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The Development and Implementation of
an Interdisciplinary Graduate Course
Linking Business, Engineering, Arts and
Sciences and Medical Students with
University Research Investigators to
Develop Strategies to Commercialize
New Technologies

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**THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AN
INTERDISCIPLINARY GRADUATE COURSE LINKING BUSINESS,
ENGINEERING, ARTS AND SCIENCES AND MEDICAL STUDENTS WITH
UNIVERSITY RESEARCH INVESTIGATORS TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO
COMMERCIALIZE NEW TECHNOLOGIES**

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Abstract

Faculty at the Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of South Florida (USF) have developed and implemented a novel integrated interdisciplinary graduate course entitled ' Strategic Market Assessments for New Technologies'. Graduate students who are candidates for Masters and/or Doctoral degrees from the disciplines of business, engineering, arts and sciences and medicine learn in cross-disciplinary team project environments under the class direction of faculty from both USF Colleges of Business Administration and Engineering. Students develop the critical skills necessary to evaluate the intellectual property portfolios of USF faculty investigators as well as the skills necessary to work effectively in interdisciplinary student team environments. Working in cross-disciplinary teams, graduate students develop: 1) evaluations of the strengths of the USF investigator's intellectual property portfolios, 2) competitive analyses of products and/or services currently in the marketplace and 3) strategic alternatives for commercializing the USF investigator's technologies.

As a result of the implementation of this new curriculum into graduate programs at USF over the past 4 years, 138 graduate students have engaged in 29 team evaluations of 26 different USF investigators' new innovations. As a direct result of the sets of strategic recommendations developed by the cross-disciplinary graduate student teams and their faculty instructors, 11 new ventures have been launched to aid in the development and commercialization of USF faculty new technologies.

The authors believe that the implementation at USF of 'Strategic Market Assessments for New Technologies' has not only provided unique interdisciplinary learning opportunities for graduate students but has enhanced both the awareness of technology commercialization and the rate of movement of USF faculty innovations from university laboratories into new venture businesses. The authors also believe that this curriculum serves as the foundation for additional interdisciplinary graduate courses dealing with other aspects of technology-based entrepreneurship including product development, new venture financing and new venture formation.