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## **Entrepreneurial students narrow gap between scientific ideas and viable business**

(CALGARY) — A new breed of scientist is emerging that combines the knowledge of science with strong people and business skills, according to a recent workshop organized for Alberta students.

40 entrepreneurial science graduate students and postdoctoral fellows spent a “boot camp” weekend in Banff to bridge the gap between science, technology and the commercial world.

Students like Jessica Mason, a masters student in computer science at the University of Calgary, has an interest in uncharted terrain, where new opportunities tend to emerge.

“My research will be in a cross-over area, for example, between biology and computer science, and there are a lot of opportunities for commercialization of research in these new areas,” she explains. “In computer science I can use my people strengths and business skills to tackle a new challenge. I like the combination of logic and creativity.”

Jessica says that workshop opened her eyes to the process of commercialization. “I was blind to it before. I just was not exposed to these kinds of ideas. The workshop absolutely changed the way I think now. A seed was planted.”

The workshop was designed to meet an identified gap in the technology commercialization process.

“While Alberta does well supporting scientific research at universities, more effort needs to be made commercializing the knowledge generated by these researchers,” said Lynn Sutherland, Vice President Programs at the Alberta Informatics Circle of Research Excellence and one of the event organizers. “This workshop is designed to help those with emerging scientific careers become comfortable and knowledgeable in both research and business settings.”

Studies of innovation have long tried to understand what makes for successful commercial ventures, whether it is a great idea, the right people, sufficient start-up funding, location, timing, or some combination of factors. This workshop was a primer for participants on aspects of the innovation process and how this is related to the commercialization process.

The event was organized by the Centre for Innovation Studies ([www.thecis.ca/](http://www.thecis.ca/)) and sponsored by Alberta Ingenuity ([www.albertaingenuity.ca/](http://www.albertaingenuity.ca/)), Alberta Agricultural Research Institute ([www.aari.ab.ca/](http://www.aari.ab.ca/)), Alberta Informatics Circle of Research Excellence ([www.icore.ca/](http://www.icore.ca/)), and InnoCentre ([www.innocentrealberta.com/](http://www.innocentrealberta.com/)).