

BUSINESS INNOVATION SYMPOSIUM (E6)

New space individuals, projects, programs, or business units: innovation, entrepreneurship & investment at the microscopic level of analysis (1)

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FLUROSAT: FROM UNIVERSITY PILOT COURSE TO A START-UP

Abstract

The FluroSat team was brought together by “Inventing the Future” (ItF), an interdisciplinary entrepreneurship and innovation course for post-graduate students at the University of Sydney that was piloted in 2016. The ItF program brought science, engineering, business and design students together to develop innovative solutions to global problems. The ItF approach differs from that of an accelerator in that it uses an interdisciplinary, curriculum-based approach to teach skills ranging from ideation, design project management, prototyping and business planning. In addition, students must respond to a design brief- rather than coming to the program with an existing product.

The FluroSat team was tasked with developing an innovative application of the nanosatellites that would have high potential social and economic impact. Our solution combines the satellite imagery and sophisticated analysis pipelines to provide solutions to compelling problems of modern crop production, such as stress identification, efficient resource inputs and maintenance of yield. During the intensive three-month program, the team iteratively improved on our ideas with the help of industry and domain experts, bringing cutting-edge research to a commercially viable application. By the end of the program, we had developed and built a prototype product. Feedback and validation from industry partners encouraged us to establish a company to address the industry problems discovered throughout the course. FluroSat graduated from “Inventing the Future” to a place in Telstra’s Muru-D accelerator. This integration within the start-up community has been vital to the success of our young company. We are continuing to develop our company and our product in close contact with prospective customers.