

2002 Campaign Initiative

Keeping Massachusetts Competitive... and Investing For The Future

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POLICY BRIEF:

HIGHER EDUCATION & SCIENCE

One in a series of policy briefs outlining the critical challenges facing Massachusetts's next governor — and ways to effectively address them.

Policy Brief Series:

- INFRASTRUCTURE:
 - ENERGY
 - TRANSPORTATION
 - WATER
 - TELECOM
- HIGHER ED/SCIENCE
- K-12 EDUCATION
- HEALTH CARE

Why is this important?

Massachusetts has always prided itself on the prestige and power of its higher education resources. Even as they meet their core educational mission, these public and private institutions now play an increasingly important role in sustaining and advancing the Commonwealth's science and technology based development economy. Our colleges and universities, small and large, train Massachusetts students and attract non-residents who often remain to become skilled employees and technological entrepreneurs. They draw federal other funding for the critical R&D that fuels the development of biotech, life science and technology firms - and the good jobs they provide - all across the state.

What are the challenges?

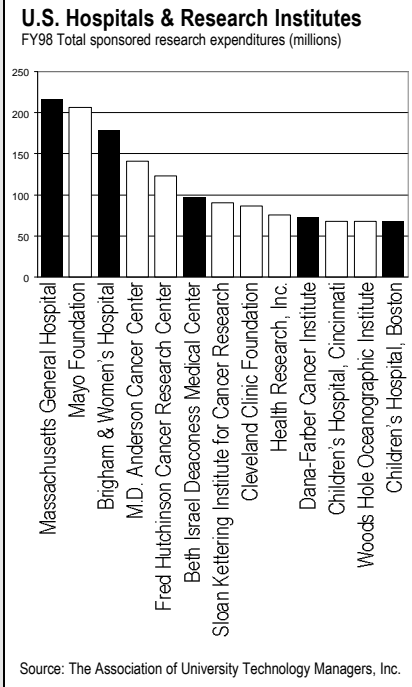
Other states and regions, many of which already enjoy inherent advantages due to lower housing and other basic costs, have acted aggressively to make science and technology and university-based research the cornerstones of their economic development. Massachusetts must recognize this serious threat, which plays out on several fronts:

- **Need more strategic alliances:** Other states have developed effective, long-term programs to coordinate efforts among and between their public and private universities and their private sectors.
- **Lack of prioritized capital and other investments:** Even though they also face serious budget problems, other technology states continue to prioritize spending on higher education, especially on research facilities and effective skills training.
- **More support needed for technology transfer:** Competitors have built sophisticated structures to help transfer R&D from their public and private campuses to local businesses.
- **Increasing competition for federal research dollars:** The efforts of other states and regions to draw federal research funds are an especially serious threat.

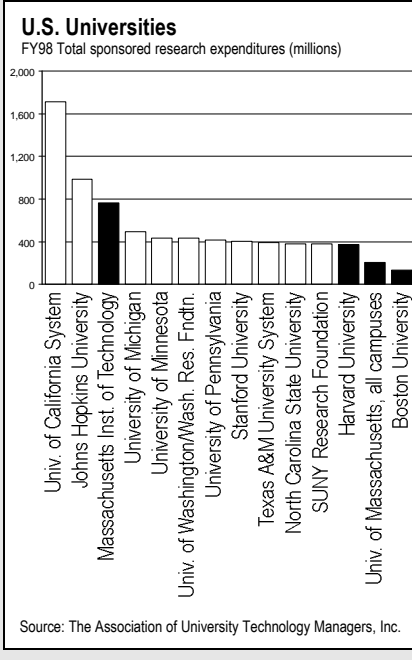
POLICY BRIEF: HIGHER EDUCATION & SCIENCE

FOCUS

Massachusetts life sciences research/teaching hospitals dominate.....



but our universities face a crowded competitive field for both life sciences and engineering/"hard" sciences.



What are the next governor's options?

The governor should use the current downturn to set a solid public stage for the economic recovery. The next administration must also balance current fiscal problems with the need for prudent, long-term investments that will position Massachusetts to thrive in a highly competitive, technology-driven economy. At a minimum, the next governor must:

- **Act to coordinate the state's research universities with its technology sector:** The governor should convene academic and private sector leaders to discuss shared needs and strategic opportunities, including greater cooperation between private and public universities. Rather than a one-shot summit, such coordination should be built into the state's ongoing economic development operations.
- **Accelerate the development of the University of Massachusetts as a research and technology leader:** Compared to other states, Massachusetts seriously underspends on higher education; in one recent survey, only two states ranked lower than us in terms of higher ed spending per capita. UMass must be strengthened both as a place for Bay State students to obtain an affordable education in needed skills and as an incubator for R&D that can keep the Bay State a technology leader.
- **Expand science and engineering workforce:** During economic downturns, Massachusetts loses current engineers and others employees as well as new college graduates to lower-cost regions with their own technology employers. If Massachusetts is to avoid another shortage of skilled workers during the next economic cycle, the next governor must work now with our universities and colleges to make sure they are producing enough science and technology graduates and with our private sector to help it identify its workforce requirements.
- **Play a stronger role in securing federal research dollars:** Other states have developed aggressive strategies to attract increasingly limited federal funds, including matching grants and other direct steps. Massachusetts, led by its governor, must act to revitalize and expand the state's current programs for seeking federal funds.

"Massachusetts thinks it has so much going for it that [its academic cluster] alone will sustain it. It won't. Other states are seeking to eat our lunch. The new paradigm lies in university collaborations with industry and with government."

-- Massachusetts High Technology Executive

Mass Insight convened several experts in the field of higher education to prepare this policy brief.

Mass Insight's 2002 Campaign Initiative is a unique briefing series for the media and statewide candidates and later the transition teams, focusing on critical competitive issues facing the Commonwealth. The issues that are the focus of the Initiative - Controlling Costs, Infrastructure (Transportation, Water, Energy, Telecommunications), Higher Education/Science, Health Care, and K-12 Education - have all been identified by business leaders as essential to creating new jobs and maintaining a positive business environment.