



2023 - 2024

ANNUAL REPORT

UF | Innovation Academy
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Message

from the

Director



Dear Friends of the UF Innovation Academy,

It is with immense pride and excitement that I present to you the Innovation Academy's 2023-2024 Annual Report. This year has been marked by substantial growth in our academic and co-curricular offerings, outstanding student and faculty achievements, and forward-looking initiatives that highlight our commitment to fostering an exceptional Innovation Academy.

Over the past year, our academy served more than 1,100+ students across various programs. We expanded our academic offerings to now include 29 majors, with new additions such as the Plant Science major and a Biochemistry track for Chemistry majors. Additionally, we have introduced seven new minors that our students can pursue in addition to their Innovation minor. Our faculty introduced various artificial intelligence (AI) tools into the curriculum, such as SciSpace, an AI research platform, and our home-grown NaviGator, UF's AI Large Language Model. We also integrated a self/peer evaluation system for team projects called Feedback Fruits, which enhances feedback students give and receive on their work in collaborative learning activities. These expansions reflect our ongoing dedication to providing a comprehensive and modern education.

As we turn toward the future, we are thrilled to share several new initiatives and expansions to enhance our capabilities and provide new opportunities for everyone involved in the Innovation Academy.

In December 2024, we will move to a larger space in the CSE building, strategically located in the heart of campus. This relocation will accommodate our growing team and better serve our students with some exciting new spaces. In 2025, we will launch a new business incubator to support student-led startups and entrepreneurial projects. This incubator will offer mentorship, funding opportunities, and a collaborative community to help students transform innovative ideas into viable businesses. This coming year, we will also introduce a state-of-the-art prototyping studio for students and faculty with cutting-edge tools to support design thinking, rapid prototyping, and creative exploration. Built on the success of our current program in Ireland, we will expand our study abroad opportunities to include a Senior Project course in Scotland. This program will enable students to gain global perspectives, experience different cultures, and apply their learning internationally.

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated faculty, staff, and supporters whose unwavering commitment makes all these achievements possible. Together, we are shaping a brighter, more innovative future.

Go Gators,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Citty', written over a light blue background.

Jeff Citty, Ed.D.
Director

Academic & Advising Highlights

Partnerships

San Felasco Tech City
City of Alachua
UF Marston Makerspace
Citi
Loss Prevention Research Council
Slice Engineering
ThemeWorks, Inc.
The Cade Museum for Creativity and Invention
UF Innovate

Inaugural Speaker Series Pitch Competition Award:

Champion of Innovation

Enhanced student experience by utilizing Artificial Intelligence Tools, Feedback Fruits, and working alongside Academic Advisors

Technical Assistant Consultations **2000+**

Design Thinking Projects **266**

Individual Innovations **867**

Awards & Achievements

Lucy Searcy, IA Academic Advisor: Recipient of Career Influencer Award from the UF Career Connections Center

Sierra Pollard, IA adjunct and UF IA Alumna, authored two books: Innovate Series: Design Thinking Innovate Series: Glossary: 200 Words Innovators Should Know



Amy Freeman, IA adjunct: Received an Honorable Mention at HANDCRAFTED, National Juried Exhibition, Maria V. Howard Arts Center, Rocky Mount, NC

IA Staff & Faculty attended 16+ workshops

Lucy Searcy, IA Academic Advisor, became a Certified Career Services Provider

IA staff members, became certified in Mental Health First Aid USA, from National Council for Mental Wellbeing



Advising Sessions



Increased Technical Assistant team from 4 to 7



Innovation Minor Completions



WEAR *IN* REVIEW

Fall 2023

through

Summer 2024

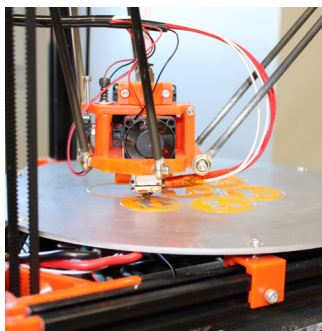
Maynooth Study Abroad ●●●●

Each fall, the Innovation Academy invites first-fall freshmen on a six-week study abroad experience in Maynooth, Ireland. From August 26 to October 7, 2023, 13 students embarked on a UF faculty-led immersion into Irish culture and innovation. Students earned six credits toward their degrees as they visited businesses such as Autodesk and PorterShed, all while forming an international mindset in their first college experience.



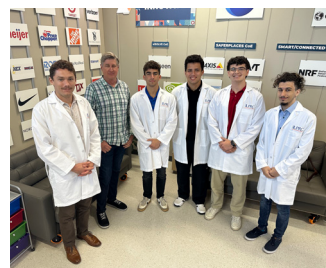
IA Open House ●●●●●●●●●●

On October 25, IA opened its doors to new and returning students to explore the IA office at our Fall Open House event. Students engaged in a fun afternoon of meeting advisors and faculty, touring the innovation classroom and winning free IA merchandise. We showcased office amenities such as the 3D printer and Pitch Studio, preparing students to begin taking their IA-exclusive courses in the spring.



IA Local Internship ●●●●●●●●

IA students have the opportunity to earn course credit while working with local businesses in the greater Gainesville area. Partners for the Fall 2023 internship included the Loss Prevention Research Council, Slice Engineering, ThemeWorks, Inc., and The Cade Museum for Creativity and Invention. Seventeen IA students participated in the internship program and worked on a wide variety of projects, from marketing in the 3D printing industry to understanding the inner workings of a local nonprofit.



LLC Move to Simpson Hall

Creativity Commons ●●●●●●●●

"Where collaboration and community collide"

The IA Living Learning Community, named "Creativity Commons", moved from Beaty Towers to Simpson Hall. Simpson Hall is a traditional style dorm that is central to campus, promotes more community centered living, and is close to many conveniences and campus amenities. IA students participated in events that included a warm welcome from the IA team, an IA Advising session, and local tours of the Gator Hatchery, the UF Career Connections Center, and the UF Incubation Hub.



Launch into IA ●●●●●●●●●●

Incoming students were invited to the University Auditorium for the Innovation Academy's signature convocation event, Launch into IA. Students were greeted by keynote speaker Brian Kornfeld, CEO and founder of MaxU and co-founder of Synapse, who shared the "maze" of his career and reminded students that "through all kinds of weather, we'll all innovate together." As a UF alumnus, Mr. Kornfeld offered a unique perspective on his transition from college life to innovative success. Additionally, Abigail Nedved, an IA student and Advertising major, presented the Sophomore Message reflecting on her time studying abroad in Maynooth and encouraging our freshmen to take advantage of their Innovation Academy experience.



Gator Giving Day ●●●●●●●●●●

Gator Giving Day is a one-day fundraising event for the University of Florida, providing the opportunity for the Gator Nation to stand up and holler across the globe! Many donors shouted their support by giving a grand total of \$111,542 to the Innovation Academy, the largest sum IA has ever received. The Innovation Academy plans to use the funds to equip a new prototyping lab, business incubator, and future student programming and engagement opportunities. Thank you, to all our donors, for your continued generous support!



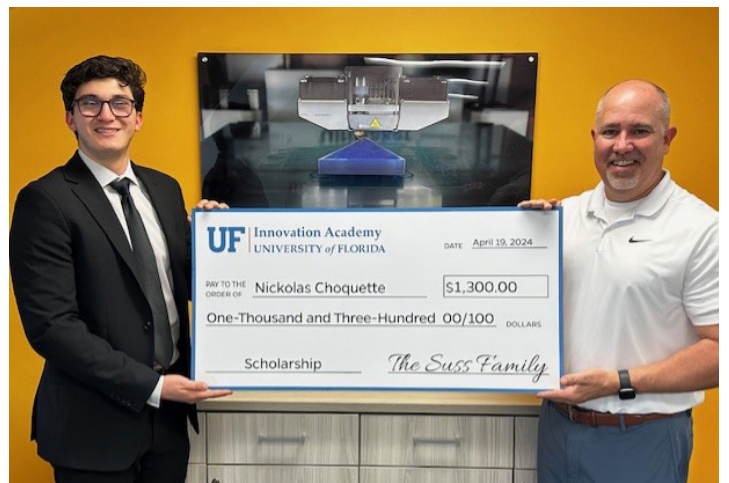
Speaker Series ●●●●●●●●●●

Twice students enrolled in IDS1940, Creativity & Design Thinking for Innovation, gathered in Norman Hall for our Spring Speaker Series. Cox Enterprises presented on human-centered design, and Slice Engineering led the Pitch Competition. Using the innovation and technical skills taught in class, five student teams pitched solutions to the potential use of 3D printing in underutilized industries to a panel of judges from Slice Engineering, PS27 Ventures and Eufinity. Judges provided professional insight into the creativity and effectiveness of their solutions, with team "Nailed It!" winning the pitch competition for their proposal to integrate 3D printing in the salon industry.



Suss Scholarship ●●●●●●●●●●

The winner for the 2024 Suss Scholarship went to Nicholas Choquette, a Finance major. He was awarded a generous \$1,300 from the Suss family. The Suss Family Endowment was established to support scholarships for students in the Innovation Academy who are pursuing a degree from either the Warrington College of Business or the College of Journalism and Communications. We are forever thankful for the continued generosity and support from the Suss family!



Senior Showcase

IA students in the spring IA Senior Project course partnered with San Felasco Tech City (SFTC) and the city of Alachua, FL, to improve the visibility and overall appeal of Tech Town to visitors. Students toured the SFTC property and the surrounding area, then implemented their design thinking and ideation skills to

provide possible solutions. Top Innovators were selected by a team of judges at the end of the semester. Ten teams from the summer IA Senior Project course presented their ideas on improving retail security to the Loss Prevention Research Council. Congratulations to the summer Top Innovators!



Harmony Highway:

Ethan Gaer, Shira Isaak, Spencer Linkhorst, Teo Resnik, Andrew Osinoff, Maria Horey



The Orange:

Drew Liebman, Kate Pilgrim, Madelyn Cable, Haley Nisonson, Sarah Silverberg, Jordan Mann



Connectech Skyway:

Dahlia Abousaouira, Averie Brock, Kailey Carmany, Luis Lageyre, Liana Ramirez, Brooke Sard



Guardians of Security:

Javier Ceron, Holly Manalansan, Christian Graham, Valarie Merchan Mendoza, Isabella Rodriguez

SUMMIT

We celebrate Innovation Academy graduates every spring and summer for their commitment to serving the global community with their innovative spirit. Summit is the Innovation Academy Award Ceremony where eligible IA graduates receive their Innovation Medallion and celebrate with their graduating class. IA Alumna, Maria Dozier, class of 2021, was the keynote speaker

for the Spring 2024 ceremony and shared how her experience as an IA student shaped her future as a climate adaptation practitioner. IA Alumna, Danielle Shu, class of 2017, was the keynote speaker for the Summer 2024 ceremony. She encouraged IA students that IA has equipped them to navigate any “T-Rex sized” problems and “life always finds a way.”



IA Scholar
Mickayla Pendlebury



Emerging Innovator
James Moncrieff



Emerging Leader
Sazzad Mabud



Director's Award
Dahlia Abousaouira



IA Scholar
Aracelly Valdes



Emerging Innovator
Lakshay Goyal



Emerging Leader
Caitlyn Helm



Director's Award
Jonah Treiber

Catalyst is our summer showcase that serves as a launching point that inspires students to move their ideas forward beyond the classroom and apply their innovative solutions to the communities they live in even after the course ends. We hold one at the end of Summer A and one at the end of Summer B every year. This year Catalyst was sponsored by Citi, a financial services holding company. First year IA students were challenged to provide solutions to the following question,

“How might Citi Tampa implement innovative benefit programs that actively involve at least 75% of its population in wellness activities and initiatives promoting healthy behaviors?”

Judges evaluated the prototypes and presented awards for different categories. Attendees and judges were given

IA Bucks to invest in the exceptional prototypes that captivated their interest. Jamie Kraft, Director of the UF Entrepreneurship and Innovation Center, shared an inspiring message while the judges deliberated award winners. Recipients of the Judge’s Choice Award also received a gift bag of merchandise donated from Citi.

Judges who generously volunteered their time included: Walt Adams, Jason Roth, Aashi Faldu (UF IA Alumna), Kelly Layman, Samantha Evans, Debbie Lee, Christine Caven, Mallory Rubek, Dr. David Cheney, and Dr. Jason Mastrogiovanni.

Representatives from Citi included: Danna Regnier (UF IA Alumna), Senior Vice President for Enterprise Risk Management, and Lauren Birch, Assistant Vice President for University Relations, Workforce Intelligence and Talent Acquisition.



Special Thanks

Our accomplishments this year would not have been possible without the generous support of our partners, and all of the innovation academy students and their families.

Dr. Kent Fuchs
Interim President

Dr. Angela Lindner
*Vice Provost, Undergraduate
Affairs*

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UF Division of Enrollment
Management
UF Department of Housing and
Residence Education
UF Division of Student Life
UF Counseling and Wellness Center
UF Foundation
UF Advancement
UF International Center
UF Office of Technology Licensing
UF Innovate

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*Interim Associate Provost,
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Dr. Mary Parker
*Vice President, Enrollment Management
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College of Design, Construction and Planning
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Warrington College of Business
San Felasco Tech City
Loss Prevention Research Council
IA Curriculum and Advisory Committees
Cox Enterprises
Slice Engineering
Cade Museum for Creativity and Invention
Citi Tampa
Scad Media
Themeworks, Inc.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON GIVING TO IA

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