

## **Key Learnings From the July 20 Meeting: Improving the Connections between Industry & University Research**

University research follows the money, which largely comes from federal grants. While universities do track disclosures, patents issued, licenses, and new ventures, success is most commonly measured in terms of sponsored research funding, of which a very small percentage comes from the private sector. The relatively small contributions from private industry to university research programs makes the universities' focus on industry clusters' needs a lower priority than seeking the larger federal contributions.

### **Suggestions Include:**

Industry can beef of its sponsorship of research to make it a more financially viable focus for university research offices.

Industry clusters can communicate to universities what their interests, problems, and opportunities are through ongoing dialogue that addresses industry's research needs. The universities can respond by identifying the faculty that are linked. ([Energy Technology and Industry Council](#) (ETIC) is already doing this with about 20 industries and 8 universities in a public-private partnership that sponsors funding for research by universities)

Relationships need to be built so the two can better understand each other. We can learn from industries that already have successful relationships, such as agriculture and forestry. Once the natural communication and historical linkages are developed, it is much easier for universities to provide research that addresses industry needs. [Ken Bailey](#) and [Leslie Lehmann](#) can share experiences from the agriculture and forestry industry, respectively.

The Cluster Network can build on the efforts by Oregon, Inc. [formerly the Oregon Council for Knowledge and Economic Development ([OCKED](#))] to determine challenges and parameters for tech transfer agreements and enhance the capacity for focused research and development. Future efforts should address some of these issues from a cluster-specific approach.

The Cluster Network can further advance the recommendations by the [Academic Excellence and Economic Development Working Group](#) to the Oregon State Board of Higher Education to connect broader research opportunity areas with multiple clusters (nanotechnology, sustainability & natural resources, neuroscience).

Identify/provide one-stop touch points into the Oregon University System for clusters. (For example, [U of O](#) is developing a guide for corporations web site that is externally focused to help address the UO/industry connection issue.)

Clusters can involve universities in technology symposia and trade shows. Universities can collaborate with the clusters through providing materials, sponsorships, and other information for trade show booths, etc.

Look to the clusters for opportunities to do research within the company members' business settings.

Be careful about what is labeled "world-class." Find quantifiable or consistent ways to determine what Oregon's "world-class" strengths really are.

**Oregon Cluster Network's Action Suggestion:** Convene meetings or focus groups with individual clusters and representatives from each of the major university research offices. These meetings could address specific cluster research interests and help establish the relationships to improve the research commercialization process. \*\*\*The Network will be the catalyst but is seeking volunteers to organize these meetings.