

Industry Partners Introduction

Lehigh's Integrated Product Development (IPD) Program focuses on technical entrepreneurship through experiential learning. We use the new product development process as a means to the end of preparing our students to lead companies in creativity, innovation and the commercialization of intellectual property. Students who have participated in IPD find that their experiences are invaluable once they have entered the workplace.

The IPD capstone course sequence is the culmination of experiential learning where students work in cross-disciplinary teams with faculty and senior peer mentors, as well as with mentors from both established and local start-up companies through sponsored partnerships. These partnerships form the backbone on which IPD establishes the interdisciplinary teams and the curricula focusing on experiential learning through product and process development. The award winning IPD program, now in its 17th year, counts among its ranks over 350 industry sponsored projects and 2,300 student participants. Each year IPD offers this two course sequence to approximately 150 students for a total of 5 or 6 credits that are co-listed under engineering, business, and design.

A limited number of 2011 Industry Sponsored Partnerships are now available. The prospective industry sponsor should begin by identifying a department or area within the company in which a project focus can be developed and a mentor named to guide the team. The primary role of the industry sponsor is strategic not tactical, however the partnership requires 1-2 hours per week of communication with the student team. The industry partnerships that are most successful include the following:

- A project mentor who has the time and interest to be focused on the experience.
- A project focus that is important enough to the company that resources have been allocated, both human and financial – but not so critical that the year long process will become burdensome.
- A company that promotes a culture of innovation and creativity and seeks employees who embody those values.

- A company that is within reach geographically so the student team can “breathe the company air” which helps them to own the project.*

For the 2011 project year, we are offering a total of 25 sponsored partnerships to accommodate the anticipated 150 students. Typically each of the 25 teams will have 5 or 6 students. The projects run one calendar year which is divided into three parts:

- A spring conceptual design semester, focusing on opportunity identification, market research, creative solutions, technical and financial feasibility.
- An optional summer at your company (funded separately).
- A fall semester of fabricating, building and testing a prototype, models and simulations of both technical and business aspects of the project.

The projects begin with a trade show style Sponsor Fair in early January 2011 and conclude with the final presentations in early December with many opportunities in between for both formal and informal interactions.

The sponsorship fee provides funding for both the project and program. Roughly 50% is managed directly by the team and 50% by the IPD program staff. If any inventions, improvements, discoveries or other Intellectual Property arise from the project the sponsor retains title to them. In addition the IPD program requires the sponsoring companies to:

- Refrain from asking students to sign a Confidentiality, NDA or Non-Compete.
- Maintain comprehensive liability and damage insurance of \$1 million dollars.
- Allow the IPD program to make the project description and results of the teamwork public.

Our 17 years of experience has shown that these items are non trivial and require lead time and often perseverance to get company approvals.

If you are interested in joining the dozens of companies that have partnered with IPD, please contact Lisa Getzler-Linn, Administrative Director at 610-758-4620 or via e-mail lig4@lehigh.edu.

*Arrangements can be made with companies that are outside of the Lehigh Valley area that will enable the students to feel connected such as video conferencing and travel but additional funds are usually required.