



2022-2023 Annual Report



WHAT'S INSIDE

A recap of the major E+I programming and milestones from the 2022-2023 academic year

Building on E+I's solid foundation



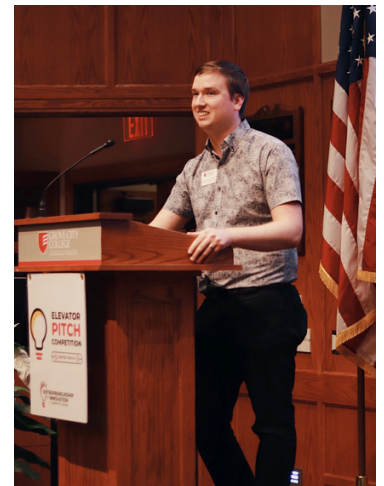
During the fall semester, E+I made a couple organizational adjustments to continue supporting our students while expanding our reach.

Logan Hammerschmitt promoted to E+I Campus Director.

One of the main adjustments in the E+I Team was the promotion of Logan Hammerschmitt from Marketing + Outreach Coordinator to E+I Campus Director.

In his new role, Logan is now responsible for the day-to-day operations of all on-campus activities related to E+I. This includes competitions, guest speakers, and many other on-campus responsibilities.

This personnel adjustment has allowed Executive Director Yvonne English to focus on executing E+I's new strategic plan, which is guided by the exciting newly-updated mission statement below.



E+I MISSION STATEMENT

The Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation (E+I) provides programs, competitions, and events that foster and support innovative thinkers and entrepreneurs from all disciplines, whether they are students, alumni, or community members, who are committed to blended impact as well as the creation of ventures that serve the common good.



Praxis

Academy 2022

During the summer of 2022, eight Grove City College students, one recent alumnus, and E+I Campus Director Logan Hammerschmitt '16 had the opportunity to attend Praxis Academy at Biola University in California.



Hosted by Praxis Labs, Praxis Academy 2022 was a unique opportunity for these students to explore the concept of redemptive entrepreneurship and consider what it means to attempt to use their faith to solve the major issues of our time.



"Through precise articulation and prayerful consideration, Praxis has created a distinct culture that motivates and inspires Christians to not only do good in the world but also to redeem the world for God's glory."

-Gus Minotto '24, Academy attendee

August Kickoff: E+I Open House

To kick off the fall semester, E+I held an open house in the Habbershon Family Innovation Zone. Students and faculty of all majors were invited to attend and learn about our offerings and programming while enjoying refreshments and community.



Students enjoyed the new addition of a prize wheel, and each attendee got to spin for a prize.

The event drew an even larger crowd than last year's formidable showing, demonstrating the campus-wide interest in E+I programming.





The E+I Open House provides an excellent opportunity for our team to reconnect with students, all of whom were missed dearly over the summer break. It also affords students an opportunity to catch up with others, be reminded of the wonderful community available to them when they visit the Zone, and to find out about E+I programs and events.

This event is ever popular among freshmen and transfer students, as it serves as the first social event of the semester where they can meet their entrepreneurial peers!



Homecoming

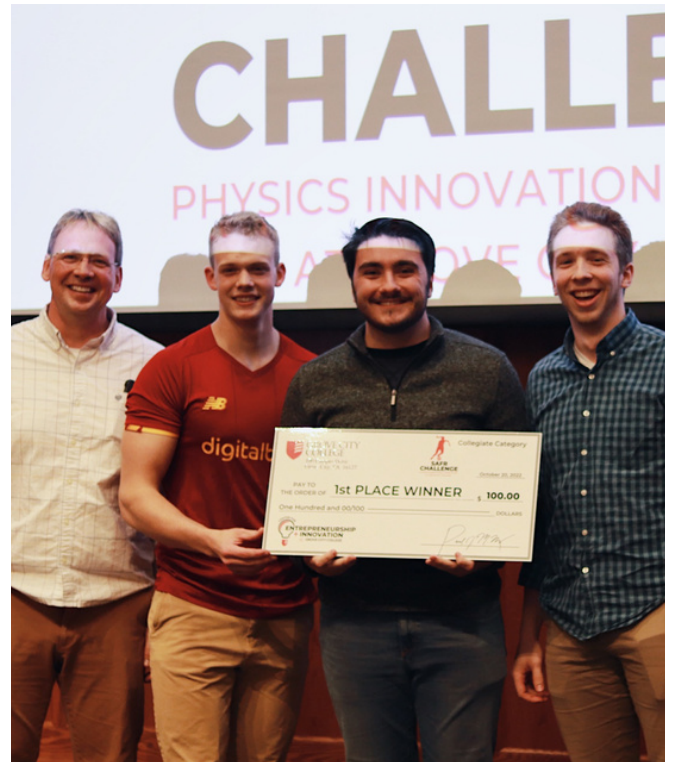


The ever-popular Venture Village tent at Homecoming was a hit! Hundreds of alumni and friends filled the **1,000 square foot tent** to chat with former classmates, current students, and faculty as well as to learn about everything E+I has to offer while exploring the **nine student businesses** on display from the E-Commerce class and beyond.

Major Collaboration with STEM



**SAFR
CHALLENGE**
PHYSICS INNOVATION COMPETITION
AT GROVE CITY COLLEGE



In collaboration with Dr. Shane Brower of the CCC Department of Physics, E+I hosted the inaugural final round of the SAFR Challenge, a competition that tasked students with developing a headband to reduce the prevalence of concussions in soccer players. High school and collegiate teams competed for cash prizes.



Resense Pitches in Chicago

Luke Gilligan '24 took his business, Resense, to the Windy City to pitch in the Top 20 of the Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization's Global Pitch Competition. This marked the fourth time that Resense has advanced to the finals of a national or global competition.

New Programs Launched

E+I continues to survey students and monitor best practices in entrepreneurship and innovation to ensure that our programming continues to meet the needs of our constituency while continuing to be innovative and relevant. As a result of this continuous work, two exciting new programs were piloted during the academic year.

E+I FELLOWS

E+I Fellows is a program designed to provide valuable micro-internship experience for students. E+I pays these fellows, who are placed at host companies to help them with subjects like marketing and sales.

The fall pilot of the E+I Fellows program initially placed three fellows at Resense, a budding startup founded by GCC student Luke Gilligan '24. The fellows include two sales interns (Oliver Schwarz '25 and Logan Mays '24) and one marketing intern (Noah Iversen '25).

After a successful pilot, the Resense team was able to expand and hire additional E+I Fellows to assist with sales, marketing, writing, and fulfillment. Additional interns hired include Megan Eisentraut, Andrew Coy, Isabella Hill, and Shannon Britt.



E+I FOUNDERS

E+I Founders, a subset of the E+I Fellows program, is a unique program designed to empower student entrepreneurs to build their businesses. Extremely qualified founders are able to be paid an hourly rate for the time they spend working on their businesses. This frees them from the need to make money via other employment opportunities so they are able to focus more of their attention on their promising ventures.

The first student founder to participate in the E+I Founders program is Luke Gilligan, founder and CEO of Resense, a company bringing comfort and joy to individuals living with Alzheimer's and dementia.

"As Entrepreneurship majors, we are taught what it looks like to run a company, but the Founders Program gave me the opportunity to put this into practice. Being part of this program has also allowed me to make an impact on the lives of individuals living with dementia and their families. The program has greatly impacted my life."

- Luke Gilligan '24, Resense CEO





ELEVATOR PITCH COMPETITION

2022 EDITION



The 16th Annual EPC One to remember!



**ELEVATOR
PITCH
COMPETITION**

2022 EDITION

The 16th Annual Elevator Pitch Competition was enjoyed by all in attendance. Participation was high with **156 excited students** from **30 different majors** entering the competition. Students started by submitting a 2-minute video of their pitch. Then, **69 generous reviewers** helped to narrow the field to **15 incredible finalists** who went on to compete live for a shot at **over \$2,500 in prize money**, thanks to the amazingly generous sponsorship of **Beans on Broad**. Judges Tim Daigle '84, Carissa Habsburg '11, and Brian Gongaware '92 selected the winners from each category (commercial and social enterprise), but it certainly wasn't easy. Dorene Powell awarded the Social Impact Prize on behalf of the **Grove City Foundation**, an affiliate of the Community Foundation of W. PA & E. OH.

The final round, held on November 9, 2022, in Sticht Lecture Hall, was well attended both in-person (**a packed house of over 150 attendees**) and via livestream (**478 live viewers from across the country**). Additionally, **nearly 400 individuals cast their vote** for the Fan Favorite Prize!



Commercial Enterprise Winners

1st Place: Shelton Brower '24
SoloCollar (\$500)

2nd Place: Sarah Welker '24
MadeFree (\$400)

3rd Place: Joe Gray '23
Cliqz (\$300)



Social Enterprise Winners

1st Place: Luke Mantzell '24
Book n Bullet Foundation (\$500)

2nd Place: Mary Golias '26
Art on Wheels (\$400)

3rd Place: Benjamin Lockwood '23
Adopt a Golfer (\$300)



Social Impact Prize + Fan Favorite

Luke Mantzell '24
Book n Bullet Foundation



Sponsored by:



**GROVE CITY
FOUNDATION**

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A very Merry Christmas from E+I!

During a joyful Christmas season, we were able to distribute over 230 Christmas cards and delicious cake pops from Daisy Pops (founded by Amy Mucha '09) to raise awareness of E+I and thank all of our on-campus supporters and partners.





Nick Freiling '13, Director, InsightHub



Maggie Blume '18, Sales Evangelist, MailShake



Connor Grieb '18, Founder, SEO Vineyard



Prof. Ken Smith '84, Entrepreneurship Department

In our VentureU Business Seminar Series, which is open to the entire campus, we were fortunate to be able to host experts from across several disciplines. This year, students learned about *Conducting Primary Research for your Startup*, *Opening Doors with LinkedIn*, *SEO and Why It's Important*, and *Financial Projections*.

E+I serves as a Founding Member of the Entrepreneurial Leadership Council

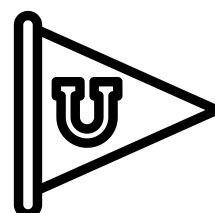


At the Entrepreneurial Leadership Council, our mission is to foster, empower, and inspire the next generation of entrepreneurial leaders. We are dedicated to creating an environment that nurtures innovation, cultivates entrepreneurial skills, and fosters a supportive network of like-minded individuals.

Our primary objective is to provide aspiring entrepreneurs with the tools, resources, and knowledge necessary to succeed in their entrepreneurial endeavors. Through our programs, initiatives, and events, we aim to equip individuals with the skills and mindset required to identify opportunities, take calculated risks, and effectively navigate the challenges associated with Entrepreneurialism.

Current member schools include:

- Allegheny College*
- Duquesne University*
- Fairmont State University
- Geneva College
- **Grove City College***
- Juniata College
- Marietta College
- Penn State University
- Pennsylvania West University
- University of Pittsburgh*
- Point Park University*
- Robert Morris University*
- Slippery Rock University*
- Thiel College
- Washington & Jefferson College*
- Waynesburg University*
- West Liberty University*
- Westminster College*



*Founding Member



ELC Social Innovation Challenge

As part of the newly formed Entrepreneurial Leadership Council, E+I was able to send eight students to the 2023 Social Innovation Challenge in February.

This weekend-long competition saw GCC students placed on teams with students from other colleges local to western Pennsylvania. Each team was tasked with developing a novel solution to the mental health crisis plaguing college campuses across the nation.

GCC student participation spanned several majors, including entrepreneurship, social work, and biblical and religious studies. Aly Mapes '24 was part of the team that took home first place!





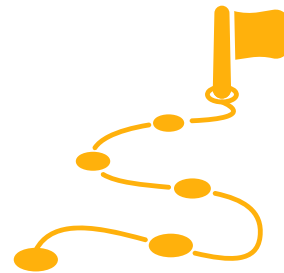
"The VentureLab program provides students + faculty with the opportunity to receive support (financial, coaching, mentorship, and educational programs) to test their ideas in a less risky environment. We can only offer this program due to the generosity of our Wolverine Innovation Fund donors and our mentors and coaches—thank you all!" - Professor Yvonne English, Executive Director + EIR, E+I

This Year...

Our teams learned about crafting and launching their businesses. **Seven students** from **five different majors** formed **four unique teams** in this year's cohort.

Each team was granted access to coaches, mentors, and the opportunity to apply for pre-approved expense reimbursement to help their businesses grow. Additionally, five students received academic credit for their efforts during the program.

Major Milestones



SHARE PACKAGE conducted a pilot of their care package program to validate their hypotheses related to who would want their services and who would participate in them.

ATHLETES AFTER built their first website and a prototype of their collegiate football programs map. They also made a connection with a potential influencer/investor.

BRIDGE developed full wireframes of the Bridge app and validated their initial target market by conducting customer interviews.

CLIQZ interviewed businesses in the Pittsburgh area to develop an understanding of how Cliqz could differentiate from competitors such as Groupon.



Share Package

Share Package provides care kits containing basic survival and hygiene products to aid those experiencing homelessness.

Mark Wilhelm '23 | Aly Mapes '24 | Gus Minotto '24

Athletes After

A sports recruitment platform designed to help give high school athletes the power and information they need.

Max Muncy '24 | Justin DeMild '24

Bridge

A creative media and networking platform for those
in the music industry.

Caleb Warrick '24 | Maura Donatelli '24 | Elliot Eyre '24



Cliqz

A social network designed to take people from bored in their apartments to out and doing things in as few clicks as possible.

Joe Gray '24



The Grove City College VentureLaunch is a new program that affords student-run businesses the opportunity to grow and explore new opportunities with the support of coaches, mentors, and pre-approved expense reimbursements. VentureLaunch is the perfect program to help small, student-run businesses scale and reach their fullest potential.

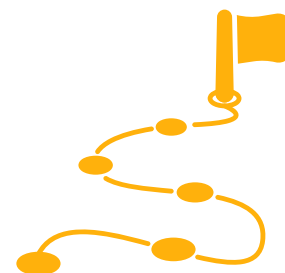
Once accepted to VentureLaunch, student-led companies can remain in the program through graduation, as long as they remain in good standing.

Pilot Year

This year, the Center for E+I piloted the new VentureLaunch program. The program is designed for businesses that have already been established and are ready to grow. Many of the ventures will have already completed the VentureLab program, although that is not a requirement.

Three teams were accepted to be part of the first VentureLaunch cohort, and the program was a great success! Each team made strides toward operating at a higher capacity and further proving that their business models could be successful. We are excited to welcome new teams to the program in the future to further advance their capacity for growth.

Major Milestones



EMMA MADE CO developed new handmade products and conducted analysis to determine the sustainability of her business.

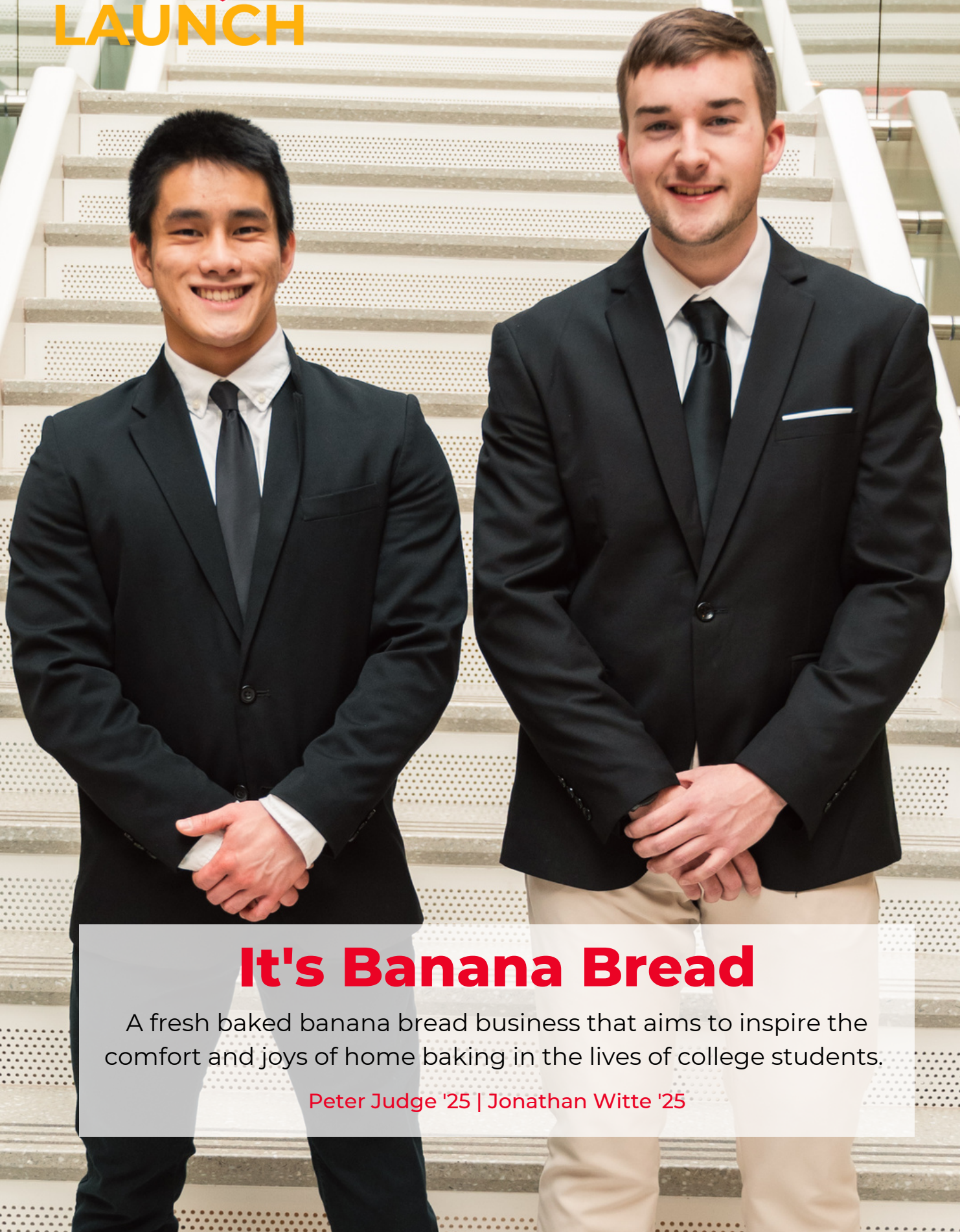
IT'S BANANA BREAD worked with a leading industry expert to navigate the difficulties of launching a baked goods company. This team established their brand and made strides toward wider distribution.

RESENSE developed and launched the Resense Register, a first-of-its-kind dementia-friendly newspaper. Samples of the Resense Register were requested by over 400 care communities in the first few weeks of its launch, and Resense has been steadily converting those to paying customers.

Emma Made Co

Handmade home decor, kitchenware, and ceramics created with quality and environmentally conscious materials for everyday living.

Emma O'Toole '23



It's Banana Bread

A fresh baked banana bread business that aims to inspire the comfort and joys of home baking in the lives of college students.

Peter Judge '25 | Jonathan Witte '25



Resense

Restorative products designed to bring comfort and joy to people living with Alzheimer's and dementia.

Luke Gilligan '24 | Logan Mays '24

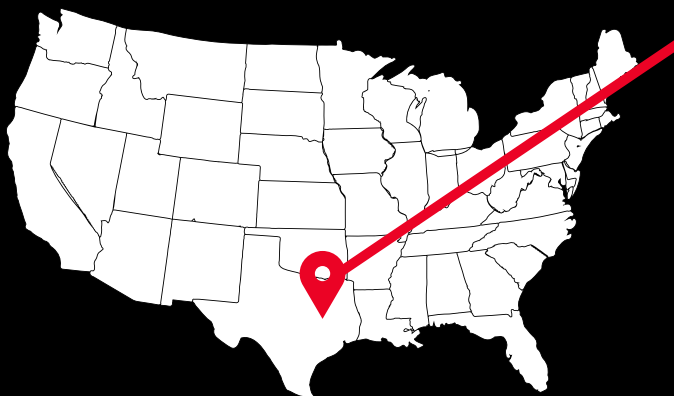
Resense

Year 2: Finding Product-Market Fit

Current junior, Luke Gilligan '24, started Resense as part of a class project for Professor English's Lean LaunchPad class during the spring semester of 2021. Now, two years later, the Resense team has expanded, launched new products, and found a solid footing to gain traction in care communities across the nation. Their latest product, the *Resense Register*, has reached over 400 care communities. This first-of-its-kind dementia-friendly newspaper is printed on real broadsheet to provide the feel of a traditional newspaper and contains timeless articles and puzzles to provide comfort to its readers.



Resense traveled to Dallas, TX to compete in the national finals of the TCU Values and Ventures Competition. The team, consisting of Luke Gilligan '24, Logan Mays '24, and Oliver Schwarz '25, reached the final round of eight teams, putting them in the top three percent of all entries nationwide!



TCU Values & Ventures | Fort Worth, TX Top 8 out of 258 entries nationwide

At the finals of the TCU Values and Ventures competition, this team of GCC entrepreneurs represented our program well, displaying their business prowess and the amazing business they have created to help those living with dementia.

We are extremely proud of the success this team has achieved thus far and are excited to continue to support them in the coming year!



Kelly Costello '07

I Survived the Shark Tank — A GCC Entrepreneur's Success Story



In the spring semester, for the first time since 2019, we were able to host an in-person speaker as part of the **Richard G. Staley '62 Visionary Entrepreneur Speaker Series**. **Kelly Costello '07, Founder of Puppy Cake LLC**, spoke about her experience on the popular TV show Shark Tank. The crowd was on the edge of their seats at every turn as they waited to hear what happened next!

The event was also visually recorded by fellow entrepreneur and Grove City College alumnus **Matt Orley '97, Founder of Big Paper Strategy**. Feel free to visit the Habbershon Family Innovation Zone (SHAL 202) to see the amazing drawing!

Faith Driven Network of Pittsburgh

On March 30, 2023, The Faith Driven Network of Pittsburgh hosted a launch event at The Landing in Moon Township. The event featured networking, catering from Chick-fil-A, and keynote talks from the Pittsburgh network's leadership team (including our very own executive director, Yvonne English '97).

The event attracted a large and diverse group of individuals, including a large number of Grove City College students and alumni, focused on the idea of advancing the kingdom of God through business and investing. We look forward to what's to come from this exciting group!





Just Pause reaches eFest finals!

Mark Wilhelm '23 and Luke Gilligan '24 represented Grove City College at this year's eFest competition in Minneapolis. Just Pause, a companion app for individuals with bipolar disorder, was a hit at this national entrepreneurship contest!





The Wolverine Venture Battle (WVB) simulates the real world by allowing teams to compete for prize money by showing their progress toward proof of concept. It all comes down to today.

APRIL 28, 2023

STICHT AUDITORIUM

WVB PRESENTATIONS + WINNERS



Songbird lands on top!

In a field of nine competitors, Songbird was crowned Wolverine Venture Battle Champion.



Songbird is a game-based education app that teaches music to students with special needs.



\$6,050 + \$500 Fan Favorite



WVB PRESENTATIONS + WINNERS



JUST PAUSE—\$4,240

An accountability and companion app for individuals living with bipolar disorder.

Luke Gilligan '24 and Mark Wilhelm '23

BRIDGE—\$4100 + \$500 FAN FAVORITE

A creative media and networking platform for those in the music industry.

Caleb Warrick '24, Maura Donatelli '24, and Elliot Eyre '24



ATHLETES AFTER—\$3,650

A sports recruitment platform designed to help give high school athletes the power and information they need.

Justin DeMild '24 and Max Muncy '24



CLIQZ—\$2,760

A social network designed to take people from bored in their apartments to out and doing things in as few clicks as possible.

Joe Gray '24



WVB PRESENTATIONS + WINNERS



VIRTUAL CLARITY—\$1,900

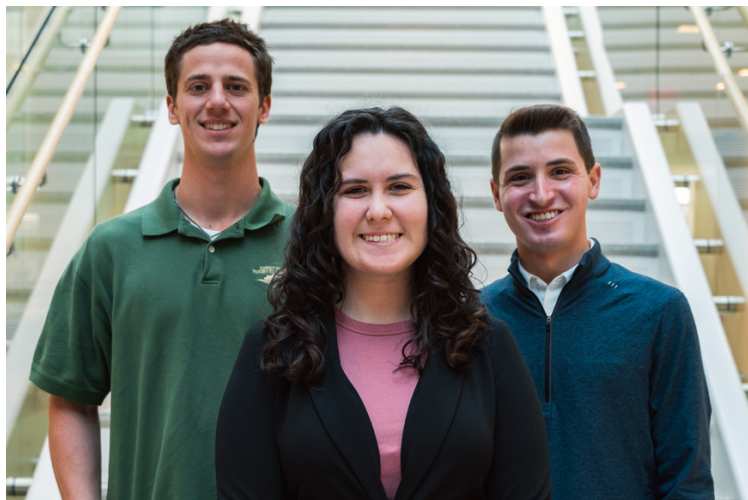
Virtual reality technology for behavioral health units and those experiencing depression.

Anna Ortiz '24 and Emma Ruby Whiteford '24

FOLDED HANDS—\$1,600

An application that allows members of a congregation to connect with their pastor and other members of their church to engage in prayer.

Dillon Werstiuk '23, Avalon Parsons '23, David Kraus '23, and Sean Matthews '23



PRAYREAL—\$1,520

A faith-based social media that connects you with your Christian friends when you respond to a daily, spontaneous notification to pray.

Sarah Anderson '25, Jack Bowery '26, Grace Anne Shaw '24, Cade Voller '26, and Ally Gaines '25



SABBATICA—\$300

A 3 to 5 day micro-sabbatical program that aims to rest, refresh, and rejuvenate burnt out small business employees and rural church pastors.

Grant Baierl '23, Rachel Goetz '24, and Jake Botkin '23



Wolverine Venture Battle

Highlights



KEY STATS



- **Packed house** in Sticht Lecture Hall
- Over **\$30,000** awarded in cash and in-kind prizes
- **27** student participants across 9 teams
- **10** different majors represented
- **11** judges for the final round
- **50** junior judges
- **56** Round 2 reviewers

LIVESTREAM STATS

- **572** unique page views during finals
- **280** votes for Fan Favorite
- Viewers from **35** different states



This year, the competition grew even more fierce as the list of finalists grew to nine teams!

Representatives from the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior classes all presented during the finals and did a fantastic job. Each team made their case for why they deserved to be awarded their share of the prize pool. Only one team could come out on top, but each team represented well!

The finalists were also competing for the votes of this year's Junior Judges...50 high school students who represented 14 different schools. Each Junior Judge was allotted \$20 to award to his or her favorite team.



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Cedric E. Lewis JD/MBA

Wolverine Donors

The Habbershon Family

Tim '81, Grant '06, Meredith '07, Jonathan '09,
and Natalie '11

John + Betsy Bawn Charitable Foundation
(Pittsburgh Foundation)

The Newton Family

The Newton Family: Rick '86, Terrie '85, Josh
'09, Anna '17, Jesse '19, Josiah '24, and Abigail

Susan (Peshek '81) and Peter Durfee '80

Elizabeth (Smith '81) and Peter Hanley

Elisabeth O'Brien '16

The Kiska Family

Stan '85, Deanna '87, Evan '20, and Lauren

The Pentz Family

Mark '81, Cheri '79, Michael '06, Yvonne '06

The Passaro Family

Dan Creston '81

Laura (Koller '11) and RJ Fryan '08

Connor Grieb '18



The Amazing WVB Judges



RJ Fryan '08

Kind Special Alloys US
Lake Park Tool and Machine
CEO



Pete Durfee '80

Gilead Sciences, Inc.
Senior Director of Corporate
Engineering and Facilities
Operations



Mark Pentz '80

Calvin Group
President + Founder



Michael Pentz '06

Calvin Group
Vice President



The Amazing WVB Judges



Brad Schake
Armstrong
Director of Field Operations



Josh Newton '09
Newton Institute
Director of Technology -
MPACT Assessment



Dan Creston '81
Creston Consulting, LLC
Founder



Connor Grieb '18
SEO Vineyard
Founder + President



The Amazing WVBA Judges



Paul Passaro
Brown-Locy Advisors
Partner



Matthew W. Gordon
Davevic Benefit Consultants
Vice President



Grace Hovis '19
Hovis Auto and Truck Supply
Marketing & Training Director





Sending out a special thanks to the **56** Round Two reviewers who helped select our finalists and make the Wolverine Venture Battle possible!



Freddie Bremble '80
 Allyson Sveda '88
 Dean Faklis
 Bob Baierl
 Liam Krut '14
 Winifred McGee '77
 Alan Mesches '71
 Jennifer Gilliland
 Alissa Sgro '96
 Lesley Winfield '92
 Rob Wright '04
 Paul Marshall '78
 Edward Huttenhower '76
 Scott Brainard '76
 Chris Botting '83
 Brad Dearborn '78
 Tiffany Bicek '18
 Kim Ford '72
 Melissa Jacobs '92

Evan Lowe '89
 Scott McDowell '87
 Ronald Miller '75
 John Romain '85
 Steve Wickman
 Lindy Hitzel '19
 Toby Basalla '98
 Steve Solman '96
 Frances Baldwin
 Sandy Frederick
 Glenn Grossman
 Kim Marks
 Chloe Sayers '15
 Ron Emery
 Brian Gongaware '92
 Warren Poschman '98
 Craig Creaturo '92
 Scott Inderbitzen '10
 John Holt '84

William Messner '96
 Ruth Entwistle '07
 Beth Lepore
 Brian Montgomery '96
 Robin Parsons
 Dianne Ruhl '89
 Tim Tobitsch '03
 Joshua Weatherstone '15
 Curt Given '84
 Alex Graham '67
 Bob Keller '73
 James Will '98
 Patricia Premick '84
 Barbara Johnson '79
 Charles (Bob) Scott '72
 Andrew Ellison
 Collin Foster '12
 Don Lockhart '67

NEW EPISODES: NOW STREAMING



INNOVATION GENERATION

Entrepreneurship for Everyone *at* GCC

Last year, we launched a brand-new podcast series hosted by Professor Tim Sweet, Chair of the Department of Entrepreneurship, called *Innovation Generation*.

New episodes were recorded and published toward the end of the spring semester and are now available on our website.

Topics of discussion include entrepreneurship at Grove City College, startup stories, entrepreneurial journeys, the love of entrepreneurs, cake pops, and sales for startups.

To listen to our podcast you can visit the link below or find us on your favorite streaming service!

gccentrepreneurship.com/innovation-generation/

You can also scan to check out the podcast:



NEWS FROM GROVE CITY COLLEGE

For immediate release

Contact: Nick Hildebrand, Senior Editor Marketing & Communications
724.458.2155, 724.967.1431, nahildebrand@gcc.edu

Student-led venture makes Global Pitch Competition finals

GROVE CITY, Pa. (Oct. 28, 2022) – A company founded by Grove City College student entrepreneurs is a finalist in a nationwide pitch competition with a \$20,000 prize package.

In a bid to win some of that cash to advance the company's business plan, junior Luke Gilligan will make the case for Resense in person this weekend in Chicago at the Collegiate Entrepreneurs Organization's 39th Annual Global Pitch Competition.

Gilligan, an Entrepreneurship major from Fishers, Ind., is CEO of Resense LLC, which was founded in a Grove City College entrepreneurship class and fostered by the Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation's VentureLab program. Resense created and markets the Memory Box, an activity toolkit designed to increase brain health, exercise the senses, and elicit long term memories for those with Alzheimer's and dementia.

In the last year, the company has placed Memory Boxes in four care facilities and is working on a strategic partnership with one care network to distribute the toolkits nationally and internationally, Gilligan said.

"So far, we have bootstrapped this company. However, for this deal to be successful, we would benefit greatly from funds from this competition to help purchase inventory, hire interns, and increase product development to implement this deal," he said.

Resense is one of 20 ventures that made the Collegiate Entrepreneurs Organization (CEO) competition's semi-finals out of more than 500 entries from student entrepreneurs. Competitors completed an online startup pitch deck that lays out the problem their product or service addresses and how it offers a solution, details a business model and revenue projections, explains how it would use Global Pitch Competition funding to advance the business, and presents a 90-second video pitch. Judges reviewed the pitch decks and evaluated each venture based on a variety of criteria with a focus on the growth potential of the company. In Chicago, finalists will deliver a five-minute pitch and stand for a Q&A session on the main stage of CEO's Global Conference.

Resense, a 2022 VentureLab company, has achieved a solid record in pitch competitions on campus and around the country, according to Yvonne J. English, executive director of The Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation and professor of entrepreneurship.

The company has been a national finalist in the Washington University of St. Louis' Olin Business School's BIG IdeaBounce contest, won 5th place and \$10K at e-Fest (Schulze School of Entrepreneurship and EIX.org) at the University of St. Thomas, and placed Top 42 of the TCU Values and Ventures Competition. Resense earned second place and fan favorite in the 2021 Wolverine Venture Battle at Grove City College.

"We have seen the mission of Resense resonate with people from all walks of life. Luke and his team have clearly identified a problem in the market, and Resense's success on the competition circuit is validation that their solution to the problem has merit," English said. "We are incredibly proud of the team's early wins and have been excited by the moving testimonials from caregivers who have successfully used the Resense Memory Box with loved ones."



NEWS FROM GROVE CITY COLLEGE

For immediate release

Contact: Nick Hildebrand, Senior Editor Marketing & Communications
724.458.2155, 724.967.1431, nahildebrand@gcc.edu

Finalists selected for Elevator Pitch Competition

GROVE CITY, Pa. (Nov. 4, 2022) – The Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation at Grove City College's 16th annual Elevator Pitch Competition finals are set for 7 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 9 in Sticht Lecture Hall of the Staley Hall of Arts and Letters on campus.

The event is free and open to the public. It will be livestreamed at gccentrepreneurship.com.

The Elevator Pitch Competition (EPC) provides student entrepreneurs an opportunity to “pitch” their ideas for a new commercial or social enterprise to judges in a two-stage contest. Each student has two minutes – about the time it takes to ride in an elevator with a deep-pocketed investor – to convince the judges that their ideas have merit and potential.

“A record number of students registered for this year’s Elevator Pitch Competition, which is an exciting indication that our students are brimming with ideas to address existing problems ranging from those smaller problems that are found in daily life to more serious problems affecting our world. The Elevator Pitch Competition is always a fun and inspirational event, and we’re blessed to have so many people come together to review ideas, help our students hone their pitches, and to produce the event,” Yvonne J. English, executive director of The Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation and professor of entrepreneurship, said.

One hundred and fifty-six students from 30 different majors registered for the EPC and submitted video pitches for commercial and social enterprises that were evaluated by a team of 69 reviewers in the preliminary round.

Fifteen finalists from eight different majors were selected for the final round in two divisions:

Commercial Enterprise

- Color by Note – Naomi Ng '26, Design and Innovation. Coloring books matched to classical music. Cinq – Joe Gray '23, Entrepreneurship. A social network that gives people friends and plans. Flyer – Caleb Einolf '26, Design and Innovation. An app that combines school information, grades, and communication.
- Gunslingers – Ayden Gutierrez '24, Communication Arts. An app that allows young quarterbacks to train from the best in the game.
- MadeFree – Sarah Welker '24, Design and Innovation. An allergen-free protein bar.

- Stradivarius Tuning – Jacob Huber '26, Electrical Engineering. String pickups to assist all elements of playing.
- Ease for Ears – Megan Dewing '26, Political Science. Replacement aviator headset ear cushions for pilots.
- Breathe Easy – Nicholas Heltzel '26, undeclared. Breathing product to help suffering athletes during play.
- SoloCollar – Shelton Brower '24, Marketing. An electronic dog collar.

Social Enterprise

- Book N Bullet Foundation – Luke Mantzell '24, Entrepreneurship and Finance. Dedicated to fixing the declining hunting population.
- Rarefinds – Mara Brak '26, Design and Innovation. An e-commerce marketplace catering to petite women.
- Art on Wheels – Mary Golias '26, Design and Innovation. Serving low-income communities with art education and spiritual support.
- Adopt a Golfer – Benjamin Lockwood '23, Finance. Connecting at-risk youth with golf mentors.
- Safety Net – Ella Medairy '25, Design and Innovation. An app that allows you to make your location known when you are unable to.
- Revelare – Rachel Petschke '26, Design and Innovation. A newsletter that reveals greenwashing.

The pitches will be heard by three judges: Tim Daigle '84, senior business advisor, AXIA Consulting; Carrisa Habsburg '11, tax director, Sisterson & Co LLP; and Brian Gongaware '92, principal, regional managing director, and director of advisory services, McKinley Carter Wealth Services, Inc.

Dorene Powell, vice president, The Grove City Foundation, will determine which enterprise wins the Social Impact Prize.

The Fan Favorite award will be determined by a vote of the audience, both in person and online.

The EPC is open to students from all majors and ideas may be at any stage of development, from creation of concepts or ideas to an established venture. The goal is to teach students to communicate effectively and allow their charisma and positive characteristics to shine through in just a short pitch. The competition demonstrates the networking and presentation skills essential to any entrepreneur or business professional.

EPC sponsors include Beans on Broad and the Grove City Foundation, an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio.

NEWS FROM GROVE CITY COLLEGE

For immediate release

Contact: Nick Hildebrand, Senior Editor Marketing & Communications
724.458.2155, 724.967.1431, nhildebrand@gcc.edu

Six students take home Elevator Pitch Competition prizes

GROVE CITY, Pa. (Nov. 16, 2022) – Grove City College’s Elevator Pitch Competition (EPC), sponsored by Beans on Broad, challenges entrepreneurial students to effectively sell potential investors on a venture and to do it very quickly. Each student has just two minutes to convince a panel of judges that their ideas have both merit and the potential to turn a profit.

Since 2007, the College’s Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation (E+I) has hosted the competition and some of the winners turned their EPC ideas into growing businesses. The “elevator” pitch is a frequently used term, which literally means “tell me about your new venture within the time it would take to ride up an elevator.”

The 2022 edition was held Wednesday, Nov. 9 as fifteen finalists made their pitches to a panel of three expert judges while an in-person and online audience watched. The finalists were selected from a pool of more than 150 students who prepared video pitches for the competition by a team of volunteer alumni evaluators. With a packed house in Sticht Auditorium and approximately 500 individuals tuning in online, student participants were presenting to a wide-reaching audience.

Junior Luke Mantzell, a Finance and Entrepreneurship major from West Middlesex, Pa., cleaned up, taking first place in the Social Enterprise category, and winning the Social Impact and Fan Favorite awards with his pitch for the Book N Bullet Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to addressing the declining hunting population.

That decline, he said, “raises a huge problem in the conservation world of not enough hunters or predators to manage the growing deer population.” He proposed an effort to increase the hunting population through education and mentorship.

Mantzell says he isn’t sure if he’s going to take Book N Bullet any further than the EPC, but said he is trying to get his pitch video to the Pennsylvania Game Commission to gauge interest in the idea. “Depending on responses, I could be moving forward with the idea to turn this idea into real life. The next steps are: to be continued...,” he said. Mantzell took home \$850 for his efforts.

Following Mantzell in the Social Enterprise category were: Mary Golias, a freshman Design and Innovation major, in second place with her pitch for Art on Wheels, a business serving low-income communities with art education and spiritual support; and Benjamin Lockwood, a senior Finance major, in third with Adopt a Golfer, a venture that connects at-risk youth with golf mentors. Golias took a \$400 prize and Lockwood netted \$300.

In the Commercial Enterprise category, Shelton Brower, a junior Marketing major, won first place and \$500 with SoloCollar, an electronic dog collar. Junior Design and Innovation major Sarah Welker’s pitch for MadeFree, an allergen-free protein bar, won second place and \$400 and senior Entrepreneurship major Joe Gray took third place and \$300 with Cliqz, a social network that gives people friends and plans.

The \$250 Social Impact Prize was sponsored by the Grove City Foundation, an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio, and presented by Dorene Powell, vice president of the foundation. An audience vote determined the \$100 Fan Favorite Award, and nearly 400 votes were received in total.

"The Grove City Foundation was excited to encourage the development of the next generation of philanthropists through the sponsorship of the Social Impact Prize for the Elevator Pitch Competition. Luke Mantzell's pitch for his Book N Bullet Foundation is a great example of how a creative social enterprise can address challenges specific to the unique culture of a community or region," Powell said. "We look forward to seeing the impact these students make as they take their ideas and put them into action."

The competition was open to students from all majors and ideas could be at any stage of development from creation of concepts or ideas to an established venture. The goal of the EPC is to teach students to communicate effectively and allow their charisma and positive characteristics to shine through in just a short pitch. It demonstrates the networking and presentation skills essential to any entrepreneur or business professional.

"This year's competition was a tremendous success, with students from 30 different majors actively participating. This broad reach of participation effectively highlights our center's mission to serve students of all majors on campus," said Logan Hammerschmitt '16, campus director for the Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation. "Providing students with the opportunity to pitch their original ideas in front of hundreds of viewers, both in-person and online, gives them valuable experience and exposure. Our panel of judges was very impressed by the aptitude of those presenting, and we can't thank them enough for giving so generously of their time and knowledge to help make this year's competition a success."

Judges were Tim Daigle '84, senior business advisor, AXIA Consulting; Carrisa Habsburg '11, tax director, Sisterson & Co LLP; and Brian Gongaware '92, principal, regional managing director, and director of advisory services, McKinley Carter Wealth Services, Inc.

Volunteer reviewers in the first round of the competition were: Alexandria Bailey '20, Tiffany Bicek '18, Chris Botting '83, Mark Brody '83, Abigail Brothers '21, Leslie Craven '94, Craig Creaturo '92, Daniel Creston '81, Kris Deemer '90, Ruth Entwistle '07, Sondra Fisher '82, Kim Ford '72, Collin Foster '12, Sandy Frederick '96, Jennifer Gilliland, Curt Given '84, Alex Graham '67, Glenn Grossman, Victoria Hassett '12, Ethan Hayward '20, Lindy Hitzel '19, Calvin Holston '05, John Holt '84, Heather Hondel '20, Edward Huttenhower '76, Melissa Jacobs '92, Barbara Johnson '79, Bob Keller '73, Sharon LeJeune '89, Beth Lepore '96, Robert Lewis '03, Don Lockhart '67, Amanda MacIsaac '05, Kim Marks '04, Beth Marraccini '96, Dean Marraccini '93, Paul Marshall '78, Wendy Marshall '81, Elaina McClure '18, Scott McDowell '87, Winifred McGee '77, Alan Mesches '71, Ronald Miller '75, Brian Montgomery '96, Garrison Moore '11, Jeff Moxie '80, Curt Newill '67, Elisabeth O'Brien '16, Susan Parrett '01, Robin Parsons '87, Michael Pentz '06, Warren Poschman '98, Patricia Premick '84, Dianne Ruhl '89, Joshua Sauer '15, Charles (Bob) Scott '72, Alissa Sgro '96, Mark Smith '83, Zachary Smith '15, Steve Solman '96, Heather Starcher '81, Cameron Suorsa '21, Allyson Sveda '88, Jill Sweet '85, Ron Templeton '12, Ann Thomas '93, James Will '98, Lesley Winfield '92, and Allison Ziegler '17.

EPC sponsors include Beans on Broad and the Grove City Foundation, an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio.

To watch a recording of the event or learn more about The Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation, visit gccentrepreneurship.com.

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Contact: Nick Hildebrand, Senior Editor Marketing & Communications
724.458.2155, 724.967.1431, nahildebrand@gcc.edu

Winners of SAFR Challenge announced

GROVE CITY, Pa. (Dec. 9, 2022) – The Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation (E+I) and the Department of Physics at Grove City College announced the winners of the inaugural SAFR Challenge Final Round.

The SAFR (Strain and Force Reduction) Challenge tasks teams of students with developing and building a headband designed to reduce the prevalence of concussions in collegiate soccer players. The Challenge, previously designed by physics Professor Dr. Shane Brower as a lab for students in his SCIC 201: Fundamentals of the Universe class at Grove City College, has developed into an on-stage pitch competition with the help of E+I. It also now includes a division for homeschool and cyber school students. There are cash prizes for both divisions.

The Challenge provides students training in the scientific method in an applied format and – critical for the high school-aged home and cyber school students, an opportunity to work with scientific equipment in a laboratory setting. The partnership with E+I adds the excitement of a public competition that affords students communication, networking, and presentation skills essential to entrepreneurs and business professionals.

The top teams from both divisions faced off in a live challenge in October that was judged by the Grove City College Women's Soccer Team, Grove City College entrepreneurship professors, and Faith Henriquez, concussion care advocate and author of "Goodbye Concussion."

The winning Grove City College teams are:

- First Place – Strike: Ransom Coffeen '24, Jacob McGuire '24, and Shelton Brower '24. \$100 each.
- Second Place – Match Fit 360: Jessie Billante '23, Thomas Botkin '23, and Gianna D'Amato '24. \$75 each.
- Third Place – HardHat Headband: Amber Flynn '24, Kacie Elmer '24, and Ashley During '25. \$50 each.

The winning junior and senior high teams are:

- First Place – Shield: Chalina and Cheylan Brower, Boyers, Pa., and Mary Graybill, Grove City. \$50 each.
- Second Place – Concussion Care: Abiella Barbour, Stoneboro, Pa., Jaden Butler, Clinton, Pa., and Elizabeth Fraley, New Wilmington, Pa. \$40 each.
- Third Place – X-Factor: Abby Bonaquist, Hermitage, Pa., Paul Hardesty, Beaver, Pa., and Jill Thiele, Butler, Pa. \$30 each.

The SAFR Challenge represents a collaboration between the College's science and entrepreneurship programs that demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of discovery and innovation. E+I serves to provide students of all majors with practical skills and hands-on experiences that prepare them to innovate and succeed in their chosen field.

"One primary goal of this competition is to help students understand the essential role of non-STEM professionals in helping to solve STEM-related problems," Brower said. "A collaboration with the folks at E+I was a natural fit, based on their extensive experience working with majors from a wide array of disciplines; and their expertise significantly enhanced the excitement level and overall learning impact of the experience."



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724.458.2155, 724.967.1431, nahildebrand@gcc.edu

'Shark Tank' veteran, Puppy Cake founder is Staley speaker

GROVE CITY, Pa. (March 27, 2023) – Grove City College's Richard G. Staley '62 Visionary Entrepreneur Speaker Series features alumna and entrepreneur Kelly Costello '07 at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 29 in Sticht Lecture Hall of the Staley Hall of Arts and Letters.

Costello, Owner and Founder of Puppy Cake LLC, will present "I Survived the Shark Tank — A GCC Entrepreneur's Success Story." Costello has seen her business grow from the kitchen of her apartment to a 20,000-square-foot factory that cranks out cake mixes and treats geared for dogs.

In 2007, Costello, an International Business major, was looking at old cake mix advertisements for a client. "Wouldn't it be great if they made that for dogs?" she thought. That was her light bulb moment. Costello's big break came in 2012 when she appeared on television's "Shark Tank." The exposure and advice she received there was the springboard to take the company to the next level. Little by little, Puppy Cake grew and began launching a whole line of treats. Since 2013, all their products are made in their factory in Portersville, Pa.

Joining Costello will be Matt Orley '97, Owner and Founder at Big Paper Strategy, who does live illustrations. During the lecture, Matt will create a large graphic drawing that will provide a backdrop for lively group conversation, fun, and clarity and will bring color, holistic understanding and visual energy to the event.

"We're thrilled to relaunch our Richard G. Staley '62 Visionary Entrepreneur Speaker Series this year with two alumni showcasing their very different businesses. From hearing about Kelly's Shark Tank journey to watching Matt Orley visually record that journey in front of their eyes, the audience should have a fun and inspirational evening," said Yvonne J. English, Executive Director and Entrepreneur in Residence for The Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation (E+I).

The series, endowed in 2013, brings successful entrepreneurs – and the lessons they learned – to Grove City College to share their insights and wisdom. Staley, a chemical engineering major during his time at Grove City College, pursued his entrepreneurial dream in 1977 when he founded Flavor House, a leading flavoring and extract manufacturer.

The series is presented by E+I, which serves GCC students of all majors and promotes entrepreneurship and innovation across the campus. The event is open to campus and community and can also be viewed via livestream at <https://gccentrepreneurship.com/staley-speaker-series/>



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Contact: Nick Hildebrand, Senior Editor Marketing & Communications

724.458.2155, 724.967.1431, nahildebrand@gcc.edu

eCommerce class raises cash for regional charities

GROVE CITY, Pa. (April 6, 2023) – Grove City College students raised more than \$4,900 for area charities as part of an Entrepreneurship class that teaches students how to create, market and sell products online.

The donations are the proceeds of businesses that students started in the eCommerce course taught by Yvonne J. English '97, professor and executive director of the College's Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation (E+I). Students learned about the essential components of a successful online enterprise, in part, through working in teams to design and operate their own digital businesses during the semester.

"This year's class had a variety of interests and really went the extra mile to serve their charities while learning how to start and run real eCommerce ventures," English said. "I'm so proud of their impressive results and am excited about the good work that my students were able to support in the local community."

In all, four student businesses raised \$4,939.41, leading to donations totaling \$4,280.99 to charities selected by the teams.

- Spice of Life – Zero calorie sugar-free spices to add to coffee or tea produced and marketed by Jake Holt '24, David Kraus '23, Logan Mays '24, and Oliver Schwarz '25. Proceeds benefit Community Food Warehouse of Mercer County, Pa.
- Faros Initiative – Handmade wristwear products crafted to raise awareness of human trafficking made and marketed by Jacob Graham '24, Joey Guida '24, Peter Judge '25, and David Lugo '25. Proceeds benefit Refuge for Women Pittsburgh.
- Such Things Leather – Leather handcrafted goods that support the local and global church produced and marketed by Ethan David '24, Caroline Dawson '25, Gabe Dunlap '24, and Luke Mantzell '24. Proceeds benefit Truth and Grace Fellowship, Hermitage, Pa.
- Silky Locks – Silk scrunchies that improve the look and feel of hair and prevent breakage, frizz, and scalp soreness made and marketed by Katie Blendermann '24, Emma O'Toole '23, Dylan Sim '23, and Tessa Stewart '25. Proceeds benefit The Pink Pamper, a Pittsburgh nonprofit that serves women with cancer.

The student businesses were featured at Venture Village during last year's Homecoming celebration. Over the last six classes, eCommerce businesses have generated \$37,066.09 with \$21,339.77 going to local charities.

Grove City College's Entrepreneurship program, which includes both the academic Department of Entrepreneurship and the Center for E+I, which serves students of all majors, is recognized as a national model for other colleges and universities by the United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship. The Department of Entrepreneurship is part of Grove City College's School of Business.



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724.458.2155, 724.967.1431, nahildebrand@gcc.edu

Students make final 8 at Values and Ventures

GROVE CITY, Pa. (*April 18, 2023*) – A team of Grove City College student entrepreneurs rose nearly to the top at the TCU Neely Values and Ventures Competition, held last month at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

After several rounds of pitching Resense, a venture created in class and fostered through the College's Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation, the students placed in the top eight at the finals, reaching the final round and placing them in the top 3% of competitors nationwide.

The Resense team was one of 42 invited to the national undergraduate entrepreneurship contest that boasted a top prize of \$40,000. Resense was one of eight teams that survived the first round of the competition, taking home a \$2,500 prize.

As a result of their performance, the team has been invited to compete in The Fowler Global Social Innovation Challenge this summer at University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis, Minn.

"We are so proud of this team not only for the success that they achieved at the Values and Ventures Competition, but also for the impact they are having on the world. They are actively working to make the world a better place, and we couldn't be happier to support their efforts to do so," said Logan Hammerschmitt, campus director of the Center for E+I, who traveled with the team to Fort Worth.

The Values and Ventures Competition focuses on for-profit enterprises that specifically impact society in meaningful ways.

Resense created and markets the Connect + Comfort Kit, an activity toolkit for those with Alzheimer's and dementia that consists of multiple different restorative products designed to improve brain health, exercise the senses, and elicit long-term memories, according to junior Luke Gilligan, CEO, and leader of the Resense team, which also included junior Logan Mays and sophomore Oliver Schwarz. The Resense Register, a first-of-its-kind dementia-friendly newspaper, is also produced by the company. Resense's products are currently being used in care communities across the nation, providing comfort and joy to those living with Alzheimer's and dementia.

Resense is part of E+I's VentureLaunch cohort and was previously a VentureLab enterprise. The programs are designed to encourage and empower student entrepreneurs of any major at Grove City College.

VentureLab is an early-stage business and social enterprise idea feasibility lab that provides funding and guidance to aspiring entrepreneurs regarding the exploration and development of new ventures based on their own original concepts. It serves as a valuable starting point for innovation and enables entrepreneurs to gauge the feasibility of their ideas in a supportive environment.

The VentureLaunch program affords student run businesses the opportunity to grow and explore new opportunities with the support of coaches, mentors, and pre-approved expense reimbursements.

VentureLaunch teams must be ready to form a legal entity to be admitted to the program.



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Contact: Nick Hildebrand, Senior Editor Marketing & Communications
724.458.2155, 724.967.1431, nahildebrand@gcc.edu

Wolverine Venture Battle excitement reaching a fever pitch

GROVE CITY, Pa. (*April 24, 2023*) – Nine teams of student entrepreneurs will face off for their share of a prize package of over \$25,000 in cash plus in-kind services in the 2023 Wolverine Venture Battle (WVB).

The business pitch contest is one of Grove City College's tentpole entrepreneurship events. Open to students from all majors, the WVB provides invaluable experience for aspiring entrepreneurs and a crucial test for their ideas.

The final round of the battle is set for 12:45 p.m. Friday, April 28 in Sticht Lecture Hall of the Staley Hall of Arts and Letters on campus. The event, presented by the College's Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation, is free and open to the public. A live stream will be available on E+I's website.

Each team advancing to the finals made it through a rigorous evaluation by 56 independent reviewers, who scored the teams' pitches based on criteria such as their solution to a real problem, their forecasted costs and revenue, and their competitive advantage.

"The teams scored so closely in the second round this year that we decided to expand the number of finalists from seven to nine," said Yvonne J. English '97, Executive Director of the Center for E+I. "This, coupled with the fact that we have a record number of junior judges from high schools joining us, will make for an even more exciting final round!"

The finalists are:

- Athletes After – Justin DeMild '24 and Max Muncy '24 – A sports recruitment platform designed to help give high school athletes the power and information they need.
- Bridge – Elliot Eyre '24, Maura Donatelli '24, and Caleb Warrick '24 – A creative media and networking platform for those in the music industry.
- Cliqz – Joe Gray '24 – A social network designed to take people from bored in their apartments to out and doing things in as few clicks as possible.
- Folded Hands – Dillon Werstiuk '23, David Kraus '23, and Avalon Parsons '23 – An application that allows members of a congregation to connect with their pastor and other members of their church to engage in prayer.
- Just Pause – Luke Gilligan '24 and Mark Wilhelm '23 – An accountability and companion app for individuals living with bipolar disorder.
- PrayReal – Grace Anne Shaw '24, Cade Voller '26, Jack Bowery '26, Ally Gaines '25, and Sarah Anderson '25 – A faith-based social media platform that connects you with your Christian friends when you respond to a daily, spontaneous notification to pray.

- Sabbatica – Jake Botkin '23, Grant Baierl '23, and Rachel Goetz '24 – Provides a three- to five-day micro-sabbatical program that aims to rest, refresh, and rejuvenate burnt out employees and pastors.
- Songbird – Jenna Knepper '25, Zach Warrick '26, Rachel Petschke '26, Aliyah Shelatz '25, and Addison Byers '24 – A gamified education app that teaches music to students with special needs.
- Virtual Clarity – Anna Ortiz '24 and Emma Ruby Whiteford '24 – Virtual reality technology for behavioral health units and those experiencing depression.

Teams have eight minutes to make their pitches to a panel of judges with wide and diverse business experience. To mimic real-world investment scenarios, the finalist teams will pitch to a panel of judges in front of a live audience in the WVB.

Based on the case the students have made and a brief question and answer session, the judges will decide how much, if any, of the prize pool to “invest” in the teams’ ideas. Each judge can award their share of the prize pool to the team or teams of their own choosing.

“This competition has been designed to simulate the real world of investment,” said Logan Hammerschmitt '16, campus director for the Center for E+I. “In the real world, both businesses and non-profits compete for an investor’s money, and those investors can choose to distribute their funds however they see fit. This creates a highly competitive atmosphere where every team has a chance to win the whole prize pool. It’s our cornerstone event at E+I each year.”

High school groups have been invited to participate in the competition as Jr. Judges/Investors. Each Jr. Judge will have an allotted amount of money to “invest” in the team of their choice. There are 14 school/programs coming to campus for the Jr. Judge program and they will play a vital role in the competition.

The WVB will be livestreamed on E+I’s website and online viewers will also have a chance to vote for the winner of a \$500 Fan Favorite award.

Judges are Dan Creston '81, Pete Durfee '80, RJ Fryan '08, Matthew W. Gordon, Connor Grieb '18, Grace Hovis '19, Josh Newton '09, Paul Passaro, Mark Pentz '81, Michael Pentz '06, and Brad Schake.

Sponsors include: Davevic Benefit Consultants; Wesley Family Services; Armstrong; the Habbershon Family: Tim '81, Grant '06, Meredith '07, Jonathan '09 and Natalie '11; John & Betsy Baun Charitable Foundation (Pittsburgh Foundation); Dan Creston '81; Susan (Peshek '81) and Peter Durfee '80; Laura (Koller '11) and RJ Fryan '08; Connor Grieb '18, the Kiska Family: Stan '85, Deanna '87, Evan '20 and Lauren; The Newton Family: Rick '86, Terrie '85, Josh '09, Anna '17, Jesse '19, Josiah '24, and Abigail; Elisabeth O'Brien '16, Paul Passaro; The Pentz Family: Mark '81, Cheri '79, Michael '06, Yvonne '06; Peter and Elizabeth (Smith '81) Hanley; Cedric E. Lewis, JD/MBA, Pittsburgh Web Design; and Sisterson & Co.



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724.458.2155, 724.967.1431, nahildebrand@gcc.edu

Entrepreneurship team makes e-Fest national finals

GROVE CITY, Pa. (April 26, 2023) – A team of aspiring entrepreneurs from Grove City College will be competing for investment cash later this week in a national competition to find the next big idea.

More than \$200,000 is up for grabs this weekend at e-Fest, an event hosted by the Schulze School of Entrepreneurship at the University of St. Thomas, Minn., that seeks to encourage undergraduate entrepreneurs and support their ventures.

Junior Luke Gilligan of Fishers, Ind., and senior Mark Wilhelm of Lancaster, Pa., are hoping to win some of that money to continue working on Just Pause, a companion app for individuals living with bipolar disorder. Just Pause monitors individuals' spending and other signs of manic episodes. When it recognizes an episode, the app will text a designated "accountability partner" and freeze accounts for extra protection.

"I am incredibly pleased with the work that this team of students has done to build this business from scratch over the past semester," said Logan Hammerschmitt '16, campus director for the Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation, who will accompany the team to Minnesota. "They are working hard to not only create a company that makes the world a better place for those living with bipolar disorder, but also to bring awareness to a mental health issue that plagues so many."

They are among 25 national finalists for e-Fest, a competition in which student teams pitch their business idea to a panel of judges that includes Best Buy founder Richard M. "Dick" Schulze, for whom the school is named. The winning team will take home \$50,000 to help get its venture up and running. Side competitions and special awards push the prize total for e-Fest to \$215,000.

"Just Pause is a great example of the Grove City College entrepreneurial ecosystem in action. The students were able to take an idea that was developed in a class all the way to our Wolverine Venture Battle and a national competition. We're excited to see how far this team can go in their pursuit to serve others," said Yvonne J. English '97, executive director of the Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation.

Just Pause was developed through Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship Kenneth E. Smith's business planning course and fostered by Grove City College's Entrepreneurship program, which includes The Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation and the academic department in the School of Business.

This is the fourth year in a row that a team from the College has made the e-Fest finals. In 2022, Gilligan was part of a team that won \$10,000 in the competition. In addition to the pitch competition, the event provides students opportunities to gain experience, hone their entrepreneurial skills, and network with their peers, professionals, and investors.

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Contact: Nick Hildebrand, Senior Editor, Marketing & Communications

724.458.2155, 724.967.1431, nahildebrand@gcc.edu

Wolverine Venture Battle pays off for competitors

GROVE CITY, Pa. (May 8, 2023) – Wolverine Venture Battle judges could not resist Songbird's call. They awarded the music education app's developers the largest share of the prize money at stake in this year's Grove City College Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation (E+I) contest.

Nine teams of student entrepreneurs made the final round of the annual business venture competition and last week they competed for a piece of a prize package worth over \$25,000 in cash and in-kind services. Judges who heard the students make their case for their ventures decided how much of the prize pool to "invest" in each team.

The final round took place in Sticht Lecture Hall on Friday, April 28. Fifty high school students from 14 schools/programs participated as "Junior Judges" and were each given a small allotment of money to allocate to the team of their choice.

Songbird was the big winner, taking home \$6,050 in prizes. The team consists of Jenna Knepper '25, Zach Warrick '26, Rachel Petschke '26, Aliyah Shelatz '25, and Addison Byers '24. Songbird is a gamified education app that teaches music to students with special needs.

"I am so thrilled that other people are as passionate about the idea of Songbird as my team and I are! The Wolverine Venture Battle was an amazing experience and I'm so thankful to have a hardworking team and inspiring teachers," Knepper said.

Other teams receiving cash prizes were:

- Just Pause (Luke Gilligan '24 and Mark Wilhelm '23) – \$4,240 – A companion app for individuals living with bipolar disorder.
- Bridge (Elliot Eyre '24, Maura Donatelli '24, and Caleb Warrick '24) – \$4,100 – A creative media and networking platform for those in the music industry.
- Athletes After (Justin DeMild '24 and Max Muncy '24) – \$3,650 – A sports recruitment platform designed to help give high school athletes the power and information they need.
- Cliqz (Joe Gray '24) – \$2,760 – A social network designed to take people from bored in their apartments to out and doing things in as few clicks as possible.
- Virtual Clarity (Anna Ortiz '24 and Emma Ruby Whiteford '24) – \$1,900 – Virtual reality technology for behavioral health units and those experiencing depression.
- Folded Hands (Dillon Werstiuk '23, David Kraus '23, Avalon Parsons '23, and Sean Matthews '23) – \$1,600 – An application that allows members of a congregation to connect with their pastor and other members of their church to engage in prayer.
- PrayReal (Grace Anne Shaw '24, Cade Voller '26, Jack Bowery '26, Ally Gaines '25, and Sarah Anderson '25) – \$1,520 – A faith-based social media platform that connects you with your Christian friends when you respond to a daily, spontaneous notification to pray.

- Sabbatica (Jake Botkin '23, Grant Baierl '23, and Rachel Goetz '24) – \$300 – Provides a three-to-five-day micro-sabbatical program that aims to rest, refresh, and rejuvenate burnt out employees and pastors.

Two teams tied for the Fan Favorite Award, which is determined by in-person and online viewers of the competition. Songbird and Bridge each won an additional \$500 as the top vote getters.

“This year’s event was both exciting and suspenseful as it’s the first time I wasn’t able to predict which team would win the most money and the Wolverine Venture Battle Grand Champion Title! I left feeling inspired by the passion and vision of the competitors,” said Yvonne J. English, Executive Director for E+I and Entrepreneur-in-Residence.

For many finalists, the competition often marks the culmination of their journey through an entrepreneurial ecosystem created and managed by E+I. The prize money and in-kind services may help them fuel their commercial or social venture after graduation.

Each team that advanced to the finals made it through a rigorous evaluation by 56 independent reviewers, who scored the teams’ pitches based on criteria such as their solution to a real problem, their forecasted costs and revenue, and their competitive advantage.

Reviewers this year were: Freddie Bremble '80, Allyson Sveda '88, Dean Faklis, Bob Baierl, Liam Krut '14, Winifred McGee '77, Alan Mesches '71, Jennifer Gilliland, Alissa Sgro '96, Lesley Winfield '92, Rob Wright '04, Paul Marshall '78, Edward Huttenhower '76, Scott Brainard '76, Chris Botting '83, Brad Dearborn '78, Tiffany Bicek '18, Kim Ford '72, Melissa Jacobs '92, Evan Lowe '89, Scott McDowell '87, Ronald Miller '75, John Romain '85, Steve Wickman, Lindy Hitzel '19, Toby Basalla '98, Steve Solman '96, Frances Baldwin, Sandy Frederick, Glenn Grossman, Kim Marks, Chloe Sayers '15, Ron Emery, Brian Gongaware '92, Warren Poschman '98, Craig Creaturo '92, Scott Inderbitzen '10, John Holt '84, William Messner '96, Ruth Entwistle '07, Beth Lepore, Brian Montgomery '96, Robin Parsons, Dianne Ruhl '89, Tim Tobitsch '03, Joshua Weatherstone '15, Curt Given '84, Alex Graham '67, Bob Keller '73, James Will '98, Patricia Premick '84, Barbara Johnson '79, Charles (Bob) Scott '72, Andrew Ellison, Collin Foster '12, and Don Lockhart '67.

Judges were Dan Creston '81, Pete Durfee '80, RJ Fryan '08, Matthew W. Gordon, Connor Grieb '18, Grace Hovis '19, Josh Newton '09, Paul Passaro, Mark Pentz '81, Michael Pentz '06, and Brad Schake.

Sponsors include: Davevic Benefit Consultants; Wesley Family Services; Armstrong; the Habbershon Family: Tim '81, Grant '06, Meredith '07, Jonathan '09 and Natalie '11; John & Betsy Baun Charitable Foundation (Pittsburgh Foundation); Dan Creston '81; Susan (Peshek '81) and Peter Durfee '80; Laura (Koller '11) and RJ Fryan '08; Connor Grieb '18, the Kiska Family: Stan '85, Deanna '87, Evan '20 and Lauren; The Newton Family: Rick '86, Terrie '85, Josh '09, Anna '17, Jesse '19, Josiah '24, and Abigail; Elisabeth O'Brien '16, The Passaro Family; The Pentz Family: Mark '81, Cheri '79, Michael '06, Yvonne '06; Peter and Elizabeth (Smith '81) Hanley; Cedric E. Lewis, JD/MBA, Pittsburgh Web Design; and Sisterson & Co.



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Entrepreneurs Who Serve The Common Good*



Yvonne J. English '97

*Entrepreneur in Residence + Executive Director, E+I
Professor of Practice, Department of Entrepreneurship*



Ken Smith '84

*Assistant Director, E+I
Assistant Professor, Department of Entrepreneurship*



Lynn Bashew '84

Program Manager, E+I



Logan Hammerschmitt '16

Campus Director, E+I

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