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## June 13, 2019 - From the President's Desk

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Dear Campus Community,

Strategic planning is powerful.

When it is done right, it fosters collaboration and leverages diversity of thought. It conjures invaluable insight and focuses forward our thinking and action. More broadly, its strength is in bringing together multiple pieces and focusing them on a singular direction and outcome.

This is exactly what the Air Force's strategic plan, Air Force 2030, seeks to do and Wright State University is an active partner.

### **Strengthening USAF Science and Technology**

Shared officially in [April 2019, Science and Technology Strategy: Strengthening USAF Science and Technology for 2030 and Beyond](#) is a plan that seeks to enhance the Air Force's partnerships with innovators and private businesses to speed up the process of acquiring the latest science and technology.

Heather Wilson, the secretary of the Air Force when the plan was unveiled, has said publicly, "The idea is to assess where our adversaries can't easily go and get there first and fastest. In a world where far more innovation is happening outside the government than inside it, connecting to the broader scientific enterprise is vital. Our research strategy will look broadly and draw from the best of American research universities as well as the Air Force and federal laboratories."

With nearly \$100 million in research and sponsored programs awarded annually, Wright State fits the bill.

### **The Wright Partner**

Currently, Wright State partners with the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) [on sensors development, unmanned aircraft systems single operator advances, and human machine teaming](#). The university partners with the [711th Human Performance Wing on live, virtual, and constructive training systems](#). In June, the Dayton Regional STEM School—a Wright State affiliate—[opened a new AFRL gaming research laboratory](#), part of a 30,000 square-foot expansion that also includes several classrooms and a new assembly area. The university hosts the annual [Tech Warrior exercise at the National Center for Medical Readiness](#). The [Air Force Marathon's Expo is held at the Wright State Nutter Center](#) while its 5K runs through our Dayton Campus each year. Wright State is committed to BRAC2020, the group planning and supporting Wright-Patt as it prepares for the next Base Realignment and

Closure evaluation in 2020.

And who could forget that Wright State was created 52 years ago to meet the research needs of the region on what had been Wright-Patterson Air Force Base land.

Both Wright-Patt and Wright State add tremendous value to the Dayton region. Wright-Patt is the largest single-site employer in Ohio with approximately 29,300 civilian employees and personnel. Its estimated annual economic impact is more than \$15.54 billion in the region. [Wright State adds more than \\$1.5 billion annually to the local economy and supports over 20,000 jobs.](#)

The Air Force, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, and the AFRL are asking for help from their Dayton region partners. Wright State is among those answering the call with partnership and outreach.

## **Velocity of Development**

[We first heard about the Air Force's new strategic plan when top AFRL leaders visited Wright State in 2018.](#) In those meetings they shared that the Air Force had several broad directives in mind that it hoped would speed innovation and enable it to become more agile and flexible. Directives also included greater emphasis on multidisciplinary approaches and increased partnership "outside the fence" to spur faster innovation.

The Air Force has already increased its contract spending in Ohio. Forty-eight percent of all of its awards went to small businesses in 2017. That's up from 40 percent a few years ago. Air Force 2030 calls for the Air Force to set aside \$560 million from its \$2.8 billion science and technology budget to fund significant science and technology projects.

The Wright State Research Institute, already skilled at coordinating efficient innovation processes with multiple partners through its leadership in the [Ohio Federal Research Network \(OFRN\)](#) and other projects, has an opportunity to be the velocity component the Air Force is seeking. Leveraging a relatively small investment of \$32 million in state funds, OFRN has funded research projects spanning 12 universities, two community colleges, and 60 industry partners throughout the state. These projects have in turn attracted more than \$150 million in new funding for Ohio-based research from both federal and corporate sponsors. The projects have also resulted in the creation of eight new Ohio companies spread around the state.

## **Roots of Innovation**

Our roots of innovation run deep in the Dayton region and now is the time to tap into them once more for the good of our nation. The Air Force is looking to us—our country's scientific researchers and industry partners—to help invent the technologies that will keep us safe in the future.

Wright State, like the Air Force, must continue to push the boundaries of what is possible. We're exactly the kind of partner this plan prioritizes. We're nimble, we're hungry, and we're creative.

The Air Force wants visionary ideas and partnerships in its 2030 plan. Wright State is thrilled to contribute and support these directives and beyond.

We hope you are too!

Warmest regards,

Cheryl B. Schrader, Ph.D.  
President

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