Rapidly evolving technology and innovation, an increasingly competitive and global economy, and the exponential growth of a knowledge-based economy demand a differentiated 21st century workforce. The high-performance, optimal workforce of today and tomorrow is not staffed with job candidates with a static skill set; it is a deep talent pool of individuals prepared to flex and adapt to dynamic scientific, engineering and information technology demands.

How deep? IBM’s Sr. VP and Research Director John Kelly recently spoke of the world being “on the verge of another incredible era of technological discovery and innovation,” which is why, he said, his company has close to 100,000 technologists, including 3,000 researchers, working on the next era of computing. That is just one company, concentrating on only one sliver of the world’s countless technologies and industries. There is a world of globally competitive companies like IBM seeking regions with robust and nimble workforces that can meet complex and ever-changing demands.

Arizona’s Opportunity

Science Foundation Arizona (SFAz) is helping to create the human capital required to position Arizona as a wellspring of exceptional, 21st century-ready talent.

Since 2007, SFAz has brought 297 of the nation’s top scholars to Arizona through the Graduate Research Fellows program, which strengthens Arizona’s three research universities and contributes to the vitality of Arizona’s scientist and engineer base. The Bisgrove Scholars program, named for a $25 million gift by humanitarian Jerry Bisgrove, draws outstanding early career engineers and scientists from across the nation and around the world to conduct pioneering research at Arizona’s research performing institutions.

SFAz engages leading experts in science, innovation and engineering to select participants for the GRF and Bisgrove Scholars programs.

SFAz isn’t just recruiting talent to Arizona, it’s also helping focus the state’s education system on producing a 21st century workforce: GRFs spend one day a week working in middle and high school classrooms, and participating in summer teaching internships; rigorous STEM programs help to prepare Arizona’s students in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics; and the Arizona STEM Network is connecting educators and industry to ensure Arizona’s education system prepares graduates for existing and future jobs.

“If we are ever to build a STEM pipeline from K-12 to college, and then to careers that accelerate economic growth statewide...it will be because of the engagement among business, industry, education and community provided by Science Foundation Arizona,” said Jerry Proctor, SFAz ambassador and former deputy to Commanding General, US Army Intelligence Center and Ft. Huachuca. SFAz provides a model for creating human capital that will continue to elevate Arizona’s standing as a globally competitive business climate where companies will desire to invest and grow.

Science Foundation Arizona
One Arizona Center
400 East Van Buren St.
Phoenix, AZ 85004
(602) 682-2800
SFAZ.org