# North Carolina's Innovation Economy

WE WORK FOR HEALTH

The Bayh-Dole Act of 1980 enables U.S. universities to retain intellectual property rights to discoveries made with federal funding, spurring an explosion of innovation in the life sciences.

Academic technology transfer contributed **$1.9 trillion** to U.S. industrial output from 1996-2020. The benefits of this innovation often stay local — **68% of university-licensed life science startups** remain within 60 miles of their founding university.

## The Life Sciences Sector in NC[1]

**$82.1B**
total economic impact

**213,000+**
jobs supported statewide

**8th nationally**
in tech job growth (2018-2023)

**$5.7B+**
in state vendor spending

## North Carolina Universities – By The Numbers[2]

**$33B**
in federal research Investment

**17,699**
invention disclosures

**4,255**
patents issued

**756**
start-ups launched

**4,802**
IP licenses

## What's at Stake

Misguided policies like **Most Favored Nation (MFN) policy** threaten to import foreign price controls that would undermine innovation in North Carolina and risk **dismantling** the ecosystem that produces life-saving treatments.

[1] The Bayh-Dole Act's Role in Stimulating University-Led Regional Economic Growth, June 16, 2025; We Work For Health, In the States
[2] The Bayh-Dole Act's Role in Stimulating University-Led Regional Economic Growth, June 16, 2025

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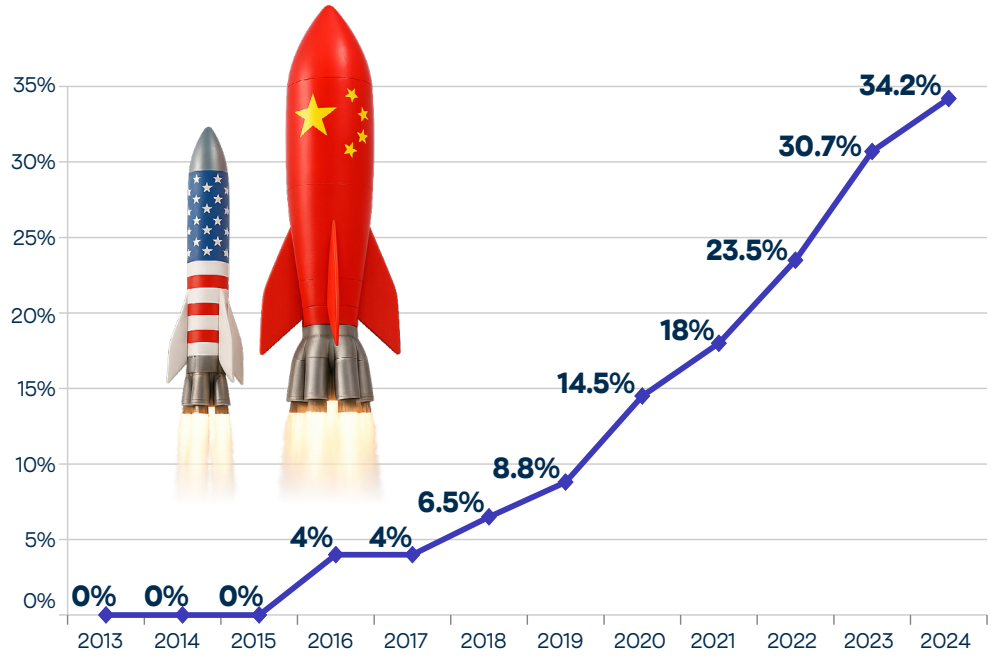
## China on the Rise[3]

China recently surpassed the U.S. in the annual number of clinical trials, the latest sign of it closing in on America's leadership in the life sciences.

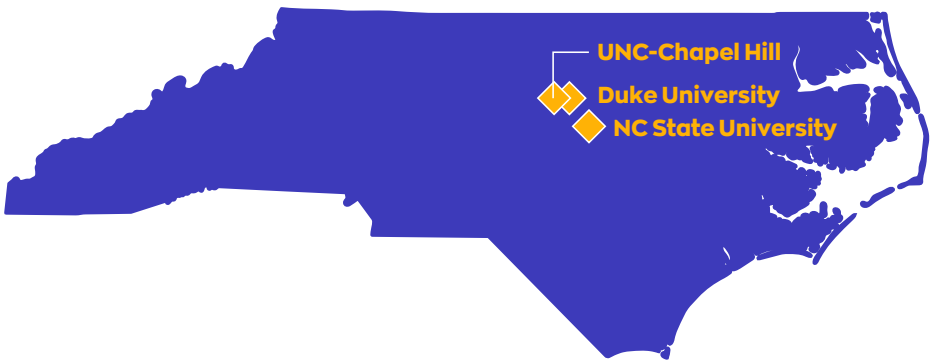
In 2014, **no China universities** were in the top 100 of the Academic Ranking of World Universities. The country had **13 such schools** last year — 34.2% of the United States' total (38).

**Number of top 100 universities in China relative to the United States**




**North Carolina's innovation leadership depends on smart policy choices that make university-industry collaboration possible.**

## Anchor Universities Driving Growth




[3] China Surpasses US for Annual Number of Clinical Trials, Feb. 12, 2025;
China is Rapidly Becoming a Leading Innovator in Advanced Industries, Sept. 2024