Bioscience & Technology Business Center (BTBC)
In 2006 the City of Lawrence, Douglas County, KU and the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce came together to create the BTBC. Its primary purpose was to create, grow, recruit, and retain bioscience and technology companies that produce jobs, building a sustainable economic development infrastructure and tax base for the region. In addition to these stakeholders, the BTBC has been able to further its mission with collaborative financial support from strategic partners including the Kansas Department of Commerce, KU Endowment Association, and Kansas Bioscience Authority. This distinctive partnership is the core of this highly innovative organization and the center of the broader BTBC network.

Beyond the unique BTBC stakeholder structure and strategic partnerships, the BTBC has developed a dynamic and successful environment for innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as for creating and building high-tech and bioscience businesses. These successes have been accomplished through:

- High commercial potential research and technology from KU
- State-of-the-art BTBC facilities with advanced amenities such as gigabit fiber internet
- Access to BTBC resources, including business services and the expansive network
- Competitive incentive packages to companies starting new business operations

BTBC has evolved into an expanding enterprise, which conducts its economic development business-creation operations at three northeast Kansas locations, spanning Lawrence and Kansas City. The three facilities total over 50,000 square feet. In July 2014, an additional 30,000 square feet of space was added to the Lawrence main facility, making BTBC the largest university-affiliated business creation system in the Midwest. This commercialization system represents the first several phases of a larger Innovation & Research Park on KU’s west research campus.

KU leveraged this opportunity and moved KUIC into the facility. This has served to grow the translation of KU research from partnership through new company formation through a solid partnership with BTBC. KUIC and BTBC also partner on an SBIR Assistance Program to provide assistance in strategically leveraging the program to monetize the
created startup company. This is an example of programming that has driven the creation of new companies in Kansas incubated at BTBC and the translation of KU innovations to the market.

The BTBC system includes 42 companies employing more than 190 people with a combined annual payroll of over $9 million. BTBC’s diverse tenant company mix consists of spinout companies from KU, early stage companies recruited to BTBC, and established private sector high-growth technology and bioscience companies, many of which seek collaboration and/or affiliation with KU.

BTBC successfully recruits and supports these companies by addressing three major components of business development:

1. Modern office and laboratory space, including locations in Lawrence at KU’s main campus, the KU Medical Center in Kansas City, and in west Lawrence, adjacent to the KU Center for Environmentally Beneficial Catalysis.

2. Professional business services provided by a team with extensive startup and high-tech business experience who act as entrepreneurs in residence, benefitting tenant companies with insight to help create, develop, and grow scalable high-tech companies; and

3. Network of resources including KU researchers, a highly skilled student body, and state-of-the-art facilities; specialized business service providers; and access to capital through angel and venture capital investors.

An essential aspect of this network is KU students, graduates, and researchers, as well as related services through KUIC. Garmin International leverages BTBC’s university network through a partnership providing KU students with real-world experience that helps strengthen Garmin’s relationship with KU. The company was looking for creative ways to expand its talent pool. By leasing space at BTBC, Garmin was able to access and develop computer science and computer engineering student through an internship program run out of their BTBC office. This unique collaboration has expanded the opportunities for Garmin as well as prospective employees over the long term. Over 60 student interns have worked in the Garmin BTBC office since its opening in 2011, and 19 interns have been hired as full time associates. Assurant Employee Benefits and Archer Daniels Midland have followed
suit, leasing space at BTBC to access student talent and KU research expertise.

With a focus on the future of Kansas, the BTBC continues to expand its pool of local resources for new and existing companies. While the goals of the BTBC will continue to be to create, grow, recruit, and retain companies in the BTBC system that will generate jobs and increase payroll in the region, the BTBC plans to have continued growth that will lead to further development of the innovation park that currently includes phase I and phase II of the BTBC. The park will continue to unite private industry, academia, KU researchers, and entrepreneurs together on KU’s West Campus. The innovation park will extend the transformation of both the Lawrence and northeast Kansas economies and will continue to grow its impact as an economic development asset for KU both in Lawrence and at the medical center campus in Kansas City.