

Calling All Student and Faculty Innovators: NCIIA Wants You

National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance makes \$2 million in funding and training available for student innovation teams and faculty entrepreneurs

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July 21, 2011—Hadley, Mass.—As the 2011–2012 academic year fast approaches, the National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance (NCIIA) seeks to identify and support the most creative, innovative minds on campus. Faculty and undergraduate and graduate students at colleges and universities across the country are encouraged to apply for NCIIA funding, training, and recognition opportunities for their socially-minded entrepreneurship and invention in science, engineering, business, medical and design programs. For more information about the NCIIA and applying for faculty or student support, please visit <http://nciia.org>.

“What we’re looking for is a technology that meets a societal need and is commercially viable—whether meant for the developing world, the operating room, or the construction site,” explains Phil Weilerstein, Executive Director, NCIIA. “Over the years, we’ve seen that student inventors are capable of bringing to the table inventions we’ve never seen before, but always knew we needed. We’re trying to harness the creativity young inventors and help them move their innovations from idea to reality.”

NCIIA has helped launch over 130 student-led companies, which in the past two years have raised \$100 million of external capital. “Without the NCIIA, Ecovative might never have grown to where it is today,” said Eben Bayer, CEO and co-founder of Ecovative Design, a 2007 NCIIA student team grantee. “NCIIA’s support extended beyond financial contributions, they also provided guidance and coaching as we moved from a two-person student enterprise into a company which today has over 40 employees.” Ecovative has attracted the attention of both major corporations and government agencies for its mushroom-based Ecocradle packaging and Greensulate insulation products.

Students moving through NCIIA’s venture development process—which typically starts in the classroom, in an NCIIA-supported experiential course—have access not just to financial support and business development training, but also to NCIIA’s extensive network of peer inventors, mentors, investors, and marketers. NCIIA’s investment arm, VentureWell, takes NCIIA’s best emerging ventures and grooms them for future external funding and investment.

“NCIIA did more than fund a student project,” added Patricia Compas, founder of DayOne Response, “it launched my career. Instead of looking for a job when I graduated college, I already had one: working for myself on the venture I launched with help from the NCIIA. The NCIIA was there every step of the development process, not only offering financial support but also connecting me to mentors and possible partners along the way.”

In addition to plans to expand its faculty and student network, the NCIIA will host a number of events during the school year, including business strategy workshops; Open, the NCIIA’s 16th Annual Conference; and Open Minds, NCIIA’s annual showcase of student innovation, to be held in San Francisco in March of 2012.

About the NCIIA

The NCIIA achieves positive social and environmental impact through technological innovation by providing funding, training, and mentoring for university faculty and student innovators.

With support from The Lemelson Foundation, the National Science Foundation and a membership of nearly 200 colleges and universities from all over the United States, the NCIIA engages approximately 5,000 student entrepreneurs each year, leveraging their campuses as working laboratories and incubators for businesses, and ultimately helping them to bring their ideas to market. For more information, please visit <http://www.nciia.org>.

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