

16 June 2014

Mark Clarke, PhD
Associate Vice Chancellor for Technology Transfer
University of Houston

In Re: I-Corps Site Establishment

Dear Dr. Clarke,

I write on behalf of the Texas Collegiate Regional Center's (TCRC) support of the proposal to establish an NSF Innovation Corps (I-Corps) site at the University of Houston (UH). An I-Corp site at UH is a strong anchor for development of STEM businesses that can take advantage of the incredible amount of research coming out of both UH and the region.

One of TCRC's core missions is the commercialization of university-developed intellectual property. To achieve that mission TCRC will invest millions in promising UH developed technology. As described in the memorandum UH and TCRC executed earlier this year, those investments can reach \$10 million. We think that there are synergies between the proposal, "STEM-Business – The Fifth Element of Innovation," (STEM-B Proposal), and TCRC's plans to invest \$250,000 to \$1,500,000 per company or technology at UH.

One of the more difficult aspects of commercializing university-developed technology is finding entrepreneurs to engage with the technology. The STEM-B Proposal puts forth a strong methodology for finding these entrepreneurs early. Combined with the work TCRC and UH have already done to pre-negotiate the royalty, sponsored research, and licensing terms for UH-technology, TCRC believes that, together, we can create a very compelling mechanism to commercialize UH technology.

We are enthused about the potential for collaborating with UH and its Office of Technology Transfer. The I-Corps site can be a foundation stone in linking TCRC's efforts to connect entrepreneurs, funds, and NSF-funded technology. These connections are often difficult to bridge without programs like those offered at I-Corps sites. UH has already pioneered programs that help research move from bench to the market. The additional programs and resources available in the I-Corps program can meaningfully complement those programs.

UH has been a leader in commercializing technology. TCRC is honored to be involved with UH in its efforts to establish an I-Corps site. We would appreciate the opportunity to serve as an external member on the planned UH I-Corps Site Advisory Board. TCRC views its participation as an incredible opportunity for TCRC to advance its mission of commercializing university technology by connecting research to funding and entrepreneurship. TCRC is fortunate to have found a partner like UH who shares its passion for creating a startup ecosystem for the region.

We very much look forward to working with you to make this project a long-term success. If TCRC can provide more information or any assistance to UH as it moves to establish an I-Corps site, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Sincerely,



Huan Le
Principal