

Discovery to Impact: How to take an Invention to Market

PROFESSOR	COURSE (3 Credits)	SCHEDULE	CLASSROOM
Dr. Gopal Nadkarni Email: gopal@uakron.edu Consultant: Dr. Tom Swiger	4600_696_802 Special Topics	Wednesdays 5:20pm-7:50 pm	TBD
Reference: 1) Business Model Generation by Alexander Osterwalder & Yves Pigneur 2) Disciplined Entrepreneurship: 24 Steps to a Successful Startup by Bill Aulet			

PREREQUISITES: None, other than being genuinely interested, committed and passionate about taking a technology to market. **NOTE:** Limited to minimum of 6 and maximum of 14 students.

The course is for senior undergraduate/graduate students wanting to get involved with technology based startups using a NSF recommended Lean Launchpad approach. It offers all students in engineering and polymer science the opportunity create a start up business based on technology from a UA laboratory. It offers business students the opportunity to work with engineers and scientists to uncover genuine unmet market needs. These real world commercialization problems are based on exciting technical research at UA e.g. new polymers and electro-spun fibers, new prosthetic devices, improved digital processing techniques to speed up image processing, adhesive fibers that are based off bio-mimicry, improved sensors etc. You will be a member of a team focused on a University of Akron technology based patent. Business and engineering students will be paired together mimicking a real world business team. As a team, you will

- Review patented technology filed at UA and understand the basis for the unique claims
- Propose a market application (product) with a value proposition that fills real unmet market needs
- Get out of the classroom, meet and interview real people (customer segment) and find out if you have a “**product-market**” fit. If and when you find validation, you will learn the next steps required for market success

If your team does not find market traction, then the team will learn to pivot and propose a new market application. This is NOT an academic course, but one that is practical and centered around finding a product-market fit through customer discovery and validation. It will involve meeting and interviewing people in detail and using this to validate your value propositions. Along the way you will learn about other parts of the Business Plan Canvas, e.g. Customer Relationships, Key Partners, Channels, Revenue Streams, Costs, Key Activities etc. You will learn how to pitch your plan, learn how to take hard knocks, and pivot and turn your ideas in a different direction as necessary to move the plan forward. You will hear and interact with expert guest speakers/entrepreneurs to help us along this journey. At the end of the course, we hope you will what it takes to translate a technology discovery to the real world.

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Gopal Nadkarni has degrees from University of Waterloo, Canada, and from the University of New Brunswick, Canada. In his 25 year career, he has worked on R&D, marketing/strategy, branding as well as implementing supply chains. His most current position prior to joining UA was as VP, Applied Technology Division at the Shale-Inland Corporation

CONSULTANT: Dr. Tom Swiger will be an official mentor, and brings a wealth of experience with his industrial background. He has been a valuable team mentor on the NSF I-CORPS Sites & Teams programs.