

To the Science and Technology Policy Office:

In response to RFI:Building a 21st Century Bioeconomy

Question (5) The toughest money to get is the bridge between research findings arising at university and research institutes that produce embryonic ideas and inventions and conventional investment. The SBIR and STTR programs were to address this gap, however in my experience too little risk is associated with the choice of proposals that receive support. Possessing data that provides a reasonable assurance of success in Phase I exploratory undertaking, seems a poor criteria for funding and places many worthy ideas and proposals in a Catch-22 situation beyond the reach of funding.

Question (6). The SBIR program has been artificially constrained by limiting the amounts that can go to venture backed companies. I don't believe there should be limits or set-asides for any specific group. If science and technology are to be translated into products benefiting the public, the best proposals should receive funding regardless of their small business origin, structure or existing support origins of the submitting organization. Why would any program want to support less than the absolute best ideas? A venture-backed company focused upon their core asset should be able to explore additional areas by leveraging their time and talent in areas deemed too risky for additional investment by the venture community. This has relevance to question (8).

Question (9) Few institutions take the time include in doctoral training even minimal exposure to the corporate world or business thinking. I have personally taught courses where doctoral students and post-doctoral students attend because they are curious or frustrated in their laboratory-based careers, however the current academic environment doesn't appear to prepare them for anything beyond a bench-focused career in science. Exposure in graduate school to the business of science in a formal way could enhance their experience and prepare students to make informed career choices proactively.

Question (12) If students are to be successful entrepreneurs they must be exposed early to the opportunity. It is unlikely that one would produce a scientist without teaching them how to write a successful grant. Yet, unless one's mentors have experience in the area, it there is unlikely to be exposure. Why would formal exposure to the workings of business from technology development fundamentals to start up company workings to large industry function not be a part of the educational preparation received to prepare a well-rounded individual ready to take their place in society? Appropriate programs or curriculum could be developed to achieve these ends without distracting unduly from scientific pursuits.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

John Perchorowicz, Ph.D.

President

Triage Masters LLC