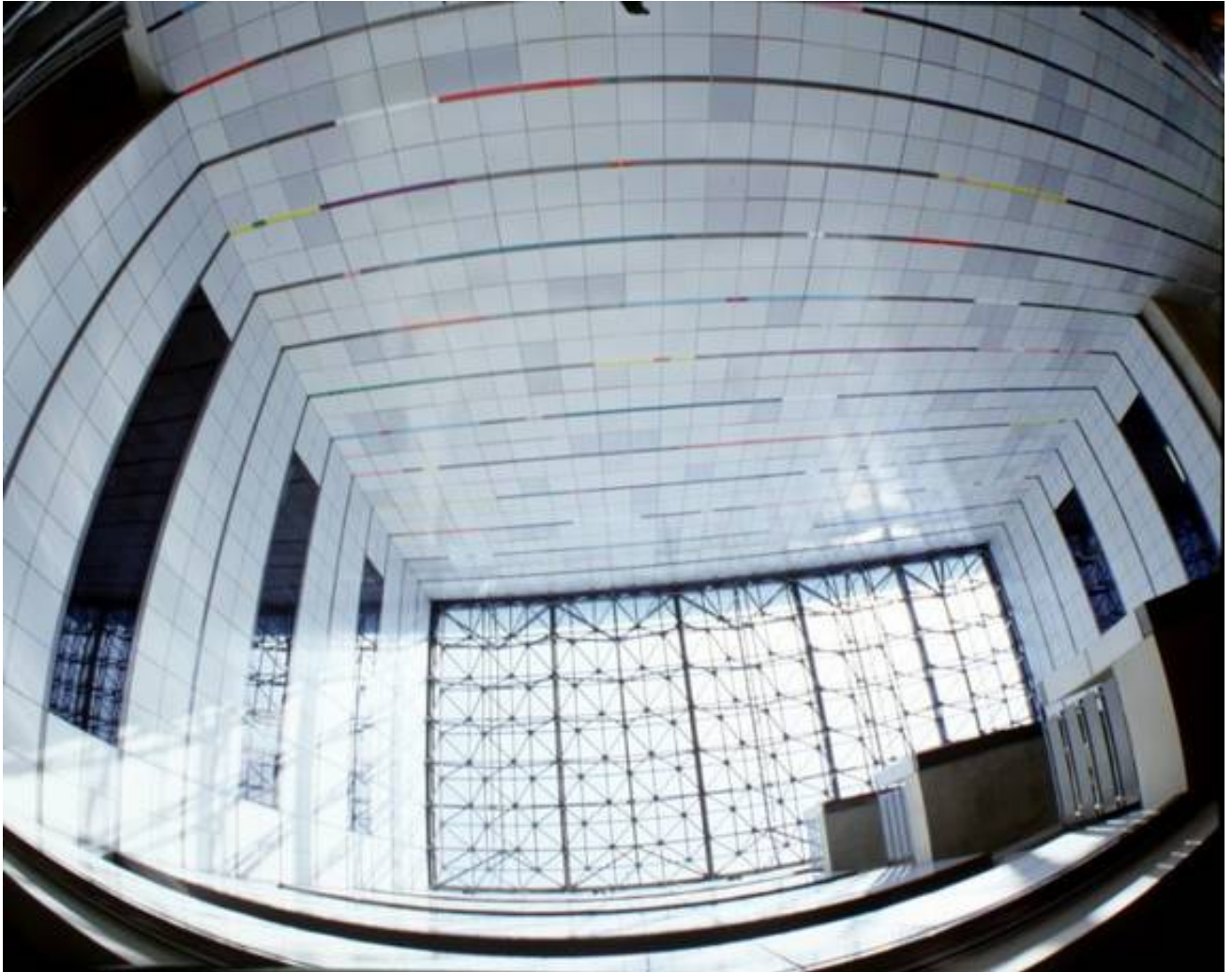


Technology Transfer in the US and Italy

Mario Gates (October 14, 2011)



How to turn Academic Research into Business. The Italian Trade Commission has organized an international training seminar in Boston, the technological research capital of the US, with the goal to provide concrete tools and examples to support entrepreneurial efforts to commercialize university research by creating a start-up company.

The Cambridge Innovation Center of Boston, MA, has hosted the two-day seminar titled Fostering International Entrepreneurship & Innovation: U.S. & Italian, Strategies for Turning Academic Research into Business. The event, promoted and organized by the Investments Desk of the [Italian Trade Commission in New York](#) [2], had the scope to foster, through public intervention, the

technological collaboration between the USA and Italy.

In those two days, all participants, mostly researchers and venture capitalists, were provided with the necessary tools and incentives to favor the commercialization of university research and the creation of start-ups and spin-offs, facilitating, the transfer of knowledge, know-how and experiences gained from the best practices performed in the United States, specifically in Boston, and in Italy.

The choice of Boston is not accidental; the city hosts a large number of international researchers, many of them are indeed Italian, dozens of important technology universities and a strong network of investors and consultants who operate in technology. Boston represents one of the main entrepreneurial eco-systems in the United States, where the ability to transform the excellence achieved in the science and technology field into grand entrepreneurial realities.

In Italy, during the last few years, the activities focused on technological research have an important role, as it is proved by the results of the Ottavo Rapporto by NETVAL (Network per la Valorizzazione della Ricerca Universitaria italiana) that has recorded 900 university spin-offs in Italy.

“The development of university research is a primary goal,” Aniello Musella, Italian Trade Commissioner, Executive Director for USA said “for a few years now, several university centers own structures with the purpose of technological transfer, of establishing spin-offs and of negotiating research results.”

The training seminar was opened by the [Consul General of Italy in Boston](#) [3], Giuseppe Pastorelli and the representative of the Investments Desk at the Italian Trade Commission in New York, Laura Del Vecchio.

The speakers who participated were: Aleardo Furlani, Innova S.p.A. Technology Transfer and Valorization, CEO and founder, who spoke of how to support the promotion of the entrepreneurial culture through the creation of innovative companies, the process of the creation of a new company and the TT process, the Italian R&D support system, and innovative company and funding tools & process; Tom Tachovsky, MIT Technology Licensing Office, Technology Licensing Officer, who focused on MIT’s entrepreneurial ecosystem, showcasing the technology transfer process from the University side and perspective and the difficulties that a university researcher can encounter when entering the T process; Julia Goldberg, Mass. Technology Transfer Center, Programs and Marketing Manager, who had a presentation of the US federal/state funding resources, featuring an overview of Small Business Research Public Funding through Federal Governmental Grants, of innovation and technology innovation funding programs and of the main local Massachusetts State Initiatives & Resources (Tech Transfer Centers, Networks, Foundations, etc.); Dr. Dana Ono, Vimac Ventures, Co-founder and Managing Director, who spoke of the Private Equity Investment opportunities and resources in MA (specifically in Boston), showcasing how venture capital plays a particularly important role in financing university start-ups because it is a major source of funds for new firms in fields in which universities are a major source of new technology; Dr. Riccardo Signorelli, FastCAP Systems, CEO, who presented a US Start-up Case Study, showcasing an example of a successful case of a new company created by means of resources available at national level as a support for hi-tech academic start-ups; Anne-Marie Dinius, Northeastern University – Center for Research Innovation, NEU CRI, Manager of Intellectual Property, who talked about the Technology Transfer related legal issues and IP and the supporting process and means available to help start-ups that exploit university research face considerable uncertainty when approaching the market and help their innovative technologies to be transformed into commercialization products; Dr. Giuseppe Russo, Sbarro Health Research Organization, Research assistant professor and Director, who presented an Italian case study, introducing the experience of S.H.R.O. in the creation of an international start-up and Dr. Filippo Dal Fiore, CurrentCity, Co-Founder, Senseable City Laboratory MIT, who presented another Italian case study showcasing the process of how the start-up was created and how the initial academic research was successfully commercialize into business through the creation of a spin-off (initial background and academic resources).

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