

Purdue Program Creates Jobs, Improves Economy

Purdue University fulfills its mission, in part, by serving as a strong economic partner with the state of Indiana. Purdue remains committed to improving the business climate, creating jobs, nurturing new businesses and supporting existing firms.

The university's Technical Assistance Program (TAP) plays a key role in accomplishing this mission. TAP has created or preserved nearly 4,100 Indiana jobs since its inception in 1986, according to the program's recently released annual report.

TAP supports Indiana companies by making faculty, staff and students available to offer free short-term assistance with product development, advanced manufacturing, information technology and management issues. TAP teams have completed more than 5,700 assistance projects to date and worked with 458 companies in 2003-04.

The economic impact of these partnerships between the university and Indiana businesses, along with state and local governments, has equaled \$63 million in capital investments and \$296 million in increased sales since 1986, according to the report.

Victor L. Lechtenberg, Purdue's vice provost for engagement, says TAP is making great strides toward Purdue's goal of stimulating the state economy.

"The Technical Assistance Program has been especially effective in serving life sciences, information technology and the manufacturing sector, where TAP has directed more than two-thirds of its services," Lechtenberg notes. "Many businesses have benefited from dramatic improvements. By connecting even more businesses to the expertise and vast resources at Purdue, we are confident that TAP will continue to improve the competitive positions of Indiana companies and provide the state a competitive edge in the global market."

Statewide impact

The Naval Surface Warfare Center at Crane in southwest Indiana, for example, asked TAP to help it improve the processing techniques of two metal components Crane supplies to the Navy. TAP referred Crane to Mysore Dayananda, professor of materials engineering, whose microstructure analyses enabled Crane to save \$25,000 in processing costs.

Griffin Analytical Technologies, Inc., a start-up company in the Purdue Research Park in West Lafayette, that has developed a chemical analyzer called a miniaturized mass spectrometer, asked TAP for help in determining the value of the company's technology. TAP introduced Griffin executives to Charlene Sullivan, associate professor of finance in the Krannert School of Management. Sullivan and a graduate student determined the valuation, which in turn helped Griffin to secure \$2.2 million in investments.

"Working through TAP experts, Griffin was able to obtain

a corporate valuation that was instrumental in finalizing our Series A financing," explains Dennis Barket Jr., Griffin Analytical Technologies founder and president. "The TAP project certainly proved to be a value-added experience for Griffin."

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources Southern Fisheries Research at Avoca asked for TAP's help in determining the most cost-effective means of conducting a user count on the Wabash River. TAP referred the department to Regina



Mysore Dayananda, professor of materials engineering, left, confers with Eric Sheid, project engineer for the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Crane Division.

Becker, manager of statistical consulting at Purdue. She and a graduate student determined that user counts obtained by air were not worth the expense.

Robert Ball, Fisheries Research biologist, says dropping that method of obtaining data saved his division a large amount of money.

"With TAP's help, we obtained a timely analysis of data and were able to make changes in the Wabash survey that saved the Division of Fish and Wildlife \$115,000," Ball states.

Funding increase sought

The state of Indiana provides approximately 75% of TAP funding, more than \$1 million annually. Through Purdue's Advancing Indiana's Manufacturing (AIM) Initiative, Purdue has requested that the Indiana General Assembly increase its support so TAP can assist even more companies throughout the state.

Purdue's AIM Initiative will provide assistance to Indiana manufacturing companies and other key sectors of the economy. In addition to statewide expansion of the Technical Assistance Program, the \$5 million request in state funding would contribute to Purdue's recently announced Center for Advanced Manufacturing, inauguration of an industrial technology bachelor's degree at seven School of Technology locations throughout the state, support for rural economic development and statewide outreach to advanced manufacturers via Purdue's branch campuses.

TAP director David McKinnis says an increase in financial support will be rewarded by even more economic growth.

"By investing in TAP in 1986, Indiana invested in its economic future," McKinnis claims. "I believe an increased investment will pay big dividends for years to come."

INFORMATION LINK

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