

Promoting Technology Collaborations

Workshop 3a

Richard Snyder and Dave Harris

Background

- A special focus of the NSF-PFI program is the creation of partnerships designed to most effectively achieve the goals of the project.
- PFI grantees shared what they have learned about developing technology collaborations across the wide range of PFI institutions and local settings.

Process followed

- Seeding questions were written prior to the workshop to facilitate discussion
- 6 seeding questions were agreed upon
- Prioritization of questions: planning then operational stages
- 34 Attendees
 - 15 graduates
 - 15 Active
 - 4 industry partners

Q1: What are some of the strategies you have used to create technology collaborations/partnerships?

- **Start with small project**
 - Achieve goal = success
 - Establish pathways (scientific, legal, bureaucratic, etc)
 - Build trust
- **Product/Deliverable-based relationship**
- **Build upon the infrastructure/trust**

Q2: Please share some pointers on how to create effective public-private partnerships.

- **Projects responsive to local/regional needs**
- **Identify champions within all partners**
- **Establish organizational structure**
- **Establish communication channels**
- **Establish common defined goals**
- **Assign responsibilities**

Q3: What are some of the challenges you have faced in forming technology collaborations?

- **Scheduling Meetings (everyone is busy)**
- **Overcoming bureaucracy**
- **Unproductive partners**
 - **Motivate vs dropping from the project**
- **University barriers**
 - **Licensing/IP issues**
 - **Unrealistic valuations (concept vs product)**
 - **Lack of experience with development phase**
 - **Establishing entrepreneurial mindset**
 - **Convince Deans and VPs to provide resources**
- **Different clocks used by industry and academia**

Q4: Once established, how have you effectively involved partners in your program to achieve your goals?

- **Identify and empower internal champions**
- **Understand each other's goals in creating a synchronized program**
- **Recognition/visibility of productive efforts**
- **Share/transfer personnel between partners**

Q5: What coordination and communication methods have you used to maintain a productive collaboration?

- **Infrequent High-level meetings to review progress/develop strategy**
- **Frequent meetings for working teams (in the "trenches")**
- **Informal meetings/conversations promoted/facilitated**
- **Passive methods are not a substitute for active communication > leader needs to actively stay in touch with all parties**
- **Change the meeting venues (partner equality)**
- **Educate partners and community to break down barriers**
- **Keep the community informed of progress (PR)**

Q6: How has your university/community/region embraced your program?

- **PFI Value recognized**
- **Leverage PFI into other funding opportunities**
- **Evolution of PFI activities into larger more encompassing activities**
- **Other “off-line” partnerships develop**
- **Creation of model systems that are disseminated and replicated**

Summary

- **Different languages spoken and different timelines**
 - **Business**
 - **Scientists**
 - **Product Development**
 - **Educators**
- **Persistent: important to frequently communicate the goals and progress to all**
- **Important to maintain momentum and recognize performance excellence**