

US/UK Experience with UIIs

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Main Players in UIL

- The literature on university-industry linkages identifies three important players along with other supporting service providers such as venture capital:
 - Universities
 - Firms
 - Intermediary organizations
- Empirical studies generally focus on one of these players to see whether certain attributes are associated with the successful university-industry linkages

Main Players in UIL

- Two papers in this session follow similar strategy
- The paper by Ghose and Acworth examines the roles played by the Knowledge Integration Community
- The paper by Youtie and Shapira focuses on the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech)

The Role of Intermediaries

- The main role of intermediaries is to fill the information gap that may exist between university and industry, and pair up universities with firms which may be interested in receiving specific assistance from universities
- Sometimes such intermediaries are associated with and funded by universities, while others may be funded by the regional or national governments to foster UILs.
- Regardless of their funding source, these entities tend to be matchmakers
- The role of KICs seems to differ from the traditional form of intermediaries that contribute to UILs

The Role of a KIC

- It can act as the source of research funding (although in the long-run, may rely more on external funding?) for applied research
- Secondly, it is multidisciplinary in nature, involves both industry and academia from the beginning, including a significant component on education
- Their organization can be characterized as similar to research consortia (such as in Japan) with explicit involvement of academic institutions.

The Effectiveness of KIC

- The natural question is to ask: is KIC with its particular organizational and funding form more effective than the other intermediaries? What would be an appropriate comparator? Typical intermediaries for UIs? Research Consortia? NSF-type grant giving organization?
- What are the advantages of this particular organization form?
- Is the ability to fund applied research grants through competitive selection an important feature?
- What kind of universities and firms are targeted? Global, national, regional, or local universities/firms?

The Role of Georgia Tech

- There is no denying that for effective UILs, universities need to have quality research capabilities and willingness to engage with local industries
- The paper by Youtie and Shapira describes the various efforts by Georgia Tech in improving its research quality and initiatives taken to foster technology transfer to local firms.
- Many of these efforts are similar to those of Universities/regions in San Diego, Austin (Texas) and Research Triangle in North Carolina.
- However, one major difference between Atlanta and these three regions mentioned above seems to be the role played by large organizations.

The Role of Large Firms

- Large organizations provide jobs for university graduates, capital for startups and for universities, customers for cluster products, and services. They acted as the initial anchor-tenant of the technology parks adjacent to the universities (Smilor and others 2005):
 - IBM and Texas Instrument in Austin,
 - IBM, Nortel and Burroughs Wellcome in the Research Triangle
 - the U.S. military and defense contractors in San Diego.
- Atlanta being a “branch economy” lacks these large organizations that can act as major players. Most firms that Georgia Tech engages with are medium sized firms.

Local Economic Growth

- If so, what can Georgia Tech do to further stimulate the economic growth of Atlanta?
- Should and Can Georgia Tech try to strengthen the competitiveness of the existing firms? How?
- Can Georgia Tech be a magnet to attract larger research/innovation-oriented organizations?
- Can Georgia Tech stimulate emergence of new industries in the area?
- Would approach and policies towards university-industry linkages differ if different goals are pursued?

Remaining Questions

- Geographic dimension of UILs, especially to the local economic development. Are universities concerned with cooperation with local firms?
- What kind of UIL is most effective in what kind of objectives?
- Would UIL be effective for the services industry?