



News

Southern Polytechnic State University
1100 South Marietta Parkway
Marietta, GA 30060-2896

Contact: Ann S. Watson
770-528-7222
awatson@spsu.edu

New study places Southern Polytechnic in top ranks for economic value of higher-education

November 5, 2003.....Southern Polytechnic State University ranks among the top four University System of Georgia institutions in the additional annual earning power its graduates can attribute to their college degree. This finding is documented in a newly-released report on higher education in Georgia, a comprehensive study commissioned by the University System of Georgia's Intellectual Capital Partnership program (ICAPP).

The "Value of a University System of Georgia Education" study was conducted by researchers at the Georgia Institute of Technology and analyzes the earnings of nearly 90,000 University System students who graduated between 1993 and 1997. Findings indicate that a college degree from a University System of Georgia institution is worth an average of \$14,000 a year more than a high school graduate could expect to make; this is an increase that equates to nearly \$1 million additional earned income in the course of a working career for those with a college degree.

In the findings, issued statewide by the Board of Regents office today, additional annual earning power for college graduates compared to high school graduates ranged from \$5,706 for graduates of a two-year college up to \$19,362 for graduates of the Medical College of Georgia. Southern Polytechnic State University ranked in the top tier

of public institutions in average additional annual earning power. The top four in this category are Medical College of Georgia, \$19,362; Georgia Institute of Technology, \$18,621; Georgia State University, \$18,513; and Southern Polytechnic, \$17,034.

Overall, the study reports that increased earnings resulting from college degrees issued by the University System added \$1.25 billion to the state's economy during 1998, the most recent year for which data was available. The additional economic impact brought at least a million dollars per year to more than half of Georgia's 159 counties. The top two counties listed as gaining the most educational value through the employment of University System graduates were Fulton County with an impact of \$276.1 million and Cobb County with an impact of \$102.6 million.

Previous studies of the economic impact of the University System concentrated on expenditure data such as cost of construction, employing workers and purchasing power. The methodology used for this report statistically compares the annual earnings of higher education graduates to the annual earnings of high school graduates.

“The report's predictions on occupational demand for the future validates that Southern Polytechnic is on the right track with degree programs that enhance career opportunity and contribute to economic development and growth in Georgia,” says Dr. Ron Koger, SPSU's vice president for student and enrollment services and advancement. Among the shortages of labor existing in 12 specialties, the report points to scarcities continuing in software engineering and computer systems occupations, and selected information technology fields. Says Koger, “We feel we are ahead of the educational curve in these areas, having introduced new degree programs less than two years ago in Software Engineering at both the bachelor's and master's level; the only such degree available in the University System of Georgia. Koger states that this bachelor degree program has seen enrollment double in the past year. “At the same time,” he adds, “SPSU introduced a Master of Science in Software Engineering.”

There have also been enrollment increases in Southern Polytechnic's Computer Science and Information Technology degree programs and Koger says “these are the kinds of degree programs that meet industry demand for a highly-educated workforce.”

The full report on the “Value of Education” and the University System of Georgia's press release are available at <http://www.icapp.org/publications.htm>.