



ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



The Vice Chancellor for Research of the University of Illinois, the Academy for Entrepreneurial Leadership, and the Champaign County Economic Development Corporation are pleased to announce the winners of the second annual Innovation Celebration.

Innovation Celebration recognizes those individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions, taken risks, and provided leadership to ensure the continuing economic success of Champaign County, the ongoing success of the University's economic development mission, and the growth of entrepreneurial talent and energy in our community.

Entrepreneur Advocacy Award

2007 Winner: Thomas A. Bruno

The Entrepreneur Advocacy Award recognizes those individuals or organizations in the community who have actively engaged, encouraged, coached and mentored entrepreneurs in the community, providing a broad base of support to help multiple entrepreneurs achieve success.

Nominated for his foresight and open-mindedness on development projects, Tom Bruno has earned the distinction of a strong advocate for entrepreneurs and economic development. Recognizing the current impact of the University of Illinois is only half of what sets Bruno apart from others; the other half of the equation is his ability to envision "what could be" as well as a keen ability to think "out of the box." He is also recognized for extraordinary enthusiasm at working to champion the vision into reality. Backing projects like the UIUC South Campus plan and M2, Bruno has demonstrated a willingness to listen, cooperation, patience and excitement about Champaign County.

Founding Thomas A. Bruno & Associates in 1980, Bruno is past president of the Champaign County Bar Association and serves on the Illinois State Bar Association Assembly, the governing body of the ISBA. He has also been a councilmember on the City of Champaign, Illinois City Council since 1997 and presently sits on the Champaign County Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors, serving as chair in 2003-2004.

Social Entrepreneurship Award

2007 Winner: Sonia Rodríguez for Proyecto CHE

The Social Entrepreneurship Award recognizes individuals who have served as change agents in our community by incorporating innovative approaches, improving systems and processes, and creating sustainable solutions to reshape society and benefit humanity,

successfully implementing entrepreneurial principles to address social concerns.

Ms. Sonia Rodríguez, an undergraduate student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and a group of like-minded students started a program called “Proyecto CHE (Children for Higher Education).

Proyecto CHE’s mission is to promote Latino cultures and encourage Latino youth to consider, prepare and eventually enroll in college. To achieve this mission, Sonia and her team went out to the local Latino community, convinced parents and recruited students, created original programming and activities, and implemented their programs on Saturdays for four full hours. Because the program takes place at La Casa Cultural Latina, these youth have direct access to a college campus, most of them for the very first time. By giving tours of the UI campus, inviting UI faculty and teaching assistants to speak, and using Latina/o undergrads to run the program, the youth receive a powerful message that the university is open to them. Something as simple as taking the group bowling at the Union can have a powerful impact as these students begin to see that they too can have access to a higher education and have fun.

Economic Development Impact Award

2007 Co-Winners: Champaign Park District and the UIUC College of Communications, Ebertfest

The Economic Development Impact Award recognizes those who have successfully commercialized innovations while demonstrating a commitment to local economic impact, with emphasis on beneficial outcomes.

Since its beginning in 1999, Ebertfest has grown from a local event that attracted 8,000 attendees to an international event that attracted 25,000 attendees in spring 2006. Now into its ninth year, Ebertfest has had a continuing positive economic impact on the local economy. Many of the attendees of Ebertfest are from out-of-town; they stay at local hotels, dine at local restaurants, and shop at local stores and malls over the five-day event. The result is a tremendous amount of new revenue for the local economy and merchants.

In addition, Ebertfest has been a major force in saving Champaign’s downtown historic Virginia Theatre. Early on, one of the goals of the founders of Ebertfest was to provide financial assistance toward restoring the old palace theater to its original grandeur. Now, through donations and Ebertfest ticket sales, the theater has been restored and equipped with the latest technologies.

Initially, officials at the College of Communications and Roger Ebert wanted to bring to C-U a positive experience that would enlighten, entertain, revitalize the Virginia Theatre, and help the local economy. All of these goals have been achieved and more. Ebertfest has grown to a world class event that meets the highest standards of achievement and serves as a legacy of goodwill that has positively impacted the local economy and community.

Technology Transfer Award

2007 Winner: Dr. Bill Boulanger for Obiter Research

The Technology Transfer Award recognizes those who have successfully commercialized innovation, either themselves or through commercial channels, as evidenced by accomplishment.

Founded in 2001 by Dr. Bill Boulanger, Obiter Research has fast become a source of pride for the University of Illinois Research Park. Dr. Boulanger, who earned his Ph.D. in Chemistry in 1984 from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, started Obiter Research as a one-room, one-person operation within the University of Illinois business incubator manufacturing specialty and hard-to-find chemicals. Today the company has grown into an 11-employee operation using five labs.

On July 20, 2006, Obiter broke ground on their new facility in north Champaign and expects to take possession of the new building in early 2007. At the groundbreaking, Obiter and its staff was hailed as “good citizens of the incubator” and a model for start-up companies. Terran Enterprises is now in the process of building the 19,400 square-foot facility to support small-scale chemistry and mid-scale process manufacturing; The second phase of the project will triple the capacity of the phase one expansion and is expected to kick off in four to six years.

Obiter has also spun off a new ventured: Peopull, LLC, a healthcare purchasing group that helps Illinois small businesses procure health insurance at a lower cost.

Innovation Discovery Award

2007 Winner: National Center for Supercomputing Applications

The Innovation Discovery Award recognizes those individuals or organizations that in the past three years have made significant and groundbreaking discoveries with the greatest potential for societal and/or economic impact.

The National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA), one of the five original centers in the National Science Foundation's Supercomputer Centers Program, opened its doors in January 1986. Since then, NCSA has contributed significantly to the birth and growth of the worldwide cyberinfrastructure, operating some of the world's most powerful supercomputers and developing the software infrastructure needed to efficiently use these systems, such as Mosaic™, the first readily available graphical Web browser. Today the center is recognized as an international leader in deploying robust high-performance computing resources and in working with research communities to develop new computing and software technologies.

Some of NCSA's recent projects include the National Center for Advanced Secure Systems Research which addresses the nation's need for a reliable and secure cyberinfrastructure; the Technology Research, Education, and Commercialization Center, which brings expertise, knowledge, and technological innovation to government and to both the public and private sectors of education and business; and the TeraGrid that unites more than 102 teraflops of computing power, facilities capable of managing and storing nearly one petabyte (one quadrillion bytes) of data, high-resolution visualization environments, and toolkits for grid computing into a distributed infrastructure for open scientific research.

Entrepreneurial Excellence in Management Award

The Entrepreneurial Excellence in Management Award recognizes those who have best demonstrated managerial acumen and skill in assembling resources, creating an organization, decision making under uncertainty, being forward looking, and implementing action plans, and creatively solving problems.

2007 Winner: Dr. Ben Barbieri for ISS, Inc.

For 26 years, Dr. Ben Barbieri has led ISS to continued success as a result of continued innovation in their R&D efforts, their instruments' software and technology, and strategic national and international partnerships.

In addition to expanding its physical facilities, ISS now offers a wide array of instruments and services. However, one thing has remained constant throughout those years: the personal attention ISS clients receive and the focus on excellent service.

From its inception, ISS has collaborated with numerous laboratories across the UIUC campus, and many ISS employees are UI graduates. However, ISS also has strong ties to the Champaign-Urbana community beyond the University. While half of ISS's instruments are sold within the US, the other half go to scientists in Europe, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, making ISS a truly global company.

ISS is well-known for the personal relationships it builds with clients, and Dr. Barbieri certainly sets a tone for friendliness and long-term loyalty for his employees to follow. He has sponsored research, seminars and workshops and has served as a mentor to several graduate students of the UI, and he ensures that ISS makes their resources available to scientists and laboratories of the University of Illinois and other academic institutions.

The Longevity Through Innovation Award

The Longevity Through Innovation Award recognizes those enterprises whose sustained success is the direct result of continued innovation over many years.

2007 Winner: Rudy Frasca for Frasca International

At the age of 14—when a driver's license seems a distant reality to most teenagers—Rudy Frasca had already started flying a plane. In 1949, he joined the Navy and was stationed at Glenview Naval Station, where he worked as a flight instructor teaching pilots on the Link trainers, an early type of flight simulator that taught pilots how to fly by Instrument Flight Rules, and where his passion for making flight safer and better began.

After the Korean War, Frasca left the Navy to attend the University of Illinois, where he studied Aviation Psychology and honed his interest in the field of flight simulation. In 1958, Rudy built his first flight simulator in his garage and Frasca Aviation was founded; the name later changed to Frasca International to reflect the emerging character of the business.

Today, Frasca International's facilities includes a 70,000 square foot building with offices and manufacturing areas, complete with a machine and wood shop, standard production area, custom production area, offices and shipping and receiving areas, as well as Frasca Field, an FBO owned and operated by the Frasca family and Frasca Air Museum, which includes his collection of

WWII aircraft. Today, Frasca International has delivered over 2,000 devices in some 70 countries worldwide and over 90% of U.S. colleges are currently using Frasca flight simulators.

Student Start-Up Award

The Student Start-Up Award recognizes an organization formed by students within the past three years whose demonstrated success is a result of entrepreneurial talent, creativity and energy, and whose future success is indicated by its current path.

2007 Winner: Michael Callahan, Ambient

Michael Callahan started his company, Ambient Corporation at the age of 22, while developing its technology with his partner in this venture, Thomas Coleman. Ambient is a biotechnology startup company developing a new communication device, Audeo, which is capable of producing speech from intercepted neurological signals sent from the brain. This device uses advanced signal processing techniques to create an interface capable of circumventing the communicative barrier imposed by physical disability.

Callahan and his team won the V. Dale Cozad Business Plan Competition at the University of Illinois two consecutive years, earning \$11,000 to aid in the development of the Audeo. Callahan is currently developing the technology with partners including the University of Illinois and the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, the #1 rehab hospital in the United States; and with support from National Instruments and the National Center for Supercomputing Applications.

Aside from leading this venture, Callahan has been instrumental in instituting a Student Entrepreneur Learning Lab in the Technology Entrepreneur Center at the University of Illinois. The lab is designed for students, like Callahan, to provide them the equipment they need in order to pursue their product and innovation ideas.

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