Meeting of Economic Development and Service to Iowa Subcommittee  
Friday December 11, 2015

Agenda:

- Introduction of Subcommittee Members
- Overview of University Strategic Planning Process
- Subcommittee Charge
- Brief Summary of Services to Iowans Offered by ISU Office of Economic Development and Industry Relations and by ISU Extension & Outreach
- Discussion of Economic Development and Service Needs in Iowa

Next meeting:

- Review “themes” of first meeting
- Develop 2 or 3 major strategic planning priorities for economic development and service to Iowa
- Begin discussing possible metrics for the priorities

Discussion:

- Iowa is a rural state, and we must not forget the importance of the smaller communities throughout the state
  - Cultivation Corridor, Creative Corridor, Quad Cities, Dubuque, and few other “pockets” do well – areas outside of these pockets have bigger challenges
  - Wealth/economic prosperity is not evenly distributed throughout the state

- Need to sustain or increase support mechanisms for existing companies – most of which are SMEs and privately (often family) held; these are the lifeblood of rural communities

- Developing and improving community leadership: help develop leaders and train leadership teams

- Metropolitan area manufacturers need workers who are willing to work on the factory floor. These are very good paying jobs, but young people today seem not to be interested or are not aware of the jobs and the compensation level.
  - Discussed Elevate Manufacturing program
  - Discussed new Future Ready Iowa program
  - Companies need workers who have the aptitude and right attitude for working in a manufacturing environment: need workers who show up for work, give their best effort, and follow instructions
  - Is there a role for ISU here in helping identify and/or develop prospective workers, particularly through programs that introduce youth to the various career and job opportunities that are available

- Workforce quality and quantity is probably the biggest and most universal economic issue in the state
How can we better connect Iowa students and graduates to Iowa companies? This connection should begin earlier, and ISU has programs that can and do support this; e.g., through youth programs such as 4H and through K-12 interaction with companies. It was noted that youth programs also help create a sense of “commitment to place” and thus can contribute to retaining talent within the state. Can ISU expand the number of internships with Iowa firms? ISU should reach out to companies and provide professional development initiatives for their workers, such as retraining, upgrading skills, etc.

• Technology transfer: increasing the transfer of ISU technology to Iowa companies should be a goal.

• ISU should be promoting more research partnerships with industry by increasing direct connections between faculty researchers and companies.

• ISU Research Park is a major asset to the region and state, and needs to be supported.

• ISU should emphasize and improve the coordination among its economic development entities, and communicate their capabilities and resources more widely and effectively (especially to economic developers throughout the state).

  o Marketing, communications and relationship building are important to furthering ISU’s contributions to state economic development.

• A reminder of the importance of agriculture was made, and discussion ensued about the university’s role in developing new ag-based products and markets to help strengthen the agriculture sector and add diversification to the state economy.

Summary of comments provided through university’s strategic planning website (through Dec. 11):

• Extension programs are a great way to reach out to Iowans, but the results of their efforts need to be communicated better. Would like to see more departments and programs like Extension so we are able to reach more people.

• Professors through their teaching and other interactions with students have an influence on students’ perceptions of Iowa as a place to work and live.

• Support student entrepreneurs by creating engaging and easily accessible avenues for students to grow their businesses.

• Continue to invest in the Research Park and grow it.

• Partner with vocational schools around the Midwest in order to bring trained vocational workers into Ames businesses.

• Iowa State needs to be a university that sets the bar for economic development around the country.