



# 2023 Fall Semester Report



## WHAT'S INSIDE

Recap of the major E+I programming and milestones from the Fall 2023 semester

# Summer Recap: May

## Resense films *Entrepreneur Elevator Pitch* show



Shortly after the spring semester concluded, Luke Gilligan '24 and Logan Mays '24 of Resense traveled to Deerfield Beach, Florida, where they filmed an episode of Entrepreneur Magazine's Entrepreneur Elevator Pitch, which some would argue is more difficult than Shark Tank!





# A Big Win for Resense



*Scan to watch  
the full pitch!*



The team had the opportunity to pitch to a panel of investors including Kim Perell, Jonathan Hung, and Marc Randolph. While they did not secure the investment they were seeking, they did receive a \$10,000 grant from Amazon Business, ensuring they could continue to operate and scale their business! To date, their episode of Elevator Pitch has been viewed over 1 million times on YouTube.

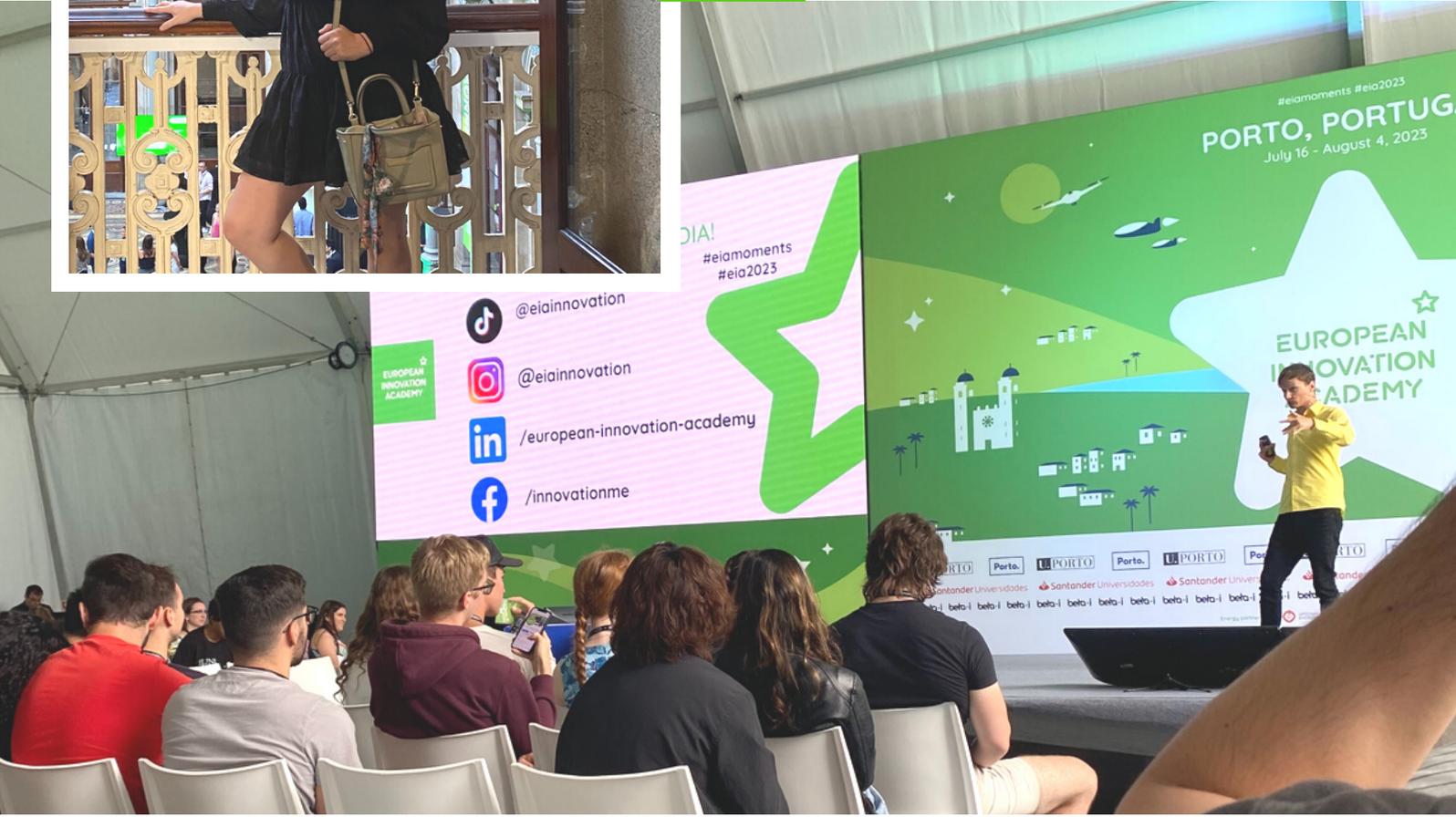


# Summer Recap: July-August European Innovation Academy (EIA)

EIA is a unique opportunity to spend three weeks immersed in entrepreneurial thinking in Porto, Portugal. This innovative program forces students to think outside the box as they form multi-cultural teams with other students from around the world to build a business in just three weeks!



★  
EUROPEAN  
INNOVATION  
ACADEMY



# A Life-Changing Experience



Ella Medairy '25 saw the opportunity to participate in EIA and immediately jumped on it. During her three weeks in Portugal, she joined a team of students, prototyped and built their idea, and pitched the final product to potential investors. The team that Ella joined was comprised of students from all over the United States (which is rare at EIA, as many students are from other countries). They worked extremely hard during the three-week competition and were given a special award by the competition mentors for all of their efforts.



Ella loved the ways she was able to apply her existing design skills to help her team and also learned to navigate the difficult realities of working on a startup concept. She described the experience as “life-changing” and highly recommends it to anyone who thinks they might be interested in attending!





# 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, community, and fun.



Students enjoyed the opportunity to spin the prize wheel for some E+I swag, and all in attendance got the chance to spin and win a prize!

The event drew a large crowd similar to last year's formidable showing, demonstrating the campus-wide interest in Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation programming.



# Homecoming



The always popular Venture Village tent at homecoming was a hit! Hundreds of alumni and friends filled the **1600 square foot tent** (our largest ever!) to chat with former classmates, learn about everything E+I has to offer, and explore the **eleven student and alumni businesses** on display from the E-Commerce class and beyond.

# Major Collaboration with STEM



## SAFR CHALLENGE

PHYSICS INNOVATION COMPETITION  
AT GROVE CITY COLLEGE

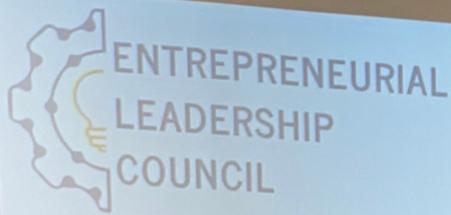


In collaboration with Dr. Shane Brower of the GCC Department of Physics, E+I hosted the second annual SAFR Challenge, a competition that tasked students with developing a headband to reduce the prevalence of concussions in soccer players. Student teams competed for cash prizes, and the competition was fierce!



## Faith Driven Entrepreneur Conference Watch Party

As part of our ongoing connection with the Faith Driven movement, E+I hosted a watch party for the Faith Driven Entrepreneur Conference. Students in attendance were blown away by the inspiring stories and quality content provided during the conference!



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COUNCIL

# Welcome



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Matthew  
Pfeich



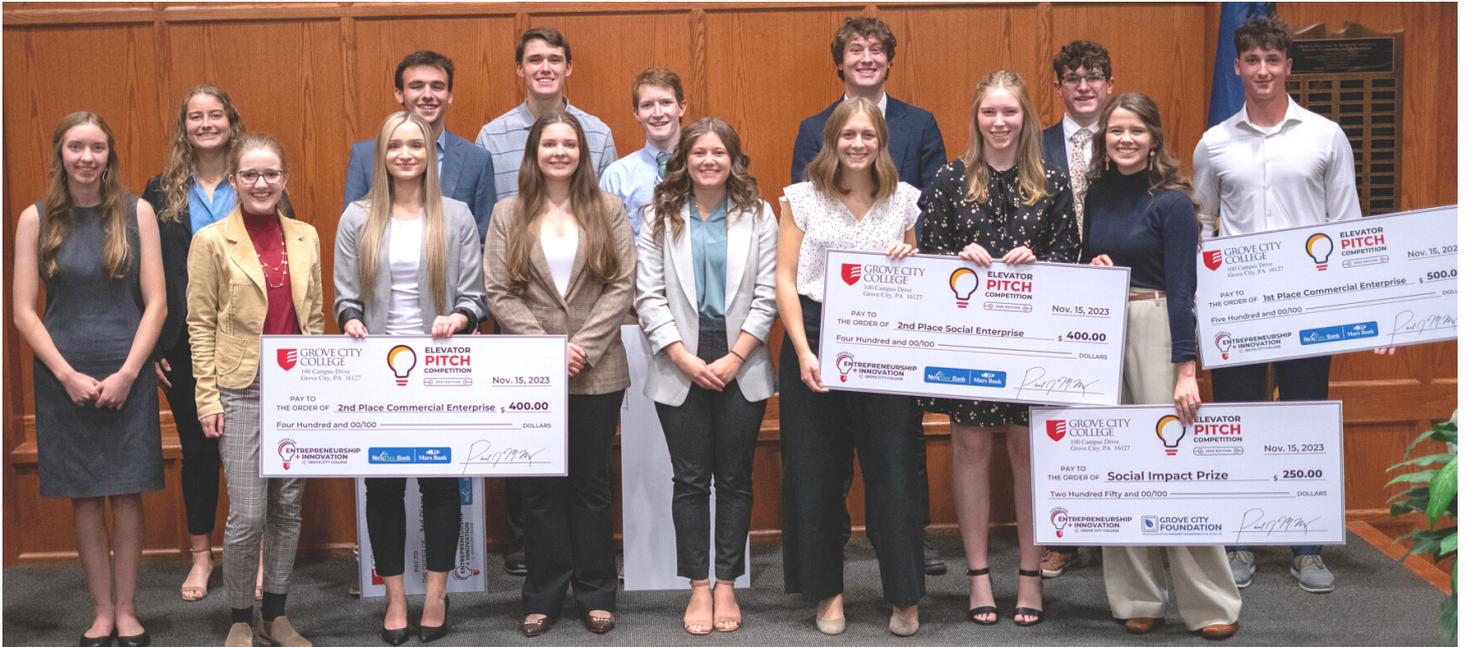
Gus



## Entrepreneurial Leadership Council (ELC) Corporate Innovation Night



Students attended Corporate Innovation Night, an evening focused on innovation-related opportunities at existing companies in Pittsburgh, presented by the ELC. Students heard from innovation leaders at companies like Sheetz, Covestro, and Koppers regarding their corporate innovation strategies.



# ELEVATOR PITCH COMPETITION

2023 EDITION

# 17th Annual EPC awards big prizes!



The 17th Annual Elevator Pitch Competition was enjoyed by all in attendance. Participation was high with **132 excited students** from **27 different majors** entering the competition by submitting a two-minute video of their pitch. Then, **63 generous reviewers** helped to narrow the field to **16 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 NexTier Bank + Mars Bank. As a nod to the 20th Anniversary of E+, the judges were Lynn Bashew '84 (current E+I Program Manager), Craig Columbus (former E+I Executive Director), and Tim Mech (former ENTR professor and social entrepreneur). The judging panel selected the winners from each category (commercial and social enterprise), but it certainly wasn't easy. In addition, 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 15, 2023, in Sticht Lecture Hall, was well-attended, both in person (**a packed house of over 150 attendees**) and via livestream (**385 live viewers from across the country**). Additionally, **Over 300 individuals cast their vote** for the Fan Favorite Prize!



## Commercial Enterprise Winners

1st Place: Ross Morrow '27  
*Cleat Caddy* (\$500)

2nd Place: Julia Kammetler '25  
*Scan Guard* (\$400)

3rd Place: Sam Hogue '25  
*StudentSync* (\$300)



## Social Enterprise Winners

1st Place: Garrett Gess '27  
*Grassroots Greenbacks* (\$500)

T-2nd Place: Reagan Mays '27  
*Hygiene Hive* (\$400)

T-2nd Place: Jenna Knepper '25  
*Restore the Word* (\$400)

T-2nd Place: Emma Ruby Whiteford '24  
*The Tapestry* (\$400)



## Social Impact Prize

Emma Ruby Whiteford '24  
*The Tapestry*

## Fan Favorite

Reagan Mays '27  
*Hygiene Hive*

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# E+I Celebrates 20th Anniversary

2023 was a milestone year for E+I as we celebrated our 20th anniversary. To mark this momentous occasion, we welcomed over 110 of our students, alumni, community members, and partners to a celebratory dinner on campus. The programming during the dinner provided a nod to the past and a peek at the future of what's in store for E+I in the coming years.



“It’s among the most impactful programs that the college has ever established for students.”

**Paul J. McNulty '80**  
President, Grove City College

“  
For all the people in the room  
who say “I’m dreaming big,” I  
say “dream bigger.”  
”

## Craig Columbus

CEO, Columbus Macro LLC  
Former Executive Director, E+I



The program, headlined by E+I Executive Director and Entrepreneur in Residence Yvonne English '97, highlighted the journey of E+I through the past 20 years and into the future, and featured students and partners whose lives have been touched by E+I in one way or another.

Topics included E+I programs such as VentureLaunch and the Wolverine Venture Battle, international opportunities like the European Innovation Academy, and partnerships in Pittsburgh such as the Faith Driven Network of Pittsburgh, in addition to brief commentary from our college president, Paul McNulty '80, our provost Peter Frank '95, and the chair of the Department of Entrepreneurship, Tim Sweet '85.



# VentureLab and VentureLaunch interest takes off!

During the fall semester, VentureLab and VentureLaunch made the transition from spring semester programs to year-round programs with rolling admission. It had become clear that the demand for coaching, mentorship, and expense reimbursement funding had expanded beyond just the spring semester, and we are happy to report that our first semester of rolling admissions saw a large increase in applications and accepted teams.



**VENTURELAB** is an idea feasibility lab designed to help students prove the validity of their ideas. Accepted teams include:

**CLIQZ** | A social network that aims to give people friend groups and ways to interact with them.

**NOTEWORTHY** | a software designed to assist students with learning disabilities via AI-guided note taking aids.

**PIK&ROLL** | A platform connecting freelance sports content creators and their customers.

**TOOLI** | A tooling and equipment rental application poised to transform the way creators, DIY enthusiasts, and professionals access tools.



**VENTURELAUNCH** is a program designed to help existing businesses scale and grow. Current VentureLaunch teams include:

**ATHLETES AFTER** | A company with the goal of fixing the broken recruiting system for high school athletes looking to make the jump to collegiate sports.

**IT'S BANANA BREAD** | A bakery changing the game when it comes to banana bread.

**RESENSE** | A company bringing comfort and joy to those living with dementia.

**POLLEN PRODUCTIONS** | A video production company creating content to help brands connect with their customers via a wide variety of video content.

As part of the inaugural rolling admission cohort, these teams have had extra time and coaching to help them prepare their businesses for the future. Many have entered or intend to enter national collegiate entrepreneurship competitions, and we are excited to see how the additional preparation time translates into success in competitions and for their businesses in general.

# Programs Ready for Action



We are proud and excited to announce that the Richard K. Mellon Foundation and an anonymous donor have recently given a total of \$455,000 over three years to expand the E+I Fellows program. This means the program will be expanding to support local nonprofits, startups, and small businesses in addition to student-run businesses in the near future.

## E+I FELLOWS

E+I Fellows is a program designed to provide valuable micro-internship experience to students. E+I pays these fellows, who are placed at organizations to serve and gain experience in their disciplines.

During the 2023 fall semester, we placed interns at three different student-run companies. **Resense** hosted five fellows who served in roles from sales and marketing to fulfillment and writing. **It's Banana Bread** hosted a logistics and social media coordinator, and **Athletes After** recently hired a Data Entry and Management intern.

The program has been a huge hit among student interns and host companies, and we are excited to expand to include others in the very near future.



## E+I FOUNDERS

E+I Founders 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 business. 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 businesses.

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. Luke has been granted the opportunity to be paid hourly for the work he performs to operate his company, allowing him to focus on the business without the need for another job.

This is Luke's second year in the E+I Founders program, and it is clear that the impact of the program has allowed him to grow Resense to new heights.



# New Program Launched

E+I continues to survey student and extended community needs and interest as well as monitor the landscape of entrepreneurship + innovation in the market to ensure that our programming continues to be innovative and relevant. Based on the needs of our community, we created a new program.

*Introducing...*



## GROVE CITY COLLEGE

# COMMON GOOD PROJECT

SERVING OUR NEIGHBORS WITH SOCIAL INNOVATION

The Common Good Project represents the unique opportunity for students to come alongside the Center for E+I with the goal of addressing the social issues facing Grove City and its residents. As part of the program, three student interns were hired to complete a needs analysis of the Grove City area and to analyze the information uncovered and explore potential solutions.

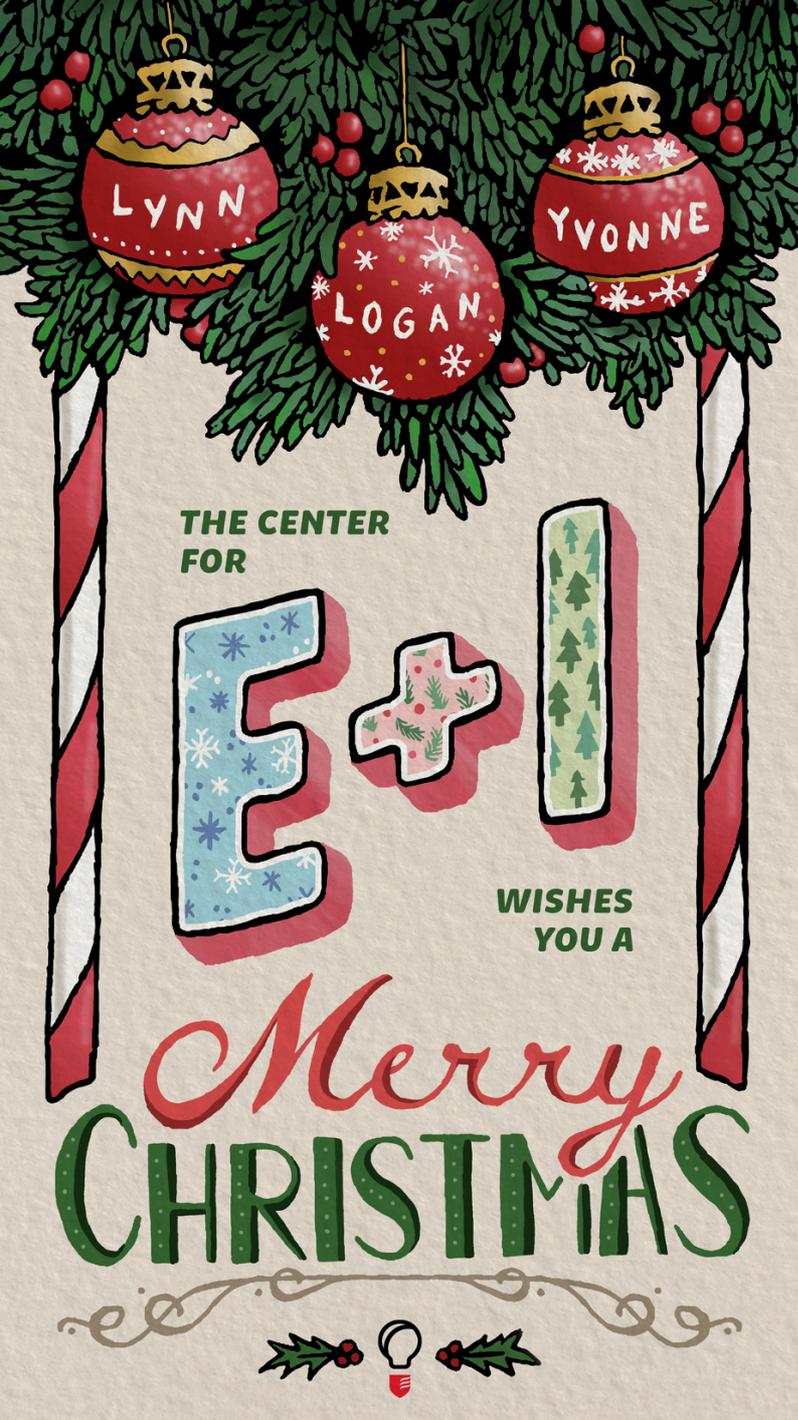
The Common Good Project was made possible thanks to a generous grant made by the Grove City Foundation, an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Western PA and Eastern OH.



As part of the launch of the Common Good Project, E+I hosted and led a Community Convening to bring together several stakeholders from across Grove City, PA. During the convening, participants actively applied design-thinking methods to identify issues plaguing the area and then dig deeper to explore the root causes of those issues. Next up, the Common Good Project student interns will be performing secondary research and talking to more community stakeholders to gather data.

For for information, please visit <https://gcentrepreneurship.com/common-good-project/>





## A Very Merry Christmas from E+I!

During a joyful Christmas season, we were able to distribute over 320 Christmas cards (with artwork from GCC student Caleb Einolf '26) 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.



The Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation (E+I) creates and facilitates experiential learning activities and events centered on entrepreneurship and innovation for the entire student body, regardless of major.



**Yvonne J. English '97**

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



**Lynn Bashew '84**

*Program Manager, E+I*



**Logan Hammerschmitt '16**

*Campus Director, E+I*



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