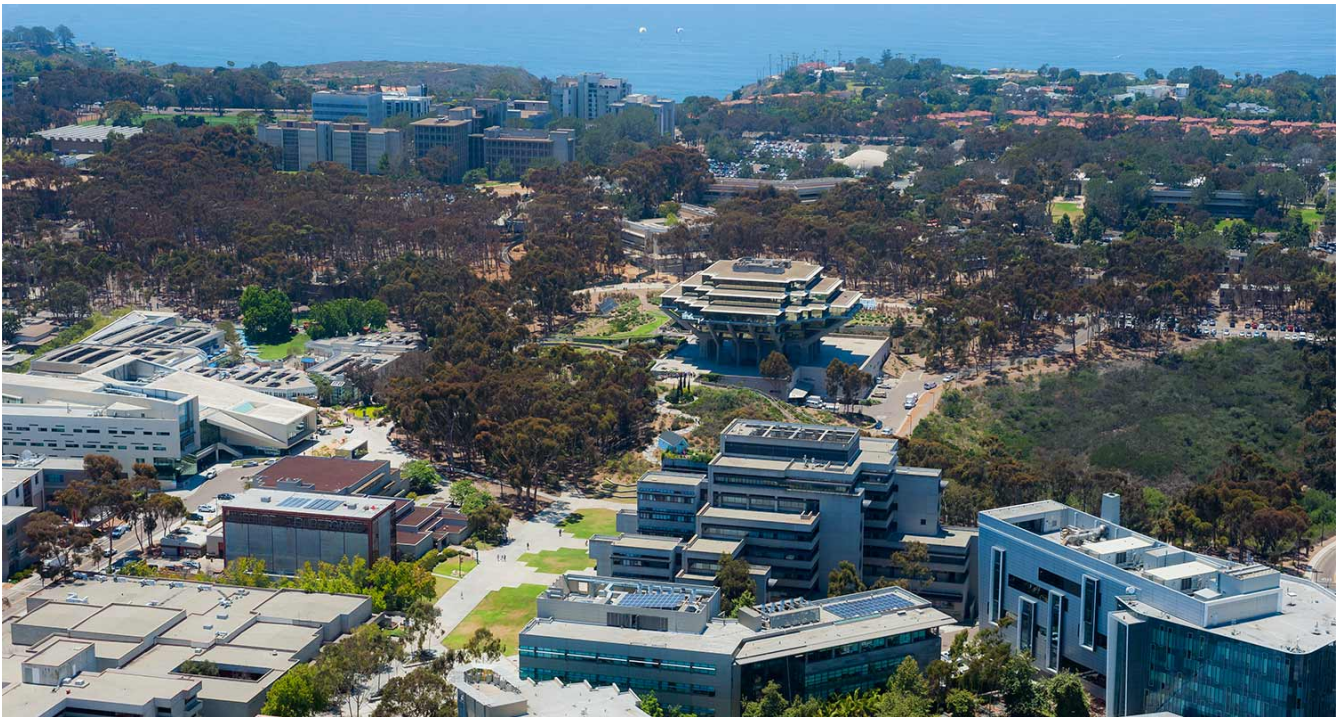


June 29, 2016 | By Paul K. Mueller

Office of Innovation Adds Entrepreneurial Expertise to New Urban Innovation Collaboratory



The Office of Innovation and Commercialization at UC San Diego plays a significant role in the just-announced Urban Innovation Collaboratory, a partnership between UC San Diego Extension and the Downtown San Diego Partnership.

The collaboratory, announced on Tuesday by San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer and Dean Mary Walshok of UC San Diego Extension, brings together the academic world with the city and the private sector to drive a vibrant and inclusive innovation economy in downtown San Diego. This partnership, dedicated to developing talent and ideas, is built on three pillars:

- A talent accelerator – to offer the education and training needed to grow the urban economy, including computer-science and information-technology skills for youth in underserved communities.

- An ideas forum – to establish connections between entrepreneurs downtown and those on the Torrey Mesa, and to help boost the region’s larger innovation ecosystem.
- An entrepreneur exchange – to provide key support to startups, with specialized programs that assist entrepreneurs and companies at various stages of development.

The Office of Innovation plays a lead role in the third category, with its expertise focused on would-be entrepreneurs, early-stage entrepreneurs, and “ready to go” entrepreneurs.

Paul Roben, Associate Vice Chancellor for Innovation at UC San Diego – who also serves on the Urban Innovation Collaboratory board – said that the partnership between Extension and Downtown San Diego will help to propel San Diego to become “a global crossroads of innovation,” attracting the brightest minds from all over the world to come and develop solutions to the problems we all face as a global society.

“There’s a powerful creative working relationship between the institutions on the Mesa and the leading voices in San Diego,” he said. “Each group brings vital assets and skills to the partnership, with Dean Walshok among the earliest, most tireless and most eloquent advocates for collaboration.”

The Office of Innovation, which Roben leads within the Office of Research Affairs, will work with inventors, innovators and entrepreneurs from newcomers to startup veterans.

Early-stage entrepreneurs, said Roben, will benefit from a variety of startup-leadership programs and workshops developed by his office – programs that complement the several startup-leadership courses other organizations on campus now offer.

Ready-to-go entrepreneurs – those with scalable ideas that venture-capitalists could well back – will be guided to CONNECT through its Springboard program, as well as to incubation opportunities EvoNexus provides.

As noted in Extension’s promotion of the partnership, “companies that are niche-market ventures with solid and fast growth opportunities, but without venture-capital backing, would also be the focus of these efforts and would receive assistance from a customized team of advisors.”

All three categories of entrepreneurs, Roben said, will benefit from entrepreneur scout programs, skills development workshops, and pre-accelerator programs.

UC San Diego Extension and the Downtown San Diego Partnership say in their announcement that the Urban Innovation Collaboratory “is designed to deliver the resources needed to ensure that entrepreneurs and downtown innovators are connected with the research and development now shaping new economic opportunities, and that they have the skills, resources, and connections needed to grow this burgeoning urban innovation ecosystem.”

The Office of Innovation and all of UC San Diego’s entrepreneur-centric resources, Roben said, are eager, via these and other vital and valuable partnerships, to “deliver on our mission to serve the community.”

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