

Commercializing Creativity – Innovation and Technology coming out of the University Labs

The University of Saskatchewan Industry Liaison Office (ILO) adds value to the economy by accelerating the commercialization of new knowledge and research. This is achieved through licensing the technology to existing companies or creating technology-based companies.

Since the ILO was established in 2004, the U of S has moved into the top 12% of Canadian universities and the top 28% of North American universities for technology commercialization (source: annual survey completed by Association of University Technology Managers).

Since 2004, the U of S's licensing income has increased almost seven-fold to nearly \$7.3 million per year. The ILO manages \$6 million of this total, where 50% flows to inventors and the other 50% is re-invested in the U of S.

The ILO technology transfer officers and managers, with expertise in key sectors, work with researchers to evaluate new ideas and facilitate intellectual property protection. They then identify companies interested in licensing these new technologies. Working with these companies means facilitating opportunities to directly engage researchers and create more competitive businesses, thereby improving Saskatoon's business and innovation environment.

The U of S helps entrepreneurial researchers start companies based on their inventions. Early-stage technology-based companies face many obstacles to entering a market. The U of S works with these new companies to ensure they have a strong foundation in which to grow. The ILO offers business plans, market analysis, financing, and governance (e.g. finding boards of directors, advisory boards, mentors, and management with the right set of skills).

Success takes sheer grit and determination. Leigh Marquess is a good example. In 2003, he combined his university education in molecular genetics and his life experience in the feedlot industry to start a company, Quantum Genetics Canada, a firm that is bringing new, ground-breaking genetic technologies to the beef industry. From the beginning, Leigh developed a close working relationship with the ILO and over the years, this has played a key role in Quantum Genetics' ability to successfully commercialize new technologies

developed at the U of S. It is a win-win relationship that is allowing the company to expand its portfolio and bring increased value to the industry.

CollegeMobile, located at the Ideas Inc. Incubator, is another example. U of S computer science instructor Chad Jones is one of the principal architects of iUsask, an application developed for smart phones and tablets that is a first of its kind in Canada. iUsask gives users instant access to key U of S information – from grades to Huskie Athletics. Launched in 2009, the app quickly became a hit, earning national media attention and requests for similar applications from other institutions. Today, Jones is CEO of CollegeMobile with 11 full-time employees and a growing market that includes businesses and educational institutions.

ILO has a mandate to support local economic development. Inquiries are welcome from local businesses and industries interested in engaging university research capabilities to overcome technical challenges or develop technical opportunities to advance their business.

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