students across 37 states, including 15,079 students in the state of Iowa from 83 counties.</p> <p>Beyond the classroom, Iowa JPEC offers one of the most comprehensive venture ecosystems in the nation. Students, faculty, and community members access resources ranging from business incubation and consulting projects to the NSF I-Corps program, gaining direct experience in building and scaling companies. Flagship initiatives such as Venture School, the Venture Mentoring Service, and Enterprise Internships connect entrepreneurs to world-class mentors, interns, and problem-solvers. The recently launched Hawkeye Ventures Seed Fund is set to expand this pipeline by providing early-stage capital and linking students, alumni, and investors in accelerating Iowa’s most promising start-ups.</p> <p>JPEC’s impact extends across the state, powering Iowa’s economy through training, mentorship, and hands-on support for all entrepreneurs. Faculty and staff programs accelerate technology commercialization, while community businesses gain growth through consulting, accelerators, and statewide workshops. By uniting education, incubation, mentorship, and capital, Iowa JPEC fosters lifelong entrepreneurial learning, fuels job</p>

	creation, and positions the University of Iowa as a national leader in innovation and economic vitality.
University of Iowa Center for Advancement's (UICA)	<p>The University of Iowa Center for Advancement's (UICA) (https://www.foriowa.org/) Corporate and Foundation Relations (CFR) drives economic development by connecting University of Iowa's strengths with industry's critical needs and solving business problems. Included but not limited to talent pipeline creation, access to faculty, cutting edge research and acting as a catalyst for organizations in achieving philanthropic goals.</p> <p>CFR's partnerships with the state's economic development organizations and the University of Iowa's office of Vice President for Research are levers that ensures the innovative research taking place at the University of Iowa is included in proposals for business attraction, retention and competitive advantage.</p> <p>In addition to connecting companies with the university, the Center for Advancement is a key player in tapping UI's extensive alumni base to support entrepreneurship and technology commercialization through monetary resources and, equally important, advice and expertise.</p>
UI Pharmaceuticals	<p>UI Pharmaceuticals (https://uip.pharmacy.uiowa.edu/) is a fee for service entity on the University of Iowa Campus that provides contract drug manufacturing (CDMO) services to academic, biotech, and pharmaceuticals clients. These services range from early-stage formulation development, analytical method support, clinical trial material manufacturing, to commercial product manufacture and support. It is organizationally structured as a division of the UI College of Pharmacy and employs approximately 85 pharmaceutical professionals. UI Pharmaceuticals has been operating for over 45 years and supports the manufacturing and testing of both clinical and commercial products. The seven departments that comprise the program are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sterile Manufacturing • Non-Sterile Manufacturing • Quality Assurance • Analytical Services • Preformulation and Formulation Development • Business Development • Engineering and Facilities
Center for Biocatalysis and Bioprocessing (CBB)	<p>The Center for Biocatalysis and Bioprocessing (CBB) (https://cbb.research.uiowa.edu/) operates a unique biomanufacturing facility that is internationally recognized for optimizing and up-scaling complex bioprocesses engineered to produce proteins. As a contractual manufacturing organization (CMO), the CBB's bioprocessing facility</p>

	<p>operates in a niche-space that uses recombinant microbial cell lines to produce proteins of commercial and research value.</p> <p>Protein manufacturing is performed in either our research and process development (RPD) suite or our <i>current good manufacturing practices</i> (cGMP) suite. Both have the equipment, instrumentation, and professional staff required to carry out the upstream and downstream manufacturing operations required to produce purified bulk protein. Each manufactured protein is produced under a rigorous quality policy appropriate for its intended application, albeit clinical, research, or commercial.</p> <p>The CBB bioprocessing facility is initiating a new effort designed to accelerate the translational path required to realize commercially viable products from laboratory discoveries. In the biotechnology sector, failure to demonstrate manufacturability is a major barrier to commercialization. The CBB's expertise in both the development and scale-up of robust biomanufacturing processes is ideally suited to help startup companies to bridge this gap. Successful demonstration of manufacturability reduces the risk of the technology and increases its commercial value, thereby enhancing investment opportunities.</p>
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III. University of Iowa's Economic Development Activities in FY25

- **UI Research Park**
 - The Iowa Research Park is home to 33 companies with 936 private sector employees working directly on the Park. Average wages in the Park's core sectors of biosciences and technology start in the low 6-figures and climb quickly, making the Iowa Research Park a concentrated home to some of the best paying jobs in the region.
 - The Iowa Research Park is also home to hundreds more high-paying jobs in the public sector with the main campus of the State Hygienic Laboratory, the Center for Biocatalysis & Bioprocessing, The Driving Safety Research Institute, the IIHR Wave Basin, and many more.
 - Companies residing on the Research Park, and in particular those residing in the BioVentures Center, have access to a variety of services, including: Shared laboratory equipment room; Executive board room and conference rooms; Multi-purpose room seating 70; Breakroom/vending area, atrium and lounge areas; Shipping/receiving area; High-speed wired & wireless internet; Emergency backup generator; Shared equipment room that includes: Autoclave, Laboratory glassware washer/dryer, RO/DI water

system, Ice machine, -80° freezer; and the vast resources at the UI's Carver College of Medicine via their core facilities.

- **UI Ventures**

- UI Ventures currently supports 37 companies including 3 that formed in FY25.
- Faculty and staff founded companies raised over \$6.5 million in equity funding in FY25.
- In FY25, four UI faculty/staff companies were awarded \$1.6 million in SBIR/STTR grants.
- In FY25, 20 Innovation Fund awards, worth \$361,800, were made to faculty and staff to aid the translation of their research towards commercial potential.
- The Nurse Innovators program engaged >1,000 nurses with 15 projects in active development including one at a Critical Access Hospital in Davis County.
- Supported the third cohort of Innovation Leadership Fellows comprised of graduate and postgraduate students, medical students, and scientists. In total, 35 trainees have been named Innovation Fellows on campus and gone on to successfully graduate from the year-long training program.
- UI Ventures continues to build a stronger economic development pipeline through programs that support business executive interactions, coaching and connections with investors, business strategy support, and other startup resources.

- **Iowa MADE**

- MADE had 4 FDA Class I products available for purchase in FY25 and students continued to develop an additional 4 products originating from the Colleges of Medicine, Dentistry, and the UIHC Dept of Nursing.
- MADE alumni continue to receive competitive job offers directly related to their work at MADE and are 100% employed upon graduation.
- MADE utilizes suppliers in Iowa to support the state economy and presently 100% of part suppliers are Iowa companies.

- **Protostudios**

- Protostudios worked with 91 clients across 105 unique design and production projects in FY25.
- Employed 8 UI students providing them with hands-on experience in client interaction, project management, design, and a variety of technical skills.

- **Iowa JPEC**

- **JPEC Key Metrics & Programs**

- Impact Summary
 - Start-up Companies Served: 207 new business starts supported.
 - Program, Seminar & Workshop Participants: 4,170 Iowans engaged in entrepreneurial training.
 - Jobs Created: 171 new jobs generated through JPEC-supported ventures.

- Client Support Hours: 18,300 hours of direct mentoring and consulting.
- Total Clients Assisted: 754 individuals received one-on-one support.
- Youth Impact: 15,079 K–12 students (264 schools from 175 school districts in 83 counties) inspired through entrepreneurship programs.
- Seed Funding Awarded: \$649,900 distributed to student and community start-ups.
- Total Participants Across All Programs (outreach, and youth): 32,460
 - Seminar & Workshop Participants: 6,409
 - Youth Impact (K-12): 23,354
 - Jacobson Institute: 18,628
 - DesignDash & UI Credit Programs: 4,726
 - Event Participation:
 - Jacobson Institute Events: 2,122
 - Iowa JPEC Events: 2,048

Student Entrepreneurship

- Academic Programs: 2,994 students (2,170 unique) enrolled across the BA in Enterprise Leadership, BBA in Entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship certificates; 337 MBA students completed advanced entrepreneurship coursework.
- Bedell Student Incubator: A 10,000 sq. ft. campus hub with offices, coworking, and intensive mentoring; supported 60 teams in FY25, contributing to 91 jobs and impacting 1,752 students since inception in 2004.
- Summer Startup Incubator: 12-week accelerator using Lean LaunchPad methodologies, daily lectures, and weekly pitch sessions advanced 11 team ventures of 14 students. Business Competitions: \$649,900 awarded through campus-wide pitch and business plan competitions to UI students, faculty and staff. Jacobson Institute for Youth Entrepreneurship: Delivered BizInnovator curriculum in 348 schools nationwide, reaching 18,628 students. Alumni-Student Mentoring Program: Alumni-Student Mentoring: 247 student–alumni mentor pairs enhanced students’ professional growth and entrepreneurial problem-solving skills.
- Okoboji Entrepreneurial Institute: Week-long immersion in entrepreneurship via a partnership with Iowa Lakes Corridor Development and other Iowa universities and colleges; 6 students participated in FY25 for a total of 208 students since inception
- Student Organizations: Entrepreneurial Honors Society Sigma Nu Tau supported 14 active members in FY25.

Statewide Entrepreneurship

- Venture School: Lean LaunchPad-based training offered statewide; 67 startups made up of 86 entrepreneurs received 3,283 hours of mentoring in FY25. Locations included Mason City, Iowa City/Cedar Rapids, Des Moines,

Dubuque, Quad Cities, and virtually. UI Small Business Development Center (SBDC): Served 414 clients, 12 new businesses, across 5 counties (Cedar, Johnson, Iowa, Poweshiek, and Washington); resulting in \$7.98M in equity raised, \$15.5M sales growth, and creation of 48 jobs. Institute for International Business (IIB): Partnered with 3 Iowa companies, across 3 counties (Johnson, Benton, and Linn), completing 3 consulting projects (4,560 hours) while providing 4 students with global business experience; providing strategic support in healthcare, consumer goods, and professional services. Business Consulting Program: 61 projects across 19 industries and 14 counties; 8,200+ hours of faculty–student consulting; provided hands on support and one-on-one consulting. Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Ventures Competition: Annual statewide competition awarding \$100,000+ to promising Iowa start-ups; Sponsored by UI JPEC in partnership with Pappajohn entrepreneurial centers at ISU, UNI, Drake and NIACC as well as the IEDA.

- NSF I-Corps Training Program: NSF I-Corps Training: Supported by a multi-year NSF I-corps federal grant and in a joint effort amongst the Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development, the UI Office of Innovation, UI Ventures, and IA JPEC. 5 cohorts trained 50 teams of 82 participants, with 1,000 hours of mentoring: resulting in 4 teams advancing to Nationals, securing \$200,000 in federal grants.

Statewide Entrepreneurship

- Regional Partnerships: Collaboration with multiple chambers of commerce, economic development groups, and community colleges across Iowa leveraging these networks to connect entrepreneurs with critical resources, mentorship, and funding opportunities.
- Accelerator Partnerships: Engagement with the Global Insurance Accelerator, Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses, Iowa Startup Accelerator, and TechStars providing specialized support, access to capital, and national networks for early-stage ventures.
- University Collaborations: Joint programming with ISU, UNI, Drake, NIACC, DMACC, Kirkwood, and others to expand entrepreneurship access, foster cross-campus innovation, and share research initiatives.
- Hawkeye Ventures: Established to act as a conduit to connect students, faculty, alumni, and investors through seed funding, mentoring, and events.
- National & Global Engagement: Active in GCEC, USASBE, NASVF, and InBIA; faculty and staff regularly present Iowa’s best practices on national and international stages ensuring JPEC’s programming remains at the forefront of entrepreneurial education and that its’ impact is felt beyond the borders of Iowa.

- **UI Center for Advancement**

- Aligns corporate partner recruiting efforts/talent pipeline creation within State of Iowa. Including internships, early talent and experienced hires (Boomerangs)

- Engage with economic development entities across the state- purchasing tables demonstrating the University of Iowa/Center for Advancement shows up for state, regional, local priorities.
- Provide access to UI faculty and staff, research, labs, institutes promoting partnerships for critical business needs and problem-solving encouraging invitation to RFP's and proposals
- Generates engagement and funding to advance the University of Iowa in support of efforts that build a stronger community and access a state flagship university via scholarships, peer mentors, mental health services and wrap around programs
- **UI Pharmaceuticals**
 - In FY25 UI Pharmaceuticals worked with ~100 different clients to manufacture and testing ~90 individual lots of material, resulting in ~\$16 million in total revenues UI Pharmaceuticals currently supports client programs across the United States as well as in Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America.
 - UI Pharmaceuticals completed start up Line 1 its state-of-the-art sterile manufacturing facility in August of 2024 and Line II in April of 2025. The new facility generated approximately \$1 million in revenue for FY25.
- **Center for Biocatalysis and Bioprocessing**
 - Oversaw the construction and installation of a custom designed, pilot-scale fermentor with a working volume of 1500 liters (≈400 gallons).
 - Installed a third ÄKTA Pilot chromatographic system.
 - Secured seed funding from the bio-based manufacturing program administered by Iowa State University. These funds are being used to support process development efforts for a potentially new CBB client. This putative client is an early-stage company that plans to have the CBB's bioprocessing facility serve as its manufacturing unit in the future.
 - Provided leadership to the NSF EPSCoR program focused on biomanufacturing of proteins for diagnostics, therapeutics, vaccines, and industrial reagents.
 - Funded additional pre-doctoral graduate fellowship to further support the T32-training grant in biotechnology awarded to the CBB from NIH.
 - Designed and implemented undergraduate internships in biomanufacturing. Two internships provided hands on experience in large scale fermentation to produce a protein designed to enhance cellular imaging. The other two undergraduate internships were awarded to non-science majors and provided them with experience in the marketing of the Center and its biomanufacturing capabilities.
 - Organized the fall CBB Conference and the spring Biocats Symposium.
 - Employed nearly 20 professional staff.
 - Participated in the annual meeting of the Iowa Biotechnology Association.
 - Manufactured commercial proteins for eight companies, including one in Asia and one in Europe.

- Hosted the CEO of a potential new client from Austria with the goal to manufacture pilot-scale quantities of novel biocatalysts engineered for commercial scale manufacturing of chemicals. Our goal is to begin these manufacturing campaigns in FY26.

- **UI Research Foundation**

	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
Disclosures	95	101	103	72	87	95
Licenses + options	37	47	48	47	29	53
Patent applications	146	123	188	175	121	124
Issued patents	76	86	80	58	69	97

Regents Innovation Funds Spent to Promote Economic Development in Iowa

- Protostudios: \$20,546 for personnel and general expenses
- UI Research Park: \$92,991 for BioVentures Center personnel, operating/general expenses
- UI Ventures and MADE: \$1,143,099 for personnel, consultants, student interns, award and general expenses

The University of Iowa recognizes the important role it plays in the state’s economic development ecosystem. The university is committed to improving the quality of life in Iowa through a sustainable cycle of research and creative activity leading to job and wealth creation in the State. Realization of these goals make Iowa a healthier, more prosperous, and attractive place to live. The university will continue to ensure that Federal, State and philanthropic monies invested in research is leveraged to develop new economic opportunities for Iowans.



University of Northern Iowa Annual Economic Development Report – FY2025

Section 1. UNI’s Economic Development Activities to Enhance Economic Growth in Iowa – Highlights and Summary

The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) provided economic development assistance to all of Iowa’s 99 counties for the 26th consecutive year. UNI’s economic development outreach programs are housed in the Business and Community Services (BCS) division and work toward supporting UNI strategic goal 3, to “Empower Communities to Shape Their Future.” Since 2000, BCS has engaged the entire university community in its outreach efforts, including faculty, staff, students, and alumni – all of whom play a critical role in Building a Better Iowa. Unique client interaction in FY2025 was 4,662, a record high for BCS outreach centers and programs.

Specific areas of service offered by UNI BCS include: entrepreneurship, community and economic development, market research, environmental research and sustainability, metal casting, and manufacturing 4.0.

Some exceptional recognition and milestones in the past year include:

- UNI’s Tallgrass Prairie Center celebrated its 25th Anniversary and hosted an open house with tours and demonstrations about native Iowa seeds.
- Advance Iowa and the Iowa Center for Employee Ownership worked with the Ford Foundation and Rutgers University to establish the Employee Ownership Partnership.
- Jennifer Trent, program manager for the Iowa Waste Reduction Center, was reelected to serve as President of the United States Composting Council.
- The Foundry 4.0 Center was recognized by the Steel Founders Society for its work with sensors and IoT in the castings industry.
- The Institute for Decision Making (IDM) was asked to assume the leadership role for the Iowa Rural Development Council for the next year during the executive director’s absence.
- Drew Conrad, IDM director, was recognized by the UNI Alumni Association for the distinguished alumni service award.
- The Center for Energy and Environmental Education was presented the Koob Award for Collaboration for its community gardens project.
- The Family Business Center recognized family businesses at a state level with a signed proclamation by Governor Kim Reynolds that declared June 23, 2025 to be Family Business Day in Iowa.

Summary of BCS’ key economic development program outcomes for FY2025:

Overall Outcomes

- Provided service to clients in all 99 Iowa counties with a total of 4,662 unique businesses, communities, nonprofit organizations, and governmental entities, and served an additional 43,032 unique visitors to IASourceLink.com.
- Reached more than 235,000 Iowans through BCS programs and projects.
- Engaged 152 faculty members and 214 students in the direct delivery of BCS client services, and another 3,077 students were reached by BCS programs.
- Leveraged each \$1 invested by the state with \$5 in private grants, contracts, fees or federal funding.

Summarized Impacts on the Iowa Economy

- Invested \$2 million in the Metal Casting Center’s on-campus foundry to create the most modern foundry on a university campus in the country.
- The Institute for Decision Making (IDM) assisted with facilitating two pilot communities as part of the Iowa Rural Vitality Coalition with Empower Rural Iowa, the Iowa Rural Development Council, Iowa State University, University of Iowa and Wellmark.
- More than 420,000 acres of public roadsides have been assisted by the Tallgrass Prairie Center with ecological integrated management services.
- Expanded the Irvine Prairie plantings by 160 acres and became the emerging Silos and Smokestacks Nation Heritage site.
- The UNI Family Business Center has now engaged 682 family-owned companies across the state with programming and guidance.
- Advance Iowa assisted 34 Iowa companies with employee ownership assistance and financial literacy.
- Green Iowa AmeriCorps provided energy efficiency services to 10,000 homes in Iowa and completed 6,000 projects through assistance from 2,700 volunteers and with 400 community organizations.

Entrepreneurship, Business Development and Incubation

- Delivered 7 webinars for Iowa businesses with 3,346 attendees covering new tax changes, social media marketing, business licensing and market information through the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center.
- Assisted 45 Iowa companies and conducted 27 seminars or presentations related to succession planning and employee ownership in all regions of Iowa through Advance Iowa.
- Partnered with the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) to serve 43,032 unique users through the Iowa SourceLink platform.
- Facilitated 28 peer group sessions for family businesses through the UNI Family Business Center.
- Incubated 12 student businesses in the UNI JPEC R.J. McElroy Student Business Incubator and 37 additional students were assisted as affiliate tenants.
- Served 291 new clients through UNI’s Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

Local Economic Development

- Provided strategic planning and comprehensive research assistance to 105 community partners, 11 additional regional groups, and 57 service providers and utility companies across Iowa through IDM.
- Assisted 2024 flood-impacted communities survey residents about their recovery needs and coordinated statewide service provider updates for the impacted communities.
- Conducted a statewide survey of tourism organizations and presented the results to assist the IEDA and its tourism industry partners.
- Coordinated the Leadership Exchange and Leadership Bootcamp for Empower Rural Iowa and the Iowa Rural Development Council.
- Trained more than 90 economic developers through the Heartland Economic Development Course.

Waste Reduction, Environmental Assistance, and Sustainability

- The Local Food Program (CEEE) served 2,900 individuals providing technical assistance and education on local food systems.
- Worked with the Resilient Iowa Communities project with city and county partners on 8 greenhouse gas and carbon sequestration initiatives.
- Distributed native seed for 46 county roadsides and more than 1,500 acres as part of the Tallgrass Prairie Center's (TPC) roadside vegetation project and provided technical support to farmers, landowners and professionals in all 99 Iowa counties.
- Certified 40 craft breweries across the state through the Iowa Green Brewery project and expanded the program to surrounding states.
- Provided one-to-one customized environmental technical assistance and on-site reviews through the IWRC to 164 Iowa small businesses and conducted 9 energy efficiency visits with small businesses.
- Expanded solar radiation modeling and urban heat monitoring for the entire state of Iowa by the GeoTREE Center.

Advanced Manufacturing and Market Research

- Trained 308 military painters at 5 satellite training sites through the STAR4D program.
- Served 20 Iowa foundries and supply chain companies with automation and Internet of Things (IoT) sensor technologies through the Foundry 4.0 Center.
- Completed a supply chain resiliency program with the Defense Logistics Agency to enhance the Department of Defense supply chain for sustainment parts.
- Hosted more than 850 visitors to demonstrate new Manufacturing 4.0 innovations and the digital twin at the Foundry 4.0 Center.
- Conducted 3 major seminars for the DoD supply chain related to Manufacturing 4.0 technical solutions.
- Provided market research and competitive intelligence to 10 Iowa companies and organizations by Strategic Marketing Services (SMS).

Section 2. Technology Transfer and Intellectual Property

FY2025	
	UNI
Number of disclosures of intellectual property	13
Number of patent applications filed	2
Number of patents awarded	1
Number of license and option agreements executed on institutional intellectual property	1
Number of license and option agreements yielding income	10
Revenue to Iowa companies as a result of licensed technologies	\$4,500,000
Number of companies graduating from UNI incubators (in total)	119
Number of companies in research parks and incubators	12
Number of new companies in research parks and incubators	8
Number of employees in companies in research parks and incubators	25
Royalties/license fee income	\$33,200
Total sponsored funding	\$36,300,000
Corporate-sponsored funding for research and economic development and revenue generation	\$1,030,000
Annual appropriations for economic development	\$1,466,419
Regents Innovation Fund	\$900,000

Section 3. Overview of UNI’s Economic Development Programs

UNI outreach services and community and economic development activities are outlined in a table format on the following four pages. The format provides a brief overview of each program, its purpose, types of clients served, outcomes from the past year, and some aggregate outcomes. Together, the programs served 4,662 unique businesses and organizations in the past year and another 43,032 individuals through the IASourceLink.com entrepreneurial development system and the Business Concierge.

Section 3. Overview of UNI’s Economic Development Programs (continued)

Services	FY25 Results	Cumulative Results
Advance Iowa (AI)		
<p>Rural/urban consulting program focused on small- and medium-sized existing businesses to provide succession planning, strategic planning, training, peer round tables</p> <p>Serves: Small and medium enterprises</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 45 companies assisted, 34 with employee ownership. ✓ 7 Industry 4.0 assessments. ✓ 27 seminars on succession planning, employee ownership, and business continuity. ✓ Hosted and supported 32 networking, educational and business assistance workshops/events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Project work with 215 SMEs, impacting 6,858 employees across the state in all quadrants and industries.
Family Business Center (FBC)		
<p>Programs and services for Iowa family-owned businesses including business succession, next-generation leadership development, peer learning and events</p> <p>Serves: Small and medium family-owned enterprises</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 152 companies assisted. ✓ 5-part seminar series for family-owned companies. ✓ Facilitated 28 peer group sessions. ✓ Annual hosted family workshop with 153 attendees. ✓ Annual hosted Family Workshop with 57 attendees. ✓ Service to clients in 56 counties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Worked with 682 small- and mid-sized family-owned companies across the state in all industries.
Center for Energy and Environmental Education (CEEE)		
<p>Technical assistance, educational programs and leadership in residential energy efficiency services, local food systems, improving community food security and environmental health, and sustainability efforts for K-12 schools</p> <p>Serves: Iowa residents, nonprofit organizations, local governments, school districts, and counties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CEEE environmental health staff organized 42 unique presentations across three initiatives that highlight the work of the program to provide actionable research to individuals interested in the nexus of human health, climate change, ecological sustainability, and harmful chemical exposures. This work conservatively reached over 30,000 individuals. ✓ The UNI Local Food Program served over 2,900 individuals including UNI staff and students, farmers, gardeners, AmeriCorps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Green Iowa AmeriCorps has provided energy efficiency services to 10,000 homes and educated 100,000 people. The program has completed more than 6,000 service projects alongside more than 400 community organizations and 27,000+ volunteers. ✓ Since its founding in 2015, the Nourish Iowa AmeriCorps VISTA Program has worked to eliminate poverty through food access initiatives across the state. And placed more

	<p>Service Members and host sites, and community members. The Garden in Every Lot program installed 52 gardens. The Veggie Voucher Program provided \$20,325 in fresh vegetables to families in the Cedar Valley. Nourish Iowa AmeriCorps VISTA members contributed 890 hours of community outreach.</p>	<p>than 50 VISTA members to host sites throughout Iowa. ✓ Over the past 16 years Green Iowa AmeriCorps has provided energy efficiency services to over 10,000 homes and educated over 100,000 people and completed more than 650 service projects.</p>
<p>Geoinformatics Training, Research, Education and Extension Center (GeoTREE)</p>		
<p>Geospatial technologies, education, research and outreach activities for federal, state, local and tribal agencies Serves: Federal, state, local and tribal governmental agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Developed high resolution land cover data for approximately 20% of Iowa for DNR. ✓ Carried out urban heat monitoring and modeling in 10 Iowa cities as part of Iowa Energy Center. ✓ Developed new and updated GIS database for Dry Run Creek Watershed. ✓ Developed high resolution new data products for the state of Iowa. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Project work with public agencies, academic groups/departments and private companies. Development and delivery of many geospatial data and custom applications serving a variety of stakeholders across Iowa.
<p>Institute for Decision Making (IDM)</p>		
<p>Hands-on community and economic development guidance and research Serves: Economic development organizations, chambers commerce, city councils, communities, utilities and others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Assistance and research provided to 105 community organizations, 11 regional development groups, and 57 services providers and utilities. ✓ Assisting with the facilitation of two pilot community planning processes utilizing the Comprehensive Wealth Capital Framework as part of the Iowa Rural Vitality Coalition. ✓ Assisted 2024 flood impacted communities to survey their residents about their recovery needs and coordinated statewide service provider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Served more than 865 communities, counties and groups in all of Iowa’s counties to date. ✓ Trained more than 1,500 economic development professionals through the Heartland Economic Development Course.

	<p>updates for the impacted the communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Coordinated the Iowa Rural Development Council's partnership with Wells Fargo for the Rural Business Initiative (RBI). 	
Iowa Waste Reduction Center (IWRC)		
<p>Free, confidential, non-regulatory environmental and energy efficiency assistance for small businesses, public entities, food waste reduction, and education.</p> <p>Serves: Small businesses in Iowa; food waste generators; military and industrial painters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Detailed one-on-one environmental assistance was provided to 164 Iowa small businesses, including 2 energy efficiency visits. ✓ Military painter training was conducted by IWRC staff and at 5 satellite sites training a total of 308 painters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provided detailed assistance or on-site review to 6,974 Iowa small businesses. ✓ Provided 5,392 certifications to military painters and DoD contractors.
John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (JPEC) and Small Business Development Center (SBDC)		
<p>Entrepreneurship education, business consulting & training, research, and capital investment programs serving entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Serves: Student entrepreneurs, faculty and staff, small and medium-sized businesses, entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurial service providers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ JPEC served 4,756 individuals. ✓ 12 student businesses incubated. ✓ 7 webinars hosted 3,346 participants. ✓ ISL website accessed by 43,032 unique visitors. ✓ SBDC served 291 clients. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The JPEC Student Business Incubator has provided space to more than 250 business owners since FY05. ✓ Since FY23, 4,354 students have learned about and crafted an elevator pitch through presentations by JPEC instructors. ✓ Since FY11, 77 business and non-profits have had their projects completed by Entrepreneurial Strategy students. ✓ Since FY12, over 530,000 unique users have been served on the ISL platform. ✓ Contributed to the start of 119 businesses.

Metal Castings Center (MCC) and Additive Manufacturing Center (AMC)		
<p>Metal casting technologies, applied research, testing, training and manufacturing 4.0 technologies</p> <p>Serves: Iowa casting users, foundries and foundry suppliers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provided technical assistance to 3 Iowa foundries and 16 additional foundries. ✓ Conducted DOD-sponsored research into Automation & robotics, IOT and Digital Twins production process. ✓ Led IMPACT 2.0 to support cast metal companies. ✓ Invested approximately \$2 million into modernization efforts of the Metal Casting Center’s foundry on campus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Over 2,350 industry-funded projects have been completed to date and more than 100 clients assisted with additive manufacturing, industry 4.0 and/or cast metals technologies.
Strategic Marketing Services (SMS)		
<p>Market research and analysis</p> <p>Serves: Businesses, entrepreneurs and nonprofit organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Completed five market research projects with 10 organizations. ✓ Assisted many local Iowa community organizations with market research including municipalities, economic developers, utility organizations and businesses. ✓ Provided consulting services to 10 Iowa organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Since 1990, market research and analysis services have been provided to 350 Iowa companies.
Tallgrass Prairie Center (TPC)		
<p>Coordination of county roadside managers, farmers and agricultural conservation professionals; native seed industry; educational materials on the tallgrass prairie ecosystem</p> <p>Serves: Iowa county governments, ag technical service providers/buyers, UNI and local educators, community, county conservation boards, and academic researchers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Distributed native seed for 46 county roadside departments totaling almost 1,500 acres (19,000 lbs. of seed). ✓ Provided technical support to landowners, farmers, and professionals in all 99 counties. ✓ Distributed prairie root banners and specimens to 20 schools and science museums. ✓ Expanded Irvine Prairie planting by 160 acres and became an emerging Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ More than 50,000 acres of Iowa counties rights-of-way have been planted to native vegetation. ✓ 65 Iowa counties use ecologically integrated management on 420,000 acres of public roadsides. ✓ Public and private land managers have access to an expanding inventory of Iowa-source seed including grasses, sedges, wildflowers, and shrubs blooming spring through fall.

Section 4: Regents Innovation Funding Report

The UNI FY2025 Regents Innovation Funding (RIF) projects and outcomes partially supported by this fund are summarized in a separate annual report, but also included in this annual economic development report.

Section 5: Collaborative Projects

Each year, UNI works closely with the other Regent institutions and state and federal agencies on collaborative projects. The following projects represent a sampling of these joint initiatives.

Advance Iowa / Center for Business Growth and Innovation – Partnerships Key to Success

- The IA-CEO Advisory Council includes leaders from the IEDA, ABI, Iowa Finance Authority, IRDC, Senator Grassley's office, and UNI faculty, as well as strong representation from Iowa's business community leadership. This collaboration with state leaders provides essential guidance, insights, and support to help IA-CEO educate and guide companies on their journey toward employee ownership. Their expertise strengthens IA-CEO's mission to foster a thriving, equitable business landscape across the state.
- The Hawkeye Community College Automation and Robotics Center, with its proximity to UNI's Foundry 4.0 Center and connection to UNI's Metal Casting Center, provides a unique opportunity to connect community college technology education with the demonstration of those technologies in a live environment. Advance Iowa facilitates connection and collaboration with Center leaders on presentations and programs for local/regional conferences and workshops, exchanging connection points to direct SMEs with needs in the best applicable direction, and generally supporting and promoting each other's capabilities to businesses looking for direction.

Center for Energy and Environmental Education (CEEE) collaborated on projects with ISU and UI

- CEEE provided services to Iowa municipalities to conduct a greenhouse gas inventory and best practice assessments across Iowa, including communities, such as Fairfield, Mt. Vernon, Decorah, and Urbandale with the goal of expanding in 2023-2024.
- CEEE worked closely with the ISU Extension Local Food & Enterprise Development program through a Planning grant from the Kellogg Foundation, to develop a plan to strengthen Iowa's food system.

The GeoTREE Center worked collaboratively with state agencies and multiple organizations

- The GeoTREE Center has historically worked with state agencies such as the Office of the State Archaeologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa Department of Economic Development – Iowa Energy Center, local agencies including Waterloo Water Works and the City of Waterloo, non-profits such as the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa and Cedar Valley Arboretum and Botanical Gardens, and has provided services to numerous private companies.
- The GeoTREE Center works collaboratively with various faculty, students, and staff from across the campus including academic departments such as History, Communications and Media, Earth Science, Biology, College of Business, and others, as well as groups on campus such as University Relations, Facilities Management, the Institute of Decision Making, and many others.

- In the last fiscal year, the GeoTREE Center worked on funded projects from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the Iowa Economic Development Authority – Iowa Energy Center, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Black Hawk Soil and Conservation District, and the City of Waterloo Traffic Operations

UNI Family Business Center (FBC)

- The UNI Family Business Center has partnered with the Renew Rural Iowa program of the Iowa Farm Bureau. This was a great way to bring together the expertise of the FBC with those of the team at Renew Rural Iowa. Our programs dovetail with each other in focus on Family Business and succession planning. This partnership allows us to reach new audiences with Renew Rural Iowa.
- The UNI Family Business Center works closely with economic development organizations across the state. This past year we have a successful collaboration with the Greater Dubuque Economic Development Corporation. We organized a succession planning event in that region of the state to bring more focus to the issues surrounding transition planning. Our program featured area family business owners on a panel of speakers sharing their transition stories and providing advice and insights to other families from the area.

Institute for Decision Making (IDM) collaborated with economic development partners

- IDM continued to partner with the Governor’s Empower Rural Iowa Initiative, the Iowa Rural Development Council, Iowa Economic Development Authority, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, the Wellmark Foundation, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, and the University of Iowa College of Public Health and the Iowa Rural Vitality Coalition to assist rural communities with improving the health and vitality of their residents in two pilot communities using the Comprehensive Rural Wealth Framework.
- IDM, in partnership with Strategic Marketing Services (SMS), assisted economic development and local leaders in the northwest Iowa communities of Rock Valley, Spencer, Sioux Rapids, Hawarden, and Rock Rapids in response to the historic floods of 2024. IDM helped to coordinate efforts among local, state, and federal agencies, creating and deploying a unified survey to homeowners and businesses impacted across several impacted counties. The effort resulted in 1,387 respondents providing information that helped direct response and recovery. The results were shared with agencies involved in disaster recovery, including: Governor Kim Reynolds, FEMA, Iowa Homeland Security, IEDA, IFA, SBDC, SBA, Red Cross, Iowa DOT, Iowa Workforce Development, USDA Rural Development, ISU CIRAS, MidAmerican Energy, and Rural Electric Coops.
- IDM assisted the Iowa Rural Development Council (IRDC) with short-term organizational leadership and management while the IRDC’s executive director was on a temporary leave of absence. This role included managing the IRDC Board, updating the organization’s bylaws, board governance and financial operations. IDM facilitated the development of a new IRDC strategic plan. IDM oversaw the development of a new grant program to support community leadership programs and administered the Rural Business Initiative grant program. IDM staff led the planning and execution of the 2025 Iowa Rural Summit, IRDC’s signature annual event, ensuring high-quality programming and strong sponsor engagement. IDM staff also coordinated and hosted the 2024 Leadership Exchange event.

Iowa Waste Reduction Center (IWRC) collaborated with state and national partners

- The IWRC partnered with the Iowa DNR and EPA Region 7 to host a Strategic Goals Workshop in November. This one-day, in-person workshop included presentations and discussions on a variety of relevant environmental topics.
- The IWRC partnered with EPA Region 7, the Iowa DNR, Missouri State University, Kansas State University and the University of Nebraska-Omaha to begin to expand the Iowa Green Brewery Certification to all of EPA Region 7.
- The IWRC is actively working with the Iowa DNR, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, and other stakeholders to rewrite administrative rules in regards to compost manufacturing and compost sales to help grow the industry across the state.

John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (JPEC) collaborations benefit students and community

- The UNI JPEC collaborated with the statewide JPEC network to offer pitch competitions to students and Iowa Ventures. 15 students pitched their businesses and students from Drake, NIACC, and UNI were awarded prizes to grow their business. In the Iowa Venture competition, 38 Iowa companies applied and 11 pitched for \$100,000 in prizes.
- In the past year, 46,378 Iowans sought information and business assistance was provided to 2,318 direct interactions with Iowa business owners via the IASourcelink referral services and the newly launched Resource Ranger in FY25. This new resource gives business owners and entrepreneurs easy access to a network expert that can help navigate all of the business resources in Iowa. The IASourceLink program continues as a strong partnership between UNI and the Iowa Economic Development Authority. This program provides assistance on business related issues and links Iowa's businesses with support resources from around the state.

Metal Casting Center (MCC) collaborates with regent institutions and technical organizations

- The 4.0 Center collaborated with Hawkeye Community College to provide workshops on the basics of robotics for the metal casting industry. Additional classes are in the process of being developed.
- The MCC collaborated with the Rock Island Arsenal and The Steel Founders Society of America on a project to investigate the effects of pressurized solidification on microstructure development and physical properties of steel.
- The Foundry 4.0 Center is collaborating with the Steel Founders Society of America to develop entry level internet of things (IOT) systems for the foundry industry. This work also required the development of presentation material to disseminate this practice to industry. Technology transfer was done during the workshop held in Pittsburgh at the ARM Institute, where 25 members of the SFSAS learned how to make their own IOT system.

Strategic Marketing Services (SMS) partners with Iowa organizations

- SMS worked in collaboration with IDM to assist the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership in assessing the starting and maximum wages for occupations in a variety of industries, assessing additional wage-related benefits such as pay increases and wage differentials, and understanding paid time off policies and benefits, workplace incentives, workforce trends, and community quality-of-life amenities. The goal of collecting this intelligence is to help the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership in attracting new talent to existing industry and prospective employers.

- SMS worked in collaboration with IDM and assisted Travel Iowa and ITIP in assessing travel organization's budget/funding, staffing, and salary and benefits information. The report was utilized by ITIP as their annual staffing and budget report to their membership. A total of 28 businesses and organizations completed the survey, which included destination marketing organizations, convention and visitors' bureaus, chambers of commerce, and local city or county economic development organizations.

Tallgrass Prairie (TPC) Partners with Iowa universities and associations

- The TPC provided technical assistance on prairie reconstruction in collaboration with ISU Extension, Iowa State University STRIPS team, the Iowa Monarch Conservation Consortium, as well as private companies, agricultural landowners, and federal conservation agencies. Activities included field day presentations across Iowa, widespread distribution of case studies on Prairie Strips at the North American Prairie Conference, and the Practical Farmers of Iowa annual conference. We shared research results on the Conservation Reserve Program's role in monarch butterfly recovery, and on the factors affecting native seed price and availability across the upper Midwest and Great Plains regions.
- The TPC worked closely with the Iowa Department of Transportation and dozens of Iowa county governments to supply enough seed to plant more than 1,100 acres of county Iowa roadsides with native plants, and to co-host an annual conference of roadside managers. We collaborated with native seed stakeholders including native seed companies, the Iowa DOT, the Iowa Crop Improvement Association, and the USDA Plant Introduction Center to supply source-ID seed for roadside planting and other prairie restorations across the state.