

Igniting Engineering Ideas - Engineering Students attend CfEL's entrepreneurship programme

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The [Cambridge Integrated Knowledge Centre \(CIKC\)](#) sponsored six delegates, four from the Engineering Department and two from the Physics Department, to attend the Ignite programme which took place last year between 29th June to 5th July. The Ignite programme, run by the Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning (CfEL) at Judge Business School, is an intensive, one week training programme for aspiring entrepreneurs and corporate innovators to trial and prepare business ideas for the commercial environment. Now in its eleventh year, Ignite attracted over 50 delegates from a wide range of business disciplines spanning many countries.



"This collaboration with CIKC is a great opportunity for us to foster innovation at the University", stated CfEL Programme Manager, Yupar Myint. "CIKC's objective to enable and accelerate the commercialisation of technology through building appropriate business skills is a perfect fit with Ignite. The CIKC support is a significant bonus for the programme ensuring a high quality of delegates and technology ideas."

The criteria for CIKC funding was based primarily on those (students, academic staff and industry partners) who are researching the exploitation of molecular and macromolecular materials, low temperature or additive processing and distributed flexible electronics and displays. CIKC received a large number of applications for the course when the sponsorship was advertised.

Dr Jose Rosas-Fernandez, a Research Associate under Professor Ian White, Head of the Photonic Communication Group, found the course instructive and beneficial "I received much more information, knowledge and motivation than I expected. The course is very well designed, each day several specialists explained different parts of the process of innovation and in the afternoon, the mentor scheme enabled me to transfer the knowledge to my business plan."

Another Research Associate Dr Ian Bu, under Professor Bill Milne, Head of the Electronic Devices and Materials group, felt that the course was very thorough "I thought the course was rigorous; all aspects of business from marketing, sales, team building, financial literacy and IP properties are covered. I particularly enjoyed the afternoon sessions, where the mentors were able to provide honest and constructive views of our business plans."

The third delegate Dr Zhipei Sun from the Electrical Engineering Division, a Research Associate under Dr Andrea Ferrari felt "The small study team from different cultural backgrounds and the teachers coming from various fields are carefully selected and arranged. The organisers, teachers and mentors are all full of passion and experiences."

The fourth delegate Ibraheem Haneef a PhD Student under the supervision of Dr Florin Udrea in the Electronic Devices and Materials Group said "I have got a clearer understanding of the way new spin off companies work, how they find the commercial viability of their technologies, generate fundings, manage finances, and cross the chasm to convert their technology into a viable commercial product".

The course has been a great success and the CIKC are planning to repeat their sponsorship this summer.

The CIKC has been set up with funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) to develop advanced manufacturing technologies based on new macromolecular materials systems, for example polymer electronics or advanced liquid crystals, and to create valid commercial exploitation models for these innovations.

CIKC brings together research activities in in molecular and macromolecular materials in the Electrical Engineering Division (in particular, the Centre for Advanced Photonics and Electronics) and in the Cavendish Laboratory.

It also draws on the expertise of the Judge Business School, the Institute for Manufacturing (IfM) and the Centre for Business Research (CBR), to create innovative knowledge exchange activities spanning business research, training and specific exploitation.

Combining world-class research with a strong partnership with business, CIKC engage with industrial partners to shape and prioritise the work programme, allow the secondment of researchers from industry and from other universities for knowledge exchange, and enable the provision of pilot manufacturing lines for prototyping.

The mission of the centre is to provide the business and technical expertise and infrastructure to enable those with exploitable concepts to achieve commercial success.

The 2009 course will run from 28 June – 4 July at the Judge Business School. Students or Researchers with commercially exploitable research ideas who are interested in CIKC sponsorship to attend the course should apply to Maggie Tanner in the CIKC office (email: mt451@cam.ac.uk). More details of this year's course can be found at:

<http://www.cfel.jbs.cam.ac.uk/programmes/ignite/index.html> .

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