

IGNITE: INDUSTRY GENERATION NEW IDEAS and TECHNOLOGY THROUGH EDUICATION

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Presentation Summary (Limited to 200 words)

The economic competitiveness of Arkansas and the nation demands that next-generation training of STEM graduate students reaches beyond acquisition of traditional technical skills. Today's workforce must be more innovative and able to communicate more effectively. The IGNITE program provides an opportunity for Arkansas businesses to help add these skills by bringing real-world technology challenges to the classroom to empower STEM student researchers to create innovative science/engineering-based solutions. At the heart of the program is the emerging technologies course, where Arkansas-based companies visit the university each week to familiarize STEM graduates with the industry and technology-based needs and problems. IGNITE also awakens visiting companies to the potential of vast research facilities and expertise that have gone unnoticed outside the university. IGNITE provides students with an awareness of research-related jobs outside of academia, skills needed to use their knowledge to innovate solutions that address current technological challenges, an understanding of how research can be translated into products through business incubation, a totally different relationship between industry and academia, opportunities to do proof of concept research, internships at industry sites, support for research and entrepreneurial activities and job opportunities to stay in Arkansas.