LSU’s Center for Advanced Microstructures and Devices is near Baton Rouge’s Towne Center shopping center, but CAMD deals in a different kind of marketplace.

CAMD is part of the global marketplace of ideas. And in the 21st-century economy, which places more value on brains than brawn, CAMD is having trouble competing.

As with so many Louisiana institutions suffering a competitive disadvantage with similar institutions outside the state, the problem boils down to money.

The name of CAMD is a mouthful, but its mission as a driver of technological innovation is an important one. The center does groundbreaking work in the energy, biomedical, environmental and nanotechnology fields. Those areas of research have the potential to advance LSU’s stature as a national research institution and draw jobs that pay well.

What’s been the response of Louisiana’s leaders to this promise? CAMD recently took a 50 percent budget cut, and its future is in jeopardy. The budget cut weakens CAMD’s ability to attract grant funding, and unless CAMD officials can find at least $1 million in annual funding to make up for the lack of state support, the research facility could close.

LSU Chancellor Mike Martin implemented the drastic cut to CAMD to help protect core academic programs on campus from even deeper cuts. The cuts were the result of reductions in state funding for higher education approved by lawmakers and the governor to grapple with a sea of red ink in the state budget.

Consistent funding of scientific research institutions can pay big dividends, as North Carolina’s Research Triangle well shows. Meanwhile, in Louisiana, CAMD is being cut.

Is it any wonder that so many of our best and brightest young people are leaving the state?