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Sujit Dey Named Faculty Director of the von Liebig Entrepreneurism Center



Professor in the Department of Electrical and Engineering, has been named faculty director of the Entrepreneurism Center.

Sujit Dey has been named faculty director of the von Liebig Center for Entrepreneurism and Technology Advancement at the University of California, San Diego Jacobs School of Engineering. The von Liebig Entrepreneurism Center offers pre-seed funding and business advisory services to researchers and students developing innovative technology at universities throughout Southern California.

The von Liebig Entrepreneurism Center was founded in 2002 to help Jacobs School of Engineering faculty turn their research into commercially viable technologies, launch startup companies and educate students about how entrepreneurial companies of all sizes innovate and compete globally. It has evolved into a regional hub for industry partners, nonprofit organizations, government agencies and universities across Southern California to accelerate the transition of university discoveries to the private sector.

Dey has been a professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the Jacobs School since 1997 and founded Ortiva Wireless, which was sold last year to Tel Aviv-based Allot Communications (NASDAQ: ALLT).

“Professor Dey is a valuable addition to the successful team at the von Liebig Center, and he brings the perspective and experience of a faculty-entrepreneur to the mix,” said Juan C. Lasheras, Interim Dean of the Jacobs School. “He will work closely with Rosibel Ochoa, the

Center's Executive Director, as well as with the Center's team of advisors, to develop and implement new initiatives that promote innovation and entrepreneurship at the Jacobs School of Engineering."

Dey is developing plans to attract more investors and entrepreneurs to support the work of the von Liebig Center. Ochoa will continue to manage the Center's day-to-day operations.

"Entrepreneurship in the U.S. is well and thriving, but there are multiple headwinds," Dey said, noting that entrepreneurs are competing for a shrinking pool of early-stage funding, making it more difficult to start new companies. Funding for the proof-of-concept prototype development and commercialization stage is particularly challenging, which is why the von Liebig Entrepreneurism Center has become so essential. To date, the von Liebig Center has granted \$5.0 million to more than 100 technology teams and contributed to the creation of 37 start-up companies that have raised more than \$150 million in capital and created nearly 200 jobs. A key to its success over the past 10 years has been its ability to connect entrepreneurs and investors with university researchers who are most likely to form a successful partnership. The von Liebig Center carefully steers researchers through the proof-of-concept process with a network of technology and business advisors.

"I am looking forward to collaborating with Professor Dey in the creation of a program that will help our entrepreneurial faculty and students access the resources they need to launch highly successful companies," said Ochoa.

"UC San Diego has all the right ingredients to help in this process, including motivated faculty and leading-edge research in disruptive technologies. The von Liebig Center can play a tremendous role in enabling technology transfer and commercialization and, thereby, company formation," Dey said. "Proper team formation, market-aware technology development, and access to investors with domain expertise can be the keys to successful technology start-ups. Our new initiatives will be aimed at enabling close partnerships between entrepreneurial UCSD researchers and successful entrepreneurs and investors. The resulting companies will have much less technology, market, and execution risks than the usual start-ups, making them attractive to the venture community."

Dey was awarded a proof-of-concept grant from the von Liebig Center in 2004 to create a prototype that became the core technology to launch Ortiva Wireless, which enables proactive management of mobile video and rich media content delivery. Dey said the von Liebig Center

helped him get the funding he needed to hire students, develop an advanced prototype that could be presented to potential customers and investors, and to offer valuable advice in the business development and technology transfer process.

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