

Florida entrepreneurs meet with FIU faculty and students

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The FIU Chapter of the National Academy of Inventors and the Division of Research hosted a panel discussion with Florida entrepreneurs on November 20, 2014. Vice President for Research Andrés Gil welcomed the panelists and the participants. The session was moderated by Peter Hernández, director of FIU's Office of Technology Management and Commercialization.



The panelists shared their experiences with startup companies and discussed four main topics: 1) defining the market and

ensuring appropriate intellectual property protection; 2) building the team, including the role of the faculty inventor in the startup company; 3) obtaining funding for the company and 4) boot strapping and resources for startups.

The session was attended by FIU faculty, staff and alumni as well as company representatives. Panelists shared advice and lessons learned, such as the importance of disclosing innovations to FIU's Office of Technology Commercialization early and often, seeking patent protection before publishing, and building teams based on expertise. Faculty inventors were reminded that innovation should address a market need, and that scientifically-relevant

commercialization requires addressing the needs of the marketplace. They were encouraged to consider all available resources for startup creation and economic development, such as the [NSF Innovation Corps](#), which refines technologies and commercialization strategies by identifying potential customers, and the SBIR/STTR program, which provides funds for company creation. As faculty inventors discover customers and target markets for their technologies, they should be prepared to "pivot". The ability to be prepared to communicate one's message and articulate company needs was stressed. Throughout the event, the panelists reiterated the need to be willing to work hard, "stick to it", be flexible and think beyond one's comfort zone.



The panelists (pictured above) included: Stephanie Warrington, MBA, MHA, an entrepreneur and investor with past experiences with companies including TrueMotion Spine, Xhale, and a principal with Synogen; Carlos Hondal, founder and CEO of XDG Technologies and past winner of the FIU track of the Miami Herald Business Plan Challenge; and Alison Tanner, entrepreneur in residence at the Florida Institute of Commercialization of Research.