

Job Description

TennSMART, Director of Entrepreneurship and Commercialization

The director of TennSMART's Entrepreneurship and Commercialization programs will be responsible for managing several programs for the organization, including our statewide Mentor Network, Automotive & Smart Mobility Challenge, as well as assist with a Reverse Pitch program between universities, entrepreneur centers and our members.

TennSMART Mentor Network

This flexible, customized program for entrepreneurs looking to scale their startups is a proven model. Given the challenges of breaking into automotive supply chains, we will continue to focus the program on startups offering smart mobility solutions, particularly related to electrification and infrastructure. With additional in-flow from other proposed initiatives, this program serves as an important role in the entrepreneurial journey to navigate the "Valley of Death."

The Director serves as the primary contact for the companies that are in the program, works to identify their needs, match them with appropriate mentors from our network, and facilitate panels and mentor sessions. The director also leads trainings so mentors are familiar with the program structure.

Annual Metric Goals for the Mentor Network program include:

- 5-7 companies in the program and/or graduated
- 40 mentors from our members, as well as investors and domain experts
- 15 meetings between companies and investors

Mentor Office Hours program

For companies who may be too mature for the Mentor Network, perhaps because they have already raised funding, a formalized office hours program will provide wraparound resources for startups with 1:1 mentoring and additional connections to OEMs and Tier 1 and 2 suppliers. The Director will develop and implement this program working with TennSMART consultants and the board to market the program.

Automotive & Smart Mobility Challenge

This nine-week program, modeled off the successful Scipreneur Challenge for life science, will showcase intellectual property (IP) being generated at Tennessee's premier research institutions (including ORNL, UT, Vanderbilt, TN Tech and more) and provide entrepreneurship training to students and postdoctoral fellows. The program includes seminars taught by local experts and culminates in a pitch competition for a cash prize and admission to the Mobility Mentor Network.

The Director will develop this entrepreneurship-based competition that offers university students and postdoctoral fellows hands-on experiences in commercialization of research and entrepreneurship. The program should highlight IP generated at area research institutions and

engage students in the process of developing a commercialization plan for the technology, including a business proforma (executive summary) and a 10- to 15-minute investor pitch. The participating teams, comprising of undergraduates, research scientists, engineers, business students, and mentors will present a business plan and compete to win prizes in a final pitch competition, judged by the area business community and investors. Winners receive prize money raised through program sponsorship.

The TennSMART “Reverse Pitch” program

This program will address micro- and macro-level problems facing the industry that need to be solved. Through the program TennSMART members will identify key challenges and call on universities, entrepreneur centers and others across the state to present solutions.

The Director will coordinate with other TennSMART personnel to develop, create and market the program.

Additional Roles of the Director of Entrepreneurship and Commercialization:

- Oversee all aspects of the Mentor Network and Smart Mobility Challenge programs, including participation by academic institutions, students and sponsors.
- Assist with the marketing and development of the programs.
- Review the history and opportunities of the program including promoting and expanding program partnerships with industry, academia and investors across Tennessee and beyond.
- Lead the training and sessions in the program models so that all participants are familiar and comfortable working in the programmatic structures.
- Facilitate program development including hosting events, panels and mentor sessions, or have appropriate mentors and EIRs to fulfill the roles.
- General program administration including budget management, communications with our grantor, LaunchTN, and board communications

Interested candidates can send a letter of interest and resume to Sara Pruneski at spruneski@tennsmart.org