

UGA tops \$600M in R&D expenditures for first time in FY 2024

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ATHENS, GA, UNITED STATES, February 5, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For the first time in its



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*UGA Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
S. Jack Hu*

history, the University of Georgia topped \$600 million in research and development expenditures in fiscal year 2024. Its \$628.1 million in expenditures represents a 10% increase year over year and yet another record high in R&D activity, marking the sixth consecutive year of growth for the university.

“The University of Georgia is embracing its role as one of America’s top public research universities, and I am grateful to everyone who is helping us advance this vital mission,” said President Jere W. Morehead. “I am proud of UGA’s extraordinary faculty, staff and students for setting

new institutional records while translating their discoveries into tangible solutions that improve quality of life and create economic opportunities.”

Driven by new faculty hiring initiatives, increases in the number of endowed professorships, and continued infrastructure growth and improvement, the \$57.2 million increase in R&D expenditures from fiscal years 2023 to 2024 was the largest in recent history. The university currently has 380 endowed professorships, a 40% increase over the past decade.

“The tremendous growth in our research enterprise over the past several years is a direct reflection of the exceptional quality of the UGA community,” said S. Jack Hu, the university’s senior vice president for academic affairs and provost. “In our laboratories and in communities across Georgia, we are committed to research that serves the citizens of our state, our nation and the world.”

Ongoing renovations to facilities on UGA’s Science and Ag Hill, including upgrades to Cedar Street Building C, were among multiple capital projects carried out in FY 2024. Completed early last fall, the work on this midcentury building (formerly the Chemistry Building) involved a complete demolition of the building’s interior and installation of state-of-the-art laboratory and support

spaces.

Additionally, preliminary work began on the \$100 million Medical Education and Research Building, which will serve UGA's School of Medicine and expand the university's capacity for biomedical research. The new School of Medicine is projected to generate between \$1.8 and \$2.3 billion in economic impact on the state by 2040.

Expanding the university's research enterprise has led to continued growth in sponsored funding from both public and private sources. In FY 2024, UGA researchers brought nearly \$321 million in research awards.

Federal research expenditures rose 15% in FY 2024 from \$221.8 million to \$255.1 million. This growth was driven by increases in expenditures for projects supported by several key federal agencies:

- U.S. Department of Commerce: 38.5%
- U.S. Department of Agriculture: 22.1%
- U.S. Department of the Interior: 21.1%
- U.S. Department of Energy: 19.3%
- U.S. Department of Defense: 16.6%
- National Institutes of Health: 11%
- National Science Foundation: 7.8%

New funding at UGA catalyzes discovery and research impact across a broad spectrum of crucial application areas. Projects range from efforts to increase crop yields for watermelon and cucumber and improvement of onion production to the conservation of animal populations and development of more sustainable cities and economies in Georgia and beyond.

The latter is a project led by principal investigator Jenna Jambeck, Georgia Athletic Association Distinguished Professor of Environmental Engineering in the College of Engineering, and co-principal investigators Jason Locklin (Franklin College of Arts and Sciences), Christina Fuller (College of Engineering) and Melissa Bilec (University of Pittsburgh). Propelled by a \$5 million award, it aims to reimagine and transform the linear consumption model of raw material extraction, production, use and disposal into a circular economy that decouples economic growth from resource consumption.

College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences Professor Bhabesh Dutta received \$4.8 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA NIFA) to manage anthracnose in watermelon and cucumber to improve long-term viability and profitability of those crops. Recent outbreaks of anthracnose, a fungal disease in plants, have threatened the viability of these and other crops with enormous economic importance to Georgia and beyond.

Dutta also received a \$3.2 million USDA NIFA grant to find more effective production practices

for organic onion growers in the southern United States, where short-day onions are primarily grown. The collaborative project with Texas A&M University will address key challenges of organic onion production such as sour and slippery skin caused by a group of soilborne bacteria.

Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources faculty members received nearly \$6 million from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources for projects intended to protect and conserve Georgia wildlife, including species such as black bears and northern bobwhites.

“UGA research and development continues to demonstrate the university’s commitment to recruiting world-class faculty, drawing substantial interest from federal funding agencies, and maintaining its status as an impactful leader in the state of Georgia and beyond,” said Chris King, interim vice president for research. “Our faculty and student researchers are moving innovative solutions from the lab to the real world and improving people’s lives.”

The University of Georgia [ranks No. 1 among U.S. universities](#) for the number of products brought to market based on its research, according to the annual survey by AUTM. UGA has ranked either first or second in this measure for nine consecutive years.

Research contributes to the university’s annual economic impact on the state of Georgia, which was estimated at \$8.4 billion in 2024. The FY 2024 research expenditures will be used to determine the university’s 2025 ranking in the National Science Foundation’s Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) survey. UGA’s FY 2023 expenditures of \$570.9 million ranked 58th among 914 U.S. colleges and universities.

UGA Media Relations
University of Georgia
+1 706-542-6927
[email us here](#)

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