



Session 2

WELCOME

CLASS OF 2026



DISCOVER CUSTOMER DISCOVERY

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Course Title	Presenters
✓	May 26, 2026	Entrepreneurship 101 – What It Takes To Commercialize Your Tech	Allison Yacci, DataCicada
📌	Jun 2, 2026	Discover Customer Discovery	Olga Petrova, University at Buffalo Kathryn Cherney, Binghamton University
3	Jun 9, 2026	Evaluation of the Opportunity – Patentability and Marketability Basics	Joy Goswami, SUNY RF Peter Fallon, SUNY RF Garrett Smith, SUNY RF
4	Jun 16, 2026	How To Win Grants – Mastering Non-Dilutive Funding Sources	Kirk Macolini, InteliSpark
5	Jun 23, 2026	Mastering Startup Agreements & Exit Strategies	Rich Honen, Phillips Lytle
6	Jun 30, 2026	Team Chemistry – Leveling Up Your Company	Doug Benel, SUNY RF Ana-Maria Galeano, Galeano Law Firm
7	Jul 7, 2026	Strategies for Unstoppable Success	Arel Moodie, Reed Oak
8	Jul 14, 2026	Telling and Selling Your Story	Michael Lightman, Hate Your Deck
9	July 20- July 24	1:1 Meeting With SUNY Venture Advisors	
10	Jul 28, 2026	Demo Day and Graduation	You!

COURSE SCHEDULE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- **May 26–July 14:** Instructional Zoom webinars will be held every Tuesday from 10:30–12:00 PM ET. Invites have been sent. Recordings will be sent within 24 hours after class.
- **June 29 – July 27:** Virtual I-Corps short regional course. Registration closes June 10: <https://www.tfaforms.com/5217695>.
- **July 20 – July 24:** Office hours with Venture Advisors to apply what you are learning and prep for your Demo Day pitch.
- **July 28:** S4 culminates with a Demo Day and Graduation celebration where participants pitch their technology or venture for up to \$200k Technology Accelerator Fund Catalyst Investments. Demo Day and Graduation are scheduled to be in person at the University at Albany's ETEC Complex in Albany, NY on July 28.



HOW DO YOU EARN POINTS FOR THE LEADERBOARD

There are many ways to earn points, including:

- Join LinkedIn Group – [SUNY Innovation and Entrepreneurship Network](#)
- Introduce yourself and why you are here
- Reply to a classmate
- Weekly attendance
- Weekly engagement
- I-Corps
- Pitch at Demo Day



LEADERBOARD



Leaderboard

SUNY STARTUP
SUMMER SCHOOL

	First Name	Last Name	Points
1	Nathalia	Andrade	2
1	Kathryn	Cherny	2
1	Lauren	Feist	2
1	Michelle	Friedman	2
1	Mehdi	Ghayoumi	2
1	Shawn	Healy	2
1	Cassandra	Jacobs	2
1	Yagmur	Kan	2
1	Swati	Keshan	2
1	Harvey	Luft	2
1	Michael	Magid	2
1	William	Mangione	2
1	Tristan	Ng	2
1	Omid	Rajabi Shishvan	2
1	Tyler	Rolland	2
1	Karlheinz	Strobl	2
1	Jeanette	Sutherland	2
1	Guanhua	Yan	2
1	Ilya	Deadoff	2



Leaderboard By Campus

SUNY STARTUP
SUMMER SCHOOL

#	Campus	Points
1	University at Buffalo, SUNY	51
2	Stony Brook University	19
3	Binghamton University, SUNY	18
4	University at Albany, SUNY	17
5	Upstate Medical University	8
6	SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry	5
7	SUNY College of Optometry	3
7	SUNY Empire State College	3
9	Buffalo State, SUNY	2
9	Dutchess Community College	2
9	SUNY Canton	2
9	SUNY Oswego	2
13	Monroe Community College, SUNY	1
13	New York State College of Human Ecology at Cornell University	1
13	SUNY Brockport	1
13	SUNY Cortland	1
13	SUNY Polytechnic Institute	1
13	UCAWD/SUNY ATTAIN	1



SUNY TECHNOLOGY ACCELERATOR FUND (TAF) S4 CATALYST INVESTMENT ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for a TAF S4 Catalyst Investment, teams and/or companies must meet **ALL** of the following requirements:

- Developing technology that is SUNY intellectual property;
- Enrolled in the S4 Class of 2026;
- Participate in the S4 Demo Day pitches on July 28, 2026;
- By December 31, 2026, complete the company formation process if a company has not already been formed; and
- By December 31, 2026, the company receiving the TAF S4 Catalyst Investment must demonstrate that it has an active license or option to the technology it plans to commercialize from a SUNY campus.



QUESTIONS ABOUT S4?

Email Us at S4@rfsuny.org

Let's jump into our second session!



SUNY **STARTUP**
SUMMER SCHOOL

Week 2

Discover Customer Discovery



SUNY **STARTUP**
SUMMER SCHOOL



SUNY STARTUP
SUMMER SCHOOL

Week 2

Discover Customer Discovery

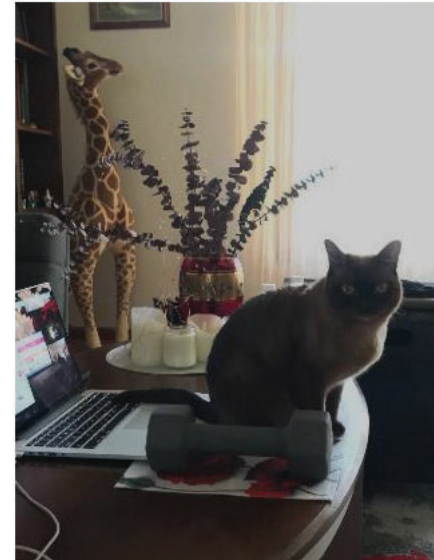
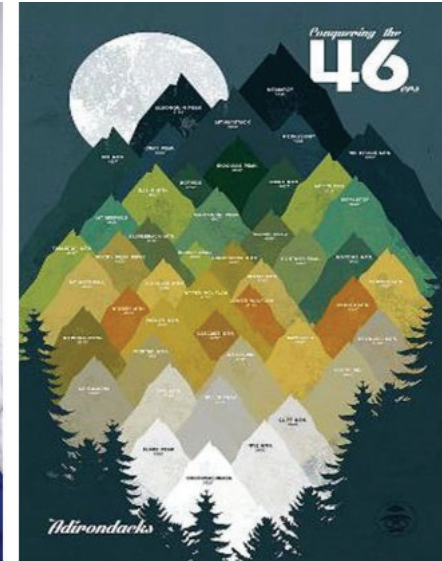


NSF I-Corps Hub
Interior Northeast

**What technology are you
working on?**

Olga Petrova

Director
Innovation Initiatives
University at Buffalo



Kathryn Cherny

Senior Program Manager
Entrepreneurship & Innovation Partnerships
Binghamton University

BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND
INNOVATION PARTNERSHIPS



Northwestern
QUERREY INQ BATION LAB



Broader Impacts of Academic Innovations

From 1996 to 2020, up to...

\$1.9 trillion

contributed to
U.S. gross industrial output



\$1 trillion

contributed to
U.S. gross domestic product



6.5 million

jobs supported



495,000+

inventions disclosed...

126,000+

U.S. patents issued...



to research institutions since 1996

17,000+

startups formed



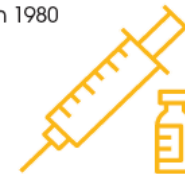
73%

of university licenses are to
startups and small companies



200+

drugs and vaccines developed through public-private partnerships since **Bayh-Dole Act** enacted in 1980



**Do you know any example of
real-world products based on
academic innovations?**

30% of drugs discovered in academic labs

RTI
INTERNATIONAL



Bristol Myers Squibb™



Northwestern University



Janssen
PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES OF
Johnson & Johnson

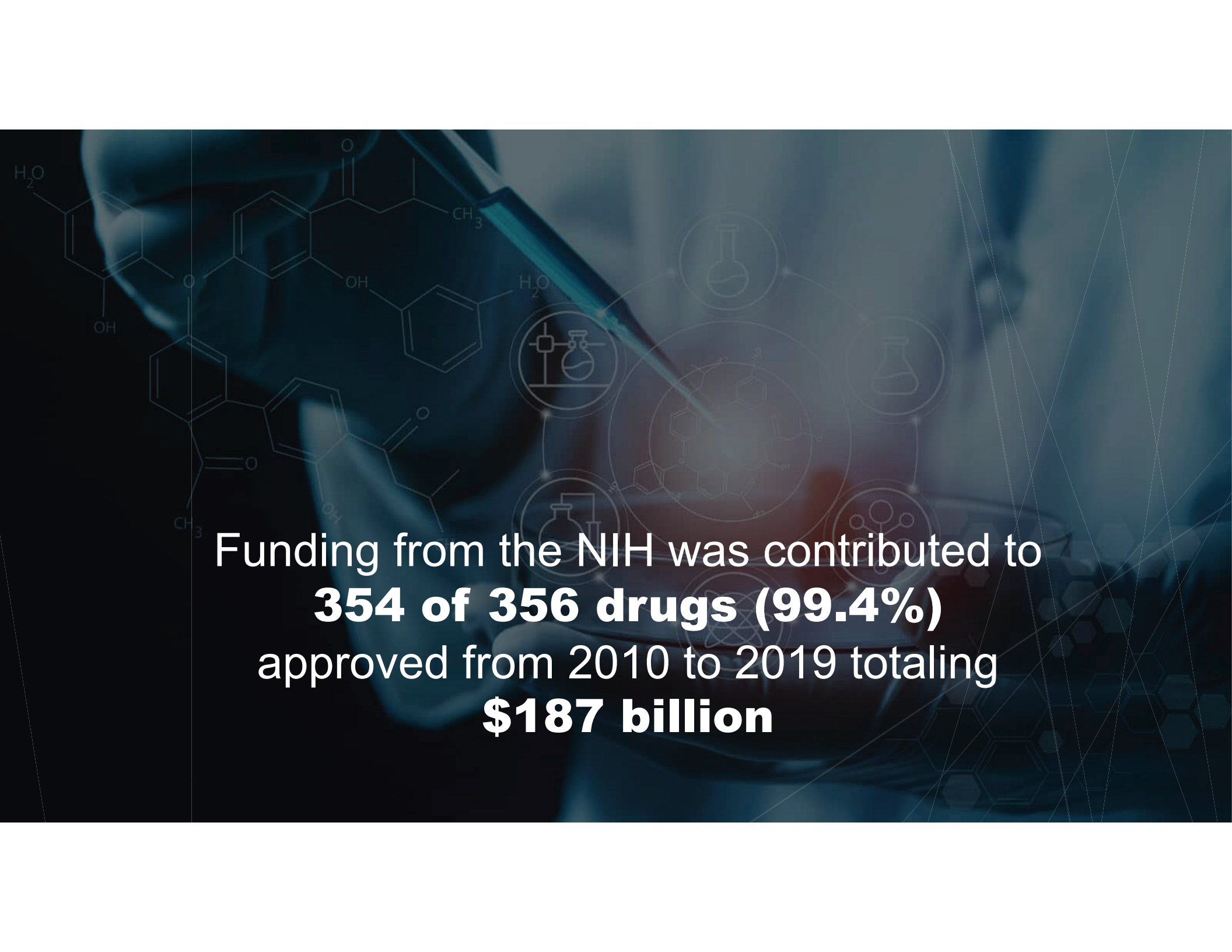


NYU School of Medicine

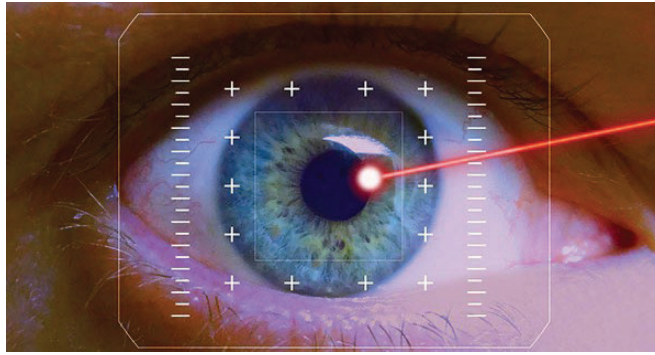
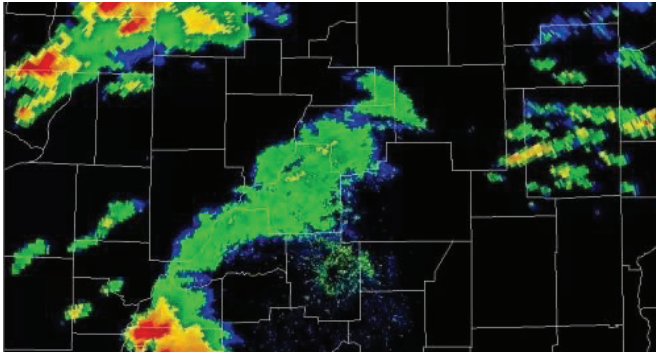
AMGEN



MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

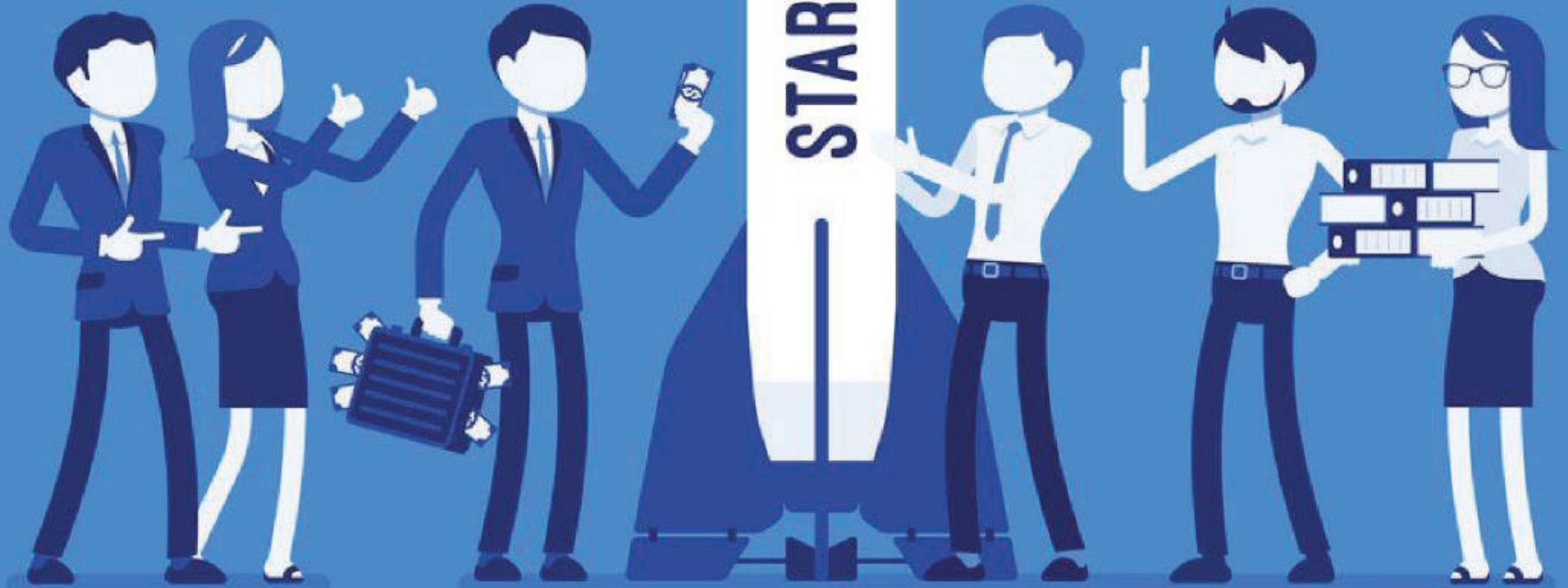
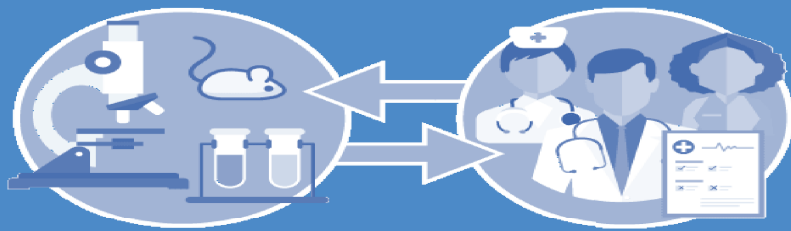


Funding from the NIH was contributed to
354 of 356 drugs (99.4%)
approved from 2010 to 2019 totaling
\$187 billion



Broader Impacts of Academic Innovations





How many startups are formed every hour?

- A. 1100
- B. 110
- C. 11,000
- D. 11

How many startups are formed every hour?

- A. 1100
- B. 110
- C. 11,000**
- D. 11

What percent of startups fail?

A. 80

B. 50

C. 90

D. 60

What percent of startups fail?

A. 80

B. 50

C. 90

D. 60

97% of all Documented Ideas Fail

75% of all VC Backed Ideas Fail



Why do most startups fail?

A. Ran out of money

B. Bad team

C. Outcompeted/poor marketing

D. No market need

Why do most startups fail?

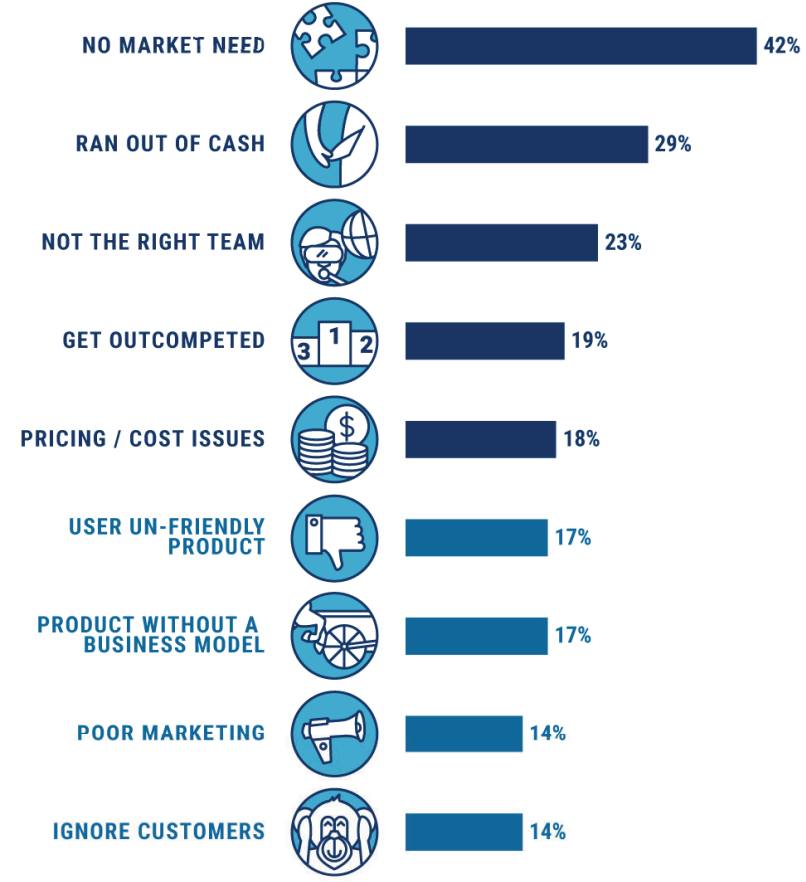
A. Ran out of money

B. Bad team

C. Outcompeted/poor marketing

D. No market need

BASED ON ANALYSIS OF 101 STARTUP POSTMORTEMS
Top 20 Reasons Startups Fail

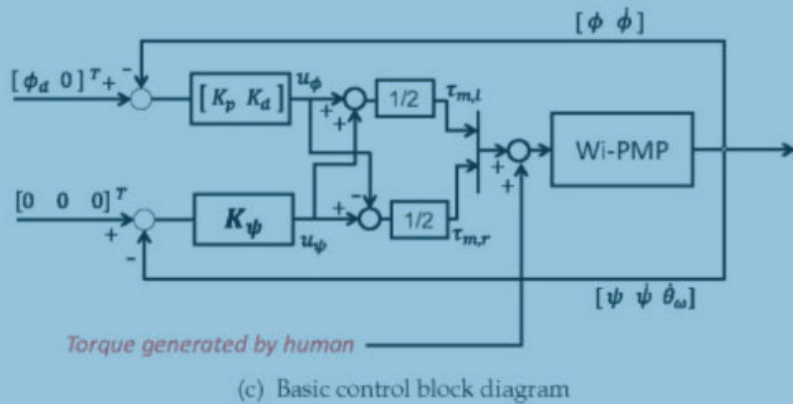
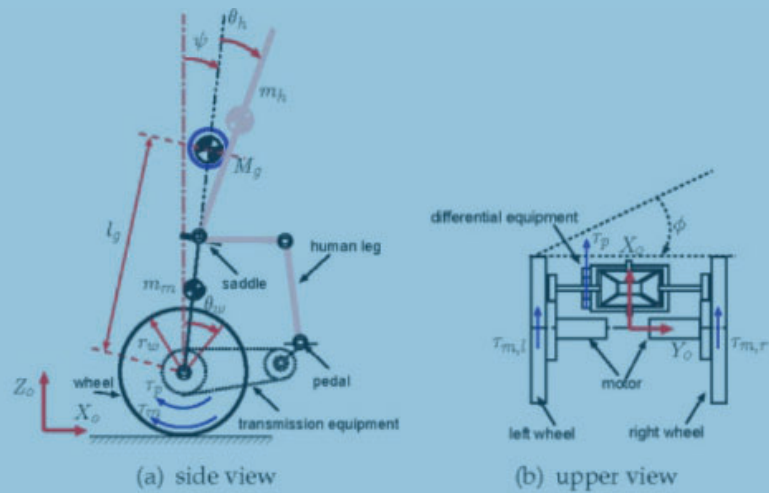




Business Plan
1500,000.00

8500,000 +
1,600,000 +
11,500,000 +
16,200,000 + 2220

2.8





Current financial situation



Trading Graph

It is the primary objective to increase sales and...
to increase sales and achieve the advantage over other...

It is a primary objective to increase sales and...
to increase sales and achieve the advantage over other...

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Issue 104
Monday, Jan 14, 2018
#Cofounders

y of the n Union

It is the primary objective to increase sales and...
to increase sales and achieve the advantage over other...

M T W T F S S

						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					





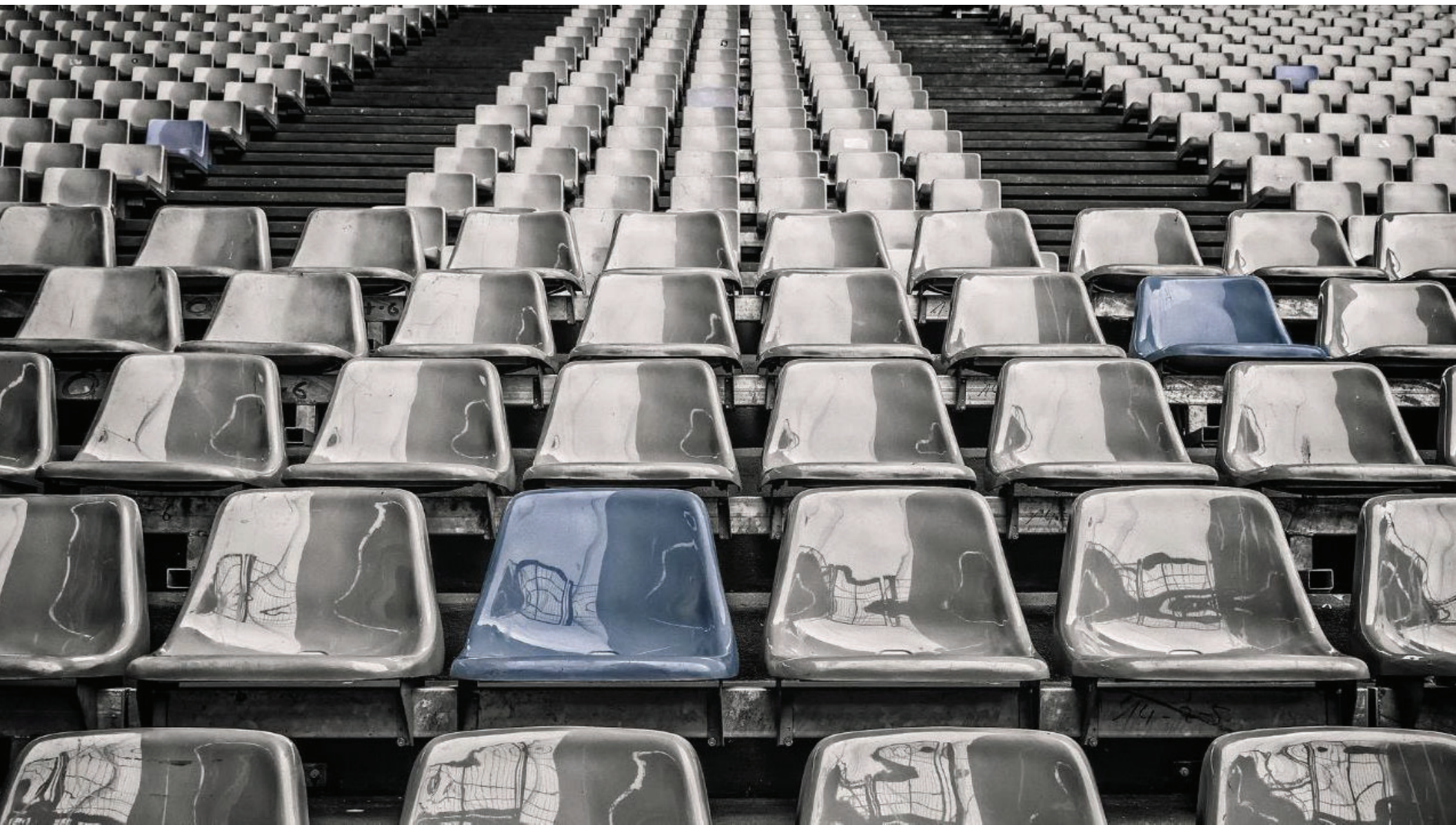


 PitchBook®

crunchbase

 CBINSIGHTS

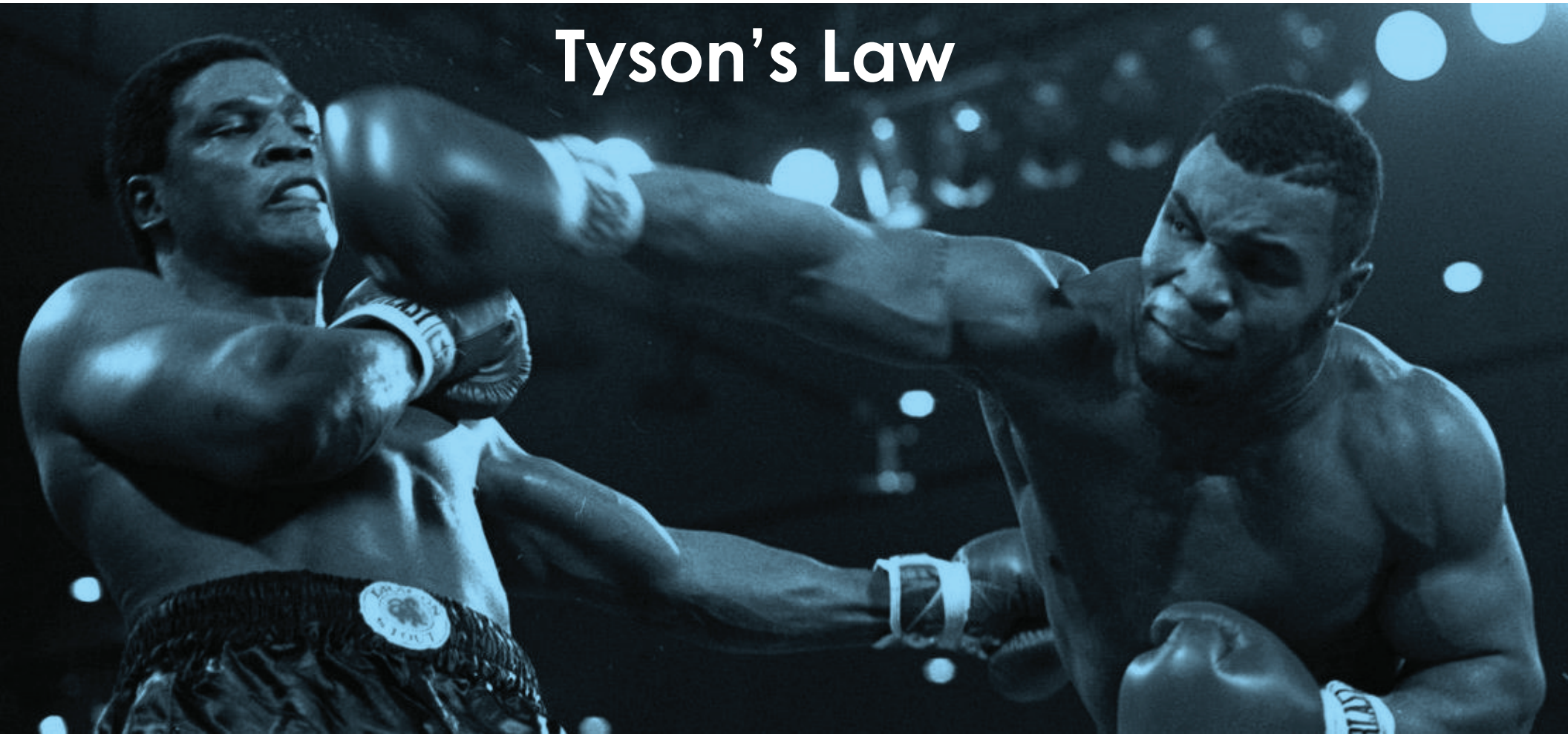








Tyson's Law



Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth

**No business plan survives
first contact with a customer**

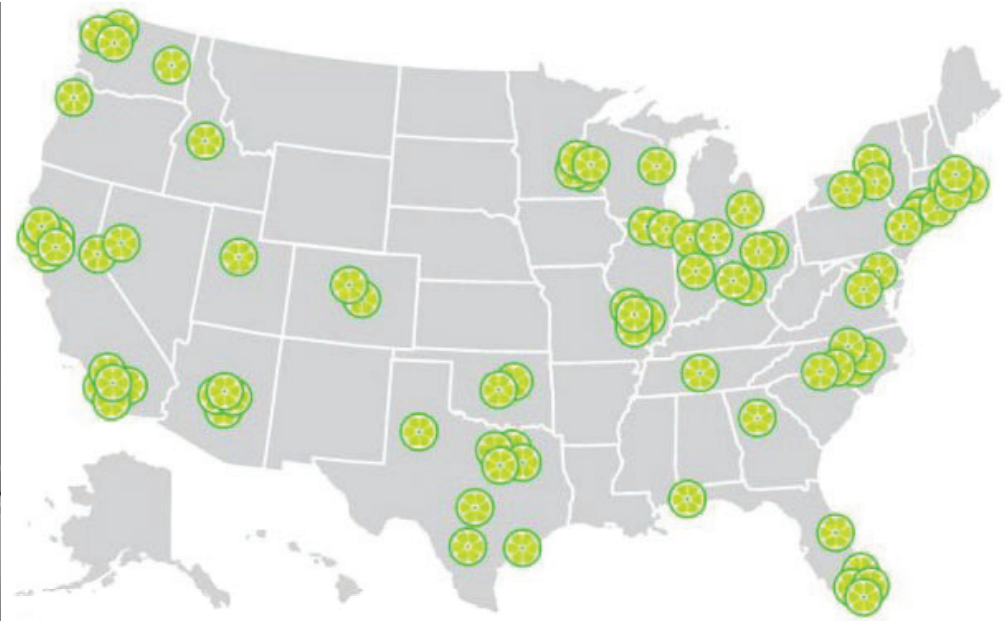







What is Lime-S?

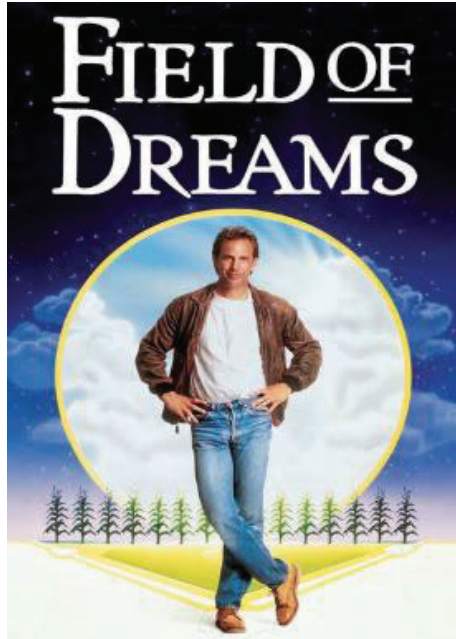
Lime-S or Lime scooters are lightweight electric scooters that are easy to maneuver and ideal for quick commutes. Lime is raising the bar on shared electric transportation, and on



 Cities with Lime (84 total)



**Too many entrepreneurs operate
on
faith-based entrepreneurship**



Don't find customers for your products

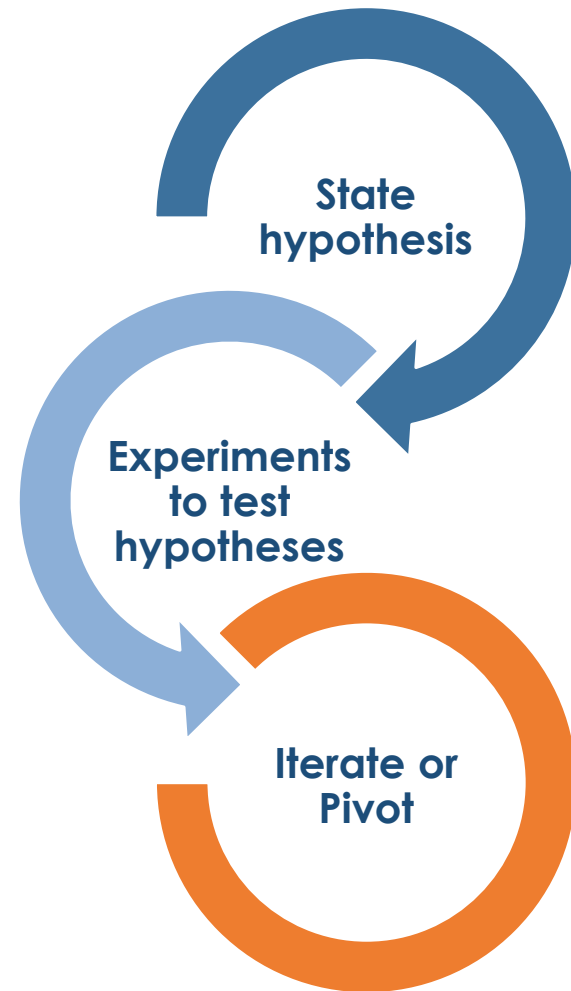
Finds products for your customers

Seek to understand

Before being understood

Seeking to Understand: Customer Discovery

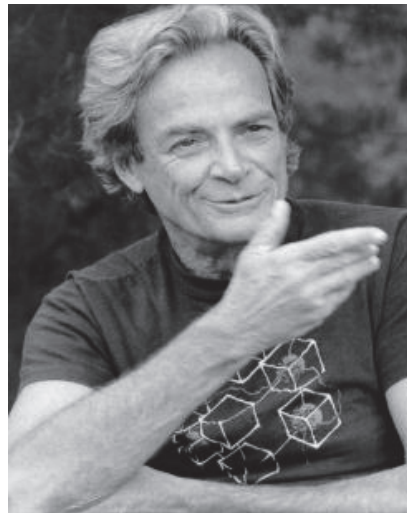
Customer Discovery and the Scientific Method



Confirmation Bias

The first principle is that you must **not fool yourself**, and **you** are the **easiest person** to fool.

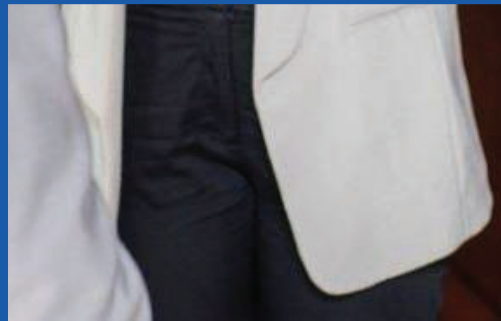
Richard Feynman



**Test assumptions about your
Business Model**

**Test assumptions about your
Customers**

**Test assumptions about your
Customers' Problems**



**Talk to
People**





Where to start???

National Science Foundation Innovation Corps



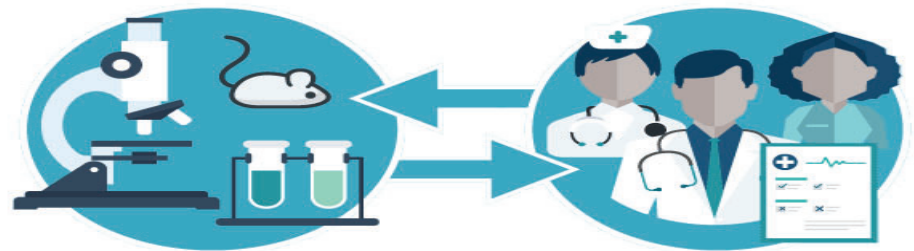
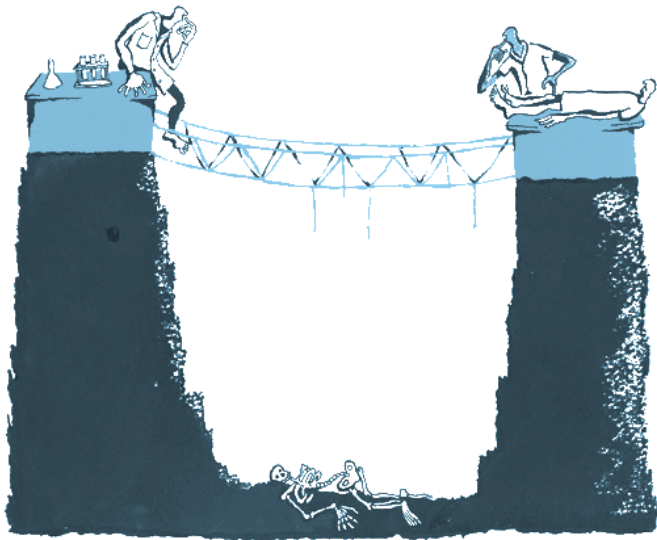
CORPS
NSF Innovation Corps

NSF I-Corps

Launched in 2011

Bridging the gap

Experiential entrepreneurship training for academic innovators





NSF INNOVATION CORPS (I-CORPS™) HUBS

A consortium of institutions clustered in a distinct geographical region that includes a Lead institution and Partner institutions that operate collaboratively to provide regional I-Corps training and work together to create and enhance the capacity for innovation within the region.

NSF I-Corps Hub Interior Northeast



NSF I-Corps Hubs form the operational backbone of the National Innovation Network, a network of universities, NSF-funded researchers, established entrepreneurs, local and regional entrepreneurial communities, and other federal agencies that helps researchers learn how to translate fundamental research results to the marketplace.

Alaska Hawaii Guam & Mariana Islands American Samoa Puerto Rico & U.S. Virgin Islands

MAP CONTROLS

Reset Map ↻

Show Partners

- Yes
- No

Legend

- ★ Hub Lead
- Hub Partner

NSF I-CORPS HUBS Click to filter

- Desert and Pacific Region**
 - ★ Arizona State University
- Great Lakes Region**
 - ★ University of Michigan
- Great Plains Region**
 - ★ North Dakota State University
- Interior Northeast Region**
 - ★ Cornell University
- Mid-Atlantic Region**
 - ★ University of Maryland College Park
- Mid-South Region**
 - ★ Vanderbilt University
- New England Region** *coming soon*
 - ★ Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- New York Region**
 - ★ The City University of New York
- Northeast Region**
 - ★ Princeton University
- Northwest Region** *coming soon*
 - ★ UC Berkeley
- Southeast Region** *coming soon*
 - ★ Georgia Tech
- Southwest Region**
 - ★ The University of Texas at Austin
- West Region**
 - ★ University of Southern California

NSF I-Corps: **Impacts**

4,500
teams

>1,350
startups

>14,000
individuals

>\$3.1 B
follow-on funding

NSF I-Corps Courses

Regional Course

1 month with **six 2-hour sessions** and office hours

Conduct **20-30 customer discovery interviews**

\$3,000-\$5,000 funding for industry conference attendance

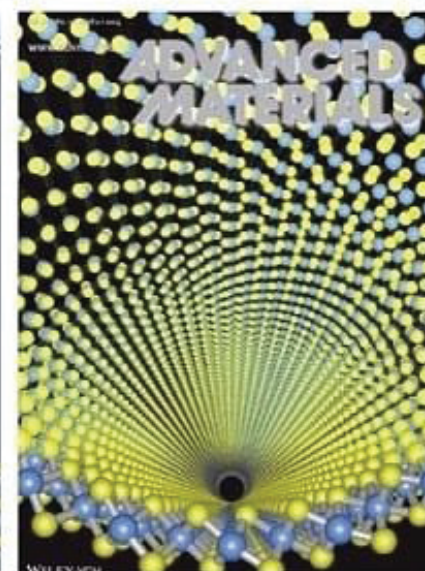
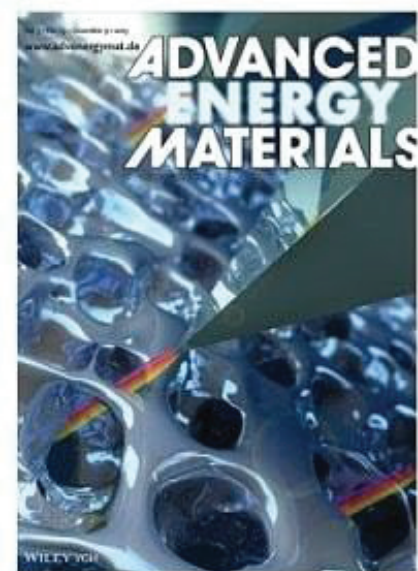
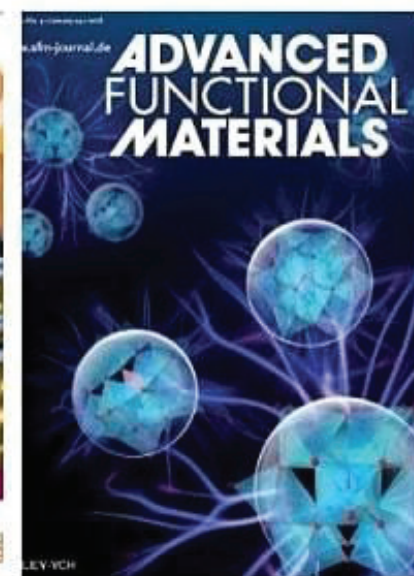
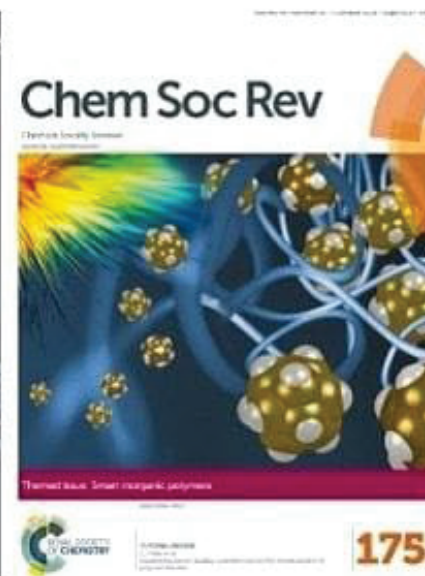
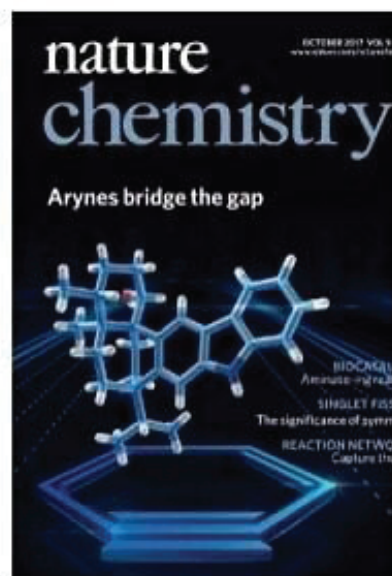
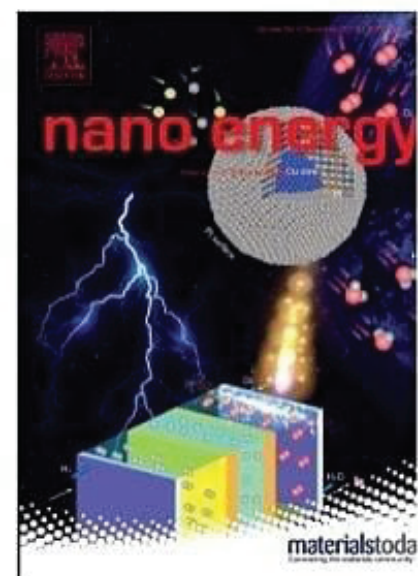
National Teams Program

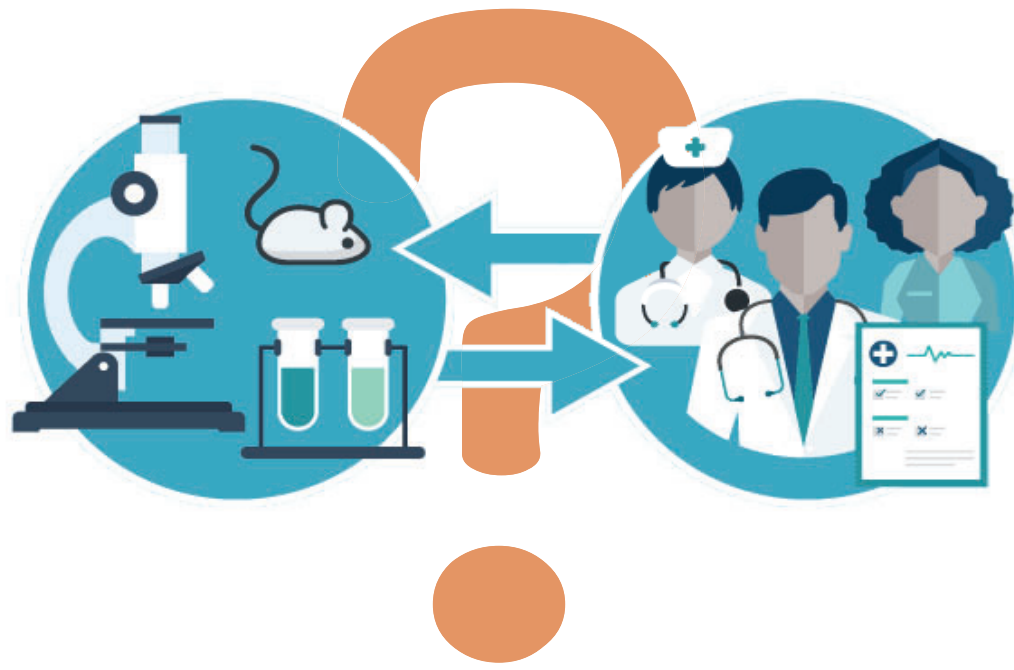
Intensive **2-month national cohort** for top teams from across the US

\$50,000 NSF grant

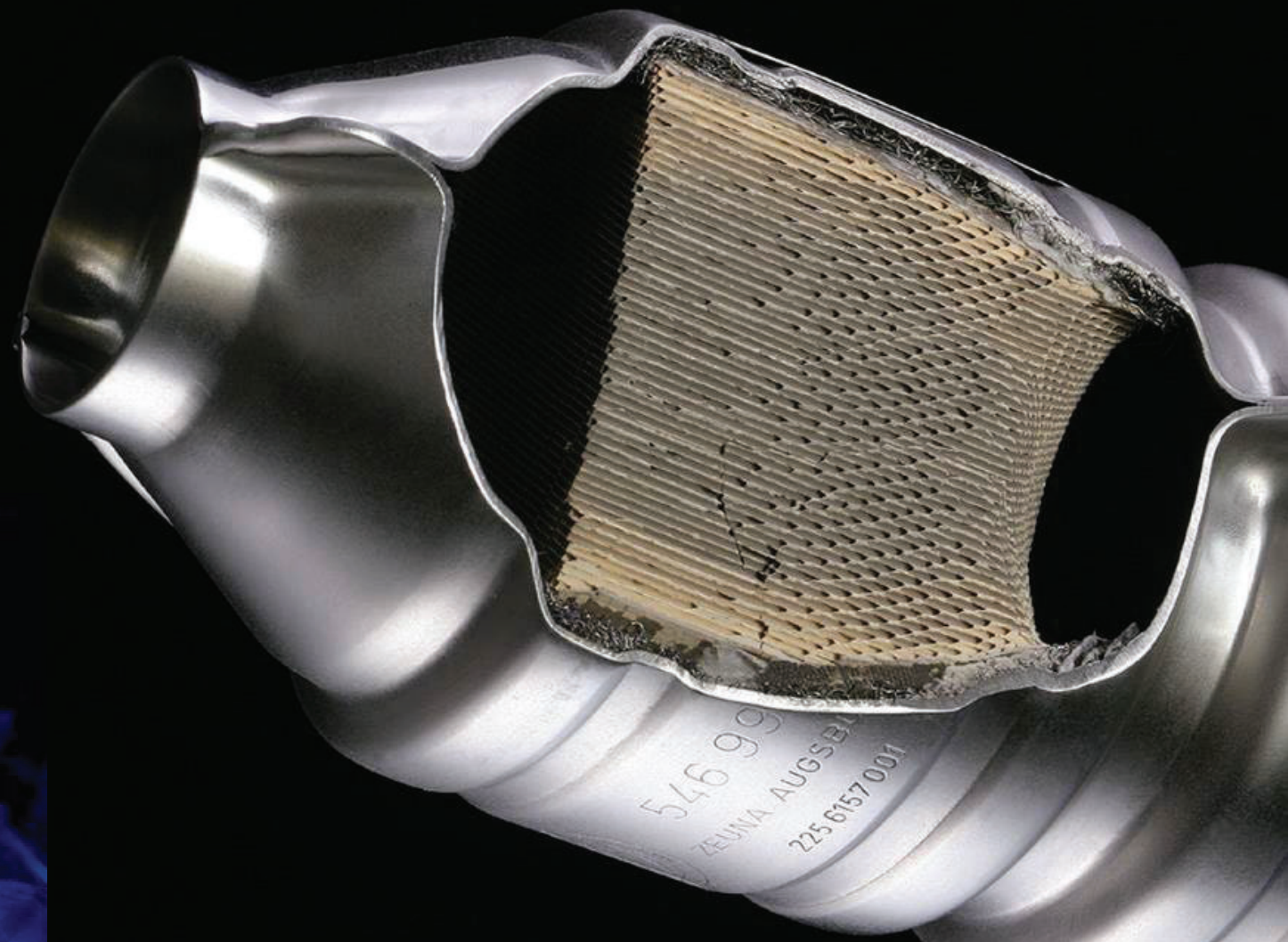
Personalized instruction and team mentoring from successful entrepreneurs

Do I really need it?





The more you know, the broader the impact



The more you know, the broader the impact



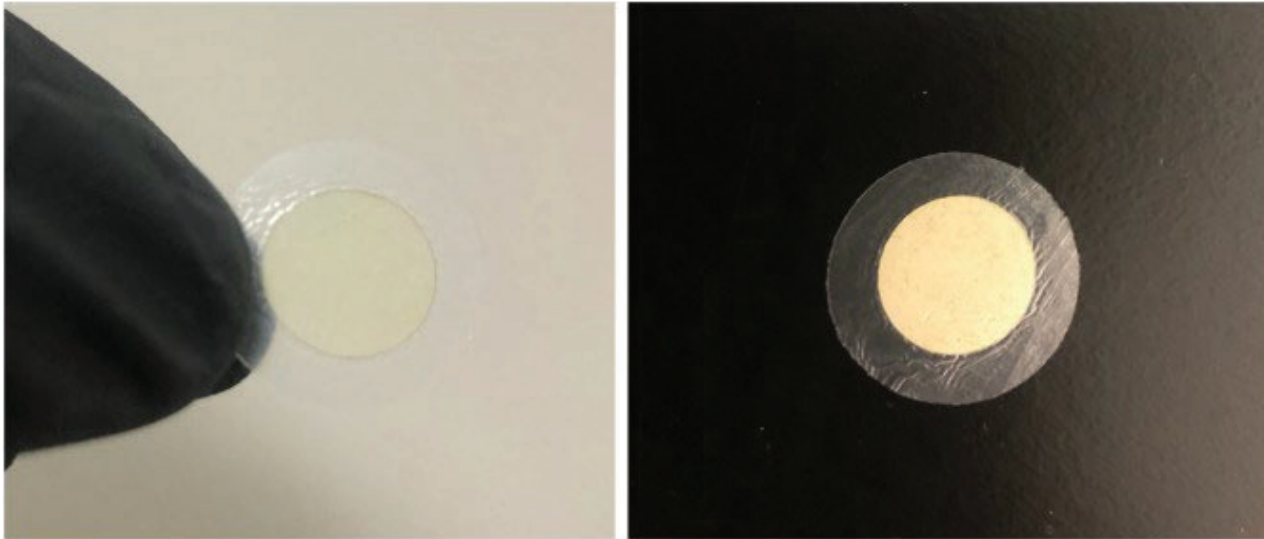
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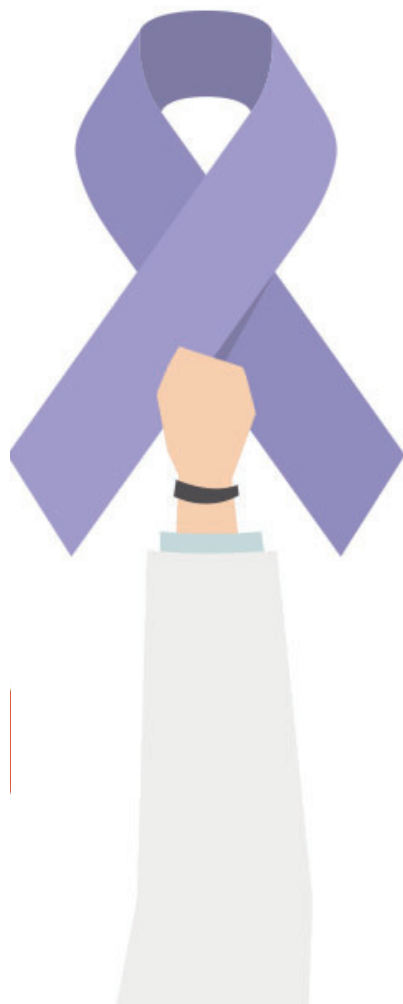
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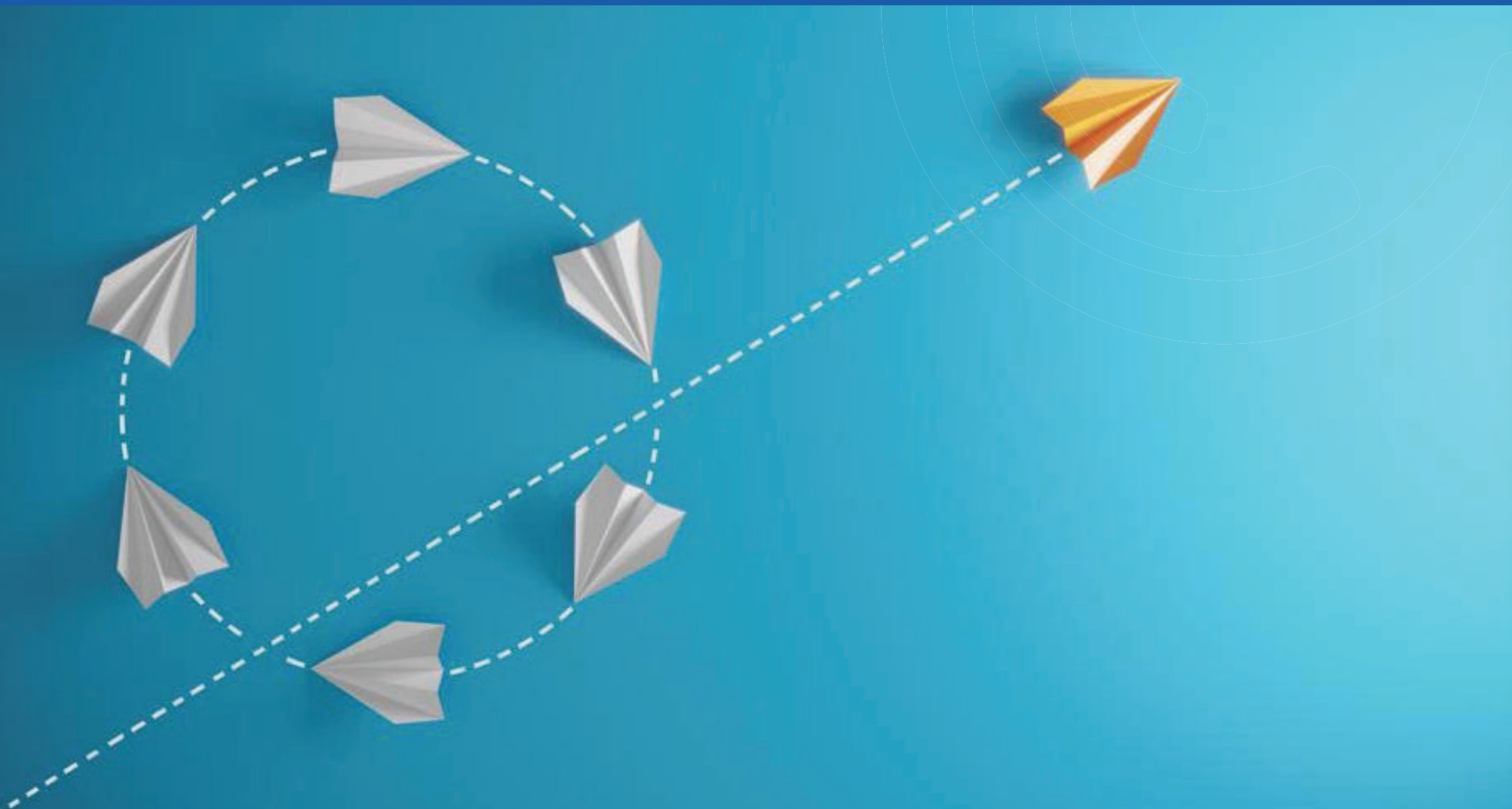
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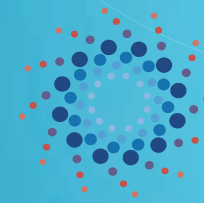
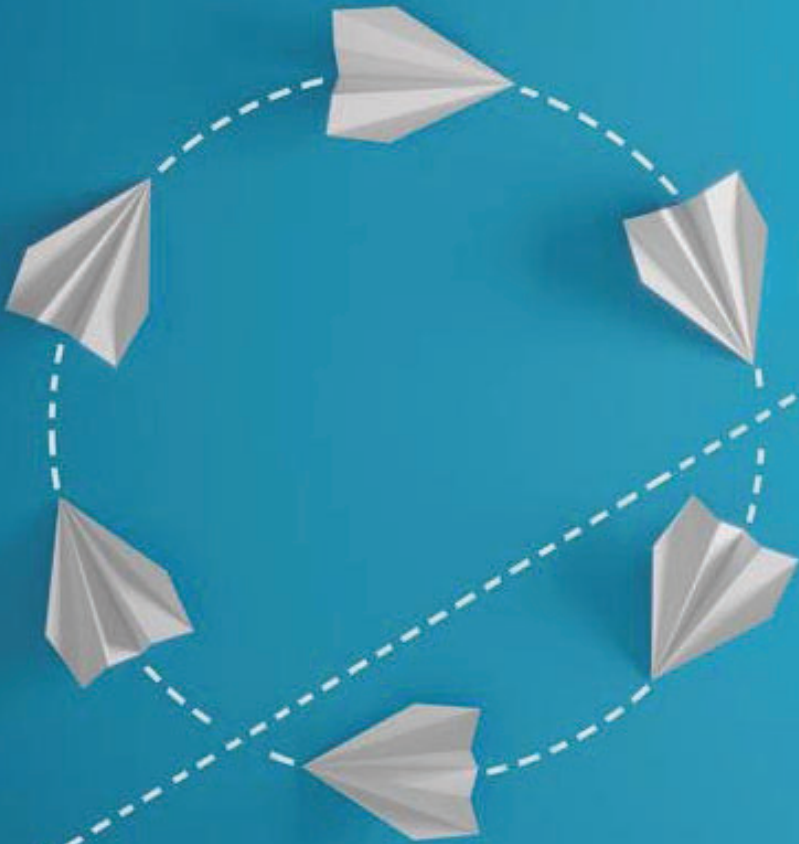
The more you know, the broader the impact



The **more** you know, the **broader** the impact



First SBIR: 10-20% to 40-50% chance increase



SBIR·STTR
America's Seed Fund™
POWERED BY SBA



NSF I-Corps: S4 Regional Course



Course opens for pre-course work: Monday, June 29

Session 1: Monday, July 6 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Session 2a: Wednesday, July 8 TBD (1:1 meetings)

Session 2b: Friday, July 10 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Session 3: Monday, July 13 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Session 4: Wednesday, July 15 TBD (1:1 meetings)

Session 5a: Friday, July 17 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Session 5b: Wednesday, July 22 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Session 6: Monday, July 27 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

<https://www.tfaforms.com/5217695>



Application Closes
Friday, June 10

THANK YOU

Please answer the Zoom poll question

Recording will be sent within 24 hours

Don't forget to connect with us on [LinkedIn](#)

Reach out with any questions, issues or ideas

Scan to
register for
I-Corps



SEE YOU NEXT
WEEK FOR

**Evaluation of the Opportunity - Patentability and
Marketability Basics**