

## PHD TESTIMONIALS

03/10/2023

### **Josh Lee – TI:GER, PHD 2023**

TI:GER gave me the knowledge, self-assurance, and network to transition from contemplating starting a business to doing it. Without a doubt, TI:GER has been the most satisfying experience I've had at Georgia Tech. I continue to rely on the guidance, counsel, and support of my TI:GER team, alumni, teachers, and staff. I learned at CDL that market research, due diligence, and industry analysis are essential before commercializing technologies.

### **Mohammad Nikbakht – TI:GER, PHD 2023**

As a PhD student, I have developed skills to address the tech industry's needs from a technical standpoint. TI:GER has allowed me to explore the business side of the tech industry and expand my knowledge and skills. By having both a technical vision and a business vision, I can view the needs in the industry from multiple angles and make more effective decisions leading to superior execution. The TI:GER program also offers a unique partnership with CDL, where I worked with startups in the CDL-Atlanta Commerce stream to develop strategies for real-world business applications and employ my learning in action.

### **Afsane Radmand – TI:GER, PHD 2023**

As a PhD student who has developed early-stage novel lipid nanoparticles for the delivery of mRNA therapeutics and vaccines, I always was interested to learn how to turn my invention into a successful product that could benefit patients. Through the TI:GER program, I collaborated with incredible business students to learn about the tools and skillsets for successfully commercializing novel technologies. TI:GER program also allowed me to work with extraordinary CDL ventures to apply these skills in the real business world. Watching mentors guide ventures during CDL sessions was valuable to me. Working with successful and passionate founders also was very valuable as I could apply the skills I have learned at TI:GER program to the real business world.

### **Gabriel Cahn - TI:GER, PhD/MBA 2021**

Through CDL I feel as if I am an actual employee of the startup, and the impact of my contribution is tangible. I am forging relationships with manufacturers and suppliers that will carry the company well into the future. Of particular value is the access we as students have to the startup selection screening meetings. I get to see the uncertainty, the imperfections, and the grit that threads entrepreneurial endeavors. Most importantly, I am gaining a broadened perspective, as CDL mentors share insights built upon diverse backgrounds and expertise. I'm learning to ask the right questions when formulating and executing a business strategy, and that is a critical skill for success when I enter industry.

### **Austin Culberson - TI:GER, PhD 2021**

As elite entrepreneurs are selected and mentored by some of the world's most distinguished subject matter experts, business leaders, and investors, CDL allows me the unique chance to be in the room where it happens. Reaffirmed with each session is the importance of designing not for perceived issues that have been circularly confirmed but designing for those problems that have been hypothesized and validated through qualitative research and customer discovery. Experiencing firsthand these living case studies of what it takes to translate research from the bench to the market as viable commercial endeavors is an opportunity unique to my PhD experience at Georgia Tech.

**Juan Medina - TI:GER, PhD 2021**

My CDL experience is helping me with my TI:GER project, which I brought from my lab at Georgia Tech. In my TI:GER project, my team has been conducting higher level customer discovery and competitive analysis to confirm that our technology will indeed succeed in the cell culture market. The CDL experience has been extremely insightful for many reasons. As a PhD candidate constantly interfacing with the early benchtop work that goes into development of tech, I used to find it difficult to see the long-term picture of getting this tech to end-patients. This opportunity helps me fill in that gap and has shown me that successful ventures require expertise that extend beyond technical knowledge of the intellectual property. Furthermore, as part of my career exploration, this experience has further confirmed my admiration for entrepreneurship and desire to pursue similar endeavors after I finish my graduate studies.

**Ali Eshaghian Dorche - TI:GER, PHD 2020**

As a graduate student in engineering school, I have always been interested to figure out how researchers in the academic environment can be more effective, addressing practical challenges in the real world, and creating value in the market. TI:GER program gave me a unique opportunity to learn what in my opinion is missing in science and engineering schools, to make research more practical and add values sought after from customers. This involves all the steps from idea development to commercialization, each step as important as the scientific research itself; this ranges strategy and market discovery all the way to the legal aspects required to make a technology venture successful. I am so grateful for having this opportunity to work with exceptional people, networking with industry experts in my research area (photonics and semiconductor industry) and get to know the important steps in business development.

**Oliver Moreno - TI:GER, PhD 2020**

I got a TON of value out of the TI:GER program. TI:GER courses have been the most eye-opening and stimulating that I have taken in engineering grad school. While other courses expanded on what I knew, the TI:GER courses have given me a new paradigm and numerous tool sets for looking at innovation. The many frameworks for thinking about and understanding markets, industries, and business models have given my research a more meaningful, richer context, which has motivated me to focus and to become more productive in the lab. The skills have also translated to improving my impact as a speaker, subject-matter expert, and leader.

**Mohammadreza Nazemi - TI:GER, PHD 2020**

The TI:GER experience provided me with a unique opportunity to learn how to effectively communicate my Ph.D. research with non-technical experts in my field of study. TI:GER also enabled me to work on exploring the innovation potential of my Ph.D. technology in a multidisciplinary team of amazing MBA and JD students with successful and productive teamwork projects. The learning experiences I gained in this program laid a foundation to attract investors to consider seed funding my Ph.D. project as I move forward to advance the technology innovation. I am extremely grateful to our wonderful team mentors. They were all incredibly supportive and patient enough to walk us through the steps in the technology innovation process.

**Zhongzhen Wang - TI:GER, PhD 2020**

TI:GER provides a great opportunity to learn the business of technology innovation, to work in teams and internationally collaborative environments, and to exchange your ideas with the smartest people. If you want to launch a start-up with your cutting-edge technology to revolutionize the world, the TI:GER program is the right curriculum!

**Nordine Sebkhii - TI:GER, PhD 2019**

TI:GER enabled me to gain a solid understanding of the different steps in the entrepreneur journey from a prototype to a product launch. But more fundamentally, TI:GER taught me how to better present my product to investors, which not only led me to win a prestigious international business pitch competition, but to be more prepared and confident when talking about my business idea to others.

**Rob Mannino - TI:GER, PhD 2018**

TI:GER showed me that there was so much more to a successful product than just a cool technology. TI:GER gave me the skills necessary to identify how my technology fits into the marketplace. This will allow me to attain my ultimate goal of it reaching as many people as possible is seldom realized by most biomedical scientists.

**Matt Smith - TI:GER, PhD 2017**

The TIGER program helped our team to understand the basics of financing a startup and how to sell your vision to investors and other stakeholders. TCPoly has gone on to raise nearly \$1M in mostly non-dilutive financing and is now part of the Atlanta based Venture Capital firm Engage Ventures, a relationship that started due to TIGER related activities. The combined educational elements and access to resources (and most importantly, local investors and experienced entrepreneurs) helped TCPoly to successfully transition to a full-time, funded endeavor.

**Nathan Evans - TI:GER, PhD 2015**

TI:GER provided me with the skills, confidence, and network to make the leap from thinking about doing a startup to actually diving headfirst into one. Years after graduating, I still rely on the mentorship, advice, and encouragement from TI:GER faculty and staff, alumni, and my TI:GER team.

**Brennan Torstrick - TI:GER, PhD 2015**

As a PhD student, TI:GER exposed me to the many different components, other than the technology itself, that go into commercializing a product idea or research platform. By understanding the broader context of how many business decisions are made, enabled me to work on broader, more important problems compared to my peers. Now I'm applying these same concepts learned in TI:GER to get my own venture off the ground.

**Shauvik Choudhary - TI:GER, PhD 2014**

In TI:GER, my research evolved from ideas into value propositions and a funded startup. This was possible only because I worked in a TI:GER team. I continually use the knowledge I gained from TI:GER, and its instructors and mentors, in my career.

**Stephanie Duncanson - TI:GER, PhD 2013**

TI:GER fundamentally changed my career trajectory-- the skills I learned during the program shaped the way I think about and tackle business-related challenges within biotechnology. TI:GER enabled a transition from the lab to a leadership position at a hot biotech company developing cutting edge cancer drugs. Looking back, TI:GER was one of the most valuable investments of time I made-- the skills I learned served as a springboard for my career.

**Jeff Gaulding - TI:GER, PhD 2013**

TI:GER was an incredible experience that allowed me to build solid and useful skills that complemented my research program. These are the kinds of valuable skills that differentiate TI:GER students from other PhDs.

**Chris Lee - TI:GER, PhD 2012**

TI:GER gave me the fundamental knowledge, network, and initiative to start, scale, and eventually sell my company that commercialized a university-based technology. This has allowed us to improve the lives of over 10,000 patients around that world that previously suffered from chronic neck and back pain.

**Erich Stuntebeck - TI:GER, PhD 2010**

I learned a lot from all the different aspects of TI:GER, but what ended up being the most important for me as a Ph.D. was getting experience with intellectual property protection through the partnership with Emory Law.

This allowed me to work with the in-house patent attorney at my first role to build a patent portfolio that was instrumental in the later acquisition of the company.

**Walter Voit - TI:GER, PhD 2009**

The TI:GER Program gives PhD students the opportunity to see how their technology will impact people. Understanding the stages required for commercialization helps gives the research focus and purpose. The program has helped me clearly articulate my research and its benefits to nonscientists, so vital to making science and technology successful in the real world.

**Dimitri Hughes - TI:GER, PhD 2008**

The TI:GER program helps engineers and scientists understand what place their work has in greater society. TI:GER is without question the most rewarding experience I've had so far at Georgia Tech.

**Matt Rhyner - TI:GER, PhD 2007**

Receiving the TI:GER fellowship was a highlight of my graduate career. The opportunity to work with graduate students from law and business helped me develop skills and knowledge that I use to this day; just yesterday in fact.

**Jeff Gross - TI:GER, PhD 2006**

TI:GER helped me understand the importance of market research, due diligence, and industry analysis before taking technologies to market. My TI:GER experiences are what helped me land the job [senior management consultant with Easton Associates] in the first place. Easton liked the fact that I had not only a PhD in science, but also experience with market assessment as well as communicating with CEOs and others on the business side.

**Lynn Capadona - TI:GER, PhD 2004**

TI:GER was a perfect way for me to diversify. Having an understanding of science and how to talk to the business side was really helpful in getting jobs. It definitely jumped out at potential employers.

**Elizabeth Gadsby -TI:GER, PhD 2004**

I liked the idea of working with other disciplines, seeing the perspectives of the MBA, JD, and other PhD students. It was a very beneficial program. I apply it to my current career, and I think it has made me a more valuable employee.

**Benay Sager - TI:GER, PhD 2004**

TI:GER came up in every interview I had they really liked my experience in the program. Without TI:GER, I'm not sure I would have gotten the job [strategic consulting position with McKinsey & Company].