

Knowledge Transfer through Entrepreneurship: From Research at the University to the Consolidation of a Spin-off Company

Authors : Milica Lilic, Marina Rosales Martínez

Abstract : Academic research cannot be oblivious to social problems and needs, so projects that have the capacity for transformation and impact should have the opportunity to go beyond the University circles and bring benefit to society. Apart from patents and R&D research contracts, this opportunity can be achieved through entrepreneurship as one of the most direct tools to turn knowledge into a tangible product. Thus, as an example of good practices, it is intended to analyze the case of an institutional entrepreneurship program carried out at the University of Seville, aimed at researchers interested in assessing the business opportunity of their research and expanding their knowledge on procedures for the commercialization of technologies used at academic projects. The program is based on three pillars: training, teamwork sessions and networking. The training includes aspects such as product-client fit, technical-scientific and economic-financial feasibility of a spin-off, institutional organization and decision making, public and private fundraising, and making the spin-off visible in the business world (social networks, key contacts, corporate image and ethical principles). On the other hand, the teamwork sessions are guided by a mentor and aimed at identifying research results with potential, clarifying financial needs and procedures to obtain the necessary resources for the consolidation of the spin-off. This part of the program is considered to be crucial in order for the participants to convert their academic findings into a business model. Finally, the networking part is oriented to workshops about the digital transformation of a project, the accurate communication of the product or service a spin-off offers to society and the development of transferable skills necessary for managing a business. This blended program results in the final stage where each team, through an elevator pitch format, presents their research turned into a business model to an experienced jury. The awarded teams get a starting capital for their enterprise and enjoy the opportunity of formally consolidating their spin-off company at the University. Studying the results of the program, it has been shown that many researchers have basic or no knowledge of entrepreneurship skills and different ways to turn their research results into a business model with a direct impact on society. Therefore, the described program has been used as an example to highlight the importance of knowledge transfer at the University and the role that this institution should have in providing the tools to promote entrepreneurship within it. Keeping in mind that the University is defined by three main activities (teaching, research and knowledge transfer), it is safe to conclude that the latter, and the entrepreneurship as an expression of it, is crucial in order for the other two to comply with their purpose.

Keywords : good practice, knowledge transfer, a spin-off company, university

Conference Title : ICIEM 2022 : International Conference on Institutional Entrepreneurship and Management

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : February 17-18, 2022