SBDC Technology Commercialization Finds Success with Novothelium and Infravein Corp

BY **JENNILEE GARZA**

In its first year, the SBDC Technology Commercialization Center (TCC) collaborated with partners at the university, regional, state and federal levels to help science and technology companies advance their innovations through some of the most rigorous grant competitions. The Center also earned its national accreditation, distinguishing the SWTXB SBDC Network as one of 18 "Technology Accredited" SBDC Networks nationally.

FEDERAL AND STATE TECHNOLOGY (FAST) PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM GRANT

Engaged in the Federal and State Technology (FAST) Partnership grants program, the SBDC TCC partnered with all Texas SBDC Networks and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Investment & Innovation to provide outreach and technical assistance to guide tech companies through Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) / Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) grant applications. These grants, referred to as America's Seed Fund ™, provide critical early stage research and development funding to help small businesses commercialize cutting edge innovations. The rigorous review process provides recognition, validation and visibility to early stage companies. Additionally, the prestige associated with the award helps businesses attract additional funding and commercialization support from venture capital partners, larger strategic partners, and investment partners.

DOD COLLABORATION

In October 2017, SBDC TCC Director **Bijo Mathew** also partnered with the Kansas SBDC for its "Encountering Innovations Week" conference held at Wichita State University. The event allowed the Center to showcase Texas innovators to DoD technology scouts. The U.S. Navy also selected the SBDC TCC as the Texas host for its December 2017 Naval Sea and Air Systems Command SBIR/ STTR Innovation Summit, a premier event that provided an opportunity for technology-based businesses in Texas to connect with the U.S. Navy, which annually invests $350 million in innovative ideas.

NOVOTHELIUM

Two UTSA alumni, **Bianca Cerqueira**, Ph.D. and **Lauren Cornell**, M.S. took on the battle against breast cancer. Their biotechnology start-up company, NovoThelium, is developing a bioengineered human scaffold that allows mastectomy patients to regenerate a nipple from their own cells, maintaining projection, natural pigmentation, and improved sensation. The SBDC TCC assisted NovoThelium with their SBIR Grant applications and various competitions. NovoThelium landed among the top six contestants at the Rice Business Challenge. They also took first place at the Venture Challenge Competition and the Texas Venture Labs Investment Competition, which provided them the opportunity to ring the opening NASDAQ stock market bell in New York City in August 2017. And, they earned a spot among the top 10 national finalists at the Small Business Administration InnovateHER Challenge, which highlights products and services that have a measurable impact on the lives of women. Over 3,000 entrepreneurs competed nationally.

INFRAVEIN CORPORATION

A team of UTSA alumni are in the midst of developing a medical device that could reap benefits across multiple fields. **Kristen Hamalainen** '16, **Sanjiv Patel** '16, and **Kreg Zimmern** '16 operate InfraVein Corporation, a medical device company that provides solutions for venipuncture procedures. InfraVein's infrared medical camera could help doctors insert needles in people with small veins and aid in catheter insertion. It could also be used on babies or by people who are obese or have darker skin pigmentations. InfraVein began working with SBDC TCC Director **Bijo Mathew** in September 2017 to work on a Phase I DoD SBIR proposal for $150,000, a six-month effort. If awarded, the company plans to develop a hand held, battery powered vascular cannulation device. A successful achievement would qualify them to apply for a two-year, $1,000,000, Phase II grant. The mobile device would allow emergency medical professionals to accurately obtain arterial or central venous access under emergency conditions without external ultrasound or stationary imaging equipment.