INCREASING INNOVATION AT S&T THROUGH ADVANCEMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL THINKING

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To achieve its mission of a higher level of recognition and relevance, S&T desires to accelerate the pace of innovation in its interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary research collaborations and programs. One way to pursue this objective is through increased “entrepreneurial thinking” among S&T faculty, administrators and students.

Entrepreneurship is not a subject or a discipline, but a way of translating creative ideas into reality. This presentation will explore the value of integrating traditional and social entrepreneurial thinking into University culture in order to further high-value, problem-based innovation. It will also provide a strategic roadmap of objectives that lay the groundwork to facilitate and support greater innovation, support robust interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary collaboration, incentivize faculty to increase innovation with better commercialization outcomes, and implement the processes, resources and culture adaptation necessary to positively impact S&T and its regional, state, national and international communities.

About the candidate:
John has extensive experience leading cutting-edge companies in emerging industries as well as setting and implementing compelling start-up visions.
Before becoming an entrepreneur, John was the Vice Chair of the Intellectual Property and Technology department at Polsinelli PC, an AmLaw 100 law firm. There, he led numerous cross-disciplinary teams and advised Fortune 100 and Fortune 500 companies on their most complicated, IP-related matters. His first venture, PharmaCann, has become one of the largest privately-held, vertically-integrated cannabis companies. His next founded a Canadian-Colombia venture focused on pharmaceutical-grade, cGMP production of cannabinoids for world-wide distribution. To-date, he has raised ~$85M in capital for domestic and international ventures.
Prior to practicing law, John was a STEM professional with Amoco Oil Corporation (now BP). John is married to Christina Leja. They have a daughter, Madeline, who is a sophomore at the University of Michigan.