

Roundtable discussion: Entrepreneurship and Transfer

The first roundtable discussion of the day “Entrepreneurship and Transfer” facilitated a discussion between experts and stakeholders about the challenges and opportunities for university-based entrepreneurship and technology transfer. The panel explored best practices, policy frameworks, and innovative approaches to support the creation and growth of startups and spin-offs in the academic sector. Key participants of this panel included Prof. Dr. Pedro José Marrón, Vice President of Transfer, Innovation & Digitalization at the University of Duisburg-Essen, Prof. Dr. Gerhard Schembecker, Vice President of Finance at TU Dortmund University, Vanessa Vaughn, and Anne Plitt, representing WorldFactory International at Ruhr University Bochum. The panel was moderated by Prof. Dr. Tessa Flatten, Vice President International Affairs and Professor for Technology Management at TU Dortmund University. The discussion revolved around the role of Entrepreneurship & Transfer at the three institutions and the specific activities for internationalization especially with United States and Canada. The speakers provided insights into the entrepreneurship and transfer structures at their respective universities, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and interdisciplinary participation. The panel also addressed topics such as securing intellectual property, increasing diversity and inclusion, and the importance of internationalization in entrepreneurship and transfer. Prof. Dr. Tessa Flatten kickstarted the discussion with an overview on the structures of entrepreneurship and transfer followed by the panelists’ introductory statements highlighting activities at the three participating universities: Ruhr University Bochum (RUB), University of Duisburg Essen (UDE), and TU University Dortmund (TUDo). At RUB, entrepreneurship and transfer are closely connected to the rectorate, and efforts are made to collaborate with the faculties. The economics department plays a significant role in entrepreneurship education and startup coaching. The Worldfactory at RUB operates a maker space and runs an incubator for entrepreneurial activities. TUDo places special emphasis on the concept of an entrepreneurial mindset to encourage interdisciplinary participation. . The CET, which supports those interested in founding a company in the implementation of their business ideas and helps with the transfer from research to industry, plays an important role in fostering an entrepreneurial mindset. Various departments have a pipeline to the CET, facilitated by a mandatory entrepreneurial mindset course/module and mentorships such as Design Thinking courses. To foster entrepreneurial mindset in an academic sector, UDE has established a central organizing unit that connects research and entrepreneurship. This unit, partially funded by the German government, falls under the rectorate, and provides tools and infrastructure to foster entrepreneurial innovations. The platform also facilitates

transparency, including patent searches. Regarding the mechanism of transfer between the universities and founders, RUB examines a founder-friendly perspective, meaning the university does not invest in startups and aims to avoid being an economic player. UDE on the other hand operates within a regulated system where founders receive 30% royalty. TUDo offers specialized programs for inclusion. All three universities support and encourage female founders through various channels for e.g. RUB implemented a funding program for female entrepreneurs. Another initiative to support the entrepreneurial mindset in an academic context, is the implementation of a new degree program “Master of Innopreneurship” at UDE. The master's program in Innopreneurship trains students for professional self-employment or for taking on innovative tasks in established companies and refers to the two thematic focuses of the curriculum: Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the discussion highlighted the differences between students and researchers in their entrepreneurial journeys, the impact-driven entrepreneurship initiatives at all three universities as well as the importance of impact-driven entrepreneurship and navigating regulations and infrastructures. The importance of internationalization in entrepreneurship and transfer was discussed, including the significance of transatlantic entrepreneurship and innovation corridors and German Accelerator networks, empowering German startups to scale globally. Participants of the panel addressed the challenges and advantages as universities transition towards a culture of entrepreneurial mindset in the future. This involves fostering a supportive environment, enhancing collaboration with industry, and navigating the evolving landscape of entrepreneurship and technology transfer.

The roundtable provided a platform for fruitful discussions and idea exchange on entrepreneurship, innovation, and fostering a culture of entrepreneurial mindset within universities. Following the first panel discussion, the group had the opportunity to visit CET and experience an in-depth tour. This firsthand experience provided valuable insights into the center's activities and further enhanced the knowledge exchange and networking opportunities for the participants.

Contact:

Prof. Dr. Pedro José Marrón
Vice President of Transfer, Innovation & Digitalization at UDE
Email: pjmarron@locoslab.com
www.uni-due.de/en/university-board/marron-cv.php

Prof. Dr. Gerhard Schembecker



Vice President of Finance at TUDo

Email: gerhard.schembecker@tu-dortmund.de

www.tu-dortmund.de/en/university/organization/university-management/rectorate/vice-president-finance/

Vanessa Vaughn

Project Management Worldfactory-International at RUB

Email: vanessa.vaughn@ruhr-uni-bochum.de

www.einrichtungen.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/en/node/352

Anne Plitt

International Network Manager at Worldfactory Startup Centre at RUB

Email: worldfactoryinternational@rub.de

www.worldfactory.de/en/international

Center for Entrepreneurship and Transfer – TUDo

Emil-Figge-Straße 80, 44227 Dortmund, Germany

www.cet.tu-dortmund.de/en/

Worldfactory Start-Up Center – RUB

Universitätsstraße 150, 44801 Bochum, Germany

www.worldfactory.de/en/

GUIDE Center for Start-ups and Innopreneurship – UDE

www.uni-due.de/guide/ (German only)