

GCG'S FIRST ANNUAL CONVERTING TECHNOLOGY TO WEALTH PROGRAM, 2013

A PROGRAM FOR ASPIRING TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER PROFESSIONALS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Austin Portion of Program Concludes Amid Praise and Plans to Repeat the Training in Austin at Least Annually

Fourteen professionals from five countries attended the first annual Converting Technology to Wealth program at the IC² Institute of The University of Texas at Austin. The program was designed to bring together a select group of tech transfer professionals from around the world and engage in hands-on practice and study of the latest methodologies in the field of technology commercialization.



Greg Pogue, deputy director of IC² Institute, led a working lunch with exercises and discussion on intellectual property and claims analysis.

The Global Commercialization Group (GCG) of IC² Institute organized the training program, calling upon its experience in commercializing technologies from almost twenty countries in the past decade.



Jim Vance, a GCG mentor and technology business development manager, assisted Pär Johansson of Sweden on a technology briefing exercise.

This year's attendees came from Chile, the Czech Republic, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, and the United States.

Converting Technology to Wealth is a three-part training program. In Part 1, participants remain in their home institutions and take a GCG online course in "Innovation Readiness." The online course consists of ten modules that provide tips and examples from real technology commercialization experience in areas such as intellectual property protection, market validation, assessing the competition, and pitching an innovation. While taking the online course, participants submit homework assignments and receive feedback from experienced GCG mentors, whom they later meet during the Austin portion of the program.

Part 2, in Austin, occurs over a two-week period with eight intensive days of presentations, mentoring, and assignments, and a weekend in the middle to get to know fellow participants, work on team projects, and see some sights.

"The things you are doing in Austin could be implemented in so many places in Europe."

- Pär Johansson, Luleå University of Technology, Sweden

Austin presentations covered topics such as commercialization strategies, processes, and models; conducting primary and secondary source research for market validation; intellectual property searches and protection; negotiations for tech transfer; technology valuation; licensing; venture finance; and tech transfer office resources and operations.

During Part 3 (ongoing now) participants return to their home institutions and address a particular need identified by them. They have the support of GCG mentors in implementing what they learned in Austin in their home institutions.



Chile was the country that sent the highest number of attendees, 5, though Chilean participants came from 2 different institutions and met for the first time at the airport.

Facilitating sharing and learning among participants from five different countries was one of the goals of the Austin part of the program. Osvaldo Quiroz, international business development manager for an incubation program at a university in Santiago, appreciated the chance “to share with different cultures and work on teams with people from different countries.” His sentiment was echoed by his colleague, Verónica Céspedes, who rated as highly important the “connections I made with my partners in the class.” Osvaldo’s team hopes to visit the offices of some of the program participants from other countries in the coming year.

“We had the chance to share with different cultures and work on teams with people from different countries. It was a great experience.”

- Osvaldo Quiroz Leyton, Centro INNOVO.
Universidad de Santiago, Chile

According to Sid Burback, director of GCG, this first annual program, with enrollment open to individuals from around the world was a deviation from the typical model for GCG training programs, which usually work with a single region at a time. “This was an experiment for us, but an extremely successful one. The benefits of having the diversity of students that we hosted made all the extra efforts worth it.”

“I liked so much the classes with Greg [Pogue, deputy director of IC²] because he is someone who really invites you to learn and is very practical.”

- Loreto Rocha, Universidad Adolfo Ibañez, Chile

Dr. Robert Peterson, IC² Institute’s director, spoke on the importance of the IC² Institute’s international mission when he welcomed the program participants. “The IC² Institute is becoming increasingly global and is considering forming an international innovation hub to bring together companies and institutions from around the world. International collaborators and visitors are sources of new insights and learning for researchers at the IC² Institute and The University of Texas at Austin.”



Participants visited one of UT’s leading applied research labs, the Center for Electro-Mechanics, which has had commercialization success with a wide range of industries, including military defense, transportation, energy, and even cosmetics.

Practicality is the essence of the program. Classes are small and sometimes divided into even smaller groups to address the varying needs of participants. Almost all sessions include exercises to enable practice of the information presented. Mentor sessions are critical and frequent. Each student begins working with his or her assigned mentor even before arriving in Austin, and continues to benefit from the mentor’s expertise as the student fine-tunes technology descriptions, makes calls to validate strategies and markets, and creates presentations that get critiqued and receive feedback from the program’s expert review board.

“I got a lot of material and valuable resources that I can take back home to share with my entire team.”

- Chalonda Handy, Nationwide Children’s Hospital, USA



Participants Loreto Rocha from Chile, Youngsoo Ra from Korea, and Jan Alán from the Czech Republic.

Glenn Robinson, GCG assistant director, served as a mentor and enjoyed seeing the growth of those he worked with during the program. “Mentoring sessions gave us the chance to engage in lots of dialogue, with me sometimes challenging their way of thinking. It was great to see a virtual light bulb go on when class concepts hit home. By presentation night, I was immensely proud of how well my team did.”

GCG mentor Jim Vance emphasized the importance of his role in letting his students know if their tech descriptions and pitches were compelling, concise, and clear. “If you don’t get it right the first time you approach a potential partner, customer, or licensee, you aren’t likely to get another shot. Even experienced professionals can benefit from coaching in this.”



Page Heller, President, Hopes Creek, and former tech transfer officer at Texas A&M University and Russia’s National University of Science & Technology, was a speaker on commercialization strategies, including start-ups, licenses, strategic partnerships, hybrids, and more.



One session focused on venture finance with a panel of experts in the field. In the photo above, Laura Kilcrease, Founder and Managing Director of Triton Ventures, LLC, Mehron Azarmehr, Founder, Azarmehr & Associates, P.C., and Jamie Rhodes, Founder and Chairman of the Board, Central Texas Angel Network, discussed options for obtaining capital.

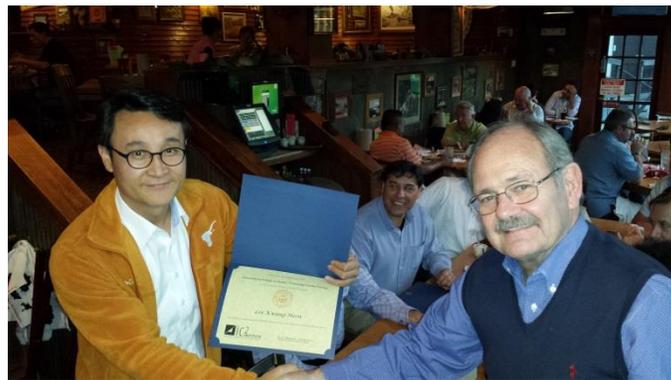
Mentors of participants are experienced GCG business development managers who have helped commercialize technologies from multiple countries. Each GCG mentor worked with three or four participants and held individual as well as group consultations with his or her assigned participants. Students were required to bring a technology—from their home institution—to the program, so that they could practice applying principles to the commercialization of that technology and receive help from their mentors in moving the technology toward a real international deal.

“The program is complex and well-built. Unlike other courses I have had—which covered just pieces of the problems of tech transfer—this joined issues together and established a practical approach.”

- Jan Alán, Masaryk University, Czech Republic

“It was a tough course and very aggressive course, but it went really well.”

- Youngsoo Ra, Jeollabuk Province
Technology Commercialization Program,
Korea



At the final graduation dinner, Sid Burback, director of GCG, presented certificates of completion to the participants. Pictured above with Sid is Dr. Kwang Heon Lee of Korea.

As she was getting ready to depart Austin on the final day of presentations, Chalonda Handy, of Nationwide Children’s Hospital (Columbus, Ohio, USA), commented on conversations she and the other participants were having. “We covered a lot of ground. We were just talking about that at the hotel this morning. The good thing about all the information we got is that it is available to us online. When we get back [home], being able to access again all the content—along with the context we now have from our practice and discussions—is going to mean even more in a couple months. We’re all excited about that!”

Sid Burback, director of GCG, noted, “We plan to tweak the curriculum a bit before the next implementation in order to spend even more time on the sessions that participants really and visibly benefitted from. We won’t cut any mentoring time, because that is something all the participants needed and loved. We will continue to try to pack as much value as possible into the program, so that we have another stellar training implementation, like this one.”

“I came to the course with quite high expectations, but my expectations were surpassed by miles.”

- Kent Mrozek, Luleå University of
Technology, Sweden



One evening was devoted to a presentation banquet, with teams of 3 or 4 participants delivering presentations on a chosen technology transfer strategy. The team above, Yoo Jin Lee of Korea, Jan Brulík of the Czech Republic, and Bárbara Jugo of Chile, presented on an educational gaming technology and recommended selling licenses of the technology to universities.



In addition to hard work, participants got to see a bit of central Texas. A visit to San Antonio included a session at a bio-tech incubator as well as some time along the Riverwalk.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL IN THE **CONVERTING TECHNOLOGY TO WEALTH** PROGRAM, PLEASE CONTACT DEBRA DZWONCZYK, debra@ic2.utexas.edu.

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