The Innovation Hub
2023 Annual Report

Texas Tech University
Innovation Hub at Research Park™
Friends of the Hub:

I am thrilled to present the Innovation Hub’s 2023 Annual Report, where the essence of inspiration, creation, and engagement defines our journey. This year, our success has been driven by deepened connections with students, faculty researchers, industry partners, Texas Tech Alumni, and the community, harnessing diverse perspectives for innovation.

This report unfolds in three sections: Inspire, Create, and Engage each offering a unique glimpse into our thriving and evolving ecosystem.

**Inspire:** In this section, you will see how inspiration is the spark that fuels progress with the Faculty Ambassadors and industry mentors as the core. Explore the evolution of our Faculty C-Startup program, now proudly standing as a nationally recognized program. Get to know our amazing industry mentors who have provided 7,000 hours of volunteer mentoring to our startups this year.

**Create:** Watch innovation come to life as you dive into the stories of our startups. Discover the “Rising Stars” and help us celebrate the successes of our current startup companies, who have collectively raised $8 million in capital this year, bringing our cumulative total to $71M.

**Engage:** Collaboration is the heartbeat of our success, and in this section, you’ll get a closer look at the vibrant pulse within our startup community. Discover how the Innovation Hub, together with our community and fellow Red Raiders, have crafted programs and events where innovation unfolds. It’s not just about what we’ve accomplished, it’s about the shared journey we’ve embarked upon to make innovation a living, breathing part of our community.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to each one of you for your unwavering support and commitment to the Innovation Hub.

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey!

Tausha Williams
Managing Director, Texas Tech Innovation Hub
The BIG Picture

We serve innovators & entrepreneurs through our startup incubator. The Hutch has been a space designed to help our community.

OUR PEOPLE

Students, faculty, staff, alumni, creatives, and West Texas entrepreneurs make up our robust community.

OUR SPACE

We've expanded our footprint & now have a bigger space dedicated to supporting startups in our community.

OUR STARTUP COMMUNITY

We're pretty good at what we do.

OUR PROGRAMS

We provide entrepreneurship support and resources to help businesses and small businesses succeed.

'... empowering entrepreneurs and small businesses to start, grow, and succeed...'

Dr. Werner Kurt, the Associate Vice President of Innovation & Entrepreneurship at Texas Tech University, shared a crucial part of innovation's success on campus by supporting industries such as the Office of Research Communication, Institute for Small Business, and the Innovation Hub.

'Southwest': Our region's economic development is essential to the growth and vitality of our community.

Hit me, Werner!
Our Space

IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK...
The Innovation Hub is over 44,000 sq. ft. of space dedicated to startup growth and to enable creative collisions. As a startup incubator, the facility is home to young ventures from a variety of industries.

A SPACE BUILT FOR A GROWING COMMUNITY...
21,031
103,487
STUDENTS, FACULTY, & COMMUNITY MEMBERS ENGAGED IN 2023
STUDENTS, FACULTY, & COMMUNITY MEMBERS ENGAGED TO DATE

TEXAS TECH ACCELERATOR COMPANIES
7
37
FORMED IN 2023
FORMED TO DATE

INSIDE THE BUILDING...
16 TENANTS & 26 MEMBERS IN 2023
237 TENANTS & ACCELERATOR EMPLOYEES IN 2023

58
ITTU MENTORS

40
FACULTY AMBASSADORS

373 EVENTS IN 2023
1,684 EVENTS TO DATE

WORKING TOGETHER TO SOLVE BIG PROBLEMS

WOW! THAT'S MORE THAN AN EVENT A DAY!
There is no better place to live, work, and play than Lubbock! The Lubbock Economic Development Alliance (LEDA) is dedicated to promoting economic growth in the Lubbock, Texas region. LEDA plays a crucial role in attracting new businesses, supporting existing enterprises, and contributing to the overall economic vitality of the community.

The partnership between LEDA, Market Lubbock, and Texas Tech University represents a powerful synergy aimed at catalyzing innovation and economic prosperity. This collaboration not only strengthens ties between academia and industry but also positions the West Texas community for sustained growth, job creation, and a robust Innovation Ecosystem. The Innovation Hub is thankful for this dynamic partnership and the support of LEDA and Market Lubbock.

LubbockLeda.org, #LubbockLeads
Road to Success

**IDEA COMPETITION**
A 60-second video competition where participants explain their big ideas and vie for public votes. The top-voted video wins $2,000!

**RED RAIDER STARTUP**
3-day weekend program focused on idea generation, team formation, customer discovery, and pitching.

**HUB CAMP**
Business plan workshop offered multiple times a year!

**LUNCH & LEARN**
A monthly seminar that covers a variety of topics from developing competitive startup funding applications to learning about intellectual property.

**iLAUNCH**
This pitch competition is centered around the Business Model Canvas and is Texas Tech’s very own Shark Tank. The first-place team takes home $10,000!

**FACULTY C-STARTUP**
$2,500 grants awarded to Texas Tech faculty to embed commercialization into their syllabus, creating a culture of entrepreneurship in the classroom.

**PROTOTYPE FUND**
Awards $55,000 to technology startups to design and build prototypes for market testing.

**NSF I-CORPS**
This program enables innovative researchers and entrepreneurs to identify a product-market fit for new technologies through customer discovery.

**ACCELERATOR PROGRAM**
This program fosters unique startups that create commercial or social impact with a $25,000 grant, a team of industry mentors, and access to the Hub’s resources during a year-long program.

**TTU MENTORS**
Mentors are the cornerstone for the Innovation Hub. Their industry expertise aids in the launch of new ventures.

**PRESIDENTS’ INNOVATIVE STARTUP AWARD**
The TTU and TTUHSC Office of the Presidents award a total of $100K to startups as seed funding.

**OUR PROGRAMS**
Inspire.
The Faculty C-StartUp program is designed to support Texas Tech faculty interested in creating a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship across campus. Five faculty are awarded annually and receive a $2,500 grant, commercialization training, and are named Ambassadors of the Innovation Hub.

40 prestigious TTU System faculty members have been named Ambassadors since 2017 and have helped increase awareness of the entrepreneurial activities available through the Hub and across the TTU System.

**VICTORY AT InBIA**

Texas Tech University’s Innovation Hub won the “Most Innovative Program” award from the International Business Innovation Association (InBIA) global meeting in Detroit. Taysha Williams, the Innovation Hub's Managing Director, was invited to submit an award proposal for the Faculty C-StartUp Program after speaking at the InBIA summit last fall. The Innovation Hub's proposal was selected as one of two finalists before beating out the University of Florida. The award recognized the creative efforts in building and facilitating the Faculty C-StartUp Program that encourages cross-departmental collaboration and innovative thinking.

“What a wonderful recognition of the work and commitment of the team at the Innovation Hub,” Joseph Heppert, the Vice President of Research and Innovation said. “This award illustrates, once again, that Texas Tech’s innovation and entrepreneurship programs are among the most creative in the world. Texas Tech is shining in this area. We are so proud of Taysha Williams and the entire Hub team. They help make these programs special and impactful for Texas Tech, Lubbock, and the West Texas region.”

“What an honor to be recognized among such a prestigious group of entrepreneurial centers across the globe,” Williams said. “I want to take this moment to thank my incredible team at the Innovation Hub for their dedication in advancing our programs to new heights.”
This year, the Innovation Hub Hustle Podcast was launched to share inspiring stories from entrepreneurs, ITTU Mentors, and faculty members that are a part of our startup community. The second episode of the Hustle Hub Podcast featured ITTU Mentors and TTU Alumni, Rachel and Doug Deaton.

Rachel and Doug share their story of how they met during their time as students at the Rawls College of Business to launching their own wealth management firm. This dynamic episode shares their journey of leveraging personal connections to overcome challenges and how they are now giving back to their alma mater that they love dearly.
Create.
Texas Tech Accelerator Cohort 6

1. Bluelens, a social platform that allows you to share your favorite local spots and get exclusive deals, won $145,000 at the Rodeo Business Plan Competition in May 2023.

2. Lasa Health is an engagement platform designed to facilitate provider/patient information and provide extensive at-home support for patients with endometriosis. Lasa Health recently announced their first clinical site with the Center for Endometriosis and Advanced Pelvic Surgery and received a $275,000 SBIR Phase I Grant.

3. Culinary Med Docs launched SAM, the software platform consisting of culinary medicine videos with customized recipes and nutritional education for patients with chronic illnesses. Recently, the app caught the attention of H-E-B. The startup is working with the Texas-based store to integrate SAM into their app-based grocery cart.

4. The Innovative Guidance, Entrepreneurship, and Outreach Center (GEO) is a social impact venture that empowers marginalized communities through entrepreneurship. GEO landed a partnership with Lubbock ISD and created an entrepreneurial program at the Lubbock County Juvenile Justice Center.

5. Texas Earth, a company focused on soil balance through the developments of products utilizing microbes in conjunction with other natural synergistic amendments. Texas Earth recently received a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to perform in-field trials for their product Bio Flut.

6. HiPR Innovations is focused on developing solutions to prevent pressure ulcer development. Khiran Sachdev was recognized as this year’s recipient of the Roberta Family Award on behalf of the Texas Business Hall of Fame. As HiPR’s CEO, Khiran has participated in numerous programs across the country, including Techstars and MassChallenge.

7. Local LBK supports the local economy by connecting the community with local businesses so everyone can feel like a Lubbock Local. The startup recently announced their partnership with The United Family. With this partnership, Local LBK will be behind the scenes sharing hidden products, services, and offerings, allowing Lubbock locals to fall more in love with their favorite grocery store.

First Ever Social Innovation Challenge Winner!
NSF I-CORPS

Texas Tech launched the National Science Foundation (NSF) Innovation (I-Corps™) regional programming in 2017 as a partner institution of the Southwest Node I-Corps™ (SWICORPS) and became an NSF I-Corps™ Site in 2018. Since launching, the program has continued to grow and expand — reaching more researchers and startups within the TTU System and West Texas community, and helping them prepare for launching their companies by participating in the National I-Corps™ Teams program.

The course uses the Lean LaunchPad methodology to systematically test key assumptions about technology-based innovation ideas and the customer problems it might be able to solve better than current alternatives. The researchers participate as a team of three - technical lead (TL), entrepreneurial lead (EL) and industry mentor (IM).

Through I-Corps™, NSF addresses four urgent national needs: training an entrepreneurial workforce, translating technologies, enabling economic impact, and nurturing an Innovation Ecosystem.

The Hub partnered with the TTUHSC to bring the National Science Foundation Innovation Corps (NSF I-Corps™) program to Amarillo for the first time in July 2023.

The two-week summer regional program brought together eight innovative healthcare-focused teams from Texas Tech, TTUHSC, the Texas Tech School of Veterinary Medicine, and West Texas A&M University. Hosted by Texas Tech’s vet school, the program saw tremendous engagement from participants and instructors.

“What sets this cohort apart is the sheer dedication towards understanding their customer base — the teams collectively conducted 150-plus customer interviews, an effort reflecting the true spirit of market research and customer-centric approach,” shared Dr. Ganga Baskar, Commercialization Program Director.
Rising Stars

ATHLETIQ

In 2016, Matt Mooney, Founder of Athletiq and former TTU basketball player, had an idea that would forever change how basketball players practice shooting. It dawned on him that during practice his shots were wide open, while the majority of the shots in a game were heavily contested.

He wanted to create a training device that challenged him during practices. As he pursued his dream of playing in the NBA, his idea took a backseat until 2020. In 2020, he teamed up with an engineer to bring his idea to fruition.

An empty bank account and three prototypes later, Matt had a clear vision for the future of the technology. Although his idea started as a way to simulate game conditions and game shots, it has evolved into something far greater - a technology that gives tailored guidance to each player’s unique shot using artificial intelligence (AI).

Matt Mooney and his team received $10,000 through the Innovation Hub’s Presidents’ Innovative Startup Award to further his company, Athletiq.

Seven years ago, Adam Mulsoow was walking alongside a Lubbock lake when the idea for a more convenient and portable kayak popped into his head. A few years later, it became his passion project.

He and his wife, Amanda, began pursuing ‘Pontos’ as a business. The packable kayak is made out of a carbon fiber frame and waterproof fabric. It weighs seven pounds and packs down to the size of a small tent.

Mulsoow took the idea to Texas Tech’s Innovation Hub and won the Launch Competition, also known as the university’s own Shark Tank™. Most recently, Pontos won $20,000 from the Presidents’ Innovative Startup Award in October.

Pontos and Abbyrose are former iLaunch Competition winners that moved on to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams by participating in the Hub’s Texas Tech Accelerator Program.

ABBYROSE

In 2019, Abby Rosliker launched Abbyrose, a customizable phone case and accessory brand. After promoting her product on social media, Abby’s unique phone case designs went viral, that’s when her solo act became a family venture. In 2023, Abbyrose became a tenant of the Innovation Hub.
Home is Where Our Tenants Are

THE STARTUPS THAT CALL THE HUB HOME!

CELEBRATED 6 YEARS IN BUSINESS!

THE HUB’S FALL 2023 TENANT MEET & MINGLE

FLINT AVE CEO ELECTED TO NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION!

GROWING WEST TX

Agrellus, Inc., North America’s Agricultural Marketplace for input solutions influencing over 365,000 farming operations, has moved its headquarters into the Texas Tech Innovation Hub at Research Park in Lubbock, Texas.

“We are super excited to continue working with Texas Tech students, and now we are even closer to the Davis College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources,” explains Chris Johnson, CEO at the fast growing startup. He continues, “Agrellus was co-founded by several Texas Tech Alumni as Texas dominance in cotton and peanut Ag research continues in West Texas.”

Agrellus has employed students from Texas Tech since 2018 in its marketplace professional programs. The Hub is a great place to leverage skills and make long-lasting connections with emerging Ag businesses.

The Agrellus Marketplace professionals and farm leaders are the backbone of helping the local farmer succeed. Agrellus is the only Ag inputs solution available where the farmer always wins. Texas Tech launched the initial program that has now expanded to over ten universities across the farm-rich interior of the United States. Farm leaders and growers that access data on the Agrellus Marketplace are presented with independent product performance validation at farm scale. A breath of fresh air from the marketing lease of manufacturers,” explains one of the Agrellus farm leaders in Texas.

This year, Agrellus is advancing its work with the “Real Carbon” initiative and is partnering with Texas Tech and two other universities while launching a series of data points for validating carbon sequestration and regeneration factors. The goal of Agrellus “Real Carbon” is to present farmers with the absolute highest return on “farming practice equity” for payout in regeneration and carbon related initiatives within a compressed timescale.
Engage.
The collaboration between the Texas Tech Innovation Hub and the Texas Tech Alumni Association is proud to welcome entrepreneurs, small business owners, students, faculty, and alumni to the Tech Hub Entrepreneur Network!

Through the commitment of the university, this alumni network encourages Red Raiders to develop relationships with investors, inventors, and mentors within the student body, alumni network, and across the nation. Our goal is to connect Texas Tech alumni to our innovative and entrepreneurial initiatives.

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY
Looking for an active and growing alumni network? Join the Tech Hub Entrepreneur Network and receive access to our community as well as benefits that match your generous donations.

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**NETWORK BENEFITS**

Ready to join our startup community? The Tech Hub Entrepreneur Alumni Network offers incentives to match your generous donations. Check out all the perks and benefits of joining our growing network below!

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<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Tier 1 ($50+)</th>
<th>Tier 2 ($250+)</th>
<th>Tier 3 ($900+)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Access to coworking space</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to mentorship &amp; guidance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exclusive swag items</td>
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<td>Access to funding resources</td>
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<td>Access to conference room 211</td>
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<td>Access to Pitchbook</td>
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<td>24/7 Access to the Hub</td>
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<td>Host one free event per year</td>
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For the second year in a row, the Texas Tech Innovation Hub hosted 13 grandkids and their grandparents for the Alumni Association’s Legacy U program!

The Legacy U program brings alumni and their grandchildren to a three-day on-campus experience. Participants select a desired “course” that they’ll complete during the program. The Innovation Hub’s course, “What’s Your BIG Idea?”, introduced 6-13 year olds to entrepreneurship.

Led by Kathryn Danesreiter and Taysha Williams, the course encouraged the students to think outside the box and develop a business idea with their grandparents!

“This is my favorite event of the year,” shares Kathryn. “The excitement each team shows is contagious! I am always amazed by the level of the kids’ creativity and how their grandparents foster that imagination into something their grandchildren can apply later on in life.”

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

ABOUT CAROLYN

After receiving her degree in public relations from the Texas Tech College of Media and Communications and a minor in marketing, Carolyn Rowley served at the Dallas Regional Chamber of Commerce as the Director of Economic Development. Her career led her back to West Texas before long, and Carolyn joined the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance (LEDA) in 2012.

Carolyn is the liaison between the Innovation Hub and LEDA and champions West Texas entrepreneurs as the Director of Retention and Innovation.

Caroly, thank you for all that you do to support our startup community!
**HackWestX**

HackWestX is an annual hackathon that showcases the university’s thriving and growing network of developers. Their goal is to empower the next generation of programmers and coders in order to make a positive impact on their community.

The hackathon poses challenges and workshops throughout the 24-hour event. This year, the student-run event also hosted industry sponsors as prospect employers and gave away over $10K in cash & prizes.

Learn more or join next year’s HackWestX by visiting www.hackwestx.tech!

**R.A.T.S. & Robowars**

Texas Tech’s Innovation Hub hosted RoboWars, a creativity-based engineering competition centered around outside-of-the-box constructive thinking.

Organized by the Robotic and Advanced Tech Society (R.A.T.S.), a student-run club dedicated to hands-on engineering, the competition begins with teams lining up around the cornucopia. Teams of 4-8 students then charge the stockpile of parts and tools. Based on what each team pulls from the cornucopia, they design and build their robot. Throughout the day robots compete in different tasks and the overall winner is announced based on their total score at the end of the day.

To learn more about R.A.T.S. and participate in the next RoboWars, contact Elizabeth Van, R.A.T.S. Co-President, at elvan@ttu.edu.

**SlingHealth**

Sling Health is a student-led entrepreneurial pre-incubator program facilitating interdisciplinary teamwork, professional development, and healthcare innovation. Their mission is to provide mentorship and support student teams in health science, engineering, and business to develop healthcare solutions.

To learn more about SlingHealth, visit www.ttuhcslinghealth.com.
Coffee, Natural Light, & Creative Collisions

OUR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS!

At the Texas Tech Innovation Hub, we believe that true innovation extends beyond our campus borders and into the heart of our community. Our Community Engagement programs are the cornerstone of this commitment, serving as a bridge between academia, industry, and the West Texas Community.

1 MILLION CUPS

Created by the Kauffman Foundation, 1 Million Cups (1MC) is a community of entrepreneurs hosted at the Innovation Hub. Once a month entrepreneurs come together to educate and inspire each other through their stories.

DISCOVERIES TO IMPACT

The annual Discoveries to Impact (DTI) conference brings together Red Raiders to showcase research, engagement, innovation, and startups. In 2023, winners took home a combined $320,000 to support scholarly activities and venture creation.

WE’RE MAKING AN IMPACT!

In November 2022, Jaafar Abdullah, CEO of the Innovative Guidance, Entrepreneurship, and Outreach Center (GEO), and the Innovation Hub partnered to bring entrepreneurship education to young men within the Lubbock County Juvenile Justice Center (LCJJC). Today, several of our startup teams, including the founders of BlueVerse, have partnered with GEO to continue this program within the LCJJC and local high schools.

FUTURE ENTREPRENEURS AT WORK

LUBBOCK ANGEL NETWORK

The Lubbock Angel Network (LAN) provides angel funding and support capital for innovative startups. Partners work closely with the Hub for access to deal flow. The Hub provides meeting space and supports LAN’s fundraising efforts.

LEGACY U

As a part of the Texas Tech Alumni Association’s Legacy U program, the Innovation Hub hosted children and their grandparents and taught them basic entrepreneurial concepts like ideation, customer discovery, and pitching. The children worked together to develop a pitch for a panel of “sharks” (judges).

ENTREPRENEUR SOCIALS

The Hub hosts networking socials at fun, local businesses across town. Connections are formed between students, mentors, and industry leaders to create a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in West Texas.
Thank you!

The initiatives, programs, and impact outlined in this report would not have been possible without the extraordinary support of our ITU Mentors, Faculty Ambassadors, sponsors, and partners. A special note of thanks goes out to John Osborne and the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance (LEDA) staff and board members for their support of the Hub’s programs.

Also, a huge thank you to Dr. Joseph Heppert and Dr. Werner Kuhrt, your leadership and vision have been instrumental in the Innovation Hub’s success. To the Innovation Hub team: Ryan Bain, Gang Baskar, Kathryn Danesreiter, David Dorsett, Savannah Miller, Nathan Styles, and Mallory Thomason, thank you for your commitment to Texas Tech University.

WHO'S READY TO TAKE ON 2024? WE ARE!

OUR PARTNERS