

[Home](#) / [News](#) / [Iowa](#)

Life sciences jobs show promise to students

Story

Discussion

Font Size: - +

By Rod Boshart Des Moines Bureau | Posted: Thursday, May 27, 2010 3:02 pm | (0) Comments

DES MOINES - Grow good-paying jobs in life science industries in Iowa and college graduates will stay.

1 retweet

Share

That according to the findings of a survey of nearly 700 Iowa college students commissioned by the Iowa Biotechnology Association that found nearly half planned to seek employment in Iowa while another 33 percent said they would be guided by the best opportunity regardless of location.

About 70 percent of the survey respondents said they thought career opportunities in Iowa were favorable or very favorable while nearly one-fourth of the students portrayed the job outlook as unfavorable.

Doug Getter, executive director of the Iowa Biotechnology Association, said there were some "strong positives" in the survey results, but he noted that only 21 percent of the surveyed students thought the state was doing enough to keep health care and science professionals in Iowa after graduation. Many cited the need for specialized laboratory or clinical experiences as factors affected their responses.

"This survey proves that if we build them - jobs, that is - they will stay," Getter said. "Iowa has made tremendous strides over the past several years to diversify our workforce and create an environment that is welcoming to high-tech, good-paying jobs that make Iowa an attractive place to work, live and raise a family. But there is still more we can do."

Getter said Iowa's K-14 education system is the pipeline for the state's future workforce and more emphasis needs to be placed on promoting career opportunities in life sciences for students already sold on Iowa's quality of life if there is a quality job available to them when they graduate.

Kerry Koonce of Iowa Workforce Development said life-science and health-care industries have been the only sectors of the Iowa economy that have added jobs in the current recession.

"Our economy is changing," Koonce said. "We won't bring back the mid-level advanced manufacturing jobs that are gone. We're going to continue to grow in the technical sciences, health care, medical fields and those kinds of things."

Alissa Jourdon of Kemin Industries, which hosted a news conference to announce the survey results, said well-educated students are Iowa's most-promising commodity and critical to efforts to make the state a center for scientific innovation. "Our continued success will be dependent on securing top-notch talent," she said.

Rob Denson, president of Des Moines Area Community College, said Iowa needs to build on the state's core strengths of education, research and agriculture to bolster the economy and foster innovation. "I'm a member of the MacGyver generation so innovation, being able to improvise, is very important," he said.

Comments: (515) 243-7220; rod.boshart@gazcomm.com