Accelerating Innovation with Our New Catapult Program

In late 2018 we launched our flagship Catapult program to support the acceleration of innovative technologies into healthcare solutions with broad societal impact. Among its inaugural class of six technologies, we have identified high-value technologies spanning the biopharmaceutical landscape from next generation cell therapies to advanced, resorbable biomaterials. The ultimate goal of the program is to enable the maturation of the next generation of therapies, and provide expansive educational support to the next generation of biomanufacturing innovators.

Utilizing a streamlined, transparent technology intake architecture, the Catapult Program guides the academic innovators in establishing the foundational clinical and business elements of the envisioned technology. Once a technology becomes engaged, the Catapult Program pairs an institution staff member with the academic innovation teams; part program manager, part ambassador, our staff serves as liaisons connecting teams to the entrepreneurial resources available across the University’s campus. Working alongside the Forward BIO Institute, academic innovators leverage the Catapult Program’s support structure to design a tailored technology maturation pipeline to enable targeted and progressive technical, legal, regulatory, and business development.

A notable aspect of UW’s entrepreneurial ecosystem is the diversity of distinguished organizations that provide insight and domain expertise spanning the entirety of the development pipeline, from inception to incorporation. Our technology innovators have the opportunity for early, repeated, and progressive engagement with organizations enabling and promoting commercial translation. In addition to reducing the barriers to engagement for our nascent innovators, the Catapult Program also contributes to the critical mass of entrepreneurial support structures across campus, and the city.

Our New Catapult Program

Institute Fostering Next Generation of Innovators

With UW - Madison ranking among top tech cities, there is a significant opportunity to supplement the technical education of our trainees to promote and foster the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs. As part of our ongoing workforce development efforts, the Forward BIO Institute has launched the Innovators in Training program, targeted to existing doctoral candidates or post-doctoral trainees with interest in biohealth and biomanufacturing technology. The core elements of the new program reflect the need for interdisciplinary training spanning business, legal, regulatory, and scientific themes inherent to contemporary biotechnology innovation. Simply put, students need to understand not just how these types of advanced products are developed, but how they are manufactured at scale, assessed for consistency, regulated by governmental agencies, and marketed for commercial use.

Keegan To Lead Institute’s Public-Private Partnerships

As Wisconsin continues to establish itself as a nationwide leader in biomanufacturing, the Forward BIO Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison continues to grow, with the addition of Philip Keegan as its public-private partnership lead. Keegan comes from a background of commercialization and project management, having worked in the medical device industry and on platforms to improve drug therapies. “Phil provides a big boost to our Forward BIO Institute efforts,” says Bill Murphy, the Harvey D. Spangler Professor of biomedical engineering and director of the Forward BIO Institute. “He has the ideal background and mindset to connect innovative technologies...”

D2P Enriching Campus Entrepreneurial Ecosystem through Partnership with the Forward BIO Institute

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"We’re very excited to partner with the Forward BIO Institute on the Catapult program to help translate new discoveries into innovative technologies with commercial impact,” said our collaboration with D2P will serve as a powerful tool for recruiting top talent to the Innovators in Training program, as well as our Biomanufacturing Innovation master’s program. Embodied by a high-energy, multi-disciplinary collaborative characteristic of the UW campus, these two organizations endeavor to jump-start a new wave of biohealth innovation and inspire a new generation of innovators and entrepreneurs at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. "

"We are pleased to collaborate with D2P, integrating their exemplary education and mentoring resources into the Institute’s existing programs,” states Forward BIO Institute’s Director Bill Murphy. “D2P’s experienced staff of technical and business experts will augment our staff’s expertise in biomanufacturing product development and project management, and further enhance the capabilities of our newly established Catapult Program.”

"We are excited to partner with the Forward BIO Institute through their new Catapult Program, which will provide valuable support and resources to our trainees as they work to bring their innovations to market," said D2P Director Andy Richards. "D2P is proud to play a role in supporting the Institute and the region’s growing biomanufacturing industry." Richards adds, "The Institute builds on tremendous research and technological strengths in our community, bringing together cutting-edge research, industry partnerships, education, talent development, and commercial expertise. These are the essential elements that are needed to continue building a center of excellence for campus and the community."

"Partnerships such as this are integral to a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem," says Murphy, "and we look forward to working with other partners of the recently launched Innovate Network to grow and enhance Madison’s potential."