

Elevating Student Ventures to Commercialization

Providing entrepreneurial students the resources to achieve success



For Ian Young (MBA candidate) and Evan Oslakovich, LiftForce is their passion project. "There are three places I live," remarks Oslakovich, "in class, in the office or in the gym." After watching too many gym-goers use improper form or prop their phone up against a chair to record themselves, they decided it was time to make a change for fitness fanatics. With the use of camera technology that projects to a virtual mirror, the team has created a comprehensive system that analyzes workout technique while providing real-time feedback.

Connecting business and STEAM students across campus

It's not every day that a college student is given the coaching, work space and financial support to kick-start a business. And it's not a typical college student who develops a smart fitness sensor technology (LiftForce), a sound recognition system (Hz Innovations) or a cybercrime prevention simulator (CASCADES). But all of this and more is exactly what occurred during the Saunders Start-Up program.

The unique program at Rochester Institute of Technology began in 2011, and offers entrepreneurial students the resources to make their business idea a reality. Multidisciplinary student teams of business science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) majors collaborate and share knowledge to make business concepts and products come to life.

After receiving more than 50 Start-Up proposals, eight teams were selected to participate in the 10-week program, the most intensive entrepreneurial initiative at RIT.

The teams receive real-world feedback from customers and external stakeholders, and work with a experienced entrepreneurs and product developers. Free time is spent on refining the business concept, including implementing the customer discovery process, cultivating business plans



"Saunders Start-Up Startup is the most intensive entrepreneurship program offered at RIT. By leveraging the vast resources of RIT, we are able to help shape the next generation of entrepreneurs."

Richard DeMartino, Ph.D.
Director, Simone Center for Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship

SAUNDERS START-UP

Approved teams gain funding, coaching and start-up resources

Saunders Start-Up is a 10-week initiative at Rochester Institute of Technology, in conjunction with the Simone Center for Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship and supported by Saunders College of Business. One of the many entrepreneurial resources available to RIT students, the program integrates business insights, prototyping and coaching from experienced entrepreneurs to form student ventures. Student teams with advanced business ideas can apply for the program, which focuses on customer delivery, commercialization and seeking funding.



Teams accepted into Saunders Start-Up receive designated work space, mentoring from faculty, access to production labs, business leaders and alumni, guidance on business development, and financial resources including a stipend and the opportunity to earn grants to sustain their plans.

After 10 weeks, teams deliver final product pitches during "Investor Day" to a panel of real-world investors, representing the culmination of Saunders Start-Up.

See reverse...

DAY ONE | career ready

- Strong industry connections, offering real world experiences in and outside of the classroom
- Among the world's oldest and largest cooperative educational programs
- 94% placement rates

DAY ONE | enterprising mindset

- Pioneering Biz 1-2 program
- #1 student innovation center, Venture Creations Incubator, and over 200 clubs to join
- Ranked #21 nationally for entrepreneurship

DAY ONE | stand out

- Over 80 minors available across all 9 RIT colleges
- Nationally recognized programs in engineering, technology, arts, and design
- Students develop unique personal brands that employers seek

DAY ONE | connected

- Small class sizes, 100% taught by faculty
- Low student to faculty ratios, and highly accessible faculty
- Plugged into over 114,000 RIT alumni and large university resources

ENTREPRENEURIAL STUDENTS HAVE COUNTLESS OPPORTUNITIES AT RIT, ENSURING A STRONG ENTERPRISING CULTURE EXISTS INSIDE AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

THE FRESHMAN EXPERIENCE: BIZ 1+2:

Undergraduate business students are immersed in Biz 1+2, a one-of-a-kind program where students build businesses from conception to commercialization. The two-semester program strengthens enterprising mindsets and establishes a strong bond among classmates.

MINORS & IMMERSIONS:

Students broaden their educational interests and social network with minors and immersions across all nine RIT colleges. These provide students the opportunity to learn new skills and discover resources among their peers.

SIMONE CENTER FOR STUDENT INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

Countless entrepreneurial opportunities exist for students of all levels to get involved, from idea speed-dating to obtaining coaching on a new business venture. Entrepreneurial-minded students can choose to live in the intensive Entrepreneurs' Hall student-living environment.

COMPETITIONS & EVENTS:

Outside the classroom, students pursue projects they are passionate about. RIT's Tiger Tank competition & Business Model competition provide students a platform to pitch their business concepts for the chance to win prizes.

SAUNDERS START-UP:

Teams with fully-developed business concepts can apply for the intensive program, focused on commercialization and seeking investment funding.

VENTURE CREATIONS:

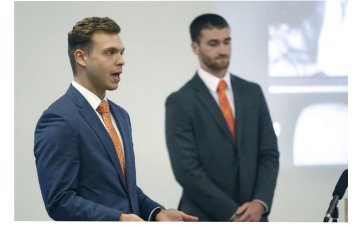
An incubator providing a range of services and coaching to early & mid-seed stage start-ups seeking to advance beyond a concept and become viable, profitable businesses.

... continued from reverse

and projections, validating assumptions, developing prototypes and software, practicing business pitches, making and perfecting countless iterations of investor presentations. After all, when preparing to launch a business, you can never be too prepared.

LiftForce takes off

Following a first place win at Tiger Tank, a national business plan competition at RIT, it made sense for the team to apply for Saunders Start-Up to work alongside and learn from other promising business ventures.



Ian Young and Evan Oslakovich, LiftForce

"The human capital that exists on a college campus makes this a perfect time to start a business."

Both of the budding entrepreneurs agree that there is no better time to begin a business than in college. With stipends, co-op credit, and competitions reserved for university students, the access is undeniably beneficial. With an intellectual pool of more than 18,000 undergrad and



"RIT has an open academic architecture that allows students of different disciplines to take minors and electives in any of our nine colleges. The integrated programming encourages interaction and collaboration, and supports student entrepreneurs from day one."

Jacqueline R. Mozrall, Ph.D.
Dean and Professor
Saunders College of Business

graduate RIT students, Young and Oslakovich saved time, energy and assets by working with a multidisciplinary team of students. "We never have to pay for Indeed or Monster.com, because we have so much talent right here on campus" remarks Young. But perhaps one of the biggest takeaways is that at RIT, from the moment students develop an idea to after they walk across the stage at graduation, they continue to fully own their business concepts. What more could you ask for?

Meet the 2015 teams:

CASCADES:

Providing a training platform that will help streamline the process of preventing cybercrime.

Hz Innovations:

Developing a sound recognition system for deaf homeowners that notifies users of calamity.

SpynAlign:

Developing biomedical solutions, beginning with a posture-correction tool for stroke patients.

Wyvrn:

Education technology seeking to help student governments understand their student body.

happy2c:

A program for language and culture exchange through mentorship and games.

Myspiderweb.com:

Creating a Social Media Management platform for small business owners.

UNA:

Producing a portable and sustainable coffee maker aimed at providing convenience.

Learn more at: saunders.rit.edu/startup

For Enterprising Students and Creative Enterprises



Rochester Institute of Technology,
founded 1829



saunders.rit.edu

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