



UGA ranks No. 1 for number of products released to market

by Iranola Ojuolape

Among 193 institutions, the University of Georgia recently ranked first for the number of commercial products released to the market in 2017, further highlighting the creative and innovative works taking place in Athens.

The results were published by the Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM), a nonprofit organization that tracks technology transfer among universities, colleges and other research institutions.

In 2017, 52 new products derived from UGA's research reached the market. Trailing behind was the University of Michigan, who had 37 products.

"The success we are experiencing results from strategic decisions to support and encourage a wide-ranging culture of research and innovation that promotes economic development and helps elevate the University of Georgia to the top tier of research universities in the United States," said UGA President, Jere W. Morehead in the press release. "We are not only expanding the research activity on campus and our ability to attract sponsored research dollars but also expanding our partnerships with industry to make research-based products available to the world."

In 2018, UGA's new products to market included: a poultry vaccine, eco-friendly charcoal lighter, soil remediation products, research and educational tools, and new peanut, pecan, soybean, wheat, citrus and ornamental plant varieties, said Derek Eberhart, associate vice president for research and executive director for Innovation Gateway, UGA's research commercialization office, in the press release.

Over the past five years, the university has increased 29 percent in overall research and development expenditures, resulting in UGA rising from 64th to 53rd in the National Science Foundation's latest R&D rankings of universities, according to the press release.

"To date, more than 175 startup companies have been created out of UGA research, resulting in more than 1,300 jobs and an estimated annual economic impact of more than \$128 million," the press release said.

The continuous growth and economic development in Athens has also inspired the launch of



programs that will take it a step further.

In Sept. 2018, the University of Georgia's Innovation District Task Force delivered its final report to President Morehead. After endorsing the report, Morehead assigned a launch team to oversee the initial stages of the innovation district project. The purpose of the Innovation District is to serve as an interface between Athens and UGA's campus. It will also help facilitate economic development, increase interactions with industry partners, and create opportunities for students to have experiential learning and internships with these partners.

"I think just in general, the innovation atmosphere at the university benefits from being in a creative town like Athens," said Derek Eberhart, who also serves as a launch team member of Athens' innovation district project. "I think the innovation district is going to be a great opportunity to help provide more resources and more opportunities for entrepreneurs and innovators at the university, but also for the community to really come together and work toward growing really cool companies that can have a big impact here in the area."

Another program that promotes economic development in Athens is [One Million Cups](#), a free program designed to educate, engage and inspire entrepreneurs in the Athens community over coffee and conversations. Since 2012, One Million Cups has expanded to more than 180 communities. This event meets every Wednesday at 8:30 a.m. at the Seller Labs in downtown Athens.