University & Industry Innovation Forum
Title: The need for multiple collaboration models
Summary: This audio pod cast provides a descriptive overview of the spectrum of collaboration models used in university-industry research relationships as well as the need for different approaches based on the industry and/or university department engaged.
Length of mp3 file: 5 minutes, 11 seconds
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Hello. This is Lou Masi, Director of Global University Programs at IBM. In this module I'd like to discuss two important building blocks, building block characteristics that will help us continue to remove barriers to university and IT industry research collaboration.

This first characteristic describes the spectrum of collaborative research relationships that exist between universities and IT industry partners. This spectrum is critical because it actually describes the important awareness that IT companies do not work with universities in one way. There is no silver bullet collaborative style and each collaboration may stop somewhere along this spectrum that I'm about to describe. So if you think about the ways that universities and IT companies work together on one side you will have philanthropy or awards, whether it's fellowship awards for students or research awards for faculty and students, or faculty awards for research assistanceships, cash awards. Those are really what I call "no-strings-attached" awards. If you move along the spectrum you'll get to open collaboration. I'll talk more about open collaboration in just a moment but open collaboration really describes the scenario where whatever the research creates it is shared globally and creates the more insight that is shared with the collaborators and shared with the world. Moving further along the spectrum there is a stop that I call "free participant use" and it really says that the intellectual property that is created is free for the participants. Further along you'll get to joint ownership where intellectual property may be owned by both parties. And then still further over you'll have sponsored research where research is being funded and what is created will be proprietary to the funder of the research.

So this spectrum, as I described it, is often used by IT companies to work with universities and the awareness of that spectrum is critical so that you don't start with the one-size-fits-all type of collaboration. And it also takes into consideration the fact that different departments in universities, computer science, computer engineering, MIS, and different professors within the departments, will often like to collaborate based on the uniqueness of the technology in different ways along this spectrum.

The second critical characteristic is that of awareness for the different industry models that are practiced by different companies. Industry models are important because if you think of different industries – I'll describe two polarizations, if you would. The IT industry is more and more centered around open and non-proprietary technologies, open software, open standards and open architectures. Some quick examples are HTML, HTTP, Apache Web Server technology, Linux is an excellent example. MySQL, Apache Derby Database technologies, et cetera. And the pharmaceutical industry has a strong reliance on the importance of breakthrough compounds and patents. And we do know and realize that in the pharma area there are pharmaceutical patents that have generated several hundreds of millions of dollars for universities. So while not all IT industry research is open and not all pharma research is proprietary, they do tend to be more on those sides of the continuum. The biotech industry, for example, may be somewhere in between. So that awareness is critical.

So by considering these two characteristics we will speed the time to research, reduce the cost of administration and advance our mutual research objectives together. This is Lou Masi and I look forward to talking with you again before long.