

Clinical Research PERSPECTIVE

ASSOCIATION OF CLINICAL RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM DIRECTORS



A WORKSHOP IN TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER EXPOSING CLINICAL RESEARCHERS TO THE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF WORKING WITH INDUSTRY

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The University of Rochester Department of Community and Preventive Medicine designed the Rochester Clinical Research Curriculum (RCRC) to be a didactic program of the theory and methods of clinical research integrated with instruction in practical research skills. At the culmination of the program, trainees possess a wide range of theoretical, methodological, and practical experiences in the conduct of clinical research enabling them to become the next generation of knowledgeable and productive clinical researchers. Recognizing that clinical research is inextricably linked to the advances in basic research, new technology, and improved health care, the RCRC is continually looking for opportunities for curricular innovations. The increasing interest in transferring the results of clinical research to industry partners by development and testing of therapeutic interventions in clinical trials, prevention and health promotion studies, behavioral research, and managed-care based research led to an increasing interest to have students learn more about interactions with industry. The School of Medicine and Dentistry's interest in promotion of the commercialization of clinical research results and technology for societal benefit also contributed to the development of a workshop tailored to informing and challenging RCRC students to address the issues and opportunities in the area of technology transfer.

An 11-week workshop, entitled Workshop in Technology Transfer/ Working with Industry, is a joint effort by the Rochester Clinical Research Curriculum and the University Office of Technology Transfer, and prepares the way for such interactions with its overall goal to introduce trainees and faculty to the relationships between the university-based research and private industry. The workshop recognizes that universities are a growing source of intellectual property for which credit and benefits to the university need to be recognized. At the same time, the private sector is a growing source of research and development support, career opportunities, and the means to apply and disseminate discoveries. The workshop explores a number of processes, issues and ways that university-based researchers can productively interact with industry, especially relating to performing research, fostering technology commercialization, and being aware of the many issues and challenges that arise from such interactions. The class addresses timely issues such as conflict of interest, publication, confidentiality, and entrepreneurship, as well as program management and marketing by industry. Legal issues in clinical research and intellectual property issues for copyright, patenting, and licensing are also examined.



Long recognized by student evaluations as one of the most "hands-on" and "I learned a lot" workshops in the curriculum, participants complete an invention disclosure for a favorite "invention" or "innovation" and follow it through a virtual commercialization or may research, examine and complete an issue paper on a topic related to and of importance to them impacting future industry collaborations. The final class session is a lively presentation of inventions and issue papers with students going on to exercise their newly found skills in the real world. As they continue along their career path, a number of students have gone on to produce actual invention disclosures. Moreover all students are armed with the potential for positive interactions with industry and are provided with valuable insights on the oftentimes murky and challenging process of technology transfer.

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