

The University Research Park as a Microcluster: Mapping Its Development and Anatomy

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ABSTRACT. The university research parks facilitate co-location of businesses within or in relative proximity to the main campus, provide a favorable environment for interaction among tenant firms, as well as between firms and academia. Because of their physical size, employment base, support services, export driven activities and the overall role in the region's economy, university research parks can be regarded as microclusters. In this paper we dissect and map the anatomy of a university research park to demonstrate its dynamism and economic impact on the region's economy through a mixture of different yet related activities. First we identify core activities that include technology companies and incubator based technology companies. These core activities are supported by park management support organizations, park tenant support organizations, and community service support organizations. Individual firms and agencies assigned to each of these categories are identified and employment is classified as export driven or non-export driven. Only the export component is used to estimate the indirect and induced employment in the metropolitan region that is dependent on park activity. The methodology and results of this project will be particularly useful in conceptualization and operationalization of economic impacts of university research parks on their local and regional economies.