Another exciting year is in the books for the Haile/US Bank College of Business’ Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE). 2015 brought many opportunities, from pitch competitions and prize money for company development, to the Center being internationally recognized for exceptional activities and placing among the top five university business accelerators in North America. The CIE is happy to help facilitate an innovative culture inside and outside of Northern Kentucky University. We can’t wait to share with you all that we have accomplished in yet another year…

Northern Kentucky University’s Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (CIE) is among the best in the world at bringing together and assisting aspiring entrepreneurs to turn their dreams into reality. Its INKUBATOR program has been ranked among the top five university business accelerators in North America by UBI Global. The CIE has also received the “Exceptional Activities in Entrepreneurship Across Disciplines” award from the Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers (GCEC). The award recognizes programs that create, advance, and enable entrepreneurship education opportunities to multiple audiences across a college campus.

Housed in NKU’s Haile/US Bank College of Business, the CIE serves students across campus through programs such as the INKUBATOR, which helps teams of students turn their business ideas into products and services; INKUBIZ, which connects entrepreneurial-minded students with mentors in the business community; and INKUREKA, a resource center for aspiring entrepreneurs of any major or minor.

“NKU students dream big: we have law students who want to use technology to revolutionize how lawsuits are filed, informatics students who want to change how the world sees video games, and biology students with billion-dollar ideas,” said CIE Director Rodney D’Souza. “They are all welcome at the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.”

The GCEC is the nation’s premier organization for university-based entrepreneurship centers. With membership from more than 200 universities across the globe, the organization links universities of all sizes to share best practices and to advance, strengthen, and celebrate university-based entrepreneurship centers and programs.

UBI Global provides support and benchmarking for more than 400 business incubator programs in 70 nations across the world. In 2014, it ranked NKU’s INKUBATOR among the top five university incubators in the world in the area of competence development.
After 12 weeks of turning their dreams into reality, six student-led startup companies were given the chance to show off what they’ve learned and how they’ve grown before an audience of University and community leaders at the INKUBATOR’s fourth annual Demo Day, August 4, 2015.

The companies included:

**CHANGE MY TUITION:**
Allowing users to round purchases up to the next dollar and deposit the difference into a 529 Savings Plan. The company is founded by Organizational Leadership student Kirk Laytart and Business Management student Leighanna Banks.

**EVENTSPIDER:**
Uses gamification methods and algorithms to engage college students in student organizations and university events. Founded by Entrepreneurship student Garrett Frey and Media Informatics student Derek Daley, the concept won second place at Idea State U, a statewide business plan competition by the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development.

**INCLUSIVE GAMES:**
Created by a disabled student who plays video games only using his feet, this game allows everyone to enjoy video games, regardless of their physical disabilities. Founded by CIT and Media Informatics student AJ Ryan, Media Informatics student James Marshall, and recent NKU graduate Heidi Rink.

**TRIP NUGGETS:**
Trip Nuggets takes the pain out of vacation planning by using local curation and algorithms to create a personalized itinerary to anywhere in the world. Founded by Michelle Bothe, who is pursuing a master’s degree in Business Informatics.

**VERDANT APPLIED SCIENCES:**
An easier and cheaper way for companies to recycle chemical waste was created by recent Chemistry graduate Matt Miles. Verdant Applied Sciences recently won the American Chemical Society’s national Green Chemistry and Engineering Business Plan Competition.

**YVES LAW:**
Helping users understand their debt, locate debt relief tools, and create documents to help them pursue debt relief and regain financial stability. Founded by Chase College of Law graduate Bob Cassity, Yves Law won the Northern Kentucky Business Pitch Competition, sponsored by the Kentucky Innovation Network.

Each company delivered an eight-minute pitch at Demo Day.

Founded in 2012, the INKUBATOR at NKU is a 12-week business accelerator open to all current students and recent graduates.

Economic Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>Accepted</th>
<th>Graduated</th>
<th>Still Operating</th>
<th>INKUBATOR Investment</th>
<th>Outside Funds Raised</th>
<th>Full/Part Time Jobs Created</th>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<td>$55,000</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>$71,250</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$56,000</td>
<td>$1,496,250</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chellgren Pathways to Entrepreneurship Keynote Delivered By United Medical Resources Founder

The series began in 2001 and is designed to bring excellence in entrepreneurship. This series of speaking events provided NKU students and faculty, as well as the regional business community, an opportunity to interact with and learn from nationally recognized entrepreneurial leaders.

Ms. Gluckman spoke on how her successes and failures guided her through her entrepreneurial career. She began her career in medical nonprofit work, which led her to develop and found United Medical Resources in 1983. She sold UMR to United Health Group, the largest health carrier in the nation, in 2005.

Ms. Gluckman was named one of the four great living Cincinnatians by The Cincinnati Enquirer. Among her many accolades, she was the inaugural recipient of the WE Celebrate Pinnacle Award-Cincinnati/USA Regional Chamber, she received the NKU Entrepreneurship Institute’s Master Entrepreneur Award, and she has received Ernst & Young’s Entrepreneur of the Year Award. She is extremely involved throughout the Greater Cincinnati community.

D’Souza Receives NKU Faculty Strongest Influence Award

From business owner in India, to student then professor at Northern Kentucky University, Rodney D’Souza uses his entrepreneurial skills to provide opportunities to today’s NKU students.

After working in accounting and technology fields in India, D’Souza started his own company that aided furniture manufacturers with a new inventory system. He sold his company and relocated to the United States. While a student at NKU, he developed an advanced business assessment tool for the Commonwealth of Kentucky’s Innovation and Commercialization Center to educate and encourage entrepreneurship within the state. This tool gained significant national attention, including discussion in a hearing before the U.S. Senate’s Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, as a tool for states to screen viable business investments and determine whether they should receive funding.

Today, Rodney D’Souza is the Fifth Third Bank Endowed Professor of Entrepreneurship and the director of the CIE. He received his Ph.D. in Entrepreneurship and Strategy from the University of Louisville. He also holds an M.B.A. from NKU, a Master in Computer Management and a Bachelors of Commerce from Pune University.

D’Souza teaches new venture creation, new venture management, and business plan writing classes. His areas of interest include entrepreneurial opportunity identification, new venture teams, and new venture financing.

His award winning research has appeared in journals such as the Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies, the Journal of Small Business Strategy, Journal of the Association for Information Systems (JAIS), Journal of Business and Entrepreneurship (JBE), Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship, and Southern Journal of Entrepreneurship.
This past summer, Connetic Ventures collaborated with the CIE to help network and educate the budding talent brought forward by the NKU Haile/US Bank College of Business programs.

"The CIE continues to impress us both with the leadership and the students," said Meena Maddali, operating partner, Connetic Ventures. "The energy is exactly what our region needs to continue to be a leader in entrepreneurship, and Connetic would like to lead by example and continue to support these students in hopes others will do the same. We could not be happier with this partnership."

Angel investors nurture new businesses and help create jobs in their communities. They do this by investing in startups and by participating as mentors and board members in the startups they fund. Universities also seek to drive economic development by providing learning experiences that help create a productive workforce and supporting faculty members’ research efforts that directly and indirectly impact the ecosystem.

LightHouse Page Presents at Celebration of Student Research and Creativity

Donna Snyder and Kim Zeigler of LightHouse Page (INKUBATOR Class of 2014) participated in the annual Celebration of Student Research and Creativity event. Celebration is about showcasing the scholarly work of students across all disciplines. LightHouse Page, an interactive, real-time communication application used to connect home and school for children with special needs, took part in the poster and interactive presentations. Thousands of students, community members, faculty/staff, and alumni attend Celebration each year.
College Students Compete in Northern Kentucky for Startup Funds and Bragging Rights

Idea State U, a nationally recognized business plan competition designed to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship on the college level, held a regional competition at Gateway Community & Technical College’s Boone County Campus.

The competition had a business plan and a business model category and each of the top four competing groups advanced to the state competition. Also, each winner was given a check for their start-up funds: first prize received $1,000, second got $750, third/$500, and fourth/$250.

A group from Northern Kentucky University called Change My Tuition finished third in the business plan competition. Change My Tuition is designed to help family members save for college tuition by rounding daily purchases to the nearest dollar and the rounded change gets put into a 529 savings plan.

Photo and story by Bryan Burke, Associate Editor at RCN

NKY Entrepreneur Student Wins Pitch Competition in Florida

The Northern Kentucky University (NKU) Collegiate Entrepreneurs’ Organization (CEO) chapter, which is housed under the Haile/US Bank College of Business Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, took a group of six students and two faculty/staff members to The University of Tampa (Tampa, FL) to partake in The South Eastern Entrepreneurship Conference (SEEC) on February 27-28.

CEO is an organization that allows students to tap into their entrepreneurial spirit. SEEC provides students with a variety of excellent opportunities to gain knowledge from successful entrepreneurs.

The SEEC trip was sponsored by Covington-based businesses Connetic Ventures and TiER1 Performance Solutions. The generous donations made by these organizations is an investment in the development of the young, aspiring entrepreneurs in our region.

Meena Maddali, COO of Connetic Ventures stated, “Entrepreneurship is the cornerstone of our economy. One of the reasons we started Connetic was to nurture entrepreneurs, their teams, and their ideas. So when we had the chance to sponsor CEO to go to SEEC, it was definitely a no-brainer: This is a group of talented students with a love for and ability to become entrepreneurs, and they’re right in our backyard. We are so proud of these students and all their achievements, and we can’t wait to see what they’ll become!”

This belief in the students immediately paid off. Jared Young, COO of Vegy Vida and an NKU Senior Entrepreneurship major, was able to participate in the Elevator Pitch competition and brought home first place. Jared used his entrepreneurial background to wow the judges with his clear and concise pitch, beating out 65 other students from across the country.

Story by RCN Newsdesk

Jared Young, COO of Vegy Vida and NKU Senior Entrepreneur major.
Northern Kentucky Entrepreneurs Freshen Up Brand

A group of NKU students won several competitions in the past year for a food product they developed that makes it easier for parents to get their kids to eat vegetables.

The group’s product originally known as Veggie Magic, was rebranded to Vegy Vida with new labeling and taglines.

“We did a complete rebranding from where we were before and now we’re about two months out from being in stores. We’re trying to get our name out there and see what people think of us before we launch on shelves,” said Jared Young, co-founder and NKU alum.

INKUBATOR Team Shifts the Gears on World of Gaming

After winning the entrepreneur competitions, the Vegy Vida team spoke with real investors on tips and strategies to make their product even more attractive. They also won a cash prize that went toward further development of their product.

“The true reason we’re launching this product is to make the world a healthier place. If we can even play a small part in getting children and adults to eat more vegetables in general, and just live healthier lifestyles with no money at all, then our mission has been accomplished. That’s really what we’re trying to do.”

Story by Bryan Burke, Associate Editor at RCN

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Story by Bryan Burke, Associate Editor at RCN
INKUBATOR Company, Yves Law, Wins Regional Pitch Competition

NKU graduate Bob Cassity wants to take the ‘paper’ out of legal paperwork – and a panel of venture capitalists said it’s the most innovative new idea in Northern KY. Cassity’s company, Yves Law, won the Northern Kentucky Business Pitch Competition, held at UpTech on May 27 and sponsored by the KY Innovation Network.

Yves Law allows attorneys and members of the public to generate and complete legal filings, such as bankruptcy petitions, online. Cassity came up with the idea while working in private practice after graduating from NKU’s Chase College of Law in 2007.

“We can save a lot of time and money for both the client and the attorney,” he said. “We try to find the sweet spot between the parts of a case that really need an attorney and the parts you can do yourself.”

Cassity worked with the INKUBATOR, an initiative of NKU’s Haile/US Bank College of Business, to help launch the service.

“We help students turn their dreams into reality – and we try to ignite the spark that will help a company really take off.”

– Rodney D’Souza, Director of the CIE

Verdant Wins 2015 Green Chemistry & Engineering Business Plan Competition

On July 15, the ACS Green Chemistry Institute® hosted the 2015 Green Chemistry & Engineering Business Plan Competition. Three semi-finalists went to Bethesda, MD to present their business for $10,000. The ACS GCI called for summaries from early-stage green chemistry and engineering companies. From more than a dozen applications, the three semi-finalists were selected:

IBEX: bionomic products in Agriculture, Environmental Remediation, Bio-Industry, & Human Health

SustAnalyze: software to speed up the development of sustainable chemicals by increasing efficiency of chemical R&D processes

Verdant: chemical recycling technology where automation makes recycling practical in any lab

Social media was made a part of the competition in order to raise awareness of green chemistry and the importance it plays in our lives. We ran a crowdsourcing campaign, “Change the World with Green Chemistry,” that gave anyone a stake in the competition. It enabled individuals from all backgrounds to learn how new technologies are changing the world and then vote for the one(s) they wanted to see come to market.

Verdant developed a programmable solvent recycler. Currently, the prototype saves users over $40 for every gallon of common laboratory solvent recycled. The company was created by Matt Miles, a graduate of NKU who guided product development from concept to implementation. Nathan Kinsmann is an engineer overseeing manufacturing/operations and David Abdon, head of sales / marketing.

Story and picture by ACS
Students Learn from Local Entrepreneurs

In celebration of Global Entrepreneurship Week, NKU’s Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship hosted a panel discussion – Fueling the Entrepreneurial Flames Panel Discussion.

Over 35 students, faculty and business community leaders listened to the founders of successful local start-up companies share their experiences of what it is like to start and manage their own business. The founders of Hello Parent, Made by Mavis, Tixers, and Vegy Vida were the panelist.

“This was a great event that connected our students with local entrepreneurs who were generous to share their stories with students who have a passion for entrepreneurship. Many of our students stayed well after the event was over; networking and learning from the panelists,” said Zac Strobl regarding the event.

Overview

2015 held many accomplishments and promises continual success more for the Haile/US Bank College of Business’ Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The year brought many opportunities, from pitch competitions and prize money for company development, to awards for exceptional activities and strongest faculty. The CIE is happy to help facilitate an innovative culture inside and outside of Northern Kentucky University.

About the CIE

The Haile/US Bank College of Business Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at NKU is a driver of educational and professional development opportunities to all NKU students.

The center seeks to advance the university’s strategy by fostering cross-campus applied learning and embedding innovative thinking more deeply in the university culture. Built on the belief that students from colleges across campus can all learn from one another, the CIE fosters trans-disciplinary opportunities for applied learning to occur so students can become well-rounded, innovative, and creative thinkers.

OUR PEOPLE

RODNEY D’SOUZA
Fifth Third Bank Endowed Professor of Entrepreneurship and Director

SALLY ALLEN

ZAC STROBL

JEFF VARRONE

NKU
HAILE · US BANK
College of Business
CENTER FOR INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
BC 350 | Phone: 859.572.5931
cie.nku.edu

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