Md. Leaders Develop Plan to Boost State's Tech Competitiveness

A high-level group of leaders from Maryland business, education, research and technology launched an effort today to make the state more technologically competitive and grow its high-tech economy. The effort is believed to be one of the first nationwide to focus on developing a grassroots response to federal competitiveness initiatives.

"Other states are watching to see how much 'electricity' we can generate in Maryland with this effort," says University of Maryland President C.D. Mote Jr., who along with 19 major organizations in the state convened a summit today in College Park. They met to plot actions that will improve K-12 math and science education, train and recruit the best scientists and engineers and foster more high-tech industry in the state. "Our goal is to jump-start grassroots action. Many initiatives will have to start at the federal level, but a key to success is buy-in from states and local communities. If we can get grassroots traction, at least a half-dozen other states will sit-up and play catch-up."

About 250 participants (partial list online) gathered for today's Protecting Maryland's Competitive Edge Summit. It's the first such state-wide meeting on the issue since the National Academies issued an influential report late last year, Rising Above the Gathering Storm, warning that "the scientific technical building blocks of our economic leadership are eroding." The report recommended specific national action steps, and helped launch legislative proposals in Congress, as well as President Bush's American Competitiveness Initiative.

"Many of the concerns outlined in Gathering Storm are at heart local or state issues -- like K-12 education and workforce development," says Mote. "We've brought together some of the state's best and brightest leaders -- people who can really make things happen at the state and local levels -- and challenged them to build on the momentum that's developed at the federal level. It's very ambitious; no other state has yet been able to tackle it. The excitement generated here today demonstrates that Maryland is ready to take this on."

Working groups met at the summit to generate recommendations and build alliances for future actions. Many of the concerns focused on education and recruitment -- expanding the pipeline of scientific and engineering talent needed to conduct research and develop technologies. The groups also underscored the need for more coordination in Maryland between the various sectors and urged future partnerships.

"There's no apparent center of gravity and the state needs one," said panel moderator Gino Gemignani, senior vice president of Whiting-Turner Construction and chair of the Governor's Workforce Investment Board, referring to what he called a lack of coordination between government, education and business in developing a high-tech workforce to meet current and future needs.

"We need to work together across institutions, and build collaborative programs," said panelist Theodore Poehler, vice provost for research at the Johns Hopkins University. His colleague, moderator Steven Knapp, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at Hopkins, pointed to the need to make the most of the state's expertise, including retired engineers, who can help "plug the leaks in the talent pipeline." "It's not just a K through 12 pipeline," he said, "it's a K through gray pipeline."

The recommendations from each of the six working groups will be compiled along with suggestions for follow-up actions.

"We're catalysts in the strictest sense of the word -- we've brought together the people who can make things happen, and the measure of our success will be how much energy they generate in follow-up action," Mote says. "We want to foster partnerships. The ideas are good and the people to develop them have stepped forward. This is an important start."

The state of Maryland is one of the nation's high-tech leaders, particularly strong in its highly trained workforce and federal research investments.
Protecting Maryland’s Competitive Edge

Protecting Maryland’s Competitive Advantage— A Call to Action

Wednesday, April 26, 2006
9:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.

Colony Ballroom, Stamp Student Union
University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland

Complimentary parking in the Union Lane Garage located next to the Student Union.
Click here for directions.
Agenda

9:00—9:30 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast

9:30—10:15 a.m. Plenary Session

C. D. (Dan) Mote, Jr.
President and Glenn L. Martin Institute Professor of Engineering
University of Maryland

Norman R. Augustine
Retired Chairman and CEO
Lockheed Martin Corporation

10:15—10:30 a.m. Break

10:30 a.m.—11:45 a.m. Six Concurrent Panel Discussions

Panel 1: Improving K-12 Science and Mathematics Education
Moderator: Mr. Richard J. Steinke, Deputy State Superintendent for Instruction and Academic Acceleration, Maryland State Department of Education
Panelists:
Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent, Baltimore County Public Schools
Ms. Katharine Oliver, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Technology and Adult Learning
Mr. James F. Pitts, Corporate Vice President and President, Northrop Grumman Electronic Systems

Panel 2: Higher Education—Recruitment and Retention of the Best and Brightest Students, Scientists, and Engineers
Moderator: Dr. Steven Knapp, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, The Johns Hopkins University
Panelists:
Dr. Judy E. Ackerman, Vice President and Provost, Montgomery College, Rockville Campus
The Honorable Calvin Burnett, Secretary, Maryland Higher Education Commission
Dr. Ann G. Wylie, Assistant President and Chief of Staff, Professor of Geology, University of Maryland

Panel 3: Commitment to Long-Term Basic Research
Moderator: Dr. William A. Jeffrey, Director, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
Panelists:
Mr. Evan Jones, Chairman and CEO, Digene
The Honorable Aris Melissaratos, Secretary, Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development
Dr. Theodore O. Poehler, Vice Provost for Research, The Johns Hopkins University

Panel 4: Incentives for Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Technology Transfer
Moderator: Christopher C. Foster, Deputy Secretary, Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development
Panelists:
Ms. Julie Coons, President, Tech Council of Maryland
Mr. Henry “Pete” Linsert, Jr., Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Martek Biosciences Corporation
Dr. Nariman Farvardin, Dean, A. James Clark School of Engineering, University of Maryland
Ms. Renée M. Winsky, Interim Executive Director, Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO)

Panel 5: Fostering Emerging Technologies—Energy
Moderator: Mr. James M. Harkins, Director, Maryland Environmental Service
Panelists: Dr. Bryan Eichhorn, Professor, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
Mr. Benjamin H. Wu, Esq., Assistant Secretary, Business Development, Capital Region, Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development
Mr. William C. Poulin, Director of Products, North America BP Solar

Panel 6: Job Creation and Workforce Development
Moderator: Gino J. Gemignani, Jr, Senior Vice President, The Whiting-Turner Contracting Company Chairman, Governor's Workforce Investment Board

http://www.competitive-edge.umd.edu/agenda.html
Panelists:
The Honorable James D. Fielder, Secretary, Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation
Ms. Barbara Krumsieck, President and CEO, Calvert Group, Ltd.; Chair-Elect, Greater Washington Board of Trade
Dr. Edward Montgomery, Dean, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, University of Maryland

11:50—12:30 p.m. Panel reports, concluding remarks
12:30—1:30 p.m. Networking Luncheon
An Action Summit Hosted by the University of Maryland
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