

Award 6: Outstanding Student Engagement & Leadership

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Discuss the various programs or initiatives your Center supports to engage a broad spectrum of students to achieve the Center's goals. How do you empower students to lead or own these efforts?

Because the Center is positioned directly under the provost and its director, the associate provost and vice president for innovation, serves on the President's Leadership Council (PLC), the Center is the same organizational level as deans and the vice president for research. As such, it has truly become the fundamental resource for all things related to entrepreneurship and commercialization at the University. And to engage students from all colleges, the Center sets yearly numerical goals of meeting with over 70 faculty members and deans and sends teams to visit dozens of student orientations, club meetings, open houses, and classrooms. The IDEA Center also employs a communications team that generates consistent media coverage for the Center and its startups.

Outlined below are four specific programs/initiatives supported by the IDEA Center. These student-led initiatives highlight the ways the Center engages students directly in achieving Center goals and discusses how we empower them to lead these efforts.

1) Inventions: The Student Commercialization Program

The IDEA Center's primary goal is to launch new companies related to the University of Notre Dame as faculty/staff and student inventions. As we began the 2017-2018 academic year, our goal was to launch 16 companies through the resources related to the IDEA Center: 10 faculty staff inventions, 5 student inventions and 1 community invention. By the end of the fall semester, we had blown past our initial goal and we ended the year with 27 startups, including 17 student companies. Altogether, 125 students had submitted their ideas for startups by the end of the year.

Our approach is to surround student entrepreneurs with the resources they need to launch successful companies. The Student Commercialization program offers a milestone-based process to help student teams learn to develop and de-risk technologies, with access to mentorship, funding and networking resources as needed.

The very core of this approach is a student-led process. Student interns serve as "Venture Coaches" to facilitate a detailed process in which student inventors validate their ideas, discover opportunities and explore their own startup ideas. This process for de-risking student ventures mirrors the detailed and robust process we use to evaluate our faculty inventions – yet the entire process was developed by students and is overseen by students. The Venture Coaches are trained and supervised as senior student interns; these students are supervised by senior IDEA Center staff members.

An essential component of the program are the resources available to the students, including the following: 1) Startup Funding. Students advancing through the Student Commercialization Program are able to pitch monthly for grant funding of up to \$2,500 to help students take risks and launch new ideas. This program is led by students; more than \$38,000 was awarded to

student entrepreneurs in 2017-2018. 2) Mentorship and Support. By tapping into the expertise of our outstanding alumni network, student venture coaches are able to connect student founders to the industry experts, mentors and advisors they need to succeed. 3) Innovation Park at Notre Dame. Home to the IDEA Center, Innovation Park is a 95,000-square foot technology and entrepreneurship facility at Notre Dame. It serves as a site where productive collisions between students, entrepreneurs, investors, subject matter experts and University faculty and staff routinely take place. 4) Maker Space. The Innovation Lab offers a comprehensive set of hand tools, 3D printers and more, all with which to build basic tangible prototypes.

2) Internships: An Integral Component in the University Commercialization Process

More than 70 students were engaged with the IDEA Center this year as paid interns. These student interns are an essential part of the IDEA Center's commercialization process, providing the crucial analysis necessary to launch successful faculty/staff and student inventions. Student interns serve in many different roles: analyzing technologies, performing market research, conducting interviews with industry experts, validating problem-solution fit, validating product-market fit, acting as project management managers for technologies, and even interning in more advanced Notre Dame startups or Innovation Park companies.

3) Competitions: Students Engage, Participate, Learn and Compete for Prizes

The annual McCloskey New Venture Competition is a valuable opportunity for our student entrepreneurs to engage with other entrepreneurially-minded students and faculty/staff inventors. The Competition is a valuable way for students to make considerable progress with their ideas for startups, or to connect with other faculty inventors or student teams. More than \$400,000 in cash and prizes were awarded this year. Moreover, 169 teams and more than 400 individuals participated in the McCloskey Competition this year. Nearly 5,000 students have participated since 2001, with more than 2,000 individuals serving as judges and mentors. A total of more than \$1,000,000 in cash has been awarded.

All teams – faculty, staff, alumni and student teams – are encouraged to add additional students to their teams, to provide opportunities for students who don't yet have their own ideas to experience the startup process through the lens of another founder. To facilitate these connections, our students have created a platform on which students can sign up to assist another team: students share a bit about their interests and areas of expertise, and founders are able to view the students' resumes. More than 150 students signed up on this connecting platform – McCloskey Connections – indicating that they were willing to help another team.

4) Education: Graduate Program Connects Students with Faculty/Staff Inventors

ESTEEM is a unique 11-month master of science degree program at the University of Notre Dame, emphasizing the action of entrepreneurship, not just the study of it. Students are immersed in an entrepreneurial sandbox, where they get their hands dirty with entrepreneurship

and innovation through a cutting-edge curriculum, a capstone commercialization thesis for an emerging technology, and outstanding out-of-the-classroom experiences.

Working closely with the IDEA Center, the ESTEEM Program connects students with Notre Dame faculty in the Colleges of Science and Engineering to identify research with commercial potential. Students work closely with the faculty throughout the year to understand the commercial applications of their research; this research becomes the basis of the student's capstone thesis. This process of matching ESTEEM students to faculty researchers has become an integral part of the commercialization process at the University, providing faculty/staff inventors with the outstanding capabilities of our graduate students – an invaluable experience for the student and invaluable expertise for the faculty inventor.

Highlight one to two specific efforts that demonstrate student leadership in your Center. Efforts should communicate the types of initiatives your Center executed that would not have happened without student leadership.

Highlighting two IDEA Center efforts that demonstrate student leadership in very specific ways:

1. As outlined above, the student commercialization process is 100% student-led and the process was developed by a core group of engaged student interns. This commercialization process – one in which student founders are surrounded with the resources necessary to succeed – is unique and has become core to the Center's goal of creating startups. This process for de-risking student ventures mirrors the detailed and robust process we use to evaluate our faculty inventions – yet the entire process was developed by students and is overseen by students. Venture Coaches are trained and supervised a senior student intern; this student is supervised by senior IDEA Center staff members.
2. The internship program as outlined above is an outstanding opportunity for our students, and has become an integral part of our faculty/staff commercialization process. We depend upon the students' leadership to provide the analysis necessary to launch companies, our primary goal. Students step up to lead the IDEA Center de-risking process and provide the essential research and analysis for faculty/staff inventions. As outlined above, our initial goal of 16 startups was surpassed midway through the year, with a total of 27 startups generated through the IDEA Center process in 2017-2018. This progress would not have been possible without the essential analysis provided by our student interns. The interns have become a vital component within our commercialization process.

Appendix

Award 6: Outstanding Student Engagement & Leadership

How the following document relates to Award 6: Outstanding Student Engagement & Leadership

The following document fulfills the following requirement: "Provide up to two (2) other items of your choice that demonstrate student engagement & leadership. This could include testimonials from engaged students."

From Mitchell Kokko, Class of 2019, Mendoza College of Business:

For me engaging with the IDEA Center has been a life changing experience. I have had the opportunity to serve as a student analyst helping other students identify opportunities to create their own startup, received \$300 to help launch my own startup, manage a team of fellow student analysts to grow a student startup program, and run events such as competitions and pitch sessions.

The model the IDEA Center has is like no other that I have ever seen. It is based around the premise of “students helping students”, providing not just resources such as \$50,000 that is available per year for students to request grant funding from to start a business but a place where students with or who have gained insight into starting their own startup can assist those who have never explored what entrepreneurship is like.

Additionally, some of the experiences the IDEA Center can provide can't be matched by any sum of money. Currently I have the opportunity to and am launching a company for Notre Dame that will help companies create a better cancer immunotherapy treatment. While I have no background in oncology or therapeutics, the training I have received at the IDEA Center has prepared me so well that the faculty inventors agreed to hire me to help them launch their new company. Without the mentorship and education I have received this past year, I could have never done so.

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From Jeff Riney, Class of 2019, College of Engineering:

The IDEA center has given me a multitude of ways to get involved. I competed in the McCloskey new venture competition, which allows students to join teams of inventors and pitch their ideas to investors, as well as get a chance to see new ideas become a reality. As an intern, I got to work on a real product and learn about the importance of market validation, as well as be apart of its journey to market. As an inventor, the IDEA center has provided state of the art equipment, resources, and connections to give my ideas the best chance at succeeding.

The idea center provides a unique environment that allows students to learn from their failures while avoiding the backlashes that are commonly associated with failure. Imagine trying to walk a tightrope across the Grand Canyon. Most people would be too scared to even take one step onto the rope, afraid of the consequences that come if they don't succeed. The IDEA center acts as a safety harness, breaking down the barrier that fear sets in front of you, and allowing you to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. Sound familiar?

Winston Churchill once said “success is walking from failure to failure without losing enthusiasm”. This perfectly embodies how the IDEA has profoundly changed my outlook on life and my learning experiences at Notre Dame. It is clear that failure is a critical component of the path to success. It's been proven time and time again to help enlighten, to help empower, and

to help motivate individuals in accomplishing a task at hand. However, society has engrained a fear of failure in us, scaring us from even attempting the necessary steps it takes to grow and to succeed. The IDEA center cuts the negative connotations that are tied to failure and promotes the positive outcomes of it instead.

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Adrian Rodriguez, ESTEEM 2018 (Graduated from ESTEEM in 2018)

I first engaged with the IDEA Center as a student bringing a product to the monthly pitch session. As an engineer studying entrepreneurship, I had a well-developed pitch deck including design concepts that brought ideas to life. The IDEA Center staff saw this and quickly brought me onboard to help other students develop their products. I've found it immensely rewarding to be a part of the genesis and growth of these student led ventures. In less than one year I helped over a dozen companies develop their ideas and businesses. From literal napkin sketches to design concepts, engineered solutions, prototypes, and patent drawings we would work together to solve problems that really impacted people. Student led companies have used my designs to file over half a dozen provisional patents and raise tens of thousands of dollars from within and outside of the University of Notre Dame. The IDEA Center gave me the responsibility, flexibility, and resources to serve these companies to the best of my ability. The IDEA Center created an environment where I was empowered to put students first which meant they were able to move faster in their companies to fix things that matter.