

**Entrepreneurship &  
Commercialization Practicum  
Sept 21-Nov 9 2023  
Faculty Biographies**



**Cheri Schmidt** is the Head of Partnership Agreements and Intellectual Property Management. She joined Fermilab in 2013 as the inaugural manager of partnerships and technology transfer for the laboratory. Her previous experience includes small-business owner, corporate sales, large-American manufacturing, business and strategy consulting, and tours of duty with the U.S. Department of Energy as head of technology programs and as manager of the Chicago Operations Office. With this combined understanding of government, industry, and academia, she has led Fermilab forward in expanding its portfolio of formal partnerships as well as developed new types of agreements to serve the evolving needs of research and development. She is trained as a civil engineer and holds an MBA from Harvard Business School.



**Todd Morrill** is a Chief Executive Officer at VENTURE MANAGEMENT GROUP INC. and provides extensive and unique domain knowledge in entrepreneurship as a CEO and innovation leader in data and research-driven technology and bio/healthcare organizations. He has taught I-Corps and Lean Launchpad to over 2000 teams funded by DOE, NSF, NIH and DOD, as well as major corporations. He has designed processes, curricula and trained technical teams from a variety of large organizations in several verticals (Manufacturing - Caterpillar Corp, Heraeus, LG. Healthcare - Mayo Clinics, WL Gore, Stanford Hospitals. Finance – Santander and Caixabank. Mittelstand – More than 25 companies, primarily manufacturing and software.) He helped design the Lean Launchpad for Life Sciences course at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), designed the TRL 1-2 course for National Laboratories (DOE), and has adapted the LLP curriculum for Fortune 500 companies.

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**Charlie Cooper** has been at Fermi for almost 20 years in various roles including IARC Technical Business Manager, Head of the Material Development Lab, and Head of the Superconducting RF Processing Group. He currently drives new business development, manages select projects and advances new application and technology development of Fermilab technologies. Prior to Fermi, Charlie developed new PEM fuel cell technologies at Ohio State University and created innovative methods to clean industrial wastewater while at the Environmental Protection Agency's National Risk Management Research Laboratory. Charlie received a doctorate in chemical engineering from the University of Cincinnati, with post-doctoral work at Ohio State University and an Executive MBA from the Chicago Booth School of Business.



**Mauricio Suarez** joined Fermilab in January 2020 as the Deputy Head of Technology Development and Industry Engagement. As part of his job, he looks for industry and university collaborations that will advance the areas where Fermilab has significant expertise and that have commercial potential. Mauricio earned his Ph.D. in chemistry at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and completed his postdoc under Nobel laureate Jean Marie Lehn. After working as a chemist in the private sector, he returned to the University of Illinois and earned his master's degree in business administration. He has worked for the technology transfer offices of University of Illinois, University of Wisconsin, and University of Nebraska and in the private sector with General Mills and Syngenta Seeds. Since moving into the innovation arena, his goal has remained the same: moving technology into the marketplace. In addition to defining new areas of technology development and building industry partnerships, Mauricio also focuses on enhancing and connecting the spirit of innovation at the lab with the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Chicago. These connection hubs include the University of Chicago, mHUB and P33, among others.

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**Hannah Farquar**, Business Development Executive of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, leads the Business Intelligence and Market Analysis group within the IPO that is responsible for evaluating Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory intellectual assets and developing commercialization pathways with private sector collaboration. Hannah also manages the entrepreneurial training programs that teach business skills to LLNL researchers and leverages their knowledge and learning to move technologies closer to commercialization. Hannah is a science and technology enthusiast by birth and training. She earned her PhD in Chemistry from Louisiana State University and was a postdoctoral fellow at Oak Ridge National Laboratory before moving to Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. The transition from benchtop to desktop has led her to over a decade in technology transfer—that unique intersection of science, business and law.



**Jayakar "Charles" Tobin Thangaraj** is currently the Science and Technology Manager and the Deputy Director at the Illinois Accelerator Research Center (IARC). He works at the frontiers of accelerator science where bold ideas enable discoveries that transform our fundamental understanding of the universe. He is passionate about partnership between science, technology and startups to enable entrepreneurship and innovation to solve 21st century challenges in environment, medicine and society. He received both his M.S. and PhD from the University of Maryland. His areas of expertise include, Artificial Intelligence for Accelerators; Machine Learning for Accelerators.