Background
Women underperform in virtually every measure of entrepreneurial activity in the engineering & science disciplines. These patterns hold across all work sectors (academic, industrial, governmental) and disciplines with the exception of regional engineering & science disciplines. These patterns hold across all work sectors (academic, industrial, governmental) and disciplines with the exception of regional engineering & science disciplines. Women choose areas of research that are less amenable to commercialization.

With this expanded model of social impact through research in mind, women then introduced an expanded dissemination model (Figure 1) that emphasizes the myriad ways that research might be translated in social impact. Traditional dissemination models with an interest in affecting broad societal impact. Traditional dissemination models provide information about resources available on and around campus; encouraging industrial network connections; and providing a supportive network of women entrepreneurs.

Campus Cohort Approach
In 2010 and 2011, women faculty were invited to participate in a four-workshop series. The value of the program was given important prestige by requesting a nomination from the Dean and tuition paid by the College. Twelve women participated each of the two years.


The first of these workshops recognized that women scientists often pursue research with an interest in affecting broad societal impact. Traditional dissemination models (Figure 1) may be insufficient for many people; however, Project REACH sought to introduce an expanded dissemination model (Figure 2) to female faculty. This model underscores the knowledge that research might be translated in social impact through the use of entrepreneurial tools.

With this expanded model of social impact through research in mind, women then assessed their skills, identified those needed for commercialization and learned how to access resources and make connections with industry contacts. From additional comments received from participants, it became clear that a major impediment to female entrepreneurship was the lack of a codified rewards structure for promotion & tenure. Since the start of the project, some units at OSU have created new guidelines for promotion and tenure review that include entrepreneurship more often. It will be important for CEOS to continue monitoring the progress of participants over time to see how best to support continued activity. CEOS is currently working to determine the most replicable aspects of both the cohort and conference workshops.

Conference Outcomes
Self assessments of characteristics, skills, and attitudes were conducted at the start and end of the conference. Of key importance, average familiarity with Tech Licensing increased 1.4 points on a 5-point scale. Comments from participants were very positive. Many expressed gratitude for the opportunity to learn about a new way of expanding the reach of their research impact. A highly valued aspect of the conference was the individual feedback on participant's early commercialization ideas. Many participants had previously considered how to commercialize their research and this unique feedback provided useful direction and encouragement.

Next Steps
Women not only enter entrepreneurship less frequently than men, they also get discouraged and exit entrepreneurship more often. It will be important for CEOS to continue monitoring the progress of participants over time to see how best to support continued activity. CEOS is currently working to determine the most replicable aspects of both the cohort and conference workshops.

Construing a National Conference
Cohort participants, research data and industry experts provided feedback about the most valued areas of their experiences. These suggestions coalesced around three broad themes:
- Learning the Business Landscape
- Building a Team
- Finding Funding

Working from these ideas, we gathered a diverse group of experts. The planning committee consisted of representatives from:
- Project Comprehensive Equity at Ohio State (CEOS)
- The Fischer College of Business
- The Center for Clinical and Translational Science
- OSU Technology Commercialization & Knowledge Transfer Office

The committee constructed a two day schedule of speakers, panels and mixers, including keynote speakers Lydia Villa-Komaroff and Scott Shane. To see a copy of the full schedule please visit http://ceos.osu.edu/

Participants were recruited from across the nation through advertisements in national women’s association newsletters. Fellowship opportunities were provided, which resulted in participation by a group of diverse women ranging from postdocs to full professors.