

Mass High Tech

Northeastern program targets product commercialization

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In an effort to spur mid-career technologies and engineers into the entrepreneurial community, Northeastern University has launched a new, online-only masters program aimed at product commercialization.

Dubbed the Masters of Science in Technology Commercialization, the one-year program is being launched out of the university's College of Professional Studies, and in collaboration with its School of Technological Entrepreneurship. Unlike other programs, the course will be administered entirely online and targets students already in the workforce.

"This is aimed specifically at people who have a technology background and have an idea they want to bring to market," said Tom Ermolovich, the director of the program and a former engineering executive at various local technology companies, including Woburn's Voice Signal Technologies Inc., Marlborough's Concord Communications Inc. and Burlington's Legra Systems Inc., which he co-founded.

The program, which is currently taking applications and expects to begin with its first class in the fall, will operate through two tracks – a traditional academic track, and a group project called the I-cubator. The I-cubator puts students together in a group to develop a business plan, investment plan and other criteria for successfully commercializing a real product over the course of the program -- all of which will take place online.

"There was a real need to address mid-career students, and we felt the best way to do that was through an online program," said Todd Leach, senior associate dean of academic affairs for the College of Professional Studies.

The program has also signed on a host of advisors from local organizations, including Abigail Barrow, director of the Massachusetts Technology Transfer Center; Paul Gasparro, vice president and co-founder of Mapleworks Technology; and Rouzbeh Yassini, founder and CEO of YAS Broadband Ventures LLC.