Considerations for a Start-up Company

What is a start-up and why choose to create one?

A start-up is a new business entity formed to commercialize one or more related inventions. Forming a start-up company is an alternative to licensing the IP to an established business. A few key factors when considering a start-up company are:

- development risk (established companies maybe unwilling to take the risk of new technology)
- ability to commercialize multiple products or services from the same technology
- sufficiently large competitive advantage and target market
- potential revenues sufficient to sustain and grow a company

Who decides whether to form a start-up?

The decision to create a start-up company for commercializing IP is a joint decision made by the OIPC and the inventors. If a new business start-up is chosen as the preferred commercialization path, OIPC will assist you and the other founders in planning and executing the process.

What role does an inventor usually play in a company?

UAF inventors rarely leave the university to join the start-up. Instead, inventors typically serve as technology consultants, advisors, or in some other technical developmental capacity. As the company matures and additional investment is required, the inventor’s role may change. Faculty involvement of any kind in a start-up must be disclosed in your conflict of interest statement. For more information on Conflicts of Interest, please see: http://www.uaf.edu/oipc/forms-and-agreements/conflict-of-interest-plan/

How much of my time and effort will it take?

Starting a business requires a significant amount of time and effort. The inventor will need to champion the formation of the start-up until the management team is identified. Once in place, the inventor will be required to participate in investor discussions, formal responsibilities in or with the company, and university processes such as conflict of interest reviews.

Will UAF pay for incorporating a start-up company?

The start-up is a separate entity from the university and therefore must pay for its own legal matters, including all business incorporation costs and licensing expenses.
**What is the Research Foundation?**

A research foundation is a vehicle that allows us to streamline the path to commercialization. It will be a separate entity from the university with its own board of directors but it will be commercializing technologies from the university. OIPC will be working with the Research Foundation to assist in the commercialization process. We believe that the foundation will be a better way to achieve deal flow in a manner that mitigates risk to the university and supports the inventors in our community.

**How do inventors engage with the research foundation?**

Inventors can engage by submitting their invention disclosure to OIPC. OIPC will engage with the research foundation in order to develop technologies and see them flourish within industry.

**What is the difference between OIPC & the research foundation?**

OIPC is the university unit that receives the invention disclosures, evaluates them, and determines if IP protection is appropriate for the disclosed technologies. The research foundation is a 501c3 corporation that acts as the agent of UAF and is in-charge of licensing and managing the technologies. Once a technology is close to being licensed, OIPC assigns the technologies to the research foundation for licensing and management.

**Does the research foundation have a name?**

The research foundation is comprised of both a non-profit and for-profit corporation. The non-profit is known as Nanook Innovation Corporation (NIC). The for-profit is known as Nanook Technology Ventures (NTV)