

2023-2024 Annual Report

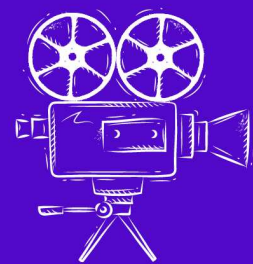


WHAT'S INSIDE

Recap of the major E+I programming and milestones from the 2023-2024 academic year

Summer Recap: May

Resense films *Entrepreneur Elevator Pitch* show

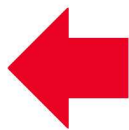


Shortly after the spring 2023 semester concluded, Luke Gilligan '24 and Logan Mays '24 of Resense traveled to Deerfield Beach, Florida, where they filmed an episode of *Entrepreneur Magazine's Entrepreneur Elevator Pitch*, which some would argue is more difficult than *Shark Tank* due to the two-level pitch format!





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, the panel did award them a special (and rare) \$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.



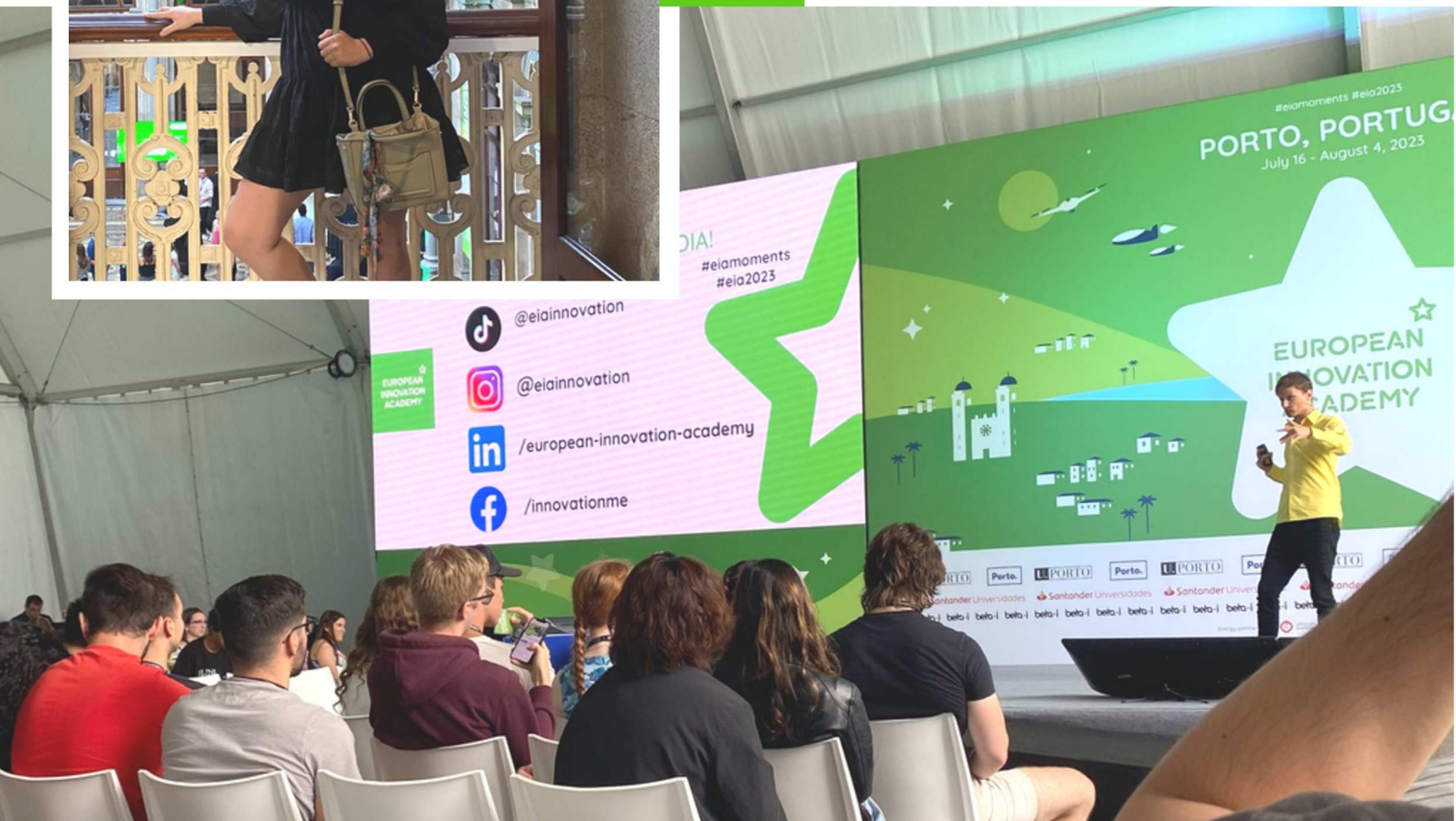
Summer Recap: July-August

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 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!



A word from the E+I Team



This year was packed with programs, events, and competitions that engaged students across campus. We hired a new team member (Hello, Emma!) to help us keep up with our rapid expansion. Our team is grateful for the opportunity to serve our campus community.

Yvonne J. English '97, E+I Executive Director and Entrepreneur-in-Residence: Having hundreds of our friends, colleagues, and students come together to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation at Grove City College was truly special this year. Not only was the event fun and inspirational, it was a reminder that everything we do here has a tremendous impact on the lives of those on campus and beyond. It is an absolute honor and blessing to lead E+I, and I am incredibly thankful for my amazing team and our entire Grove community.

Logan Hammerschmitt '16, E+I Campus Director: Another year is in the books, and what a year it was! I was privileged to work with so many amazing, driven students this year and help to build out programming to assist them achieve their entrepreneurial dreams. Getting to do what I love every day is an honor that I do not take lightly, and is something I hope to be doing for a very long time!

Emma O'Toole '23, E+I Community Manager: Serving as a Student Assistant for the Center for E+I for two years, I was honored and thrilled to be hired on full-time after graduating to the place and team that are so near and dear to my heart. My primary focus with E+I is overseeing the E+I Fellows program, and it is a privilege working with our wonderfully talented students and making an impact in their lives.

Lynn Bashew '84, E+I Program Manager: After organizing E+I competitions and events and working "behind the scenes" for over 16 years, it was a blessing to be asked to step out and serve in two different capacities. Judging the amazing student presentations at the Elevator Pitch Competition was an honor! Being asked to participate in the Common Good Project's Community Convening (as a resident of the town and a representative of the College) to help identify community needs and explore solutions was a privilege. I am very grateful for both opportunities to serve God and His people.

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 had 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 Professor English's E-Commerce class and beyond.

Major Collaboration with STEM

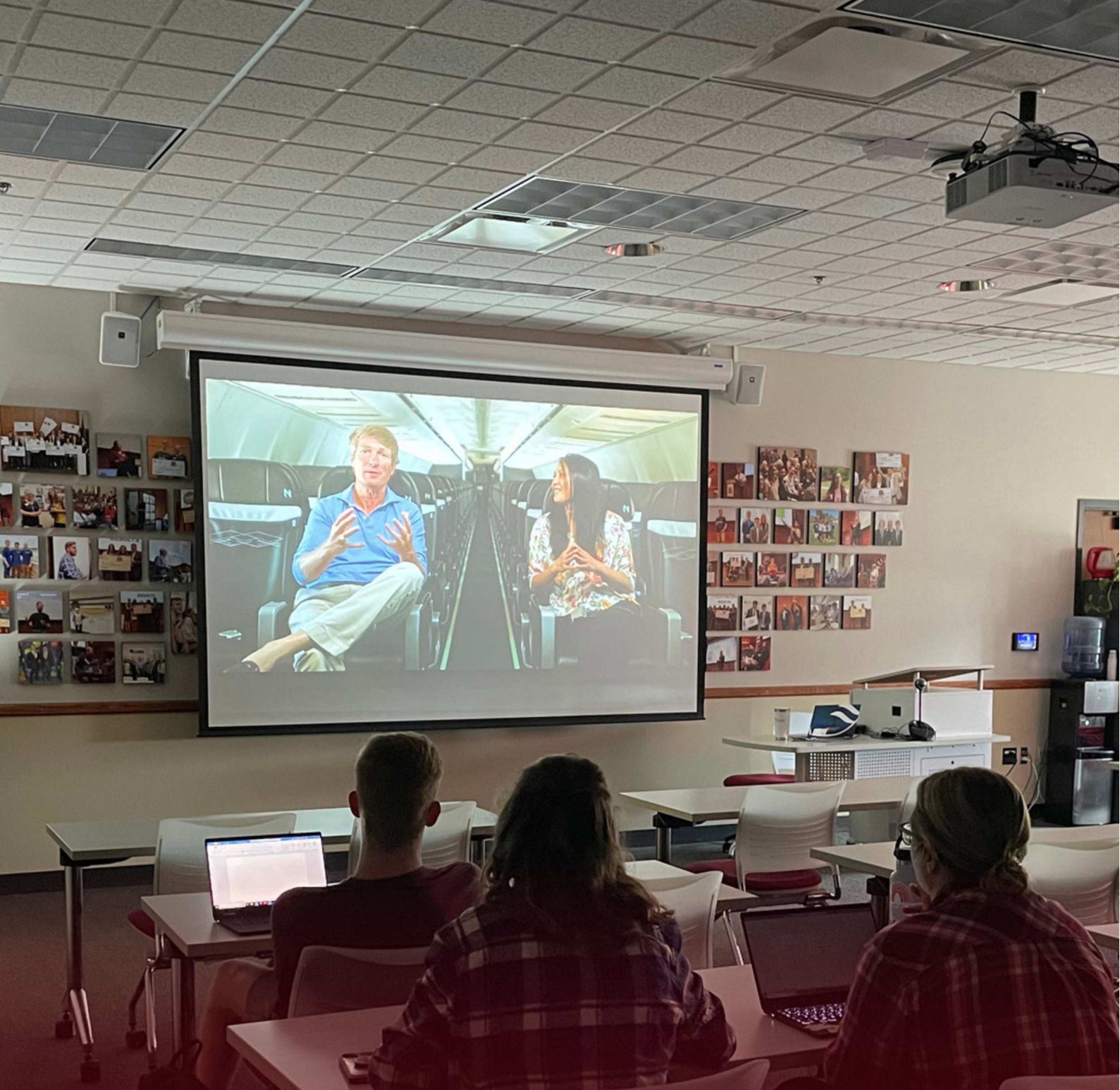


SAFR CHALLENGE

PHYSICS INNOVATION COMPETITION
AT GROVE CITY COLLEGE

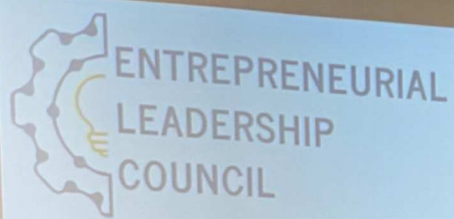


In collaboration with Dr. Shane Brower of the GCC Department of Physics, E+I hosted the second annual SAFR Challenge, a competition that tasked students with developing a headband to reduce the prevalence of concussions in soccer players. Student teams competed for cash prizes, and the competition was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



Welcome



Sponsored By
Allegheny Conference
on Community Development

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+I, 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)

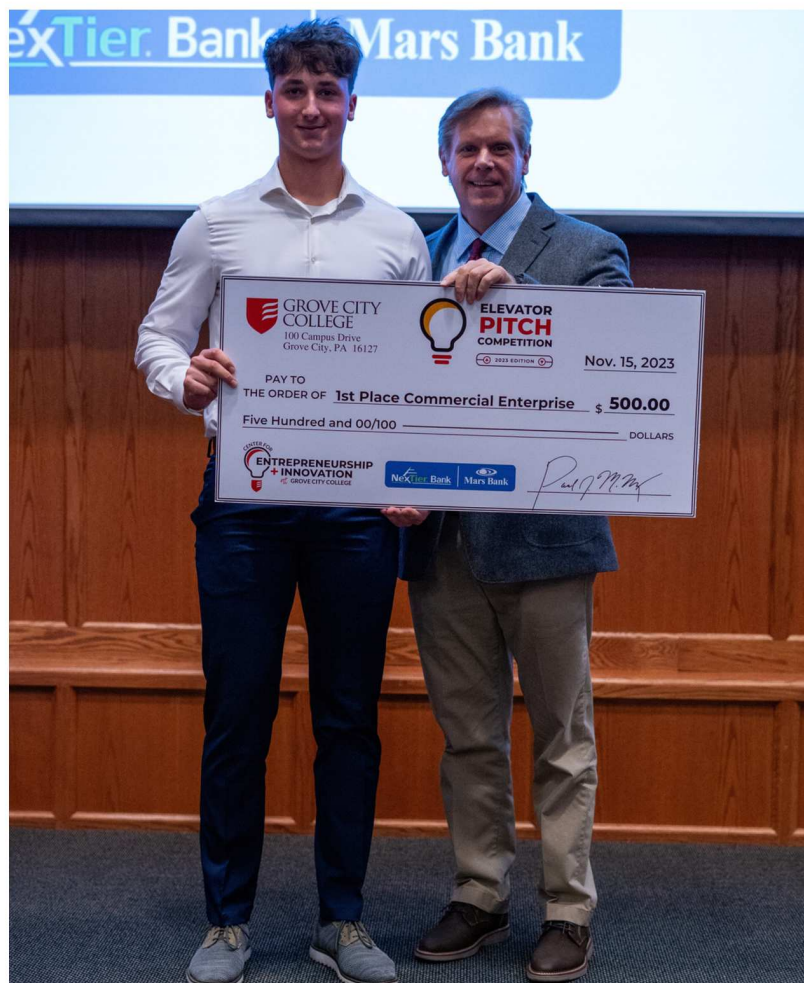


Social Impact Prize (\$250)

Emma Ruby Whiteford '24
The Tapestry

Fan Favorite (\$100)

Reagan Mays '27
Hygiene Hive



Sponsored by:

NexTier Bank

Mars Bank



GROVE CITY
FOUNDATION

AN AFFILIATE OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF W. PA & E. OH



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 J. 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.



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, student interns were hired to complete a needs analysis of the Grove City area and to analyze the information uncovered and explore potential solutions.

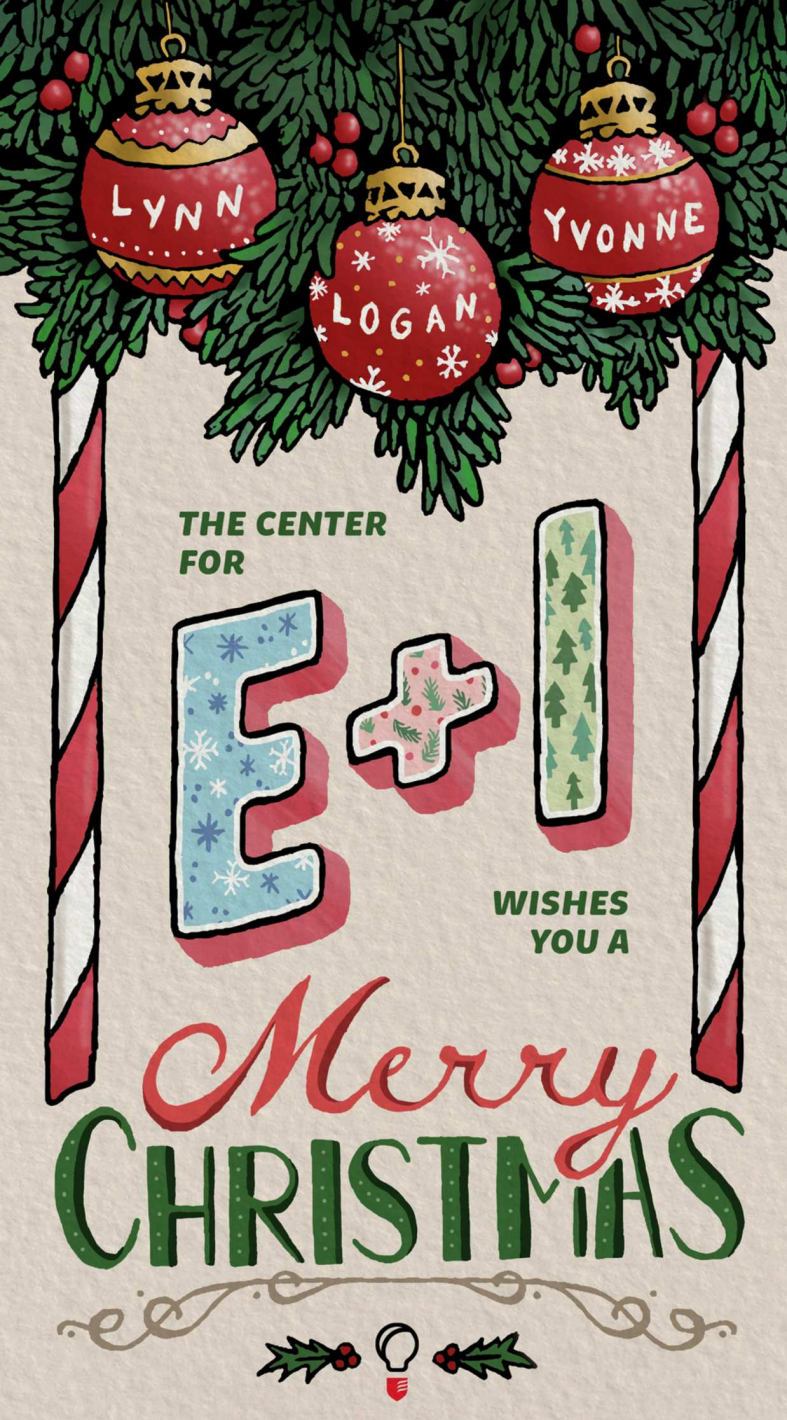
The Common Good Project was made possible thanks to a generous grant made by the Grove City Foundation, an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Western PA and Eastern OH.



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. During the spring semester, the Common Good Project student interns performed secondary research and talked to more community stakeholders to gather data.

For more information, please visit <https://gccentrepreneurship.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.



January Redemptive Imagination Luncheon



Community
+
Food
+
Redemptive Imagination
=
Sheer Awesomeness



To kick off the spring semester, we held a Redemptive Imagination Luncheon. Students from classes such as Lean LaunchPad where invited to attend to discuss topics related to the Redemptive Frame.

Students, faculty, and staff enjoyed deep conversation over a wonderful meal, and learned about the importance of redemptive work in a broken world.



GCC Entrepreneurs Win Startup Weekend Pittsburgh



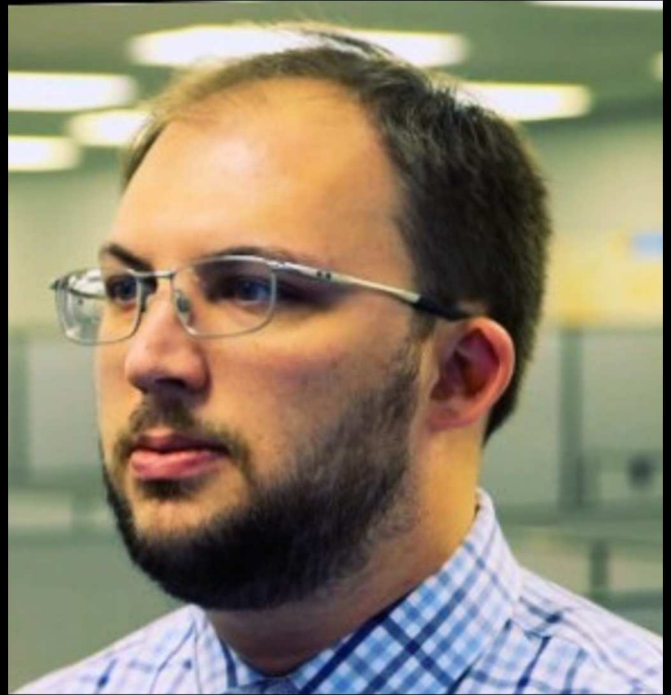
techstars_ Startup Weekend Pittsburgh



A team comprised entirely of Grove City College students (pictured top left) competed in and won Startup Weekend Pittsburgh in early February. Meet Cute, a dating app focused on pairing compatible singles with local restaurants for discounted dates, impressed the judges and took home a prize package that included access to legal services for incorporation and co-working space. In total, twelve GCC students, along with E+I Campus Director Logan Hammerschmitt '16, competed in this intense, 54-hour startup competition.



Jordan Hörst '18, Marketing and
Events Assistant, Baird



Jordan Atchison, Chief Marketing Officer,
Corkboard Concepts



Sarah Hatfield, Communications Specialist,
Grove City College



Brian Slawin, Regional Director & Portfolio Manager,
Ben Franklin Technology Partners Central & Northern PA

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 *Telling a Compelling Story with Video*, *Leveraging Paid, Earned, and Owned Media In a Marketing Strategy*, *The Importance of Clear Writing and Detailed Editing*, and *Pro Forma Financial Projections*.

Acton Business Matters Conference



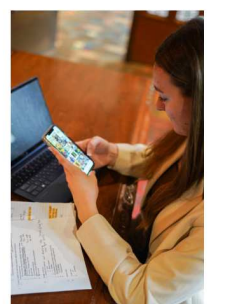
ACTON
INSTITUTE



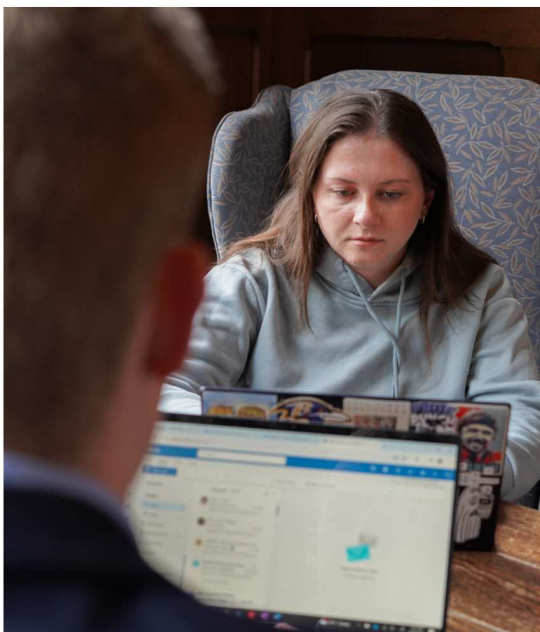
In February, E+I hosted a watch party for the Acton Institute's Business Matters Conference. Topics of discussion for the conference included *First Principles for Thriving Business*, *AI, Disruptive Technology, and the Future of Work*, *Work and the Meaning of Life*, *Case Studies of Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, and *How Business Can Help Communities and Families Flourish*.



E+I FELLOWS



E+I Fellows Expanded Pilot Program Yields Great Results



Host Organizations



During the spring semester, our **6-week expanded pilot** of the E+I Fellows program began. **Seventeen student fellows** working with **10 host organizations** took part in this cohort, with overwhelmingly positive results, all with students earning \$15 per hour! Students worked as social media coordinators, business development interns, software engineers, marketing associates, and in other mission critical jobs to help their host organizations grow! The E+I Fellows program has a special focus on startups, nonprofits, and other high-impact businesses when selecting its host organizations, and would not be possible without the support of the **RK Mellon Foundation** and another **anonymous donor**.

This pilot also featured the expansion of our E+I Founders program. Two student founders, Luke Gilligan '24 and Max Muncy '25 were paid \$15 per hour to focus on their startups during the pilot.



A group of eight students, four males and four females, are posing for a photo. They are standing in two rows. The background features a large blue and white banner with the Praxis logo (a stylized cross) and the text "PRAXIS 2024 Academy Activate". A vertical banner to the right also displays the Praxis logo. The students are dressed in casual to semi-formal attire. Two students in the front row are wearing name tags: "LEYLA ZWOLINSKI" and "ELLIE GARDNER".

PRAXIS 2024 Academy Activate

Praxis Academy Activate

Prior to spring break, eight students from Grove City College traveled to New York City to participate in Praxis Academy Activate, a one-day event for aspiring leaders seeking to create a redemptive vision and strategy for their vocation. Students were provided stipends to cover travel costs.

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 year 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:

BATTLESTAMP | An office-style stamp designed for the painting of miniature gaming pieces.

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

GRACECOVERS | A company with the mission of serving Christian women through a suite of products.

MEET CUTE | A dating platform that connects singles with local businesses to go on discounted first dates.

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.

SLEEK | A real estate photography company delivering quick, friendly service and breathtaking media.



VENTURELAUNCH is a program designed to help existing businesses scale and grow. 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.

TOOLI | A tooling, equipment and service rental application transforming access to tools.



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



Athletes After

A three-pronged approach to equipping high school football players with the knowledge and skills they need to market themselves to college coaches and play for the school of their choice.

Justin Demild '24 | Max Muncy '25



Athletes After wins big!

Justin Demild '24 and Max Muncy '25, co-founders of Athletes After, participated in the Zingale Big Idea Competition hosted by Allegheny College. The duo took 1st place and the \$10,000 cash prize that came with it in the final round. Athletes After provides resources to help high school football players reach and play at the collegiate level.



Toolli

A peer-to-peer tooling, equipment, and service rental application, poised to transform the way creators, DIY enthusiasts, and professionals access tools, allowing users to list and rent tools, equipment, and services all in one place.

Elliot Eyre '24



Toolli reaches eFest finals!

Elliot Eyre '24 and Luke Owen '24 represented Grove City College at this year's eFest competition in Minneapolis, MN. Toolli is a peer-to-peer rental application for tools, equipment, and services. Elliot was also part of a team that took 3rd place in the Innovation Challenge, which tasks teams of students from different schools with solving a global problem!





Resense

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

Luke Gilligan '24

Resense

Year 3: Time to Scale

Luke Gilligan '24 started Resense as part of a class project for Professor Yvonne J. English's Lean LaunchPad class during the spring semester of 2021. Now, as Luke graduates, he's ready to scale Resense and unlock the business's true potential. It's been a three year journey to this point, and Luke is excited to focus his full attention on serving individuals living with dementia via Resense's suite of dementia-friendly products. Luke has had quite a journey so far!

Gilligan Named to 5 Under 25

5 Founders

Under 25:

Luke Gilligan,

Resense

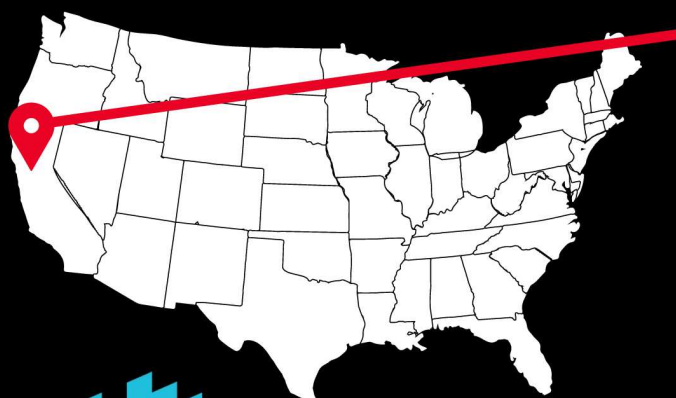
Student entrepreneur named Pittsburgh 5 Founders under 25

Grove City College senior Luke Gilligan is one of Pittsburgh Inno's 5 Founders under 25.

"They're young. They're creative. And They're driven," according to Pittsburgh Inno, an online outlet focused on the region's tech and startup sectors. "Pittsburgh's next generation of innovators is here, and they are poised to transform the way the world works."

The distinction highlights the undergraduate CEO's work establishing Resense, a company that produces and markets products to improve the lives of people with dementia and Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers.

A screenshot of the Grove City College website's 'Featured News' section. It features a photo of Luke Gilligan and the headline 'Student entrepreneur named Pittsburgh 5 Founders under 25'. The article is dated August 04, 2023, and is categorized under 'ENTREPRENEURSHIP'. A 'READ MORE' link is visible at the bottom of the article preview.



PRAXIS

We are extremely proud of what Luke has accomplished with Resense and can't wait to see what the future holds for this #gccentrepreneur!

Luke with Praxis Venture Partner Jessica Kim



Praxis Imagination Summit Emerging Founders | Napa Valley, CA

The Emerging Founders scholarship program is an all-expenses-paid award for 10 next-generation entrepreneurs to attend the 2024 Praxis Summit as a guest of the community. Emerging Founders join regular event programming, as well as unique opportunities with mentors and Praxis Fellows as a cohort. Luke was fortunate enough to be nominated for and selected to the cohort, and he traveled to California.



Mary Beth Green

Custom Crafted Careers: Key Skills for a Tailor-Made Future in Innovation



In the spring semester, E+I hosted **Mary Beth Green**, Chief Innovation Officer at Sheetz, as part of the **Richard G. Staley '62 Visionary Entrepreneur Speaker Series**. Mary Beth spoke about her experience related to traveling the world and becoming a world class innovator in the process.

Faith Driven Network of Pittsburgh

On April 18, 2024, The Faith Driven Network of Pittsburgh hosted its Annual Gathering at Allegheny Center Alliance Church in the Northside neighborhood of Pittsburgh. The event featured networking and keynote talks from various stakeholders involved in the network (including our very own Executive Director, Yvonne J. English '97, who is also the Director of the Faith Driven Network of Pittsburgh, and Resense founder Luke Gilligan '24).

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 are excited about what is to come from this network of entrepreneurs driven by faith!





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.

MAY 3, 2024

STICHT AUDITORIUM

WVB PRESENTATIONS + WINNERS

RESULTS



Fortify soars to new heights!

In a field of eight competing teams, Fortify was crowned Wolverine Venture Battle Champion.

fortify

Fortify partners with healthcare providers specializing in eating disorder treatment by gamifying healthy habit building within a supportive community.

Audrey Karwowski '26, Eleni Kasianides '26, Emma Fiscus '25, Natalie Gilkinson '27, Owen Gasser '26, and Joel Riehl '26

1 \$6,350 in cash won!



WVB PRESENTATIONS + WINNERS



TOOLI—\$6,050

A peer-to-peer tooling, equipment, and service rental application to help users monetize their clutter while reducing tool waste.

Elliot Eyre '24

IDWEAR—\$4,650 + \$500 FAN FAVORITE

Wearable RFID solutions to improve safety and bring convenience to college campuses across the U.S.

Caroline Dawson '25 and Quincy Chapman '25



SLEEK REAL ESTATE PHOTOGRAPHY—\$3,300

Sleek Real Estate Photography delivers friendly service, breathtaking media, and 12-hour turnaround times.

Gus Minotto '24



WVB PRESENTATIONS + WINNERS



STRIKER SOCKS—\$2,500

An athletic sock that relieves calf pressure and reduces ligament injuries through grips on the bottom and breathable fabric in the back.

Aly Mapes '24, Katie Blendermann '24, and Nate Hamel '24

CARPENTER—\$2,450 + \$1,000 FAN FAVORITE

Mentorship through woodworking projects to restore father-figure relationships in the lives of boys and young men.

Ethan David '24, Luke Mantzell '24, and Michael Crowley '25



MEET CUTE—\$700 + \$1,500 FAN FAVORITE

A dating platform that connects compatible singles with local businesses to go on discounted first dates.

Katelyn Rose Emmons '24, Elliott Stratton '24, and Joey Guida '24



SAASQUATCH—\$650

A SaaS marketing consulting platform for the middle market powered by AI.

Luke Owen '24, David Lugo '24, and Caleb Warrick '24



Wolverine Venture Battle



KEY STATS



- **Packed house** in Sticht Lecture Hall
- Over **\$32,000** awarded in cash and in-kind prizes
- **22** student participants across 8 teams
- **8** different majors represented
- **13** judges for the final round
- **13** junior judges
- **55** Round 2 reviewers

LIVESTREAM STATS

- **427** unique users during finals
- **1483** votes for Fan Favorite
- Viewers from **33** different states



This year's competition was closer than ever, with only \$300 separating 1st and 2nd place!

Representatives from the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior classes all presented during the finals and did a fantastic job. Each team nailed their presentation, making it even more difficult for our judges to determine who to allocate their prize money to. It was perhaps the highest level of competition yet!

The finalists were also competing for the votes of this year's Junior Judges...13 high school students who represented 6 different schools. Each Junior Judge was allotted \$50 to award to his or her favorite team.



Our Generous Sponsors



ARMSTRONG®



In-Kind Support



Cedric E. Lewis JD/MBA

Wolverine Donors

The Habbershon Family

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

John + Betsy Baun Charitable Foundation
(Pittsburgh Foundation)

Susan (Peshek '81) and Peter Durfee '80

The Pentz Family

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

Dan Creston '81

Laura (Koller '11) and RJ Fryan '08

Elizabeth (Smith '81) + Peter Hanley



The Amazing WVB Judges



RJ Fryan '08

Kind Special Alloys US
Lake Park Tool and Machine
CEO



Darrin Grove '91

Truefit
Founder + CEO



Mark Pentz '80

Calvin Group
President + Founder



Michael Pentz '06

Calvin Group
Vice President



The Amazing WVB Judges



Elisabeth O'Brien '16

IHG Hotels & Resorts

Director of Reservations Product



Josh Newton '09

Newton Institute

Director of Technology



Justin Driscoll

IQ Inc.

Director of Business Development



Wendy Mascio '88

Medical Equipment Source

Founder + CEO



The Amazing WVB Judges



Jordyn Kemats '03

S&T Bank

Director of Sales Strategy &
Marketing



Mark Nicklas '81

Nicklas Supply, Inc.

CEO



Ben Nicklas '08

Nicklas Supply, Inc.

Sales Manager





The Amazing WVB Judges



Patrick Miles

Chick-fil-A

Senior Project Lead,
Innovation Services

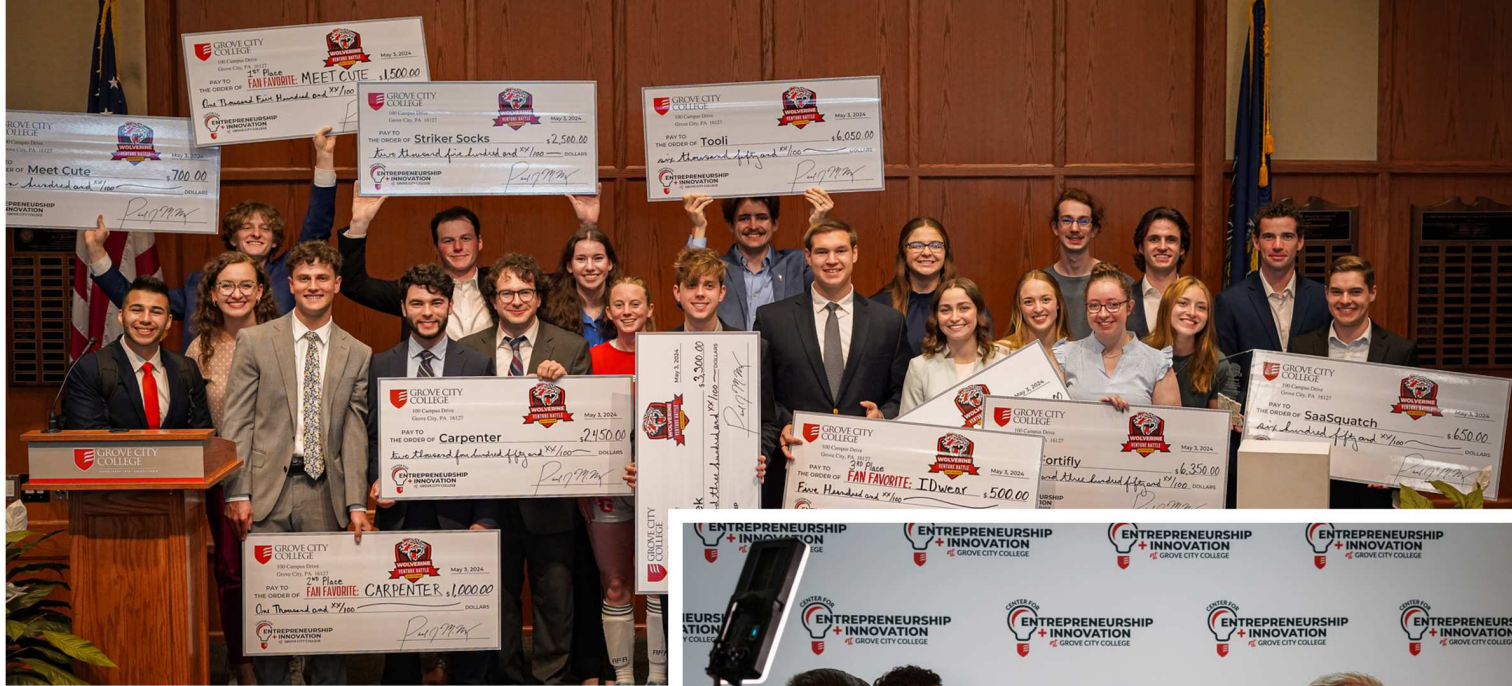


Kim Garrett '12

Better Made Brands

Owner





*Sending out a special thanks to the **55** Round Two reviewers who helped select our finalists and make the Wolverine Venture Battle possible!*



Bob Baierl
 Frances Baldwin
 Toby Basalla '98
 Randy Beck '85
 Chris Botting '83
 Scott Brainard '76
 Mark Brody '83
 Craig Creaturo '92
 Jeff Curran '85
 Brad Dearborn '78
 Steve DeCaspers '98
 Benjamin Demers '19
 Brian Dutton
 Stephen Eckert '84
 Andrew Ellison
 Ruth Entwistle '07
 Dean Faklis
 Collin Foster '12
 Beth Fox Lepore '96

Chuck Gaetano '74
 Curt Given '84
 Alex Graham '67
 Matthew Hackworth '97
 Alex Halton '20
 Victoria Hassett '12
 Michael Hemmerlin '97
 Lindy B. Hitzel '19
 William Howell '81
 Melissa Jacobs '92
 Haley Kahle '15
 Bob Keller '73
 Jeff Lininger '87
 Darla Livermore
 Don Lockhart
 Evan Lowe '89
 Beth Marraccini '92
 Dean Marraccini

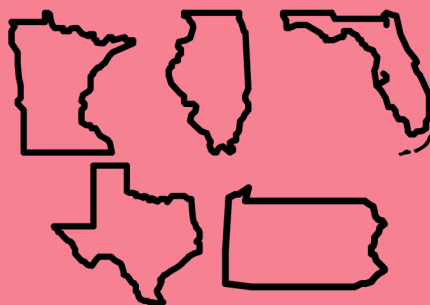
Lauren Marts '10
 Scott McDowell '87
 Mitch McFeely
 Alan Mesches '71
 Trey Miller '95
 Robin Parsons
 Mark Phillips '09
 Lydia Price '13
 Tiffany Rice '18
 Charles (Bob) Scott '72
 Alissa Sgro '96
 Steve Solman '96
 Cameron Suorsa '21
 Allyson Sveda '88
 Jill Sweet '85
 Jack Thomas '89
 Steve Wickman
 Lesley Winfield

In the spring of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted not just E+I, but the whole world, and threatened to delay our rapid trajectory towards our goals. Undeterred, we committed to coming back stronger than ever. **Now, in 2024, we are excited to report that...**

Since 2021, GCC entrepreneurs have:



Reached the finals of 12 national competitions



Pitched in 5 different states



\$27,333

Won over \$27,000 at outside competitions



\$15,150

Won over \$15,000 at the EPC



\$110,295

Won over \$110,000 at the WVB

Received expense reimbursement for prototypes, marketing, technology, etc. through:



Totaling \$12,618

Pitched to venture capitalists:



EPISODE WITH OVER 1 MILLION VIEWS

\$10,000

Participated as interns and hosts as part of:



3,062 hours worked

\$40,502

Since 2021, GCC entrepreneurs have received or won non-dilutive funding* totaling:



\$215,898



**Not counting investor dollars raised*

NEW EPISODES: NOW STREAMING



INNOVATION GENERATION

Entrepreneurship for Everyone *at* GCC

Hosted by Professor Tim Sweet, Chair of the Department of Entrepreneurship, *Innovation Generation* is a podcast that takes a close look at entrepreneurship through the lens of Grove City College.

New episodes were recorded and published this year and are now available on our website as well as on YouTube, Spotify, Apple, or wherever you get your podcasts!

Topics of discussion include entrepreneurship at Grove City College, startup stories, entrepreneurial journeys, digital entrepreneurs, family business, and the Wolverine Venture Battle.

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:





Student entrepreneur named Pittsburgh 5 Founders under 25

GROVE CITY, Pa. (August 4, 2023) – Grove City College senior Luke Gilligan is one of Pittsburgh Inno's 5 Founders under 25.

"They're young. They're creative. And They're driven," according to Pittsburgh Inno, an online outlet focused on the region's tech and startup sectors. "Pittsburgh's next generation of innovators is here, and they are poised to transform the way the world works." The distinction highlights the undergraduate CEO's work establishing Resense, a company that produces and markets products to improve the lives of people with dementia and Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers. Gilligan, an Entrepreneurship major from Fishers, Ind., said being selected as one of the region's rising stars was "very cool" and a great way to highlight the business and raise awareness about a dementia, which impacts six million Americans and "touches everyone in one way or another." Gilligan and four other collegiate entrepreneurs identified by Pittsburgh Inno are profiled this week in the Pittsburgh Business Times.

"Getting this opportunity to showcase the work that I have done is encouraging and reassures me that I am on the right path. I am hoping this is also an opportunity to raise awareness of those with dementia and how we can help them in their journey," he said. In the profile, Gilligan says he became interested in the caregiving field through volunteering and working in nursing homes as teenager. He said the way people with dementia were treated, often "like children," broke his heart. He was a freshman at Grove City College when he and other students in Entrepreneurship Professor Yvonne English's Lean Launchpad class began to develop the idea for Resense. "One of my team members had a grandfather who was living with Alzheimer's, and we wanted to create a product for him," Gilligan said.

After extensive research, including interviews with loved ones, physicians, psychiatrists, nurses, and caregivers, the company conceived its lead product, the Connect + Comfort Kit, a toolbox of items and activities that target the five senses to utilize a nuanced approach to therapy aimed at increasing brain health and eliciting long-term memories.

"We joined the Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation (E+I) at Grove City College's VentureLab program and we were able to test our toolkits in multiple care communities, develop our own products, build partnerships and launch in May 2022," Gilligan said.

With support from E+I, seed money won at collegiate business plan competitions, and much hard work, Resense was able to market the kits successfully and develop another product. "We realized that many care communities do not provide newspapers to their residents. So, we came up with the idea of a dementia-friendly newspaper that would include completely positive news. We launched our paper, the Resense Register, in March of 2023 and it has entered over 400 care communities to date," Gilligan said.

Up next for the startup is creating an online platform that will allow care partners of individuals with dementia to have online access to downloadable activities, resources, and mentoring, Gilligan said.

Grove City College has been an essential element of his venture's development, Gilligan said. "Without GCC I would never have had any of these opportunities. I owe most of Resense's success to the Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation," he said, singling out English '97, who serves as E+I's executive director, and E+I Campus Director Logan Hammerschmitt '16. "Their encouragement, mentorship, and support have been beyond helpful."

E+I has also helped Resense with internship support through the E+I Fellows program, while Gilligan was paid to work on his startup through a new and innovative program called E+I Founders. "This is beyond helpful because it allows me to focus on growing Resense instead of having to work another part-time job somewhere else," he said.

"All of my professors have been supportive of me pursuing Resense while still in college, and I am happy to be able to have a practical opportunity to apply everything I am learning in the Entrepreneurship program to a real-life company," Gilligan added.

Gilligan is "a passionate and humble entrepreneur," English said. "The team at the Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation has had the tremendous honor of working with Luke over the last few years as he participated in every facet of our programming, and we're excited to see him use his education and training to help and serve others. We couldn't be more proud," she said.

Sixteen teams competing in annual E+I Elevator Pitch

GROVE CITY, Pa. (Nov. 14, 2023) – Students will put their ideas for commercial and social enterprises to the investor test at the Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation's 17th annual Elevator Pitch Competition finals at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 15 in Sticht Lecture Hall of the Staley Hall of Arts and Letters on campus.

The Elevator Pitch Competition (EPC) provides student entrepreneurs an opportunity to pitch their ideas 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.

"The Elevator Pitch Competition finals is an amazing culmination of much hard work from these student finalists. I am so excited to hear their pitches and see who rises to the top. Conveying your business idea in two minutes is a difficult task, but one that prepares students for their future and exercises their public speaking skills. The Center for E+I is pleased to present this year's finals, and I hope everyone will consider joining us in person or via livestream to see the results," said Logan Hammerschmitt '16, Campus Director for the Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation.

The event is free and open to the public. It will be livestreamed at gccentrepreneurship.com/elevator-pitch and online viewers can join in the judging. Sponsors include NexTier Bank + Mars Bank and the Grove City Foundation, an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio.

This year's competition takes place during Global Entrepreneurship Week.

One hundred and thirty-two students from 27 different majors registered for the EPC and submitted video pitches for commercial and social enterprises that were evaluated by a team of 63 reviewers in the preliminary round.

Sixteen finalists were selected for the final round in two divisions:

COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE

- Coffee Basics – Grace Serritella '27 (English); a disposable filter that fits into a travel mug and reduces the acidity of coffee.
- Have to Go – Kenzie Mawhinney '26 (Marketing); an app that helps combat the long lines at crowded public events.
- Cleat Caddy – Ross Morrow '27 (Design & Innovation); a game-changing product for athletes that simplifies cleat care and transport.
- Scan Guard – Julia Kammetler '25 (Communication Arts); a wristband for healthcare workers that tracks hand sanitization and provides emergency alerts and health-tracking features.
- Inc and Influence Inc – Charles Vahlberg '27 (Design & Innovation); a sales company passionate about making sales personal to your clients and partners with hand-written
- personalized letters.
- ShipPic – Ellie Gardner '27 (Entrepreneurship); a product photography service accessible to all beginner entrepreneurs, offering a variety of content types enhanced with AI technology.
- Airharness – Alex Christman '27 (Political Science); a lightweight drum harness for an easier drumming experience.
- StudentSync – Sam Hogue '25 (BARS); an app that allows entrepreneurial college students to connect with potential student buyers on campus.
- StickSaver – Alyssa Good '25 (Marketing); an engineered allergy stick to assist those with food allergies.
- ReelCharge – Jacob Peters '26 (Management & Marketing); a phone charger that reels in the cord.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE:

- Allari – Greta Paulding '27 (Marketing); an app that encourages community improvements and gives the public a chance to visualize and share their beautification ideas and designs using augmented reality.
- The Tapestry – Emma Ruby Whiteford '24 (English), an app that offers additional resources for premarital counseling and for sustaining marriages and families.

- Hygiene Hive – Reagan Mays '27 (Entrepreneurship); a room in schools that provides access to free hygiene products for kids in need.
- Little Life Stories – Alex Anderson '26 (Entrepreneurship); a platform for telling stories that celebrate the value of life.
- Grassroots Greenbacks – Garrett Gess '27 (Business Economics); a fundraising platform to assist middle-class candidates in running for political office.
- Restore the Word – Jenna Knepper '25 (Design & Innovation); a prison ministry that works with prisoners to restore old Bibles that are given to prisoners free of charge.

Three judges will hear the pitches: Retired faculty member and social entrepreneur Tim Mech; E+I Program Manager Lynn Bashew '84; and Craig Columbus, CEO of Columbus Macro, LLC. Pitches will be evaluated in such areas as need, clarity, achievability, sustainability, and growth.

Dorene Powell, vice president of 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.

Winners of 2nd annual SAFR Challenge announced

GROVE CITY, Pa. (Nov. 20, 2023) – The Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation (E+I) and the Department of Physics at Grove City College announced the winners of the second annual SAFR Challenge, which tests students' skills in physics innovation.

The SAFR (Strain and Force Reduction) Challenge tasked teams of students with developing and building a headband to reduce the prevalence of concussions in collegiate soccer players. The challenge began last year as a lab exercise in Physics Professor Dr. Shane Brower's Fundamentals of the Universe class at Grove City College and is now in its second year as an on-stage pitch competition, allowing students to use their classroom learning to solve real world problems.

This year's initial phase of the challenge took place in a lab overseen by Brower and fellow Physics Professor Dr. Glenn Marsch. The second phase was the collaboration with E+I, which elevates the impact of the lab by providing students with an opportunity to present their final product in a public forum to qualified experts in soccer and exercise science. E+I exists to provide students of all majors with practical skills and hands-on experiences that prepare them to innovate and succeed in their chosen field.

Fifty-six students in the initial phase of the competition were split into nineteen teams. Their headbands were judged on a combination of criteria including cost, comfort, aesthetics, functionality, and their overall marketing pitch. The top seven teams qualified for the final round.

The finalists faced off on Oct. 26 and were judged by Dr. Jeffrey Buxton, Exercise Science; Grove City High School boys' soccer coach James Irani; and Grove City High School girls' coach Darcie Holmes. "E+I once again organized an exciting event showcasing our students' creative abilities. The competition was even stronger this year because students had access to the recording of last year's event – they knew what went into a winning presentation, and they did their best to include these elements," Brower said.

The winning teams were:

- First Place (\$100 each) – Kare Guard: Eden Kleiman '24, Aiden Kramer '24, Annie-Grace Smith '24
- Second Place (\$75 each) – Use Your Head: Jaden Davinsizer '25, Jonathan McGee '24, Rilee Smith '25
- Third Place (\$50 each) – Sports Halo: Trevor Beck '24, Justin DeMild '24, Jaden White '25

"Collaborating with Dr. Brower and the Physics Department has been a real treat for us at the Center for E+I," said Logan Hammerschmitt '16, campus director for E+I. "The hands-on learning opportunities we provide to student participants have proven valuable and demonstrate our mission to serve students of all majors across campus."

Students take top prizes at Elevator Pitch Competition

GROVE CITY, Pa. (Dec. 8, 2023) – Pitches for a “game changing” cleat-care product and a novel fundraising platform for political candidates who aren’t independently wealthy impressed the judges for the 2023 Grove City College Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation (E+I) Elevator Pitch Competition.

Student competitors had just two minutes to make their cases for their commercial or social enterprise ideas, which could be at any stage of development, and convince the judges their ideas had both merit and the potential to turn a profit. That tight timeclock and the annual competition’s name comes from the idea that an effective entrepreneur can pitch an idea in the time it would take to ride in an elevator with a potential investor.

A pair of freshmen captured the first place spots in both divisions in last month’s Elevator Pitch Competition finals.

Ross Morrow ’27, a Design and Innovation major from McKean, Pa., took first place – and a \$500 prize – in the Commercial Enterprise division with his pitch for Cleat Caddy, a cleat storage and transportation product that also deodorizes athletic footwear.

“The Elevator Pitch Competition was a great way for me to utilize my problem solving and presentation skills. It allowed me to share my ideas with the Grove City community and is a good accomplishment to put on my resume,” Morrow said.

Garrett Gess ’27, a Business Economics major from Allison Park, Pa., won the top spot in the Social Enterprise Division and \$500 for Grassroots Greenbacks, a political fundraising platform designed to “level the playing field” for local candidates who are left behind by today’s political funding schemes.

“It was great to compete in the EPC in front of hundreds of people and pitch my business idea. I thrive in situations where the stakes are high,” Gess said.

Three students tied for second place in the Social Enterprise division, a first for the Elevator Pitch, with each winning a \$400 prize:

- Jenna Knepper ’25, a junior Design and Innovation major from Washington, Mich., pitched Restore the Word, a prison ministry that works with incarcerated people to restore old Bibles.
- Reagan Mays ’27, a freshman Entrepreneurship major from Knox, Pa., for Hygiene Hive, a room in schools that provides access to free hygiene products for needy kids. She also won the \$100 Fan Favorite award.
- Emma Ruby Whiteford ’24, a senior English major from York, Pa., pitched The Tapestry, an app that offers additional resources for premarital counseling and for sustaining marriages and families. She also won the \$250 Social Impact Prize.

In the Commercial Enterprise division, Julia Kammetler ’25, a junior Communications Arts major from Bethlehem, Pa., won second place and a \$400 prize for Scan Guard, a wristband for healthcare workers that tracks hand sanitization and health-tracking features. Sam Hogue ’25, a junior Biblical and Religious Studies major from Cranberry Township, Pa., won third place and \$300 for StudentSync, an app that allows entrepreneurial college students to connect with potential buyers on campus.

“We are incredibly proud of all the students who bravely took the stage to share their ideas with the world,” said Logan Hammerschmitt ’16, Campus Director for the Center for E+I. “These students, along with the hundreds in attendance, both in-person and via livestream, created an exciting and competitive environment for our competition. It was a very tight field from top to bottom, and we are so thankful to our sponsors for helping to make this all possible,” Logan Hammerschmitt ’16, campus director for E+I, said.

The annual competition is open to students from all majors. Sixteen student finalists, selected from more than 130 entrants, faced off in the Nov. 15 Elevator Pitch Competition. The three judges for the finals were selected in honor of the Entrepreneurship Program’s 20th Anniversary: Retired Entrepreneurship faculty member and social entrepreneur Dr. Timothy Mech; former E+I Executive Director and Department of Entrepreneurship Chair Craig Columbus, CEO of Columbus Macro, LLC; and E+I Program Manager Lynn Bashew ’84, who has served the program in this capacity since 2008.

Dorene Powell, vice president of the Grove City Foundation, selected the Social Impact Prize winner and the Fan Favorite award was determined by a vote of the audience, both in person and online, of over 300 votes.

Sponsors include NexTier Bank + Mars Bank and the Grove City Foundation, an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio.

Students raise more than \$5K for charities through class

GROVE CITY, Pa. (Feb. 2, 2024) – Grove City College students raised more than \$5,000 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 Professor Yvonne J. English '97, 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.

"It is a special experience for the students to be able to serve our community as they are actively learning about e-commerce. I'm proud of the work that they've done inside and outside of the classroom," English said.

In all, five student businesses raised \$5,106.09 for charities selected by the teams. It was the highest total raised by eCommerce students in the last eight years. The teams included:

- Next Era Apparel – Isaac Lipton '26 (COO), Keifer Lengacher '25 (CDO), Caroline Marshall '25 (CMO), Luke Owen '24 (CEO), Jack Henne '25 (CFO). Offering fashion with a purpose, Next Era sells high quality apparel to support education and empower change. Partnered with Teach Her, an organization dedicated to making quality education accessible to every child.
- Cups of Courage – Lauren Williams '25 (CFO), Zach Warrick '26 (CEO), Arami Hillebrand '25 (CMO), Julia Bauer '25 (COO). With the tagline "Spreading courage one cup at a time," the business sells trendy glass cups with handcrafted designs. Partnered with Light of Life Rescue Missions--provides food, shelter, and hope to men, women, and children experiencing homelessness, poverty, or addiction.
- Steeped in Love – Karis Mall '25 (CEO), Eleni Kasianides '26 (COO), Isabella Baginski '25 (CMO), Jonathan French '25 (CFO). Selling different high-quality teas, Steeped in Love seeks to promote the culture, customs, community, and love that tea ceremonies bring. Partnered with Mosaic Community Development Center, a place of safety and growth for Jeannette (Pa.) School District students.
- Covenant Clay – Molly Gleason '25 (CEO), Aliyah Shelatz '25 (COO), Abby Mason '25 (CMO), Elliott Stratton '24 (CFO). Covenant Clay crafts inspirational "Jewelry with a Mission!" Partnered with Harvest Bridge, which collaborates with missionaries in South Asia to empower communities through education, healthcare, and sustainable livelihoods.
- Radiate Truth – Alex Anderson '26 (CEO), Cayden Testa '26 (CFO), Ella Douglass '26 (CMO), Brendan Stull '26 (COO). A Christian hat company that encourages customers to "Share the Gospel through what you wear!" Partnered with Family Guidance, which provides mentor relationships and camping experiences that spark faith in Jesus Christ.

The student businesses were featured at Venture Village (during last year's Homecoming celebration), a tent that showcases student and alumni businesses.

Over the last eight classes, eCommerce businesses have generated \$45,106.25 in revenue with \$26,445.86 going to local charities.

GCC students take first at Techstars Startup Weekend

GROVE CITY, Pa. (Feb. 14, 2024) – A team of Grove City College students won first place at the recent Techstars Startup Weekend Pittsburgh with their proposal to create a place-based dating app.

The Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation (E+I), which serves Grove City College students of all majors, sponsored 12 current students for the trip to the competition. There, they competed with and against a field of entrepreneurs and business professionals, as well as other students from some top colleges and universities, including Cornell University, University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon, and Duquesne University.

They listened to each other's pitches and seven teams rose to the top. The remaining participants at the sold-out event formed final teams around the best ideas. They then had just 54 hours to conceive, build, and validate a business model that could win over the judges. On the last night of the competition, teams pitched their ideas in a public forum and the winners were selected by a panel of highly qualified judges.

One team, comprised entirely of Grove City College students, including Joey Guida '24, Gus Minotto '24, Luke Gilligan '24, Andrew Coy '26, Ella Medairy '25, and Rafe McIlwain '25, developed a pitch that overcame all the competitors. Their idea, called Meet Cute, is a dating app that connects people based not on looks or personality, but on where they like to go – restaurants, parks, and other destinations.

Their win earned them a year's worth of office space at competition sponsor Avenu Workspaces and up to \$5,000 to incorporate their business.

"We're extremely proud of this team of GCC entrepreneurs and of all the students who participated. It's a clear testament to the hard work and determination that are characteristic of Grove City College students. Building a business over the course of one weekend can take a toll on you, but I'm sure if you asked any of these students, they'd do it all over again in a heartbeat," said Logan Hammerschmitt '16, E+I campus director.

Techstars is a prominent national pre-seed investment program that sponsors startup events for super-early-stage entrepreneurs to fine tune their ideas and make connections. Techstars Startup Weekend Pittsburgh, held at Duquesne University the first weekend in February, was hosted by InnovatePGH, a public-private partnership working to accelerate the Steel City's innovation environment.

E+I Fellows micro internships aid students, local organizations

GROVE CITY, Pa. (Feb. 27, 2024) – Grove City College students can get valuable work experience under an innovative internship program that also seeks to benefit worthy, but resource-strapped, nonprofits, start-ups, and small businesses in Western Pennsylvania.

E+I Fellows is an initiative of the College's Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation (E+I) that connects students with regional host organizations to design and execute micro internships. E+I will pay for the work the students do to help small operations, some launched by their peers, meet manpower demands, and contribute to the growth of these organizations. In the future, students may also be able to earn internship credits during their fellowship.

In the expanded pilot cohort launching this spring, E+I is partnering with several organizations and supplying them with student fellows to help advance their missions. E+I provides guidance for the host organizations and helps them create a project plan to maximize the value of the placement for both the organization and the students involved. There are also check-in meetings throughout the placement to ensure the best results for all involved. Special consideration for participation in the program is given to nonprofit and commercial entities that have a positive impact regionally through social innovation or economic opportunity.

"The E+I Fellows program is a unique opportunity for current students to hone their skills, build their resume, and support amazing organizations vetted by E+I," said Yvonne J. English '97, professor of practice and executive director of E+I. "Students will also gain an appreciation of the problems and issues faced by nonprofits, startups, and small businesses locally and will contribute by strengthening the regional economy and advancing the common good in the surrounding area.

"E+I Fellows was first piloted as an internal program that had eight students working with Resense, a student startup participating in E+I's VentureLaunch program. VentureLaunch is designed to help small, student-run businesses scale and reach their fullest potential. The success of that initiative led E+I to expand the program to include other student ventures and now, regional organizations that often have scarce resources and are not able to hire traditional interns or employees to increase capacity and continue to grow.

"The E+I Fellows program was the foundation that allowed our entire company to come together," said Justin DeMild '24, Founder, Athletes After, a college recruitment tool for high school football players.

"These micro-internships will help local organizations increase their capacity and chances of success, as students gain real work experience in their disciplines and make connections that may lead to future job opportunities," said Emma OToole '23, E+I Community Manager and organizer of the E+I Fellows Program.

E+I Fellows is funded by a grant from The Richard King Mellon Foundation and an anonymous donor.

Chief Innovation Officer of Sheetz to speak at Grove City College

GROVE CITY, Pa. (April 5, 2024) – Grove City College students are familiar with late night Sheetz runs.

The local outlet west of campus is a ready go-to after the dining halls have closed. It's a place where students can hang out with their friends and get a Red Bull or an MTO snack, some Utz chips, or a Tastykake. The array of products and services available makes Sheetz much more than a gas station and demonstrates the convenience store chain's embrace of innovation.

Mary Beth Green, who serves as Chief Innovation Officer of Sheetz, will talk about the value of innovation ready skills as part of the Richard G. Staley '62 Visionary Entrepreneur Speaker Series, at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, April 10 in Sticht Lecture Hall of the Staley Hall of Arts and Letters.

The lecture, co-sponsored by The Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation (E+I) and the School of Business at Grove City College, is free and open to the public. It will be livestreamed at gcc.edu/liveentrepreneurship.

"We are thrilled to welcome Mary Beth Green to our campus and to have her share her wealth of experience and knowledge with our students," said E+I Campus Director Logan Hammerschmitt '16.

"Mary Beth Green is a world class innovator, and our students are fortunate to have the opportunity to hear her speak and learn from her experiences. Innovation can be a driving force for good in our world and we hope that the students in attendance will be inspired to apply innovation principles in their future careers," he said.

Green has reinvented herself over the course of her career with one common theme — transferrable innovation-ready skills. She has worked in many areas of business and has held various positions, developing knowledge and skills in innovation, commercialization, board leadership, collaboration, goal setting, strategic planning, and more.

Green holds an MBA from Carnegie Mellon University, a Master of Public and International Affairs degree from the University of Pittsburgh and a Bachelor of Economics degree from the University of Illinois.

The Richard G. Staley '62 Visionary Entrepreneur Speaker Series brings successful entrepreneurs – and the lessons they learned – to Grove City College to share stories of success, experience, and advice with students of all majors. 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.

Student team makes e-Fest national finals

GROVE CITY, Pa. (April 18, 2024) – A team of Grove City College students is advancing to the national finals of an undergraduate entrepreneurship competition.

The team will be pitching Tooli on April 18 at e-Fest at the University of St. Thomas' Schulze School of Entrepreneurship in Minneapolis, Minn.

Tooli is among 25 teams moving forward in the competition in which over \$215,000 in prize money is up for grabs. The competition involves pitching a business idea to a panel of judges.

This is the first time that team Tooli has made the finals in a national competition. The team is participating in the 2023-24 VentureLaunch program sponsored by the Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation (E+I). The E+I 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 is the perfect program to help small, student-run businesses scale and reach their fullest potential.

Grove City College continues to distinguish itself on the national stage at e-Fest, having had several teams make it to finals over the past few years. Tooli has also earned a spot as a finalist in E+I's upcoming Wolverine Venture Battle at Grove City College on May 3.

"It is a testament to the quality of our students, our program, and the college itself that our student ventures continue to distinguish themselves in the national entrepreneurship competition circuit. Only a couple of schools have teams that make the e-Fest Top 25 on a regular basis, and the others are much larger than Grove City College," stated Yvonne English '97, Entrepreneur in Residence and Executive Director of the Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation.

"Reaching the top 25 at e-Fest is a tremendous accomplishment. This year over 150 teams submitted their pitches, so for the Tooli team to have made it this far is a great reflection of the work they have put in through our VentureLaunch program this year," said Logan Hammerschmitt '16, E+I campus director, who will accompany the team to the competition.

Founded by senior Elliot Eyre of Winchester, Va., Tooli is an app that uses a community platform model.

"Tooli is a peer-to-peer tooling, equipment and rental application built to help users monetize their clutter and reduce tool waste. Think of it as Airbnb but for all the tools you have sitting in your garage," Eyre explained.

Eyre will be accompanied to the competition by Tooli's marketing manager, senior Luke Owen of Lawrence Township, N.J. Owen, who is also the CEO of video production company Pollen Productions, which helped Eyre by filming and editing marketing material for Tooli.

Eyre and Owen said they are looking forward to attending e-Fest and see it as an opportunity for growth. "E-Fest is a huge opportunity for us, not just because of the possible funding we could receive but also the connections and recognition we could build," Eyre said.

"Having coached the team since its inception, I am excited for them to show the progress they have made to the judges in Minneapolis this week," Hammerschmitt said. "This team has its sights set on bringing home another top 5 finish for Grove City College, and I think they have a great shot to do that."

Wolverine Venture Battle finalists square off

GROVE CITY, Pa. (May 1, 2024) – Eight teams of Grove City College student entrepreneurs will face off for their share of a prize package of over \$28,000 in cash plus in-kind services in the 2024 Wolverine Venture Battle (WVB).

The venture pitch contest is one of the College's Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation's tentpole events. Open to students from all majors, the WVB provides invaluable experience for aspiring entrepreneurs and a crucial test for their ideas.

The pitches will start flying at 1 p.m. Friday, May 3 in Sticht Lecture Hall of the Staley Hall of Arts and Letters. Hosted by the Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation (E+I), the WVB is free and open to the public and will be livestreamed at gccentrepreneurship.com.

"We've got a record-sized prize pool of almost \$30,000 and eight very different teams competing for the coveted title of Wolverine Venture Battle Champion this year. The students' vision and ideas for making their mark on the world will be featured on the WVB stage this Friday, and we welcome everyone to join us at this exciting and inspiring event," said E+I Executive Director + Entrepreneur in Residence Yvonne J. English '97.

Each team will have eight minutes to make their case and another six to field questions from a panel of accomplished judges who will divvy up the prize pool by "investing" in the teams they think made the best pitch.

To make it to the finals, teams survived a rigorous evaluation by 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 unfair advantage.

Sixty-three students from 14 different majors and every class year entered twenty-two teams in the first round of the competition.

The WVB finalists are:

- Carpenter – Ethan David '24, Luke Mantzell '24, and Michael Crowley '25. Their idea fosters mentorship through woodworking projects to restore father-figure relationships in the lives of boys and young men.
- Fortifly – Audrey Karwowski '26, Eleni Kasianides '26, Emma Fiscus '25, Natalie Gilkinson '27, Owen Gasser '26, and Joel Riehl '26. Fortifly partners with healthcare providers specializing in eating disorder treatment by gamifying healthy habit building within a supportive community.
- IDwear – Caroline Dawson '25 and Quincy Chapman '25. IDwear offers wearable RFID solutions to improve safety and bring convenience to college campuses across the US.
- Meet Cute – Katelyn Rose Emmons '24, Elliott Stratton '24, and Joey Guida '24. A dating platform that connects compatible singles with local businesses to go on discounted first dates, with the goal of fostering real connections and reimagining online dating to benefit both the user and the venue.
- SaaSquatch – Luke Owen '24, David Lugo '24, and Caleb Warrick '24. A SaaS marketing consulting platform for the middle market powered by AI.
- Sleek Real Estate Photography – Gus Minotto '24. Sleek Real Estate Photography delivers friendly service, breathtaking media, and 12-hour turnaround times.
- Striker Socks – Aly Mapes '24, Katie Blendermann '24, and Nate Hamel '24. An athletic sock that relieves calf pressure and reduces ligament injuries through grips on the bottom and breathable fabric in the back.
- Tooli – Elliot Eyre '24. A peer-to-peer tooling, equipment, and service rental application to help users monetize their clutter while reducing tool waste.

In addition to the judges' allocations of prize money, teams will vie for the Fan Favorite Award. The \$1,000 prize winner is determined by texts from those watching the competition live and online.

New this year is the addition of volunteer mentors. experienced professionals who assisted the teams to prepare for the Battle. They are: Toby Basalla '98, founder of Synthelize, Mark Brody, board member, business and turnaround consultant, Benjamin Demers '19, wealth management client associate at Merrill Lynch, Steve DeCaspers '98, vice president of marketing at Brightspeed, Victoria Hassett '12, director of PantherlabWorks, Melissa Jacobs '92, partner at Jacobs Family LLP, Elizabeth Martin '21, client experience coordinator at The Family Office, LLC, Mark Phillips '09, senior research analyst at Miller/Howard Investments, and Amy Frank '95, academic advisor at Grove City Christian Academy.

This year the Venture Battle features a panel of Junior Judges. Thirteen students from six high schools will each be able to award a \$50 prize to the team they think is most deserving.

Wolverine Venture Battle competition was close

GROVE CITY, Pa. (May 7, 2024) – The 2024 Wolverine Venture Battle (WVB) judges favored Fortifly over Tooli, but just barely, to take the top spot last week at the venture pitch competition held by the Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation (E+I).

The winning team's idea – and pitch – to gamify healthy habits and build a supportive community for those being treated for eating disorders garnered \$6,350 of the Battle's \$29,000 non-equity prize package, which included cash and in-kind services. The Fortifly team includes Audrey Karwowski '26, Eleni Kasianides '26, Emma Fiscus '25, Natalie Gilkinson '27, Owen Gasser '26, and Joel Riehl '26.

Runner-up Tooli, a peer-to-peer tooling, equipment, and service rental app developed and represented at the WVB by Elliot Eyre '24, claimed a giant check for \$6,050.

"The fact that first and second place were within \$300 of one another indicates just how close the competition was this year," said E+I Executive Director and Entrepreneur in Residence Professor Yvonne J. English '97. "This was, by far, one of the strongest cohorts of finalists in the history of the Wolverine Venture Battle. It was a very exciting and inspirational day!"

The winnings were determined by a panel of judges and WVB fans in attendance and online who allocated the WVB's \$29,000 prize pool among teams that they think have a winning idea for a new business, product, or service.

"I was so impressed with the level of competition this year," said E+I Campus Director Logan Hammerschmitt '16. "Every team rose to the occasion and presented extremely well, making it difficult for our judges to decide who to allocate their prize money to. The energy in the room was tangible and you could feel the excitement as the teams received their prizes."

Other teams receiving cash prizes were:

- IDwear – \$4,650 (plus \$500 Fan Favorite) – Caroline Dawson '25 and Quincy Chapman '25. IDwear offers wearable RFID solutions to improve safety and bring convenience to college campuses across the US.
- Carpenter – \$2,450 (plus \$1,000 Fan Favorite) – Ethan David '24, Luke Mantzell '24, and Michael Crowley '25. Their idea fosters mentorship through woodworking projects to restore father-figure relationships in the lives of boys and young men.
- Sleek Real-Estate Photography – \$3,300 – Gus Minotto '24. Sleek Real Estate Photography delivers friendly service, breathtaking media, and 12-hour turnaround times.
- Striker Socks – \$2,500 – Aly Mapes '24, Katie Blendermann '24, and Nate Hamel '24. An athletic sock that relieves calf pressure and reduces ligament injuries through grips on the bottom and breathable fabric in the back.
- Meet Cute – \$700 (plus \$1,500 Fan Favorite) – Katelyn Rose Emmons '24, Elliott Stratton '24, and Joey Guida '24. A dating platform that connects compatible singles with local businesses to go on discounted first dates, with the goal of fostering real connections and reimagining online dating to benefit both the user and the venue.
- SaaSquatch – \$650 – Luke Owen '24, David Lugo '24, and Caleb Warrick '24. A SaaS marketing consulting platform for the middle market powered by AI.

The final round of the WVB took place in Sticht Lecture Hall on Friday, May 3. Sixty-three students from 14 different majors and every class year entered twenty-two teams in the first round of the competition. Eight teams made the finals.

This year's judicial panel included experienced entrepreneurs, founders, CEOs, and a variety of professionals and alumni. They were: RJ Fryan '08, CEO of Kind Special Alloys US and Lake Park Tool and Machine; Kim Garrett '12, owner and consultant at Better Made Brands; Justin Driscoll, director of Business Development at IQ Inc.; Darrin Grove '91, founder and CEO of Truefit; Jordyn Kemats '03, executive vice president and director of Sales Strategy & Marketing at S&T Bank; Mark Nicklas '81, president and CEO of Nicklas Supply, Inc.; Ben Nicklas '08, sales manager at Nicklas Supply, Inc.; Wendy Mascio '88, serial entrepreneur and GCC Trustee; Patrick Miles, senior project lead, Innovation Services at Chick-fil-A, Inc.; Josh Newton '09, director of Technology for the Newton Institute; Elisabeth O'Brien '16, director of Reservations Product for IHG Hotels & Resorts; Mark Pentz '81, owner and president of Calvin Group Inc.; and Michael Pentz '06, vice president of Calvin Group Inc.

Students collect \$10K prize at Allegheny's Big Idea competition

GROVE CITY, Pa. (May 8, 2024) – A pair of Grove City College entrepreneurs collected first place and a \$10,000 prize last weekend at Allegheny College's Zingale Big Idea Competition.

Max Muncy '25, a Business Analysis major from Knightstown, Ind., and Justin DeMild '24, a Management major from Douglassville, Pa., successfully pitched Athletes After, a sports recruitment platform designed to help give high school athletes the power and information they need to make the right choices for their college career, at the competition held April 26 and 27.

Athletes After is being developed within Grove City College's Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation's (E+I) ecosystem. Muncy and DeMild participated in E+I's [VentureLab](#) and [VentureLaunch](#) programs, which help students gauge the viability of their business.

They competed – and won \$3,650 – in the 2023 [Wolverine Venture Battle](#) and, under the [E+I Fellows](#) program, hired two student interns to further expand their business, which they plan to continue to grow after they graduate.

The Center for E+I's Campus Director, Logan Hammerschmitt, stated, “The team at the Center for E+I couldn't be more proud of Justin and Max for representing us well at Allegheny College's Zingale Big Idea Competition, and we can't wait to see where this business carries them. I'm thrilled that these students, both of whom are former members of the GCC football team whose careers were cut short due to injury, have found a way to help others pursue their dream of participating in college athletics.”

The Zingale Big Idea Competition focuses on seed-level new business ideas and emulates the experiences seen on the show “Shark Tank,” but “with a heart,” organizers said. Unlike the TV show, judges provide constructive feedback and encouragement.

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

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