

More Than a Research Park - a Frame of Mind

A park like the Research Park at Florida Atlantic University® is so many other things - workplace for thousands of workers, an incubator for upstart companies, a growth engine for emerging businesses, a living laboratory for new technologies, and an interface between business and academia.

Success is not necessarily measured in job growth or economic impact. It's measured by the innovation, collaboration, and "Eureka" moments it sparks - that then spread throughout the community.

Rich Masel, founder/CEO of Dioxide Materials, has found such moments collaborating with Jason Hallstrom, a professor in FAU's College of Engineering and Computer Science, whose innovations are changing the way Florida monitors its water quality, sea level rise, hurricanes, agriculture, aquaculture, and even its aging senior population.

A company like University MRI is located here because it shares equipment worth hundreds of thousands of dollars with FAU for brain mapping, neuroscience research, and clinic treatment which has resulted in more than \$3 million in external research funding.

Life of Purpose, founded by FAU alum Andrew Burki, is exploring strategies and resources to better serve student-aged people on how to overcome substance abuse, working with the FAU School of Social Work.

The Research Park is a special place, it's not a business park where just any company, even if it's a cool tech company, can locate. These tech companies are essential, but they can locate in BRIC and be part of the overall ecosystem.

For Masel, a researcher who's now exploring his fourth start-up, the Research Park is a collaborative space, a university campus, where entrepreneurs can mingle with highly trained engineers and scientists - a place "that would make it easy for me to attract employees and a place I'd want to go to work."

The Research Park is the only true university research park in South Florida. It's a huge, unique

asset for the region, where the governing authority takes seriously its responsibility to navigate the path and only accepts tenants that embrace research, seek scientific collaborations with FAU, and are technologically advanced.

This unique feature sets the Research Park apart: its protected status as a place reserved for research, invention and innovation. What it lacks - and rightly so - is frequent announcements about job numbers and recruitments (notwithstanding Gov. Rick Scott's visit to Modernizing Medicine to praise the company's plans to hire 800 new employees).

"Initiatives here have long lead times to yield results, and they're worth the wait because the addition to the economy is knowledge - in the form of people and new ideas - that power us to new heights, greater well-being and, yes, new prosperity as a region," says Andrew Duffell, president and CEO of the Research Park.

That's the vision, "To be recognized as Florida's premier R&D destination for innovative technology businesses to thrive," and our mission, "To create and sustain the ideal environment for innovation and invention, maximizing the academic and entrepreneurial talent and regional resources in South Florida to accelerate economic development and prosperity."

The Research Park at FAU started as an idea, a dream to create the kind of environment where new ideas could be invented, developed, improved, and taken to market in conjunction with FAU, forming part of the academic and research community that would power our region's future. It was a bold idea for a pineapple field that had once been part of the U.S. Army Air Corps' airfield, one that is becoming a reality now.

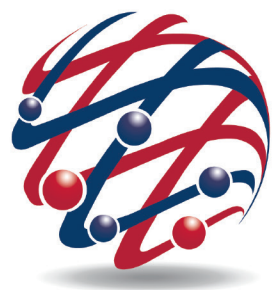
-Jeff Zbar

Research Park Tenant Named 'Company To Watch'

Yachtico, a tenant in the Technology Business Incubator, has been named a Company to Watch by GrowFL, the Florida economic gardening institute. Yachtico was created by an international team of specialists in marketing, customer care, software development and industry veterans to create a platform that connects customers who want to rent or charter boats with fleet operators and boat owners.

The company offers more than 16,000 yachts - sailing yachts, motor yachts, catamarans and houseboats - in more than 40 countries for charter directly online. With a simple online booking process, real time availabilities, professional service and NO booking fees - booking a yacht through YACHTICO.com is as easy as booking a hotel room.

Previous Companies to Watch: Aerospace Technologies Group (2016); MobileHelp (2014); Modernizing Medicine (2012)



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