Seeking visionary scientists with business sense

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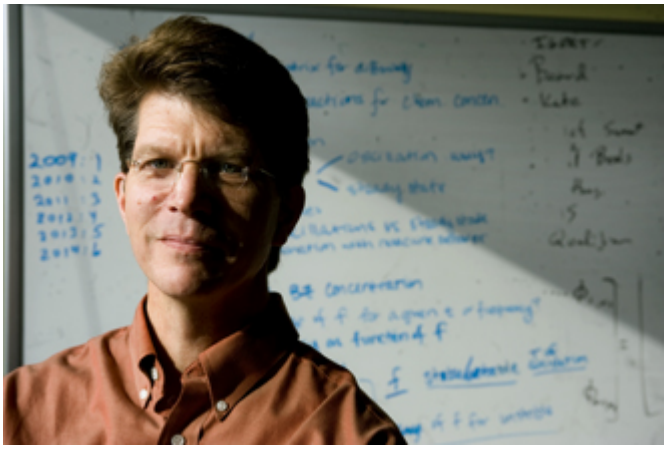
Donald P. Gaver is looking for serious science students who possess a penchant for taking entrepreneurial risks. Gaver, the Alden J. “Doc” Laborde professor and chair of biomedical engineering, is directing a new interdisciplinary PhD program in bioinnovation at Tulane University.



Donald P. Gaver, biomedical engineering professor and director of the interdisciplinary bioinnovation PhD program, sees the ideal candidate for the program as a risk taker as well as a passionate scientist. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

“I want the person who cares passionately about the science, but not only about the science,” says Gaver. “They want to do this because they think they can develop a technology or product that can be useful in the marketplace.”

The interdisciplinary program for which Gaver is recruiting doctoral candidates involves 30 faculty members in the schools of Science and Engineering, Medicine, Law and Business.

Bioinnovation is medically related biological innovation ? anything that can positively affect human health.

The Tulane bioinnovation program is focusing on research in regenerative medicine, or tissue engineering, drug delivery systems and biosensors.

The goal is for the fundamental science to eventually help clinicians diagnose and treat disease, improve quality of life and reduce medical costs.

Students will embark on a science curriculum steeped in quantitative fundamentals and mathematical modeling. They'll do laboratory rotations in science, engineering and medicine. To learn about regulatory approval process, they'll intern at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. They also will participate in business plan competitions.

“In my opinion, there are many barriers to progress,” says Gaver. “One is a lack of understanding by those who are doing fundamental science on what it takes to get something to the marketplace. And from the marketplace, what it takes to do the fundamental and applied science. We need to find and train individuals who want to bridge that gap.”

The bioinnovation PhD program is an Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship funded with a $3 million grant from the National Science Foundation. For more information, contact program manager Anne-Marie Job.