I-Corps
(*Pronounced “I-core”*)

NSF program designed to increase the economic impact of NSF-funded research.

Intensive program prepares scientists and engineers to extend their focus beyond the laboratory.
I-Corps Outcomes

• 100 Customer Discovery Interviews
  – Direct customer feedback defines the opportunity

• Clear go / no-go decision
  – New start-up business Creation
  – Technology Licensing
  – SBIR Proposal around Venture

• Increase chances for funding
• Refine and strengthen your research agenda
“How can we increase the economic impact of the research dollars invested every year?”
Lean LaunchPad Course
542 Teams
263 Companies
$59M + Raised
3 Acquisitions
I-Corps becoming *the model for innovation* programs across the country and the globe
8 New Agencies

NIH (SBIR & CTSA), DOD, NSA, USDA (ARS & NIFA), DHS, & SBA
Rapid Expansion

16 Cohorts 2016

~ 336 Teams

56% Increase!!
What is our **Purpose**?
Improve Odds
TOP 10 STARTUP MISTAKES

#1 Building something nobody wants
Score: 300
36% of Tot.

#2 Hiring Poorly
Score: 153
18% of Tot.

#3 Lack of Focus
Score: 112
13% of Tot.

#4 Fail to execute Sales & Marketing
Score: 98
12% of Tot.

#5 Not Having The Right Co-Founders
Score: 66
7.9% of Tot.

#6 Chasing Investors, Not Customers
Score: 45
5.4% of Tot.

#7 Not Making Sure You Have Enough Money
Score: 28
3.3% of Tot.

#8 Spending Too Much Money
Score: 28
3.3% of Tot.

#9 Failing To Ask For Help
Score: 18
2.1% of Tot.

#10 Ignoring Social Media
Score: 12
1.4% of Tot.

www.100FirstHits.com
Most frequent errors in startups:

1. Building something nobody wants: Score 300 (67%)
2. Hiring poorly: Score 153 (18%)
3. Lack of focus: Score 112 (13%)
4. Spending too much money: Score 100
5. Not having the right co-founders: Score 98 (12%)
6. Failing to ask for help: Score 94
7. Ignoring social media: Score 86
8. Spending too much money: Score 80
9. Chasing investors, not customers: Score 73
10. Fail to execute sales & marketing: Score 66 (7.9%)
11. Not making sure you have enough money: Score 64
12. Not making sure you have enough money: Score 55
13. Not making sure you have enough money: Score 48
14. Not making sure you have enough money: Score 41
Create More Winners
What will teams do?
Get Out of the Building

100

Interviews
Class Philosophy

• This class is taught using the “Startup Culture”
  – We will be direct, open & tough – just like the real world
  – Startup culture has no hierarchy - *in this class you are an entrepreneur* - not a PI, lab mgr or center director
  – We’re your biggest supporters – we want you to succeed

• Question us, challenge us, push us as hard as we push you

• We don’t pretend to be domain experts, we **know** you are top scientists in your field
The Opportunity

National I-Corps

&

Regional I-Corps
National I-Corps Teams Grant

• $50,000 in granted funds
  – Cap of $5,000 in IDC
  – Expenses to attend Opening / Closing Workshops
• 6-Month Program
• 7-Weeks of Intensive, Hands-on Effort
• Expectations for use of funds:
  – Student Support
  – *Travel to support Customer Discovery (CD)*
  – Fees to attend workshops/conferences for CD
  – Early Prototype Materials and Equipment
National I-Corps Teams Grant

• Very specific Team structure
  – Entrepreneurial Lead: Grad Student / PostDoc
  – Principal Investigator: Researcher / Inventor
  – Industry Mentor: Experienced Business Professional

• NSF Research Lineage Required
  – PI must have NSF funded research in the field related to the opportunity within the last 5 years.
National I-Corps Commitment

• Full Participation of entire team
  – 3 Days Launch
  – 5 Weekly WebEx
  – 2 Days Close

• > 15-20 hours / week (Each Team Member)

• Commitment to the Process
  – Open to Customer feedback
  – Open to Faculty feedback (it will be relentlessly direct)
  – Open to new uses of your technology – “Pivot”
  – Open to alternative commercialization pathways
  – Open…
National I-Corps Application Process

• Rolling Quarterly Admissions Deadline
• 1-page Executive Summary – Program Officer
• Initial Phone Interview – NSF Staff only
• Follow-up Phone Interview – NSF Staff + National Faculty
• NSF will inform teams to fill out Fastlane application (5 pages)

https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=504672
Regional I-Corps

How is it Different?

• Locally deployed, Short Course Format
  – 3-day and 2-week programs offered
• Open to teams with any funding origin
• Team formation is more flexible
• Southwest Node has authority to grant NSF lineage – teams can earn opportunity to apply to National I-Corps!
Regional I-Corps
Team Requirements

• 2-4 founding team members
  – Principal Investigator (PI) - Researcher
  – Entrepreneurial Lead (EL) – Student/Post Doc
  – Industry Mentor (IM) – Business expertise

• Technical proficiency of the proposed innovation

• Right to practice the Intellectual Property
Regional I-Corps Commitment

- Conduct interviews as a Team
  - 15 interviews per week
  - Everyone participates
- Construct useful experiments that eliminate bias
- Document interviews consistently
- Remain constructive, avoid getting defensive!
Upcoming Regional Program

Opportunity!

• EL PASO: 2-week program @ UTEP
  – April 4 – Opening Workshop
  – April 22 – Closing Workshop
  – http://goo.gl/forms/VXlcq0RhBm

• LUBBOCK: 3-day program @ Texas Tech Innovation Hub
  – March 23 – 25
  – http://goo.gl/forms/Jkg1JKRf5u
Southwest I-Corps Node is your Resource

- Inform on I-Corps process & expectations
- Recruit, guide, & review teams
- Deliver national & regional training programs
- Communicate with NSF Program Directors
- Provide Resources and Contacts
Key Contacts

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