

STUDENT
INNOVATION
@ THE



2023



The University of Utah

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STUDENT INNOVATION @ THE U 2023

ABOUT THE REPORT

“Student Innovation at the U” is an annual publication celebrating student innovation and impact at the University of Utah. A digital version is available at lassonde.utah.edu/studentinnovation2023. This publication is produced by the Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute, an interdisciplinary division of the David Eccles School of Business and the hub for student entrepreneurs and innovators at the U. Learn about the Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute and how to get involved at lassonde.utah.edu.

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Have a question? Want copies? Want to nominate a student to be featured in the next edition? Or want to be a contributor? We want to hear from you! Contact the Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute at lassonde@utah.edu or [801-587-3836](tel:801-587-3836).

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WELCOME



President's Message

Welcome to the 2023 edition of "Student Innovation at the U." This publication features students from across the University of Utah who are making a difference through innovation. The projects and initiatives being led by these young entrepreneurs are not only impressive but also illustrate what being a student at the U means in 2023.

At the University of Utah, students get a world-class education in a variety of majors and disciplines. But we don't stop there. Students have countless opportunities to apply what they are learning as they participate in real-world activities and learning modules through our many centers, institutes, and programs. These applied experiences allow students to put their education to work, make a difference, and learn by doing.

In the following pages, you'll read about students who are doing everything from improving battery technology to

creating new ways for lugging ski gear to the slopes. These stories are told by student writers and photographers.

While there are differences between these stories, the common thread tying them together is entrepreneurial spirit. Our students and the entire U community do more than ask hard questions: we find solutions and pursue them.

I invite you to browse this publication to learn more about our incredible students. Then I encourage you to get involved in any way you can. If you're a student, take action, create something, and make an impact on the world and in your own life. If you're a faculty, staff, or community member, please encourage students to get involved and help mentor them. We're already doing great things, and together, we can do more.

— Taylor Randall, president, University of Utah

1. FASHION



A Marketplace for Fashion Entrepreneurs

Susma Gurung is turning her frustration into a business opportunity in the fashion industry.

The marketing student at the University of Utah is a fashion entrepreneur, and she knows the struggle of gaining exposure and selling something new.

To help herself and many young fashion entrepreneurs like her, Gurung created Off the Rack, a marketplace where they can gather to sell their products and promote themselves. The Off the Rack marketplace events are currently hosted on the University of Utah campus, and Gurung hopes to grow and also host events off campus.

By being part of the local fashion community, Gurung saw an increase in young fashion entrepreneurs who were starting creative businesses. As she noticed the increase, she saw an opportunity to start Off the Rack.

Gurung has taken advantage of a variety of resources at the Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute, including the Company Launch program, to grow Off the Rack.

Off the Rack's overall purpose is to encourage people to

shop sustainably and ethically while supporting young fashion entrepreneurs in the community. Gurung also wants to amplify the voices and creativity of young fashion entrepreneurs, provide a platform and an opportunity for them to gain recognition for their creative artwork, and create a community where they can learn, be inspired, and be encouraged by one another.

"We have plenty of talent, skills, and determination, but not enough of a platform to showcase that," Gurung said. She hopes Off the Rack will change that.

"The goal is not to make things perfect," she said. "The goal is to hold businesses accountable if they are not making efforts and taking action toward implementing sustainable policies in their business operations."

"Young student entrepreneurs have a high risk of experiencing the effects of unsustainable business policies," Gurung said. She wants to help them use their power to change trends that align with sustainability.



Sustainable Luxury Knitwear

Before starting James Street Co., Jess Reese didn't think she could work in the fashion world. It seemed unattainable — like a made-up job. Now, four years after starting the luxury knitwear brand, she can't imagine doing anything else.

Reese, a founder in the Master of Business Creation program at the University of Utah's David Eccles School of Business, started James Street Co. out of her basement. In the beginning, everything was knit to order, and she knit, processed, and shipped all orders on her own. Her company has since grown, with clothing made in Los Angeles and Peru.

James Street Co. clothing is made in small batches with respect for the environment. All the fabrics are traceable, and factories are vetted to ensure ethical practices. Additionally, the brand does limited drops with no restocks. It's

important to Reese that the company doesn't end up with excess inventory.

"I worked for brands that overproduced, and the waste they created was shocking," she said. "I knew that I wanted to do something different."

What really sets the brand apart, however, is its style. Although the brand caters to women, the clothing is androgynous, with occasional gender-neutral clothing lines. Because there are no restocks, every collection is unique and created with customer feedback in mind.

"The whole process has been really exciting," Reese said. "Sometimes I can't believe I've been doing this for four years and created my own job. I hope it keeps growing and eventually becomes a family business."

— by *Despina Giannopoulos*



David Wimert

Problem-Solving Fashion

Mya Nguyen, a multi-disciplinary design student at the University of Utah, faced a challenge in her senior studio class to solve a problem with a product. The project took varying courses and avenues, but the initial thought started with body positivity.

After brainstorming, Nguyen took her initial concept of body positivity and addressed a problem she'd dealt with and thought a lot about: hyperhidrosis, a condition characterized by excessive sweating. "I wanted to do something that mattered to me and for people to recognize this as a problem," Nguyen said.

While this condition may seem insignificant to most, those afflicted often experience social alienation. The initial desire came from creating a solution and

outlet for people to coexist with hyperhidrosis instead of taking drastic action such as surgery.

From the prototype to the final project, Nguyen overcame various obstacles, such as sourcing materials, sewing, incorporating effective textiles while maintaining aesthetics, and limited resources. The result? A stylish streetwear vest that alleviates hyperhidrosis.

"With this project, I found out I love fashion," she said. "The future of this product is accompanying pants and a more polished vest with a bigger budget."

In the future, Nguyen hopes to pursue a career in UI/UX design while working on textile projects on the side. Wherever she goes, innovation will likely follow.

— by *David Wimert*

2. COMMUNITY



David Wimert

Literature for Change

Bachelor of social work students Ash Moyano-Villa and Tyson Sommer's "Little Free Library" sits on the first floor of the social work building, with a bright red backdrop silhouetting it. It feels cozy and intimate, its own little world, with a sign that reads, "Take a book, leave a book. Decolonize your bookshelf." The Little Free Library is a historic nonprofit promoting book exchanges through a public bookcase, altered in this case by being a specialized little free library that only features underrepresented communities and authors.

The idea for this project came from the lack of literary diversity the students experienced during their formative years combined with their love of literature. They see literature as both a transformative tool for change and a medium that needs more diverse perspectives.

"Representation and varied perspectives paired with great writing awoke me to great possibilities," Sommer said.

They wanted to bring a new perspective to the university community. "We wanted to make a difference within the individual and the community, but also to provide entertainment where anyone could find themselves represented," Moyano-Villa said. The responsibility of representing diverse and historically silenced communities is not an easy task, but the project is making a difference.

In the future, Moyano-Villa sees herself working in social work for children, while Sommer wants to tie social work with HR in an interdisciplinary approach.

— by David Wimert



David Wimert

Global Impact Through Charity Validation

Excluding funding, what is the number one challenge facing nonprofits? Validation, according to Angela Holzer, founder of WikiCharities and a recent Master of Business Creation graduate.

As a humanitarian volunteer, nonprofit researcher, and student, Holzer realized that a resource was needed to centralize and build trust between funders, users, and nonprofits. Thus, WikiCharities was born.

"It is a platform that creates transparency for nonprofits on a global scale and has a standardized reporting structure," Holzer said. Charities pay an annual subscription to access the platform, and in return are backed by WikiCharities, becoming a trusted and verified nonprofit that funders and users alike can easily find online.

Some of the nonprofits WikiCharities has worked with are RiseUp School of Dance, GuardianGroup, and Meals in the Meantime. Holzer explained how these charities are finding WikiCharities since they need a path toward gaining trust with funders. Funders want third-party validation of nonprofits since they do not see a return on funds, unlike traditional investors.

With the advancement of technology and global acceptance of online platforms, Holzer believes that WikiCharities can accomplish what wouldn't have been achievable even five years ago. She hopes to find partners for Wikicharities, go fully nationwide, and begin expansion into the international space.

— by Julia Dominesey

Architecture as Cultural Expression

University of Utah architecture student Samantha Eddy's admiration for architecture is obvious.

Eddy is riding a winning streak following her team's win at the annual JUMP into STEM final competition, which played off the theme "resilience in the wake of a disaster." When asked about the win, Eddy said, "It still feels surreal, when I think about it."

The JUMP into STEM competition was the largest competition to date, with the U.S. Department of Energy offering internships to the four winning teams' students. The University of Utah's team won for their holistic and innovative designs that strengthened marginalized and vulnerable

communities in the event of a natural or man-made disaster.

Eddy's Diné heritage is the driving force of her work. She hopes to empower and elevate her community by creating sustainable, modular architecture that maintains cultural traditions while bringing in solar panels, green building materials, and more.

In the future, Eddy plans to pursue an architectural master's degree. "I see myself going back to the Navajo Nation gathering a team together and founding the first Indigenous architecture firm there," she said.

— by David Wimert

3. ART & DESIGN



Learning by Doing

During the Community-based Art Education program, master of fine art student Reilly Jensen said her favorite radical approach was “learn by doing.” She described how art has the power to integrate and tell a story.

Jensen took the opportunity to learn “secrets” of artists, such as radical pedagogy, co-intentional educational approaches, and the power and weight of community relationships with the intentions identifying and obtaining the collaborative skills of artists, addressing systemic cultural heritage, and contesting narratives of the past.

She worked with scientists, artists, and local schools at the

UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Bat, Khutum, and Al Ayn in the Sultanate of Oman to collect local clay and create ceramics for research of Bronze-Age ceramics processes and generate questions about the cultural past and our relationships to it through the creation of heritage for her master of fine arts thesis.

She continues to work and prepares for the upcoming field season. You can follow the process on Instagram: [@quaffingreilly](#).

— by Vyana Dang



Despina Giannopoulos



Mary Allen

Reimagining Data Visualization

Youjia Zhou is a computing Ph.D. candidate at the University of Utah working to help scientists and mathematicians with their knowledge-discovery process through practical visual analytics systems. Her research focuses on large and complex data, coupling theoretical analysis with interactive visualization to help users quickly gain insights from complex graphs and hypergraphs.

Visualization is useful when exploring data but can be challenging with complex hypergraphs. Because hypergraphs model data from relationships with more than two entities, the visualizations of complex hypergraphs tend to have areas that contain little informational content due to visual clutter.

Zhou has created a visualization system that supports hypergraph simplification using topological techniques. The system is an interactive web application that allows

users to input their datasets and apply simplifications at different scales to discover interesting patterns, subsets, and entities within the relationships modeled. Furthermore, these insights can help domain scientists to identify and address their research problems.

This method of topological simplification can be applied to any multiway relationship. Zhou has explored the relationships among characters in a novel, co-authors of academic publications, members of social groups, and genes in biological pathways.

While many research efforts focus on visualizing large graphs and hypergraphs, few focus on hypergraph simplification. Zhou's innovative approach to hypergraph simplification and visualization will help solve problems across many disciplines.

— *by Despina Giannopoulos*

Where Innovation Meets Music

Tage Rinehart has been a musician their whole life — and saw a need for accessibility in the world of electronic music. That's why they came up with abSYNTHe: a virtual software instrument created to ease the many difficulties that exist in electronic music production.

abSYNTHe was born out of Rinehart's senior project in the University of Utah's Multi-Disciplinary Design program. After researching electronic music production in a classroom exercise, they got curious about the different tools needed to create music in that field.

"I noticed that when I tried to learn and make electronic music, there was a really high learning curve compared to other instruments," Rinehart said. "I wanted to investigate why that was and use my skills as a digital product designer to help create better music software that feels like playing a real instrument, so it feels familiar to musicians."

Rinehart has plenty of experience with music composition, having grown up singing, songwriting, and playing the piano, bass, and guitar — among other instruments. This gave them the familiarity needed to build a program that musicians could use and feel comfortable with.

Rinehart used insights from instruments to transform an interface full of knobs and entry forms into an expressive and interactive experience. "I focused on the digital synthesizer, comparing it to other instruments. My design uses insights from what it feels like to play an instrument to redesign that process and translate it to a digital language," Rinehart said.

In an increasingly electronic world, abSYNTHe is working to give greater access to the sounds of everyone's favorite musicians.

— *by Mary Allen*

4. HEALTH



Despina Giannopoulos

A Cuffless Blood-Pressure Monitor

Henry Crandall, an electrical and computer engineering Ph.D. candidate at the University of Utah, is working to create a blood pressure monitoring technique that is cuffless, convenient, and can measure over an extended period.

Blood pressure is an important indicator of overall heart health, and high blood pressure contributes to many serious health issues. Despite the importance of this measurement, the lack of a portable or convenient technology leaves most people without a way to continuously monitor their blood pressure outside of a yearly doctor's appointment.

"Getting a measurement once a year is a very small snapshot of what's going on with your heart long term," Crandall said. "There's a huge need for a new measurement technique and device that can measure continuously."

Crandall's research uses bioimpedance — a health

monitoring approach that injects an imperceptible amount of electricity directly into the skin's tissue. He is developing new algorithms, equations, and models to incorporate into the next generation of wearable health monitors, like smart rings and watches. His research results are part of a provisional patent application currently in the works by the university.

"This has huge societal impacts, helping people to live better and healthier lives," Crandall said. "I'm super excited to be plugged into this ecosystem."

Crandall is eager to support the next generation of engineers and use his blood pressure research in university outreach events.

— *by Despina Giannopoulos*



Mary Allen

Innovating in Medical Research

Elaine Wong, in her final semester of her undergraduate degree at the University of Utah, is making major strides in the fields of engineering and medical research. She is an electrical engineering major with minors in cognitive science and biomedical engineering, though she didn't always know this is what she wanted to do.

"I took a class that talked about technology that makes diagnosis easier and better for doctors," Wong said. "I knew immediately that it was something I wanted to work on."

Since then, Wong has undergone plenty of research dedicated to decreasing the disconnect between patients and those who create the technology that helps them. Her medical history has been a personal motivator in this work as well.

"Patients have to go through a lot, and they're not super connected to the people who provide the resources that can give

them help," Wong said. "Because of that disconnect, there just isn't enough technology getting created to help them."

Wong has put this research to use in her undergraduate thesis as it applies to muscle disorders, tongue cancer, and facioscapulohumeral muscular dystrophy. She has also worked with doctors who specialize in skin cancer at the Huntsman Cancer Institute to further this research.

Furthermore, she is first author of a manuscript under review at the *Journal of Investigative Dermatology*. Her work on this skin cancer project was recently awarded the American Cancer Society's Institutional Research Grant.

Wong's work in the field of medical engineering is already making waves during her undergraduate years, and her work in this field is likely to truly change lives.

— by Mary Allen



A Source for All Things Wellness

Lauren Hash turned her passion for healthy living into an online personal training company, *explorWell*, while studying exercise science at the University of Utah and participating in programs at the Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute.

Hash enjoyed playing sports in high school and college, not only because of the motivating team environment but also because of the great impacts on her health. Prior to her participation in sports, she consumed the standard American diet and didn't exercise regularly.

"Once I began playing sports and started focusing on my nutrition, I felt all-around better physically and mentally," she said. "The difference was amazing. I have more energy, can run miles without getting tired, and feel immensely happier

when I move my body and eat well."

Many people, however, are still at the beginning of their health journey and may not know where to even start. It can be difficult to decipher what is actually good for the body when society throws so many different fad diets, "health products," and juice cleanses at each individual seeking to live healthier.

Because of the impact fitness and nutrition have had on Hash's life, she knew she had to create a company to help others become their healthiest selves. That led her to major in exercise science and start *explorWell*.

Hash's passion to help others shines through when she interacts with her clients. She genuinely cares about helping others feel their best physically and mentally.

5. FOOD



Cooking Reimagined

University of Utah student startup Savorit is reimagining cooking with help from the Lasonde Entrepreneur Institute.

Ever wanted to explore new recipes without hurting your bank account? This company makes it easy. They are working to combine Tinder and HelloFresh to provide a service that makes cooking more engaging and less costly.

Users will swipe on recipes, selecting their favorites. Savorit will then compile a set of meals with the most overlap in ingredients to save the user money. The app has integrated Instacart's APIs so users can have their groceries delivered right to their door. The user will then follow the simple cooking instructions provided by Savorit to have a freshly cooked meal they can savor with loved ones.

The team behind Savorit consists of University of Utah student Sarah Rinderknecht, alum Leon Weingartner, and alum Felix Weingartner. All three members feel there is a true value in connecting with loved ones through cooking.

"Cooking for us creates a simple time to connect with one another and create lasting memories," Rinderknecht said.

"Everyone deserves to have access to simple healthy meals. We want to lower the cost and time commitment of cooking so people can focus on what really matters in their lives."

While studying at the University of Utah, the innovation and creativity of the Lasonde Entrepreneur Institute quickly caught their attention and inspired them to start their company. Participating in Lasonde's Get Seeded grant program was a major turning point for the team. After earning a microgrant, they pursued full grants and were awarded funding in two more grant rounds. This has led them to the launch of their business and covered many of their startup costs, such as filling as an LLC and obtaining a provisional patent to secure their idea as they grow.

— by Vyana Dang



From Botswana to the World

One creative company from Botswana is fighting to change the world. Well, more like cooking to change the world. The company is Maungo Craft, and they are doing this one incredibly delicious hot sauce at a time.

Co-founder Bonolo Monthe recently graduated from the Master of Business Creation, a program offered at the University of Utah's David Eccles School of Business. She participated virtually from Africa.

This vegan fruity, spicy, and smoky hot sauce has started getting traction in the USA and rightfully so. It is now available on Amazon with a five-star rating and glowing reviews. It is also available at niche stores in Salt Lake City.

Maungo Craft owes its mission to one fruit that grows in abundance in Botswana's semi-arid desert environment. The marula fruit tree is the ancient grandfather of the apricot and produces fruit in abundance.

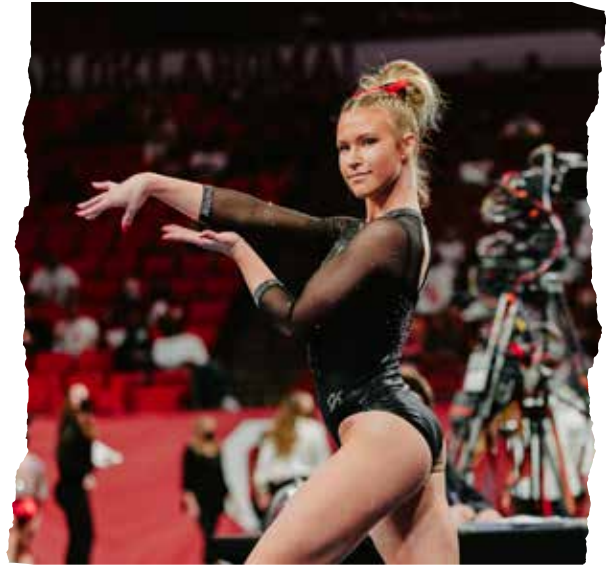
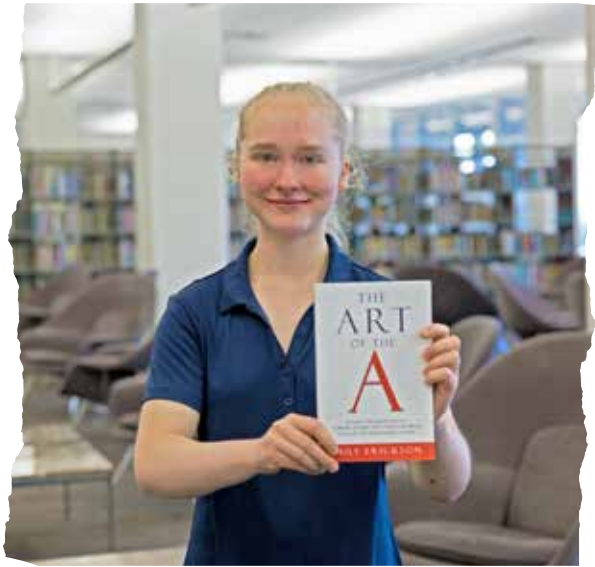
The seed oil extracted from the marula fruit is quickly becoming an international commodity for its cosmetic

properties. The fruit, however, is incredibly underused.

"It takes roughly 300 tons of marula fruit pulp to get 12 tons of marula cosmetic oil. The rest of the fruit typically goes underutilized," Monthe said. "So, we thought to ourselves, we know what happens with the oil, but what happens to all that fruit?"

In 2017 Monthe, her sister Abigail Monthe, co-founder Aganga, and friend Motseoeme Taunyane started making preserves with an effort to save the fruit. They have since introduced sauces and syrups to their range. Maungo Craft has gone on to achieve many firsts in their country. They have had products endorsed by Martha Stewart and received Great Taste Awards from the Guild of Fine Foods. They now supply hospitality, restaurants, gifting, and retail with their unique range. Maungo Craft has won 13 awards, locally, regionally, and internationally and, according to Monthe, is the first food company from Botswana to sell on Amazon.

6. INFLUENCE



The Art of the A

“To students who want to do it all and refuse to accept that they should settle for anything less. This book is for you. It will show you how you can,” reads the dedication page of Emily Erickson’s most recent book, “The Art of the A: A Guide to Earning Straight A’s In Middle and High School Without Sacrificing Your Social Life, Sleep Schedule or Sanity.”

Erickson published the book as a freshman at the University of Utah. She knows about taking advantage of all school has to offer: She graduated high school with a 4.0 GPA and class rank 1 of 563, and successfully completed 14 AP classes, among many other accomplishments. Most impressive of all, she managed to do all this without sacrificing her sleep or social life.

According to Erickson, misconceptions abound

regarding who can earn straight A’s and what it takes to get them. “With the right approach, almost all students are capable of earning A’s in school while still having the time and energy to engage in the activities they enjoy outside of school,” she said.

“The Art of the A” is a comprehensive guide to excelling academically, covering everything from how to complete homework quickly to reframing stress and avoiding burnout. It contains unique and unconventional strategies — such as how to leverage procrastination as a tool.

“I wanted my book to be relevant and relatable to today’s students,” Erickson said. “It’s filled with entertaining stories from my own time in school and contains real and honest advice on topics essential to academic success which frequently get overlooked.”

Student-Athletes Making a Difference

University of Utah gymnast Abby Paulson is a student-athlete who wants to make a difference.

With over 26,000 Instagram followers and a spot on a nationally ranked team, Paulson has a larger platform than most students could imagine. She saw new opportunities when the NCAA approved a policy that allows student-athletes to monetize their name, image, and likeness (NIL).

Along with partnering with companies to promote products, Paulson is using her platform to tackle important issues. She has worked with foundations for women and girls in sports and participated in fundraising events for pediatric cancer research, with plans to continue these efforts in the future.

“Having this platform has given me these opportunities,” Paulson said.

“I’m glad to have a voice and the ability to share things that are important to me while also working to build my brand.”

Additionally, Paulson is involved with Who Rocks the House, an NIL collective dedicated to Utah gymnastics and believed to be the first in the country just for female student-athletes. Who Rocks the House gives athletes opportunities to engage with fans and participate in philanthropic efforts in their community to create meaningful impact.

With NIL deals becoming more ubiquitous, new opportunities are surfacing in college athletics. A lot is changing for student-athletes, and Paulson believes it will only get more exciting.

— by *Despina Giannopoulos*

7. OUTDOORS



Serving Up Fun

If you haven't yet heard of pickleball, you will soon. Pickleball is the fastest-growing sport in America. This sport with a funny name is enjoyed by grandparents, NBA players, children in PE, and the Hollywood elite alike. Katy Luxem, founder of Big Dill Pickleball Co., was drawn to the fun culture of pickleball and launched her own pickleball paddle and gear company based in Draper, Utah. She rediscovered pickleball during the pandemic, and has been serving up fun ever since.

Big Dill Pickleball Co. aims to be the go-to pickleball brand for beginner and intermediate players. Offering fresh designs, her paddles, sets, balls, and accessories make it so the only thing her customers need to find is an open court. Luxem chose the Master of Business Creation program at the University of Utah's David Eccles School of Business to help take her business to the next level.

"My favorite aspect of the sport is how inclusive and addictive it is. I can play with my kids, parents, and friends," Luxem said. "But when I shopped for pickleball paddles,

everything looked like the side of an RV. This didn't speak to the fun, accessible nature of the sport. I knew I could do better."

As a seasoned e-commerce consultant and former Amazon employee, Luxem knew she could make something more unique, exciting and pickle-themed. Big Dill Pickleball Co. has sold thousands of units on the company Amazon store, where customers rate the brand highly for quality and distinctiveness. Big Dill Pickleball Co. also sells on their website and Walmart.com. Her product range centers around two USA Pickleball-approved paddles. The Original is made of carbon fiber and the Infinity is made of fiberglass. These are also sold in two-pack sets, which are popular with new pickleball players.

Big Dill Pickleball Co. has sponsored local tournaments, donated to Utah schools, and also regularly donates to charities. "Pickleball is the ultimate participatory sport," said Luxem. "I am always excited about getting more people to play."



Mary Allen

Making Adventure Accessible

In a state known for its natural beauty, outdoor adventures are a quintessential part of day-to-day life for people all over Utah. Many students attend the University of Utah because of its proximity to this natural landscape, but it's not always easy to take advantage of.

Thomas Rash, Matthew Lebrecht, and Darin Pinedo, sophomore students at the University of Utah's David Eccles School of Business, saw this problem and decided to start Innovation Outdoors — an outdoor recreation company dedicated to making the outdoors accessible. Their first project is a foldable paddleboard that is easy to transport and store.

"We're trying to make the wonderful world around us more accessible to everybody," Lebrecht said.

Their desire to pursue this came from Rash's

experience with the world of paddleboarding.

"I was a paddleboarding instructor a couple of years ago," Rash said. "My mom has an inflatable paddleboard. She bought it for the issue of storage and space, but it was really hard to stand on."

This gave Rash the idea to create a product that anyone with a passion for paddleboarding and the outdoors can take anywhere — from a garage to a dorm room.

The Innovation Outdoors team is optimistic about the future of their startup. They believe the University of Utah is one of the best places to find people who want to get outside, just like themselves.

— by Mary Allen



The Family-Friendly Adventure Rack

Utah is home to some of the world's most popular skiing and mountain biking, but for years, people have been using imperfect — and sometimes unusual — means to get their gear to the mountains. University of Utah entrepreneurship student James Linton and co-founder Charles McNall, a professional engineer, believe they have the answer.

After seasons of experimenting with different ski and bike racks, Linton and McNall designed and brought to market a new, family-friendly adventure rack: the Chuck Rack.

"The idea is that a family can, with one lightweight and storable rack, carry six bikes or eight pairs of skis with a fully loaded vehicle to wherever they want to go," said Linton.

The Chuck Rack is a modular

trailer-hitch-mounted rack system designed to carry everything from skis to camping gear. Each part of the modular rack can be installed separately and each weigh less than 20 pounds — because those who've experienced it know that installing a 60-pound vertical bike rack is a pain.

The company shows no signs of stopping, and so far, consumers' reception has been positive.

"It's awesome to hear from people that get their racks, and they just love how convenient it is for them," Linton said.

Linton and McNall hope to eventually compete with the likes of Yakima and Alta Racks as they expand their product line. Future ideas include attachments for van showers, surfboards, kayaks, and more.



Entrepreneurs in Knife Retail

After growing tired of running a staffing agency for several years, Trevor Darby realized he could pivot in a completely new direction with his work — and use entrepreneurship to make that happen. He is now pursuing this dream with help from the Master of Business Creation program at the University of Utah's David Eccles School of Business.

Darby is the founder of BladeOps, an online knife retail company. What began as a small business he ran out of an extra closet at his staffing agency is now a top-ranked destination for knife consumers and collectors nationwide. The company currently operates out of a storefront location along with its website.

"We have a lot of fun educating our customers about different knives and how they function," Darby

said. "We have a wide variety of customers in our base, from people who use these knives in their everyday life to people who use them for their outdoor activities."

Entrepreneurship was appealing to Darby because of his ability to market a dependable product, which was something he didn't feel like he could do at the staffing agency.

"It happened to be retail," he said. "Most people go the other direction trying to flee from retail. But I thought, 'I think I can make this work.' It's been a fun journey."

Darby decided to quit the staffing agency altogether and go full time with his business. It's been growing ever since, but Darby has kept an open mind to lessons about entrepreneurship along the way.

— by Mary Allen



Garrett Petersen

Better Ski & Snowboard Gear

Meet the dynamic trio behind Breezy Ski Co.: Alex Rodriguez, Zach Bryan, and Dorian Ishmael. These innovative students, who met in a business class at the University of Utah, share a passion for storytelling and creating high-quality products. They're on a mission to change the ski and snowboard industry by developing a range of functional and sustainable gear that solves common problems.

After struggling with wet gear on the mountain, the team knew there had to be a better solution. They got to work on their latest project, which is a ski/snowboard boot bag with better ventilation, anti-microbial and sustainable materials, and eventually a heating element to keep your gear warm and dry.

Their entrepreneurial spirit has led them to establish Breezy Ski Co. as a brand that's focused on solving problems and creating products that

stand out in the industry. To date, they've been working hard to develop their brand and gain an organic customer base through their website, apparel, and brand ambassadors. They've also been building relationships with other young entrepreneurs on and off-campus, collaborating on ideas, and sharing resources.

Their passion for winter and outdoor sports runs deep, and they're committed to making products that help others enjoy those activities to the fullest. They believe that gear should not only be functional but also comfortable and stylish. Breezy Ski Co. is all about creating products that reflect the spirit of the mountain and the lifestyle that comes with it.

As Ishmael puts it, "When you love what you do, you're not working," and the team behind Breezy Ski Co. embodies this sentiment.

— by Garrett Petersen

8. RESEARCH



Mary Allen

New Strides in Peptide Chemistry

Max Austin is a senior at the University of Utah, studying chemistry with an emphasis in math.

He has been working as a student researcher leading a project to prepare and evaluate antimicrobial peptides in the Roberts Laboratory in the Department of Chemistry and has most recently been involved in research on peptide chemistry.

"Peptides are molecules made up of amino acids," Austin said. "We are interested in short- to medium-size peptides that happen to be antimicrobial. We're working on making cyclic peptides that could potentially be stabilized antimicrobial peptide therapeutics."

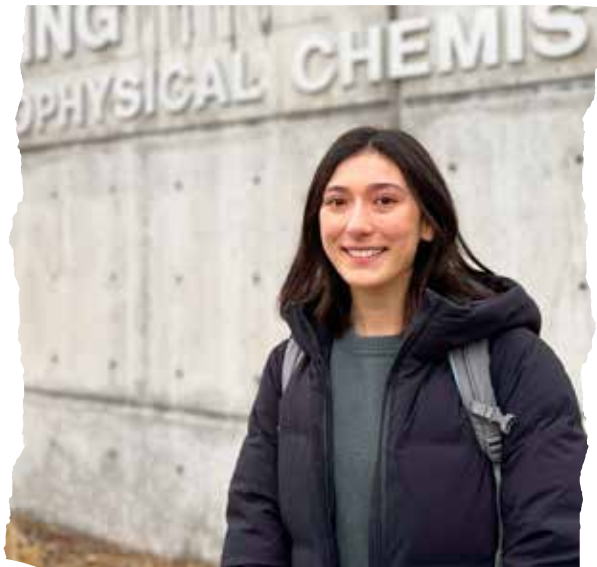
Austin came to the U initially planning to study chemical engineering but was eventually led to the study of organic chemistry and synthesis — it was an area that came easily enough to him that he knew he could go into it in a more detailed context such as research. Austin was recently recognized as a Beckman Scholar through the University of Utah Beckman Scholars Program. His research is currently supported by The Arnold and Mabel Beckman Foundation.

"I saw the chemistry department as a good environment for research and creativity over chemical engineering," Austin said. "I knew there were more clear ways I could contribute." This eventually led him to the laboratory he now works in, and he became interested in drug development as a career after seeing the connection between the new methods to make peptide compounds and the need for that within drug development.

"In our research area, there's a known lack of progress in antibiotic development. This specifically impacts more underdeveloped places with a need for antibiotic drugs," Austin said.

Austin plans to study bioanalytical chemistry in graduate school, which will eventually lead him to his goal of working in medicinal chemistry within the pharmaceutical industry. Austin is working to make sure that his research continues at the U after he graduates.

— by Mary Allen



Ethan Pearce

Measuring DNA Damage

Mina Done, a biochemistry major at the University of Utah and a member of the Burrows Lab, is researching a new way to measure oxidative damage in your DNA. This oxidation causes base mutations in DNA that can affect transcription and gene expression. Done's project can help determine where specifically in DNA the most stress occurs.

"Basically, what I was hoping to understand was to see where in the DNA that we have in our bodies is most susceptible to this damage, whether it occurs in certain areas as opposed to different areas," Done said. "We're hoping that the qPCR method will be able to quantify where in the genome or any part of the DNA is susceptible to these kinds of damage."

Done's idea was to use qPCR, a technique for amplifying segments of DNA to compare sections

of the DNA where oxidative damage occurs. When those sections are amplified, a difference can be observed between sections that have been damaged and those that haven't.

This information gives a better understanding of where oxidative stress or damage occurs most often in cells.

"Being able to quantify those instances (of damage) can be useful in identifying what areas are most impacted, which can be something that researchers can target for repair and further research into why potentially cancer-causing mechanisms are occurring," Done said.

Done is a fourth-year student at the U and plans on graduating in spring 2023. She is interested in pursuing medicine and continuing her research.

— by Ethan Pearce



Vyana Dang

Improving Methods to Recycle Rare Metals

University of Utah metallurgical engineering Ph.D. candidate Munro Alley is passionate about sustainable engineering. His experimental research focuses on developing more energy-efficient and cost-efficient approaches to producing critical materials like titanium and rare earth elements.

Critical materials like rare earth elements and titanium are limited in their application by their cost, which stems from the energy-intensive nature of their production.

The research group Alley works in has developed

an approach to producing titanium based on the magnesiothermic reduction of titanium oxide in a hydrogen atmosphere that has the potential to compete with state of the art production practices in use today.

Alley is working to develop a similar novel approach to apply to other materials.

Alley's innovative and hands-on approach to engineering research has made him a promising innovative scientist and engineer of the future.

— by Vyana Dang

9. SUSTAINABILITY



Zack Zaman

A New Battery for the Environment

Our current world runs on electricity, there's no doubt about it. And as technology continues to evolve, the way we store our electricity needs to evolve as well. Luckily, University of Utah chemical engineering Ph.D. student Jing Liu is doing just that. Liu has been leading a team to create a new type of battery that is better for the power grid and the environment.

Liu created a new type of battery after her invention of two electrolytes, termed FERMI and FERCI in her paper. These electrolytes performed better than all the other existing alternatives. The low-cost battery is a type of iron metal battery based on iron chemistry that could be used for large-scale storage of wind and solar energy in the future. The current most popular battery for energy storage is the lithium-ion battery. Along with being better for the power grid and the

environment, Liu says this new power-storage medium is also 10 times cheaper than the lithium-ion battery.

After about a year of work with her professors two undergraduate students, Alan Larrea Caro and Nicolai Sage Andreas, Liu created a new type of battery after her invention of the two electrolytes. While the entire team helped with the creation of the project, Liu carried out all the literature study, experiments, and data analysis.

It will be exciting to see where Liu and her team will take this technology and what the future holds for this brilliant invention.

— by Zack Zaman



Environmentally Friendly Hemp Streetwear

Cotton is everywhere. Odds are, something you're wearing right now is made with cotton. After researching alternatives to cotton, however, University of Utah student entrepreneur Eliasib Paredes wanted to use a recently legalized and more environmentally friendly material to produce fashionable streetwear: hemp.

Hemp? People often ask Paredes, is that the same as marijuana? Not exactly; it's a cousin to the plant people smoke, with a much lower concentration of the THC compounds that give marijuana its potency. Still, hemp was approved for industrial farming in the U.S. only in 2018 and has yet to become the staple that cotton has become over the last couple of centuries.

Paredes saw this as an opportunity: hemp is grown faster, is better for the land it's grown on, and can even reduce body odor and moderate body temperature when worn as a garment. Unfortunately, consumers looking for hemp are still very limited in their options. "When I was starting out, I searched up some hemp clothing brands and saw they were

somewhat bland, with small, simple designs, whereas all the cotton brands have insane graphics, embroidery, everything you could want," Paredes said.

He launched his company, Organic Vestitus, to provide this more sustainable and comfortable material with the striking designs that aren't available elsewhere.

Paredes is a political science student at the University of Utah, where he has received both inspiration and funding for his venture. He has since used that funding to purchase his first round of inventory — a shipment of sweatshirts — which he then sold and gathered feedback for his next round of product.

"The next step for me is to branch out and order more product in different colors and then transition to organic ink graphics so that every piece of the product is organic," Paredes said. "In the future, I'd love to design and create this clothing independently."

— by James Linton

10. SELF CARE



A Health & Fitness App

A native of New Delhi, India, Sasha Singh is majoring in computer science major and minoring in entrepreneurship and psychology at the University of Utah. With the goal of becoming a software engineer and aspirations of a master's in information systems, Singh is using the Lassonde+X program at the University of Utah's Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute to help people live healthier lives through her project titled "Life."

"Lassonde+X really helped me solidify how I wanted this product presented to consumers," she said of the three-course program that allows students to add entrepreneurship to any major. "There was a lot of back and forth between what the cost would be and the services I would provide."

It all started with Singh's desire to pursue entrepreneurship and combine her tech background with innovation and creativity to help people. She knew she wanted to work with something that was personal, so during the pandemic she came up with a health and fitness app that created value

for everyone. This would help people eat correctly and live a holistic and happy life through Zen living, checking water intake, and helping meditate, among other things.

Singh explained how body dysmorphia impacted her in the past and how that was one of the key motivators to create an app that put it all together under one umbrella. This includes catering to individuals needs through diverse means, something not seen in health and fitness apps, whether that be gender identity or different body types. The result is a community through group activity and exercise.

The Life project is currently a website, with the goal of turning it into an mobile app.

"Entrepreneurship is a state of mind and seizing opportunities and forging a path in society," Singh said.

— by David Wimert



Hair Products for Textured Hair

If you have wavy, curly, or coily hair, you know the daily struggle of managing your hair and finding products to help.

University of Utah students Kristina Guzman, Haylie Heale, and Anila Jonnavithula believe they have the solution.

Kurl Up officially launched in March 2022, selling their hair oil through their website, local farmers' markets, and student-run marketplaces at the university.

Kurl Up uses ingredients from each member's cultural background to serve and represent every hair type. "Anila uses amla oil from her family in India to strengthen it. Haylie uses kukui nut oil from the Polynesian Islands, which locks in moisture. I use Brazil nut oil to combat frizz," Guzman explained.

"My family and I are from South America where curly hair is more common," Guzman added. "We're used to extreme humidity causing frizz so we put Brazil nut oil in our blend, which has a lot of benefits for tight curls by naturally conditioning hair and adding great shine."

Heale said, "My family and I are from the Pacific Islands

of Hawaii and Samoa. In both of these places, curly hair is the norm. We added kukui nut, an ingredient native to the Hawaiian islands since it provides a great benefit for curly hair, locking in moisture."

"My family and I are from South India," Jonnavithula said. "We use amla oil almost daily to strengthen our hair since it's so high in protein. It's also great for taming frizz in India's humid climate and adding shine."

Hair oils are extremely versatile. They can be massaged into the scalp to promote faster, healthy hair growth. They can be used in hot oil treatments to protect and nourish dry, brittle hair. They can be used to soften your hair and provide vitamins and minerals that get stripped from frequent washing. They're great for boosting moisture and shine by adding it to your tresses before walking out the door. Hair oils are the secret hack to elevating your look with just a few drops.

Kurl Up is planning future products that will incorporate ingredients from cultures from all over the world.



Smart Light Cell Therapy

Isaiah Tate and his company are on a mission to improve people's lives through smart light cell therapy.

Tate is the co-founder Valhalla Cell Health. He is growing the business in the Master of Business Creation program at the University of Utah's David Eccles School of Business.

Valhalla was initially conceptualized as a foundation for alternative therapies aimed at treating first-responders and veterans. "In Norse mythology, Valhalla is a place filled with warriors," Tate said. "They would fight battles every day, and following these conflicts, every evening they would be restored to full health. The first-responders and veterans who put their lives at risk daily are each fighting battles for us. The least we can do is provide them a place where they can find rest and recover."

The team at Valhalla realized early on there were so many more people suffering, and they had the opportunity to help. "As we continued to formulate our business plan, it

became apparent that everyone fights a battle daily," Tate said. "Whether that battle is against pain, trauma, traumatic brain injury, anxiety, depression, or struggling to get out of bed in the morning, there are many people who need help."

He added, "We want to be the place where those who are suffering can find rest. We use smart light cell therapy to focus on reducing inflammation, improving circulation, and boosting cell energy." Most injuries, diseases, and illnesses have one or more of these aspects present, which is why Valhalla is able to offer functional benefits to their clients.

Valhalla is also working with companies to give access to their machines to employees. "When businesses demonstrate a focus on health and wellness in the workplace there are benefits in all facets of a company," Tate said. Valhalla's smart light cell therapies offer benefits to employees that can include better focus, more alertness, and faster reaction times resulting in better outcomes for their business efforts.

11. TECHNOLOGY



Empowering New Mining Generations

Maria Echavarria's company, Opencontour, aims to simplify mine-planning software tools and empower new mining generations to embark on the journey. She is growing it with help from the Master of Business Creation program at the University of Utah's David Eccles School of Business.

Echavarria and Opencontour's founder, Russ Downer, created Opencontour from experiences with mining software that didn't live up to their expectations. They saw an opportunity to innovate and improve by creating a cloud-based open-pit mining software. It provides solutions for company's specific project requirements.

Echavarria and Downer believe that learning how to use mining software should not be a barrier for mine planners and engineers to overcome. She wants to reduce the amount of time spent on integrating data, running design iterations, and training employees.

"Many middle managers have left the mining industry," Echavarria said. "There's a gap in expertise and skill development. We want to simplify complex processes and help

new mining generations learn how to be efficient and improve their productivity without having to spend additional time learning how to use software."

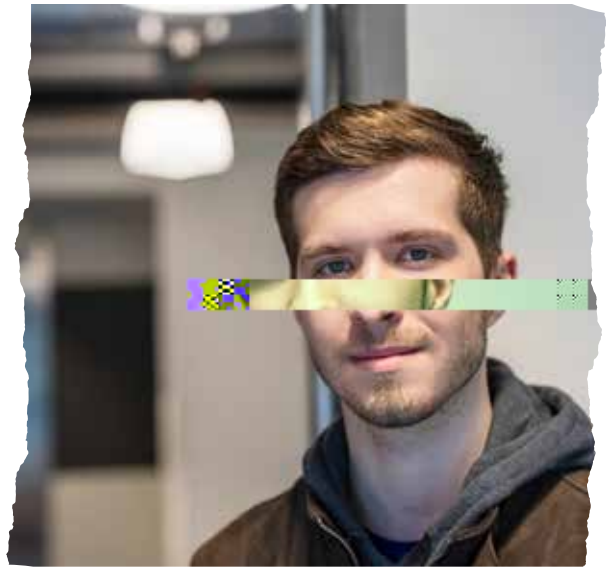
Opencontour provides a complete solution in a single software that combines design capabilities with mine scheduling and budgeting. The software also measures cost-benefit scenarios for multiple designs and schedules.

In addition to exploring new mining technologies, Echavarria is committed to bringing sustainable mining practices into the software.

"With advances in technology and an increased focus on sustainability, the mining industry is shifting towards more environmentally friendly methods," she said. "New technologies and practices are being implemented to reduce the environmental impact of mining."

As the company grows, Echavarria hopes to create new opportunities in mining.

— by Despina Giannopoulos



Sean Andrews

A Dual-Function Esophageal Probe

University of Utah biomedical engineering students Lauren Slattery, Emma Slominski, Robert Falconer, and Catie Augustine put the L-E-R-C into LERC Medical. The first letters of their names form the name of the company they formed to support the realization of their prototype of a dual-function esophageal probe.

Esophageal probes are long probes inserted through the esophagus of a patient under general anesthesia to monitor core body temperature during surgery. LERC Medical developed a dual-function esophageal probe, meaning it measures both core body temperature and oxygen saturation. Both of these measurements are necessary to determine a patient's stability during surgery.

Currently, to monitor these vitals, two separate devices are necessary. "We wanted to simplify the

number of devices needed during a surgery," Augustine said. "So, we developed a prototype with sensors that are currently available, and threaded them to create a bifurcated mature." Not only could this new probe reduce the cost incurred by the devices needed during a surgery, but it also reduces the clutter in the surgery theater.

Due to the device's integration, the insertion procedure of the LERC Medical esophageal probe will not differ from the current practice of esophageal probe insertion.

"I chose this project because I knew it would be a challenge incorporating the electric components, and I was curious as to how it would work and wanted to explore it," Slominski said.

The team hopes to develop LERC medical as an acquirable passion project.

— by Julia Dominesey

Breaking into the Gaming Industry

Alex Moran always had a passion for entertainment, so it wasn't a surprise when he found himself running haunted attractions to benefit local charities on the East Coast. But his interests took a turn when he discovered the world of gaming, which he felt encompassed everything he loved about books, films, and interactive media.

However, Moran found that breaking into the gaming industry was challenging, and many of his peers felt the same way. With a desire to help aspiring game developers, Moran and a group of his peers from the University of Utah Entertainment Arts & Engineering program decided to start a nonprofit organization to provide entry-level experience to students before they enter the industry.

The process of starting and growing the organization wasn't easy, but Moran and his team

were determined to make it work. They focused on creating a community-driven environment where students could work on team-based projects and develop their skills in a supportive environment.

The organization quickly became a big part of the university community, with 15-20% of the total games program students participating in their projects. Moran and his team also hosted various activities to bring together students from different majors and foster an entrepreneurial spirit in the community.

Ultimately, Moran's goal is to establish a lasting impact on the local community and provide a unique resource for aspiring game developers. He wants his organization to continue to support and empower students for years to come.

— by Sean Andrews

RESOURCE DIRECTORY

ArtsBridge: An interdisciplinary arts education outreach program. artsbridge.utah.edu

ArtsForce: A two-day conference for art students to learn about how to share their creative work. artsforceutah.com

Arts Entrepreneur: Connect with your peers, learn the value of your skills, and explore connections between the arts and entrepreneurship. lassonde.utah.edu/art

Associated Student of the University of Utah (ASUU): A student-led organization that provides resources and services to students, hosts events and programs, and advocates for students with university administrators. asuu.utah.edu

Bench to Bedside: A competition for medical, engineering, and business students to collaborate to develop or improve a medical device. bit.ly/UUb2b

Bennion Center: Program with a mission to mobilize people to strengthen communities through learning, scholarship, and advocacy. bennioncenter.org

bioDesign: Teams of engineering students work with clinicians to develop prototypes and test medical devices. biodesign.utah.edu

bioInnovate: Graduate program providing a comprehensive biomedical, device-design training program. bioinnovate.utah.edu

bioWorld: A two-semester course enabling students to develop a business plan for a medical-device in a developing country. bioworld.utah.edu

Business Scholars: An experiential program for high-achieving students offered by the David Eccles School of Business. eccles.utah.edu/scholars

Company Launch: Apply for dedicated office space and customized support at Lassonde Studios through this program. lassonde.utah.edu/launch

Eccles Global: Students engage in worldwide business education that instills the skill set students need to compete internationally with classes taught by Eccles School faculty in classes around the globe. eccles.link/eccles-global

Elevate U Program: Student athletes learn brand management, creative marketing, leadership, and character development in partnership with the Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute. utahutes.com/elevate

Entertainment Arts & Engineering: Interdisciplinary program where students design and develop video games. eae.utah.edu

Food Entrepreneur: Learn about food entrepreneurship, what it takes to open a restaurant, and more. lassonde.utah.edu/food

The Gapp Lab: A student game-development center for health and education-related video games and apps. library.med.utah.edu/synapse/gapp

Get Seeded: Pitch your business idea to your peers to receive seed funding for your venture. lassonde.utah.edu/getseeded

Global Entrepreneurship Program: Travel the world while taking classes in entrepreneurship and completing internships in this program from the David Eccles School of Business. eccles.utah.edu/global-entp

Global Public Health: Promotes health and medical development, leading to measurable improvements. globalhealth.utah.edu

Goff Strategic Leadership Center: Committed to developing strategic leaders by engaging with students across campus and the business community to share insights and build practical skills. eccles.utah.edu/goff

High School Utah Entrepreneur Challenge: A statewide business idea competition for all students ages 14-18. \$30,000 in cash and scholarships are available. lassonde.utah.edu/hsuec

Hinckley Internship Programs: Internship opportunities are available to students interested in politics. hinckley.utah.edu

Honors Praxis Labs: Students work together to find original solutions to problems our society faces, while a faculty mentor guides the work of each group. honors.utah.edu/praxis-labs

Hours with Experts: Sign up to meet with an expert in fields including law, business, design, and engineering. lassonde.utah.edu/experthours

Kahlert Initiative on Technology: Prepares students to be digitally literate regardless of degree. KIT offers a Digital Literacy Certificate program that allows you to learn cutting-edge technology from industry experts in an easy-to-understand format. eccles.utah.edu/kahlert

Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute: The hub for student entrepreneurs and innovators at the University of Utah. Its many programs and opportunities are open to all students. lassonde.utah.edu

Lassonde Founders: A select community of active undergraduate entrepreneurs who live, create, and launch together while receiving generous support, mentorship, and scholarships. lassonde.utah.edu/founders

RESOURCE DIRECTORY (CONT.)

Lassonde New Venture Development Center: Graduate students are paired with inventors and entrepreneurs for fall and spring semester preparing a business plan. lassonde.utah.edu/new-venture-development

Lassonde Studios: The home for student entrepreneurs and innovators. All students welcome to live, create, and launch here. lassonde.utah.edu/studios

Lassonde+X: An introductory program for undergraduate students from all majors (X) to learn the entrepreneurial mindset, explore and practice entrepreneurship, and build skills to succeed in the future. eccles.utah.edu/lassondex

Learning Abroad/Global Engagement: Students participate in hundreds of programs all over the world based on their interests and career goals. learningabroad.utah.edu

LGBT Resource Center Emerging Student Leadership Program: A leadership program for LGBTQIA+ students to explore leadership from an intersectional perspective and build community with other students invested in creating positive change. lgbt.utah.edu/lgbtrc_programs/ESLP.php

Make Program: Learn how to use prototyping tools and see your idea come to life at Lassonde Studios. lassonde.utah.edu/make

Meetups: Join the Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute at a meetup event or host one to meet people and learn about the community. lassonde.utah.edu/meetups

New Leadership Academy Fellows Program: Students receive leadership coaching and learn about equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives within complex institutions. diversity.utah.edu/nla

My U Signature Experience (MUSE): A database of research, leadership, community engagement, scholarships, and internship opportunities across campus. muse.utah.edu

Sorenson Impact Center: Marshals capital for social good, empowers data-driven programs, breaks down silos across sectors, and equips the next generation of leaders with social purpose. sorensonimpact.com

Stena Center for Financial Technology: Brings together education and industry to accelerate financial and technological innovation that supports students, research, and industry to expand and strengthen the fintech ecosystem. stena.utah.edu

Student Affairs: Encourages U students to participate in the creation of their own campus culture. studentaffairs.utah.edu

Student Investment Fund: Get hands-on investment experience in this unique program from the David Eccles School of Business. eccles.utah.edu/student-investment-fund

Sustainable Campus Initiative Fund Program (SCIF): Innovative and motivated students are awarded grants to team up with a faculty or staff member to bring about sustainable changes for the campus. sustainability.utah.edu/scif

Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR): Students are paired with faculty members and work closely with them in research experiences. our.utah.edu

University Venture Fund: Students work with entrepreneurs and investors to learn about investments and see how successful companies are managed. uventurefund.com

Utah Center for Financial Services: Help innovate financial services, guide regulatory issues, and examine and support the deployment of new financial products and services. eccles.utah.edu/utah-center-for-financial-services

Utah Entrepreneur Challenge: One of the largest business-model competitions in the nation. Students across Utah develop full, comprehensive business models. \$60,000 in prizes are available. lassonde.utah.edu/uec

Utah Real Estate Challenge: Real-estate development competition for undergraduate and graduate students throughout Utah. eccles.utah.edu/ivory-boyer-real-estate-center/utah-real-estate-challenge

Utah Summer Program for Undergraduate Research (SPUR): Provides undergrad students with an intensive 10-week research experience under the mentorship of a faculty member. our.utah.edu/spur

Wilkes Center for Climate Change: Provides students with transformative, integrative, and cutting-edge science, education, entrepreneurship, and practical solutions to tackle climate change in Utah, the United States, and the globe. wilkescenter.utah.edu

Workshops: Attend regular workshops at the Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute to learn new skills. lassonde.utah.edu/workshops

Submit a Listing: Do you want to add a listing to this resource directory? We want to hear from you. Email us at lassonde@utah.edu.

lassonde.utah.edu/studentinnovation2023

