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**Discovery to Product welcomes a new director**

**MADISON** - Andy Richards has been selected for the director of UW-Madison's

[Discovery to Product](#) (D2P) office.

D2P, located within the [Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education](#), supports and mentors faculty, staff and student innovators and entrepreneurs on campus who are interested in moving their technology and innovations to the marketplace. D2P, located at 1403 University Ave., fosters collaborations between UW-Madison, the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) and other partners off and on campus, and has been integral in launching successful start-ups ranging from cell phone apps to 3D printing companies.

"There is no shortage of innovative ideas at UW-Madison, but the playbook for commercialization success of those ideas isn't always straightforward," explains Richards. "D2P, with the expertise of its mentors and its connections across campus and in the community, is in a great position to help innovators at UW-Madison navigate a course, take calculated risks and ultimately fulfill their dreams."

Richards began his new position at D2P on April 1 and had previously served for three years as chief of staff for the vice chancellor for research and graduate education, and more recently, in a dual role as interim director of D2P.

Before coming to UW-Madison, Richards was a senior special assistant to the president for strategic initiatives and chief of staff for the president at University of Wisconsin System. He has a master's degree in business administration from UW-Milwaukee and a master's degree in public policy and administration from UW-Madison's La Follette Institute of Public Affairs.

"At WARF, we have been proud to support D2P in its efforts to help UW-Madison strengthen its entrepreneurial resources and ecosystem, and to assist campus innovators in their pursuit of startup company opportunities as they move their inventions toward commercial success," says Erik Iverson, managing director at WARF. "We are looking forward to continuing to collaborate with and support Andy and his staff as they carry out D2P's critically important role in advancing UW-Madison's research, industry relationships and entrepreneurship. D2P provides an important service both on campus and in the community."

D2P support for campus innovators and entrepreneurs includes supporting individuals and teams regardless of where they are on their journey from Discovery to Product, from exploring a new idea to starting a new company and beyond. D2P combines the strength of experienced industry professionals with startup tools &

techniques to help teams develop their product/market fit and business model, two critical non-technical components of technology commercialization. Working with D2P, teams gain valuable experience with customer discovery, market research and segmentation, value proposition design, business plan development, and fundraising – key skills needed as they transition from idea to market.

“The D2P director is integral to growing and nurturing an entrepreneurial spirit across campus and in the broader community,” says Norman Drinkwater, interim vice chancellor for research and graduate education. “With Andy’s leadership at D2P we hope to stretch the boundaries of what is possible for innovators at UW-Madison and guide them to success that not only benefits our faculty, staff and students, but also that puts The Wisconsin Idea into practice.”

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