

Purdue & Panama: Partnering for Semiconductor Growth



Purdue University and the country of Panama join forces to enhance educational opportunities and workforce development for the Central American country's semiconductor industry.

In August, Purdue University and the country of Panama signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) focused on enhancing educational opportunities and workforce development with an emphasis on developing and strengthening the Central American nation's semiconductor industry.

According to Purdue, the MOU also centers around creating training programs, research opportunities and academic exchanges in critical areas, including cybersecurity, supply chain management, emerging technologies and other fields.

Purdue President Mung Chiang signed the strategic agreement with Ramón E. Martínez de la Guardia, Panama's ambassador to the U.S. "At Purdue University, we are proud to collaborate with the Republic of Panama on this key initiative, advancing innovation and educational cooperation in emerging technologies and strategic supply chains, especially in semiconductors," Chiang said, in a [university press release](#).

"This MOU underscores Purdue's strength as America's leading university in semiconductors, recognized for our trailblazing workforce development efforts, cutting-edge research and growing global partnerships with like-minded partners," Chiang continued. "Following U.S. Secretary of Commerce Raimondo's engagement with the Republic of Panama last year, we enthusiastically look forward to this collaboration as America continues the execution of the 2022 CHIPS and Science Act."

Collaborating on Future Agreements

In addition to their new MOU, Purdue and Panama will also be collaborating on future agreements that "would provide students in Panama with access to Purdue programs in advanced disciplines," the university says. They'll also explore the feasibility of establishing a Global Workforce Development Center for Advanced Technology in Panama to support regional efforts in semiconductors, cybersecurity and other emerging technologies.

"Together with Purdue University, we aim to cultivate an innovative ecosystem that will drive economic and human resource development while positioning Panama as a regional leader in technology and semiconductor advancements," said José Alejandro Rojas, Panamanian minister counselor for private investment. "As a proud Panamanian and Purdue University alum, I am thrilled about the strategic alliance forged between our government and Purdue University."

According to [Inside Indiana Business](#), Purdue inked a similar MOU with the Dominican Republic in July. The university has also signed agreements with other international industry partners, including French software maker Dassault Systèmes and Belgium-based semiconductor research company Imec.

Additionally, a South Korea-based semiconductor and memory chip maker, SK hynix, is planning to build a nearly \$4 billion advanced packaging fabrication and R&D facility for micro-

electronics in West Lafayette, Ind., where Purdue University is based.

Bolstering Workforce Development Efforts

Last July, the U.S. State Department announced that it will collaborate with the Panamanian government and other “like-minded partner nations” to explore opportunities to diversify and grow the global semiconductor ecosystem. The partnership was enabled by the International Technology Security and Innovation Fund, created as part of the CHIPS and Science Act.

“Panama joins an expanding list of countries that are attempting to grow their semiconductor industry,” Purdue reports, adding that in April the country’s government launched a national initiative to develop and promote microelectronics and semiconductor activities. “The alliance with Purdue will help bolster those efforts through academic collaboration and workforce development.”

Focused on Panama’s potential as a hub for semiconductor assembly, packaging, and testing (AT&P), Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) and other value-add services, these new initiatives build on the country’s strengths in logistics and digital services; the transport and utility infrastructure undergirding its well-developed energy and tourism sectors; and Panama’s political stability.

“Panama is a place for development of connections,” ROPAN-AMA General Administrator Carmen Gisela Vergara Mas told *Site Selection Magazine*. “This is an industry that has so much potential for growth, from over \$575 billion in value in 2022 to around \$1.3 trillion globally by 2029.”