Aimee Edinger Starves Cancer Cells to Death

The UCI professor's lab uses novel techniques to destroy cancer cells by targeting their metabolism.
“GROWTH AND COMFORT DO NOT CO-EXIST.”
— Ginni Rometty, IBM CEO

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Past Tides

UC Irvine Beall Applied Innovation celebrates its official grand opening and five-year celebration at the Cove @ UCI with more than 600 guests in attendance, a record-breaking number for the Cove’s five-year history.

From left: UCI Beall Applied Innovation Founding Board Member and Founding Board Chair Don Beall, Peter the Anteater, UCI Chancellor Howard Gillman, CEO of NOWA Innovations Nassam Chokri; Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Enrique Lavernia, UCI Beall Applied Innovation Executive Director and UCI Chief Innovation Officer Richard Sudek.
Chancellor’s Distinguished Speaker Series / January 2020

Yonatan Winetraub, co-founder of Spacelil, a nonprofit organization formed with the aim of landing the first Israeli spacecraft on the moon, talks about inspiring the next generation of scientists during the Chancellor’s Distinguished Speaker Series event at the Cove.

Longtime UCI Employee Kevin Kennan Starts Retirement Journey / February 2020

Kevin Kennan, J.D., director of Intellectual Property Administration and Industry Sponsored Research, is retiring after 20 years at UC Irvine.

Kennan has been in his current leadership role ever since the tech transfer department transitioned to UCI Beall Applied Innovation. In his position at Applied Innovation, Kennan has helped facilitate an increasing number of interactions with industry, as well as engaged with and provided guidance to inventors and entrepreneurs at UCI. During Kennan’s tenure, the number of industry sponsored agreements as well as the total dollar amount of industry sponsored research has increased every year.

“What I’ve enjoyed about [Applied Innovation] is having the freedom and the autonomy to develop a culture that is responsive and supportive of BA’s goals of industry engagement and supporting innovation and entrepreneurship,” said Kennan.

Kennan received his bachelor’s degree in biochemistry from University of Wisconsin, Madison and began a professional career at the McArthur Laboratory for Cancer Research. He later earned a law degree from University of Wisconsin, Madison and pursued dual masters in architecture and urban planning at University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.

During retirement, Kennan will spend time traveling, getting involved with affordable housing groups in Orange County and follow his love of architecture by completing his new house.

Coming Down the Pipeline

SOME OF UCI’S TOP AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGIES CURATED BY UCI BEALL APPLIED INNOVATION’S RESEARCH TRANSLATION GROUP

The Research Translation 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 available for licensing.

Tech ID #: 30637

NONINVASIVE METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PERIPHERAL ASSESSMENT OF VASCULAR HEALTH

UCI researchers introduced a medical device which noninvasively and accurately monitors vascular health metrics such as endothelial function, arterial stiffness and blood pressure. The technology uses a small heating/cooling component placed on a human digit. Vascular health measurement from this device is inexpensive, more holistic and more accurate than current approaches.

Bernard Choi, Ph.D. / Beckman Laser Institute

Tech ID #: 32569

SLEEP APNEA DEVICE WITH BALL VALVE DESIGN

The invention is a compact nasal device for people suffering from sleep apnea, snoring and other sleep disorders. The invention secures the flow of air through the patient’s nasal passage without the need for uncomfortable, bulky masks or bedside devices, making it a convenient and sustainable treatment method.

Eliezer Nussbaum, M.D. / School of Medicine

Tech ID #: 30642

HEART ASSIST DEVICE FOR PATIENTS

Researchers at UCI have developed a cardiac assist device for patients with failing heart functions. The device expands and contracts the heart with the help of a pacemaker to help restore natural heart pace and blood flow.

Arash Kheradvar, Ph.D. / Henry Samueli School of Engineering
THE PROBLEM

While observing some of the furthest galaxies in the sky using the Keck telescope in Hawaii, Hemmati and Nayyeri thought there should be better ways of accessing the latest research and communicating results within the scientific community.

“There are many issues in today’s science,” said Hemmati. “Networking has become an essential key to success in almost any field of science. With the huge number of scientific papers/proposals coming out every day, advertising is needed for the work to be seen, let alone getting any feedback from the community.”

According to Hemmati, the science community favors extroverts, while researchers who are younger with less confidence face a lot of difficulty. Additionally, Hemmati adds, some practices, such as sharing a scientific paper with a journal, still exist.

UREKA! THE SOLUTION

Co-founded in January 2018, Ureka Science, Inc. is an app and website that focuses on an “open science” platform that aims to become the go-to resource for researchers and scientists who can discover the latest research in their fields, post their own research and receive feedback, as well as connect with one another to collaborate.

The startup was named after a famous word shouted by ancient Greek mathematician and inventor Archimedes, who in 265 B.C., was tasked with determining whether or not the king’s crown was made of solid gold. It is reported that Archimedes made the discovery while bathing with the crown and was so excited that he jumped from the bath and ran through the streets of Syracuse shouting “Eureka!” – Greek for “I’ve found it!” – too excited to realize he was naked.

“Many different tools that scientists need and you can find most of them in different platforms, but there was no single platform to answer all of the needs of scientists,” said Hemmati, Ureka Science co-founder and CEO.

What the scientific community lacks in information sharing, Ureka Science aims to provide free of charge. Now there is a single network hub for them to connect.

“When there is a new scientific discovery, on conventional social media platforms, there could be 100 different conversations going on at the same time about the same subject and your interested reader doesn’t know which one to follow,” said Nayyeri, Ureka Science co-founder. “We designed Ureka to have all of that discussion in a centralized location by experts of each field that is easily searchable by other users.”

Once in the app, the user is presented with 10 branches of science that can range from astronomy, computer science, biology and more. Each channel is updated daily with all the science postings from arXiv.com, a free preprint archive. In addition, each channel contains posts from the verified scientists. Users of the app can choose to follow channels or other scientists to fill their newsfeed with the research they desire.

The Ureka app lets the user search within scientific literature, the latest trends – based on user interaction – as well as browse a paper suggestion system, and contains a bookmarked library for future readings. The app also allows the user to read announcements about upcoming conferences and deadlines.

[Text by: Jackie Connor / Photos by: Rthuras Cevallos]
FINDING THEIR WAY

The team joined UCI Beall Applied Innovation's Wayfinder incubator* in January 2018 and continues to advance through the program. They have found value in workshops and training programs, such as the Wayfinder bootcamps, which offer UC startup companies the opportunity to connect with each other and leverage the collective wisdom of the community.

“You get the opportunity to meet and talk to a lot of people within Applied Innovation or other people who come through here,” said Nayyeri. “It seems to be a startup hub for Southern California.”

In addition to networking and the Wayfinder program’s workshops, the Ureka Science team found the Wayfinder showcase events to be particularly helpful for interaction and getting the word about their startup out into the community.

“We bumped into a lot of people there that led to some discussions about potential investment,” said Nayyeri. “People showed a lot of interest in the Ureka pitch from that event.”

The trio of co-founders, which includes Asantha Cooray, Ph.D., UCI professor of physics and astronomy, launched their idea into a startup using seed round funding and are now looking for Series A funds. Additionally, within the Cove @ UCI*, the team aims to gather more users and become a main hub for scientific discussion with a new added possibility of having a live cast of conferences for people who cannot attend.

“Open science for all! Ureka Science, Inc. aims to make scientific research available worldwide and will serve as a platform for anyone who wants to access scientific papers and journals as well as network with other scientists.

“IN THE U.S., IT’S EASIER TO ACCESS SCIENCE IN GENERAL, BUT FOR EVERYONE ELSE IN THE WORLD, IT’S NOT EASY.”

– Shooby Hemmati, Ph.D.
Each year, millions of people die from cancers of all types and many millions more are diagnosed. For decades, researchers have worked tirelessly to find ways to slow or stop the growth of cancer with varying success, depending on the type of cancer. And because there are so many forms of cancer, there is no one-size-fits-all approach.

Unless of course one could target a universal aspect of cancer cells. Aimee Edinger, UC Irvine (UCI) professor of developmental and cell biology in the School of Biological Sciences, is doing just that by targeting a process that occurs in every living organism: metabolism.

CALIFORNIA TO PENN AND BACK AGAIN

Before Edinger was unlocking the secrets of metabolism for cancer therapies, her interest was in medicine, which led her to UC Davis for undergraduate studies where she began a trajectory toward veterinary school. It was there, as a pre-vet student, that Edinger was first exposed to research, becoming involved in a project that explored the physiological effects of altitude on horses and another that looked into the biological mechanisms that allow mammals to generate heat while they hibernate.

Then, after learning that the National Institutes of Health-sponsored medical scientist training program at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) also supports veterinarians, Edinger went on to Penn to earn a doctorate of veterinary medicine and a Ph.D. in microbiology. As a thesis student at Penn, Edinger worked to develop human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) vaccines, later conducting postdoctoral work on cancer metabolism, which is now the primary focus of the Edinger Lab at UCI.

The Edinger Lab, however, views cancer metabolism through a different lens than the average researcher. “What distinguishes what we do from a lot of what other people in this space do, is we’re really cell biologists, and a lot of people who work on cancer metabolism are biochemists,” said Edinger. “So when you study cancer metabolism as a biochemist, you’re looking at enzyme activity – the chemical reactions that change metabolites into the building blocks of cells. We study how membranes and vesicles and organelles move around the cell and how this intracellular traffic affects metabolite availability.”

Part of the lab’s success, according to Edinger, comes from combining their cell biology expertise with that of scientific collaborators from different disciplines, an approach that has laid the groundwork to develop novel approaches to cancer therapy.

RIDDLE OF THE SPHINGOLIPIDS

In their search for new cancer therapies, Edinger and team learned important lessons from yeast cells. “Yeast are kind of like cancer cells in that they are trying to grow as fast as they can in a manner that is every cell for itself,” said Edinger.

The tricks yeast use to survive in the wild focused their attention on sphingolipids, molecules named after the sphinx because of their enigmatic nature. These molecules slow down nutrient uptake into yeast cells to induce a state similar to hibernation when cells are under stress. The hope was to evoke the same hibernation response in normal human cells. While a state of hibernation can protect normal cells from stress, cancer cells cannot simply turn down their revved up metabolism. Unable to cope with the reduced nutrient levels by slowing their growth and reducing nutrient demand, cancer cells starve to death.

“As Napoleon once said, ‘an army marches on its stomach.’ So if you want to stop cancer in its tracks, you take away its fuel. Attack the supply wagons. It’s just kind of common sense,” said Edinger.

To translate this effect from yeast cells to cancer cells, the Edinger Lab collaborated with Stephen Hanessian – synthetic and medicinal chemist and UCI Distinguished Professor of Chemistry, Pharmaceutical Sciences, is doing just that by targeting a process that occurs in every living organism: metabolism.

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Large molecules, including nucleic acids, proteins and carbohydrates

These cancer cells survive chemotherapy by consuming nearly dead cells.

This image shows the tubular recycling endosome in Hela cervical carcinoma cells. SH-BC-893 affects the function of this compartment in a way that stops transporters for nutrients from getting to the cell surface.

This image shows breast cancer cells that have consumed dead cell corpses by macroautophagy, the autophagic engulfment of material in the tumor microenvironment.

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Sciences and Pharmacology – and his medicinal chemistry group to develop a drug-like compound named SH-BC-893 to mimic the naturally occurring molecules and starve perpetually ravenous cancer cells to death.

This new compound turned out to deliver a one-two punch. It not only prevents nutrients from entering cells, but also disables the cancer cell’s ability to generate nutrients from macromolecules via digestion. This combination of preventing cancer cells from accessing extracellular or intracellular nutrient sources has proved to be effective in petri dishes and in mice and does not negatively affect organ function.

In 2017, Edinger and team were awarded funds through UCI Beall Applied Innovation’s Proof of Product (POP) Grants program to further their research with the drug-like compound. The funds allowed them to answer vital questions about the compound as well as retain critical lab staff.

“The most expensive thing in research is personnel, and it’s even more expensive to lose people with deep knowledge of the project,” said Edinger. “My postdoc, at that point, had been in my lab for six years and had been working on this project from the very beginning. To lose her to another lab or company would have been catastrophic.”

Edinger and her collaborators felt their cancer therapy had promise, so they decided to translate the findings into a startup.

SIEGE PHARMACEUTICALS

Edinger and Hanessian started Siege Pharmaceuticals to take SH-BC-893 from the lab to the public, where they hope to make a difference for cancer patients. Siege Pharmaceuticals, though still in its infancy, has hit a number of milestones, such as securing Series A funding from an investor they met through Applied Innovation.

The startup also applied for a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant after receiving valuable feedback from consultants at the Small Business Development Center @ UCI Beall Applied Innovation, who helped the team transition from writing grants with academic goals to writing grants that had more business-oriented goals.

“(It) really helped us prioritize what is going to move the needle as a company,” said Edinger.

“Understanding the next best step and the key milestones to hit in order to get to that next step is crucial.”

Siege Pharmaceuticals is currently leasing wet lab space through University Lab Partners – an Applied Innovation ecosystem partner, located at the Cove @ UCI – where they continue their work of moving SH-BC-893 closer to clinical trials and Food and Drug Administration approval.

EXTRACELLULAR ACTIVITIES

When Edinger is not busy spending time with family, teaching, researching novel approaches to cancer therapies and working on Siege Pharmaceuticals, she also serves as the equity advisor for the School of Biological Sciences. It’s through this appointment that Edinger raises awareness of best practices for promoting faculty diversity and inclusion, and shares insights on how to be more mindful on and off campus.

"Neutral because people are biased doesn’t mean they’re the enemy. Implicit biases – those that are subconscious – aren’t our fault. Everyone has implicit biases, myself included. Understanding the problem is always the first step,” said Edinger. “The nonprofit Project Implicit has free online tests that can help us identify our biases and take steps to counteract them.”

Learn more about the Edinger Lab at edingerlab.bio.uci.edu

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*Resources Mentioned in this Story

Cove @ UCI
innovation.uci.edu/the-cove

Proof of Product Grants
innovation.uci.edu/programs/proof-grants

SBIR Grant
innovation.uci.edu/programs/sbir

Small Business Development Center
innovation.uci.edu/sbdc

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Xandra Laskowski Takes Lead for Women Angel Investors Los Angeles and Orange Counties

AS CEO OF THE ONLY WOMEN-RUN ANGEL INVESTMENT GROUP IN LOS ANGELES AND ORANGE COUNTIES, LASKOWSKI HAS MADE IT HER MISSION TO INCORPORATE MORE WOMEN INTO THE ANGEL INVESTMENT WORLD.

Becoming an investor requires curiosity, passion and a lot of due diligence – and that is what Xandra Laskowski has acquired throughout her career working in otherwise male-dominated industries of tech, money management and now, angel investing.

As the founder and CEO of OSEA Angel Investors, Laskowski is driven by many purposes, but a few form the basis of OSEA: providing a platform and meaningful education about the angel investing world that is driven by women and, though not exclusively, for women to invest in very diverse and successful emerging companies.

REWIND

In 1988, Laskowski started in the purchasing department of Toshiba in Irvine, worked her way into worldwide commodity management and, later on, the disk drive division based in San Jose throughout her years at the company.

“I was thrust into a man’s world, but I was so new and naïve, it worked in my defense,” said Laskowski. “I didn’t look at politics, I wasn’t intimidated because I was open-minded.”

During her time at Toshiba, Laskowski developed connections, received top tier mentorship and embraced Toshiba’s hardworking culture. From there she moved into major account sales positions at tech companies based in the Bay Area, and then finally, Ingram Micro, a global technology and supply chain services company based in Irvine.

“I was fortunate to have been treated with respect during my career and given the tools to do my job,” said Laskowski. “I was taught to view challenges as opportunities and worked with really, really great people.”

A LEARNING CURVE

After retiring from Ingram Micro in 1998, Laskowski spent the next decade raising her children. She then became interested in the family’s money management and wanted to learn how to continue to grow their assets. She interviewed the family’s money manager and several of her affluent friends’ husbands, but she still had no clear idea of an investment strategy and after a year of research, she began managing the family assets.

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OSEA ANGEL INVESTORS

Since 2017, OSEA has been the go-to angel investment group for women in Los Angeles and Orange counties. The group is part of the Angels Syndication Network and utilizes UCI Beall Applied Innovation’s event space to hold meetings and pitch events. If you’re a startup, you must meet OSEA’s presenting company criteria – all seven points – before you’re invited to pitch. The group is industry agnostic and past investments have been in Software as a Service and consumer-facing industries.

“There are so many women I know who want to learn about angel investing, and they want to be in a women’s group. Where is it?” said Laskowski. “And to this date, there are no other women angel groups in Orange County or Los Angeles that connect, educate and inspire women about angel investing.”

“Writing a check is not why most of our members join,” said Laskowski. “I say, ‘I don’t care if you write a check. That’s not why you’re in this room. You’re here to be inspired about what’s going, to be educated on the angel world, to learn how to invest and to stay connected to those deals.’”

Laskowski’s main credo is education – her goal is to teach women to invest thoughtfully and learn from her experiences.

“You don’t know what you don’t know – and with angel investing, that can be dangerous,” said Laskowski. “So why do we do it? Because we want to be a part of something that might succeed, that will give back to the community in the form of jobs and revenue and hopefully create more women angel investors.”

Learn more about OSEA Angel Investors:
oseaangelinvestors.com

TEX: BY JACKIE CONNOR / PHOTOS BY DANEIL XU

“THERE ARE SO MANY WOMEN I KNOW WHO WANT TO LEARN ABOUT ANGEL INVESTING, AND THEY WANT TO BE IN A WOMEN’S GROUP. WHERE IS IT?”
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innovation.uci.edu/the-cove

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The Beach @ the Cove

UCI Beall Applied Innovation’s largest event space dazzles and delivers.

UCI Beall Applied Innovation’s new home in UCI Research Park builds upon the success of the previous location and offers new and updated spaces for entrepreneurs, campus innovators and the Orange County ecosystem. One such space within Applied Innovation’s new location is the Beach, a purpose-built event setting that can accommodate over 300 guests, with design elements reminiscent of Southern California’s sandy shores.

Cove visitors would be forgiven if they did not notice the Beach from the lobby, as the glass wall separating the two spaces features a smart film that allows the glass to instantly transition from transparent to opaque at the flip of a switch. This simple upgrade provides event attendees with the option of increased privacy or a more open atmosphere.

Upon entering the Beach, attention is immediately drawn to the massive, 132-foot-long Hiperwall screen, which can play any content desired in any configuration. From live television and social media feeds to presentations and video conferencing, the 180-degree viewing experience of seamless display technology elevates events for attendees and event hosts alike.

What’s more, the room’s front podiums, center dais and configurable seating makes the space ideally suited for all manner of events, and features popular amenities like high-speed Wi-Fi, overhead speakers, spotlighting and live event streaming capabilities.

Special Events Manager at UCI Beall Applied Innovation Michelle Hong understands the importance of utilizing a space’s full suite of features and views the Beach as a cohesive union of form and function.

“The Beach space is truly a unique experience for all our Cove guests. The space and the AV become part of the event itself versus it serving as just a room where the event takes place,” said Hong. “We are excited to host a variety of events this year, welcoming people in and out of UCI to experience and learn what the Cove has to offer.”

From speaker panels to networking mixers, the Cove hosts a variety of events aimed at building ties between investors, entrepreneurs, innovators, industry members and others excited about this rapidly growing innovation district.

Visit the Cove by attending an upcoming event. For inquiries and questions, please contact Cove Events at coveevents@uci.edu.

*Resources Mentioned in this Story

Events @ the Cove
innovation.uci.edu/events
5 Places to Kick Off Your Startup Journey in Southern California, Part II

There are many ways to get your company off to a good start and incubators and accelerators can help.

Startups and entrepreneurs can look forward to even more resources for their companies. Here, in part two of our listicle series, are five more accelerators and incubators* located in the Golden State that focus on a variety of business types— including tech, health and artificial intelligence.

Techstars®: LA Accelerator
Techstars LA helps tech-oriented startups, especially those focused on web or software development, and those with the potential for national and/or worldwide reach. Startups have lifetime access to Techstars resources, including a 90-day mentor-based accelerator program with office space, access to $300,000 in business resources—such as accounting and legal support— and exposure at their Demo Day in Los Angeles. Teams receive a $100,000 convertible note and Techstars also contributes a $200,000 stipend in exchange for six percent company equity.

Location: Los Angeles
techstars.com/programs/los-angeles-program

JLABS San Diego
Johnson & Johnson Innovation, also known as JLABS, is an international innovation ecosystem that focuses on life sciences sectors, such as medtech and pharmaceuticals, to improve provider and patient experience. It offers startups industry connections, entrepreneurial programs and a flexible platform that encourages new ideas to improve the healthcare space.

Location: San Diego
jjobs.jnjinnovation.com

The Sandbox
The Sandbox incubates startups in the artificial intelligence and machine learning fields. The incubator considers artificial intelligence a new avenue for promising technologies that are at the cutting edge of invention. At the Sandbox, startups have a coworking space specifically designed for machine-learning innovations.

Location: San Diego
thesandbox.ai

MuckerLab Accelerator
MuckerLab Accelerator provides coworking space to 10-12 startups per year that focus on internet services, software, media and mobile industries. Unlike other incubators, MuckerLab focuses exclusively on startup development for an entire year and does not host a Demo Day. It also offers startups a network of advisors and experts with experience and connections to Silicon Valley. MuckerLab generally invests $21,000 to $150,000 in exchange for an eight to 15 percent equity stake, which depends on the startup’s capital needs and state of business.

Location: Santa Monica
mucker.com/muckerlab-accelerator

Koa Accel
Koa Accel focuses on early-stage medical device and digital health startups. Each team receives a project manager with experience in the startup’s focus who helps develop the business at a low cost and with effective tools. Along with their mentors, teams create operating plans for their startups that last anywhere from 12 to 18 months. Through these plans, the teams mitigate business risk, raise capital and become independent companies.

Location: Irvine
koaaccel.com

*These incubators and accelerators are listed in no particular order. Some of the incubators listed also have locations outside of Southern California. Applied Innovation offers many other resources and services for entrepreneurs and startup companies. Learn more at innovation.uci.edu/the-cove/ecosystem.

If you didn’t have your current role, what job would you want to do instead and why?

I probably want to do something that had to do with animals. I ride horses at least three times a week. I’ve always been passionate about them, even since I was a little girl. I never owned a horse, but I always found them wherever I was living so I could spend time with them.

What’s your favorite hobby and why?

I have two favorite hobbies. One is horseback riding and the other is fly fishing. I got into fly fishing in the 1990s. I went on a trip to New Zealand and fly fishing is very big there. New Zealand is a really standoffish place and the first time I did it, I got hooked on it. It’s an activity you can do all over the world. You can go to interesting places (sometimes on horseback) and find all different kinds of fish.

If you could be anyone for 24 hours, who would you pick and why?

I’d probably want to do something that had to do with animals. I ride horses at least three times a week. I’ve always been passionate about them, even since I was a little girl. I never owned a horse, but I always found them wherever I was living so I could spend time with them.
Where Are They Now?

Givsum

The Wayfinder Alum Team Has Found a Home in Irvine to Expand Their Business.

Volunteering, donating to charity, lending a helping hand – no matter what, it is important to "give some." At least, that’s the philosophy of Shawn Wehan, CEO and co-founder, and Robert Kollar, general counsel and co-founder, of Givsum. The UC Irvine startup is a donor-facing online platform where users can engage with a variety of charities.

The company provides information about philanthropic events, volunteer opportunities and charitable purchases on one platform. Once users create an account, Givsum logs all of their activity onto profiles, which serve as a digestible summary of the user’s philanthropy for the year. Givsum can then recommend charities based on engagement. To increase interaction on the website, Givsum uses a social media model. Users can follow different profiles, engage with the community and compare Givsum scores, which the website generates and adapts based on user activity.

“We know small-to-medium sized charities need a great tool that helps them get their mission and vision out,” said Wehan. “We know that regular donors would love to have all their donations in one place for their taxes at the end of the year.”

And they have had success. Currently, Givsum has an office in Newport Beach with a 15-person staff, which includes nine interns and two full-time software developers in addition to an executive team. They also have relationships with over 300 local charities, 20 of which have provided beta assistance while the team built their platform. The company has over 26 investors and has raised $1.3 million in funding. In 2019, Givsum’s beta charities raised $843,000 in donations – their highest year yet.

But like most startups, they had to build from the ground up and the Wayfinder* program at UCI Beall Applied Innovation, which they joined in 2017, allowed them to move in the right direction. Besides offering office space at the Cove* – Applied Innovation’s headquarters – and business advice, Wayfinder helped jump-start Givsum’s success and invited them to Startup Scrimmage*. This is an event where members of the business community gather to watch Monday Night Football and hear startup pitches at the Cove. And it is also where Givsum connected with a former CEO of a publicly traded company. Givsum’s pitch resulted not only in an investor, but also a valuable advisor.

"Being at Applied Innovation contributed to the success of our seed round, as it allowed us to invite investors to a legitimate startup space," said Wehan. “It is a real innovative space where entrepreneurs are building their companies.”

As for the future, Givsum hopes to onboard 5,000 service clubs in the next five years. They also want to increase donations to benefit more charities and encourage philanthropy.

Start your own success story at Applied Innovation.

For more information, visit: innovation.uci.edu/programs/wayfinder-incubator //

Resources Mentioned in this Story

Wayfinder innovation.uci.edu/programs/wayfinder-incubator
Events @ the Cove innovation.uci.edu/events

Cove @ UCI innovation.uci.edu/the-cove
UCI Beall 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.