

Commercialisation @ DCU

Generating new revenues

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Dublin City University

- Opened 1980, university status in 1989
- Strong industry links, priority focus on computing, science and technology
- Partnership with government in attracting knowledge-intensive inward investment
Joint research ventures with Wyeth; BMS; Intel; IBM; etc.
- Active commercialisation strategy:
 - (a) campus companies to commercialise research; (b) incentivisation;
 - (c) revenue targets for all academic and non-academic units
- Innovative and non-traditional



Reasons for commercialisation strategy

- Inadequate state funding
State funding in Ireland for higher education has decreased in real terms by nearly 40 per cent during this decade
- Need for diversification of revenue sources
- Need to network with external partners to pool resources in discovery and exploitation
- Need for institutional streamlining and reform



Nature of commercialisation strategy

- Discovery, where appropriate, should be ‘translated’ into application
Building on the concept of ‘translational research’ developed in clinical/medical research
- In some cases translation requires commercialisation
- The main purpose of commercialisation is to find capital and skills to exploit discoveries
- DCU prefers to undertake commercialisation with partners
- DCU will incentivise scientists/inventors, but wants them in the laboratory rather than the boardroom
- Where commercialisation involves spin-out companies, DCU prefers to be a minority shareholder
- The main function DCU seeks to buy with equity is marketing



Commercialisation structures

- Establishment of two DCU holding companies, DCU Facilities Ltd and DCU Enterprises Ltd
- All campus companies and commercialisation vehicles owned by one or the other of these two companies
- Invent: DCU's Innovation and Enterprise Centre, first purpose-built university incubator in Ireland
- Support provided through Ryan Academy of Entrepreneurship



Commercialisation example #1

- Discovery source: National Centre for Sensor Research
Established under major public funding framework (PRTLII)
Recent winner of largest ever Science Foundation Ireland award
- Discovery: sensor for measuring gas in sealed environments
- Commercialisation: establishment of company, Gas Sensor Solutions Ltd (and other companies)
- Winner of entrepreneurship awards, recipient of major venture capital
- DCU now minority shareholder



Commercialisation example #2

- **Science involved: Biotechnology, bioprocessing**
Cell culture and Down Stream Processing process development, optimisation and validation to Quality Assurance and Quality Control issues in current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMP) environments
- **Developed in: National Institute for Cellular Biotechnology**
- **Commercialisation: Archport Ltd**
Only manufacturing company owned by an Irish university...
- **Major international corporate partners; possible sale of company or majority stakeholding.**



Commercialisation example #3

- DCU's security services have developed hardware and software for on-campus surveillance
- Products and services have been sold to other higher education institutions and to private sector organisations
- Company is to be formed to market this service



Commercialisation example #4

- DCU decided to buy out the campus catering service (previously outsourced)
- DCU created a sports facilities service, for the campus community and for outside customers
- Both ventures brought together in new company Trispace Ltd, with aggressive revenue targets



Strategic goal

- DCU seeks to diversity its revenues
Strategic plan *Leadership through Foresight*: 70% of revenues to come from sources other than HEA core grant and HEA-paid fees
- Short term and long term objectives: revenues and adding capital value
- Enhance opportunities for discovery
- Encourage an entrepreneurial culture
- Privatisation?

