



2025

sbt⁺dc

TECHNOLOGY COMMERCIALIZATION INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Each summer, the North Carolina Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC) offers consulting internship opportunities to qualified graduate students.

As part of the SBTDC's Summer Internship Program, interns will have the opportunity to work with two technology-based clients during the 10-week internship.

Participating schools and organizations have included UNC Chapel Hill, Duke, NC State, East Carolina University, Wake Forest University, UNC Greensboro, UNC Charlotte, Appalachian State University, NC Innovation, and Western Carolina University.

SELECTION PROCESS & FUNDING

SBTDC staff interview, select, and place our student consultants to work on projects developed by clients and the SBTDC. An SBTDC mentor will work with the clients and the interns throughout the summer to monitor the project and make sure it stays on target.

The SBTDC and the university that the students are enrolled in participate equally in the funding of the stipend paid to interns. Clients are not required to provide funding, but we do ask that they consider doing so at the end of the project if they found the work product to be valuable.

Past interns have gone on to land full-time positions at a companies of all sizes in a multitude of industries around the world, while a handful also take on the challenge of starting their own business.



2025 INTERNS

BHAVIK SHAH
 DANIEL AHMEDOFF
 FRANCIS SIAPNO
 KARTIK SASTRY
 KEKE GENIO
 KUDZAI MTASA
 VIDUSHI BAHOLA
 NATALIE MALONEY
 RAJAVARDHAN REDDY SURA
 RAMANPREET KAUR
 RUCHIN RAJ
 RUSSEL "HOBSON" SHERRILL
 SID DHARMMIREDDY
 STEVE VALLADARES GALEAS
 YUG SHARMA
 LOGAN ZWERNEMAN
 DAVID LIEE

TECH START-UPS

FINDICIA
 BEEMON
 ARTx
 RADIANT Dx
 SELSYM BIO
 BMI ORGANBANK
 PREDICATE
 CLARADELE
 NUREAM
 CROWN BIOME
 THE CULLOWHEE MIDAS
 PROJECT
 NANEXPURE
 3C INSTITUTE
 ARCLET
 OUR DAY
 SELAH INNOVATIONS
 VINDHYA DATA SCIENCE
 INNOVATION FORCE
 LINEAR DETECTION

METHOD MARKETING
 SCENERGY
 MARGIK
 SOCIAL CASCADE
 NCI
 DURAVAX
 OIL SAVE FILTRATION
 HEALTHCARE PARTNERSHIP
 INTERNATIONAL
 JERICHO SCIENCES
 LIGHT ACTIVATED
 THERAPEUTICS
 SONOTHERAPEUTICS



BHAVIK SHAH

I was drawn to the SBTDC internship because it offered something unique—an opportunity to sit side-by-side with early-stage founders, helping them navigate the murky, high-stakes decisions that define a company's trajectory. Coming from a background in investment banking and consulting, I've worked with businesses in more mature stages, but I've always been curious about the earlier end of that spectrum—where ideas are still being shaped and strategy matters most. I saw this internship as a way to apply my experience in a new, meaningful context: helping founders build their foundations.

I worked with two startups—one in Agritech and one in Fintech—each tackling very different challenges. One was focused on launching a new product in a highly fragmented, traditional industry. The other was developing a digital platform and needed clarity around customer acquisition and monetization. My role was to bring structure to the uncertainty—whether that meant developing a go-to-market approach, exploring partnership models, or helping shape early investor materials. Across both projects, the common thread was figuring out how to match the founder's vision with a strategy that was practical, scalable, and aligned with market needs.

One of the biggest takeaways for me was that strategic thinking is most powerful when grounded in empathy. Founders aren't just looking for slides and models—they're looking for someone who can understand their ambition, help them see around corners, and make decisions with limited data. I also saw how finance and strategy are deeply intertwined at this stage: pricing, partnerships, product choices—they all impact long-term value.

This internship is what you make of it. You won't be handed neatly packaged problems—you'll be expected to define them, shape them, and work closely with founders to create a path forward. It's a rare chance to work on things that truly matter to a company's future. You'll gain exposure to different industries, wear multiple hats, and most importantly, grow your ability to think critically and lead with intention. If you're someone who's curious, adaptable, and eager to work on real-world problems that don't come with answer keys, this is the kind of experience that will challenge and reward you in equal measure.

"It's a rare chance to work on things that truly matter to a company's future."

DANIEL AHMEDOFF

What initially drew me to the SBTDC's Technology Commercialization Summer Consulting internship was the opportunity to bridge my background in data analytics and computer information systems with real-world innovation. As someone who aspires to a career in data-driven decision-making, particularly in roles that blend technical analysis with strategic insight, I was excited by the chance to support early-stage companies navigating commercialization. The prospect of working directly with startup founders, exploring business viability, and translating technical potential into tangible market strategies felt like a unique way to expand beyond the classroom and grow professionally.

My consulting work involved two high-potential startups: one developing intelligent sensor systems for construction and defense applications, and another building a rural business discovery platform. My projects included early-stage valuation modeling using methods, building out an investor-ready data room, refining pitch decks for commercialization, mapping out unit economics, and identifying growth levers such as IP strength, advisory relationships, and partnership strategies. I also supported their customer discovery and outreach planning to better align their value propositions with the needs of economic developers and public sector users.

This experience pushed me outside of my technical comfort zone and into the world of business development and startup strategy. Coming from a technical background in CIS and data analytics, I initially found the startup landscape unfamiliar. But over time, and with guidance from mentors and working with clients, I found my footing and began to understand how analytics can support commercialization, whether that's through calculating valuations, visualizing market potential, or making data-informed recommendations. I also gained an appreciation for the messy, iterative nature of early-stage innovation and the importance of adaptability when working with emerging technologies and shifting business models.

For future students, I'd say this internship is an incredible opportunity if you're curious about how innovation moves from concept to market. You don't need to be an expert in business to make an impact, just bring your skills, ask good questions, and stay open to learning. You'll come out of it with a deeper understanding of what it means to consult, collaborate, and contribute to something that could change an industry.



"This experience pushed me outside of my technical comfort zone and into the world of business development and startup strategy."



DAVID LEE

I applied to the SBTDC internship because I wanted to support university-based startups and help innovative therapeutics advance toward the clinic. As a scientist interested in entrepreneurship, I also hoped to better understand the commercialization process. The program offered a unique chance to learn how startups form and grow directly from early-stage projects. It aligned perfectly with my interest in translational research and biotech entrepreneurship.

My project focused on conducting primary market research through customer discovery interviews using the I-Corps framework. I also helped the startup identify and prepare for non-dilutive funding opportunities like SBIR/STTR grants. Together, these efforts supported commercialization planning and early business development. The goal was to validate product-market fit and build a sustainable funding strategy.

"As a PhD student without much of a business background, it helped fill major knowledge gaps."

I learned how to structure and conduct customer discovery, which gave me insight into aligning science with real-world needs. The experience also helped me understand the path from academic research to startup formation. As a PhD student without much of a business background, it helped fill major knowledge gaps.

This is a great opportunity for anyone curious about translating science into real-world impact. It's especially valuable for STEM students who want to learn more about startups, business, and funding. You'll gain practical skills in commercialization that most academic programs don't teach. I highly recommend it to scientists interested in entrepreneurship.



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

FRANCIS SIAPNO

This internship confirmed something I've long suspected: I want to be where science meets business strategy.

What drew me to the SBTDC internship was the chance to work directly with early-stage life sciences companies and actually build something useful, helping founders make strategic choices that move their science forward. I've always been interested in where deep science meets commercialization, and this felt like the right place to explore that intersection.

Over the summer, I worked with two life sciences startups tackling distinct but equally ambitious commercialization challenges. For my first client, I led customer discovery and market validation efforts for a genetics platform that enables better CRISPR drug discovery. I conducted multiple interviews across biotech, pharma, and academia, synthesized key pain points, and developed business model vignettes and plans with go-to-market and financial strategies. My work helped the client prioritize the CRISPR validation market, a ~\$750M opportunity, by aligning the platform's strengths with unmet industry needs.

For my second client, I built out commercial viability models for a revolutionary blood clotting technology. I evaluated burn rate scenarios, grant funding needs, and projected revenues under different GTM paths. My models shaped strategic decisions around timing IND studies, identifying optimal initial and secondary markets, and building financial structure to attract near-term both nondilutive and dilutive funding and long-term DoD/Hospital GPO contracts.

This experience strengthened my ability to operate in ambiguity, structure complex problems, and communicate strategic recommendations with clarity. It also affirmed my long-term interest in life-sciences and healthcare consulting, particularly at the intersection of science, commercialization, and early-stage innovation. I found it deeply rewarding to contribute to companies working on real breakthroughs and help guide their decisions at pivotal moments.

For future students interested in this opportunity: the SBTDC internship offers hands-on exposure to life sciences commercialization in a way that's both practical and meaningful. You'll gain experience working directly with founders, develop tangible deliverables, and grow your strategic thinking in a supportive, fast-paced environment. It's an excellent fit for anyone looking to bridge science and business in a real-world consulting setting.



"This internship confirmed something I've long suspected: I want to be where science meets business strategy."



UNC
KENAN-FLAGLER
BUSINESS SCHOOL



KARTIK SASTRY

I was drawn to the SBTDC's Technology Commercialization Summer Consulting internship because it offered a rare opportunity to work at the intersection of innovation, entrepreneurship, and real-world impact. The chance to support early-stage technologies and help founders navigate the commercialization process really appealed to me. I was particularly excited about gaining hands-on experience in business strategy.

Additionally, the structure of the program - with exposure to a variety of clients, mentorship from experienced advisors, and the focus on practical deliverables - aligned well with my goals of strengthening my consulting skill set.

Overall, the SBTDC's internship program offered a rare convergence of my academic background, career aspirations, and passion for innovation. I saw it as a perfect platform to deepen my consulting experience while making a tangible difference in the growth trajectory of promising technologies.

The consulting projects I worked on focused on two distinct but complementary aspects of technology commercialization.

For one client, the engagement centered on developing a comprehensive commercialization strategy. This involved in-depth market research, competitive landscape analysis, and the exploration of international market entry opportunities. The objective was to identify the most promising markets and outline strategic pathways for global commercialization.

For the second client, the focus was on a thorough opportunity assessment. I analyzed unmet market needs, conducted a competitive landscape review, and developed a financial model to assess the commercial viability of the technology. Additionally, I carried out inventor identification and engagement to ensure strategic alignment and support the continued development of the innovation.

In both projects, I translated complex technical and market data into clear, actionable insights — providing each client with strategic guidance tailored to their stage of development and commercialization goals.

This internship helped me grow both personally and professionally. I learned to navigate ambiguity with focus, confirmed my passion for technology strategy roles, and even shaped my long-term goal of launching a startup.

On the professional side, I gained hands-on exposure to both medical device and AI startups, saw how different early-stage startups operate, and applied classroom concepts like financial modeling and strategy in real-world contexts - all within a fast-paced consulting environment.

"I translated complex technical and market data into clear, actionable insights — providing each client with strategic guidance."

KEKE GENIO

I applied to the SBTDC's Technology Commercialization Summer Consulting internship because it aligned with my pre-MBA background as an entrepreneur, my MBA concentrations in Marketing and Strategy at Duke, and my long-term goal of working in a tech commercialization role. When I saw the posting on my school's portal, I immediately knew I had to apply. I was excited by the challenge of applying business frameworks to real-world problems, especially in an unfamiliar space like health-tech, which made this a valuable opportunity to grow both personally and professionally.

Throughout the internship, I had the opportunity to work on two fascinating projects. The first was with a sleep-focused neurotechnology company, where I analyzed competitive positioning and helped develop a go-to-market strategy for their anticipated 2026 product launch. The second project was with a melanoma cancer-focused company, strengthening their digital presence to help build trust and visibility with investors and potential pharmaceutical partners.

These projects gave me the chance to apply a wide range of tools and frameworks from my MBA coursework, such as Pricing Waterfall Analysis, Value Curve Mapping, and Customer Sentiment Radar Charts, and see how they translate into real-world consulting work.

The SBTDC internship gave me my first hands-on experience in health-tech, such as pushing me to quickly learn about FDA regulations and how they impact commercialization. I also learned the importance of clear client communication, being upfront about deliverables while staying flexible to evolving needs. Meeting clients in person added another layer of connection that made the work more meaningful and enjoyable.

I also feel lucky that SBTDC provided strong support, from mentors to in-house experts in healthcare, which I fully optimized throughout the process. Their guidance was incredibly helpful as I navigated unfamiliar territory, making the overall experience more insightful and rewarding.

For future students considering this opportunity: it's a unique experience that gives you exposure to cutting-edge technologies and real client challenges. If you enjoy ambiguity, want to work closely with founders who are still shaping their vision, and are looking for an environment that's flexible but impactful, this internship is a fantastic fit.



"I had the opportunity to work on two fascinating projects. The first was with a sleep-focused neurotechnology company, the second project was with a melanoma cancer-focused company."

NATALIE MALONEY

When I came across the Technology Commercialization Summer Consulting internship on Career Connections, I immediately felt it was exactly what I was looking for.

I wanted a summer role that would let me dive into that same entrepreneurial energy—rolling up my sleeves with passionate founders to turn their concepts into real commercial strategies. SBTDC's program stood out because it pairs MBA talent directly with companies at critical inflection points, tackling genuine go-to-market challenges and building mentor relationships that last. It's the perfect chance to sharpen my strategic skills in a hands-on setting while helping founders de-risk their biggest bets.

Over the summer, I partnered with two early-stage ventures to build the foundational systems and strategies they need to grow. In the first engagement, I revamped the vendor and user data infrastructure by standardizing and mapping datasets for seamless CRM integration. From there, I designed an omnichannel email and SMS engagement schedule, prototyped user journeys in Figma to remove friction and validate assumptions and collaborated closely with the development team and founder to roll out a brand-new onboarding flow.

In the second project, I built end-to-end lifecycle automations—from initial signup all the way through renewal—within their marketing platform. I assembled a library of tested messaging templates, drafted a pilot blueprint for rapid state-by-state expansion, and put in place playbooks that will accelerate partner onboarding, boost customer engagement, and strengthen their brand's credibility in the market.

Over the past few months, I've sharpened my confidence in steering projects through uncertainty and making the big calls that keep things moving forward. Working side-by-side with founders and cross-functional teams taught me how to cut through incomplete information, lean into ambiguity, and make "executive" decisions when timelines and stakes are high. I built clear communication rhythms, rallied diverse stakeholders around shifting priorities, and saw firsthand how decisive action and transparent updates go hand-in-hand.

I learned to prototype solutions on the fly, gather feedback in real time, and iterate until it clicks. There's nothing like watching a small idea turn into a living, breathing product—especially when you can measure its impact.

If you're looking to push beyond the predictable paths of a traditional corporate internship, this is the place for you. At SBTDC, you won't find an assembly line of tasks—you'll get to shape your own experience, tackle real commercialization challenges, and stretch your curiosity every single day. It isn't about flashy swag or rigid processes; it's about the freedom to take risks, learn from failure, and discover what you're truly capable of. If you want an internship that fuels your ambition and leaves you with a fresh perspective on what's possible, don't hesitate—take the leap and apply.



"In fast-paced, ever-changing environments, I learned to prototype solutions on the fly, gather feedback in real time, and iterate until it clicks."



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RAJ SURA

I applied for the SBTDC internship because I wanted to work directly with innovative startups and learn what it really takes to move an idea forward in the real world. The opportunity to consult with two early-stage companies, while being mentored by experienced professionals, was a rare chance to apply my MBA learning in a meaningful way.

During the internship, I worked on two very different projects, one with a Health tech startup and another with a biotech data science company. For the health tech client, I focused on product positioning, market research, and creating a custom ROI model to justify the product's value to hospital administrators. I also developed a go-to-market strategy which could help the startup scale efficiently.

For the biotech data science company, I supported the commercialization planning for a cloud-native clinical trial decision support platform. My work included market sizing, competitive benchmarking, and early-stage pricing analysis. A key part of this engagement was helping the client pivot their product strategy based on insights from over 100 customer interviews conducted through the NSF I-Corps program. I also developed a strategic roadmap to support their Phase II SBIR application and long-term scaling plan.

This internship was a deep and challenging learning experience. Professionally, one of the biggest lessons was learning how to move forward even when the problem is unclear. Both of my projects began with open-ended questions and very little structure. I had to break down the ambiguity, set priorities, and keep progressing even when all the answers weren't in front of me.

Another major learning was the power of customer discovery. In both projects, talking to end users completely shifted how I viewed the product. It showed me how important it is to validate assumptions early and to let user feedback guide strategy.

Personally, I learned how to stay calm in uncertain situations. There were many moments when I felt unsure or out of my depth, but I pushed through and built resilience along the way. More than anything, this experience reaffirmed my interest in entrepreneurship.

If you're someone who learns by doing, this internship is for you. You won't be handed a clear playbook, but that's the beauty of it. You'll get to shape strategy, talk directly to customers, and solve real problems that matter to your clients. Be proactive, ask tough questions, and lean into discomfort because that's where the growth happens.



"You won't be handed a clear playbook, but that's the beauty of it. You'll get to shape strategy, talk directly to customers, and solve real problems that matter to your clients."



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RAMANPREET KAUR

Having previously worked in the corporate sector across finance and audit, I was eager to gain firsthand exposure to the dynamic world of early-stage startups. The opportunity to work directly with founders and immerse myself in the entrepreneurial ecosystem—understanding how startups are built, how they secure funding, and how they scale—was a key motivator for applying to the SBTDC program.

My consulting project focused on conducting in-depth market research, analyzing emerging industry trends, and evaluating the competitive landscape. I actively participated in customer discovery interviews and supported the creation of go-to-market strategies, including DRIP marketing campaigns. Additionally, I developed detailed user and buyer personas and contributed to outreach efforts aimed at validating the product-market fit.

This experience provided me with a strong foundation in the innovation lifecycle—from ideation and company formation to market targeting, investor engagement, and strategic storytelling. I honed key skills such as crafting compelling elevator pitches, delivering persuasive presentations, and aligning business models with real-world challenges. On a personal level, it significantly boosted my confidence, strategic thinking, and communication skills. Knowing that my contributions were valued by the client and played a role in driving meaningful outcomes made the experience especially rewarding.

I strongly encourage future students to take full advantage of practicum courses during their MBA journey, as they offer an ideal blend of classroom learning and real-world experience. The SBTDC internship, pushes you to be resilient, adaptable, and a proactive learner. It's a rare opportunity to sharpen your problem-solving skills, expand your professional network, and gain immersive, hands-on exposure to the startup ecosystem—all while making a tangible impact on a real client project.

"Knowing that my contributions were valued by the client and played a role in driving meaningful outcomes made the experience especially rewarding."

NC STATE

Jenkins MBA

RUCHIN RAJ

What initially drew me to the SBTDC internship was a candid conversation with Ridam, a Fuqua alum from the previous cohort, who spoke highly of the autonomy, exposure, and mentorship this program offers. Her experiences prompted me to attend the excellent info session led by John and dive deep into the SBTDC website.

I was inspired by the tangible impact past interns had made in helping NC-based small businesses bring their innovations to market. The opportunity to work directly with entrepreneurs and contribute meaningfully to early-stage commercialization strategies aligned closely with my goals as a rising second-year MBA student. I'm also grateful to the Fuqua CMC team, who provided great support in navigating the application and interview process.

I worked with two early-stage tech startups: one in energy infrastructure, the other in tax automation. My role involved market research, benchmarking, go-to-market planning, and partner strategy. Across both projects, I connected technical innovation with commercial feasibility, delivering actionable roadmaps to guide their next phase of growth.

This experience taught me to lead through ambiguity, adapt quickly, and build structure in fast-moving, unstructured environments. I learned to balance deep analysis with practical recommendations and gained exposure to commercialization frameworks across diverse sectors.

This internship is perfect if you're curious about startups, love problem-solving, and want true ownership of your work. You'll gain real exposure, build versatile skills, and learn from excellent mentors. Come ready to dive in and you'll walk away with a stronger toolkit and a deeper appreciation for entrepreneurship and innovation.



"This internship is perfect if you're curious about startups, love problem-solving, and want true ownership of your work."



VIDUSHI BHADOLA

The SBTDC's Technology Commercialization Summer Consulting internship represented the perfect opportunity to create real impact with North Carolina's small businesses. Having founded a retail clothing B2C e-commerce business in India, I experienced firsthand the challenges of scaling during COVID-19 and reaching the right customer segments. These experiences taught me that successful businesses need more than innovation, they require strategic guidance and market understanding.

During my internship, I had the privilege of working with two clients at vastly different stages of their business lifecycles, which provided me with comprehensive exposure to the entrepreneurial journey.

Early-Stage Cleantech Client: I crafted an investor-ready pitch deck for their next funding round, conducted extensive investor research to identify relevant VCs and angel investors in the cleantech space, and researched potential B2B partners to accelerate their go-to-market strategy.

Later-Stage EdTech Client: I designed product testing protocols to gather user feedback, conducted competitive analysis to identify differentiation opportunities, and developed marketing materials and sales demo pitches that resonated with their target audience.

On a personal note, this internship introduced me to industries I had never explored, significantly broadening my career perspective. The consulting environment constantly required navigating ambiguity whether understanding new markets or developing strategies with limited information. Additionally, I also learned to balance user empathy with strategic thinking. When developing marketing materials for the edtech client, I put myself in the shoes of educators and students, ensuring every pitch addressed real user needs while supporting business objectives.

On the professional front, I directly applied MBA coursework concepts, particularly from Business Plan Analysis course at the B-school, where I learned frameworks for analyzing business models and market opportunities. This experience clarified my career trajectory toward product management, as working across different functions reinforced my passion for the cross-functional nature of PM roles. Working directly with the startup founders also reignited my long-term entrepreneurial aspirations.

For future students considering this opportunity, I encourage you to embrace the learning curve that comes with diving deep into new industries and business models. If you're assigned to work in an unfamiliar sector, don't hesitate to ask questions, your fresh perspective often leads to valuable insights.

Leverage all available resources during your initial days, from SBTDC's extensive knowledge base to your fellow interns and mentors. The learning environment is incredibly supportive, and the more curious and engaged you are, the more you'll gain from the experience.

"The learning environment is incredibly supportive, and the more curious and engaged you are, the more you'll gain from the experience."



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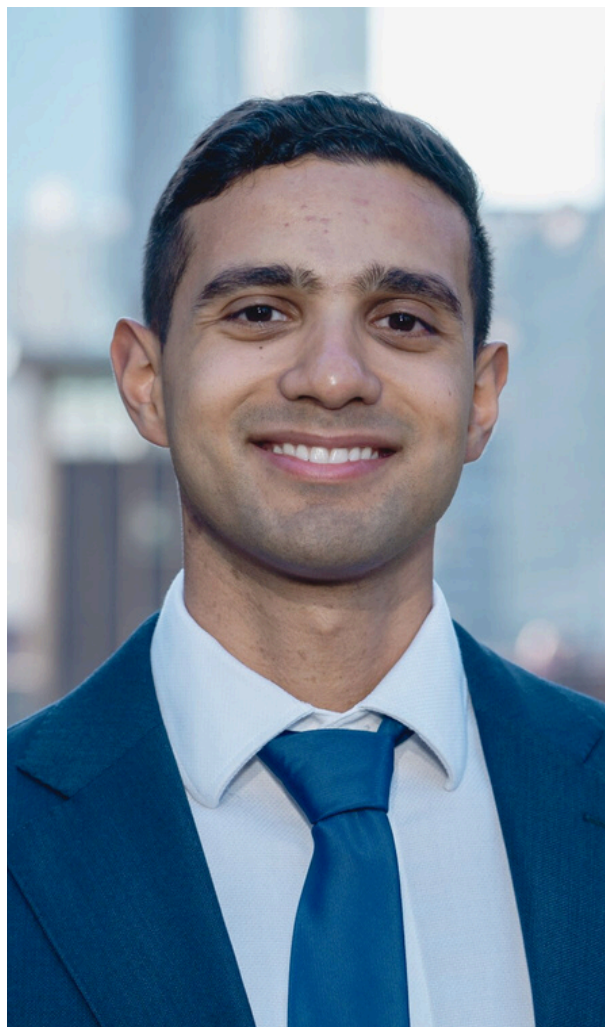
STEVE VALLADARES GALEAS

I've always been drawn to entrepreneurial ventures. In college, I started a direct-to-consumer pet apparel business, and during my time in the military, I ran a house hacking side hustle that generated positive cash flow. While I had experience building ventures on my own, I had never supported a real-world startup in a professional capacity. This program offered the chance to see what that's like and apply my MBA skillset to a new environment.

·My work spanned several key areas, including conducting customer discovery interviews, building a market sizing model, developing a pitch deck, crafting a go-to-market strategy, and compiling secondary research to extract actionable insights.

·This experience reminded me of the boldness required to build something from the ground up. Both ventures I support are navigating complex industries, yet the founders remain deeply committed to making a meaningful impact. I also discovered a budding interest in the biotech space, an area I had not previously considered but now find compelling.

·This is an excellent opportunity to test your ability to own a workstream end-to-end. You'll be working directly with founders of innovation-driven startups, which gives you real autonomy to explore different approaches and apply your business school learning in meaningful ways. You are truly running the show, and the founders will give you the opportunity to demonstrate the unique value you bring to the table.



"I also discovered a budding interest in the biotech space, an area I had not previously considered but now find compelling."



YUG SHARMA

I was drawn to the SBTDC's Technology Commercialization internship because it offered the chance to work directly with innovative startups while applying both my MBA and Financial Mathematics background in a real-world setting. The opportunity to help early-stage companies develop commercialization strategies, financial models, and investor materials felt like the perfect blend of my interests in venture capital, entrepreneurship, and consulting.

I worked on two projects over the summer. For one, I developed detailed financial projections under multiple business model scenarios, analyzed supply chain and regulatory considerations for international pharmaceutical distribution, and proposed scalable operational strategies. For the other, I built a valuation model for a preclinical biotech startup, prepared investor pitch materials, and structured SAFE note terms to support fundraising. Across both, I conducted market research, refined go-to-market strategies, and helped align business plans with investor expectations.

This internship was eye-opening for me in terms of understanding how commercialization really works beyond textbooks. Personally, I gained more confidence in navigating ambiguity—many of the startups were still defining their business models, and it was up to us as consultants to help bring structure and clarity. Professionally, it reinforced my passion for early-stage investing and advisory work. I walked away with sharper financial modeling skills, a better understanding of startup lifecycles, and deeper empathy for founders trying to build something from scratch.

"You'll get to wear multiple hats, work on meaningful projects, and walk away with real experience that sets you apart."



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KUDZAI MTASA

The SBTDC Technology Commercialization internship stood out because it offered hands-on exposure to the intersection of science, commercialization, and consulting areas I've been increasingly drawn to during my MBA. I was excited by the chance to work directly with university-affiliated ventures and emerging technologies, particularly in public health and biotech. The structured yet flexible nature of the program, the access to mentors, and the ability to contribute meaningfully to commercialization plans were all major motivators to apply.

I worked on two innovation-driven commercialization projects. The first involved a dental biotechnology diagnostic, where I helped refine the value proposition, conducted customer discovery with dentists and DSO leaders, and built out a complete commercialization roadmap. I also developed a pitch deck and 5-year financial projections. The second focused on a public health technology for mosquito surveillance. I conducted market research across North Carolina counties, designed and analyzed stakeholder questionnaires, and created a strategic roadmap for scaling the platform in underserved regions. The work culminated in a commercialization strategy targeting public agencies and private sector pest control.

This internship deepened my understanding of how commercialization truly works at the early stages—beyond theory. I learned how to bridge the gap between science and market, tailoring messages to different stakeholders like clinicians, public health officials, and academic collaborators. I developed more confidence in areas like customer discovery, financial modeling, and storytelling through pitch decks.

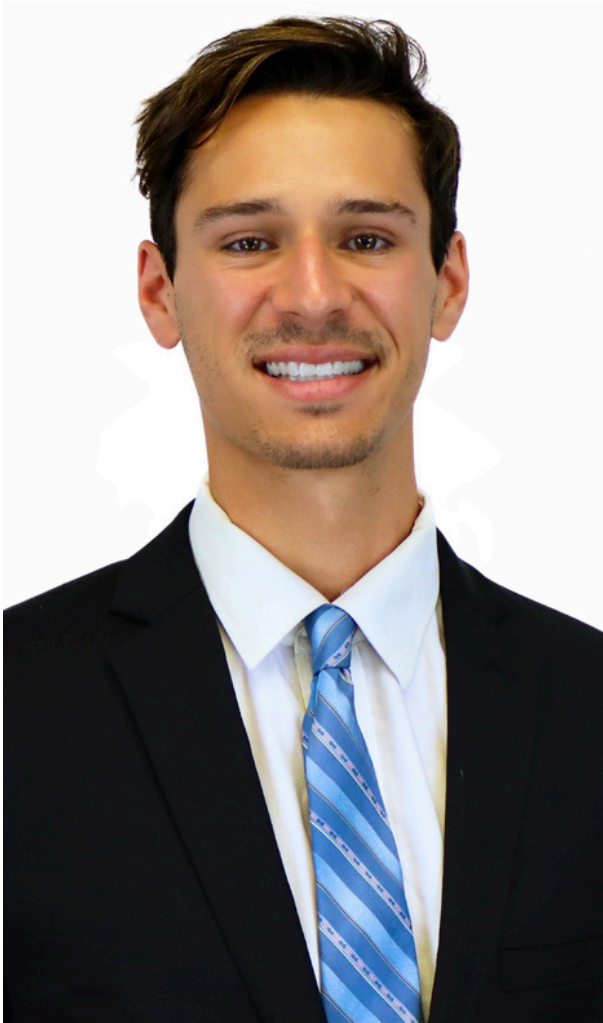
Personally, I learned that I enjoy working in ambiguity—structuring research, building insights from scratch, and driving clarity in unstructured environments. I also realized that I'm drawn to roles that combine strategy, impact, and innovation. This experience affirmed my interest in consulting or venture strategy roles where I can work closely with founders and innovators to bring ideas to market.

If you're curious about startups, tech commercialization, or consulting, this internship offers a rare chance to get your hands dirty with real ventures doing impactful work. You won't just be shadowing—you'll be delivering.

My advice: come with a self-starter mindset, be comfortable working with ambiguity, and take full advantage of the mentorship and access to innovators. Your deliverables could directly shape a startup's path to market, so bring your best and enjoy the process.



*“You won’t just
be shadowing—
you’ll be
delivering.”*



HOBSON SHERRILL

Before this summer, the world of consulting and equity funding was entirely new to me. I applied to the SBTDC Technology Commercialization Summer Consulting Internship because I saw it as a unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience working with progressive, forward-thinking companies. The program offered the chance to work at the intersection of innovation and strategy—exactly the kind of real-world exposure I was seeking during my MBA journey.

During the internship, I focused on several core components of the consulting process. These included conducting market research, engaging in customer discovery, supporting the drafting of grant applications, and brainstorming innovative commercialization pathways.

Personally, I learned the value of curiosity and proactive communication. I discovered that initiative opens doors—people are generally willing to offer their time and insights when they see your dedication and professionalism. Professionally, I came to appreciate how many moving parts contribute to building a successful business. By understanding a company from the ground up, I developed a more holistic view of what it takes to scale innovation and bring a product to market.

To future students considering this internship, it's an exceptional opportunity to gain practical business experience while advancing your MBA. You don't need to be an expert in equity funding or technology to succeed—you just need a strong work ethic, intellectual curiosity, and respect for the entrepreneur's craft. If you bring those qualities to the table, this program will be incredibly rewarding.

"I discovered that initiative opens doors—people are generally willing to offer their time and insights when they see your dedication and professionalism."

LOGAN ZWERNEMAN

I was interested in getting to help a startup in the “zero to one” phase of their development. It excited me to be able to help make decisions that really guide the direction of the company, rather than just being a cog in a wheel. Also, I wanted to be a part of helping North Carolina grow as a hotbed of tech/biotech.

Most of my time was spent understanding the competitive landscape in our market, performing customer discovery, understanding regulatory approval pathways, and performing secondary market research on how partnerships in my market have been formed.

This internship confirmed my desire to work with early-stage startups, either in the capacity of working with a startup or in venture capital, or possibly life science consulting (to help with go-to-market strategies). I found that I enjoy working in small, adaptable teams and that I’m good at taking a lot of data and finding the important points from it and communicating them clearly, skills that will be valuable in my career ahead.

You get out what you put in. The more quality time and energy you put into this, the better you’ll be at consulting and the more helpful this will be for your future career! Also, be ready to pivot frequently and stay on your toes!



“It excited me to be able to help make decisions that really guide the direction of the company, rather than just being a cog in a wheel.”



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Your business. Better.