



# UF Tech Connect<sup>®</sup>

An EDA University Center

## University

University of Florida

## Center Director

Jane Muir

## Center Location

Outreach Unit

## Center since 2002

## Center Activities

- Incubator services
- Business plan development
- Mentoring
- Matchmaking
- Training and workshops
- Feasibility studies

## Clients

- Entrepreneurs
- Start-ups
- Existing businesses

## Assessment Techniques

- Feedback from staff
- Client interviews
- Feedback at workshops

## Contact Information

[www.research.ufl.edu/otl/techconnect.html](http://www.research.ufl.edu/otl/techconnect.html)  
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### UF Tech Connect<sup>®</sup>

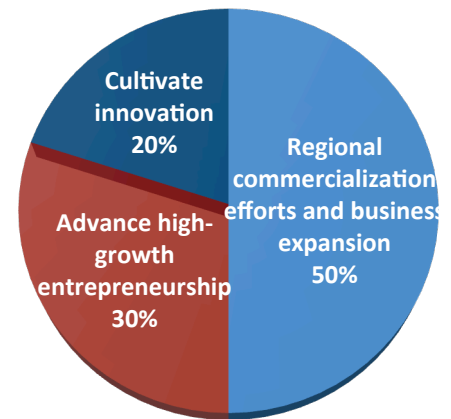
The primary focus of the EDA University Center UF Tech Connect<sup>®</sup> program is to accelerate regional and statewide economic growth by creating new technology-based companies that create high-wage jobs based on the commercialization of innovative inventions of university researchers in medicine, biotechnology, engineering, health, information systems, and more. In so doing, the Center also focuses on advancing high growth entrepreneurship and cultivating a culture of innovation.

### Activities

The Center provides start-up companies with industry consulting expertise in such areas as business plan development, entrepreneurial strategy, management assistance, and potential strategic partnerships. Center clients also have access to the Florida Innovation Hub Resident Partners who provide a limited amount of pro bono assistance. They include law firms specializing in patent law and corporate law, an accounting firm, a multi-disciplinary

design and development studio, and three early growth stage investment firms. In addition, the Center conducts a Technology Entrepreneur Bootcamp, Elevator Pitch workshops, SBIR workshops and other training programs, providing essential technical knowledge for early stage companies.

The Center also supports entrepreneurial faculty members interested in start-up companies to



facilitate transfer of their discoveries from the laboratory into commercial entities where they can focus on the applied research necessary to get them into the marketplace. Specifically, the Center pairs faculty inventors with entrepreneurs to write business plans based on their technologies, to

conduct market feasibility studies, to help identify resources to assist in proof of concept, and to make connections with potential funding sources.

### Leveraging

The Center leverages its position within the University of Florida's Office of Technology and Licensing where University researchers disclose over a third of

*"Great program for promoting local talent and university intellectual properties."*

*--Center Client*

the state's new inventions (approximately 300 annually). In addition, 75% of all research conducted at Florida universities is located within a two hour radius of the Center. The Center takes advantage of this strong position to help commercialize university research in the region. In addition, the Center has strong

partners with government, private, and academic organizations, such as The Florida Institute for the Commercialization of Public Research, Florida Works (the regional workforce), Florida High Tech Corridor, Florida Research Consortium, BioFlorida, and other state-wide organizations. The Center also has strong relations with businesses that provide legal, design, and prototyping services to clients.

## Success

### Leveraging university expertise, resources, and partnerships to support new startups and spinoffs

The University of Florida (UF) is home to approximately one-third of all research conducted at Florida universities. UF researchers disclose one-third of the state's new inventions, and UF generates the majority of all university start-ups in the state. In addition, 75% of all research conducted at Florida universities is located within a two-hour radius of UF. UF Tech Connect® is therefore uniquely positioned to capitalize on these advantages to provide tailored and targeted support for entrepreneurs and start-ups, including services such as business plan development, entrepreneurial strategy, management assistance, workshops

and training programs, and making connections with outside partners. One successful start-up based on University research is Shadow Health, a software training program that uses avatar technology to train medical students. In 2011, Shadow Health was an inaugural tenant in the Florida Innovation Hub, an EDA-funded incubator where Tech Connect® provides many networking and other entrepreneurial support functions. The company graduated from the incubator after 9 months, having outgrown capacity; it added over 20 employees during its tenancy in the incubator. The company then moved to a downtown location half-a-mile from the incubator into a formerly unoccupied building, which it revitalized. In less than two years,

the company has grown to over 40 employees, received two rounds of financing totaling more than \$1 million, conducted extensive beta testing on three prototypes, and launched its signature products.

**As the home to a large share of Florida's research and innovation capacity, UFTechConnect leverages significant expertise to aggregate resources and forge partnerships to spinoff new companies that create high-wage jobs. Since launching in 2002, UF Tech Connect® has helped to support 135 start-up companies, and assists over 80 companies in the community annually.**