Economic Development Advisory Committee

Date:	May 22, 2025
Time:	2:30 pm
Location:	UF Innovate, Room 140 747 SW 2nd Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601, USA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 PM.

Members in Attendance: Linda James Carrie Bush, Alexander Hamilton-Sanchez, Levy Odera, Sarah Rockwell

Members Absent: Ying Xu, Nedra Goettling

Others in Attendance: Jessica Hurov, Bailey McClellan, Nephtali Dzubin, Matthew Traum, Lillian Withers, Melissa Kuchma, Dr. Rachael Seidler, Jordan Callaham

2. Review of Agenda

Romona Jackson made a motion to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Linda James and approved unanimously.

3. Approval of the Agenda Packet and Minutes from the February & March meetings

Linda James moved to approve the revised February meeting minutes and Carrie Bush seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Romona Jackson motioned to approve the March meeting minutes, and Carrie Bush seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. UF Innovate Presentation, 20mins

Lilly Withers, the Admin coordinator for UF Accelerate, presented for UF Innovate on their program offered at the Hub. UF Innovate | Accelerate was started in 1995. Sid Martin is their second building in Alachua, which opened in 1995; it is strictly biotech. At the Hub, it is mixed use; whether the company is trying to create a video game or a drone, UF Innovate tries to provide the resources to build the client's company up. UF Innovate does connect to resources wherever the companies go.

Since opening, UF Innovate created 2,500 jobs and approximately 2 billion in capital. The Hub building opened in 2011, and it houses 60 companies. Given that it is mixed use, some are dedicated to biotech while others are generic.

UF Innovate ensures to provide resources to Stage 1 companies and Stage 2 companies.

Stage 1 – *Precede*: This stage is related to building up funding. Funding sources include government grants, among other sources. However, given that funding can be limited, UF Innovate wants to assist companies in optimizing their funding by providing some immediate resources for a lesser cost:

- Space: lab, wet lab, or office
- Equipment: microscope, etc.
    - Shared equipment in Core Lab

Stage 2 – *Build*: This stage is helping with the business and what to do next, or the business plan. Some features include customer discovery and selling points for the company. This is the stage for businesses who have a physical foundation and trying to move upwards.

- The Hub has 67 offices, 11 wet labs, 20 dry labs
- Sid Martin has 14 offices, 22 wet labs, 3 dry labs
- UF Innovate maintains a constate line of communication between themselves and their companies.
    - They host networking events, webinars, and seminars, which are free to the public.
    - Examples of services offered to companies include consultations to determine needs and logistics: such as if a company approaches UF Innovate for support in marketing.

Graduation from UF Innovate:

- Separation from building, but still given access
- They are considered alumni companies

Three different memberships

- Resident
    - Physically present in the building

    - Access to UF Innovate 24/7 for all support and services
- External
    - Able to operate separately from the building
    - Services are available as needed
    - Ability to utilize the Core Lab with shared equipment
- Graduate
- Separation from building, similar to External, but with more access
- They are considered alumni companies

UF Innovate has pushed 300 companies through both Sid Martin and the Hub.

- Approximately 70 companies at present
    - 16 External
    - 6 at Sid Martin
    - 60 at the Hub
    - 400 clients are present at the Hub at any given point in time

UF Innovate offers tech licensing and its own marketing team. The public is encouraged to work with UF Innovate and connect businesses to resources.

At the Hub, UF Innovate tries to get companies acquired, which is considered a success for the company.

- Several companies succeeded in this way through UF Innovate.
    - Ie: Rapid Genomix, Actionable Quality Assurance, Applied Food Technologies, Feathr, Neobiosis, etc.

UF Innovate is leaning more into clean tech and space tech, including Astraeus Space, which have a net zero on the effects that they have on the earth.

In terms of UF Innovate's connection to UF, they are separate from education and are instead focused on research.

TECHNOLOGY LICENSING PRESENTATION

Melissa Kuchma, Assistant Director, Licensing Officer, presented on technology licensing offered through UF Innovate.

UF Innovate is the innovation arm of the university. Tech licensing protects all the technology that goes through the university.

UF Pathways: a program that brings faculty and helps them with startups to equip them for the business world. This program helps to train those faculty and helps to bolster start up formation, which helps economic development of UF innovate.

The venture fund, a $2 million fund, started in 2020. This investment goes to UF-based startups. Those startups need to have foundation at UF. They can fund UF-based technology. The requirement is that it must go into a company that has licensed technology with UF.

Tech licensing: They have 383 invention disclosures. These are split up into a portfolio of where each have about 500 technologies and multiple patents. With these disclosures, UF Innovate meets with the faculty, evaluating what is novel and marketable about the technology. UF Innovate is trying to get UF technologies out into the world. UF Innovate wants that impact of those research dollars.

- Ranked #2 tech transfer in the country
- Budget to write patents: $75 million to protect the university by filing patents
- In fiscal year 2024, 437 patents were filed. 169 issued as United States patent without foreign patent. Patents take a long time.
- They want to be able to license those out and get that technology out. There have been 279 license agreements where new technologies go out to companies. Of those companies that took UF technology, there have been 9 startups.
- Research phase is first.
- 800 material transfer agreement to UF, with its number steadily rising.
- Faculty must be on board. The goal is to have faculty disclose instead of publishing before getting a patent. There is generous IP revenue sharing.

Member Carrie Bush asked a question regarding impacts on research due to federal funding, and Licensing Officer Melissa Kuchma provided some of the ways in which companies are bringing in research dollars, which is not all from the federal government. For example, a substantial amount is from sponsored research agreements. Melissa answered Romona Jackson’s question about engagement, stating that she is constantly reaching out and has talked with a

large multinational company that is now going to visit to meet researchers here at UF. Chair Sarah Rockwell asked If there was a risk with pure scientific research, given that it is not often patentable. Melissa Kuchma provided insight into corporate interests that there is a preference things that are coming along sooner rather than 10-20 years.

One of Melissa Kuchma's projects is the space research consortium, which is coming at a high level due to the Governor signing off on it. It's a collaboration between three universities, including the University of Florida. The aim is a free flow of research and funding, as well as bringing corporate research and driving up the space economy in Florida. It will be seen how organizations like Astraeus fit into this as well as more universities. The goal is to get Florida to be a space hub to compete with Texas and California due to a launch space off the coast here.

5. Astraeus Space Institute Presentation, 20mins + Q/A

Dr. Rachel Seidler, Professor at University of Florida, and Deputy Director Astraeus Space Institute gave the presentation. Dr. Seidler introduced Jordan Callaham, the Assistant Director of Administration.

Astraeus Space Institute was founded at UF a little over a year ago, receiving UF strategic funds to set up the institute.

Leadership Team:

- Founding & Acting Director: Rob Ferl
- Deputy Director: Rachael Seidler
- Assistant Director of Administration: Jordan Callaham
- Assistant Directors:
    - John Conklin, professor of mechanical aerospace engineering
        - Builds sensors that go into space to understand behavior of black holes
    - Jamie Foster
        - Corporate engagement
        - Engaging with Kennedy Space Center
    - Terry Harpold, English professor

        - Studies science fiction literature
        - Interacts with public and Institute
        - Book readings at local bookstores with authors publishing in space fiction
    - Amy Williams
        - Workforce development with students
        - New certificate programs
        - Finding internships
    - Leadership Council: people on campus who are department chairs or meeting centers or institutes that connect with space to some degree. This allows Astraeus Space Institute to get a broader representation.
        - Warren Dizon
        - Elizabeth Lada
        - Anna-Lisa Paul
        - Siobhan Malany

Priorities and goals of the institute:

- Astraeus Space Institute serves as a go-to space resource for the academic industry, government, and the public related to space.
- They in the process of building a network of partners across government, academia, and industry.
    - There is a new space universities consortium with the Kennedy Space Center, signed in January 2025.
- Astraeus Space prioritizes space research excellence, particularly with faculty.
    - Pilot funding offered for people who are working on large grant proposals.
- Their goal is to develop the space workforce (majors, minors, certificates, internships, continuing education, workshops, etc.)
- The Institute is proud of the breadth of expertise that are represented:

- Faculty at UF are conducting planetary science research, people who are working on manufacturing in space or on sensors to fly into space, people who are controlling satellites, or, like Dr. Seidler, who are looking at physiological changes when people go into space, some faculty study science fiction literature.
- The goal of the Institute is to represent any space related research interests.

In the Q&A section, Carrie Bush asked a question about workforce development and whether the Institute is engaging with up-and-coming young adults? Dr. Seidler stated that they are not engaging with high schoolers just yet, but hosting engagement events, like telescope nights. Dr. Seidler offered to get Carrie in touch with Amy Williams, who directs workforce development.

Chair Sarah Rockwell asked a question about certifications and new programs so that high school counselors know about what is being offered at UF and advise high schoolers accordingly. Dr. Seidler replied that those programs are still in progress. Jordan Callaham added that the extension department indicates that there are new special interest courses available soon to gauge interest. Dr. Seidler suggested a campus wide handout to distribute to the school board. When students get to UF campus for college, they can find the Space Institute at engagement events. Sarah stated that students think UCF is the main school for space engineering programs. Jordan responded that UCF is known for building rockets and UF is known for space biology, as in how we are going to live and work in space. In other words, UF is concerned with taking humanity into space.

6. Member Comments

After the presentation, the members of EDAC individually introduced themselves and shared their affiliations.

7. Public Comment

None.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

9. Upcoming EDAC Meetings