

Exploring University- Industry Collaborations at a Pivotal Moment:

*A Historical Insight and
Potential Future Directions*

June 5, 2025



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Speakers:



Anthony Boccanfuso, President &
Chief Executive Officer, UIDP



Sophia Herbert-Peterson,
Executive Director for Sponsored
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Moderator:



Kevin Wozniak, Director, Research
Security & Intellectual Property,
COGR

 [#COGRJune25](#)

COGR

Strengthening and Modernizing Cross-Sector Partnerships

Anthony Boccanfuso, UIDP

June 5, 2025

COGR Meeting | Washington, DC



Strengthening
University-Industry
Partnerships



uidp.org | info@uidp.net

Fast Facts

Began in December 2006

Convened by the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

Is now an independent trade association based in the U.S.

Members include global companies and universities



New Federal Priorities



Dear Mr. Kratsios:

Scientific progress and technological innovation were the twin engines that powered the American century. The Manhattan Project fueled the atomic era. The Apollo Program won us the space race. The internet connected us to a digital future. Today, we will usher in the Golden Age of American Innovation. We will make America safer, healthier, and more prosperous than ever before. We will create a future of American greatness for every citizen, restoring the American Dream.

Current State of U.S. R&D

- Declining global leadership in R&D
- Resource/investment realities
- COVID-era evidence: We can collaborate across sectors – at pace – when we have aligned goals
- Talent gaps

We need bold change.



UIDP: A Trusted Partner to Federal Agencies

- Convene workshops, summits, and enable critical conversations across sectors
- Administer the NSF Engineering Research Visioning Alliance
- Town halls, programmatic webinars



Graduate Fellowship Support

- UIDP gauged interest among companies to fill the gap in the NSF Graduate Fellowships Program, which left 3,000+ students without funding
- Short-term – unlikely
- Longer-term – interest in developing new modalities that increase ROI for **all** parties

CASE EXAMPLE: UIDP-convened Workshop

Result: Jointly-Funded NSF Solicitation based on findings

 An official website of the United States government [Here's how you know](#) ▼



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STRENGTHEN & MODERNIZE U-I Partnerships



Initiative Goal (Launched Sept 2024)

UIDP is undertaking a year-long effort to directly address the need to strengthen and modernize university-industry partnerships through bold approaches that dramatically increase impact from collaborative innovation.

Imperatives

Relevant to cross-sector partnerships and collaborations

- I. Align the S&T enterprise with societal needs
- II. Re-imagine IP management to accelerate impact
- III. Catalyze transformative partnership formation
- IV. Grow a future-ready workforce
- V. Optimize use of research assets
- VI. Shape new funding models to advance the R&D enterprise

Current approach - Jointly Employed Researchers

- Not limited to academic faculty; grad students, postdocs, national labs, etc.
- Provides a pathway to reduce the compensation gap between the sectors
- Allows employees to benefit from academic freedom and corporate employment
- Expedites translation

New approach – Dramatically Reduced Contracting Time

- Cultivates greater understanding of contemporary and accepted practices
- Achieves greater buy-in from disparate parties involved in process

COGR Call to Action

Idea Identification for Pilots

- What is one thing that needs to happen to transform cross-sector R&D partnerships?
- What current pilots or programs should be more broadly adopted?
- What role will you play?



[Click to learn more, or
email \[tony@uidp.net\]\(mailto:tony@uidp.net\)](#)

Georgia Tech Contract Continuum & Enterprise Team

Sophia Herbert-Peterson, Executive Director, Office of Sponsored Programs

What is the Georgia Tech Contract Continuum?

Georgia Tech Contract Continuum

- The Contract Continuum is a collection of standardized agreements that enables Georgia Tech to engage in industry-sponsored research throughout the entire R&D cycle.
 - Specialized Services Agreement
 - Basic Research Agreement
 - Applied Research Agreement
 - Demonstration Research Agreement
- The Corporate and International Contracting Team, operating within Georgia Tech's Office of Sponsored Programs, manages the Contract Continuum.
- The Contract Continuum can be found at:
 - <https://osp.gatech.edu/contract-continuum>

Contract Continuum – Agreement Types

Fundamental



Applied

Services

Performance testing and evaluation

- All data and test results on sponsor-owned technology are owned by sponsor.
- No development of IP is anticipated; thus, all rights in foreground IP follow U.S. patent law and U.S. copyright law.

Basic

Fundamental scientific investigations

- Sponsor may be granted a nonexclusive, royalty-free commercial license to project IP, subject to PI approval.
- Sponsor has the option to negotiate an exclusive commercial license at fair market value in a defined field of use after the IP has been created.

Applied

Proof of concept and early-stage prototyping

- Sponsor receives an exclusive commercial license to all foreground IP for a term of five years in exchange for an upfront percentage fee of the contract cost per field of use.
- Sponsor may negotiate an extended license at fair market value.

Demonstration

Incremental improvements to existing technology

- Sponsor receives an exclusive commercial license to all improvements to sponsor-owned or sponsor-controlled background IP (i.e., background IP exclusively licensed by GT to sponsor).

Contract Continuum - Considerations



Private Business Use

- Private Business Use arises when tax-exempt bond-financed property is used by or for the benefit of a nongovernmental entity—such as a private company—for a trade or business purpose.
- Exceeding certain thresholds of Private Business Use can jeopardize the tax-exempt status of the bonds used to finance the property.
- Granting up-front IP rights in a sponsored research agreement—before the IP is created—may cause the research to be classified as Private Business Use.
- Private Business Use becomes a concern with Applied and Demonstration Agreements, as they grant industry sponsors upfront commercial licenses.

Contract Continuum – Considerations

Managing Private Business Use

- IRS Revenue Procedure 2007-47 provides safe harbors—specific conditions under which research agreements between governmental or 501(c)(3) organizations and private sponsors do not result in Private Business Use.
- The Corporate and International Contracting Team works closely with the Office of Treasury Services to review and actively monitor research space used under the Contract Continuum when agreements fall outside the IRS safe harbors for research activities.
- When Applied or Demonstration Agreements are under consideration and the Office of Treasury Services determines that the designated research space is in a tax-exempt bond-financed building with no remaining capacity for Private Business Use, the Principal Investigator must identify an alternative space that meets the necessary compliance requirements to proceed with the project.



Beyond the Contract Continuum

Customized Solutions for Broader Engagement

- While the Contract Continuum templates cover the vast majority of industry-sponsored research at Georgia Tech, certain sponsors or novel research initiatives may require unique terms. In such cases, we offer additional, customized solutions to meet specific needs:



- Enterprise Team & Enterprise Agreements
- Steering Committees
- Novel Solutions & New Templates

Enterprise Team

- Georgia Tech created an Enterprise Team dedicated to working with certain sponsors to support a broader level of engagement
- Enterprise sponsors are assigned a single point of contact within the Enterprise Team
- A dedicated point of contact streamlines communication and enables personalized, concierge-level support



Enterprise Agreements

- Enterprise Agreements may incorporate one or more elements of the Contract Continuum
- Enterprise Agreements are used when the expected scope, engagement type, or level of collaboration exceeds that of a standard agreement
- Enterprise Agreements may involve cross-functional collaboration between academic units and dedicated research laboratories



Steering Committees

- Enterprise Agreements are often overseen by a bilateral steering committee to guide collaboration and strategic alignment
- Steering committees typically include representatives from both Georgia Tech and the sponsor, ideally comprising a contracting expert and a technical lead from each side
- Steering committees foster more productive relationships, streamline contracting processes, create economies of scale, and strengthen strategic collaboration



Steering Committees

- Committee responsibilities:
 - Convene regularly as agreed upon by committee members
 - Discussion and approval of new projects
 - Comprehensive review, evaluation, and accounting of ongoing research projects
 - Discussion of new research initiatives
 - Collaborative conflict management, including preemption and mitigation strategies
 - Coordinating with supporting offices of both parties, including tech transfer, legal affairs, and accounting to ensure smooth negotiation, initiation, and management of active awards



Novel Solutions & New Templates



- The templates in the Contract Continuum serve as starting points for negotiations with industry sponsors. When appropriate, we tailor agreements on a case-by-case basis to reflect the specific needs and circumstances of the proposed research.
- If we observe a consistent volume of agreements with similar terms, we may formalize those terms by creating a new template category within the Contract Continuum.
- New templates may be developed based on the type of research, the specific needs of a particular industry, or even the unique requirements of a single Principal Investigator's lab—especially when their work aligns better with alternative IP terms.

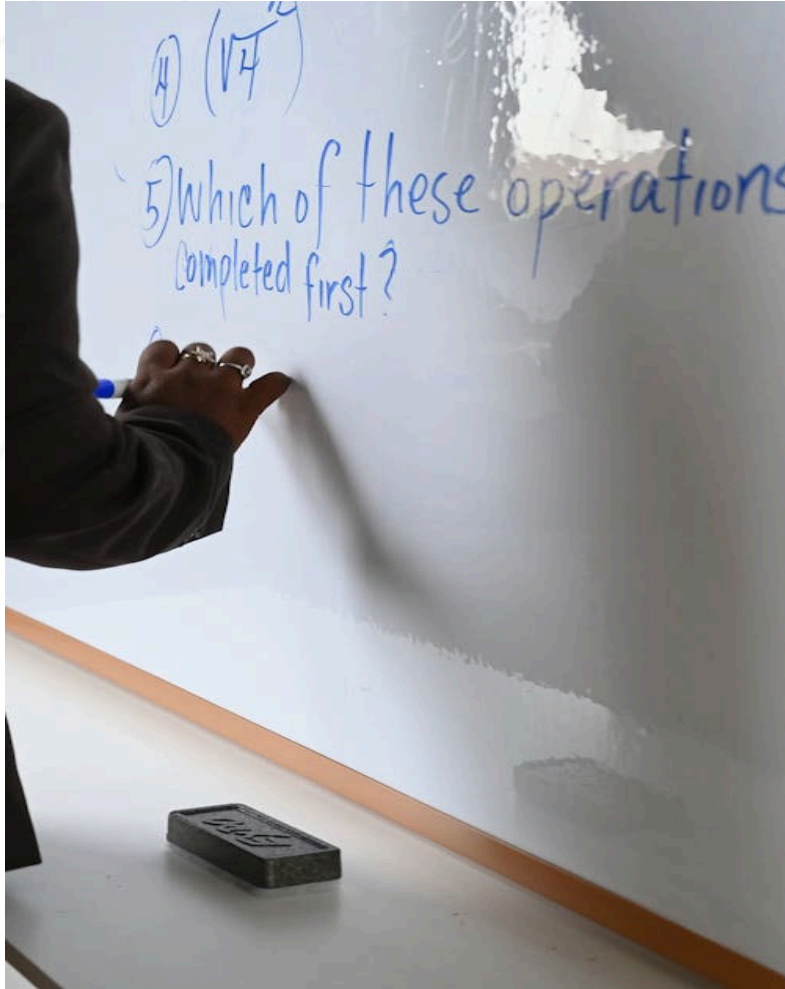
Contract Continuum & Enterprise Team – Overall Success

Feedback From Sponsors:

- Sponsors value the flexibility of the Contract Continuum, which facilitates collaboration with Georgia Tech across all phases of the R&D cycle.
- The Contract Continuum highlights Georgia Tech's commitment to flexible, industry-friendly collaboration.
- The Enterprise Team enables deeper engagement with enterprise sponsors by offering personalized, end-to-end support tailored to their specific needs and goals.



Lessons Learned



- The Contract Continuum does not inherently generate new research opportunities; rather, our researchers play a pivotal role in attracting new sponsors.
- The Applied and Demonstration Agreements were designed to be non-negotiable to expedite the contracting process. However, in practice, they are frequently subject to negotiation, which often leads to delays that counteract their original purpose of streamlining timelines.
- Sponsors do not always opt to pay the upfront fee for exclusive commercial rights, as research outcomes are inherently uncertain. When projects do not result in new intellectual property, the value of having paid the fee diminishes, making the investment less justifiable.

Questions?



A top-down view of a wooden desk. In the upper right, a portion of a white laptop keyboard is visible, showing keys for a decimal point, plus/equals, and minus/underscore. A silver pen lies diagonally in the lower right. A yellow paperclip is in the upper left. Three sticky notes are arranged horizontally in the center: a pink one on the left with a large black 'Q', a light green one in the middle with a large black '&', and another pink one on the right with a large black 'A'.

Q

&

A