Statement on Student Intellectual Property

The participation of students in entrepreneurship classes and activities, such as the Eagle Works Competition and the iMakerSpace, raises questions about ownership of the resulting intellectual property (IP). Generally, students will own the IP they create when they are solely using Tennessee Tech University resources that are customarily provided, such as office spaces, residence hall rooms, library facilities (including the iMakerSpace), and standard access to computers and networks. However, when students use University facilities, equipment, or funds to develop their IP, the standard University ownership rules apply.

Tennessee Technological University Policy No. 732: Intellectual Property outlines the procedures and guidelines by which the university protects the rights and interests of all parties involved in IP matters, including members of the university community, external sponsors of research, and the public. The university recognizes and encourages student entrepreneurship and innovation by providing various programs, resources, and opportunities. To facilitate such activities, the University may apply a limited exception to its ownership policy with respect to student inventions and business ventures resulting from specific class projects and entrepreneurial activities, subject to certain criteria. In particular, the University may waive its ownership rights in cases where the student invention arises solely from the class or activity and the only University facilities used were those provided for the approved class or activity. However, this exception does not apply if the invention incorporates, depends on, or is derived from other University-owned IP. Moreover, if the class or activity is supported by sponsored sources, such as federal, state, or private grants, programmatic guidelines specified by the funding agency may prohibit such exceptions.

Student Team Agreement

Students are strongly advised to sign a team agreement. The agreement is designed t