**I-Corps Lite at FermiLab**

Thursdays 9:00 – 11:00 AM

June 23 – August 11

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Program Sponsor: Cherri Schmidt

**Introduction**

For the next 9 weeks you and your team will receive a taste of what it is like to be in a startup. Smart guesswork, speed and teamwork replace in-depth analysis and long planning cycles.

You will learn to formulate and test hypotheses. This may sound simple if you are trained as a scientist, and not too hard if you are an engineer, or wildly exotic if you are neither. But in this course, you will learn to build and test **business** hypotheses at the speed of light (or at least the speed of sound). Whether you want to

* spin technology out of FermiLab, or
* find funding and justification for an internal project, or
* discover outside collaborators, or
* seek corporate money for funded research or
* just learn more about all this…

building “QRST” hypotheses and testing them with VOSERA conversations will make it easy, fun and pretty quick, and give you a core understanding of the Lean LaunchPad approach to innovation and entrepreneurship.

In the first few weeks will cover how to build and test meaningful business hypotheses about your project. ***Starting in the first week***, you will be asked to ‘interview’ (aka talk to) people who might be relevant to your project and let them provide the data to test your hypotheses. By mid-July, you will be talking to 3-5 people per week, who will love to tell you about their needs, wants, technologies, funding, etc.

Most of these people you don’t know (yet). Most of these people don’t even know that they want to talk to you (yet). **But if you do the work, many of them will become long-term contacts, collaborators and supporters** for your work at FermiLab and beyond.

**Schedule at a Glance**

June 23 Kickoff, introductions, team formation, why we are here

June 30 “Customers” – people who might need or use your project’s technology.

“Value Propositions” - Why might someone care about the technology

July 7 (Holiday week)

July 14 Best Practices for Discovery Interviewing – Getting people to talk freely

July 21 Overview of the Business Model Canvas, as applied to Fermi projects and goals

July 28 “Revenue Models” – Who pays for what, why they might pay, and when

Aug 4 Prototyping – How to test incomplete, unfinished or theoretical technologies

Aug 11 Storytelling for science and technology

Aug 118 Lessons Learned presentations

**Weekly Rhythm**

Each week includes four (4) required activities and two (2) suggested ones.

1. Attend the group sessions, shown above in the Schedule at a Glance
   1. Provide a short summary of your data and conclusions from the weeks work. You will be provided a ppt template. Typically 5 minutes.
   2. Provide and receive feedback on the presentations
   3. Engage in the discussion about the topic of the week
2. Attend a very short, pre-scheduled 1:1 session with the instructor. These sessions will clarify the findings from the group session, and are a good place to ask for help with finding or talking to ‘customers’
3. Find, approach, schedule and talk to your projects ‘customers’. You are expected to talk to 3-5 new people per week.
4. Participate in a short team meeting. Your meeting agenda is up to you, but usually includes a review of interviews conducted, planning for scheduling and other preparation of the ppt template for the following week.

As you may see from this list, this course is all about getting things done quickly and efficiently. You will necessarily not cover all the topics at each event in sufficient depth, but if you keep up and keep the pace, you will find that you learn a great deal at high speed. Much of the “Lean Launchpad” culture is based on startup culture – make some guesses about what is true, test them quickly, and move on to the next set of assumptions and tests. By being wrong a lot, you end up right.

You will find the concepts and practices of the course easier to assimilate if you do some background work, which is suggested but not required:

1. There are also a number of short videos (1-3 mins) and simple readings which complement the materials that are presented in the group sessions. I recommend that you glance through them – while on the way to work, at a coffee break, or when you’re tired of mowing the grass, the mosquitos are being a pain, and the heat is too much. Or it’s raining… The videos are easily found on Innovation Within, and can be located other places on the internet. (for example: <https://venturewell.org/i-corps/llpvideos/>
2. Download and read this short ‘book’: <https://www.talkingtohumans.com/> The book (more an essay, really) provides some practical tips on how to do discovery interviews

As a thought… between now and July 4 (only 2 weeks!) you do not have much other work for this class, so it’s a good time to review the videos!

Todd Morrill

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To schedule 1:1 sessions:

https://calendly.com/toddmorrill/1-1-sessions-with-todd-for-i-corps-lite-at-fermilab