



U.S.-Georgia University Capacity Building Program

Roundtable: “Deepening Industry-University Collaborations for Innovation – The View from Investors”

The University Capacity Building Program (UCBP), funded by the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi and administered by American Councils for International Education, is an initiative to foster entrepreneurial culture at Georgia’s higher education institutions, link practical research output to industry, and increase innovation and economic growth.

On February 7, 2022 the roundtable will gather perspectives on some of the challenges and barriers to deepening industry-university collaborations. In collaboration with the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Committee of the American Chamber of Commerce in Georgia (AmCham), American Councils invites business leaders, higher education administrators, and policymakers to identify problems and solutions impeding university-industry collaboration. Experts and participants will share opportunities and challenges for university-business-government collaborations. The roundtable will serve to form a networking and share expertise and interest around industry-university relations in Georgia.

Presented by UCBP “Entrepreneurs in Residence” (EIRS):

Andrew Thornhill, Founder of Paystars, IT Consult, Solani Creative and more.
Fintech entrepreneur, lecturer and visionary

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Program Agenda (90 minutes total):

- 1) Introduction and Presentation of Survey Findings and Webinars with HEI representatives. (10 minutes)
- 2) Presentations from four EIRs: (10 min. each, 40 min. total)
 - a. How does industry perceive university innovation in tech transfer, commercialization and entrepreneurship?
 - b. How do they view current industry interaction with HEIs in Georgia?
 - c. What are some real barriers and constraints of Georgian HEIs to advance collaborations with industry?
 - d. What would they like to see from Georgian HEIs?
 - e. What opportunities do they see for Georgian HEIs to contribute to innovation in Georgia?
- 3) Brainstorming Session with HEI and business representatives (30 minutes):
 - a. How can industry-university relations be improved?
 - b. What are some immediate action items and priorities (with a view to resources, relevance, legal constraints, etc.)?
 - c. What are some preliminary recommendations?
- 4) Wrap up: How can UCBP serve as a network to facilitate and follow up? (10 minutes)