FEATURES

UT Dallas Seed Fund Makes 6th Investment
The latest edition to the UT Dallas Seed Fund portfolio seeks to ease the mind of the busy cat parent.

Institute Team Heads to Industry Gatherings
Members of the Institute’s team made their way around the state participating in industry events and showcasing institutional success.

Spring Event Portfolio Grows
New event centered around Earth Day brings university departments, students, and industry experts together.

Endowed Professorship Honors Institute Founder
This Spring, the university honored 12 distinguished professors with new appointments at its annual investiture ceremony. Among the faculty honored was Dr. Riki Takeuchi, a professor in Organizations, Strategy and International Management in the Naveen Jindal School of Management. Dr. Takeuchi received the title of Dr. Joseph Picken Distinguished Professor in Innovation and Entrepreneurship - an endowed professorship made possible by the generous donation of the Institute’s founder upon his retirement.
Meowtel Wins UT Dallas Seed Fund Investment

The sixth investment of the UT Dallas Seed Fund award was made in Q2 to Meowtel. Founded in 2015, Meowtel offers a marketplace platform that connects busy cat parents with trusted cat sitters all across the country.

Meowtel was recommended for and received a grant of $25,000 after a highly competitive, three-month process. The process began with over 30 companies recruited by venture associates in the Seed Fund Support class.

Ricardo Rossi, Chief Technology Officer and shareholder in Meowtel, commended the professional process run by the students recruiting and interviewing startups for funding consideration. “The level of energy and genuine interest in learning about our industry, our business, and how we planned to grow was impressive,” said Rossi, who received master’s degrees in Information Technology Management and International Management Studies from the Naveen Jindal School of Management in 2007 and 2009 respectively.

Seed Fund Support Course Offered to EMBA Students

Based on demand and word-of-mouth popularity, a new section of the Seed Fund Support Course was introduced to the Executive MBA students in the Spring, for the first time.

“We were looking for an evolution of the capstone project – so many companies are reluctant to share corporate data with us and we want a project at the end that culminates the EMBA curriculum. The Venture Capital Seed Fund course created the opportunity for students to explore an entire company, synthesize their findings and create a pitch for funding,” said Pamela Foster Brady, director of the EMBA program.

Paul Nichols, program director for the Innovation & Entrepreneurship academic program, co-taught the class with Bryan Chambers, UT Dallas Seed Fund director. “The Seed Fund course had already proven its value at the undergraduate and graduate level, so we were excited when EMBA program asked to be a part of this unique UTD resource.”

With the growth in the amount of funding and the level of interest in venture-oriented investing continuing, Brady plans to offer the Seed Fund Support Course in the 2019-20 academic year, with a strong likelihood of being added as a regular offering in the EMBA curriculum.
Institute Team Learns and Leads at Industry Groups

In early June, staff from the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship headed down to St. Edwards University in Austin, Texas for a two-day gathering of Texas university entrepreneurial programs, institutes, and centers.

TUNIE stand for the Texas University Network of Innovation and Entrepreneurship. It was co-founded by retired Clinical Professor and Institute founding director, Joe Picken.

While there are international organizations to promote university scholarship and education on innovation and entrepreneurship – most notably, USASBE and GCEC – a formal mechanism had been absent for gathering at a state level in Texas, until TUNIE.

In addition to heavy personal networking among the attendees, delegates from every school shared best practices with representatives from the other Texas institutions.

UT Dallas has a member on the TUNIE board (Steve Guengerich) and is involved in providing marketing and communications support to the group, through Institute team member, Sarah Crowe.

In mid-June, Institute executive director spoke at the Entrepreneurial Living-Learning Community (ELLC) Roundtable led by the University of Illinois Technology Center, hosted at Texas A&M College Station.

Speaking on the importance of branding, Guengerich described how leveraging the brands of other meaningful, high visibility organizations through partnerships had been important to UT Dallas’s strategy.

By associating UT Dallas with statewide and local entrepreneurship groups – like Capital Factory, the Dallas Innovation Alliance, and the Innov8te accelerator by DEC – larger circles of influential mentors, prospective donors, and support groups have been introduced to the Institute’s program and vice versa.
When the Texas Startups Roadshow Came to Dallas

In early June, two buses full of out-of-state investors toured the Texas startup ecosystem over three days. The Roadshow, organized by Capital Factory and J.P. Morgan, began in Dallas with visits to Old Parkland, Neighborhood Goods, and the new GameStop Performance Center at The Star in Frisco. Present at the breakfast at Old Parkland was a delegation from UT Dallas including university President Richard Benson, who delivered remarks on the universities growing relationship with the Dallas startup ecosystem.

Among venture firms represented on the trip are Blueprint Local, Central Texas Angel Network, Chicago Ventures, Edison Partners, Geekdom Fund, Espresso Capital, ff Venture Capital, Jump Capital, Mistletoe, Moonshots Capital and many more — roughly 40 people altogether.

For video highlights of Dallas stop, please click on the link or go to: youtube.com/watch?v=kURNUSeRf3Y

Astrapi Makes $100K Pitch

During the Austin leg of the Texas Startups Roadshow, a select number of startups from around Texas were invited to deliver a pitch for Capital Factory’s $100,000 Defense Innovation Challenge.

Making the pitch for Astrapi was David Shaw, the companies co-founder and Chief Commercialization Officer.

Astrapi is an early-stage company disrupting the telecommunications industry with spiral-based signal modulation AND offices at the Venture Development Center.
You have a business idea but now what? Joining an accelerator can give you guidance, support, and even an opportunity for funding. At UT Dallas, our accelerators offer the same. The CometX accelerator is for students who have early stage business ideas.

Throughout the 8-weeks of this experiential program, students will receive individualized guidance from our resident entrepreneur and facilitator, Shaz Amin. Topics include Minimum Viable Product, Customer Discovery, Business Model Canvas, Fundraising, and more.

A similar program, GalXc, recently launched for women in spring 2019. This program is open to students, staff, faculty and alumni who are interested in exploring entrepreneurship. This program is designed to allow women to learn about entrepreneurship whether or not they have an idea for a business just yet. Leah Frazier, Founder of Think Three Media, will be the lead facilitator for Fall 2019. The curriculum has been revised to offer more hands-on workshops and deliverables this upcoming semester.

At the end of the 8-weeks, CometX and GalXc participants have an opportunity to pitch their ideas in front of a panel of experienced judges for an opportunity to win $5,000 in cash and scholarship prizes. This initial funding can be critical in helping a business get off the ground.
After taking first place at the Hedera Hashgraph hackathon in Dallas, Pablo Peillard, a computer science major and the founder of Hashing Systems, was invited to participate in the first cohort of the Helix Accelerator in Hong Kong.

Peillard said, upon returning, that the accelerator helped his team to establish a solid set of products and several opportunities for partnerships.

Hashing Systems utilizes the Hashgraph network to create distributed ledger technologies (DLTs).

**Student Entrepreneur Jets to Hong Kong for Demo Day**

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**Fifth & Cherry Debuts at Dallas Market Center**

MSIE student, Tim Reazor is expanding his company's footprint after a successful launch at the Dallas Market Center's Total Home and Gift Show. Reazor’s company, Fifth & Cherry, creates beautifully crafted cherry cutting boards using wood from his families custom cabinetry shop.

According to Reazor, the tradeshow proved to be a success after they signed nine dealers and sold 23 boards on the spot. Currently, Fifth & Cherry cutting boards are being sold in Maryland, Oklahoma, and Texas.

**Hobo Loco Receives Patent Approval**

The team behind HoboLoco, short for “hoverboard” and “locomotion” are developing a very different kind of gaming controller- one that’s controlled by your feet.

According to founder Rick Tett, the idea for the board was inspired by a family member he saw riding a hoverboard.

In early Spring, they announced their patent had been approved for their, “virtual reality locomotion device.”
Incubator Companies Announce New Milestones

R9 Technology Receives FCC Certification

In Q2, R9 Technology, an innovative provider of IoT-based services and solutions, announced they had received approval for their G200 cellular gateway and SN400 sensor node.

These two devices form the cornerstone of R9’s SAFEZONE refrigeration monitoring system which simplifies food safety management. According to John Tauch, R9’s president and co-founder, the system addresses inconsistencies found in traditional temperature logging and record-keeping.

SIINNO Technology Developing Wearable Device for the Blind

The team at SIINNO (Safety Integrated Innovation) Technology is looking to improve the quality of life for humans by creating innovative technology products.

Their signature product, MAVI, which stands for “Movement Aid for the Visually Impaired,” is a device placed on the waist that vibrates when objects are detected in front of or above a visually impaired individual. The team is currently taking pre-sale orders.

Sprinkl Nearly Complete with Beta Testing Soil Moisture Sensors

Sprinkl, one of the newest residents in the Venture Development Center, is working to develop connected products focused on the conservation of water in both residential and commercial applications. According to Ian Woodward-Smith, president at Sprinkl, the plan is to officially release their soil moisture sensor, Sense, on a large scale beginning the first week of August.

Additionally, Sprinkl has teamed up with the Center For Irrigation Technology in Fresno, California to conduct a study on both their moisture sensors (Sense) as well as their 16 zone smart controller (Control).
2019 Emerging Technologies Summit Focuses in on Gaming

In its second year, the Emerging Technologies Summit tackled another major topic in the emerging tech ecosystem: Esports and the new gaming economy.

Produced as a marquis event during 2019 Dallas Startup Week, the event was held off campus at the Mavericks Gaming Center and Capital Factory Dallas.

More than 300 participants attended from UT Dallas and the region’s startup community. President Richard Benson led off the program, with nearly 30 speakers across 8 sessions throughout the afternoon and early evening. For more information about EmTech2019, please visit: https://innovation.utdallas.edu/emtech-summit/.

Earth Entrepreneurship Forum

The University of Texas at Dallas kicked off its annual Earth Week festivities with the inaugural Earth Entrepreneurship Forum.

Organized by the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, the half-day conference was presented by the Naveen Jindal School of Management, the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and the Erik Jonsson School of Engineering and Computer Science.

In the information-packed program, speakers discussed the past, present and future of the energy sector, addressing entrepreneurial opportunities “above, on, and below” the earth. The wide variety of speakers included federal officials, university research directors, private equity and venture fund partners, founders and principals of cleantech startups, and senior managers from major corporations.