The Expanded Role and Capabilities of Tech Transfer Offices

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What’s Driving the Expansion

• Heightened expectations of:
  - University leadership
  - Communities (local, state, federal)
  - Faculty and Students
  - Businesses and Institutions
• Tech Transfer “needs” to fulfill mission
• Expanded breadth of engagement
• “Keeping up with the Joneses”
How Are TTOs Evolving?

• Layered Expectations
• Layered Capabilities
• Illustration:
  - University of Michigan evolution
Tech Transfer – Circa 1996

- Central Function – Licensing
  - Inventor Interaction
  - Patenting
  - Marketing
  - Licensing and Relationships

NOTE: This is still “core” to our mission today
Tech Transfer Evolution

• Start-up Encouragement
  - Approaches
    • More Flexible Policies (licensing, equity, etc.)
    • Recruiting others to initiate start-ups
    • Adding staff to initiate start-ups
    • Occasionally even run/manage early stage start-ups
Tech Transfer Evolution

• Gap” Funding
  - Internal/state funds to
    • Address commercialization feasibility and approaches
    • Enhance marketability, reduce risk
Tech Transfer Evolution

- Expanded Partnering
  - Translational Research Funds
    - Technical Feasibility and Approaches
    - Pre-Seed Funds
    - VC/Angel and other Relationships
    - Student Projects
    - Educational and Concept Development
Tech Transfer Evolution

• Talent Sourcing
  - Talent/Student Entrepreneurship Manager
  - Database (Expertise/Capabilities)
  - Mentor-in-Residence (MIR) Program
  - “embedded” entrepreneurial rotating staff
  - OTT Fellows
  - Student market/patent/technology analysis resources
  - Networking Events
  - Talent “Magnets”, Encourage Partnering
The Venture Center

One-stop hub for all U-M start-ups

- Integrated venture creation services
- Convenient portal into U-M for entrepreneurs and venture partners
Tech Transfer Evolution

• Broadened Corporate Partnering
  - Business Engagement (hub for industry)
  - Student Entrepreneurship
  - Increased focus on student-initiated ventures
  - Economic Outreach
  - Alumni engagement
  - Attraction activities
  - Key to university “messages”
  - Broader Collaborations
  - State-wide, Regional, International
What Lies Ahead

• Meeting the challenges of a changing world
• Meeting/measuring (and exceeding?) expectations
• Being realistic about constrained resources
• Focusing on “impact” and not just numbers