

Dr. Mark S.F. Clarke, Ph.D.
Associate Vice-Chancellor for Technology Transfer, UH System
Associate Vice-President for Technology Transfer, University of Houston

RE: Letter of Support for NSF Innovation Corps Site Program (I-CORPS Site) Proposal

Dear Dr. Clarke,

Please accept this letter as an expression of our enthusiastic support for your proposal entitled "**STEM-Business (STEM-B) – The Fifth Element of Innovation**" that seeks to establish an NSF Innovation Corps (I-Corps) Site at the University of Houston (UH).

Houston Health Ventures, LLC (HHV) is a venture capital company looking to found companies in the medical field. We are excited about future partnerships with you and UH to provide additional funding to innovative companies coming from University Technology and for UH to host HHV's NextHIT Accelerator Program.

The establishment of an I-Corps Site anchored at UH with strong links to the local entrepreneurial community can only help strengthen and expand UH's efforts to create a sustainable innovation ecosystem. An I-Corps Site will also serve to strengthen existing relationships with the local and regional ecosystem by providing formal bi-directional partnering mechanisms for technology commercialization that takes advantage of the burgeoning UH entrepreneurial workforce. It will also augment the number of STEM-qualified entrepreneurs available to enter the local innovation workforce, while also helping to address the national "innovation gap".

We are particularly excited about the opportunity to be involved in the proposed cross-disciplinary training program, designated **STEM-B**, which is designed to provide entrepreneurial education and training to students drawn from the University of Houston's STEM colleges (Natural Sciences & Mathematics, Engineering, Optometry and Pharmacy). Development of a cadre of entrepreneurially trained STEM professionals can only enhance the local innovation ecosystem and the important role that UH, its students and its graduates play in Houston's vibrant and expanding start-up community.

We are also very excited to have the University of Houston's as a corporate sponsor of the inaugural class entering our NextHIT accelerator program focused on health IT solutions. Having this program located at the UH Innovation Center will greatly enhance the programs visibility and provide significant opportunities for our client companies to interact with UH faculty and students.

HHV will be happy to participate as an external member on the planned UH I-Corps Site Advisory Board and to encourage experienced entrepreneurs to become involved in the activities of the UH I-Corps Site program. Such activities include mentoring of entrepreneurial teams created as part of the **STEM-B** program, opportunities surrounding the commercialization of technologies both "spun out" from the UH IP portfolio and "spun-in" from the external community, as well as access to a pool of qualified interns to support our own internal operations.

I am happy to pledge our commitment to working with you on this exciting project as we believe that establishing an I-Corps Site program at the University of Houston will provide a multitude of opportunities for us to leverage our collective strengths to enhance our local, regional and national innovation ecosystems.

We very much look forward to working with you to make this project a long-term success.

Sincerely,

 6/24/2014

David Franklin
Managing Director, Houston Health Ventures, LLC