



For the STEM student, moving their innovations to the TTU Innovation Hub is the next step in their entrepreneurial journey. However, TTUHSC students are not typically as experienced with the entrepreneurial process, said Sizer, who also serves as faculty sponsor for the School of Medicine's Sling Health student organization chapter. They are not familiar with inventions, patents and business plans, he said.

"The whole experience is very intense," Sizer continued. "The Sling Health chapter reduces the TTUHSC student's angst over this and introduces them to the process."

Phy is collaborating with Sizer to establish the Innovation Bridge Grant program. She previously worked with the TTU Innovation Hub to successfully develop an evidence-based diet plan for women living with polycystic ovary syndrome. She said getting new medical devices, pharmaceuticals, software and other inventions to the public is complicated, expensive and time-consuming.

"We do research hoping that our discoveries will help someday, but if our discoveries never reach the person who needs them, I am not sure why we do research," Phy said. "In the business world, there is a common term called the valley of death where a new business struggles between having a great idea and making the idea a reality. The Innovation Bridge Grant Program will bridge that gap, giving researchers the support, funding and mentoring they need to take ideas and cutting-edge research findings to the next level as quickly as possible."

During the ideation step, students make a brief presentation about their idea and take part in a pitch contest.