UW-Madison is a hotbed of smart people with innovative ideas about ways to make the world a better place.

- But creating and growing a start-up venture requires more than an idea — it takes passion and purpose teamed with business savvy and the right connections.

- Mentors are experienced entrepreneurs who provide up-and-coming entrepreneurs with the help they need to overcome hurdles they will face in their new business.

MERLIN is a free local mentoring service that fosters growth in the number and quality of Madison area start-up enterprises by matching new entrepreneurs with experienced business people.

MERLIN is modeled on a successful program at MIT and adapted to the Madison area by mentors themselves to benefit the community

*MERLIN is an acronym for The Madison Entrepreneur Resource, Learning and Innovation Network

**MERLIN Objectives**
- Create a larger pool of viable entrepreneurs within the Madison community.
- Strengthen UW-Madison’s role as a leader in innovation by contributing to the education of UW students, faculty and alumni.

**MERLIN Approach**
- Experienced business leaders volunteer their time, knowledge and experience to help entrepreneurs convert ideas into action.
- Students, faculty, staff, Madison residents, recent alumni have all accessed MERLIN
- MERLIN operations are funded by a grant from the University Research Park
- MERLIN is part of the Wiscontrepreneur campus-wide entrepreneurship program at OCR supported in part by the Kauffman Foundation

Mentors include angel investors, entrepreneurs, investment bankers, CEOs, faculty members and engineers with experience in a wide range of fields and industries.

**MERLIN Metrics**
- Began operations Fall 2008
- 99 peer-reviewed mentors
- 110 entrepreneurs have applied for mentoring
- 32 active mentor teams
- By business sector
  - 7 Energy/Cleantech
  - 13 Information technology
  - 4 biotech and healthcare
  - 4 food and beverage
  - 4 retail
- 7 graduated entrepreneurs, 2 secured follow-on investment

Learn More:
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Created through a collaboration of: