

Stimulating interdisciplinary research

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How does a university stimulate interdisciplinary research?

- by making use of faculty diversity
- integration and symbiosis
- use of strengths
- luck!

University of Melbourne

1. The problem:

- very poor record in commercialisation as % of R&D (<5%, the benchmark figure)
- investment income very poor
- patent portfolio thin

Caused by:

- IP position
- lack of central policy

University of Melbourne (UM)

2. The response

- UM with Royal Melbourne Hospital and Walter & Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research established Bio21 Australia Pty Ltd.
- UM approached State Gov't with matching funding (MIT float) for Bio21 Institute
- Bio21 Institute of Molecular Science and Biotechnology established

Issues

- Platforms
- Who gets in/how long
- Institutes
- Industry
- IP/commercialisation
- Research training for careers with commercial focus (MBA/MIT)

- **DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY!**

Bio21 infrastructure

- **Multiple sources:**
 - **State Government/Melbourne IT float/
Atlantic Philanthropies**
- **Other drivers**
 - Queensland (IMB)/Victoria biotech focus
 - A suitable site
 - State government STI grants

Bio21 Institute Scale Model



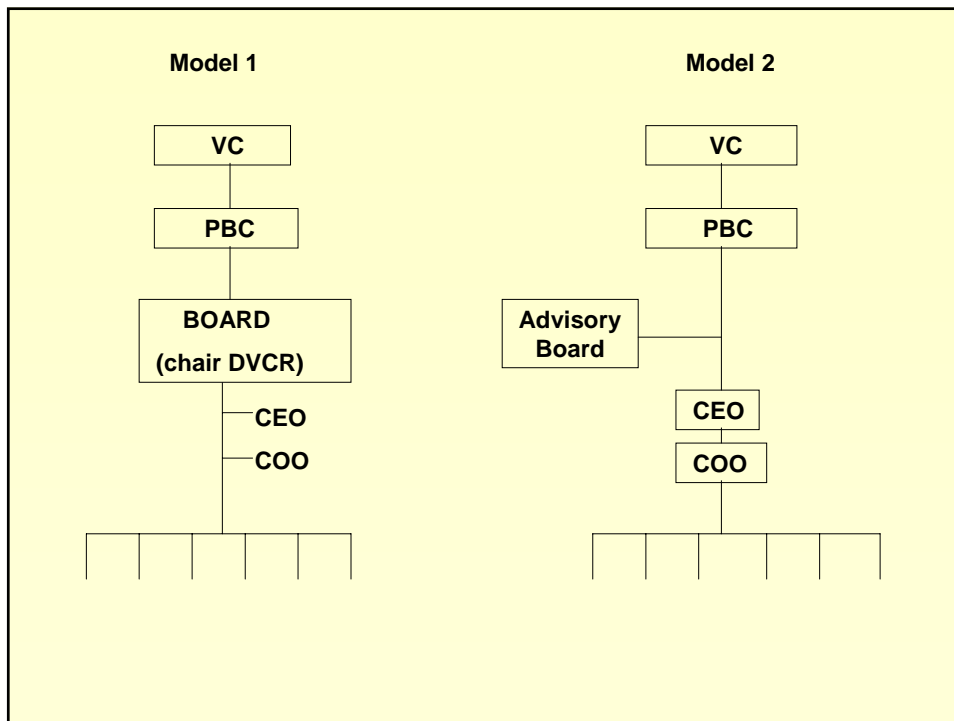
Source: P Goss Bio21 Inst

The Bio21 Institute experiment

- The location
- Why?
 - To force/foster interdisciplinary research
- The players:
 - State Government
 - University (\$ windfall)
 - Philanthropy
 - Environment

Themes

- MEDICAL BIOTECH – targets, markers for disease; platform drivers
- DEFENCE AGAINST PATHOGENS AND ALLERGIES
- CHEMICAL BIOLOGY
- HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENT
- NANOBIO TECHNOLOGY



**Multidisciplinary journal articles
in THES 2004 top universities and U21 universities
1998-2005**

Data source: Thomson ISI Current Contents Connect Sept 2005

