

An aerial photograph of a university campus. In the foreground, a large, historic building with a prominent white clock tower and a dark roof is visible. To the right, a large, modern building with a distinctive blue, segmented dome stands out. The campus is surrounded by trees, and the background shows a hilly landscape under a clear sky.

2022-2023

WERTH INSTITUTE IMPACT REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Princeton Review Rankings
5	Letter from our Director
7	Principles Guiding Our Programs
9	Boucher Management & Entrepreneurship Department
11	Impact by the Numbers
13	TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION
14-16	Championship Labs
17-20	Center for Neurodiversity & Employment Innovation
21	INCREASING INCLUSION
22	Werth Innovators
24	Graduating First-Year Female Werth Innovators

25	BUILDING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL PERSPECTIVE
26	Exploring the Entrepreneurial Perspective: UNIV 3088
27	NetWerx
29	Month of Discovery
31	HackUConn
33	HealthWerx
34	Student Travel
35	Daigle Labs
37	Werth Institute Advisory Board
38	Championship Labs Advisory Board
39	Hillside Ventures
41	Werth Institute Donors
43	NetWerx Mentors
44	Closing Acknowledgements

OUR VISION IS SIMPLE:

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES
NOT YET DREAMT OF.

IN 2023, THE PRINCETON REVIEW RANKED UConn AS:

#28

FOR TOP GRADUATE
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
PROGRAMS

#41

FOR TOP
UNDERGRADUATE
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
PROGRAMS

#6

IN THE NORTHEAST
REGION FOR
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
STUDIES

#1

IN CT FOR
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
STUDIES

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
WSJ

NAMED ONE OF
THE 50 BEST
UNIVERSITIES
IN AMERICA BY
THE WALL
STREET JOURNAL

“

“THE WERTH INSTITUTE IS REWRITING THE NARRATIVE OF HIGHER EDUCATION'S ROLE IN THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM, FORGING UNPRECEDENTED CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ACADEMIA, ENTREPRENEURS & INNOVATORS, BRIDGING THE GAP IN PURSUIT OF SHARED GROWTH AND PROSPERITY.”

Dr. Radenka Maric

PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

FROM OUR DIRECTOR

As we marked the 5th anniversary of The Werth Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation in the 2022-2023 academic year, one thing came to the forefront of every celebration: our journey from a scrappy boot-strapped start-up to what we now proudly refer to as “Werth 2.0” wouldn't have been possible without you.

At the University of Connecticut, we firmly believe that entrepreneurship and innovation are not just buzzwords; they are the driving forces behind progress and change in our students, our state, our nation, and the world. We recognize that great opportunities can come from anyone, anywhere, and it's our duty to nurture and empower these sparks of innovation.

Over the years, we've expanded our programs and support for the University, evolving into “Werth 2.0,” focused on building a future that keeps The Werth Institute relevant beyond any one person. We are committed to building a better university, society, and student experience, even when met with obstacles. Simply put – we will do whatever it takes to make a positive lasting impact.

Our work revolves around 3 key pillars:

Ecosystem - We support, communicate, and connect the entire entrepreneurship ecosystem at UConn and its stakeholders.

Innovations - Our main responsibility is to experiment and innovate around the UConn experience. We're here to try things that others won't, can't, or haven't done by testing, iterating, and modifying. We've been experimenting greatly with creator-based entrepreneurship groups, resulting in Championship Labs, a new minor in the School of Business; multiple new entrepreneurship classes; refinement of career pathways and how to communicate the value of these entrepreneurial experiences through digital portfolios, resumes, LinkedIn, and more; and corporate training and workforce partnerships to meet the needs of the economy.

Incubations - We focus on crucial University and societal initiatives that address the question, “If not us, who?” An excellent example is the emerging Center for Neurodiversity & Employment Innovations (CDNEI),

where Director Judy Reilly has built a university consortium of over 50 institutions, formed an employer leadership group, became Vanderbilt's Frist Center for Autism and Innovation, increasing collaboration between Vanderbilt, UConn and industry. Furthermore, CDNEI brought in approximately \$500,000 in net new funding for UConn. We expect it to be in the Center application pool this year or next for formal recognition.

As we peruse the pages of this Impact Report, reflecting on another year of transformational learning, we are always looking ahead. We are excited about our evolving partnership with the Provost's office, which will further integrate The Werth Institute into the student experience. **The Werth Institute is UConn, and UConn is Werth.** This partnership will enable us to achieve even greater synergies and make a more significant impact.

The generous support of our visionary donors serves as the catalyst for empowering aspiring entrepreneurs, fostering a dynamic cycle of economic and social transformation in our beloved state of Connecticut. We are profoundly thankful for the unwavering passion and commitment you bring to UConn.



**Students first.
UConn always.
Huskies forever.**

David Noble

MANAGING DIRECTOR, THE WERTH INSTITUTE

PRINCIPLES GUIDING OUR PROGRAMS

1 CREATING ENTREPRENEURIAL ACCESSIBILITY & TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS:

We listened to our students and realized that entrepreneurial opportunities were often limited to those in later stages of their education. So, we decided to change that. By investing our time and resources, we remain committed to opening up a world of possibilities for students of all years and majors. Our goal is to transform lives well beyond the classroom, giving every student the chance to thrive, no matter where they are on their academic journey.

2 INCREASING INCLUSION IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP, ESPECIALLY AMONG FEMALE & BLACK FOUNDERS:

In the world of entrepreneurship, "diversity and inclusion" are often just buzzwords. But at UConn, we're not about buzzwords; we're about action. We're creating the most accessible and inclusive entrepreneurial community, embracing diversity in all its forms – from gender and race to first-generation college students and even different majors. The Werth Institute is here to empower every student where we find them and help them confidently explore opportunities they might have otherwise overlooked.

3 BUILDING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET:

Empowering students with early entrepreneurial awareness and ambition is a game-changer for their future careers. Our programs equip students with the skills to spot and seize opportunities, bounce back from setbacks, and thrive in diverse environments, setting them on a path to long-term success.

A photograph of Peter J. Werth, Jr., an older man with white hair, wearing a dark suit and a red patterned tie. He is seated at a podium, smiling and looking towards the right. In the background, several other people are visible, some standing and some seated, in what appears to be a conference or event setting.

**“Be Good.
Make a Difference.
Change the World.”**

—Peter J. Werth, Jr.

AN INVESTMENT
IN THE FUTURE OF
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AT UCONN

BOUCHER MANAGEMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEPARTMENT

“

“For me, the best social justice program is creating job opportunities, for everyone at every level, so that they can elevate and better their lives, and in turn, improve the economy of where we live.”

Antoniella “Toni” Boucher

FORMER CONNECTICUT STATE SEN, MBA’02

Former Connecticut State Sen. Antonietta “Toni” Boucher ’02 MBA and her late husband, Henry “Bud” Boucher, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 2020. Just weeks later, Bud was diagnosed with leukemia. After Bud’s sudden passing, Toni was determined to fulfill their philanthropic aspirations. She made an impactful \$8 million naming gift, establishing the Boucher Management & Entrepreneurship Department within the UConn School of Business.

The gift—which is the University’s first departmental naming and the largest individual gift to the School of Business—will enable the School to launch new programming that will expand its successful footprint in education for founders, inventors, and scientists. It will double the teaching capacity of the new student venture fund program and provide flexible resources to pilot new programs that will prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow.

Toni’s generosity also led to the creation of the Henry “Bud” Boucher Faculty Fellowship and additional funding for the Toni Boucher Scholarship Fund, reflecting their shared passion for entrepreneurship. This gift, the largest individual contribution to the School of Business, expands UConn’s ability to educate future entrepreneurs and innovators.

The Boucher Department’s innovative programs will equip students from diverse academic backgrounds with entrepreneurial skills, bridging the gap between innovative ideas and successful businesses. This collaboration leverages expertise across



UConn, integrating business knowledge with STEM disciplines, facilitating the growth of STEM startups.

Toni’s vision for creating opportunities for young people to reach their potential is embodied in this gift. By fostering entrepreneurship and helping create jobs, she is not only honoring Bud’s legacy but also contributing to the betterment of Connecticut’s economy and society. The Boucher Management & Entrepreneurship Department is set to drive positive change, preparing students for the challenges of tomorrow’s job market while honoring the memory of a beloved husband and entrepreneur.

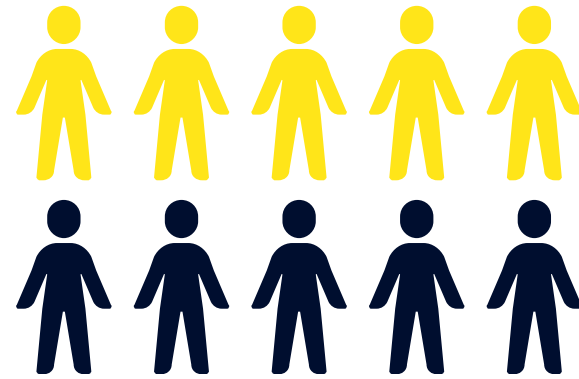


LEARNING THROUGH
EXPERIENCE

IMPACT BY

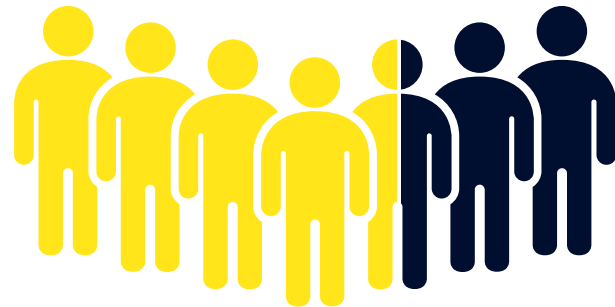
55%

WOMEN IN WERTH
INSITUTTE PROGRAMS



60%

STUDENTS FROM
UNDERREPRESENTED
POPULATIONS



156

NETWERX ALUMNI
MENTORS

288

NETWERX MENTEES

893

 HOURS OF
MENTORSHIP



\$219,710

TOTAL SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

THE NUMBERS

64

WERTH
INNOVATORS
IN 2022-2023

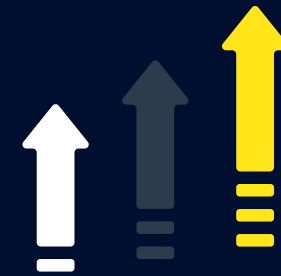
138

TOTAL WERTH
INNOVATORS
SINCE 2018

34



ACTIVE WERTH
INNOVATORS MAJORS
ACROSS 7 SCHOOLS



\$83,956,508

CAPITAL RAISED BY UCONN ALUMNI STARTUPS

WERTH INNOVATOR
GRADUATES WORKING FOR AN
ENTREPRENEURIAL-RELATED
COMPANY OR STARTING
THEIR OWN VENTURE TODAY



15%

\$30M

COMMITMENT FROM PETER J. WERTH
FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMS

1 TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

WERTH INSTITUTE PROGRAMS ARE DESIGNED TO REVOLUTIONIZE THE UCONN ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEY, BRINGING LIFELONG BENEFITS TO STUDENTS THROUGH ENHANCED WELL-BEING & CAREER ENGAGEMENT.

IN THIS SECTION:

CHAMPIONSHIP LABS	14
CLABS STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS	15-16
CENTER FOR NEURODIVERSITY & EMPLOYMENT INNOVATION	17-19
CNDEI SPOTLIGHT: MENTRA	20

CHAMPIONSHIP LABS

A PLAYBOOK TO MONETIZING NIL

Championship Labs (CLabs) at The Werth Institute educates and inspires student-athletes and student influencers to become entrepreneurs to their name, image, and likeness (NIL). The Werth Institute works one-on-one with students to create a blueprint to monetize their personal brands and businesses while empowering them with the skillsets of an entrepreneur.



At Championship Labs, students are encouraged to explore their interests, passions, and skills, regardless of their initial career goals. Our program is about empowerment, and through partnerships with influential figures like UConn alum and social media influencer Marc D'Amelio, we continue to break barriers, creating opportunities for students to redefine what it means to be an athlete, a creator, and an entrepreneur.

This school year, two Huskies found themselves on a transformative journey through Championship Labs, securing summer internships with D'Amelio Brands in Los Angeles.

CLABS *student spotlight*



**Proud to be
interning at
D'Amelio
Brands**



FAITH WATSON

Faith is a junior with a deep-seated passion for Psychological Sciences. Her drive to make a difference and connect with others led her to the world of sports marketing. Faith, who worked closely with UConn Men's Basketball star Adama Sanogo to expand his brand by showcasing his personality off the court, aspires to elevate athletes on their entrepreneurial journeys. Her journey with Championship Labs has been a catalyst for this dream.



KATIE SCHATZ

Katie initially envisioned herself as a criminal defense attorney however, her involvement in Championship Labs as a team lead changed everything. Katie's love for athletics, along with the opportunity to work with athletes on monetizing their NIL rights and building their personal brands, ignited her passion.

"This past year, I have created youth-based camps, obtained brand-athlete partnerships, developed social media platforms, and helped athletes achieve their entrepreneurial dreams. I love being able to implement teamwork, communication, leadership, creativity, and of course athletics into creating success. Every day, I am excited to go into work to learn and grow."



ADAMA SANOGO

The lifeblood of UConn's 2023 title team, Adama Sanogo was named the Most Outstanding Player of the Final Four and won a national championship at UConn. An inaugural member of CLabs, Adama learned how to articulate his identity and values, a crucial asset in navigating the NBA draft process. While he may not have been selected, his journey continued as he signed a two-way contract with the Chicago Bulls, becoming the third Husky to make the leap to the pros in 2023.



Production Assistant at ESPN
@NelsonCortess

NELSON CORTES

After interning at UConn alumni startup, Revyrie, Nelson Cortes was offered a full time employment opportunity at ESPN.

"What interested me about Championship Labs was the opportunity to produce work around sports and athletes, while having the opportunity to build my brand on TikTok and getting paid to do so. I was able to go to SXSW 2023 in Texas, gained over 800,000 likes on my account and got multiple videos at over one million views during my time with Championship Labs. The program familiarized me with sports media and content, and I give thanks because a lot of my portfolio that I shared with ESPN was work that I produced in my time at Championship Labs. I learned that consistency is key when posting to grow my audience and that it is not easy, but the results will come if the time and effort is put in."

CENTER FOR NEURODIVERSITY & EMPLOYMENT INNOVATION



The Center for Neurodiversity and Employment Innovation (CNDEI) at UConn continues to make significant strides in its mission to bridge the gap between employers in search of talent and neurodivergent young adults yearning for opportunities in supportive environments.

This goal extends beyond breaking barriers for neurodivergent individuals; we're also dedicated to enlightening employers about the invaluable contributions of neurodiversity and providing accessible resources for change. We're reshaping post-high school pathways, offering tailored career training and readiness programs that go beyond traditional STEM-centric options.

Our vision is to foster inclusive workplaces where diversity isn't just a buzzword but a guiding principle, enhancing our collective growth and impact.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION & COLLABORATION

CNDEI's national reputation has grown, leading to its inclusion in the "Big 4" Academic Centers for Neurodiversity Employment, alongside Vanderbilt, Stanford, and the University of Washington. These institutions collaborate to advance research, strategies, and pathways in the field of neurodiversity and employment.

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR NEURODIVERSITY EMPLOYMENT

CNDEI has been at the forefront of the University Council for Neurodiversity Employment, which now boasts over 74 universities and colleges as members. The council serves as a platform for education and training related to career development and services, with a special focus on neurodivergent students who are often overlooked in traditional programs.

VISITING FELLOW & COLLABORATION:

CNDEI Director Judy Reilly was honored as a Visiting Fellow at Vanderbilt's Frist Center for Autism and Innovation. This collaboration aims to leverage Frist's expertise in Engineering with CNDEI's focus on Management Education, fostering greater coordination and innovation in the field of neurodiversity and employment.

EMPLOYER EDUCATION

CNDEI introduced 4 employer courses in "beta" to enhance employers' competencies in neurodiversity & the workplace. These courses include:

- "Excellence in Management and Neurodiversity"
- "Excellence in Mentoring & Coaching ND Individuals in the Workplace"
- "Building a Neuro-Inclusive Team & Organizational Culture"
- "Build your Neurodiversity Employment Hiring Initiative Workshop"

The formal launch is scheduled for Q4 2023, and these courses offer valuable insights and toolkits for different audiences within companies.

NEURODIVERSITY CAREER EXPERIENCE PROGRAM:

Supported by a grant from the Synchrony Foundation, CNDEI initiated the Neurodiversity Career Experience Program (NDCE). This innovative program facilitates partnerships between employers and universities to provide college students with autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other cognitive differences with career development and experiential upskilling opportunities. It also serves as an avenue for employers to engage with neurodivergent talent.

COURSES FOR HR PROFESSIONALS:

In the upcoming academic year, CNDEI plans to launch courses specifically tailored for HR professionals. These courses will focus on providing accommodations, addressing challenges, and supporting managers in effectively assisting neurodivergent employees and colleagues.

NEURODIVERSITY TRAINING:

CNDEI developed asynchronous and hybrid courses to educate individuals about neurodiversity and its relevance in the workplace. These courses equip participants with a deep understanding of neurodiversity and provide strategies for addressing neurodivergent needs in various professional settings.



“

“As a university, we’re trying to be a leader in the space around improving employment outcomes for people with autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and a whole host of other conditions that have barriers in the process of securing and then retaining employment. We’re not just focusing on individual success, but also on making a broader societal impact.”



— Judy Reilly
DIRECTOR OF CNDEI

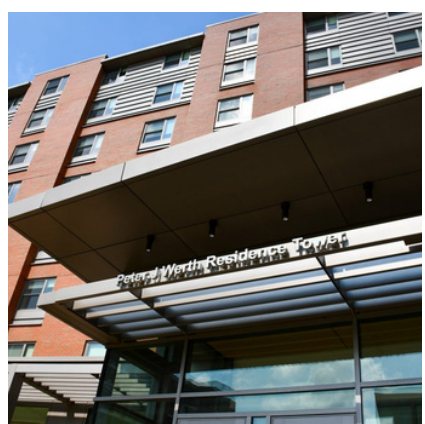
IN THE NEWS:



COMPANIES DEVELOP PROGRAMS TO HIRE NEURODIVERGENT CANDIDATES

Businesses are training their hiring managers in new ways that bring in neurodivergent candidates.

[WATCH THE SEGMENT HERE](#)



‘IT’S A BIG MOUNTAIN TO CLIMB’: HELPING THE AMERICAN WORKPLACE INCLUDE & SUPPORT NEURODIVERGENT WORKERS

Judy Reilly, director of the Center for Neurodiversity and Employment Innovation at UConn, talks with UConn 360 about the changing nature of American work.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

CNDEI *spotlight* MENTRA



The Center is also leading a pilot program of for Mentra, a platform designed to connect neurodivergent job seekers with potential employers. Mentra serves as an educational resource for both job seekers and employers seeking to understand and harness the potential of neurodivergent talent.

With approximately 3,500 self-identified neurodivergent job seekers on the platform, UConn is at the forefront of the program involving 30 other universities working to showcase the supportive nature of the platform and the power of aggregating a pool of college-level neurodivergent job seekers. The goal is to encourage employers to adopt inclusive practices, making it easier to access this incredible pool of talent and provide guidance on the adaptations needed. Through initiatives like this, UConn hopes to motivate more employers to embrace neurodiversity in the workplace.

2 INCREASING INCLUSION

THE WERTH INSTITUTE IS DEDICATED TO FOSTERING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT WHERE HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES NOT ONLY FEEL AT HOME BUT ARE ALSO EMPOWERED TO THRIVE AS THE ENTREPRENEURS AND LEADERS OF TOMORROW.

IN THIS SECTION:

WERTH INNOVATORS	22
DONOR SPOTLIGHT: FRIARS	23
GRADUATING COHORT OF FEMALE WERTH INNOVATORS	24

WERTH INNOVATORS

UConn's Werth Innovators are students who want to start something, create change, or evolve an idea and receive guidance and resources to do so. The program provides selected students from various academic backgrounds with the tools, confidence and community to work on a problem or idea they are passionate about. Werth Innovators includes:

TRACK #1

First-year women who receive a \$4,000 paid summer internship to pursue an idea by allowing risk-free, full-time focus & support; also receive a \$3,000 scholarship in their sophomore year.

TRACK #2

Rising sophomores who receive a \$3,000 scholarship during their spring semester.



This year's Chicago Innovation Conversations helped students hone their public speaking skills through talks delivered to a room full of Chicago alumni, with a curriculum designed by upperclassman Werth Innovator Jake Winter. Others dived into developing AI and machine learning skills, taught by upperclassman Justin Nappi.

Werth Innovators learn to develop their entrepreneurial skill sets and accelerate their growth while joining a greater community of like-minded fellow Werth Innovators and alumni.

donor spotlight

PATRICIA & TIMOTHY FRIAR

The Werth Institute had a lofty goal four years ago with the launch of its Freshman Female Founder (F3) program — to be the top entrepreneurship program in the world for women entrepreneurs and innovators. The program has since evolved to become part of the Werth Innovators experience.

As the first cohort of F3 enters their senior year, fundamental to their journey was the support of UConn alums Pat and Tim Friar, who have a lifetime of giving to the university. The Friars have generously given their time, talent, and monetary support at an unprecedented level. Their daughter Catherine, UConn CLAS 2018, represents a new generation of support and mentorship having recently hosted Werth Institute women in Austin, TX earlier this year. The sharing of time and talent will continue to build on the remarkable legacy the Friar family demonstrates and a belief that a commitment to making a difference can never start too soon.

"My wife Pat was a visionary leader who, long before it had a name, championed diversity and inclusion in the workplace," said Tim Friar. "In the 1990's she reshaped an entire culture at GE Capital and ultimately GE as the company's first Head of Diversity. She demonstrated that embracing a diverse and inclusive workforce could be accomplished not only for the betterment of the individual but for the whole of the enterprise. Diversity was not just a title or a program. It represented embracing the needs of a changing work force and work environment. Her pioneering work utilizing such disciplines as data analytics, risk management, and employee empowerment laid the foundation for transformative change and became the model for companies throughout industry."



"Pat's dedication to making 'I work for GE!' a source of pride for every employee serves as an inspiration for all to continue creating opportunities for women and fostering an inclusive culture. Embracing, cultivating and providing leadership development opportunities, driven by the belief that doing the right thing, no matter how challenging, can shape a brighter future."

---Tim Friar

GRADUATING THE FIRST COHORT OF FIRST-YEAR FEMALE WERTH INNOVATORS



student spotlight
YULIANA TSAPAR
School of Business, 2024

“

"My experience as a Werth Innovator challenged me to figure out exactly what my dream was, and how to start working towards that vision every day."



As a Freshman Female Founder, Yuliana created Shift with Yuliana, a sustainable fashion and lifestyle community educating young adults on the circular economy as well as motivating individuals to be proactive in pursuit of their dreams. Throughout the process, Yuliana:

- Discovered her love for content curation and the importance creative outlets play in her life.
- Learned that perfection can hold you back and become your number one enemy.
- Learned the importance of taking risks and saying yes to opportunities that might make you nervous or uncomfortable.

After her freshman year, Yuliana moved to Paris for six months to study fashion. Moving to Paris was, "the scariest and yet the best decision of my entire life, and if I had never applied for the program my Freshman year, I don't think I would've ever taken that chance."

BUILDING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET

IN THIS SECTION:

EXPLORING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL PERSPECTIVE: UNIV 3088	26
NETWERX	27-28
MONTH OF DISCOVERY	29-30
HACKUCONN	31-32
HEALTHWERX	33
DAIGLE LABS	35

EXPLORING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL PERSPECTIVE

UNIV 3088

Over the past year, UConn has offered an one-credit course that has played a pivotal role in shaping students' understanding of the transformative potential of entrepreneurship.

With a curriculum designed to instill an entrepreneurial mindset, the course has introduced 2,506 undergraduates and graduates to the concept of pursuing opportunities, unburdened by the constraints of available resources, while harnessing the power of markets. It has become evident that individuals embracing this entrepreneurial perspective hold the capacity to drive value in their careers and contribute to the greater good.

Through the participation of 15 faculty contributors, the course adopts a transdisciplinary approach, going beyond traditional academic boundaries to encompass diverse fields, including business, engineering, science, fine arts, agriculture, social sciences, and the humanities. It engages all stakeholders in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, from investors and lenders to regulators, policymakers, and employees. The course experienced a substantial rise in students actively seeking additional entrepreneurial resources and programming in the past year, underscoring its tangible impact and resonance within the UConn entrepreneurial ecosystem.



NETWERX

NetWerx is a student-initiated mentorship program designed to empower undergraduates by cultivating networking skills and boosting their self-assurance. Through this initiative, students are connected with alumni mentors and gain access to UConn's dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem, regardless of their major. NetWerx offers one-on-one mentoring opportunities and introduces a new one-credit course for first and second year students, "Univ 1820 – Conversations with Entrepreneurial Alum." In this course, alumni leaders host virtual group discussions, sharing their valuable experiences with students, further enriching their entrepreneurial knowledge and expanding their network.

student spotlight

LINDSEY PUGLIESE

'25 BFA, Werth Innovator

"Being able to say I worked at a studio is a huge deal. It's hard to break into the industry because everyone's work is so good. Having the experience and work going into my junior year is a massive confidence boost. I have the work to back it up."



Lindsay's passion for art, science, and engineering found a perfect outlet in animation, where coding and software combined to bring her creative visions to life. Originally from New Jersey, Lindsay was drawn to UConn's animation program and the opportunities it brought to meet people from different backgrounds while staying close to home.

As a 3D animation student, Lindsay was aware that breaking into the animation industry can be a challenge, especially without a portfolio. Interested in learning 2D animation, Lindsay sought advice on how to secure an internship in the field and was introduced to Mike Parker, creative director at Lowbrow Studios, a 2D animation studio in Connecticut. Mike offered Lindsay an internship on the spot, where she worked three days a week delving into the intricacies of animation.

Recognizing Lindsay's potential, Mike prioritized her personal growth over the pressure of project deadlines and deliverables. One of the highlights of her journey was contributing to an animation for the Dorkly YouTube channel, known for its humorous take on video games and movie references. Seeing her name in the credits for the first time was a source of immense pride.

"Before the internship, I was interested in various aspects of 3D animation. But after learning about the production side, I realized I really like it."

mentor spotlight **MIKE PARKER**

Owner, Lowbrow Studios



On becoming a mentor:

"I got invited to be a guest at a couple classes in the Art Department and loved seeing the students' work and their thought processes. It was also great just helping students try and navigate school or the transition from school to a job environment."

MONTH OF DISCOVERY

OCTOBER IS THE MONTH OF DISCOVERY, WHEN UNDERGRADUATES ARE INTRODUCED TO THE WEALTH OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES AT UCONN.

Student-led annual event sponsored by The Werth Institute, Office of Undergraduate Research, First Year Experience and Learning Communities (FYE&LC), and Department of Operations and Information Management (OPIM) that showcases the 20+ programs and resources available to 220+ students who are interested in exploring innovation.



EXPERIENCE INNOVATION EXPO



RESEARCH CONNECTIONS

Designed especially for early career students to explore the breadth of inquiry happening throughout a research university through conversations with researchers representing a range of departments, topics and approaches. More than 252 students attended.



FALL FRONTIERS

The 10th Annual Fall Frontiers in Undergraduate Research Exhibition was offered with 90 undergraduate students presenting 75 projects in person at Storrs. In addition to giving student presenters valuable experience sharing their discoveries with the university community, the exhibition allowed over 200 students to learn from their peers and spark their imaginations about questions and topics they might explore through undergraduate research.

MAKERSPACE BOUNCE

Students partake on a scavenger hunt like no other that jumpstarts their creativity, lets them “bounce” some ideas around, and get making! Bouncing between four makerspaces (OPIM Innovate, the Innovation Zone, the UConn Library Maker Studio, and the Krenicki Arts and Engineering Institute), students get to learn about and take part in the makerspace resources available to them at UConn. The event culminates with a carnival filled with bounce houses and inflatables, where this year a record breaking 440+ participated.



This year’s HackUConn, a 20-hour marathon event that brings together undergraduate innovators across all majors and industry experts for a non-stop, fast-paced innovation competition, was the largest in the program’s history, with participation nearly doubling from the year prior. More than 100 students formed 20 teams to create a solution around the theme “Art Meets Technology.”



1ST PLACE: Amplify	2ND PLACE: Giant Steps	3RD PLACE: Proof by Induction
<p>INNOVATION: An application/service that connects musicians to venues & studio owners to expand networks and make live music booking & the recording process easier.</p> <p>MEMBERS: Adama Modi & Kenny Pineda</p> <p>TEAM PRIZE: \$2,000</p>	<p>INNOVATION: Comic Bot, an AI powered "choose your own story" comic creator with AI generated illustrations.</p> <p>MEMBERS: Antonio James Butler, Nikhil Ghosh, Reiner Reichenberger & Colin Acerbi</p> <p>TEAM PRIZE: \$1,000</p>	<p>INNOVATION: Doodle Diagnostics, a website application that de-stresses users through art while collecting important health data.</p> <p>MEMBERS: Ryan Lagasse, Clare Inyang, Karina Jadia, Kellynn Hill & Mubarak Oshomah</p> <p>TEAM PRIZE: \$500</p>

SPONSORS INCLUDE:

UConn

GLOBAL JOURNALISM

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

CHNP

GLADSTEIN FAMILY HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTE

Engineering for Human Rights Initiative

synchrony

Coca-Cola

The event is 100% free for all participants and funded by our generous sponsors including:



A special thank you to the alumni who volunteered their time & talents.

HEALTHWERX

The Werth Institute and Hartford HealthCare joined forces this year to drive innovation in community health, recognizing the value of fresh perspectives in fostering transformative change. Their collaborative effort resulted in HealthWerx, a ground breaking experiential learning pilot program designed to provide UConn undergraduates with hands-on exposure to healthcare equity issues – an opportunity most do not get before going into graduate programs.

HealthWerx welcomed applicants from all schools and majors, starting with a spring 2023 course and leading into a

full-time summer internship with Connecticut-based startups. For many, it was the first time that they were thinking about concepts of entrepreneurship and how those concepts might fit into their own goals, both personal and professional.

Working closely with Hartford HealthCare's Neighborhood Health teams, the students sought innovative solutions to address community health challenges, ultimately equipping them with the fresh perspectives necessary to contribute to healthcare innovation and confront healthcare equity issues head-on.

STUDENT TRAVEL

AUSTIN



CHICAGO



LOS ANGELES



SAN FRANCISCO



Members of the HealthWerx team at Hartford HealthCare's Pearl Street Office in Hartford. From left: Genesis Rosario '24 (CAHNR), Brenda Lituma Solis '23 (CAHNR) '25 MS, Sophia Manos '24 (CLAS), Jewel Booker '25 (CLAS), and Zoey England '22 (CLAS).

DAIGLE LABS

Launched in 2023, UConn Daigle Labs is the first university research center dedicated to the field of organization science. Headed by Dr. Ryan Coles, UConn Professor of Management & Entrepreneurship, and seeded by Jamie and Kyle Daigle (COO GitHub), this innovative venture was conceived to harness the power of cutting-edge organization science to stimulate technology entrepreneurship in Connecticut and foster environmentally sustainable business growth worldwide.

At the core of Daigle Labs is the Startup Foundry, an applied lab where Principal Investigators experiment with building businesses around the lab's academic research as well as scientific research

conducted by other scientists. The Startup Foundry focuses on commercialization projects in the areas of A.I. and Computing, Energy and Transportation, as well as Agriculture, Waste, and Biodiversity. In the first quarter of 2023, Daigle Labs took on eight startup projects and the team has achieved impressive results. In a mere nine months, the Daigle Labs team oversaw \$515 million in new sales contracts for their startup projects, translating into a \$2.63 billion increase in the collective valuation of the eight startups. The four projects, grounded in academic research where Dr. Coles and team are co-authors, collectively hold a valuation of \$1.29 billion.

Pictured: Dr. Ryan Coles & his Daigle Labs team with students at Ukrainian Catholic University's Business School conducting workshops on startup internationalization and resilience in times of uncertainty.



One of the notable success stories comes from the Startup Foundry at Daigle Labs is the journey of Peter Goggins '21 (CAHNR) '23 MEGE, a graduate student and founder of Pisces Atlantic, a Connecticut-based global leader in nutritional solutions and services for aquaculture. The company has developed a healthier and more sustainable fish feed, and a regenerative fertilizer that remediates depleted soil. The Foundry's support led him to explore international markets, particularly in the Middle East and Latin America.

During a trip to Jordan, Peter met with local farmers and distributors, identifying an opportunity to supply high-quality fish feed at a lower cost than what was available in the local market. This not only helped Peter expand his Connecticut-based business into an international market but also provided Jordanian farmers with access to a better product. Between January 2023 and July 2023, Daigle Labs leveraged its global networks to secure \$12 million in new sales contracts and helped internationalize the Pisces supply chain.

Pictured: David Coles, Peter Goggins, Dr. Ryan Coles, & a Jordanian farmer.



WERTH INSTITUTE ADVISORY BOARD

Within this distinguished group of alumni business leaders lies the driving force behind the transformation of inclusive entrepreneurship at UConn. They are not just ambassadors, advisors, and advocates; they are the architects of change, shaping our business communities and forging a path for every entrepreneurial dream to thrive.

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CHAMPIONSHIP LABS ADVISORY BOARD

Meet the trailblazers behind the Championship Labs Advisory Board – a group of esteemed alumni deeply connected to UConn Athletics. These former student-athletes have achieved remarkable success well beyond the sports arena. Joined by the NBA’s Rudy Gay, a role model for those aspiring to professional careers, our Advisory Board brings both passion and expertise to the table. Their mission? It's more than just connecting Huskies with lucrative opportunities - it's about guiding emerging professionals toward long-lasting success.

The impact of this extraordinary group will know no bounds as they reshape the landscape of NIL opportunities. Their focus extends beyond profitable ventures, as they pave the way for sustained, long-term success.



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HILLSIDE VENTURES



Hillside Ventures, a unique initiative at UConn, is a student-led venture fund with a \$1 million portfolio. It offers students a groundbreaking opportunity to gain practical experience in investing actual funds into promising startups. This pioneering venture investment program is the first of its kind in the academic realm, welcoming students from diverse majors and backgrounds. Hillside Ventures stands as a trailblazer in shaping the future of inclusive and innovative investment practices.



student spotlight **JOSEPH ROBERTS**

Meet Joseph Roberts, a senior majoring in Finance at UConn's School of Business. Joseph's journey from Gateway Community College to Hillside Ventures, where he assumed the role of Sustainability Vertical Lead, is marked by his significant contributions to the world of venture capital and sustainability. Over the course of two semesters, he orchestrated the successful closure of five deals, channeling a total of \$150,000 into pioneering ClimateTech ventures. This portfolio showcases promising names like Goodwipes, Voltpost, Enviro Power, Rebound Technologies, and the Incaendum Initiative Corporation.

As 2023 approached, Joseph's forward-thinking vision led to the inception of the STEM Fund, an innovative initiative that bridges the gap between technology and investment. By pairing STEM students' technical know-how with burgeoning startups in deep tech sectors like AI, robotics, and alternative energies, the STEM Fund disrupts the traditional investment landscape. Notably, it provides non-dilutive capital to startups, even during their ideation phase, setting a new standard for support in the world of deep technology ventures.

Joseph's journey isn't just a story of academics; it's a tale of practical experience. His resume includes internships at Connecticut Innovations, where he served as a Venture Capital Analyst, and at Loeb.nyc, where he made his mark as a Venture Capital Summer Analyst.

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