Faculty Forum: Commercialization and Knowledge Transfer

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Faculty Forum addressing commercialization and knowledge transfer
December 6, 2017

00:08 thanks for coming
00:10 to the farm this afternoon on
00:11 commercialization and knowledge
00:14 and I give you an overview of what we
00:18 want to accomplish today I mean the main
00:21 goal of today's forum is really to kind
00:25 of bring the campus up to speed on what
00:27 we've been doing but also to signal in a
00:30 very real way you know that we're
00:33 elevating the the attention paid to in
00:37 the prioritization of commercialization
00:39 activities at the University of Maine so
00:42 what I want to do is start with a little
00:43 bit about why look at the question why
00:45 are we increasing the focus on it right
00:48 now well I'll make a few comments about
00:51 that and then what I want to do is walk
00:55 you through or summarize for you about a
00:58 year's worth of work that we've done on
01:01 looking at commercialization at the
University of Maine starting a last summer of 16 June 2016 roughly through July 2017 a group of us put some concentrated effort into into that brought some resources in to try to understand how we can do this at an accelerated pace and at a different level and again I'll say that's not that we're doing it bad we're doing actually quite well but like many research universities we're trying to elevate our game in this in this sphere so I'll tell you what we did and then I'll summarize the key findings from our work and then the concrete steps that we've taken moving forward everything I want to talk about is in this report which you can link to and on the Provost's website around the faculty forum but I'll go over it so the key aspects of what we found and what are the directions that we think or though we
know we're moving the kind of steps were taking right now to do that obviously we want to hear your questions and you know your thoughts about about this direction so let me start by just like I said I would give the context you know why now why should the University of me be focusing increased attention on commercialization of intellectual property and knowledge transfer well some of it has to do with what's going on nationally and there's a lot going on nationally so first say the different colors of these states means nothing it just happens to be a graphic or so but that is the United States of America if you didn't recognize it and give you the national picture so what's going on well you know the key thing that's going on is that we're looking at Federals that the federal government's investment in research and for the decade you know
there was steady growth in the government's investment starting and 2011 that trend started moving in the opposite direction we’re funding his flat or going down each year from the federal government now this this graph our data from going through 2015 if you extend this out it's pretty much flat for the next few fiscal years if you sure you do read the paper watch the news the the the the signs coming from our current administration and the and the current Congress are not particularly encouraging about investment in Rd at the federal level and you know there are you know like everything that happens in Congress there’s a lot a lot of transaction we have some real champions in our legislative you know in our federal legislation senator Collins and Senator King in particular are strong advocates
04:10 for R&D investment but they're part of a
04:15 bigger body so the picture is
04:18 challenging in terms of the the
04:21 traditional areas to look for for
04:22 research this graph bears a little
04:25 explanation but it what do one thing it
04:28 does is it narrows the the scope here so
04:30 now we're looking at was my pointer oh
04:33 here's looking at this period from 2010
04:36 to 2015 when you can think about this
04:40 graf is about how have research
04:43 institutions universities and other
04:45 research institutions responded to this
04:48 change in federal funding so the orange
04:50 line is you know that's really the same
04:54 picture you saw before getting up to a
04:57 peek into 2011 and then working its way
05:00 down so this is all relative to 2010
05:03 dollars so in 2015 it was essentially
05:06 flat a hundred one percent of the 2010
05:09 dollars from the federal government and
05:11 then it's been flat all along state
investments this and again these are national data stated state investments went down sort of this is again still the impact of the recession coming back up to be basically flat there's not an expectation that these areas are going to going to change now the area we want to focus on today's conversation is what I'm gonna call the the fuchsia or pink line and that's commercial or corporate investment in R&D now again this is as a percent change from 2010 there has been an increase and also then in the other category which is primarily private foundations investment in R&D the other big change which of course I can't ignore is that's institutional investment so that's like here at the University of Maine our example that would become the University of Maine systems research reinvestment fund so reallocating funds from other areas into
research so we've done that these data suggest that we're not alone other research institutions around the United States are reinvesting so again I do want to just so there's not a misconception about this slide this these numbers are percent change from 2010 they're not absolute numbers so you shouldn't think what institutions are putting on 100 40 percent of what the federal government is that's obviously not right these are the exact mile or the amounts in 2015 so the federal government putting about 38 billion dollars into it versus institutions all across the United States come together close to 17 billion but it's the change that I want to draw your attention to these data were put together by the Consulting Group EAB Education Advisory Board and provided you know this snapshot date about what's going on
nationally and then this is their kind of take on the outlook looking forward. Okay, in the state, there really is unlikely to anticipate growth and the federal government likely to deterioration or slow recovery. The greatest impact in growth is in the corporate sector in terms of R&D. This is similar in terms the other category which again primarily is private foundations. Institutions have responded the fastest but their their statement and I would agree with it certainly as it relates to the University of Maine is that it's not sustainable to be able to replace federal funds by institutions reallocating funds into R&D. So again I wanted to take a second to talk about this because it's the the larger national picture the bringing it down there to the good old state of Maine you
know another way to answer the question
is you know why shall we be focusing
more now more attention now on
commercialization and knowledge transfer
has to do with our more local pictures
so our Board of Trustees identified five
I'm sorry for priority key priorities
for the next five years about a year ago
and you know the leave these three are
fine and we're focusing and working on
all these but the fourth one as a key
priority from our system board of
trustees and that's to support Maine
through research and economic
development and if we look at the
University of Maine system you know the
lion's share of that responsibility is
at the University of Maine
we are the research university in the
state of Maine we're the only the
research university in the system USM
does some R&D work and there are
certainly contributors to it the smaller campuses do it very at a very small level but the lines share this is going to be it at our institution and so it's a challenge if you will from the Board of Trustees to say okay you know we need to do more on Rd will return to the conversation with the Board of Trustees at the end of this presentation because it has to do with future directions but they have said this is a priority so then you can then say well and then narrower still if the national picture is you know federal funds are challenging the state pictures we you know that our governing body is saying this is good should be a top priority why I was out at our University what are the factors that suggest it's worthwhile paying a lot of attention to this here and I just put a couple of things one is your broad categories that we're
succeeding and that's the Royal wheel I
could say that you know this is our
research faculty our research centers we
are moving up and at levels we haven't
before in terms of relationships with
corporations moving intellectual
property out to market licensing fees
returning to the University so I just
took a couple of these are just examples
of the evidence for that makes me think
I missed I I have an older version of
this slide up there there's another
point I'll make which is missing here
but um this so this just this year over
just about half a million Darby yeah
half a million dollars in licensing
revenues come back to the university
there's a slide point goes right here
that talks about the number of
cooperative agreements we have with
companies and how much it is increased
in the past five years I don't have the
number memorized but it's it's wicked big it's quite a jump in the last 180 to 389 over the last five years in terms of number of partnerships we have with companies we have done again I just put some examples out of last the environment by Renetta X Technology Corporation a spin-off company with a couple of our faculty at the lead in the process Development Center they just been licensing the production of cellulose nano fibrils this is actually exciting in terms of building using wood products for materials for everything from cups to packing material packaging material that is environmentally friendly its biodegradable comes out of here really some very exciting things happening there we see on the horizon actually the potential for companies weren't coming wanting to come to move to Maine to connect with our process
Development Center and of course there's a lot coming out of advanced structures and composites Center including the advanced infrastructure technologies now. I'm going to stop for a second to say instead of going out of this and finding the latest version of this I'm gonna apologize for some typos that are here that Rob and I corrected this morning that will still be here so now that I realize I pulled up the penultimate version of this slide show the other thing that's going on is that there's interest and I'm pretty unprecedented level from a private foundation that's the Harold alpha and foundation in what's going on here at the University of Maine in terms of our relationships with companies and what we're doing in the commercialization space the so one example of that is that the Alpha and Foundation provides a
significant gift to create the Alpha W

to ocean engineering laboratory within

advanced structures and composites

Center again there that money for that

came from a variety of sources but they

gave us quite a significant gift and

then it's named because of that the size

of the gift coincident with that they

expressed interest and primarily working

with as president a quarry

what is he what is the university doing

and how can they help us and that was

their question how can they help us to

advance our our impact on R&D in the

state through accelerating the way we

move things from research into the

marketplace so some of the work that we

did was provided in the last year was

with some sea

funding from the alpha and foundation so

they one of the things they do is they

provided some funding to assess our
current portfolio of intellectual property to look at what's ready to go to market what isn't so that's the context until this was over a year ago now back in the spring of 16 a lot of meetings and discussions about this moving into the summer so president hunter charged me with moving this forward saying look what we know we're moving in unprecedented areas now we've had success we're having success at levels that we haven't before in fact I'll describe it the way Cody VAR ami and our vice president for research and Dean of Graduate Studies said and he was a member of this team he couldn't be here today but in looking at and coming in this summer and assessing what we do and how we've done he said you know over the last 20 years University of Maine you know you would
we were doing this stuff we're kind of uh I'm his words not mine a mom-and-pop shop figuring this stuff out well we've gotten to a level that we're no longer dealing with things that a scope and scale that can be handled at that level we need to be thinking differently to manage really our success at this again those of you who've been around the university long time like I have you've seen with the investment that came with the MEI F money starting in the mid nineties this year this institution is transformed as a research institution and one one of the significant ways is in building relationships and with corporations in the in Maine and throughout the United States to have a more significant impact on our economic development that we have ever had historically so anyway director this story the president said look Jeff I
want you to do pope together folks and get to work on this and she charges and something to keep coming the key aspect she said we said look at look at how we're set up here what's the government's structure is this the ideal way that we should be set up to to make sure that this is a priority at our institution and that we're positioned to continue to grow I'll will say could she said it to me and we talked time the office of innovation and economic development led by Jake ward they performing like a 20-person operation and there are two person of two to three people operation depending on how you account they they've done a tremendous amount here and been really move the university well let's look at the governance structure now how do we create a structure that's inclusive of the campus but it and
provides you know high-level guidance for growth and progress she said look I want you to look at our policies and our practices and how are they contemporary are they matching we're you know a research use university should be in the 21st century and we want to look at different ways we might structure both internally and also potentially forming an external organization to help us to do this more efficiently and be more responsive so I said sure no problem so first thing you did was get a team together and we ordained ourselves the commercialisation working group these are the people who who participated in that we started meeting last summer summer of 2016 and I will again bore you with all the details but there was a bit of taking this charge and defining what exactly are we gonna
how do we gonna achieve this
there was a bit of people like me being brought up to speed for people who live and work this every day like Chris burden and Jake some education going along so as we we work we said okay here's how we're gonna go about this we're going to look at the work it's having four four components to it one component is going to be to look at our current portfolio of intellectual property there's a lot there patents have been created here at the university they're in this space and ask I won't ask them now but sometime you should ask Jake Ward to give you a nice description of the value of death and that's the that's the the the path from an idea to market and it kind of goes like this and it's getting things through that value of that so we're
looking at intellectual property that we have and one question is you know what is viable in terms of moving to market and the other question is how and what resources do we need to accelerate that process second conservation was this was around structure said look you know we're aware that many university we're at many universities many research universities have created research foundations that are separate 501 C 3 s that carry out some of these functions and they are designed to be a connection between the university a public institution and the private sector so analogously we have here the university of maine foundation right which is an independent organization it's got a president it's got its own Board of a Board of Directors but it exists to serve the University of Maine right so it handles our our endowed funds that's
its primary purpose it moves scholarship
dollars over every year and and in
dollars for professorships etc what
would that kind of organization serve
the university you know have we reached
a point of maturity we're creating an
activating a research foundation would
be would help us and if so you know what
should it look like
so that was one of the questions we want
to look at the third question we wanted
to say was okay where we've been at this
for a while we've engaged with lots of
companies we've had a lot of our faculty
and staff doing this work we should ask
them what's working well what are we not
doing so well what are the challenges
and for the companies what are the
challenges in working with the
university to the faculty and staff what
are the challenges to you engaging this
and this kind of work so we kind of
label that what's the experience of partners to date so we can learn from that and the fourth was really all right there's a variety of ways you can find out about best practices you can read literature you can contact national organizations etc etc we should do that as well so that that's the four ways we went about it so what I want to do is I want to kind of walk through each of these you think of this it's kind of a research paper this is the methods section I will just walk you through and say this is what we did and then I'll get to the key findings okay as opposed to doing it because because key finding from one area interacts with another area it's artificial to break it apart but I do want to you understand a bit about how we went about this so let's talk about how do we go about reviewing the intellectual property portfolio as I
mentioned earlier we've been in conversation with the Herald alpha and Foundation they provided a generous grant of $100,000 to assist with this so we're able to go out and bring in some external consultants to help us look at this so um through the site I was going to delete but I mean he caught me so Chris looked at the portfolio and she say okay you know let's look at in segments somewhat refer to as our core resource portfolio things that we have been at for a while have a quite a track record one our what we call active one-offs and we struggled to come up with a more flattering name for that and I couldn't come up with that's why I was gonna delete this slide but now you caught me so these are things that not necessarily part of a progression but they're active they're exciting to have potential it's not clear whether
they're part of a thing that will move forward but they're active at this point newly disclosed technologies these are the young younger in the pipeline things that faculty have been you know you've disclosed to the office of innovation economic development when you're developing this what's happening there and then some of the ones we refer to as Twilight's technologies and that was our ones for these ones have been around for a while and have not moved on and is this a way we first to look at it so we we and in the row with Krista this most of this work segment and then when we put out an RFP for a consulting organization and we we actually we hired Tremonti consulting group to help with this but we also did some other things to look at the portfolio because because of the different kinds of information
are different kinds of properties that were in there but the chunk of the work was done by Tremonti and we chose 30 assets intellectual property assets we asked them to review them think about developing how you would market each of these two to advance them to do an independent evaluation we also took advantage of this company called Vortech vortex group and this was the beyoncé's was opportunistic this was a company that the office of innovation and economic development had worked with some years ago they came back and said look our product is you know we've improved our product we just you want to why don't you try it again so we got a free trial and so we ran the I think was just one thing as a very Chris through the in the invitation evaluator an online way of looking at evaluating these properties for their potential for
marketing and then one of our one of our
it is our largest endeavor in this
spheres the offshore wind work being
done at the de Vence structures and
composites Center and there's been a lot
of work done on patenting there there's
a hope they they have their own
portfolio of patents associated with the
offshore when were given so and there
was a you know I was just grabbed a plan
or assessment of that what we wanted to
do is have an independent group come in
and look at that to take a second look
really a fresh look to say okay here we
are at this point in time let's look at
the way these patents are structured the
the relationships with the University
and give us an opinion about that we the
law firm of Errol Dana down in Portland
does this kind of work and they were
hired to do that part of it okay that's
method there what do we do in terms of
considering the research foundations or other structures that was actually part of the RFP we put out to the Consulting Group so we did end up back with the Tremonti group again but what we did was we articulated some questions okay you know what are the reasons to create such an ad why do you like why have research universities some created research foundations right what what purposes they serve one of the risks in doing that what are the challenges you have in legal challenges public perception challenges operationally thought through their connection between this independent organization in the university one thing we discovered on our own was that while there are many research foundations associated with research universities around the United States no two look alike we are own looking this so we said okay then what's
the possible range of activities if we were going to activate and create a research foundation here what what ought it to do that's right we're saying what what do we want it to do and then we said look look let's compare that to the stages quality we'll compare to the way our current operations which ones would what we should be considered transferring to the foundation is there an urgency to the transfer and then how do we assess mean by what criteria whether this model is working is this whole good way a good way to go as I said we we once again brought in this as part of the same contract this Tremonti Consulting Group helped us with this we asked him to look at our current processes and activities related to commercialization he said okay how does that compare to benchmark institutions we asked them to make a recommendation
regarding a research foundation or similar entities and then to recommend how that should be organized not to make the decision for us but to layout if we were to do this why what would be and what would you recommend in terms of how its structured this is some of their method they came to campus I met with a lot of stakeholders and also folks from outside of the university they would come in they gave presentations to groups got feedback and discussion based on you know part of this was based on people's experience in working with the university and people at the University of the experience in this area and they riposte produced a report force which my correct is on our website Robin yeah so the this report is on the website in the Tremonti is full reporters link to the website in the same on the same
place then we all stay also went and talked with senior leadership at peer institutions that have these types of organizations and you know had a conversation with what's working what's not working what are the challenges in setting this up to try to inform us alright third third line of this was again evaluating the experience of people who've been engaged in this so far again using some of the funds we had from the Alpha and Foundation we were able to bring in Shanna Cox who runs a company called project tipping point and her we we asked her to help us doing this assessment and she came up with a you know two parallel or a complimentary I guess remember complementary strategies and two parallel groups so she her two strategies were running survey and and focus group and then the two are two sets of peoples who went to
work with where the faculty and staff at the University and also industry partners so we've sent a survey on our behalf send a survey to faculty of the university faculty and staff and all faculty and staff we'd identified is working in the you know these areas it's got a hope we had 188 responses 88% were for that should say identified as tenure-track faculty that's an editing yeah but 80% were tenure-track faculty we then gave her quite a list of industry partners these were primarily people who had had some kind of contact with us in working on R&D development but but we also add to that companies that we're aware of that we thought you know that's the kind of company where we think they should have contact once we have something to offer them so we could gather information and that the range was from companies that had pretty
minimal contact with us to those who
work in with labret with researchers for
years so what she did was she surveyed
all these folks electronically
and then she brought together subgroups
for focused discussions and so we had
these focus group interviews 34 you main
faculty and staff participated in 23
industry partners some of the interviews
had to be done one-on-one just for
practical reasons but she did that for
the data gathering finally in the fourth
strategy we did was trying to was to
identify best practices there our
methods there we asked the Education
Advisory Board could they develop a
research brief for us that's probably
what this company does is they review
literature and produce produce white
papers basically they went in their
archives and pulled out some for us and
then they customized a research brief
for so we were able to look at the literature that way we looked at peer institutions there's well I can't help but point it out there's a typo apologies wrong place for apostrophe but look at our peer institutions and actually Robin from I was did a lot of this work going online looking at their websites how are they organized what are their policies so that we had a comparison point for the University of Maine and then Larry the well and who was at that time our vice-president for HR and Chris Burton primarily worked on this together looking at some of the HR issues around compliance with federal and state policies how we might look at this and one of the practices around promotion and tenure and what are the kind of ways to look at incentivizing engagement in this kind of work and how do we look at compensation issues who's
there particularly you're getting and
looking at R&D work and you're working
for the private sector that's you know
that's important work for us to do our
salaries tend to be low compared to the
private sector and we're not a we're not
an employment agency for the private
sectors where they have to try people
out and scoop them away from us loose we
try not to be so how do we look at
creating competitive compensation for
our research scientists and then Chris
primarily attended some national
meetings from an organization's you know
that that are engaged in
kind of work did networking around
around the country so the result of this
was this report that I showed you all
right quickly showed you and again is
available for you on the on the website
we presented this the president hunter
back in August and so what I wanted to
now is I'm gonna summarize what we think was some of the key findings either report are out of our work and then talk about some of the directions that were we're headed so with respect to key findings expect of our IP portfolio the Tremonti review and as well as looking with the other other methods about a quarter of our of the thirty that they we had them look at they felt really had real potential to move to commercialization now or with with the right kind of investment in support could could move to that so that was helpful for us to know but actually I think in terms of the long-term process that the more important thing we got out of that was that we we could we had an experience with the value of bringing in an independent third party to work on this they you know when they reviewed something they've prepared a report
they've sent that back to the faculty member our team of people involved in it and then we heard from those folks most of them nearly all the feedback we got from faculty was this was really helpful it was really constructive to see how someone looked at this really constructive their ideas about how to move this forward so that was that was very helpful it was helpful we felt our team that it was it's a different perspective dependent bringing an independent person to look at this because the faculty of course you know all of us we think our ideas are brilliant and everyone should recognize that and all ready to go if people would just wake up and then you have someone like Jake or Chris they've often been working closely with the faculty member and they're not they don't have quite the distance that you might want to
you're bringing that someone independently to say. I don't know about this or why would you do that or who do you think the market is for this or how would you move this? it's it's a helpful process so that you know learning from that it's a piece of what we're thinking about in terms of moving forward we don't want to do it in this bulk the way we did it here but to be able to say okay when work moves to a certain point what at what point do we bring an independent person to look at it to help us figure out what the next steps are we also learned and you know just confirmed our suspicions that there are you know there are real advantages to creating a research foundation that has this independence from the University but its sole purpose for existence is to support the research university you know
we found is the reason that universities are crazies they their provide some flexibility in retention and compensation for employees for some of them they are very helpful with respect to marketing of resources and we feel that that's something we you know get to that what the partners told us but marketing what the university has to offer to potential partners that it's a potential way to provide support services for faculty and staff who are involved in this and because it's independent of the University which is a great thing but also quite a big bureaucracy there's greater flexibility and be able to respond and work with companies then slowly so those so they were pretty convincing evidence we felt from moving forward with developing of a research foundation when we talked to most of the feedback that industry
partners who had worked with the University of Maine Gabe was quite positive they would typically talk about individuals or sets of individuals who they you know enjoyed work whether it was helpful it was productive and nonetheless we did learn that the universities got quite a ways to go and creating this kind of explicit culture around commercialization is a significant piece of what of what we do the business partners highlighted the need for improved communication and marketing of services one of the interesting things that happened at these focus groups is that one person from one business would be the focus group and they would have worked with one one organization with the University someone else would have worked with someone else and so as they talk about examples they were looking saying I
didn't know the university did that I
thought they just did this right so we
haven't done a good job of marketing the
array of ways that people could connect
with us as a university there there's
some suggestions they have about
improving the way we deliver services
and the array of services that
relates mostly to my first point about
marketing but they're looking for a
little wider array of services from the
humane faculty express the need for
clearer clearer or clearer policies
about round commercialization they
wouldn't be able to be clearly
understood and easy to find not
surprisingly looking for additional
resources to help them get out of the
valley of death and into the market
place how do we pull how do we do that
and again you know asking a faculty
member who's an expert in this area that
they are working in to also then understand how to move things to market
setters is not reasonable we need to bring other resources to that and then we heard some things about aligning in the incentive structures so that you know people are rewarded for engaging in this kind of kind of activity in our view of the literature and looking at other institutions we find in fact that there are whole variety of ways to get incentives structures for faculty and staff to move in to and be engaged in commercialization there's kind of a list of things we found in the report from other other institutions you know we also learned that best practices with respect to some of these things are going to require some changes to some of the University of Maine system policies not wholesale dramatic changes but there are some language changes that have to
do with changing law and policy
hi so one of the things that so I'm sorry I'm now I'm getting to the recommendations to come out of this one of the things that we recommend it was that we would create an innovation and economic development council now I'm out you know in putting this slideshow together I thought well geez you know I talked about a year's worth of work and presenting and then say okay so what came out of this so we're forming a new committee so that's not very exciting so I want to make the point about why we think this is important and and also a little bit about how it'll function so part of what we realize is that if we want commercialization and theyyam using that term very broadly this knowledge transfer connections with the private sector to be a you know elevated and it's in the strategic thinking at
the university we have to elevate it organizationally and so our vision for the innovation and economic development council is that it reports directly to the president the president points people starting with people in her cabinet but then also key other folks involved that this group is advisory directly to the president and our viewpoint our model for this is that the Advisory Board the Economic Council you know takes on a task and in our report we put a series of tasks that we thought should be the first year probably two years worth of agenda items but we're not asking the council to implement we're asking compliments is to deal with that give the president a set of recommendations who then says okay you know - Cody varam Ian I need you to take charge and do this to me you need
to take charge and do that so that others are put in charge and responsible for doing this and then of course we need enough breadth of involvement on the Edit on the contemporary edited version this slide I've got these things summarized for you right here but if those are the key points that we want to make so we formed this council here it is now it's quite a lengthy group we thought through very carefully who should be on here not in terms of names but in terms of positions so in the report you'll see we felt that these are the kinds of positions and this slide doesn't capture quite well but somewhat with respect to the to some of the positions it's not I'll choose it's not I'll choose these two deeds it's not well we should have Ivan and Dana it was okay we need representation from the Dean's Council
and it shouldn't be a single Dean we should have two and we should look at across different areas of the university so we'll start our initial would be with the Dean of the business school and the Dean of the College of Engineering we didn't say Habib has got to be on there when we said was we need a descent or a research center director we did some work around this one of these faculty members as a chosen by the Faculty Senate I can't remember which one but we knew we needed a partner with the Faculty Senate so there was my point is we thought through carefully the kinds of people and then and then populated it eventually if when once we create and activate our research foundation they'll be represented from the foundation and because we did this work before the partnership was really sorry the the before the change was made
from University made in Machias to become a regional campus for the humane we don't yet have a representative from there but eventually we will this group as we only the president sent out invitations I guess I did on her behalf this fall we've just formed it and the first meeting will be soon as Cody and tickler are empty and jason is working on setting this up okay second big recommendation is that we yeah we need to go ahead and move on creating the research foundation now many of you know I've been talking about creating the foundation that the University of Maine actually has a Research Foundation it was created about four years ago 2013 in 2013 so five years ago it so at that time the Board of Directors were the president Paul Ferguson at that time Jenna Waldron as the vice president in association finance in Jake Ward a vice
president of innovation that kind of development with the changeover in positions the board's changed now of course president hunter Jake is continued in Ryan low is the third board member but the Research Foundation has not been active so in other words the board there's a board on paper it doesn't meet there's no money in the research foundation our recommendation is to activate it so so steps are being taken to do that it's not currently active there there will be a board meeting very soon of this small board Jake and working and working from the Tremonti report and out of our discussions out of the commercialisation working group we have a series of steps to take to reorganize the foundation in the ways that we've envisioned but but we can't just do those the board has to agree to those so the first step is for
the board to expand they'll have a
meeting they will vote to expand I hope
and we'll bring the experience
membership then there's a series of
steps about how we want to put the the
foundation into action there the third
thing we've recommended is okay you know
if we're gonna do some of this work
particularly creating this research
foundation we need resources for that
type of work and we need to find
resources for investment so our first
place is local the rrf is the research
reinvestment fund that's the University
of Maine system created this fund three
and a half years ago there was it's 2.1
million dollars and it is the purpose of
it is to invest in research but research
that serves the Maine economy that's the
central charge from it we've been
operating these funds
for three years now there's grant
programs that go out at cetera to do
this they're not just the University of
Maine they're to the University of Maine
system but again it's a research
university we've we've received the
lion's share of those funds the Board of
Trustees committed to these funds for
five years so there's the rest of this
year in one more year our concerns is
that that investment continue and
perhaps grow and our strategy is to
start doing the groundwork for that so
an opportunity trained itself in some
conversations between the Chancellor
Paige and myself and chancel patient and
and Jake Ward and we agreed to organize
on the Chancellor's behalf a
commercialization summit which is gonna
be on january 9th faculty who
participated in the focus groups will be
invited business partners will be
invited key system people will be
invited but importantly we're inviting
Board of Trustee members to this meeting some what it is going to be a
working meeting but some of it is to
educate the board about what we've done
so far
demonstrate to the board that we're
poised to continue to move forward and
to demonstrate to the board the need for
the research reinvestment funds if
they're serious about their key priority
which I showed you at the top is an
investment in research and economic
development for the state of Maine
so what we're doing essentially is
working on assuring that those funds
continue the second strategy we have for
bringing resources is to continue our
dialogue with the Herald Alpha and
Foundation at the outset this hundred
$100,000 like a seed grant they gave us
was their response to a much larger
proposal that Jake had worked for them
this lays the groundwork for us to
return to them to pursue additional
funds the they have been provided with a
report about our work they're pleased
with what we've been doing we do need to
coordinate with this with other
initiatives that the alphonse are
funding for the system and that's a
frankly that tricky ground but where
we're working that ground to make sure
that our - - yeah sure that these funds
can come into the Research Foundation in
the way that we want and we can use them
in the way that we've the way that we've
outlined the last thing that we've done
is to look at some of our processes
around industry partnerships and improve
some of our our pieces and this slide go
through kind of quickly because it's
really this is you're seeing a draft
form but we're looking at the guidelines
primarily around around student IP
there's some changes that we need to
make we brought those up to speed we
brought the deans council involved there
now with the University's attorney we're
looking at the IP policy language and
and we need to make some changes that
make them comply with current current
law we're looking at the way that we set
up in this industry engagement so that
we're more successful make it easier for
the business to connect with us and
we're looking at faculty professional
development opportunities just started
this fall with a training around
commercialization we did in fall 2017
this spring we're going to be doing the
first commercialization accelerator work
that's where we're taking and working
with faculty who were involved in the
intellectual property that was Seton
determined to be ready or primed for
market and bringing some resources to help them to move that through out the other side of the pipeline and again I'm gonna go through them quickly because we were very careful about how we headed through the language to make it read better than that and so those are the steps that we've taken again I know I've gone through a lot of a lot of material and we're you know we're happy as it seemed to answer any questions but you can tell we're trying to approach this from a variety of angles and we're looking for you know you think it's an ongoing process the invasion time so yeah the innovation in economic development council is a way to continue to have focus on this at the university as a priority we talked about this idea the idea was to say well we have the University Research Council which brings folks around and
serves primarily as a consulting to the vice president for research at the University Teaching Council brings people around from the university looking at that part of our mission primarily reporting to me and we want to have the commercialization group I'm sorry the innovation economic development council will be reporting connecting to the president so this is elevated in our organizational structure to signal that this is a high priority and that we have mechanisms to continue to work on this