

Study reaffirms that UR is a powerhouse in N.Y.

James Goodman • Staff writer • May 7, 2010

Since University of Rochester President Joel Seligman has been at the helm, UR has continued to grow as the biggest employer in the area.

But a new report by the Center for Governmental Research shows that UR is not only the top employer locally but also the sixth-largest in a state where eight of the top 20 employers are health care providers.

With 19,610 employees at the end of last year, UR has increased its work force by almost 2,400 since 2005, when Seligman became president.

The report, Economic Impact of University of Rochester and its Affiliates, was commissioned by UR and updates two earlier reports. In the broadest stroke, the new report found that UR, which owns Strong Memorial and Highland hospitals, in 2009 contributed about \$2.3 billion a year in wages to the region, spent more than \$654 million on goods and services and was responsible for about 47,000 jobs.

"It's a snapshot of the progress. We have weathered the recession and are moving forward," Seligman said Thursday.

The \$2.3 billion wage figure is \$400 million more than the total two years earlier, while the 47,000 job figure is 4,000 more than in 2007. This job number includes workers on its payroll as well as those hired to perform services for UR and jobs created by the spending of UR employees.

Education, said Seligman, remains the core mission, but UR also has become deeply involved in providing health services. At the center of the growth has been the University of Rochester Medical Center, with about 13,000 employees.

"The Medical Center brings in good jobs and solid jobs," said Ellen Rosen, a vice president for the

Rochester Business Alliance.

Although as a nonprofit educational institution UR is tax-exempt, those on its payroll or contracted by UR paid \$141 million in sales, personal income taxes and local property taxes last year, says the report.

UR is filling in the gap created by the shrinking industrial sector here.

According to the report, manufacturing dropped from providing more than 20 percent of the total jobs in Monroe and its four contiguous counties in 1999 to less than 13 percent at the end of 2009.

Meanwhile, jobs in health services and education rose from 17 percent to 22 percent during this time frame.

Tammy Marino, associate economist for the state Department of Labor, said jobs in health care and education are less likely to be outsourced than jobs in the manufacturing sector.

"With health care and industry, you physically need to be on site," Marino said.

UR helped create 26 start-up companies between 2005 and 2009.

Still, some of the \$1.8 billion in research money brought in over the past five years to UR — including about \$44 million in federal stimulus

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money — does not immediately translate into a lot of jobs.

But UR spokesman Mark Michaud said that research grants also bring long-term returns. "We are **investing** in science, and out of science comes the companies of the future," he said.

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UR's two hospitals, its research, Memorial Art Gallery and education have a huge economic impact locally. (WILL YURMAN file photo 2007)