San Francisco State University does more than enrich minds. It enriches the Bay Area, California and the country, as well. By fueling economic activity, nurturing career development and encouraging a community-focused approach to commerce, the University repays every dollar put into it many times over. In business terms: Investing in SF State pays big dividends.

**Priming the Pump in Northern California**

SF State isn’t just the 12th largest employer in San Francisco, with more than 3,700 faculty and staff members. The millions of dollars SF State spends each year on salaries, services, goods and facilities create a ripple effect across the region, generating more than $1.3 billion in additional economic activity.

That creates a lot of jobs — which SF State helps fill with approximately 8,000 grads a year. According to online recruiting platform Jobvite, only two other universities have more graduates working in Silicon Valley. Of course, not just any employees will do for the tech companies that give the region its clout. They need workers with experience and expertise. SF State helps students build that know-how through hands-on involvement with the very companies they will be applying to one day.

Through a collaboration with the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, for instance, SF State students are placed as interns in the laboratories of biotechnology companies and nonprofits. And the University has partnered directly with Genentech to create placements in the biotech heavyweight’s trailblazing labs.

“Business is for furthering the well-being of individuals...not just economically but socially.”

– Denise Kleinrichert, Director, the Center for Ethical and Sustainable Business
Offering a Boost up the Ladder

Extending economic opportunity to everyone is what SF State is all about. Almost one-third of the University’s freshmen are the first in their families to attend college, and nearly two-thirds of the student body receives some form of financial aid.

While a good education is a critical first step toward a successful career, making the right connections can have a huge impact, as well. One way SF State helps students make those connections is through the Willie L. Brown Jr. Fellowship Program. Named for the former San Francisco mayor and SF State alum, the program makes it possible for students with an interest in public service to serve as interns in city agencies. The students take part in weekly professional development seminars that emphasize job-search skills while creating opportunities to network with upper-level city managers. Program applicants must demonstrate that they have overcome a significant challenge to pursuing an education.

“This program is creating the next generation of leaders who represent a broader set of interests,” said Professor and Chair of Urban Studies and Planning Raquel Pinderhughes. “The experience they get jump-starts their careers by about 10 years.”

SF State also gives a boost to workers who’ve already begun their careers but are looking to make a change and get a leg up. Located in Westfield San Francisco Centre on Market Street, the University’s Downtown Campus is home to both the College of Extended Learning (CEL) and an array of College of Business graduate programs. Each year, approximately 5,000 students take CEL continuing education courses, many of them earning certificates that allow them to begin new careers as paralegals, pharmacy technicians, event planners or clinical development professionals.

“We’re just a few blocks from the Financial District, a few blocks from Union Square, a few blocks from Twitter, a few blocks from Salesforce,” said Orlando Harris, executive director of business development and marketing in the College of Business. “We’re at the epicenter of San Francisco business itself.”

Remembering the Real Bottom Line

Denise Kleinrichert, an associate professor in the College of Business’ Department of Management, has a message for her students that one doesn’t always hear in a business school: “Business doesn’t have to be just for profit.” As Kleinrichert sees it, being in the black is great, but that’s not all commerce can or should be about.

“Business is for furthering the well-being of individuals across a number of areas,” she said. “Not just economically but socially and environmentally.”

Since 2006, the College of Business has been putting that ideal front and center through its annual Business Ethics Week (which Kleinrichert chairs). Each year, the college invites business leaders to participate in events that explore such topics as sustainability, transparency and social responsibility. Hundreds of students participated in this year’s Business Ethics Week activities, which featured guest speakers from Clorox, Clif Bar, Lyft and other companies.

The success of Business Ethics Week inspired the creation of SF State’s Center for Ethical and Sustainable Business, which sponsors events year-round.

“The Bay Area is unique. It’s a caring society. We have empathy and we think about how to do better by other people,” said Kleinrichert, who was recently named the center’s director. “That’s how it is in the political community, the social community, the environmental community. And the business community, too.”

Learn more about SF State’s College of Business at cob.sfsu.edu.