

Dr. Thomas Patrick O'Neal

Associate Vice President, University of Central Florida (UCF)

Office of Research & Commercialization



Dr. Thomas (Tom) Patrick O'Neal received his Ph.D. in Industrial Engineering, a Master of Science in Engineering Management and his Master of Business Administration from the University of Central Florida and his Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of South Florida.

Since 1975, Tom has been an active member of the business community in Florida. He founded his first start-up company at age 18, which he successfully operated until pursuing a full-time college career. Tom then entered the high-tech business arena as a project engineer for a computer manufacturing company. Prior to joining UCF, he served as a Technology Specialist and Financial Director for a \$40 million project with the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency for Florida's state university system.

Tom joined the UCF staff in 1991 as business manager and ultimately Associate Director for the Center for Research and Education in Optics and Lasers (CREOL). In this capacity, he was responsible for the business and administrative functions of the Center. The Center evolved into one of the top centers for education and research in optical sciences and engineering.

Tom has assisted in the formation of numerous spin-off companies for technologies developed at UCF. In 1999 he founded and established the UCF Technology Incubator of which he serves as the Founding Director. The UCF Business Incubation Program has expanded to 8 locations under his leadership. The Incubator was named the Incubator of the Year in 2004 and Incubator Network of the Year in 2013 by the National Business Incubation Association (NBIA) where he currently serves as Chair for the NBIA's executive board.

Dr. O'Neal established partnerships for the original Incubator with both the University and the community to provide tools and resources that enhanced the success of the developing companies. He also assembled a distinguished Advisory Board for the UCFBIP consisting of Central Florida business professionals that provide valuable assistance to the Incubation Program and more importantly, to all the more than 150 clients it serves.

Tom currently serves as the Associate Vice President of Research and Commercialization at the University of Central Florida (UCF), Vice President of the UCF Research Foundation, Executive Director of the UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP) and Executive Director of the Florida Economic Gardening Institute (GrowFL). He has been part of UCF's Office of Research and Commercialization team working to help UCF become a leading metropolitan research university since year 2000. Tom's areas of responsibility include the sponsored programs office, technology transfer, compliance, the UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP), the UCF Venture Accelerator, and the Florida's Economic Gardening Institute. The Florida Economic Gardening Institute (GrowFL), another program Tom helped establish and is executive director of, assists second stage companies with growth and development.

Dr. O'Neal has published papers and book chapters on the subjects of business incubation, entrepreneurship, and economic development and has received funding from the Kauffman Foundation, the NSF, the NCIIA, and others to support entrepreneurship and innovation initiatives. His Ph.D. dissertation was on effective incubation practices. He is the current president of the Florida Business Incubation Association (FBIA), is a tenured faculty in UCF's Management department and has affiliation with UCF's Industrial Engineering and Management Systems department in the College of Engineering and with the College of Health and Public Affairs. He teaches several classes, such as Technology Commercialization & Entrepreneurship and Engineering Management. Project Engineering and Engineering Management as Intellectual Property and technology Commercialization. Tom is often asked to give talks and presentations at national and international conferences and meetings. In 2011, he was asked to testify before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation in Washington to share insight on his experience at UCF in creating industry partnerships and overall impact on economic development concerning the National Nanoscience Initiative.

Tom has secured more than more than \$55 million dollars in external funding to support his research and other activities and has been a member of UCF's millionaires' club every year since 2004.