



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™

Technology Resource Institute

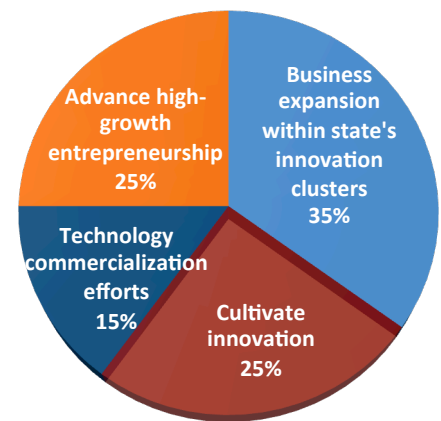
Technology Resource Institute

The Technology Resource Institute (TRI) at Mississippi State University (MSU) hosts the University Center. Supported by the grant, the University, and program fees, the Center strives to build and sustain a statewide economic ecosystem through outreach programs. The goals of the program include business expansion within the state's innovation clusters, advancing high-growth entrepreneurship, and supporting technology commercialization efforts. In addition, the Center strives to cultivate innovation by “building out the last mile” of entrepreneurship in rural and distressed counties, including the Mississippi Delta, and among underserved groups.

Activities

The Center exists to help the businessperson or industry representative, the community agency, or the local government agency obtain the assistance, research, consulting, analysis, service, or information they seek. TRI also provides assistance to the growing

number of student entrepreneurs at MSU. The majority of the Center’s activities start with the assignment of research and consulting projects to MBA or Business Information Systems teams, drawing upon the expertise of MSU faculty and external consultants, coordinating and cosponsoring training and educational opportunities, and utilizing communication and networking activities to connect internal and external partners in



unique ways to generate change in the status quo and fill ecosystem gaps. Assistance includes enhancing the viability of existing businesses by assessing and building capabilities in areas such as strategic and human resource management, information systems, and sustainable

University

Mississippi State University

Center Director

Jeffrey Rupp

Center Location

College of Business

Center since 1989

Center Activities

- Marketing studies
- Feasibility studies
- Training in entrepreneurship
- Strategic economic development plans
- Applied research

Clients

- Entrepreneurs
- Start-ups
- Existing businesses
- Local and regional communities

Assessment Techniques

- Feedback from staff
- Client interviews
- Client satisfaction surveys
- Case studies

Contact Information

business.msstate.edu/
research/tri/
jeffrey.rupp[at]msstate.edu

manufacturing processes. Other assistance strives to advance high growth entrepreneurship by evaluating products and market opportunities, providing assistance in developing business and market plans, preparing financial analyses, and facilitating opportunities to meet with investment partners as needed. This

"The project was very beneficial to us by giving us "fresh eyes" to analyze our business and marketing approach. We are impressed with the amount of data that was gathered. We couldn't have accomplished the work with our staff due to their current work load."

--Center Client

assistance aids commercialization and innovation efforts by providing technical assistance on licensing, filing patents, researching customers and markets, assessing business models, and finding seed money as appropriate. The Center also strives to cultivate innovation in sparse environments and among

underserved groups by building partnerships and providing training and information in local settings.

Leveraging

The Center leverages the University's extensive network of research and outreach programs, such as the Thad Cochran Technology and Research Park on campus. In addition, the Center leverages university data sources and the technology transfer office. The Center's leveraging of students and faculty teams is a core element to its assistance.

Success

Technology Resource Institute (TRI) has brought together various political, academic, and business resources to solve problems for businesses and entrepreneurs and to provide critical training for MSU students

A professor in MSU's College of Business spotted a student she felt had potential and referred him to TRI. The young man had a solid business idea but had little business experience. TRI worked with the student on his business concept, eventually putting him in touch with a CPA, an attorney, a bank president and an angel investor. After successfully launching and growing that business, the student became a serial entrepreneur, creating a high-end food products business and an

app for music fans.

TRI supports these students by providing mentoring and technical assistance. TRI also helps the students get connected to key players in Mississippi's business community.

A steel fabricator in Mississippi that employs over 600 workers was facing layoffs due to the global slowdown in heavy construction. The company founder was looking for a new business to keep people on the job and came up with the idea of manufacturing after market truck bumpers using existing machinery at the plant. The challenge was the company had a complete lack of knowledge of the sector. The company approached TRI to do

research on competition, pricing, distribution, and barriers to entry into the truck bumper market. After months of research by a team of MBA students, a formal report was presented to the company outlining the best path to success. Several months later the company reported that not only did the new product keep it from laying off welders but backorders for the bumpers allowed the hiring of additional workers.

TRI has shown how students and external clients can both be served by a program that is targeted on client need and that closely directs student contributions.