

Gregory W. Deason

B.S., Agricultural Economics, Purdue University 1986

In the Business of Human Impact

As a land-grant institution, Purdue University has always had an outreach focus. Gregory Deason's work fits right into that historical mission.

Deason repositioned Purdue Research Park in West Lafayette from a basic real estate venture to a vibrant high-tech hub that incubates and supports firms in the life sciences, homeland security, engineering, advanced manufacturing, and information technology. It is Indiana's first and largest certified technology park, with more than 100 tech-related companies sharing common ground.

He also led the development of research parks in Merrillville (2004), New Albany (2009), and Indianapolis (2009).

His recruiting efforts capitalize on Purdue's deepest core competencies. Although the West Lafayette park dates to 1961, Deason was also able to take advantage of a critical development in the mid-1990s—a new emphasis on creating and growing companies from start-up mode. He developed a program called Purdue Research Park Portals, which provides daily counsel to early-stage companies on crucial topics from writing a business plan to protecting intellectual property.

The parks' impact is substantial both in terms of new jobs and capital investment, he says: “At its core, we're trying to create new kinds of jobs that are highly skilled and pay well; that will continue to diversify Indiana's economy; and that address new and innovative products, services, and ways of doing business.”

Such companies will help Indiana retain its brightest individuals, he adds. He believes that, through research parks, universities can have tremendous human impact by developing solutions to societal challenges in energy, medicine, and the environment.

As president of the 374-member Association of University Research Parks, he has represented Purdue and the entire industry in discussions of best practices around the world.

Deason grew up in rural Clinton County. He is a composer, singer, and guitarist, and is active in his church's music programs and in a band called Mustard Seeds. He also enjoys time with his family, especially watching the older two of his three sons play varsity football.

Pull-out quote

Purdue, as a whole, laid a great foundation, but in agricultural economics a number of my classes guided me to think critically. Then I was encouraged within the department to work hard



on my communication skills to add a layer to what I could do. Faculty helped me hone my leadership and management skills.

1986

B.S., Agricultural Economics, Purdue University

1986–1987

Business Administrator, Earth and Atmospheric Science, Purdue University

1988–1989

Branch Manager, INB National Bank, Lafayette, Indiana

1989–1995

Purdue University

Business Administrator, Cooperative Extension Service Field Staff, 1989–1992

Business Administrator, International Programs, International Programs in Agriculture and Academic Programs in Agriculture, 1992–1994

Business Manager, Agricultural Sponsored Programs and Accounting, 1994–1995

1995–present

Purdue Research Foundation

Assistant Director of Real Estate, 1995–1998

Associate Director of Real Estate, 1998–2002

Director of Research Park Development, 2002–2004

Vice President of Real Estate and Research Park Development and Director of the Purdue Research Park, 2004–present

2004

Purdue Research Park named Outstanding Science/Research Park, Association of University Research Parks

2008

Purdue Research Park receives Excellence in Economic Development Awards in three categories: Entrepreneurship; Partnerships with Educational Institutions; and Technology-based Economic Development, *International Economic Development Council*

2008–2009

President, Association of University Research Parks, Tucson, Arizona