

resources, areas in which they are keen to engage. “Working with academics is pretty much my job description, and we very much welcome them.... It is not a one-way process as they also recognize that we have a great deal of intellectual knowledge within GSK,” says Malcolm Skingle, director, academic liaison at GlaxoSmithKline.

### Conclusions

Fostering industry partnerships to drive academic entrepreneurship in the current, extremely competitive funding environment requires a scientifically driven approach. Research universities are increasingly looking to alternative bodies for funding sources and, as a result, the pharmaceutical industry has become inundated with investment opportunities. To differentiate their venture pitch, universities must build a strong business case to communicate where a discovery fits in the scientific portfolio of a potential industry partner. CVC alone will not address the academic valley of death, but industry’s

combination of funding and commercial expertise offers an orthogonal value add to academic excellence.

At a time when the industry is reducing its own footprint (and personnel) at an alarming rate, it falls to the university to provide a compelling case for channeling resources into an academic proposition.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank the academic, industry and venture capital scientists who

generously gave their time to participate in iterative interviews during this research. Thanks also to N. Reynolds for administrative support.

### COMPETING FINANCIAL INTERESTS

The authors declare no competing financial interests.

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## First Rounders Podcast:

### Mary Tanner

Mary Tanner is senior managing director at Burrill Securities. She was formerly senior managing director at Lehman Brothers and managing director at Peter J. Solomon; her work on countless deals includes biotech’s second-ever initial public offering and the Roche-Genentech merger. In her conversation with *Nature Biotechnology*, Tanner details the Amgen-Immunex buyout, defines ‘wildcatting’ and suggests the years in which children most need a parent around the house. <http://www.nature.com/nbt/podcast/index.html>.

