DESHPANDE CENTER FOR TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

The Deshpande Center (http://deshpande.mit.edu) was established at the MIT School of Engineering to increase the impact of MIT technologies in the marketplace. Founded with an initial donation from Jaishree and Desh Deshpande, the Deshpande Center supports a wide range of emerging technologies including biotechnology, biomedical devices, information technology, new materials, tiny tech, and energy innovations.

Since 2002, the Deshpande Center has awarded over $15 million in grants to support more than 125 MIT faculty-led projects. The objective of the funding is to nurture ideas with market potential and reduce the uncertainty around them so that an external party would invest in the technology. In addition to the funding, the grants bring with them publicity, mentoring, and connections with the business community.

This funding enables MIT faculty and their students to pursue exciting new avenues of research on novel technologies. As a result, 32 projects have spun out of the center as independent startups, collectively raising more than $600M in outside financing from top-tier venture capital firms and other investors.

There are two ways for students to get involved in projects funded by the Deshpande Center.

• Deshpande Center Grant Program: The grant program identifies and supports MIT research that can address important market opportunities. To support this research, the center awards Ignition Grants and Innovation Grants (ranging from $50,000 to $250,000 per project) to MIT faculty. Students may participate through a thesis or research assistantship in the laboratory of a faculty member. A portfolio of projects can be found on the website (http://deshpande.mit.edu/grants-resources).

• i-Teams (Innovation Teams): i-Teams is a course that selects ambitious and highly qualified students interested in helping to bring leading-edge technologies from MIT’s world-renowned research laboratories to market. The students join teams devoted to evaluating commercial feasibility and creating go-to-market strategies for technologies within the Deshpande Center portfolio. The course is taught jointly through the Sloan School of Management and the School of Engineering. More information can be found on the website (http://deshpande.mit.edu/grants-resources/other-mit-resources).

The executive director of the Deshpande Center is Leon Sandler. The faculty director of the Deshpande Center is Professor Timothy M. Swager. Staff includes program manager Michelle Grdina and assistant director Maren Cattonar. For more information, contact the Deshpande Center (deshpandecenter@mit.edu), Room 1-229, 617-253-0943.