Translating your research discoveries into practice: It takes a village!

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Cancer Immunotherapy: It Takes a Village!

- Basic scientists who did the fundamental scientific research to provide the foundation for the field
- Scientists in academia and industry who designed and tested the molecules for the targets to turn the concepts into potential real medicines
- Physicians who did the clinical trials
- Patients who participated in the clinical trials

It takes a big village!
Academic Research, Invention and Innovation at the University of Michigan

• **Academic Research**
  - What we do very well at the University of Michigan
  - $1.34B research expenditure in 2012-2013 (#1 among American public universities)

• **Invention**
  - Turning money into ideas (patents)
    - 421 new invention disclosures in 2013 received by UM OTT
    - 128 patents issued by the US Patent and Trademark Office

• **Innovation**
  - Turning patents into money
    - 108 License/Option Agreements in 2013
    - 9 New Business Startups in 2013
    - $13.4M Royalties in 2013
Academic Research: Basic versus Applied

• Basic Research (Wikipedia)
  – also called pure research or fundamental research, is a systematic study directed toward greater knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena without specific applications or products in mind.

• Applied Research (Wikipedia)
  – Applied research is a form of systematic inquiry involving the practical application of science. It accesses and uses some part of the research communities' accumulated theories, knowledge, methods, and techniques, for a specific, often state-, business-, or client-driven purpose.
Impact of Basic Research

James Watson and Francis Crick

IMPACT
The discovery of double-helix DNA structure by Watson and Crick marked a milestone in the history of science and gave rise to modern molecular biology.
Impact of Applied Research

Jonas Edward Salk
(October 28, 1914 – June 23, 1995)

IMPACT
Salk developed the first successful polio vaccine. Before the Salk vaccine was introduced, America's greatest fear was polio, apart from the atomic bomb.
Salk: Inventor but not Innovator?

• “There is no patent. Could you patent the sun?”, Said Salk, when asked by a reporter if he had filed a patent on his polio vaccine.
• It is estimated that he could have made $7B if he had patented his vaccine.
• But his invention has saved thousands of lives, mostly children.
Why Patents Your Research?

Impact of the 1980 Bayh-Dole Act

• Non-profits, including universities, and small businesses may elect to retain title to innovations developed under federally-funded research programs
• Universities are encouraged to collaborate with commercial concerns to promote the utilization of inventions arising from federal funding
• Universities are expected to file patents on inventions they elect to own
• Universities are expected to give licensing preference to small businesses
• The government retains a non-exclusive license to practice the patent throughout the world
• The government retains march-in rights.
Why Patents Your Research?

• Unlike Salk’s era, today, unless you (the university and inventors) have a patent on your discovery, no one will invest into it and turn your discovery into a commercial product for the betterment of humans and human health
  – This is how the capitalism works:
    • 99% investors seek financial return for their investments
My Own Research: Academic Drug Discovery

• What is academic drug discovery research?
• What are the opportunities and advantages for academic drug discovery research?
• What are the main differences between academic drug discovery research and drug discovery research in the pharmaceutical industry?
• What are the biggest challenges for academic drug discovery research?
• How to build a successful academic drug discovery research program?
Academic Drug Discovery Research

• Entire spectrum of drug discovery research
  – Assay development
  – “Hits” and “leads” identification for drug targets or pathways
  – Lead optimization
  – Drug-target interaction
  – Target validation with lead compounds
  – Efficacy and toxicity studies in animal models
Opportunities for Academic Drug Discovery Research at the University of Michigan

• World-class research university with top ranked research programs in all disciplines
• Extensive clinical expertise in different disease areas
• Cutting-edge science and deep knowledge on many new and exciting disease targets
• Basic infrastructures and cores available for drug discovery research
# Some Main Differences between Academic and Industry Drug Discovery Research

## Academia
- **You choose a project to work on**
  - Freedom! You are the boss as long as you can get funding.
- **Publications rank as the top priority**
  - “Publish or perish”
- **Less stringent timeline**
- **New targets and cutting-edge science**
  - High risk projects and high innovation

## Industry
- **You do what you are assigned**
  - Limited freedom but funding provided
- **Publications rank low and are often discouraged**
- **Stringent timeline**
- **Not always new targets or new science**
  - Breaking other people’s patents are common practices in companies
Some of the Biggest Challenges for Academic Drug Discovery Research

**Basic Academic Research**
- Individual science
- Single discipline
- Publication is the final product
  - Taking one-year
  - High rate (>90%) of success
- Translation is not needed

**Drug Discovery Research**
- Team science
- Many disciplines
- Medicine is the final product
  - Taking 7-10 years
  - High rate (>90%) of failure
- Translation is needed and not easy
  - Stuck in preclinical stage
Given These High Hurdles, Why Do We Do It?

• There are many unmet medical needs and millions of patients urgently need new medicines
  – We live longer and many age-related diseases (cancer and Alzheimer's disease) are now the biggest medical problems in health care

• This is a golden era of drug discovery in human history since there are many new drug targets for every single human disease
  – Biology evolution

• Big pharmaceutical industry is cutting back on their investment in early-stage drug discovery and focusing on late-stage drug development
  – Big pharma are laying off scientists by the thousands every year but their early pipelines are drying up
  – Academia and small biotech companies are there to fill the void
My Journey for Academic Drug Discovery Research at UM

• Building a complete team
• Doing it systematically
• Choosing your targets carefully
• Being innovative
• Identifying and bringing on key collaborators to your research to solve key challenges
• Being patience and persistent
  – Determination and resolve
Building A Basic Team

A 10-year process (1996-2006)

- Computational Design
- Biochemistry
- Pharmacology
- Medicinal Chemistry
- Cell Biology
Doing it systematically

• For a promising target, we drive it all the way to the finished line by advancing one or more drugs into clinical development
• We work on more than one target at a given time (e.g. 8-10 targets) but focus on 2-3 projects to make the most impact
• We triage our projects based upon science
• We constantly bring in new and exciting targets through collaboration
Choosing your targets carefully

• **Highly clinically relevant**
  – If we are successful, how much impact can we make for this disease (impact to patients)

• **Cutting-edge science**
  – If we are successful, how much can we contribute to science (impact to science)

• **High impact but maybe difficult targets**
  – We can afford a longer timeline
Being Innovative

• We won’t be able to compete with big pharmaceutical companies on a given project based upon resources alone

• We need to be highly innovative (creative) with new ideas and new approaches in order to compete

• Be the best
  – First and the best
  – If not first, be the best
Yes, You Need Collaborators!

Ongoing process (1996-now)

- Computational Design
- Biochemistry
- Pharmacology
- DMPK
- Medicinal Chemistry
- Cell Biology
- Structural Biology
- New Targets and Disease Models
- Precision Medicine
- Clinical Trials
Being Patience and Persistent!

- Drug discovery and development is a costly and lengthy process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discovery</th>
<th>Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>7-10 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>$5-10M</td>
<td>$300M-$1B</td>
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Bridging the “Valley of Death” in Academic Drug Discovery

You are here with your drug candidate

You need to be here to put your drug into patients

The only problem: it will cost $2-3 millions for IND-enabling studies and another $5-10M for a phase I trial. What do you do?
Bridging the “Valley of Death”: How to Bring Your Drugs to Clinical Development?

• Working with a development partner early-on

• The best development partner is your own company

• Be Entrepreneurial!
# Building a Win-Win Relationship between Our Laboratories and UM Start-Up Companies

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<th><strong>UM Laboratories</strong></th>
<th><strong>UM Start-up Companies</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>• We focus early, science-driven discovery research</td>
<td>• They do everything needed for advancing the projects into clinical development</td>
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<tr>
<td>• We generate intellectual properties (patents), owned by the University of Michigan</td>
<td>• They license UM patents through licensing and research agreements on defined areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>• We work closely with the company every step along the way</td>
<td>• They are our development partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We are their discovery partner</td>
<td>• They raise funding to support research and clinical development</td>
</tr>
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Three Companies: Three Different Models

• Ascenta Therapeutics Inc.
  – Founded by Shaomeng Wang, Dajun Yang and Marc Lippman in 2003 with HQ in San Diego, CA
  – All technologies licensed from UM
  – Traditional Venture-Funded Company
    • Raised ~$100M
    • Advanced first drug (Bcl-2 inhibitor) into >10 Phase II clinical trials for different types of cancer
    • Advanced second drug (IAP inhibitor) into Phase I clinical trial and then licensed out to DebioPharm
      – Three trials ongoing for different types of cancer and more planned
    • Licensed third drug candidates (MDM2 inhibitor) to Sanofi, which advanced it into clinical development
      – Two trials ongoing, more planned
Three Companies-Three Different Models

• Ascentage Pharma Group
  – Founded by Shaomeng Wang, Dajun Yang and Ming Guo in 2009, with HQ in Hong Kong, China
  – Most of technologies from UM (5 out of 7)
  – Supported by initial investment from 3S*Bio (a public-traded company on US NASDAQ) and grants from local and central governments in China
    • Advanced two cancer drugs into clinical trials
    • IND-enabling studies ongoing for three other drugs
Three Companies-Three Different Models

• OncoFusion Therapeutics Inc.
  – All technologies from UM
  – Started with seed funds from founders and close colleagues
  – Completed a licensing and research agreement with Medivation in March 2014
    • BET bromodomain inhibitors for oncology and others
  – Plan to advance 4-5 drugs into clinical development through partnership or by itself within the next few years
UM’s Progressive Policy

• These start-up companies are possible because of UM’s progressive policy in technology transfer and COI management
  – UM has one of the most progressive policies among all American universities
  – Faculty can found companies and
  – Faculty can serve as officers and directors of the board
  – Companies can invest into faculty’s research under research agreements, in turn for the rights to license inventions
  – Faculty’s outside activities are publically disclosed and managed by conflict of interest (COI) committees
OTT Is Our Best Friend and Partner!

- UM’s Office of Technology Transfer (OTT) is superb in supporting new, start-up companies
  – Robin Rasor: Director of Licensing
The Best Days Are Still Ahead!

• We are getting better every year in what we do!
  – Targeting selection
  – Our research to deliver drug candidates for clinical translation

• We are doubling our lab size to 45-50 researchers!

• We have close collaborations with many laboratories at the University of Michigan!
  – Arul Chinnaiyan, MCTP
  – Yali Dou, Pathology
  – Duxin Sun, CoP
  – Jeanne Stuckey, LSI
  – Yi Sun, Radiation Oncology
  – Many others

• With our successful track-record in academic drug discovery, pharmaceutical partners are eager to work with us!
Other Labs at UM Can Do It!

• If we can do it, you can do it!
• Medical School’s Fast Forward Medical Innovation (FFMI) provides funding for therapeutics discovery and translation
  – Therapeutics Champion
• UM is investing into drug discovery research!
  – Provost, Medical School, CoP, LSI, Departments of Pathology and Internal Medicine, EBS have put together resources to invest into early drug discovery research
Wang Laboratory, January 2014