

[www.baltimoresun.com/business/bal-bz.college27feb27,0,7867783.story](http://www.baltimoresun.com/business/bal-bz.college27feb27,0,7867783.story)

**baltimoresun.com**

## Universities, hospitals generate \$8 billion locally

By M. William Salganik

Sun reporter

February 27, 2008

Baltimore area universities and their affiliated hospitals generate \$8 billion a year in direct spending and employ 63,000 people, according to an economic impact study released yesterday by Baltimore Collegetown Network, a consortium of local colleges.

In addition to direct economic activity, the colleges generate \$9.2 billion in indirect economic activity that leads to nearly 100,000 other jobs, the report said.

"When we talk to business leaders in the area, everyone knew it was good to have colleges in the region, but we didn't have numbers," said Kristen Campbell, executive director of the Collegetown Network.

Her group commissioned the study, she said, "to say, 'We're here, and we're an industry.'" Campbell said she hoped quantifying the economic power of the colleges would lead government and business groups to include the schools more in regional development and planning.

Richard Clinch, director of economic research at the University of Baltimore, who conducted the study, said a student buying a pizza would be direct economic activity; the pizza shop buying tomato sauce would be indirect activity stimulated by the colleges.

He said the numbers, calculated from information from 15 member colleges and universities, show that higher education is the sixth-largest employment sector in the region.

A separate section of the report, compiled by RESI, Towson University's research and consulting arm, looks at the potential for the Baltimore region to become a "brain magnet" by connecting university research with entrepreneurs and venture capital funding.

The hope is to generate concentrations of high-tech businesses, similar to Silicon Valley in California and Research Triangle Park in North Carolina.

The section concluded that Baltimore benefits from a "strong intellectual capital base," government efforts to assist commercialization and proximity to federal labs and regulatory agencies. Weaknesses, it said, are relatively low availability of venture capital and a limited history of commercializing university research.

Campbell said the study shows that the region would benefit from an organization, similar to that in Research Triangle, representing a collaboration of business, government and higher education, to serve as a "front door" for connecting companies with research space and faculty expertise.

[bill.salganik@baltsun.com](mailto:bill.salganik@baltsun.com)

Copyright © 2008, [The Baltimore Sun](#)

