As the Biomedical Innovation Program (BIP) Turns 4, OCTRI Sits Down With a 2015 Awardee

John Muschler, Ph.D.,
Research Associate Professor, Biomedical Engineering

Dr. John Muschler is currently a Research Associate Professor in the Department of Biomedical Engineering. He has been at OHSU since 2011. His work has focused on ECM receptor signaling in the context of normal cell biology and human disease, and the generation of unique reagents and methods for the dissection of these pathways.

Awarded BIP funding in 2015, for his project titled, "Developing novel bioconjugates for the detection and treatment of bladder disease," Dr. Muschler has made significant progress toward his goal of bringing a potentially groundbreaking diagnostic and treatment tool to the marketplace where it can positively affect the lives of patients.

OCTRI: Please tell us about how your research led you to the Biomedical Innovation Program (BIP).

JM: A research discovery of ours suggested a new method of targeted drug delivery. We filed an invention disclosure with OHSU Technology Transfer & Business Development, and were then looking for ways to quickly continue the work and develop its commercial potential. A colleague suggested OCTRI and the BIP as a source of early stage funding.

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- John Muschler, Ph.D.
OCTRI: In your experience, how does the BIP differ from other grants?

JM: The grant submission for the BIP required several sections not found in standard grant proposals, including a market overview for the proposed product and an outlined path to commercialization. Reviewers of the BIP proposals offer commercialization experience that is helpful in guiding the project. Lastly, and most importantly, the BIP doesn’t stop after funding the award, but continues to provide support for the project through connections to people with experience in the various steps of commercialization.

OCTRI: Can you talk about what you may have learned so far from participating in the program?

JM: The BIP has helped me learn the path from research discovery to product commercialization. Through the BIP, with guidance from program staff and interactions with entrepreneurs, I have begun to step out of the “research scientist” mindset and become more comfortable thinking like an inventor and entrepreneur.

OCTRI: How has participating in the BIP helped move your technology forward?

JM: Obviously, the early stage funding provided by the BIP has been crucial to keeping the project alive and to advancing the research. By helping me learn the paths to commercialization, the BIP is also helping to plan ahead and efficiently prepare for the next steps in the commercialization without wasting valuable time.

OCTRI: Lastly, any parting words of encouragement for folks considering applying to the BIP?

JM: If you have an invention with commercial potential, the BIP program is an excellent mechanism to move it forward and test the waters. There are many benefits. Learning to think like an inventor or an entrepreneur is a valuable education in itself. The BIP program can connect you to many creative, helpful, and insightful people. Obviously, a product that makes it to market offers many additional rewards; there’s a lot to gain with little to lose.

The Biomedical Innovation Program is a partnership between the Oregon Clinical and Translational Research Institute (OCTRI) and OHSU’s Office of Technology Transfer & Business Development (TTBD).

OCTRI’s Awards Program staff are available year-round to offer guidance towards developing your idea for future award cycles, and welcomes interested parties to contact us at any time.

Jonathan Jubera: BIP Primary Contact, Project Manager // jubera@ohsu.edu
Aditi Martin: BIP Program Director // martiad@ohsu.edu

OCTRI has a wide array of resources to help investigators and research staff plan, fund, and implement successful research studies. For more information, contact the OCTRI Research Navigator at: octri@ohsu.edu