

BUILDING TALENT, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND INNOVATION CAPACITY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

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WHAT IS THE INNOVATION ACADEMY?



Founded in 2013 at the University of Florida

1,100+

ENROLLED STUDENTS

7

COLLEGES/DISCIPLINES

6

INNOVATION COURSES

15+

EVENTS A SEMESTER

**DEVELOP GRADUATES
WHO CAN:**

- Identify opportunities
- Solve complex problems
- Work across disciplines
- Launch new ventures
- Drive innovation inside existing organizations

THE INNOVATION ACADEMY MODEL

INNOVATION EDUCATION + MAJOR + EXPERIENCE

INNOVATION EDUCATION



- Design Thinking
- Creativity
- Entrepreneurship
- Leadership'
- Ethics

CO-CURRICULAR EXPERIENCES



- Real-world projects
- Community partnerships
- Industry-sponsored challenges



IMMERSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Students learn to:

- Critical Think
- Test ideas / Learn from Failure
- Collaborate in Teams
- Communicate – Written+Verbally
- Rapid Prototype



INNOVATION AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CONNECTING STUDENTS TO COMMUNITIES

Innovation Academy students
work on real challenges from:

- Cities
- Nonprofits
- Economic development organizations
- Small businesses
- Corporations



FROM IDEAS TO IMPACT

STUDENT INNOVATION IN ACTION

- Student-developed startup concepts
- Community innovation projects
- Design challenges
- Senior capstone solutions



CATALYST INNOVATION SHOWCASE

ANNUAL PUBLIC SHOWCASE WHERE STUDENTS:

PITCH
IDEAS

PRESENT
SOLUTIONS

ENGAGE
JUDGES

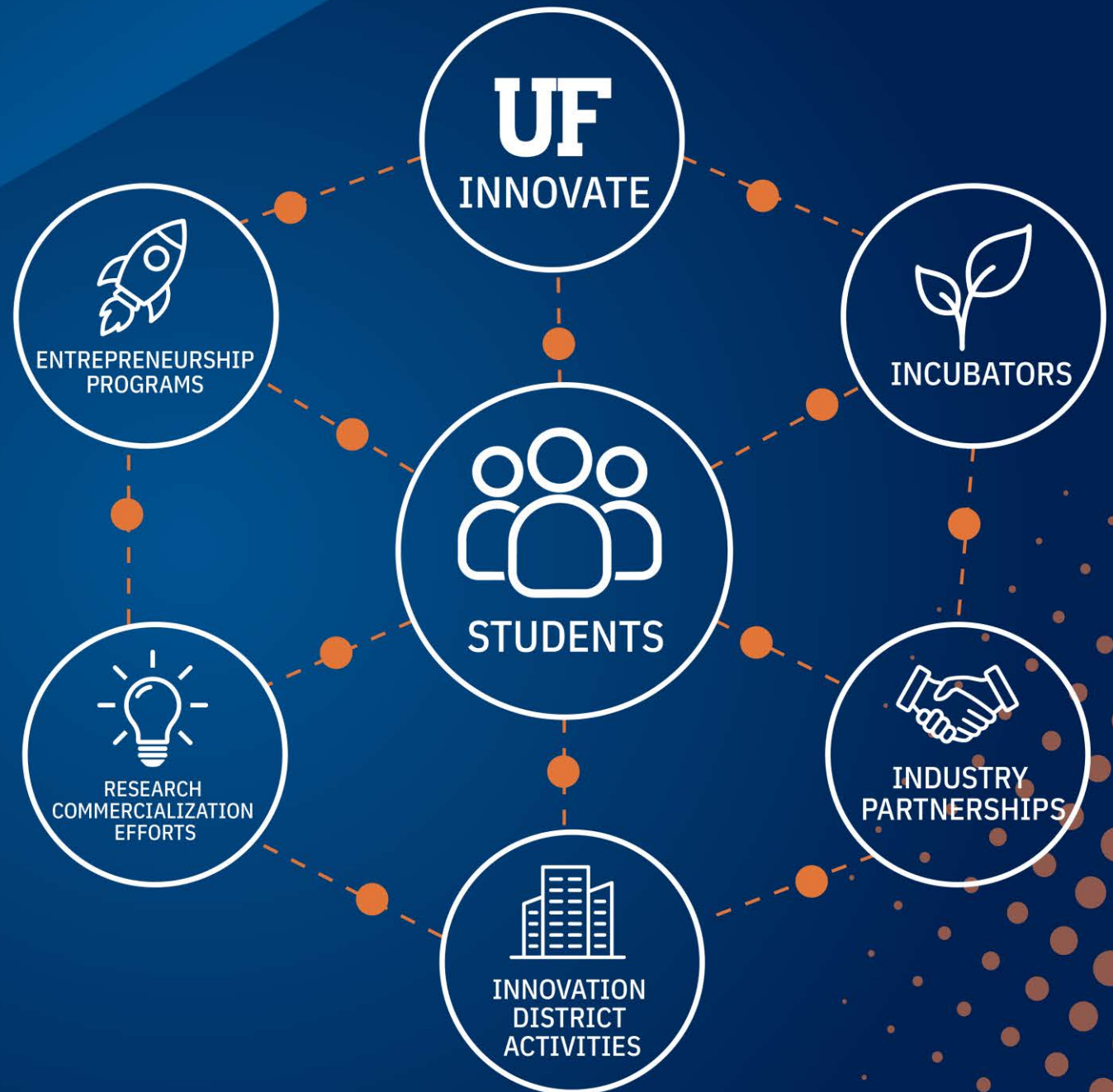
RECEIVE
FEEDBACK FROM
INDUSTRY
PROFESSIONALS

BUILDING AN INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM AT UF

INNOVATION ACADEMY AS PART OF A LARGER ECOSYSTEM

Innovation Academy connects students to:

- Entrepreneurship programs
(College of Business & Engineering)
- Incubators
(student, early-stage, biotechnology)
- Research commercialization efforts
(UF Innovate)
- Industry partnerships
(Various)



WHY INNOVATION EDUCATION MATTERS TO STATES

WHY STATES NEED INNOVATION TALENT PIPELINES



EDUCATION



**INNOVATION
SKILLS**



ENTREPRENEURSHIP



**ECONOMIC
GROWTH**

STATES ACROSS THE SOUTH FACE COMMON CHALLENGES:



- Weave in career readiness
- Workforce shortages in high-growth sectors
- Retaining talented students after graduation
- Supporting entrepreneurship outside major metropolitan areas
- Helping graduates become job creators, not just job seekers
- Connecting universities more directly to economic development

KEY TAKEAWAYS

WHAT STATES CAN DO

INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS ARE BUILT THROUGH **PEOPLE**, **PARTNERSHIPS**, AND **PERSISTENCE**—NOT JUST BUILDINGS.

PEOPLE

PARTNERSHIPS

PERSISTENCE

SUCCESSFUL INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS OFTEN SHARE:

1. Strong university-industry partnerships
2. Investment in experiential learning
3. Entrepreneurial education across disciplines
4. Support for incubators and accelerators
5. Regional collaboration among stakeholders

PUBLIC POLICY OPPORTUNITIES

- ✓ Incentivize university-industry collaboration
- ✓ Support student entrepreneurship
- ✓ Expand innovation opportunities into rural communities
- ✓ Strengthen talent retention
- ✓ Encourage cross-sector partnerships

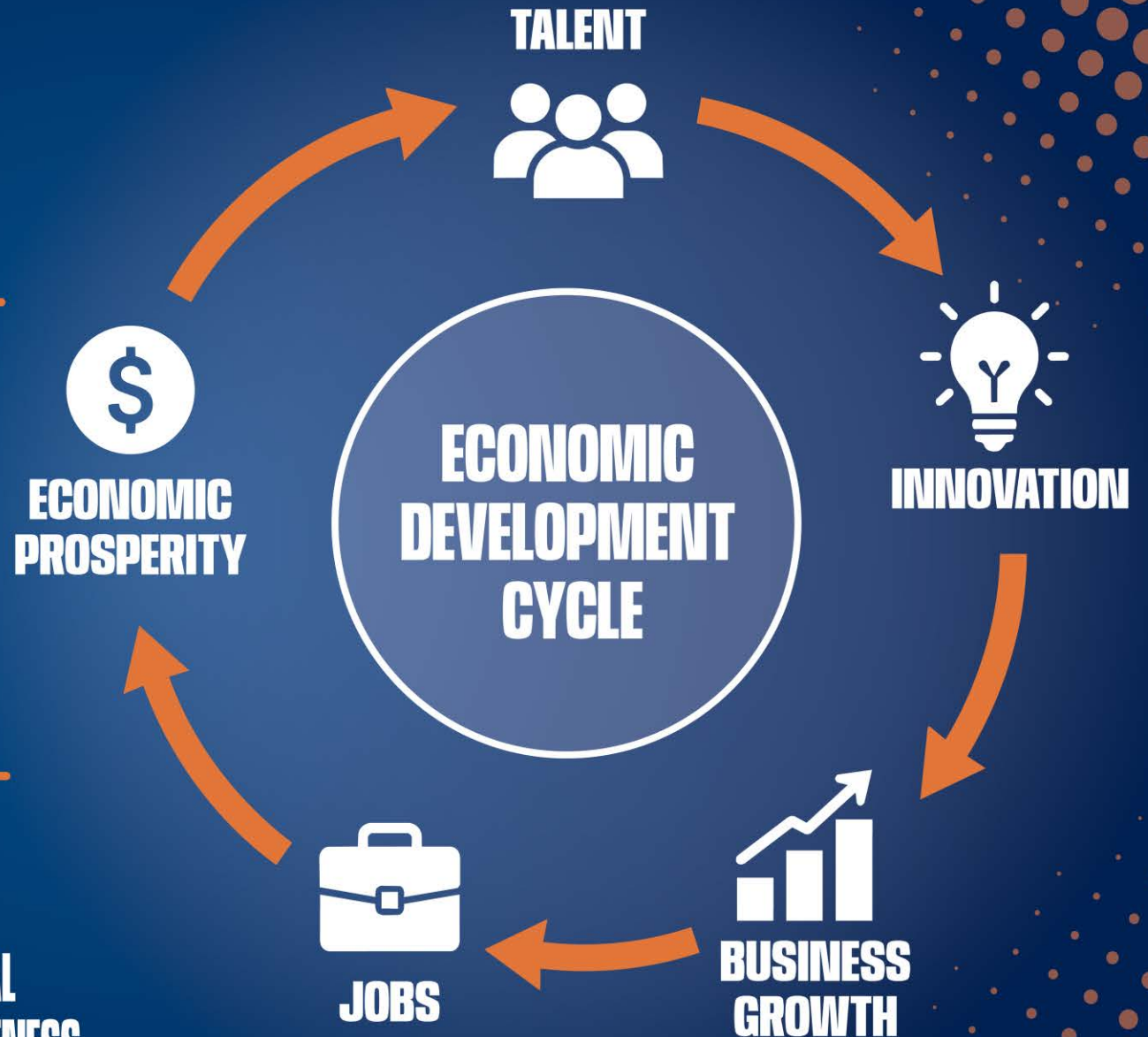
RETURN ON INVESTMENT

WORKFORCE
READINESS

BUSINESS
CREATION

TALENT
ATTRACTION

REGIONAL
COMPETITIVENESS



INNOVATION BEGINS WITH PEOPLE.

CREATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF INNOVATORS

The University of Florida Innovation Academy demonstrates that:

- Innovation can be intentionally taught
- Entrepreneurial thinking can cross all disciplines
- Universities can strengthen economic development
- Students can become both workforce contributors and future innovators

"Innovation Academy's primary economic contribution is not the startups it creates today, but the innovators, entrepreneurs, and problem-solvers it develops for Florida's economy over the next 40 years."



UF | A

CONNECT WITH THE INNOVATION ACADEMY



We're here to help you innovate, collaborate, and create impact.
Lets get connected!

CONTACT US



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