



UNIVERSITY PARTNERING FUNCTIONS

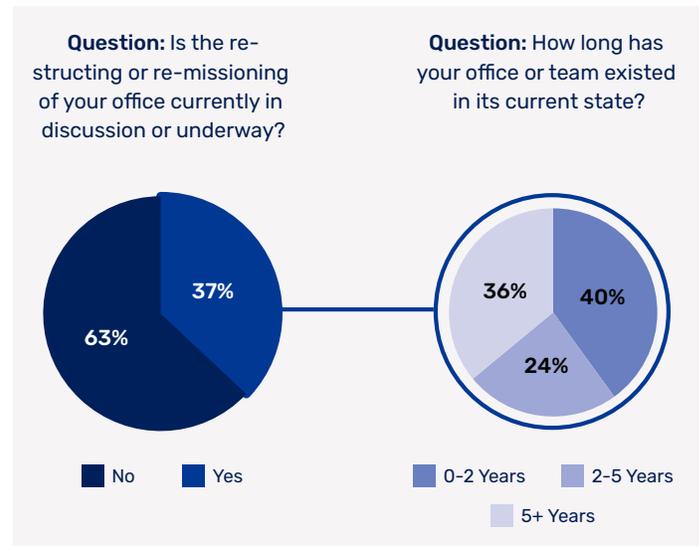
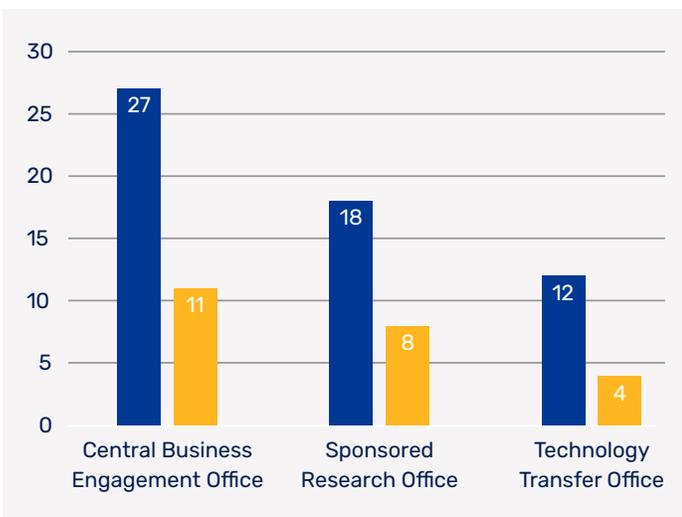
KEY INSIGHTS FROM MAY 2020 SURVEY

With the support of Vantage Partners, The University of Pittsburgh recently reorganized their industry partnering capability to maximize the impact of existing research relationships and create a more efficient and robust culture of partnering at the University. As part of this effort, a survey on industry partnering offices was issued to members of the University Industry Demonstration Partnership (UIDP). This document sets out the five key findings of that brief pulse survey.

A snapshot of industry partnering offices at major universities

There were no meaningful differences between the responses of Public and Private universities. Across questions, the distributions of responses between private and public institutions remained relatively consistent. Given the structural differences between these two types of institutions — in total, 64 public and 23 private — we hypothesized that we may see difference in the way these offices operated, or were resourced, but found instead that offices from each type of institution faced similar challenges and operating realities, and to similar degrees.

University partnering offices are evolving. Less than half of respondents indicated their office or team has existed in its current structure for more than five years, and over 1/3 of respondents indicated their offices were currently re-structuring or re-missioning. In both these groups, the majority identified as Central Business Engagement Offices — confirming this continues to be a popular approach for organizing university partnering capability across UIDP membership.



Types of relationships between University stakeholders and industry

Through internal and external stakeholder engagement, the project distilled twelve primary types of industry relationships held by the University of Pittsburgh. These types are set out below:

1. Industry sponsored research
2. Economic development
3. Venture Capital
4. Licensing
5. Philanthropy
6. Government sponsored research
7. Fee for service
8. Startups
9. Sponsorship / advertising
10. Key vendor / Strategic supplier
11. Student engagement
12. Executive education

The project then determined which types of industry relationship were managed by which University office, and how to best ensure a seamless experience for the industry partner across engagement types with the different university offices.

Organizational alignment around and clarity on the purpose and role of the industry partnering office drives greater stakeholder value. Unfortunately, only half of respondents felt internal stakeholders were clear and aligned on the purpose and role of their office. However, the vast majority of these respondents (93%) indicated that their office is also perceived as adding value to engagements with industry partners.

There were seven offices that despite being less than two years old, noted stakeholders were clear and aligned on their purpose and role. An interesting question for further exploration might be to investigate how these teams were able to efficiently and effectively socialize their function, and as a result quickly begin to add value to their stakeholders.



Appropriately-resourced offices are better able to contribute to their organizations, but the majority of offices are not appropriately resourced. 43% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that their office was appropriately resourced to deliver on its mission. This proportion remained consistent across the three types of offices that were represented by the respondents: Central Business Engagement Offices, Sponsored Research Offices, and Technology Transfer Offices. As you might expect, 95% of appropriately resourced offices felt they were perceived as adding value, while only 48% of under-resourced offices felt they were able to do so.

Successful offices employ reporting mechanisms, with more preferring soft socialization methods than hard metric approaches. Among offices who feel internal stakeholders are clear and aligned on the purpose and role of their office — over 85% employ at least one form of reporting, and only 11 relied solely on meeting with their direct line of leadership. As would be expected, communicating the capabilities of partnering offices is likely to increase alignment around their purpose and amplify their impact across the university.

About Vantage Partners

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About the Office of Industry and Economic Partnerships

The Office of Economic Partnerships (OEP) helps businesses and institutions from around the world access the University of Pittsburgh's resources to build partnerships that drive economic growth and innovation. We foster opportunity by lowering barriers for university faculty, helping clients navigate our resources, and championing Pitt as an enthusiastic partner that is prepared to play a central role in regional and global development activities. To get in touch or learn more, please visit: <https://oep.pitt.edu/>

Contact us, we are happy to share our insights



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