FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Alon Gorodetsky

Gorodetsky’s infrared technology makes a splash in the scientific community and beyond.
Challenge from Richard

Southern California is a special place for entrepreneurs and innovation. Many come here seeking their dreams and find themselves settled in Orange County, working to change lives across the world.

UCI Applied Innovation @ the Cove is doing our part to not only position Orange County as a globally recognized leader in scalable innovation, but to also help entrepreneurs and innovators build their own American dream. At Applied Innovation, we have provided a platform where planned meetings and accidental collisions turn into valuable connections that, I feel, will beneficially impact both the regional economy and humankind.

My vision for Applied Innovation is to identify solutions to the struggles I faced as an entrepreneur. When I was a young entrepreneur, I quickly discovered the issues numerous entrepreneurs face and the long, arduous journey that can be filled with many failures and successes. At age 24, as a bootstrap entrepreneur, I founded a computer consulting company with $250. After 17 years, I ended up selling to a multibillion-dollar firm. However, as with any startup, we encountered challenges and struggles – from hiring and firing, to expanding too quickly, to working seven days a week and missing out on family and friends – as they say: the struggle is real. But so is passion.

Applied Innovation and the Cove @ UCI were built to fuel that passion and to help provide entrepreneurs with as many resources as possible with one simple goal in mind: to give back to the community.

From more than 700 events featured at our work and presentation space known as the Cove, to access to programs like the Small Business Development Center that serves both UCI and the community, Applied Innovation provides any aspiring entrepreneur with the ability to build from their ideas.

Through our newly launched publication, I hope you will find more details through stories about these resources and successes, as well as ways to get involved at the Cove. Take advantage of all Applied Innovation and the Cove have to offer and help make an impact on the Orange County community and beyond.

The American dream is alive and thriving at Applied Innovation and you can become a part of it. I challenge you to inspire, mentor or be the resource that propels a startup to the next level. Help us build the best damn entrepreneurial ecosystem in the world in Orange County.

By supporting Applied Innovation, you are helping others build their own dreams into realities.

– Richard Sudik, Ph.D.  
Chief Innovation Officer and Executive Director
I’M CONVINCED THAT ABOUT HALF OF WHAT SEPARATES THE SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURS FROM THE NON-SUCCESSFUL ONES IS PURE PERSEVERANCE.”

– Steve Jobs
Switzerland’s University of St. Gallen Attends Weeklong Course on Entrepreneurship / July 2018

For one week in July, 15 MBA students from Switzerland’s University of St. Gallen were at the Cove @ UCI to learn more about entrepreneurship in a program hosted by UCI’s Paul Merage School of Business.

Lunch & Learn, John Yoon / August 2018

John Yun, head of strategy and marketing for Cypher, enthusiastically talks about the importance of branding and marketing, in addition to pitching mistakes for startup companies, during UCI Applied Innovation’s August 2018 Lunch & Learn event.

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) celebrated the grand opening of its latest technology-focused center at UCI Applied Innovation with a presentation and ribbon cutting ceremony at the Cove @ UCI.

The UK Invades the Cove @ UCI / October 2018

Life science companies from the U.K. made their way to UCI for the Greater Irvine Chamber’s 2018 Life Science Showcase event at the Cove @ UCI.

How a $1,000 Personal Check Turned Into a Company with a Multibillion-Dollar Valuation / November 2018

The Angel Capital Association held a three-day conference at the Cove @ UCI, which featured a fireside chat with TAE Technologies’ CEO, Michl Binderbauer and Harry Hamlin, Hollywood actor and one of the company’s earliest investors, and Richard Sudek, Applied Innovation’s chief innovation officer and executive director.

The Cove @ UCI is host to more than 700 events per year in support of innovation, entrepreneurship, industry and the community. Take part! Check out and register for upcoming events: innovation.uci.edu/events
A Little Goes a Long Way with the Student Startup Fund

Students can receive up to $1,000 in micro-grants.

When it comes to getting a startup company off the ground, finding initial funding resources can be challenging. UCI Applied Innovation’s Student Startup Fund provides micro-grants to students and alumni to help student startup companies bridge their funding gaps to further their startup journeys.

Prior to seeking larger investments, startup teams might refer to friends and family to kick-start their journey. However these investments are not always possible.

“The Student Startup Fund helps fulfill the mission and vision of UCI Applied Innovation by ensuring the key segments of the people we serve have the resources they need to successfully pursue their entrepreneurial ventures,” said Hayley Young, assistant director of the New Venture Group at Applied Innovation.

Micro-grants can be as little as $100 and range up to $1,000 and can be used for a variety of items such as prototyping materials and project supplies and are meant for immediate or short-term use.

Applicants must be a current UCI student or have graduated UCI within the last 12 months and be involved with entrepreneurship programs, events or centers on campus, such as the campuswide New Venture Competition.

Bien Gutierrez, a senior biomedical engineering student, received $800 from the Student Startup Fund to attend Texas Christian University’s 2018 Values and Ventures Competition. There, he pitched his startup HUMBLE Technologies, a design for an improved syringe that increases convenience and decreases patient risk.

“Initially, we had taken it upon ourselves to pay for the competition and kind of accepted that cost as part of our training,” said Gutierrez, HUMBLE Technologies co-founder and CEO. “But, because of the Student Startup Fund, we were able to use that money for travel to this competition.”

In addition to gathering more experience and networking with peers during the competition, the HUMBLE Technologies team received second place and $750 in the Elevator Pitch category.

“Everyone worked really hard for this funding,” said Gutierrez. “We believe that it was a very crucial resource for us at this stage.”

Applications to the Student Startup Fund are now open and are accepted on a rolling basis. Apply online: innovation.uci.edu/programs/studentstartupfund

The HUMBLE Technologies team used the Student Startup Fund to attend Texas Christian University’s 2018 Values and Ventures Competition.

Available Technologies

Coming Down the Pipeline

Some of UCI’s top available technologies curated by UCI Applied Innovation’s Invention Transfer Group

The Invention Transfer Group manages over 1,000 inventions from UCI researchers spanning the areas of engineering, medicine and life sciences, physical sciences, communications and computer sciences. These innovative technologies are patent pending and available for licensing.

WIDEBAND DISTRIBUTED MIXERS

Tech ID #: 29886

A simple, novel ultra-wideband distributed complementary metal-oxide-semiconductor mixer, which incorporates on-chip distributed transmission line. A wideband distributed mixer is capable of operation over a wide range of frequencies, and can carry large amounts data up to 250 feet, which makes it attractive for military and law-enforcement use.

Payam Heydari, Ph.D. / Henry Samueli School of Engineering

DECENTRALIZED CHARGING PROTOCOL FOR PLUG-IN ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Tech ID #: 29884

Plug-in vehicles (PEVs) have drawn interest from government, automakers, and the public due to potential for reduced environmental impact. UCI researchers have developed a decentralized charging protocol for PEVs that results in improved stability in power grid demand.

Scott Samuelson, Ph.D. / Henry Samuel School of Engineering

HANDHELD BLOOD-FLOW IMAGING DEVICE

Tech ID #: 29397

The invention is a medical handheld device that carries out skin visual inspection simultaneously with blood flow measurements through integrating a Laser Speckle Imaging (LSI) system within a handheld compact device. Combining both features in one compact, cheap and easy to use device will generate accurate and elaborative functional data that will improve the accuracy and detection of diseases such as cancer.

Bernard Choi, Ph.D. / Henry Samuel School of Engineering

ULTRA-DURABLE CONCRETE WITH SELF-SENSING PROPERTIES

Tech ID #: 29494

Concrete is a major material component for transportation, energy, water, and building infrastructure systems. UCI researchers have developed a new class of concrete materials with extraordinarily high damage tolerance and improved properties for long-term health monitoring.

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These innovative technologies are patent pending and available for licensing.
There are so many variables in a startup and so much information being thrown at you ... to be able to put a team in a room and give them a way to think about all of that and understand what their priorities should be is just very enjoyable,” Halliwell said.

Halliwell came to Applied Innovation two years ago and has mentored UCI startups, led workshops and has an active role in the Tech Surge competition and the Wayfinder admissions process. One of the recent startups she has worked with is FirstStep Diagnostics, a UCI startup that developed a way to detect autism in early stages of human development. FirstStep won the 2018 Tech Surge track, sponsored by Applied Innovation, in the Paul Merage School of Business' New Venture Competition and placed second in the New Venture Competition's Life Sciences category.

As the team’s EiR, Halliwell encouraged them to focus on the value of their product rather than their competitors. Hayley Young, assistant director, New Venture Group, originally matched Halliwell with FirstStep.

“It was a combination of the promise of the technology and the strength of the team,” said Young. “I thought that would be a good complement for the skill set and experience that she brought.”

Halliwell enjoys working closely with startup companies, but she also offers advice to any startup who needs it – even if they’ve only met once or twice. Halliwell says that all startups can be flexible in their business models and can skillfully decide how their innovation diffuses into the marketplace – which involves selecting the right first customer.

“Typically, if you choose your first customer correctly, that single customer can make up the vast majority of your growth and your revenue,” Halliwell said.

Halliwell is available by appointment through email at cwhalliwell@gmail.com.
A not-so-long time ago, at a campus not-so-far away, Alon Gorodetsky, UCI associate professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering, developed materials that have the ability to revolutionize infrared camouflage and thermal management. Simply put, Gorodetsky has developed adaptive infrared reflecting materials, or materials that change and adapt how they reflect infrared radiation and heat for a specific purpose. These materials draw inspiration from the structures of color-changing cells and organs found in squid skin. But it wasn’t always about adaptive materials and squids. Gorodetsky originally focused his research on organic electronic materials for biosensors and solar cells, but quickly pivoted his career in 2011 to study adaptive materials inspired by the skin of cephalopods, like the common pencil squid. After walking into a talk given by Roger Hanlon, senior scientist at the Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory, Gorodetsky became fascinated by the ability of cephalopods, or predatory mollusks such as octopus, cuttlefish or squid, to change their color, shape and texture. The rest is not-so-distant history.

“It just blew me away, it was like seeing something out of a science fiction movie,” said Gorodetsky. “Basically I threw [out] half the work I was planning on doing and said ‘okay, let’s work on this instead.’”

HOW IT WORKS

The materials mimic a cephalopod’s complex skin structure or their camouflage ability. The skin of many cephalopods contains different color-changing components, including cells called leucophores and iridophores, as well as organs called chromatophores, which work together to help the animal change color and camouflage itself in different surrounding environments.

According to current understanding, leucophores reflect light to provide a white diffusive background. Iridophores reflect light of different wavelengths and are iridescent. Chromatophores are muscle-controlled organs that expand and contract in size – behaving like spectral filters. These cells and organs allow cephalopods to not only camouflage themselves, but also to communicate with other animals.

“Cephalopod skin is like this amazing bioelectronic display, that’s how I think about it,” said Gorodetsky. “The skin kind of has the complexity and patterning abilities similar to, let’s say, an advanced LCD screen, when it changes color, and then it can also change shape – with some limitations. It’s really a remarkable system.”

CEPH•A•LO•POD / noun
preatory mollusks such as octopus, cuttlefish or squid

GORODETSKY’S INFRARED TECHNOLOGY MAKES A SPLASH IN THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY AND BEYOND.

Alon
FACULTY SPOTLIGHT
Gorodetsky

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

CHROMATOPHORES
IRIDOPHORES
LEUCOPHORES

Diagram of Cephalopod Skin:

Cuttlefish, a type of cephalopod, are masters of disguise and can change their skin color rapidly to evade predators.

GORODETSKY’S INFRARED TECHNOLOGY MAKES A SPLASH IN THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY AND BEYOND.
and translates them to develop artificial thermal management materials that have new cephalopod-like functionalities. "Alon is very passionate and enthusiastic about his team and his research," said Chengyi Xu, a materials science and engineering graduate student. "I want to see this research translate into something on the market, something we can use. Everything we do in this lab, we can see and touch it. I think it would be great to see what we are doing now used in some application in the real world." 

WHERE IT CAN BE USED

A key aspect and one application of Gorodetsky's adaptive infrared reflecting materials is controlling where heat goes. "For infrared, there's the kind of deception aspect ... fooling infrared cameras," said Gorodetsky. "But there's also a lot of places in life where adaptively controlling infrared radiation, or changing how it is transmitted or reflected by objects, would be a huge advantage." If the technology is integrated into textiles, the wearer could control how the clothing reflects infrared radiation to keep them warm or cool on demand. The technology can also be applied to shipping containers for perishable items, giving the shipping company the ability to control the local thermal environment in the container to prevent food from spoiling.

COMMERCIALIZATION

In 2013, Gorodetsky met with Doug Crawford, UCI Applied Innovation's senior licensing officer, who helped Gorodetsky get started on the filing process for several patents and, subsequently, introduced Gorodetsky to Applied Innovation's entrepreneurial resources. "One of the things that makes working with Alon so enjoyable is that he understands the power of telling a story and how his technology relates to the everyday world," said Crawford. "Alon makes things more accessible to any audience ... by putting it in terms that make sense and how what he's doing can potentially intersect your life or the lives of people you might know."

Gorodetsky's research has primarily received funding from the defense advanced research projects agency. He has previously worked with more biological materials. Within the Gorodetsky Lab are more than 15 researchers, all with diverse backgrounds that range from materials science and engineering to molecular biology. Gorodetsky aims to move his lab's focus toward working with more biological systems to gather a different perspective. "If you can understand the animal's skin better, you can do more interesting things with applications," said Gorodetsky. "So far, we've just studied only certain parts of the system at the molecular level, selectively the proteins found in some of the skin cells." The research team also plans to continue development of practical applications for energy management to configure a material focused on providing people with the ability to control their local temperature and use less energy for heating ventilation and air conditioning.

"Once we get over some manufacturing hurdles, I think we could have a practical technology from an energy management perspective, something that could help people control their local temperature, which would let you use less energy for heating ventilation and air conditioning" said Gorodetsky. "It happens to be a very important global problem ... that's where technologies like the things we're developing could be impactful and useful."

GOALS

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Despite his technology's many applications, Gorodetsky's laboratory has primarily focused on clothing or personal thermal management. He has previously received a joint grant with Under Armour through ARPA-E to develop wearable materials and is currently exploring extensions of this work. According to Gorodetsky's research publication "Adaptive Infrared-Reflecting Systems Inspired by Cephalopods" featured in Science, different variants of these materials can be developed for wearable applications and can adapt themselves like squid skin.

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For more information about Gorodetsky's research and lab, visit gorodetskygroup.org.///
InSolar
LIGHTENING THE LOAD OF SOLAR COSTS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSUMERS

THE COMPANY’S TRANSPARENCY HELPS CUSTOMERS SAVE MORE THAN 50 PERCENT

Within UCI Applied Innovation’s open-spaced ecosystem, passersby might notice a tall man with a thick, dark beard proudly talking a mix of business jargon and motivational speak to his army of interns throughout the Cove’s shared workspace. Or he might be excitedly spouting off his next big idea, drawing charts and graphs on various unsuspecting whiteboards for fellow startup teams and Cove tenants – in sandals and boardshorts, of course. This man is Ali Sina, CEO of startup InSolar, a company that connects solar shoppers with high-quality solar panels, installers and lenders for up to 50 percent below market price. For the past 13 years, the passionate entrepreneur has had many interests, but landed specifically on renewable energy.

“With InSolar, you are getting 320 Watt LG or Sunpower panels with Enphase Microinverters, wrap-around skirt, Pegasus Mounting, monitoring, warranties … the whole nine,” said Sina. “The goal is if someone has the intention of going green, then it should be as simple as pushing the start button on your car. It’s not a big decision, it’s just a small decision.”

Sixty percent of solar power is produced by a small number of very large projects owned by power companies, according to a 2018 PBS news article. “The state of the U.S. solar industry: 5 questions answered.” The remaining projects are primarily small-scale, like rooftop installations. California currently occupies nearly half of all U.S. solar electricity generating capacity.

Cardenas and Sina emphasize the solar industry’s lack of transparency – where customers will often incur “soft cost”-style fees, or fees associated with pre- and post-construction expenses – with most solar installation companies. These fees are often geared toward a company’s marketing and sales efforts, however InSolar does not include marketing and sales costs in their business model.

With InSolar, the team aims to streamline the solar purchase procedure by helping consumers find and vet solar installers while offering complete transparency with pricing and process. Sina cites that solar prices have plummeted 70 percent since 2010, but soft costs have increased as sales and marketing account for 67 percent of the total cost of a solar installation.

InSolar joined UCI Applied Innovation’s Wayfinder* program in September 2017 where the team has utilized the shared workspace and networking opportunities. Already up and semi-running, InSolar has two revenue streams. These include their affiliated partnerships with sales staff and their recently relaunched website.

“The website is more like a self-serve for consumers who want more information about solar,” said Sergio Cardenas, InSolar chief technical officer. “We are in the early phases and, based on what we are learning about our customers, will apply our proprietary technology to our customer base.”

InSolar says soft costs are an increasing pain point in a growing market – a point that InSolar continues to address. As opposed to the standard homeowner average of a nine-year payback for solar panels, Sina cites his company decreases the payback period to three-to-four years.

“This idea was in my head for three years,” said Sina. “At some point, I just said I’m going to do it because nobody else is doing it. By eliminating those extra costs, it’s a no-brainer.”

In September 2018, InSolar applied for The Department of Energy’s American-Made Solar Prize, a $3 million prize competition designed to revitalize U.S. solar manufacturing through a series of contests and rapid development of innovative solar solutions. And, while they wait to hear from the Department of Energy, they plan to continue to grow their client base and make the company a profitable business while expanding staff.

“As an entrepreneur, if you have a fantastic idea, you’ve got to be really multifaceted, creative … you’ve got to figure things out, you’ve got to be tough skinned,” said Sina. “You’ve got to understand that it’s a very long game. Sit tight, nothing comes fast.”

For more information on InSolar, visit getinsolar.com. For a fact sheet on the solar industry, visit energy.gov/solar.
9 Things You Need to Know About Intellectual Property

Who pays for the patent and how much does it cost?
If Applied Innovation determines that an invention is both patentable and has commercial value, UCI will pay an outside patent attorney to apply for a patent on UCI’s behalf. An issued United States patent can cost as much as $25,000-$35,000 or more. Once the invention is licensed to a startup or company, Applied Innovation will seek reimbursement of these costs from that licensee.

Patents help the development of early-stage technologies.
A strong, enforceable patent can be an incentive for a commercial entity to invest in and further develop university IP into commercial products. Without the patent exclusivity, a company looking to develop an early-stage technology may have a hard time recouping its costs. Therefore, a great idea created at the university runs the risk of never making it to the public.

How do I benefit from disclosing an invention?
If your invention is commercialized, any revenues from fees and royalties – minus Applied Innovation’s costs of pursuing a patent – are shared with the inventors. Under current UCI policy, inventors receive 35 percent of any revenues, the inventor’s academic department or research unit receives 15 percent, and the remainder goes to the university to support university research and education programs. Also, if an invention is licensed to a startup or existing company, the inventors may benefit from an alliance with the company, such as industry sponsored research, where the licensee funds a mutually agreed upon research project at the university.

You can still conduct research after your patent is licensed to a third party.
The licenses drawn up between UCI and third parties typically ensure that inventors can continue to work on their research that the patent is based on.

If you have an idea, contact UCI Applied Innovation.
If you feel you have discovered a unique technology that could have a commercial value and application, contact Applied Innovation as soon as possible. If the appropriate protections are not in place before publicly disclosing your idea (presentation, publication, etc.), patent rights might be forfeited by law. It is possible to both file a patent and publicly disclose your technology, if done in an appropriate manner.

What is invention transfer?
Invention Transfer is part of Applied Innovation and fosters alliances between UCI and outside parties interested in the university’s IP; protects UCI’s IP, which are primarily patentable inventions and copyrightable software; and commercializes UCI’s IP for public benefit by licensing it to startup and existing companies.

What is a patent?
A patent is a federally given property right that provides the owner of an invention the right to prevent others from making, using, selling or offering it for sale. This right expires approximately 20 years from the date the invention was filed, assuming the patent is allowed to issue.

What constitutes a patented invention?
An invention is a unique and non-obvious discovery – usually an improvement upon an existing idea – that is generally categorized as a composition of matter, method of doing something (i.e., treating a disease, manufacturing a compound, etc.), product or device.

How long does it take to get a patent?
It takes on average about three years for a patent application to be allowed to issue, if at all, which may commonly include an initial rejection or challenge by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office followed by a counter to the decision by the applicant and inventors with help from UCI’s outside patent counsel.

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For questions, clarification and guidance or to find out more information on intellectual property, patents and licenses, visit invention.uci.edu

The content of this article is not legal advice nor should the information within be used as guidance.
What is your favorite part about working here?

I love seeing all the creative things that our team works on. The creative energy in the office is so inspiring.

What is the last book you read?

Silly enough, it was “Pete the Cat,” the one about Halloween. I read it to my seven-year-old son last night.

What is a secret hobby?

I just started getting back into triathlons. I did one a while back and stopped after my son was born. I do swimming, biking and running. I do the smaller triathlons; swimming is around 750 meters or just stopped after my son was born. I do swimming, biking and running.

If you could pick up a new skill in an instant, what would it be?

I would love to learn graphic design or design in general because just seeing what they produce is pretty amazing.
For more than 30 years, I have had the opportunity to be an entrepreneur, investor and educator. As an investor, I have screened over 1,000 entrepreneur pitches and one of the main qualities I look for in an entrepreneur is passion.

An entrepreneur’s passion is contagious. It helps propel people through challenges, inspires others and can make the difference between success and failure for many entrepreneurs and startup companies.

In 2010, I helped create a research study team where we looked at the importance of passion in the investing process. In the first phase of the study, we asked 150 angel investors nationwide for their definitions and perceptions of passion. We also asked if an entrepreneur’s passion is important in their investment decision. The results were a resounding “yes, it is important” and their definitions of entrepreneurial passion could be categorized into three main classifications:

Is this all that matters? No, angel investors made it clear that the entrepreneur has to have a unique business idea. The surveyed investors made comments like: “No amount of passion can make a pig fly,” or “Passion is just one part of the equation: skill, knowledge and intelligence … also matter.”

Deep-rooted passion is intrinsic and pervasive at an emotional, behavioral and cognitive level. If you don’t feel this level of passion for your venture, you should keep looking for the opportunity that you feel deep in your gut. You will need this passion to push you through the tough times of your startup. This level of passion will exude from within, help keep you committed and prepared, and also inspire. Passion matters to investors! 

1. **Displayed Affective Passion**
   Includes the outward enthusiasm and excitement the entrepreneur displays when pitching to investors.

2. **Displayed Cognitive Passion**
   The preparedness the entrepreneur shows and their knowledge on their particular industry. Have they put in the time and research to learn everything they can about their competitors and customers?

3. **Commitment Passion**
   The amount of time and money the entrepreneur has invested in their passion. For this category, the entrepreneur is doing everything they can to win, such as displaying persistence and taking risks. Are they all in? Did they quit their job, mortgaged their home to start the company?

Is this all that matters? No, angel investors made it clear that the entrepreneur has to have a unique business idea. The surveyed investors made comments like: “No amount of passion can make a pig fly,” or “Passion is just one part of the equation: skill, knowledge and intelligence … also matter.” Deep-rooted passion is intrinsic and pervasive at an emotional, behavioral and cognitive level. If you don’t feel this level of passion for your venture, you should keep looking for the opportunity that you feel deep in your gut.
UCI Applied Innovation is a dynamic, innovative central platform for the UCI campus, entrepreneurs, inventors, the business community and investors to collaborate and move UCI research from lab to market.