



Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) Universities Program

Maximizing the economic and societal impact of higher education institutions through talent, innovation, and place

IEP Universities Award Application Guidelines

(NOTE: An institution must first earn the IEP University Designation before its able to compete for an award. Designation guidelines may be found on the [APLU website](#).)

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About APLU



About APLU: Founded in 1887, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is North America’s oldest higher education association serving 242 public research and land-grant universities, university systems, and affiliated organizations in all U.S. states, the District of Columbia, four U.S. territories, as well as in Canada and Mexico. APLU works with its members and national partners to strengthen and promote the work of public research universities through funded projects, research, policy, and advocacy from its offices in Washington, DC. APLU engaged senior leaders in its work including presidents and chancellors, provosts, VPs for research, governmental affairs leaders, chief communication officers, senior diversity officers, senior international officers, data and business officers, Cooperative Extension directors, deans of agriculture, chief economic and community engagement officers, senior student affairs officers, and others.

About CECE: APLU’s [Commission on Economic and Community Engagement \(CECE\)](#) is convened by APLU’s Office of Economic Development and Community Engagement (OEDCE) which was established to lead and coordinate APLU’s mission pillar of “expanding engagement.” CECE is APLU’s primary member body convening chief economic and community development leaders as well as presidents and chancellors, senior research officers, provosts, public and government relations officers, and other senior administrators who are responsible for planning, executing, or communicating university economic and community engagement. CECE provides member governance for the IEP Universities program.

IEP Awards Submission Overview

APLU’s Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) Universities Program is two-part: First a **designation process** and then an annual **awards competition**.

The **IEP University designation process**, which was designed by APLU’s [Commission on Economic and Community Engagement](#), helps institutions better know, measure, and tell their economic engagement impact and demonstrate a substantive, institution-wide, and sustainable commitment to regional economic engagement. “[Economic engagement](#)” comprises university efforts across **talent** and workforce development, **innovation** and entrepreneurship, and **place** development through community engagement, public service, and outreach. The IEP designation identifies institutions working to advance the economic and societal well-being of their states, regions, and the nation through a variety of efforts. Designees have worked through an intensive institutional self-study process, collaborating with internal and external stakeholders to identify the strengths of its economic engagement enterprise as well as areas for growth and improvement. By earning the IEP University designation, institutions codify their

economic engagement work and learn strategies to more effectively “know, measure, and tell” around university-based economic engagement.

The **IEP University awards competition** is open to all [IEP University designees](#). Again, an institution must first earn the designation before its eligible to apply for an award. Whereas the IEP designation recognizing institutional commitment to economic development, IEP Awards recognize particular case studies or projects, programs, and initiatives that have *innovative, exemplary* and *impactful* work in economic engagement. Each year at the APLU Annual Meeting, **four** prestigious awards are given to celebrate exemplary work in economic engagement:

1. The **Talent Award** for excellence in promoting 21st century skills, life-long learning, and meeting regional workforce development demands.
2. The **Innovation Award** for excellence in building innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems, technological commercialization, research parks, and industry-engaged research allied projects.
3. The **Place Award** for excellence in public service, outreach and extension, and community engagement that contribute to social, cultural, or community development.
4. The **Economic Engagement Connections Award** is the **top award** in the competition. It’s given for exemplary overall economic engagement case studies and, most importantly, the demonstration that the institution is leveraging and connecting across efforts in Talent, Innovation, and Place. Judges select a Connections award winner from entries to all three award categories, identifying a submission that transcends submission categories and **demonstrates synergistic leveraging of assets and impact areas spanning award categories (“connections” between and among at least two of the categories of Talent, Innovation, and Place.)**



Recognitions for finalists, award winners, and applicants

- Six finalists are publicly announced during the [CECE Summer Meeting](#), APLU’s signature conference for economic and community engagement leaders, as well as in a press releases coordinated by APLU and finalist institutions. Finalists also present during the [APLU Annual Meeting](#), the world’s largest convening of public university presidents, provosts, vice-presidents and their senior staff, which is when award winners are publicly announced.
- Awardees receive a commemorative plaque, along with a certificate, and a logo that can be used in the university’s publications, websites, grant proposals, and government relations materials to promote the institution’s recognition as a leader in economic engagement. Award winners are also showcased on the APLU website, through a press releases for finalists, another for award winners, and via CECE’s blog and newsletter.
- In addition to the recognitions above, the winner of the IEP Connections Award is given a complimentary CECE Summer Meeting registration for the following year.
- Lastly, all applicants’ award case studies, whether or not they were selected as a finalist or award winner, are included in APLU’s [IEP case study library](#) for promotion and sharing.

Defining Innovation and Economic Prosperity: Since “Innovation” and “Economic Prosperity” are central phrases in this program, it is important to clearly articulate the intended meanings:

- **“Innovation”** in the context of economic development often refers to technology transfer and other ways of making the results of scientific research relevant and useful. More broadly, “innovation” means new or novel methods, ideas, products. While many applicants will highlight examples of the first definition of innovation, the **word “innovation” in the title of this award is also meant to suggest that exemplary practices are innovative, exemplary and sustainable**, whether they be in technology transfer, entrepreneurship, in talent and workforce development, or in university contributions to the social, cultural, and community aspects of economic development or engagement. It is also important to note that for something to be an “innovation,” it needn’t be new or novel to the field as a whole—an institution adopting a practice from somewhere else, representing a new or novel practice for the adopting institution, can be considered to be implementing innovation.
- **“Economic prosperity”** is also defined broadly for the purposes of the award. Most conversations about economic development focus on expanding financial wealth. Helping to promote and sustain economic prosperity is an important goal of university economic engagement efforts. Financial prosperity, however, is tightly interconnected with the development of human and social capital, and with the nurturing of community and cultural assets. “Economic prosperity,” for the purposes of this award, means attention to building value in all of these areas mentioned.

Eligibility

- Only institutions that have earned APLU’s IEP designation are eligible to apply for awards.
- An institution may submit multiple applications for the award categories per submission cycle (the top-prize Economic Engagement Connections award winners are selected from category

award finalists). Additionally, an institution is eligible to win only one award per submission cycle (i.e. An institution cannot win both a category award and Connections award in the same year – this is a new policy as of 2018).

- **Institutional equal opportunity:** APLU affirms that all institutions of higher education can and must maximize their economic and societal impact through economic engagement, regardless, of the size of the institution, its enrollment, research portfolio or other attributes. All IEP designees are encouraged to submit award applications. Judges are appropriately coached on the importance of evaluating case studies while being mindful of resources available to the given institution.

Award Application Submission Deadlines

Reminder: A university must be a recipient of the [IEP University designation](#) (a separate application and submission process) to be eligible to apply for the award.

- **Deadline to declare intent to apply for an award:**
 - Complete the [intent to apply form](#). Intents allow APLU to organize the appropriate number of judging panels ahead of the review cycle.
 - Upon declaring intent to apply, all participating universities will receive the IEP awards application fillable PDF form (applications may be prepared in advance using the information and rubric below).
- **Applications for IEP awards are due COB Pacific Time on April 8, 2020.**
 - Completed application forms will be completed and emailed to IEP@aplu.org.
 - Applicants will be informed of their status no later than mid-May 2020.

Award Application Contents

Award applications will include two parts and should be no longer than 4000 words total (distributed as indicated below):

1. **Institutional Economic Engagement Overview** (up to 1000 words)
2. **Case Studies** (three case studies, up to 1000 words each)

1) Institutional Economic Engagement Overview: The Institutional Economic Engagement Overview will provide an overview, context, and background for a description of measured impact in the Case Studies.

Your Institutional Economic Engagement Overview should briefly address—in 1000 words or less—the following items (please include a heading for each item). Please address each of the three items described below. Note that you will not necessarily be able to answer every one of these questions. Focus your overview on those questions that seem most salient to your institution’s accomplishments in the award category for which you are applying. Note also that you will likely be able make use of material from your designation submission as a foundation for addressing these items.

- **University Economic Engagement Vision and Definitions (200 words max):** How does your institution define economic engagement? For what purposes does the institution undertake economic engagement efforts? How do the ideas of “innovation” and “economic prosperity” (see discussion of these terms above) play into university economic engagement efforts?

- **University Accomplishments in Award Category (500 words max):**
 - How can the university’s accomplishments in economic engagement best be described, overall? What have been the key outcomes?
 - What are your institution’s strengths and accomplishments in the category to which you are applying (talent, innovation, OR place)? How do activities in this domain contribute to the university’s overall economic engagement enterprise?
 - What distinguishes the selected case studies as exemplary accomplishments of the institution in the category to which you’re applying? Do they share specific hallmarks or best practices?
- **Connections (300 words max):** Although you are applying for the award in one category, your application will be considered for the top award—the IEP Economic Engagement Connections Award. How is your university building connections between and among the domains represented by the category in which you are applying, and the other two domains? What have been important factors for making these connections? How is the university “linking and leveraging” engagement activities across the three areas for maximum impact?

2) Case Studies: Your award submission will include **three** case studies (up to 1000 words each) of what you consider to be exemplary accomplishments of the institution and its economic engagement enterprise. These accomplishments may have been identified as part of the self-study process you undertook to garner the IEP Universities designation, or are otherwise known to reflect the institution’s strengths in economic engagement.

Your case studies should focus on the category to which you are applying. However, remember that you are looking for case studies that demonstrate the extent to which your university is making connections across talent, innovation, **and** place, helping you compete for the “Connections” award. While your focus should be on highlighting your institution’s strengths in the one domain represented by the category you are submitting for. Position yourself for the top award by illustrating connections across that domain and at least one of the other domains.

- *Web Publication.* All case studies submitted for the IEP Universities awards program will be published in the online IEP library, for sharing stories about university accomplishments in economic engagement and disseminating effective practices.
- *Purpose of the Case Studies.* Create concise stories that “show, don’t tell” ways in which your university has had an impact on innovation and economic development in your state. These stories are “proof points” that can be used as anecdotes to demonstrate impact.
- *Length.* Include up to 1000 words that tell the essence of the story, with a link or links to a fuller story or more information (see “Link to More Information” below). Tables, graphs, and/or charts are not included into the total word count. Be sure to put page numbers on the bottom right hand corner of your submission.
- *Tone.* For maximum credibility, focus on the facts and avoid “over selling.”

- *Illustration.* Required. Each story must be accompanied by at least one photo or drawing that has a clear center of interest, draws attention, and captures the essence or a key aspect by telling the story. No simple head shots of people. Please provide a high-resolution version of your image.
- *Metrics.* Required. Each story must be accompanied by at least one quantitative measure of the described impact. The metric you use is at your discretion—use a figure or figures that are most appropriate to the story. We recommend that you consider using one or more of the metrics included in the APLU CECE “Measures of Economic Contributions” guide, part of CECE’s [Economic Engagement Framework](#). Provide good information about how your data were obtained and how the measure describes the impact related by your story (this information can be included as a footnote and needn’t count in the 1000 words of the body of your story).
- *Link to More Information.* Provide interested readers with an opportunity to learn more about the activities highlighted in the case study by including a link or links to:
 - Websites and/or other social media outlets
 - Formal or informal reports on the activity or project
 - Articles in university publications
 - Press clippings
 - Videos
 - Blogs

Suggested Topics for Case Studies

There are many possible developments at universities that contribute to impact on innovation and economic development in a region.

When published on the web, case studies will be categorized and “tagged” to make for easy browsing by subject. At the broadest level, the categories of “Innovation” (for case studies highlighting support for entrepreneurship, applied research, technology transfer, commercialization, etc.), “Talent” (for case studies focusing on education and workforce development efforts), and “Place” (for case studies highlighting social, cultural, and community contributions to regional development) will be used. Appropriate sub-categories and other tags will be applied.

Some ideas:

- A promising/successful spinoff company based on university technology (potential tags: Innovation, spinoff, technology)
- A profile of a successful alumni entrepreneur or business leader (potential tags: Talent, Innovation, entrepreneurship)
- A profile of a company that regularly hires alumni, and attributes its success to that talent (potential tags: Talent, jobs)
- A novel program or activity designed to have an impact on innovation or the economy
- A particularly productive collaboration with industry
- A university investment or commitment that has implications for the economy
- Faculty being promoted and/or tenured on the Scholarship of Engagement
- Novel new courses designed to spur innovation, creativity, or entrepreneurship among students
- Student initiatives that make a difference (a solar car team or venture fund)
- A major grant or award that strengthens the region’s innovative capacity or potential

- Business plan competitions that create new start-up companies
- A sustained effort that creates new jobs or economic opportunities as part of your institution's economic growth engine
- Collaborations among universities that can lead and sustain economic development
- Expert commentary—insights on major trends and issues having to do with entrepreneurship, innovation, and economic development in the state
- Examples of student capstone projects or civic activities that serve the mission of the college or university by helping keep jobs, creating new economic opportunities that did not exist before and/or improve the quality of life for people the institution serves
- Surveys/study results—anything on economic or workforce trends, alumni entrepreneurship, economic development
- Successful collaborative efforts to lure or grow new/existing companies into the region and/or state

Key Questions for Case Studies

The following are the sorts of questions that can help uncover thoughts and approaches to choosing and writing a case study that will capture and reward reader interest.

- In one sentence, what's the story?
- Exactly what's new, different, or unique about this?
- What impact has it had? How do you measure impact, or how will you measure impact?
- Could it have happened without the university?
- What barriers had to be overcome? How?
- Why should people care about this? How will it affect their lives?

Judging Criteria

There are four award submission judges' rubrics—one each for the three categories of Talent, Innovation, and Place as well as the fourth top-prize Connections Award.

The rubrics, included below, will be used in scoring each institution's submission. In selecting winners, judges will take into account both the total scores for institutions, and will also consider the category (talent, innovation, or place) score as distinct from the Connections score. A total of 20 points is possible—up to 10 points in the category, and up to 10 points for Connections:

- **0 = not enough information** to score this category
- **1 – 3 = Low** reflection of category in submission
- **4 – 7 = Medium** reflection of this category in submission
- **8- 10 = High** reflection of this category in submission

Based on the criteria descriptions, judges will look for evidence of emphasis on the category in the institutional economic engagement overview and in your case studies. Judges will consider both:

- The extent to which the university demonstrates capacity to deliver the kinds of programs/efforts suggested by the category

- The extent to which the submission case studies demonstrates *exemplary* and *innovative* programs and practices in the category.

Judges will also assess the extent to which the case study is leveraging assets across one or more of the intersections of talent, innovation, and place for consideration of the top-prize IEP Connections Award. Please see descriptions of the connections award review criteria described below.

The award rubrics were developed based on a taxonomy included as part of APLU’s [Economic Engagement Framework](#). Applicants are encouraged to review one publication in particular, [Higher Education Engagement in Economic Development: Foundations For Strategy and Practice](#), which was produced jointly by APLU and the University Economic Development Association.

IEP Universities Award Judges’ Rubric: TALENT Category

Category	Score
<p>The submission demonstrates that the university has a capacity for economic engagement efforts in talent and workforce development, such as (not necessarily all of the following):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing human capital for the 21st century Knowledge Economy, whether through formal, credit-bearing programs or informal teaching and learning modes: short-format education and training, experience based education, mentoring, or other forms of teaching and learning • Connecting theory and practice in learning experiences • Taking responsibility for cradle-to-grave talent development, including the effective education of children and the facilitation of lifelong learning <p>Examples of the types of talent development programs that might be described: active alignment of curricula to industry/employer needs (creating competency maps, building customized programs); professional programs; experiential education programs (internships, cooperative education, service learning); senior capstone projects.</p>	[Enter score 0 – 3.]
<p>The submission demonstrates that the university is undertaking exemplary and innovative programs and practices in talent development (note that “innovative” can be new to the institution without necessarily being new to the field).</p>	Enter score (0-7)
<p>The submission demonstrates that that the university is thinking about economic engagement broadly, pursuing efforts that transcend the talent category and include connections between talent development and at least one of the other domains of innovation and place.</p> <p>The submission suggests that the institution is considering how to reach a higher scale of impact by linking and leveraging economic engagement activities, both within the talent domain and across domains of talent, innovation and/or place.</p>	[Enter score 0 – 10.]

IEP Universities Award Judges’ Rubric: INNOVATION Category

Category	Score
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<p>The submission demonstrates that the university has capacity for economic engagement efforts in innovation- and technology-based economic development and entrepreneurship, such as (not necessarily all of the following):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moving from knowledge creation to knowledge transfer and application in ways that are useful and relevant to society • using intellectual, creative, and business processes—from ideation to implementation • applying new knowledge to solve problems of identifiable markets • adopting a collaborative, multi-disciplinary, problem-solving intellectual orientation • identifying and monitoring economic, technological, social, policy, artistic, or cultural outcomes <p>Examples of the types of innovation development programs that might be described: use-inspired research (applied, translational, problem-oriented, industry-contracted); technical assistance services/programs; proof of concept programs and funds (product development, comparison, and testing; prototyping; experiment analysis; market research and positioning/strategy); technology transfer/commercialization; business formation, incubation, and acceleration; business capital funds/sources; business support for entrepreneurs; place-based strategies to support innovation (collaborations/shared facilities; incubators or accelerators; research/technology parks; testing laboratories); inclusion of invention, patenting and technology transfer in faculty promotion and tenure guidelines.</p>	<p>[Enter score 0 – 3]</p>
<p>The submission demonstrates that the university is undertaking exemplary and innovative programs and practices in innovation/entrepreneurship (note that “innovative” can be new to the institution without necessarily being new to the field).</p>	<p>[Enter score 0 – 7.]</p>
<p>The submission demonstrates that university economic engagement efforts transcend the innovation category and include connections between innovation/entrepreneurship and at least one of the other categories of innovation and place.</p> <p>The submission suggests that the university is thinking about economic engagement broadly, and working to connect efforts across talent, innovation, and/or place.</p> <p>The submission suggests that the institution is considering how to reach a higher scale of impact by linking and leveraging across economic engagement efforts.</p>	<p>[Enter score 0 – 10.]</p>

IEP Universities Award Judges’ Rubric: PLACE Category

Category	Score
<p>The submission demonstrates that the university has capacity to deliver <u>economic engagement efforts in social, cultural, or community development</u>, such as (not necessarily all of the following):</p>	<p>[Enter score 0 – 3.]</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating smart places where people want to live, create and take jobs, raise their families, participate in civic life, and contribute to community advancement • attention to the health, education, environment, housing, and entertainment needs of community members • cultivating networks and connections that build community and competencies • Helping citizens practice good government and work to assure equity of opportunity and social justice <p>Examples of the types of place development programs that might be described: partnering for pre-K to 12 education; health care facilities and wellness programs, arts and cultural amenities; sports and recreation amenities; environmental sustainability efforts; community development programs; downtown development; rural development; public safety; local government training/leadership programs; inclusion of scholarly community engagement in faculty promotion and tenure guidelines.</p> <p>Please note: Place-based strategies to support innovation (collaborations/shared facilities; incubators or accelerators; research/technology parks; testing laboratories) are best suited to the Innovation category (but may have important connections to Place if it has social, cultural or community development dimensions).</p>	
<p>The submission demonstrates that the university is undertaking <u>exemplary and innovative</u> programs and practices in place development (note that “innovative” can be new to the institution without necessarily being new to the field).</p>	<p>[Enter score 0 – 7.]</p>
<p>The submission demonstrates that university economic engagement efforts transcend the place category and include connections between place and at least one of the other categories of innovation and talent.</p> <p>The submission suggests that the university is thinking about economic engagement broadly, and working to connect efforts across talent, innovation, and/or place.</p> <p>The submission suggests that the institution is considering how to reach a higher scale of impact by linking and leveraging across economic engagement efforts.</p>	<p>[Enter score 0 – 10.]</p>