

This is a printer friendly version from the **Democrat and Chronicle**:

June 6, 2007

UR packs a punch for area economy

Top employer's rising impact felt in spending, pay, services

[Matthew Daneman](#)
Staff writer

The University of Rochester is responsible for more than 30,000 jobs directly or indirectly, spent \$145 million on goods and services locally last year and pays salaries and wages of more than \$1 billion a year.

And as the area's largest employer, the university's "ties to Rochester are vital and inextricable, and they are growing," President Joel Seligman said Tuesday.

And as the area's largest employer, the university's "ties to Rochester are vital and inextricable, and they are growing," President Joel Seligman said on Tuesday.

The university is almost an island physically, bounded by the Genesee River and Mt. Hope Cemetery. But in a speech before about 400 alumni, donors and administrators at the Memorial Art Gallery, Seligman argued that UR is already a major part of the community medically, culturally and educationally — and that its role economically is growing.

"If universities were ever like cities on a hill, separate and apart from their surrounding communities, those days are long over," Seligman said.

Backing up his case, he cited statistics from a new Center for Governmental Research analysis of UR's economic impact. Among that study's preliminary findings:

- Local spending by the university, its employees, students and visitors, as well as spending on construction, hit \$1.4 billion in 2006.
- UR, especially through events such as graduation weekend in the spring and Meliora Weekend in the fall, accounts for more than 21,000 hotel room reservations per year.
- The university and its massive Strong Health system directly provide more than 17,000 jobs. And spending by UR and its workers accounts for 13,500 other local jobs.

Employment levels should grow over the next few years, Seligman said, citing CGR estimates that Strong's Wilmot Cancer Center expansion will create 1,000 jobs.

Seligman did not mention discussions going on at UR about increasing the faculty of the College of Arts, Sciences and Engineering by about 25 percent, to 400, and raising the number of undergraduate students from 4,000 to 5,000.

During his talk, Seligman also described how UR boosts the community in other ways, from the 90,000 people who get medical treatment through its 120 community health programs each year to its numerous educational outreach efforts, such as the eight-week research program that's held each summer for high school students at its laser lab.

When the university was looking for a new president in 2004, G. Robert Witmer, chairman of the board of trustees, said that the university's evolving role in the Rochester area was a key issue.

Seligman, who took over in 2005, has since joined other area college presidents to discuss how their institutions can work together on economic development issues.

MDANEMAN@DemocratandChronicle.com

[Back](#)

Copyright © 2007 Rochester Democrat and Chronicle | 55 Exchange Boulevard | Rochester, NY 14614 | (585) 232-7100. All rights reserved. Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#), updated June 7, 2005.