

TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT



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This is a wholly new role within our School, born of the shared vision between Stephen Buckman and Jim Williams to diversify research funding and expand our culture of engagement with industry. It is an honour to be the first to hold this position and I am keen to set the tenor, choosing a title which reflects the goals and respects the research principles which drive the School. Often this type of position attracts titles which include 'commercialisation', 'innovation', 'industry' and so on. These all presuppose the role of the position, and might be at odds with the core objective of RSPE. Thus, *Technology Development*, seems to capture the opportunity to apply our science without forcing a skewed perspective about the key research drivers in RSPE. I owe much to Victor Pantano for helping to crystalize these thoughts. Nonetheless, applications for our research often come knocking and building a responsive culture firstly, and subsequently one that proactively promotes opportunities is a productive use of publicly funded research.

A team is being assembled spanning our School and the Office Commercialisation (OC), lead by Fiona Nelms. Rana Ganguly is the first to join this team with foundations coming from his time in advanced industry in India. Soon to join the OC is Neil Radford presently en route from the University of Leicester and starting in early 2013. He will be based in the School one day per week and will build industry relationships as well as manage the IP portfolio for physical sciences. The School Development Board have promoted the concept of a locally-focused Business Development Manager. A search is soon to start fill this position to be based largely in RSPE.

Departments are defined by distinctly different cultures. Most have experience with industry engagement and there are numerous mentors already within our School. One challenge is to grow new opportunities, the grander challenge is to build a sustainable model for funding these opportunities. The ways in which we engage must build on our core strength to do fundamental research. This necessarily means that we embark on a multistep path that enhances our research teams along the way. Consequential funding along this path ultimately returns more long-term value than simple licensing deals or spin-offs. The value is in building productive relationships across universities and industry alike. I like to consider that, in general, a license or spin-off are symptomatic of an established and productive relationship.