



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
Lamar Smith, Chairman

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Statement from Barbara Comstock (R-Va.)

From Lab to Market: A Review of NSF Innovation Corps

Chairwoman Comstock: The purpose of today's hearing is to review the National Science Foundation's Innovation Corps (I-Corps) program and its goal of preparing scientists and engineers to extend their research from lab to market.

The hearing will examine the successes and challenges of the I-Corps program and the committee will hear recommendations for the future of I-Corps and its role in the innovation ecosystem.

In research labs today are the seeds for breakthroughs in new fields like quantum computing, artificial intelligence and bioengineering; breakthroughs that will continue to transform our lives and the world we live in.

Many scientists and engineers are not trained for commercializing those ideas because most did not go to business school or take any business development classes as part of their training. So how do we give them the tools to be successful entrepreneurs?

How do we help scientists and engineers turn their innovations into products and services?

In 2011, NSF established I-Corps to help fill that need. I-Corps is a National Innovation Network of eight nodes across the country, which connects academic researchers with the private sector and trains them to be entrepreneurs.

NSF funds teams of researchers to go through a seven week I-Corps curriculum that provides a real-world, hands-on, immersive learning experience.

Today, I-Corps is taught at 86 colleges and universities in the United States, and over 1,000 teams have been through the program. I welcome Dr. Dawn Tilbury, the new Assistant Director for Engineering at NSF, to discuss what NSF has learned from over five years of running the program and collecting data and information.

We are also fortunate to have Mr. Steve Blank on the panel, the architect of the NSF I-Corps curriculum. He will explain how his approach trains scientists and engineers to be entrepreneurs in a short period of time, and his vision for the future of I-Corps.

We also have on the panel Dr. Dean Chang from the DC Area I-Corps node to discuss the innovation ecosystem in the Virginia, Maryland and D.C. region.

The 10th Congressional District I represent has a robust and growing technology sector, while Virginia, D.C. and Maryland boast some of the top research universities in the country. I look forward to learning how I-Corps contributes to building connections between academic researchers and the private sector to create more companies and more jobs.

Finally, I look forward to hearing from Dr. Sue Carter on her experience participating in three I-Corps teams and creating successful companies.

Through research and activities like I-Corps supported by the National Science Foundation, we have the opportunity to boost our economy, enhance our national security, strengthen our cybersecurity infrastructure and create a STEM-job ready workforce.