PENNTAP HELPS PA BUSINESSES AND PENN STATE STUDENTS SUCCEED
For over half a century, PennTAP has been providing an array of programming and technical assistance services that support the business communities of the Commonwealth with a focus on helping small to mid-sized businesses compete and grow. Simply put: they engage the expertise of their advisors and the resources of the University to make an impact in Pennsylvania’s business community. How can they help your business succeed? Read on!

Whether helping a business better utilize technology to be competitive; providing world class faculty, staff and students to help solve an issue; or educating business leaders about the latest tools and practices, PennTAP is here to help maximize your business. Through funding provided by federal, state and university resources, they provide most services at no cost to small to mid-sized enterprises. One of these services is energy assessments where a company with fewer than 500 employees can benefit from a no-cost Pollution Prevention and Energy Efficiency (P2/E2) assessment to help minimize energy costs and reduce pollution. An on-site assessment takes just a few hours, after which PennTAP follows up with a technical report summarizing conservation opportunities, project costs, available funding sources and corresponding payback periods.

Senior energy engineering students often accompany the advisors on these trips, which provides an excellent opportunity for students to extend their learning experience outside of the classroom and see the inner workings of a manufacturing business first-hand.

That process alone would be of significant value to the companies participating, but PennTAP takes it a step further.

“As we develop the relationship with our client, we are not only looking for ways for them to benefit from the expertise of our advisors, but we...
are trying to identify other resources at Penn State that they could utilize,” says Director Tanna Pugh. “Connections to Career Services for recruiting Penn State students is just one example of another connection we try to make.”

Other programs offered under the energy and environment pillar include Building Re-Tuning, which is structured for school districts and municipalities who are interested in a no-cost or low-cost method of reducing their energy costs; and E3 – Economy, Energy and Environment, which helps food manufacturers define and implement strategies to reduce energy use, prevent pollution and promote productivity.

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Because of their longstanding presence, many businesses are aware of PennTAP and the valuable services they offer.

“We have excellent partners across the Commonwealth with economic development associations,” says Pugh. “We get a lot of referrals.”

For participating companies, the value added by PennTAP can be clearly calculated. Success stories featured on the PennTAP’s website praise the program for offering easy and accessible service that saves thousands of dollars in cost, as well as saving and creating jobs.

“We provide them with expertise and services they don’t have in house,” Pugh says. “And because we’re doing this at no cost to the company, we’re really adding to their efforts and trying to advance their expansion and growth.”

In addition to the energy and environment services, innovation is a key focus of PennTAP’s. The team manages the Inc.U Competition which culminates with the taping of “The Investment,” a WPSU television show where undergraduates from any Penn State campus compete for a share of $30,000 in funding. The teams form a company and present it to the judges while being filmed in front of a live audience. Twenty-five teams submitted videos for 2019, and the final six have been selected. PennTAP mentors and coaches the teams in preparation for the two-and-a-half-minute presentation to the judges. Last year, the judges atypically gave the full $30,000 to one highly impressive team, but the amount can be distributed to various teams as the judges desire.

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PennTAP actively promotes training and education opportunities to their clients. They provide online training through webinars hosted by technical advisors, in addition to hosting in-person learning events and conferences throughout the year.

Here are some upcoming events:

**Fundamentals of Building Re-Tuning Workshop**
May 16, 2019, 8:15 am – 4:30 pm
Monaca, PA
Learn about the fundamentals of Building Re-Tuning, including low-cost tools and system specific workbook calculations.

**Basics of Building Re-Tuning**
Jun 20, 2019, 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
Online Webinar
This webinar will help those involved with building operations learn how to operate buildings more efficiently, reduce operating costs, and provide energy savings.

**Funding and Incentives to Implement Energy Efficiency Projects**
Jul 18, 2019, 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
Online Webinar
This webinar will discuss funding opportunities for small to mid-sized companies throughout Pennsylvania.
The maker culture is having a moment, bursting into the consciousness of society, throwing its calloused-handed members onto center stage, TEDtalks and Mike Rowe's social media pages. But don't let all the attention fool you into thinking that it is new. As makers will tell you, it's a love for doing that's as old as time.

The joy and necessity of creating is elemental as humankind, but as modern education has veered away from apprenticeships and the pendulum swung toward advanced degrees, it's a path that can sometimes imply less value. Within a college town, this weight can be felt even more strongly, dividing those who 'work with their minds' from 'those who work with their hands.'

The maker culture is turning those old school suppositions on their heads, creating an AND culture, using both their minds and never-stopping hands to create answers and solutions, innovations and sustainable art, that is benefiting the world around them. And here at Innovation Park, and their sister facility in Philipsburg, makers are changing the world.

In an article on the movement in Forbes, they said, "Maker culture leans heavily on the idea of constructivism—that is, the notion that learning is best done through doing. In the past, this learning technique was used heavily by craftsmen to train their apprentices. It was a perfect fusion of do-it-yourself wherewithal and immersion learning."

For Josh Helke, CEO of Organic Climbing, the do-it-yourself culture was ingrained into his DNA. He grew up with a mother who was a potter, and remembers spending time at the kitchen table, licking envelopes for her mailing list.

"I come from a family of makers," he says. "There's always been value, but I think the perception has changed a lot in recent years due to social media. It's easier to share your work. Before there was such a limiting factor with trying to publicize what you created, but now it's much easier to be known across many fronts."

Finding the Venn diagram of artistry, affordability and sustainability is something that Helke continually pushes for. "I think makers have always been appreciated by a certain affluent section of society, but we need to bridge those societal gaps and create US brands that are affordable, functional and just plain good."

"I think makers have always been appreciated by a certain affluent section of society, but we need to bridge those societal gaps and create US brands that are affordable, functional and just plain good."

He echoes the words that are the secret handshake of every maker whose ever lived (it's easy to find words similarly spoken by Steve Jobs, Thomas Edison, George Washington Carver). "My heart is in making stuff. I am always spinning energy. I always have to be creating something."

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For Helke, his making became a business that makes functional, durable climbing gear. Now located in Philipsburg, he employs sewers who create chalk bags, backpacks and bouldering equipment that are one of a kind, thanks to their use of a huge assortment of colors and recycled cuttings. It's a line of work that has always had an implied hierarchy, the idea people and the assembly people, he says, and Organic Climbing empowers all makers in their company to take an active role in creating. "Anyone who is sewing anything is an artist," Helke says. "And the respect is slowly increasing for trades like this. It's more than just dreaming it up – someone actually needs to make it."

His company is poised well between the affordability of Philipsburg and the immense resources of Penn State. "I was recently giving a talk to an entrepreneurship class at Penn State and talking about the bouldering mats that our company has adapted and innovated and one of the students told me about research going on at Penn State to create a soy-based foam. This is the kind of thing that would work perfectly with Organic," he says.

Ryan Shipp on Elk gritstone, using his Organic Climbing gear. Photo by @charfetterolf.
In existence since 2004, Organic Climbing is now industrial, but still retains its artisanal maker spirit, and Helke credits the emphasis on the process for much of their viral success. “It’s easy to forget that everything that’s made is made by a person. We put the emphasis back on that process.” And while he’s seen some resistance to creativity since he’s been here in central Pennsylvania, he’s also seeing change, and a tremendous amount of energy. “There are a lot of super awesome people who are working very hard,” he says.

What’s next for the maker movement, according to Helke? Taking what we’ve learned and teaching them to a bigger audience. “No one taught our generation to make squat,” he says. “And people were retiring and taking the tricks of the trade with them. We need to revitalize that, and teach it to the next generation. We need to teach them that if you take your energy to create a product and your company prospers, then you are rewarded. It’s sweat equity, and it’s a great thing.”

THE RIVET AT DISCOVERY SPACE FOSTERS CREATIVITY AND CRAFTSMANSHIP

Discovery Space is renovating the 5,000 square foot garage in the rear of the building into a maker space called The Rivet for the whole family. Renovations are underway this spring and summer. In the meantime, programming is already started!

The Rivet is a makerspace where you can take classes that teach you how to use a specific tool – like a lathe – and workshops that will teach you how to make something using those tools – like a wooden bowl. The Rivet will foster collaboration and networking for entrepreneurs and provide studio space for artists and students working on large projects, as well as opportunities for people in the trades, or those considering a career in the trades, to learn a new skill.

This maker space is ideal for entrepreneurs, artists, tradesmen, students, teens, hobbyists and anyone over 14 years of age who likes to work with their hands to create.

Programming kicked off in February with Maker Mondays, with upcoming events including workshops on how to use basic hand tools, and carpentry. You can find a full list of events at therivet.org/events.

For more information about how you can use the maker space, or get involved with helping The Rivet with volunteering opportunities, contact Michele@discoveryspace.org.

A recent Maker Monday featured a professional Balloon Twister and Engineer on hand to explain the science and environmental impact of balloons. Later, makers could try their hand at acrylic pour art, creating their own unique piece of art.

An artist’s rendering shows the front bay of The Rivet, which includes a wood working and metal working area.

The Rivet was part of Penn State’s annual Robotics Day, where kids in grades k-12 had the opportunity to explore robotics, showcase their skills through friendly competition, and connect with Penn State engineers.
For Matt Woods co-founder of Xact Metal, making things was something he couldn’t stop doing, even from a very early age. When he was 12 years old, he asked his parents if he could have a motorcycle, was told no, so he tore apart the family’s treadmill, duct taped the motor to his bike, and he was in business. Fast forward a few years later, he built a 3D printer in his Penn State dorm room with supplies he’s amassed for $700, and instructions he downloaded from the internet. He used the printer to build drones, and a gadget to open and close his dorm room blinds.

“I guess I’ve always had the mindset that if I encounter a problem, I am going to make the solution. That’s kind of given rise to all of my creations and my ideas, and ultimately how I started Xact Metals.”

After a few years dabbling in 3D printers, he started to see a problem – 3D printing could create almost anything, but with plastic as the medium, the results were limited. He got involved with the Lunar Lion project at Penn State and had his first exposure to 3D metal printing at an on-campus lab that used materials that were so expensive that students did not have access. It changed everything for Woods.

“They said, you like to 3D print, right? So 3D print a rocket… and I said, ‘But I’m just a student!’ Through the program, he was able to explore the new technology of metal printing in a way that wouldn’t have been possible outside the Lunar Lion program.

“The maker culture is such a culture of doing and watching others do. It’s tinkering. It doesn’t matter if it worked, it’s the act of doing it that matters.”

That was a calling for me,” he said. “I was fascinated by how much room for improvement there was.” When the Lunar Lion project ended in 2015, Woods found himself surrounded by a team of innovative, maker-minded students like himself, who shared his passion for building things.

He tasked them with the challenge of helping him build a prototype 3D metal printer that would be affordable for purchase outside of big research labs.

On a shoe-string budget, relying on financial help from family, friends and startup competitions, the team created a single metal 3D printer and effectively solved a massive problem within the 3D printing marketplace. “Today, one of our 3D metal printers is in the learning factory at Penn State,” he says happily. “That kind of closes the loop for me. We’ve been able to provide printers to all kinds of makers at a lower cost.”

“I had no access to this tech. Today, we have metal 3d printer in the learning factory. Kind of closes the loop. Access to our printers, which we created at a lower cost.”

He’s happy to see more access to tools and opportunities to learn by doing. “The maker culture is such a culture of doing and watching others do. It’s tinkering. It doesn’t matter if it worked, it’s the act of doing it that matters. It’s the trial and error. If you can blend your passions and the things you love and turn it into lifelong work, then work doesn’t feel like work anymore.”

Matt Woods, co-founder of Xact Metal, with the metal 3D printer he designed.
In May, The Penn Stater Hotel & Conference celebrates 25 years of service. A talented and dedicated staff works diligently and passionately to make The Penn Stater an award-winning establishment. Judith Karaky has been at The Penn Stater team for 22 years, with the last 13 as general manager. She tells us the inside scoop of game days, commencement and their conferences. Read on!

Over the years, Karaky has become familiar with the ins and outs of various seasons in hotel and conference planning. Gratefully, other than a slower winter from December to February and a lag at the end of August, The Penn Stater has built steady and consistent business. The versatile conference venue has clients booking rooms and halls for conferences and stand-alone catering events and hotel guests flood in for football weekends, commencement ceremonies and other local events.

Karaky admits that monthly trends are always changing. Months that were previously slow now see good business, such as the shift they’ve seen in the months of July and March over the last five years. Aside from the unpredictable winter season and the deep breath of late August, Karaky and staff stay busy, especially on their big-ticket weekends, namely football and May Commencement.

“We’re always preparing for what’s incoming,” Karaky says. “It’s just amplified for those busy weekends.”

In preparation of their busy months and weekends, Karaky stresses the importance of strong communication among the staff, having all their ducks in a row and then expecting the unexpected. The staff is trained to know what kind of situations they may encounter. If they’re asked a question they don’t

Continued on page 8
know the answer to, they’ll take ownership of it and find out who does.

“As much as you can have nailed down, it makes dealing with changes that much easier. Everyone knows their role and what they’re doing and that it may change,” Karaky says. “The staff has a genuine willingness to help and enjoyment of the job.”

“When the hotel is fully booked, all hands are on deck and the crowds start rolling in, The Penn Stater handles some impressive volume.”

When the hotel is fully booked, all hands are on deck and the crowds start rolling in, The Penn Stater handles some impressive volume. Housekeeping will go through 2,500 bath towels over May Commencement weekend. The restaurant will go through approximately 3,100 eggs, 300 pounds of chicken wings and 400 pounds of hamburger. The shuttle will log over 1,000 miles. And that’s just in one fully booked weekend.

While the amount of food, number of rooms and volume of towels for a fully booked weekend remain constant, the air in the hotel shifts with each event. May Commencement means that hundreds of families are on their own strict schedule. The hotel puts up clear instructions for shuttle use, reviews the schedule, makes appropriate timing recommendations and provides whatever everything they can to ensure families can stay on schedule. Photos are snapped at every corner, and stress and emotions run high, especially before ceremonies. When compared to Blue White weekend, full of laid-back guests with little agenda, the difference in the atmosphere is obvious.

The Penn Stater hosts a variety of individual guests and conferences throughout the year. Conference groups are often repeat clients, who are anchors for the business. Government groups, educational groups, state associations, regional groups, energy groups, local businesses and more all make their way through The Penn Stater throughout the year. Thanks to several competent and veteran event planners who average over 17 years on staff, the repeat customers often work with the same team members.

“In the last two years it was voted one of the best hotels in State College, Best of the East by Meetings Today and achieved a Certificate of Excellence with Trip Advisor.”

“I’m always so impressed, because no matter how many times a group has been there, the staff haven’t lost their desire to continually improve the groups experience each year,” Karaky says.

Staff members all have their own way of making sure to note anything that could have gone better, and the following year, they make sure it does while noting any new hiccups. It’s an evolving process that allows groups to have the best experience possible each year.

Another benefit to the regular businesses of conferences means the staff at The Penn Stater get a front-row seat to trends in the business. Lately, Karaky notes the rise in technology-use of groups onsite. Wi-fi and audio-visual technology are in high demand to allow for video streaming and even upgrades to the check-in process. Recently, Karaky saw a group using mobile-to-mobile check-in for lunches rather than a standard ticket issued at check-in or registration. Meetings can be recorded or live-streamed and the video conferencing tool Zoom is in common use.

The Penn Stater continues to be a respected establishment in and outside of the State College area. In the last two years it was voted one of the best hotels in State College, Best of the East by Meetings Today and achieved a Certificate of Excellence with Trip Advisor. If history is any indication, those won’t be its final accolades.
Penn State SBDC is on a mission to help small business owners. The First Step to Small Business Success seminars are one way they do that. The seminars are aimed at helping budding entrepreneurs launch successfully as they learn the process of owning a successful business, developing a business plan, exploring financial options, and more.

"From 'First Steps,' I hope the participants have a clearer picture of the next steps that they need to do to start business, because it can be overwhelming!" said Kimberly Tremaglio, the Events and Marketing Coordinator at the Penn State SBDC. "There are a lot of resources, a lot of things to think about, so this kind of breaks it down: if you want to write a business plan, here are the steps that you need. Here are the people that you need on your team; for instance, you need an accountant, maybe you need an insurance agent, and here are the reasons why. It breaks everything down step-by-step to put it in manageable pieces so it’s not so overwhelming."

The feedback from participants in the First Steps seminar has been overwhelmingly positive and has helped fuel the continuation of the seminar, with the next session to be offered on May 14 from 9-12 at the Technology Center.

It is also feedback from participants and consulting clients that has led to the development of other seminars, including Social Media for Small Business and Learning How to Use Google to Grow your Startup.

Flavia Barger, Nick Barger and Yamá Castilho (center) cut the SBDC ribbon for their business venture Brazilian Munchies.

Penergy Soutions received a patent for their anaerobic digester in July 2015. Using the digester technology, Penergy Solutions has started manufacturing 100% recycled fertilizer, Fertili-Tea™. Fertili-Tea™ is safe for food production, helping small business farmers.

“It’s fun; our consultants meet with clients and get a sense of, what are clients asking about, and what do we think that they need?” said Tremaglio, who then helps plan seminar programming based on those needs.

“We want to provide a service to the community and to folks interested in starting small businesses in order to help boost economic movement in the area,” explained Tremaglio. “We provide these services to people wanting to start businesses, and that in turn helps the economy.”

To learn more about upcoming seminars and to sign-up today, visit https://sbdc.psu.edu/events.

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The First Step to Small Business Success

June 11, 2019, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
200 Innovation Blvd., University Park
Cost: Free

Learn from a business consultant about:

- lifestyle requirements for business owners
- how to assess the feasibility of your business idea
- legal and tax implications of owning a business
- how to develop a business plan
- how to compile a bank-ready financial package
- how to market your product or service
- health and safety regulations that may apply to your business
- where to find other resources that may help you succeed
Wherever you are on the entrepreneurial path, Invent Penn State has resources you can use to grow. Their signature programs and tools can help you start up and grow a business, find licensable technologies and investment opportunities, and get to know the innovation community.

Invent Penn State has created a family of tools to make IP discovery and entrepreneurship at Penn State even more streamlined and accessible than ever. The Resource Navigator, Startup Navigator and IP Navigator help startups, entrepreneurs and industry partners quickly find what they need through a searchable showcase of Penn State entrepreneurial and innovation resources, Penn State technology available for licensing and startups with Penn State DNA.

Each of these tools are free to use and accessible to anyone regardless of their affiliation with Penn State or geographical locations. The Navigators are available now at invent.psu.edu.

Resource Navigator: Startup funding, mentorship, maker spaces and more

This searchable showcase of entrepreneurship and innovation resources in Penn State enables you to quickly navigate a database of more than 150 resources by filtering the results based on the individuals need and where they’re located. You can even submit resources to be added to the database to help future entrepreneurs on their journey. This is the navigator you want if you’re looking for coworking space, specialized tools or training, or access to funding at invent.psu.edu/resources.

IP Navigator: Discover technological advances from Penn State researchers

Penn State is one of the top research universities in the country with an annual research budget of $863 million and advances in the fields of medicine, engineering and materials, and more happen at the university every year. The Intellectual Property Navigator showcases these technologies, which run the gamut from a chest splint for respiratory support for preterm newborns to technology to clean up oil-spills quick and even a bioabsorbable foam to treat intracavity and surface wounds. These technologies and more are available for licensing today at ipnavigator.psu.edu.

Startup Navigator: Find startups with Penn State DNA

Penn State has a rich history of entrepreneurship and startups, and the Startup Navigator is a showcase of startups with that Penn State DNA. Did you know OrderUp was founded by Penn State alums after they had launched a similar business in State College called LionMenus? How about that Accuweather, one of the largest weather forecasting companies in the world, was founded by a Penn State faculty member in 1962? Find these and other Penn State startups (or submit your own) by visiting startupnavigator.psu.edu.
Every profession has their own lingo, and startups and entrepreneurship in central Pennsylvania are no different. Resources in and around Penn State are largely known by acronyms, quickly turning your next conference or meeting in an alphabet soup. Here’s a quick study of some of the top abbreviations, and why they matter to you.

**OTM**

*What it stands for:* Office of Technology Management

*Who they are:* Their office walks you through the steps of patenting a new technology. So far, 50 technologies have received $10,000-25,000 proof-of-concept and proof-of-relevance awards.

*What they can do for you:* They can review your technology for patentability based on the novelty and utility of your invention. Find out more at otminfo@psu.edu.

**OEC**

*What it stands for:* Office of Entrepreneurship and Commercialization

*Who they are:* OEC is the administrative home of Invent Penn State and leads the Universities economic development activities—acceleration of Penn State startups, administration of the Fund for Innovation & the Venture & IP Conference, and programming for Penn State’s innovation hubs.

*What they can do for you:* Help you find your next investor. Enroll now for their next Venture & IP Conference on October 3 & 4, 2019. Their inaugural sold out conference showcased over 90 startup ventures—14 from our Penn State community—representing high growth and emerging markets including Advanced Manufacturing, IT, Energy, Biotechnology, Healthcare, B2B and B2C among others. The 2019 conference will be an even bigger draw.

**OIP**

*What it stands for:* Office of Industrial Partnerships

*Who they are:* With more than 500 active industry partners, Penn State’s Office of Industrial Partnerships has the experience and expertise to help with your company’s next research project.

*What they can do for you:* Simply put, they are problem solvers – they foster strategic relationships with industry partners and support Penn State’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. This means that they work closely with the other units within the Office of the Vice President for Research to coordinate sponsored research, technical matchmaking, technology licensing, contracting, research compliance and new venture formation.

**OVPR**

*What it stands for:* Office of VP for Research

*Who they are:* The Office of the Vice President for Research is responsible for facilitating the $927-million-per-year research enterprise at Penn State by working with a broad range of units across the University.
What started as an IST event in 2012 has quickly grown into Penn State Startup Week, a University-wide event that brings some of the leading minds in entrepreneurship and innovation to the Penn State campuses throughout the Commonwealth. This year’s event was on April 1-5, and included presentations, workshops, networking events, a resource fair, and pitch competitions.

Innovation headlines at Startup Week, which encourages all attendees to make innovation a part of their careers and provides various ways to do so. It promotes resources that currently exist at Penn State and in the surrounding areas through collaboration with existing University programs, community partners, and Invent Penn State.

“Entrepreneurship is a path to create wealth. We need more education and resources to close the gap for black and brown founders to succeed.” - Aniyia Williams ’07, Founder & CEO of Tinsel. Photo by @PSUStartupWeek
The opening three days of the event featured individual plenary sessions presented by top names in business such as IBM, M&T Bank Technology, and Ernst and Young (EY). Panelists for each group included entrepreneurs and innovators from various stages in their careers presenting engaging topics surrounding entrepreneurship. There were opportunities to connect with the panelists after the event for those who choose to stay and network.

The line-up included “Someday is Today: Getting Started in Entrepreneurship,” where attendees heard from Chief Marketing Officer at Reflexion Interactive Technologies Matt Roda ’20 who started Reflexion before beginning his freshman year at Penn State.

An ice hockey injury led Roda to start the search for better concussion care of athletes, ultimately leading him to work with two high school friends to develop “The Edge” (a 2”x6” LED touchscreen) that tracks brain health in athletes while improving their skills. Aniyia Williams ’07, Founder of Tinsel and Co-Founder of Black and Brown Founders, joined Roda. Williams ’07 has a background in the arts and technology, which she used to start Tinsel in 2014. Tinsel started as an idea for an audio accessory that doubles as a piece of jewelry. She also leads Black and Brown Founders and works to provide resources and access to underrepresented founders in tech.

“The Entrepreneur’s Journey: Learning from Successes and Setbacks” focused on the process of developing a business that lasts. Entrepreneurs Nova Lorraine, Founder & Editor-in-Chief at Raine Magazine; Hillary Murray ’08, Founder & CEO at Lumi Organics; and Rich Thompson, Managing Partner at Factory LLC discussed their successes and setbacks they have faced along the way.

Congratulations to the six Inc. U Competition startups who were honored at the Penn State Startup Student Recognition Reception held at Pegula Ice Arena during Startup Week. Photo by @PSUStartupWeek

“Innovation is lacking when there’s a homogeneous group of people at the table.” -Avis Yates Rivers. Photo by @AlisonPSU.
“Innovation Happens Everywhere: Intrapreneurship in Established Organizations” on April 3 discussed entrepreneurship and innovation in established organizations. Panelist Francine Grant ’87, Head of Global Innovation Activations at VISA creates and launches “new ways to pay” proof of concepts and innovation experiences at marquee Visa sponsored events such as the Olympics, FIFA World Cup, and the SuperBowl.

In addition to the educational panel sessions, the week featured pitch competitions and a 3-Day Sustainability Mini Challenge with incentivizing awards such as seed funding, access to resources, and prizes, including trips to entrepreneurial conferences. The top teams from each competition gathered on April 4 at the Pegula Ice Arena for an invitation-only reception. The prestigious celebration included guests from Startup Week speakers, University administrators, and Penn State President Eric Barron.

Penn State College of Engineering and Penn State Science students Pierre Franklin, Deeksha Vishneek, Likhith Gowkanapalli, Ayokanmi Aloko and Kabir Kholi were the recipients of the Dave Hall Award at the IdeaMakers Challenge as part of Penn State Startup Week. They also won third place for their idea, Ag Assist, an automated and smart farming machine.

The award is named for the late dean of the College of IST, Dave Hall, who helped to launch Startup Week in 2012. He wanted to give problem solvers in IST the space to think about creativity and innovation, and expose them to experts and speakers. The award is given in his honor to celebrate a team that exemplifies collaboration and innovation across disciplinary areas. Photo by @ISTatPENNSTATE

Andrew Weinert ’09 is a research engineer focusing on drone airspace integration and public safety info systems for @MITLL. “Our goal is to develop tech for the nation that helps with risk reduction.” Photo by @PSUStartupWeek

Ben Franklin TechCelerator Graduation
May 21, 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM
200 Innovation Blvd/Room 243
Ben Franklin’s TechCelerator @State College is inviting you to join us on Tuesday, May 21, 2019 as each team pitches their business concept to a panel of independent judges to win a cash prize of up to $10,000!

Save the Date: Invent Penn State Venture & IP Conference
October 3 & 4
The Penn Stater Hotel & Conference Center
Last year’s event showcased 70+ startup ventures in high growth and emerging markets including IT, Energy, Advanced Manufacturing, Biotechnology, Healthcare, B2B and B2C and more. This year’s conference is expected to be even bigger! Save the date for this trailblazing event. For more information and to join their mailing list, go to pennstatevip.com.

The 2019 ITGA City and University Relations Conference
May 19-22
State College is the host city for the 2019 International Town & Gown Association Conference in May. This conference will feature workshops, keynote speakers and a professional networking event for professionals in University cities. For more information or to register, go to itga.org/Conference/2019.

WPSU: The Investment
Thursday, May 16
8 p.m. on WPSU-TV
Student entrepreneurs present their business ideas to a panel of judges, Shark Tank–style. The team or teams with the strongest ideas and best pitches will leave with the seed money necessary to jump-start their companies.
Judy and Kadin Karaky know a thing or two about anxiety. "Anxiety has always been present in my life and the lives of the people I care about – even our dog gets anxious," commented Judy Karaky, a Penn State graduate with a degree in Elementary Education. "Over the years, I’ve tried different approaches to managing my stress such as focused breathing exercises and muscle relaxation techniques without much success. Even yoga and meditation didn’t help, because clearing my mind of all the chatter was futile," said Mrs. Karaky.

When Judy’s son, Kadin, a seventh grader at Park Forest Middle School, started experiencing anxiety attacks, she found that traditional breathing exercises were not effective for him either. Kadin commented, "It’s hard to keep your mind focused on the exercises rather than what you are stressed about in the first place." Together, they started brainstorming solutions and came up with the idea for a product that would improve the outcomes of breathing exercises for anyone - but especially children and young adults.

The Belly Buddy, a comforting animal figure that rests on your stomach during the breathing exercises, comes with an embedded accelerometer, the movement of which causes a sequence of vertical lights to shine based on the rise and fall of your belly. When you are inhaling and exhaling properly, the lights, which are accompanied by a two-speed rhythmic sound, go completely to the top indicating successful deep breathing.

Judy and Kadin are exploring their business concept as part of the spring cohort at Ben Franklin’s TechCelerator@StateCollege – a program located in Innovation Park which has helped launch more than 100 startups in Central PA. Judy saw the notice about the 10-Week Business Startup Boot Camp in Ben Franklin’s newsletter and called the Program Manager, Bob Dornich, to inquire if there was a seat available. Bob said, "We’ve never had a mother and son team before — much less a seventh grader! But, there’s no age requirement on budding innovators, and we are excited to hear their graduation “pitch” on May 21, 2019."

Now getting ready to enter the third week, both Judy and Kadin, commented, "We’ve just finished the second class and most of the content is new to us. We’re learning about value propositions, customer discovery, and how to make an effective pitch for funding – but we’ve also gained some new ideas on how to improve our product. By the end of the class, we hope to determine if there is a viable market for our product and map out a blueprint for next steps. Once that’s done, we’ll both be breathing easier.”

About the Ben Franklin TechCelerator @ State College
A partnership with Invent Penn State designed to offer the region’s entrepreneurs, students, faculty members and small business owners a 10-Week Business Startup Boot Camp that culminates in a graduation pitch event with prizes totaling up to $10,000. The program encourages an entrepreneurial climate, increases technology transfer opportunities and helps develop a robust startup culture in State College and the surrounding area. Visit https://cnp.benfranklin.org/techcelerator-at-state-college
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