

## DC Node I-Corps Short Course as Team Recruitment Strategy

The DC I-Corps node moved to a “short course” regional model in 2015 (see <https://nciaa.box.com/s/8yhh7q2ggguqfgsharxmfssuvosi39yq> and <http://innovation.umd.edu/learn/i-corps>), with two primary objectives:

- 1) to significantly increase participation by a wider audience of researchers on our respective campuses in a much more cost-effective way, and
- 2) to significantly increase the number of teams admitted into the NSF national program from the DMV region.

The node conducted 10 of the regional short courses at all node institutions (UMD, VT, GWU, JHU) and two regional universities (UVA, VCU) (compared to only 2 “long course” regional cohorts the previous year). The node also ran two cohorts focused on technologies from Federal Labs (FedTech cohorts). In total, these courses served about 100 participating teams (compared to about 40 teams in the 2 “long courses” the previous year). So far, about 10 of these teams have gone on to the NSF national program, with many more expected in the future (compared to about 4 teams to national the previous year).

### Recruitment for National I-Corps Program

The table below shows all national I-Corps teams through Spring 2016 from the DC/MD/VA node as well as other schools where we've done regional programs to recruit for national. The 45 national teams span the entire 3 years of the DC node’s existence, but over half those 45 teams came in the last 12 months since the start of the 2-week Intro to I-Corps short courses. UMD ran 5 short course cohorts totaling over 25 teams with 5 teams going on to national in just the last 4 months, all from the short course. So we think the short course can and should become the preferred entry process for national teams.

| <b>National I-Corps Teams from DMV</b> |                             |           |                                |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| # Teams                                | DMV Node School             | # Teams   | DMV Regional School            |
| 13                                     | UMD                         | 6         | UVA                            |
| 9                                      | VT                          | 1         | UMB                            |
| 6                                      | GW                          | 3         | UMBC                           |
| 2                                      | JHU                         | 2         | VCU                            |
| <b>30</b>                              | <b>Total</b>                | 1         | Howard                         |
|  |                             | 1         | Georgetown                     |
|  |                             | 1         | Berkeley (UMD EL, Berkeley PI) |
|  |                             | <b>15</b> | <b>Total</b>                   |
| <b>45</b>                              | <b>Grand Total from DMV</b> |           |                                |

### Additional Benefits of Short Courses at UMD

At UMD, these 2 week short courses are offered every 2 months and have much higher enrollment from faculty and researchers because they are typically held in convenient locations on campus (often down the hall in the same building as their labs) and only generally require 10-20 interviews over those 2 weeks. The smaller cohort size (5-6 teams) means a very lean teaching team (a single instructor), an abundance of rent-free medium-sized rooms around campus, far fewer logistics and TA requirements, and no travel expenses. These short courses are far less expensive to run than full blown regional cohorts that exactly copy the national model.

UMD's tech transfer office recruits teams for these short course cohorts based on UMD researchers who have filed invention disclosures or patent applications or who have expressed interest in commercialization grants. The short course is appealing to faculty and researchers because it improves their chances of getting their innovation patented by the tech transfer office and/or improves their chances of receiving a commercialization grant. It's also a way to dip their toe in this whole I-Corps thing they've heard about without having to immediately make a heavy 7-week commitment to the national program with lots of travel involved. They only have to make the short course opening day and two subsequent office hour sessions each scheduled at their convenience after they've done at least 5 new interviews. Office hour sessions are used to see if they did the interviews and embrace the process enough to warrant moving on to national. Plus there's the bonus to UMD of now qualifying researchers for national I-Corps (and the \$50K) if they weren't previously NSF-funded (e.g., maybe they were funded by NIH, DOE, etc).

### Summary

The DC node expects much greater participation in I-Corps by more researchers and even more teams to advance to national now that the short course has moved from a pilot exercise to a repeatable model.