

2023 UC Davis Innovation Awards Honors Innovators and their Impactful Contributions



Eduardo Blumwald, right, of the UC Davis Department of Plant Sciences, with postdoctoral researcher Akhilesh Yadav, and rice they and others on the Blumwald team modified to use nitrogen more efficiently. (Trina Kleist/UC Davis)

The University of California, Davis, presented its 2023 Innovation Awards, recognizing faculty, community partners and industry leaders who are developing innovative solutions to improve the lives of others and address important needs in our global society.

At an in-person ceremony June 13, [Michele Barbato](#) and [Eduardo Blumwald](#) each received an Innovator of the Year award, Tim Keller of the [Inventopia](#) incubator received the Innovative Community Partner of the Year award, and the Lifetime Achievement in Innovation award was presented to [Simon Cherry](#).

The annual awards program, now in its eighth year, is co-managed by [Venture Catalyst](#) and the Office of Research, in coordination with the Office of the Chancellor.

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Venture Catalyst is Hiring!

The application for a full-time 18-month **ACE Program Manager** position is

now open! This person will lead the deliverables for a \$1M program to support the state-funded Aggies for Climate Equity (ACE) initiative. The ACE Program Manager will organize a multi-stakeholder advisory board, manage a proof-of-concept grant program, and oversee the delivery of educational programs for the UC Davis community related to climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience in California. To apply, please visit the [internal link for UCD applicants](#), or the [external link for all other applicants](#). The application deadline is August 4.

Our **Food & Agriculture Innovation Fellowship** seeks a UC Davis graduate student for a 10-month part-time internship to support translational innovation and accelerate commercialization efforts in food & ag. [Apply on Handshake by July 31](#).

Please contact jafelliott@ucdavis.edu for more detailed position descriptions.

Local Startup, Pheronym, Gets \$1M NSF Grant to Expand Manufacturing



UC Davis-associated ag-tech startup and [Venture Catalyst START™ program](#) participant [Pheronym Inc.](#) won a \$1 million Small Business Innovation Research grant from the National Science Foundation. The money will be used to scale up commercial manufacturing of the company's approach to pest control that doesn't use chemical pesticides.

Pheronym is based in Woodland at [The Lab@AgStart](#). The company is developing biological controls to control pests in greenhouses and in fields.

[Read Full Article from the Sacramento Business Journal](#)

UC Davis-spinout Sensit Ventures Inc. Develops Breakthrough Technology for Egg Industry

The egg industry has a problem: it only wants to raise female chickens to adulthood, but current practices mean that all eggs for breeding must be incubated until hatching, and then the male chicks are culled. Ethical considerations of culling and the wasted resources of incubating all eggs has led to a demand for new solutions to “sex” eggs sooner.



Fertilized chicken eggs can be sexed by “sniffing” volatile chemicals emitted through the shell, according to [new work published in PLOS ONE](#) by researchers at UC Davis and local Davis startup, [Sensit Ventures Inc.](#)

Other technology already on the market depends either on sampling the egg through a tiny hole in the shell, or imaging through the shell. The non-invasive Sensit approach relies on detecting volatile organic compounds given off by the developing male and female embryos that diffuse through the shell.

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UC Davis Professor Addresses Plastic Pollution with New Bioplastic Technology



For decades, [Ruihong Zhang](#), a professor in the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering, has been studying biological conversion of food waste to explore solutions that could address environmental challenges.

Her recent research on biodegradable plastics using dairy byproducts may reduce the long-term global level of plastic pollution by creating a viable alternative. Some of her proof-of-concept work was supported by the 2021 round of [STAIR™ Grant](#) awards.

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Funding Opportunities

CDRH Biothreat Challenge

The focus of this challenge is to enable tool developers to test their algorithms on blinded mock-clinical and in silico metagenomics samples using provided regulatory-grade reference genomes from the FDA-ARGOS database. This will enable the community to look at bioinformatics pipeline performance using a fixed reference genome data standard. The challenge will help familiarize precision FDA users with the agency’s innovative FDA-ARGOS database resource. [Apply here](#). Deadline: July 26, 2023

NIH SBIR & STTR Grant Funding Opportunities

The NIH Small Business Program is accepting applications for SBIR & STTR funding. [Apply here](#).
Deadline: September 5, 2023

NHLBI Catalyze Funding Opportunities

Facilitates the transition of basic science discoveries into viable diagnostic and therapeutic candidates cleared for human testing. Offers heart, lung, blood and sleep investigators funding, technical services,

training, and mentorship. Develops the translational research workforce by helping investigators build their product development and entrepreneurial skills. Supports and funds product definition, preclinical research research, and development of technologies and transformative platforms. [Apply here](#). Deadline: December 21, 2023

Growth Factory - Accelerating Venture-Backable Startups

The goal of this local startup accelerator is to help founders of pre-seed to seed stage venture backable companies located in the Greater Sacramento Region rapidly achieve product market fit, positioning them to raise funds and achieve revenue of \$1M in ARR within 18 months. Applications are open on a rolling admissions basis. [Apply here](#).

NASE Growth Grant

You could receive up to \$4,000 for your small business through the NASE Growth Grants program. Since 2006, the NASE has awarded nearly \$1,000,000 to members just like you through the Growth Grants program by providing small business grants. [Apply here](#).

OpenGrants Affiliate Program

The OpenGrants Affiliate Program is a commission-based program that rewards affiliates for referring new customers to the OpenGrants API and WordPress Plugin subscriptions. Affiliates earn a 20% commission on any subscriptions sold to referred customers in perpetuity. [Apply here](#).

Physicians Foundation Interoperability Fund

The Interoperability Fund will assist medical practices in effectively sharing clinical information with other physicians and hospitals through health information exchanges (HIE). Funding is available for physicians in participating states with an electronic health record system (EHR) and will be allocated to practices on a first come basis. [Learn more](#).

AgFunder

AgFunder is a new kind of venture capital firm built on proprietary technology and a global ecosystem of over 85,000 subscribers. We invest in exceptional and bold founders who are committed to building the next generation of agrifood technology companies that will transform our food system. We are one of the most active agrifood tech investors in the world. [Apply here](#).

O'Shaughnessy Fellowship

The O'Shaughnessy Fellowship is a one year program that provides \$100K, equity-free, for innovative creators to work on whatever they choose. Applications are selected throughout the year on a rolling basis, so apply now! [Currently accepting applications](#).

UC Davis Office of Research - Links to Funding Sources

Browse the listings of funding announcements provided by sponsoring agencies and other pertinent information about obtaining critical research funding. [View the complete list here](#).

Tech Coast Angels

If your company has a strong team with a great defensible idea, has early traction and is set to grow, TCA is ready to invest up to several million dollars through our funds, individually or with our syndicate partners. TCA looks at investments in the United States and Canada. [Currently accepting applications](#)

Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health

We are interested in ideas that address any of these four areas of focus: Future of Evidence; Future of Social Interaction; Future of Food; Future of Work. Additionally, we welcome ideas that might fall outside of these four focus areas, but which offer unique approaches to advancing health equity and our progress toward a Culture of Health. [Currently accepting applications](#)

Evidence for Action: Innovative Research to Advance Racial Equity

Evidence for Action prioritizes research to evaluate specific interventions (e.g., policies, programs, practices) that have the potential to counteract the harms of structural and systemic racism and improve health, well-being, and equity outcomes. [Currently accepting applications](#)

IndieBio Accelerator

Multi-stage investment to support big ideas.#1 in early stage biotech![Currently accepting applications](#)

Open SBIR/STTR Grant Topics

Federal Research/Research & Development with the potential for commercialization.[Learn More](#)

Educational Opportunities

2023-2024 Fellowship Programs Information Session

Join us to learn about three fellowship programs offered by the UC Davis Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. These cohort-based fellowships are one academic year long and include workshops and experiential learning. [Register here](#). Date: July 21, 2023

EOS Workshop: Get Alignment with Your Vision and Gain Traction

Join us for this online workshop on Tue Jul 25 2023 at 12:00:00 pm PST to learn how to align your vision with your business goals and gain traction towards success. This workshop is designed for entrepreneurs, business owners, and leaders who want to take their organization to the next level. [Register here](#). Date: July 25, 2023

Carlsen Center Summer Cohort Program

The program will run from August 12th to October 12th and will be a mix of in-person and virtual meetings. We will kick off the program with a Launch Weekend at the Carlsen Center, we will meet on Zoom throughout the 10 weeks and conclude with an in-person Demo Day. The 10 weeks will be broken into 3-sprints propelling you to traction.[Apply here](#). Deadline: July 28, 2023.

Business Model & Value Proposition Canvas: Designing a Model that Succeeds

Are you looking to design a business model that succeeds? Join us for our workshop on the Business Model and Value Proposition Canvas where we will take you through these tools created by Strategyzer. The Business Model and Value Proposition Canvases are a couple of the most important business tools ever created to help teams visualize their value proposition and ensure it maps to the customer's needs. [Register here](#). Date: August 1, 2023

Intro to Lean Startup: NSF I-Corps Method

Each month, NSF I-Corps Method offers an immersive one week virtual training aimed at translating academic research into a startup. You'll learn how to conduct 15 customer interviews to identify your top customer segment and value propositions, validate your commercial market, and accelerate finding product market fit. [Apply here](#). Deadline: August 4, 2023

Pirates in the Navy: Building a Worldclass Innovation Company

Join us to discover the secrets of building a culture of innovation with author and innovation expert, Tendayi Viki. In "Pirates in the Navy," Tendayi explores innovative strategies and mindsets for fostering creativity and disruption. Drawing inspiration from pirates, he reveals valuable lessons applicable to any industry, empowering individuals and businesses to navigate uncharted waters. [Register here](#). Date: August 9, 2023

Startup Pitch Workshop - Monthly

Three startups present their pitch for advice and feedback from a panel of experts. Organized by

StartupSac, Startup Folsom and NCID. [Apply here](#). Date: 4th Wednesday of every month

IndieBio

IndieBio is always looking for the next generation of early stage life sciences companies that will transform the future of human and planetary health. We review companies from across all different backgrounds, geographies, and sectors in the life sciences to invest and accelerate the next wave of innovation. IndieBio reviews applications on a rolling basis. [Apply now](#).

USPTO Webinar - Together in Innovation: Agricultural Advances

In case you missed it, UC Davis-associated startup Pheronym Inc. CEO Dr. Kaplan was a panelist with pioneering entrepreneurs and journalists Dr. Pam Marrone, Dr. Amy Wu, and Suma Reddy on a webinar hosted by the United States Patent and Trademark Office's. [Watch now](#).

On-Demand Virtual Entrepreneurship Toolkit Series

The new On-Demand Toolkit Series is a resource of past recordings as well as slides and tools taught throughout the 5-week series. After a short application, you will have access to five recordings and subsequent resource tools. [Apply now](#).

The Lean Innovator: Workshop Series

Our curriculum and program focuses your efforts on doing the things that matter in gaining traction. We enable you to engage customers while gaining evidence that systematically de-risks your startup, such as market niche research and prototyping. [Apply now](#). Spots are accepted on a rolling basis.

Community Engagement: How to Maximize Grant Outcomes

An OpenGrants webinar with Sedale Turbovsky and Chris Dumont to discuss the easy way to win grant funding. Sedale Turbovsky is the CEO and co-founder of OpenGrants, a venture-backed startup focused on building modern infrastructure for funding. Chris is the CEO of Alpine Sustains, a social networking platform for community development that matches community members with projects. [Learn more](#).

Advance Your Career with UC Davis Continuing and Professional Education

Gain the knowledge and skills you need to succeed in today's evolving workforce. Serving adult learners worldwide, we provide career-focused education designed for busy working professionals—including a variety of tech-related courses and programs. UC Davis staff and faculty receive a discount on our main courses and can take any of our UC Davis Coursera courses for free. [Learn more](#).

Insight Data Science Fellows Program

The Insight Data Science Fellows Program is a postdoctoral training fellowship that bridges the gap between academia and data science. Throughout this seven week intensive program, researchers learn how to apply their existing analytical skills to big data. [Applications open now](#).

Postdoctoral Fellowship in Conservation Science

The Postdoctoral Fellowship in Conservation Science is a two-year program designed to provide recent PhDs in chemistry and other physical or material sciences with experience in conservation science. The application period typically opens every other year in the autumn for a fellowship beginning the following year. The next opportunity to apply will be in Fall 2023 for a two-year fellowship beginning Fall 2024. [Learn more](#).

Startup Traction Hotline with JDM

Growth, revenue, product-market fit, pitching, traction, business models, tools, tips, techniques, and whatever else is on your mind. Get advice that's comprehensive, useful, and immediately actionable. Join every Thursday at 10:00 AM PT on YouTube for a live discussion of whatever's on your mind. [Learn more](#).

Regional Events

1 Million Cups

Present your early stage company to your peers. Or just grab a coffee and listen.

Date: [Every Wednesday](#)

Business Casual: Get Your Creative Biz Together

Every fourth Saturday of the month, Atrium's mentorship team will be hosting a free business basics discussion group. Growing your creative business can seem like a daunting task. Atrium is here to help take your ideas from the drawing board to the boardroom with free "get started right" business workshops for creative startups. Come with a laptop and a ready-to-grow mentality. [Register now](#). Date: Ongoing

AgStart Office Hours

Expert mentors to help your business. [Sign-up now](#). Date: Ongoing

Sacramento State Carlsen Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship Events and Workshops

[Learn More](#). Date: Ongoing

Small Business Development Center Workshops

[Learn More](#). Date: Ongoing

Silicon Valley USPTO Workshops

Check out the US Patent and Trademark Office's [West Coast region events](#) Date: Ongoing

California Life Sciences Institute FAST Advisory Program

Get the coaching you need to perfect your business model. [Apply now](#). Date: Ongoing

Bay Area NSF Innovation Corps Immersive Short Course

Join the weeklong immersive course for university researchers and early stage startup founders. [Apply now](#). Date: Ongoing

Industry Events

BIO Asia-Taiwan

The event aims to build on the success of recent years' gatherings to bring together biotechnology and pharmaceutical executives and investors from North America, Europe and Asia, and explore business opportunities and to engage with Taiwan's emerging biotech sector. The five-day gathering will feature a three-day conference with internationally-renowned speakers, company presentations from Asia and around the world, BIO One-on-One Partnering™ meetings, symposia and workshops, and an international exhibition. [Register here](#). Date: July 26-30, 2023

Salesforce Dreamforce 2023

AI-powered innovation. Faster data-driven decisions. Smarter CRM. Meet the future of business. And feel the magic of Dreamforce. [Register now](#). Date: September 12-14, 2023

TechCrunch Disrupt 2023

The original startup conference — stays fresh, relevant and focused on founders, investors, and the future of tech year after year. Whether you're a startup rookie learning the ropes, a seasoned investor searching for the next big thing, or a founder hell-bent on changing the world - Disrupt delivers the tools,

knowledge, and connections to help you make it happen! [Register now](#). Date: September 19-21, 2023

SOSV Climate Tech Summit

The SOSV Climate Tech Summit aims to convene the climate tech startup ecosystem of founders, investors, technologists, corporates, policymakers, and media to discuss the extreme challenges ahead. Join us for a live, virtual and free event featuring panels and breakout sessions. [Register here](#). Date: September 26-27, 2023

B2B Forum - Marketing Profs

B2B Forum is the ultimate destination for marketers to discover how to drive growth, elevate brand reputation, prove ROI, and stay ahead of the ever-changing marketing curve. [Register now](#). Date: October 4-6, 2023

Growth Factory's GFX 2023

Growth Factory's annual venture conference & startup showcase brings together the most talented and innovative minds from the Greater Sacramento, Northern CA region and beyond to connect, learn, and support great startups and to build a robust startup ecosystem together. [Register now](#). Date: October 5, 2023

Women in Construction Conference

this is a conference for men, women, and those who want to make change within the built environment. Come for a full day of panel discussions, breakouts, and best practices, and walk away ready to recruit current and future generations. [Register now](#). Date: October 5, 2023

Bio Events - Investor Forum

BIO Investor Forum tracks investment trends and opportunities in life sciences, with a focus on start-ups, venture-stage growth, and emerging public companies. [Register now](#). Date: October 17-18, 2023

About Venture Catalyst

UC Davis Venture Catalyst supports the development of new UC Davis-associated ventures fueled by university research and technology. Venture Catalyst offers several innovative programs that bridge the gap between early-stage research and commercialization and provide entrepreneurs the resources, support, and connections needed to successfully form and grow technology-based startups. With a focus on accelerating technology-led economic development in the Davis-Sacramento region, Venture Catalyst also works closely with partners in the regional innovation and economic development ecosystems.

Contact Venture Catalyst

For more information or for editorial comments, please [email us](#).



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