

30th Annual Emerging Issues Forum

Innovation Reconstructed

How will our companies and communities compete in a future of accelerating everything?

February 9-10, 2015, Raleigh Convention Center

Economic prosperity will depend more and more on a capacity to innovate in the face of rapidly increasing global flows of people, finance, goods, services, data and communications. The Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI)'s 30th Emerging Issues Forum will focus on opportunities for North Carolina to enhance economic competitiveness by fostering a capacity for innovation appropriate for this age of new and accelerating global connections.

Do North Carolina's companies and communities have what it takes? What mix of factors best drives cutting-edge innovation? How are innovation models changing and adapting to fast-paced global realities? Do we have the right infrastructure, inputs, and supports?

During the last 30 years, North Carolina's economic, educational, governance, and other key systems (the interdependent and interrelated sets of public and private institutions, organizations, and individuals that work to achieve shared civic and economic goals) have responded to sustain and enhance our state's innovation and economic competitiveness. Our leaders, with an ever-recalibrating mix of public and private investment, helped North Carolina to continue to transform its economy and expand its capacity to innovate.

Pace of Innovation in the Context of Global Connections



Thirty years ago, few would have dreamed that we would today communicate around the globe with a device that fits in a pocket. How will innovation reshape the world across the next three decades?

For North Carolina to continue to prosper, our key systems must anticipate and confront the demands of unprecedented change and connections. How are they preparing? Are these systems, and the companies and communities they support, developing the fluid set of adaptive abilities required to innovate on shorter timelines while facing bigger challenges?

Although we cannot be sure of what lies ahead, we can be confident that change will only accelerate as traditional practices are disrupted, even obliterated, by the emergence of more and very different patterns of connections. We must prepare now to be ready to innovate and compete in such an environment.

IEI's Program of Work

As North Carolina looks ahead to IEI's celebratory 30th Annual Emerging Issues Forum, IEI begins its program of work by identifying the best examples from the past 30 years of productive response to the pressures of change. Which of the state's key systems developed the innovative ideas and actions that improved competitiveness during a period when connections were augmented and amplified? Let's look for lessons that can be applied moving forward.

We must then look ahead 30 years, certain that new and accelerating connections have implications for how we innovate and compete. Those implications demand North Carolina's full attention *today*. In order to safeguard and extend N.C.'s innovation infrastructure and economic competitiveness, IEI will ask stakeholders to identify the most critical capacities that North Carolina must develop now to respond productively in the future. We will also give attention to the tradeoffs involved in choosing any particular course of action.

In developing our program of work, IEI will focus on questions that include:

- What is the current extent of North Carolina's connectedness, both locally and globally?
- Which systems will be key to enhancing our future innovation and competitiveness?
- What capacities will these systems need in order to lead through a period of accelerating, disruptive change?
- How will those capacities serve our state's companies and communities?

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