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## **URC to launch Global Detroit International Student Retention Program**

**New Economy Initiative of Southeast Michigan awards three-year, \$450,000 grant to harness talent, economic potential of foreign-born students at Michigan's colleges and universities**

**MACKINAC ISLAND, Mich.** – The New Economy Initiative of Southeast Michigan has awarded the University Research Corridor (URC) a three-year, \$450,000 grant to launch the **Global Detroit International Student Retention Program** to retain international talent in the region. The program is based on recommendations outlined in a May 2010 Global Detroit study funded by the New Economy Initiative. The objectives of the Global Detroit International Student Retention Program include:

- Marketing the region to international students from the moment of first contact to graduation
- Recruiting employers to hire international students
- Navigating immigration legal barriers
- Developing an ongoing presence and relationships with participating universities, international students, and related international organizations

According to URC Executive Director Jeff Mason, the Global Detroit International Student Retention Program directly supports the URC's mission to transform, strengthen and diversify the state's economy. It also cooperatively links the URC with other college and university partners in Michigan to achieve this shared goal.

“Michigan's reinvention requires us to retain the best talent we can,” Mason said, “regardless of whether those students hail from Michigan or come here to study in our

great universities. By attracting and retaining the best and brightest, we can accelerate the pace of change to a high-tech, highly skilled knowledge-based economy.”

Key findings of the Global Detroit report reveal that:

- Michigan has more than 23,500 international students -- the 8<sup>th</sup> largest population of international students of any state.
- International students contribute nearly \$600 million annually to our local economies.
- Immigrants file nearly 50 percent of Michigan’s international patents and are three times as likely to start a business.

According to New Economy Initiative Director David Egner, the Global Detroit International Student Retention Program is an appropriate next step in response to these compelling factors. Egner said he concurs with Global Detroit’s recommendation that international student retention promises to “increase the prosperity of the region, as well as the number of high-tech firms...[and] make the region more innovative.”

“Not only can these students improve the overall education levels of the state’s workforce,” Egner said, “but, because Michigan’s international students overwhelmingly excel in critical STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), they can contribute to the growth of emerging sectors in Michigan’s new economy.”

The Global Detroit Study noted research by Vivek Wadhwa at Duke University and Anna Lee Saxenian at the University of California-Berkeley, which shows that “foreign born talent already has had a profound impact on Michigan’s tech economy with an estimated 32.8 percent of all the high technology firms created in the state from 1995-2005 having at least one immigrant founder.”

Michigan Governor Rick Snyder publicly announced his support for retention of international talent as part of his strategy for economic recovery. “In my State of the State address this year I called for us to establish an exciting new initiative to encourage immigrants with advanced college degrees to come to Michigan to live and work,” said Snyder. “This effort will complement my Global Michigan Initiative. I am pleased that NEI has entrusted the URC to begin efforts in southeast Michigan to retain international students. Immigration made us a great state and country. It is time we embrace this concept again as a way to speed our reinvention.”

# URC UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CORRIDOR

The **Global Detroit International Student Retention Program Strategic Partners** include Eastern Michigan University, Lawrence Technological University, Michigan State University, Oakland University, University of Michigan, University of Michigan – Dearborn, Wayne State University as well as the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA – Michigan), the Detroit Regional Chamber, The New Economy Initiative of Southeast Michigan and Michigan’s University Research Corridor.

## **About the URC**

The University of Michigan, Michigan State University and Wayne State University formed the URC to leverage their collective assets, encourage collaboration, and increase business partnerships, with an overarching goal of accelerating statewide economic development. The URC has a net economic impact on Michigan’s economy of \$14.8 billion.

For more information on the URC, visit: [www.uremich.org](http://www.uremich.org)