



WiSys[®] Innovation Report // Fiscal Year 2023

Eureka isn't a moment. It's a process.

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Message from the President

This past fiscal year marked WiSys' 23rd year as a supporting organization of the Universities of Wisconsin. Over the past decade, based on input and stated needs of stakeholders, WiSys has created programming and services that are more inclusive and aligned with the innovation support needed for the primarily undergraduate institutions it serves across Wisconsin. Today, the scope of WiSys as a “**collaborative innovation organization**” is encapsulated in the Vision, Mission, and Pillars that follow in this report.

2023 was an exciting year! We worked to grow our events and grants back to pre-pandemic levels, and led a partnership, that competed for and **won a prestigious Award from National Science Foundation (NSF)** to develop an innovation engine in Wisconsin. This award, spearheaded through a collaboration among WiSys, WARF, and UWMRF, along with collaboration with over 30 Wisconsin universities and organizations, is working to lay the groundwork to make Wisconsin a global leader in sustainable agriculture. Through this award, Wisconsin can organize innovation capacities in agriculture and build out a robust innovation ecosystem to launch an agriculture innovation engine.

This engine will strive to bring academia, industry, government, and communities together in Wisconsin to provide solutions for making food systems more sustainable in a way that restores current land and water resources and improves the potential for future production. In this way, Wisconsin can use its considerable strengths in agriculture to create a more resilient, sustainable, and innovative Ag sector that creates significant economic growth and builds a modern workforce with new, quality jobs.

We believe NSF picked the WiSys-led coalition as one of 44 awardees out of over 400 concepts, because of the alignment of WiSys programs with the NSF goal of “innovation anywhere, opportunities everywhere.” The NSF Engines program supported and boosted WiSys programs in support of the regional institutions. In FY2023, we engaged close to 1500 innovators; evaluated and supported over 200 ideas; awarded \$837,000 in grants to faculty, staff, and students to support those ideas; and leveraged 60 partnerships to strengthen the innovation ecosystem.

We look forward to continuing to adapt and grow with the changing times. Our board chair of the past ten years, David J. Ward, frequently describes WiSys as a “learning organization” as we listen, learn, and adapt to better serve our 11 regional campuses. WiSys' tag line applies equally to our organization as it does for the innovators we support.

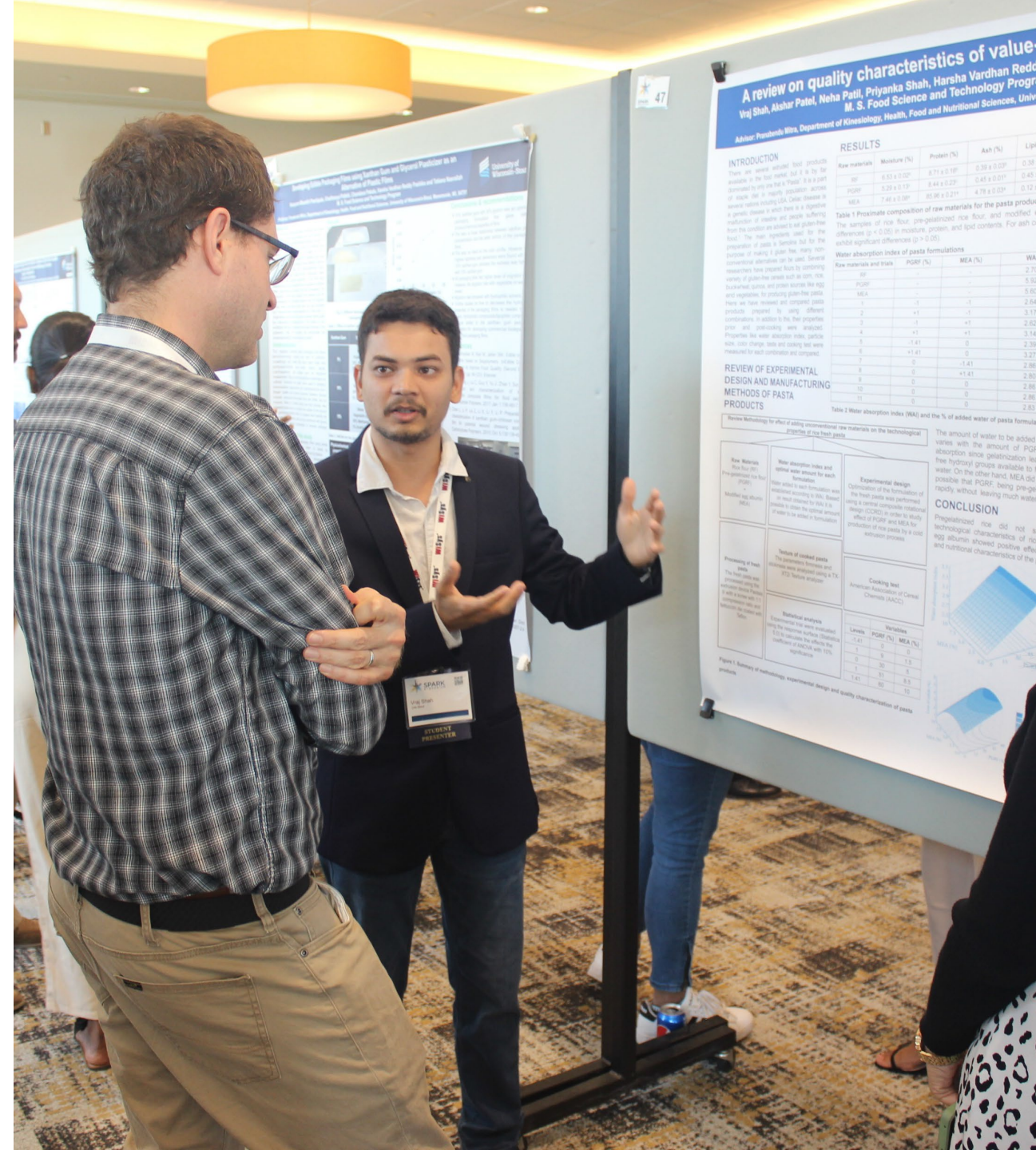
Eureka isn't a moment. It's a Process.®



Arjun Sanga
WiSys President

Vision

A **collaborative culture of innovation** among the Universities of Wisconsin exists to **solve major challenges**, contribute to a creative workforce, and add value to Wisconsin's economy and beyond.





Mission

Supporting Universities of Wisconsin faculty, staff, students, and alumni to **innovate for impact.**

Strategic Pillars

I. PEOPLE - Cultivating and supporting innovators.

- Faculty, students, staff, and alumni need encouragement, resources, space, and time to unlock their innovation potential.

II. IDEAS - Stimulating innovation to impact.

- Innovations need development, protection, talent, and capital to become impactful products, services, and businesses.

III. ECOSYSTEM - Building and maintaining a sustainable innovation ecosystem.

- Reliable and accessible support for innovation needs a collaborative process.

WiSys Supports:

University of Wisconsin
Eau Claire

 UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
GREEN BAY

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
LA CROSSE UWE

UWO | UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
OSHKOSH

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
PARKSIDE

P UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
PLATTEVILLE

 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
RIVER FALLS

 University of Wisconsin
Stevens Point

 University of
Wisconsin-Stout
Wisconsin's Polytechnic University

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
Superior

 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
WHITEWATER

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Year at a Glance



\$837,000

Grants awarded to
Universities of
Wisconsin



1,477

Innovators engaged



201

Ideas supported



60

External partnerships
leveraged by WiSys

*see appendix at end for full numbers



Congratulations to our partners on winning the NSF Engines Development Award!



Wisconsin can be at the forefront of Advancing Sustainable Agriculture

- Leading the need for sustainable food systems for the future
- Driving positive economic outcomes
- Developing a modern workforce with new, quality jobs

The Opportunity

Wisconsin can be a global leader in bringing forth systemic changes in our Food Systems to meet the needs of the present while positively impacting food production and consumption for future generations

Goals that address this challenge will create:

- A more resilient, sustainable, and innovative Ag sector
- Significant economic growth
- A modern workforce with new, quality jobs



Growth of Innovation On-Ramp



As WiSys works to grow innovation throughout the state, our WiSys Innovation On-Ramp program has evolved and grown tremendously since its inception in 2017. Innovation in Aging was the competition's original title and focus, and over the course of 5 years, there were over 140 participants at UW-Green Bay.

In spring 2022, the program removed the focus on aging, added educational coursework, and turned into Innovation On-Ramp. These changes opened it up to students of all disciplines and helped students better develop an innovation skill set for use in the competition and real-world scenarios. In the fall of 2022, Innovation On-Ramp expanded to UW-Platteville and its Prototype Hackathon, and there were 365 registrants between both programs.

[Learn more about WiSys Innovation On-Ramp.](#)

WiSys Quick Pitch Goes National

WiSys Quick Pitch, a research-focused student pitch competition, was featured at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research when the major conference was hosted by UW-Eau Claire in April.

The annual conference promotes undergraduate research, scholarship and creative activity, offering students from all disciplines and institutions of higher education the chance to showcase their work on a national stage.

More than 500 students from across the country applied to participate in WiSys Quick Pitch at the conference. Participants had three minutes to impress a panel of judges with their ability to explain the value of their research to society. Before the competition, students received communication training from WiSys and UW System campus experts.





**Pillar I:
CULTIVATING AND
SUPPORTING INNOVATORS**

Section Highlights

18-20 **Innovators of the Year**

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- Dr. William Parker
- Dr. Philip J. Parker
- WiSys Innovation On-Ramp Planning Committee

CARL E. GULBRANDSEN

**INNOVATORS OF
THE YEAR**

UW-EAU CLAIRE DR. DAVID E. LEWIS

WiSys named Dr. David E. Lewis, Professor Emeritus of Chemistry at UW-Eau Claire, one of its 2023 Innovators of the Year.

Lewis has been the recipient of numerous WiSys grants throughout the years and has supported WiSys since its inception in 2000. He has disclosed 13 technologies to WiSys, which primarily focused on imaging agents and anticoagulants. Two of the submitted technologies ultimately became issued patents.

In 2015, Lewis was admitted to the Royal Society of Chemistry as a fellow. He has also received two awards from the American Chemical Society, and in 2016, he received the University Faculty Excellence in Scholarship Award from Eau Claire. In 2019, he was awarded the V.V. Markovnikov Medical for Outstanding Achievement in Organic Chemistry from Lomonosov Moscow State University in Russia.

Lewis earned his B.S., PhD, and D.Sc in Chemistry at the University of Adelaide in Australia. Before joining the Eau Claire faculty in 1997, he worked at the University of Arkansas, University of Illinois, Baylor University, and South Dakota State University.



UW-LA CROSSE DR. SUJAT SEN

WiSys named Dr. Sujat Sen, Assistant Professor of Chemistry & Biochemistry at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, one of its 2023 Innovators of the Year.

Sen has submitted two disclosures to WiSys, both of which are accepted technologies. One has a patent filed and is under prosecution, while the other is a provisional patent. He is also the recipient of a WiSys Launch Grant, which helped him with one of his technologies. Sen has also been an advocate of the WiSys Student Ambassador Program.

The Sen Research Group at UW-La Crosse manages the Electrochemistry & Materials Science Research Lab. The group is working on creating access to cheap and clean energy, as well as the development of renewable energy technology. The research group has received support from the National Science Foundation (NSF), Wisconsin Space Grant Consortium, ACSPRF, and WiSys.

Sen earned his B.S. in (Honors) Chemistry from St. Stephen's College in Delhi, India, before earning his M.S. in Polymer Chemistry at the University of Reading in the U.K. He earned his PhD in Chemistry at Brown University in 2014.



INNOVATION CHAMPIONS

WISYS VENTURE HOME-EAU CLAIRE ELAINE COUGHLIN

WiSys has named Elaine Coughlin one of its 2023 Innovation Champions.

Coughlin is the director of entrepreneurship and investment at the Pablo Group and the co-chair for the WiSys VentureHome-Eau Claire steering committee. She was also previously the community manager at CoLab, the home of the WiSys VentureHome location in Eau Claire.

Coughlin has been a key partner in the WiSys VentureHome program since its inception and leads the Eau Claire Level Up! Pre-seed Accelerator. 30 startups have graduated from the program since it began. Her leadership and support of local entrepreneurs have been instrumental in growing the region's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Coughlin earned her associate's degree in marketing from Chippewa Valley Technical College and her B.S. in business administration at UW-Stout.



UW-EAU CLAIRE MATTHEW JEWELL

WiSys has named Dr. Matthew Jewell one of its Innovation Champions for 2023.

Dr. Jewell is an associate professor of materials science and biomedical engineering at UW-Eau Claire.

Jewell has been a champion for WiSys Quick Pitch since it was first piloted at UW-Eau Claire in 2015 and has been the chair of the organizing committee for the campus event since 2017. His support has been instrumental in helping the program grow at Eau Claire and bringing WiSys Quick Pitch to the national stage at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research on the Eau Claire campus in April.

He is a strong supporter of undergraduate research on campus and has facilitated student engagement in WiSys programs, including the SPARK Symposium.

He has been awarded numerous grants throughout his teaching career, including nearly \$460,000 from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and \$225,000 from the US Department of Energy.

Jewell earned his B.S. in materials science & engineering, MS in materials science, and PhD in materials science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



UW-PARKSIDE WILLIAM PARKER

Dr. William Parker has been named one of the WiSys Innovation Champions for 2023.

Dr. Parker is an associate professor of physics and mathematics at UW-Parkside.

Parker has mentored numerous student innovators, including Brandon Behringer and Gabrielle Richardson, on the research and development of a novel vaccine chiller that is part of the WiSys portfolio. Behringer was named an Innovator of the Year in 2021 as an undergraduate, and Richardson won the Big Idea Tournament the same year.

He has been a strong supporter of WiSys programs, including the SPARK Symposium and Quick Pitch, both of which expand research opportunities for students and spark innovation at UW-Parkside.

Parker earned his B.S. in physics and B.A. in astronomy at the University of Texas Austin before earning his PhD in physics at The Ohio State University.



UW-PLATTEVILLE

PHILIP J. PARKER

Dr. Philip J. Parker has been named one of the WiSys Innovation Champions for 2023.

Dr. Parker is the interim dean of the College of Engineering, Mathematics, and Science at UW-Platteville.

Parker has been a champion of researchers and innovators on the UW-Platteville campus. He has facilitated feedback from campus faculty about their needs and challenges, which have influenced programs such as the WiSys SPARK Symposium.

His leadership has also been instrumental in the successful implementation of the WiSys Scholar Program, which supports prototyping efforts for nascent technologies in the WiSys portfolio.

Parker earned his B.S. in civil engineering and PhD in environmental health engineering at Clarkson University.



UW-GREEN BAY WISYS INNOVATION ON- RAMP PLANNING COMMITTEE

The planning committee was instrumental in transitioning from the original Innovation in Aging competition to Innovation On-Ramp, a five-week online course followed by an optional pitch event.

Innovation in Aging began in 2017 at UW-Green Bay; over 140 students participated in 5 years. Since the focus was on aging and ideas/inventions to help an aging population, the participation was limited to engineering and students in more technical fields. There was a desire to open it up to students in all fields of study and expand learning, so this planning committee created the five-week online course to help students learn innovative thinking skills and advance their ideas.

WiSys Innovation On-Ramp launched in the spring of 2022, and after a successful launch, it expanded to UW-Platteville in the fall. A total of 356 students registered for the program between the two schools.

The program now takes place during the fall semester, and UW-Eau Claire and UW-Stout were the next schools added in the fall of 2023.

The members of the planning committee are as follows: Susan Craver, Nazim Choudhury, Susan Gallagher-Lepak, Doreen Higgins, Wendi Holschbach, Myunghee Jun, Kim Krueger, Kathryn Marten, Stephanie Rhee, Nischal Thapa, Dean VonDras, Evelyn Olson, Tony Hanson, and Adhira Sunkara.



Accepting the award on behalf of the planning committee members (from left to right): Kathryn Marten, Nazim Choudhury and Susan Gallagher-Lepak.

WiSys Quick Pitch

@UW-River Falls



**Pillar 2: STIMULATING
INNOVATION TO IMPACT**

Section Highlights

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Campus Highlights

- UW-Eau Claire
- UW-Green Bay
- UW-La Crosse
- UW Oshkosh
- UW-Parkside
- UW-Platteville
- UW-River Falls
- UW-Stevens Point
- UW-Stout
- UW-Superior
- UW-Whitewater

UW-Eau Claire-Mayo Clinic-WiSys Biomedical Innovation Grant

UW-Eau Claire, Mayo Clinic Health System, and WiSys are continuing to grow their work together. The partnership between the three, which began in 2017, contains the Blugold Biomedical Innovator Grant. The grant, which is facilitated by WiSys, has 10 scholarships to give on a yearly basis to students who are pursuing careers in the medical field.

Throughout the partnership, there has been one invention disclosure to WiSys, as well as many medical studies. Studies conducted include 3D printing to enhance patient outcomes for cardiac surgeries, mRNA measurement, prenatal stress & neurodevelopment, using AI to diagnose diseases, and more.

To learn more about the partnership, click [here](#).



UW-Green Bay's Mitchell Bell wins WiSys Innovation On-Ramp for communication tools idea

UW-Green Bay communication student Mitchell Bell took first place and a \$1,000 prize in the WiSys Innovation On-Ramp Pitch Competition at UW-Green Bay on February 15, 2023.

Bell's winning idea was to redesign expensive tools used in social media management, video production, marketing and public relations to be cheaper and more user-friendly.

By winning the competition, Bell was eligible to compete in WiSys' statewide entrepreneurship contest, the WiSys Big Idea Tournament, in April.

Business administration and art student Sophia Wysocki won the second place prize of \$500 for "CarryMore"—an insertable, air-tight divider for water bottles that can carry all of your drinks in one container.





UW-La Crosse professor & student place at WiSys APPStart Challenge

UW-La Crosse professor Heather Schenck won the WiSys APPStart Challenge for her EasyChair app. The app will aid students taking organic chemistry on how to draw the “chair,” which is a six-carbon flexible ring and difficult to draw. EasyChair helps users with the accuracy of their models. The app is currently under construction. ***[Learn more here.](#)***

Graduate student Logan Larson earned third place in the WiSys APPStart Challenge for Castify, a podcasting platform. Larson, who is studying software engineering, came up with the idea since podcasts don't have their own specific apps like social media platforms. ***[Learn more here.](#)***

[Learn more about the WiSys APPStart Challenge.](#)

UW Oshkosh hosts WiSys SPARK 2023 Symposium

Over 200 faculty, students, and other academics from across the state attended the WiSys SPARK Symposium. Hosted annually by a different Universities of Wisconsin campus, this year's event featured three days of competitions, events, and networking.

The Innovation Awards were awarded to faculty, staff, and community members from different universities across the state for various initiatives. The Quick Pitch State Final was also held, with UW-Stout graduate student Areeba Ali winning the top prize. UW-Eau Claire's Josh Baker won the poster competition for his poster on a microcontroller system for a solar water heater.



UW-Parkside's Dr. Ramasamy receives \$220K NSF Grant

Dr. Vijayalakshmi Ramasamy, Chair and Associate Professor, Director of the MSCIS Program of Computer Science, was awarded \$220,000 from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for Improving Undergraduate STEM Education Computing in Undergraduate Education. The grant is a four-year project totaling \$2 million in funding, which was divided between three different institutions, including UW-Parkside. The grant will focus on online learning and schools sharing resources with each other.

Dr. Ramasamy has been a researcher and educator for over 27 years. She has previously worked with WiSys in various research development programs and received XXXX grants.

[Learn more about the grant.](#)



Photo credit: UW-Parkside



UW-Platteville's engineering students work to combat invasive species

Engineering students at UW-Platteville are working to combat various invasive species, including quagga and zebra mussels. The invasive species can cause huge ecosystem issues in lakes, and the students are working with the USGS to find new solutions for eliminating them. Dr. Thomas Zolper, associate professor of mechanical engineering at UW-Platteville, leads the project, with students Logan Budack, Kade Muehlenhaupt, AJ Pomplun, and Dorothy Schildt working on design.

The goal of the project was to execute a design that infuses carbon dioxide into the invasive species, which kills them. Through trial and error, the students ultimately came up with an umbrella-like steel design that can complete the task. WiSys is currently working with the USGS to patent this product.

Photo credit: UW-Platteville

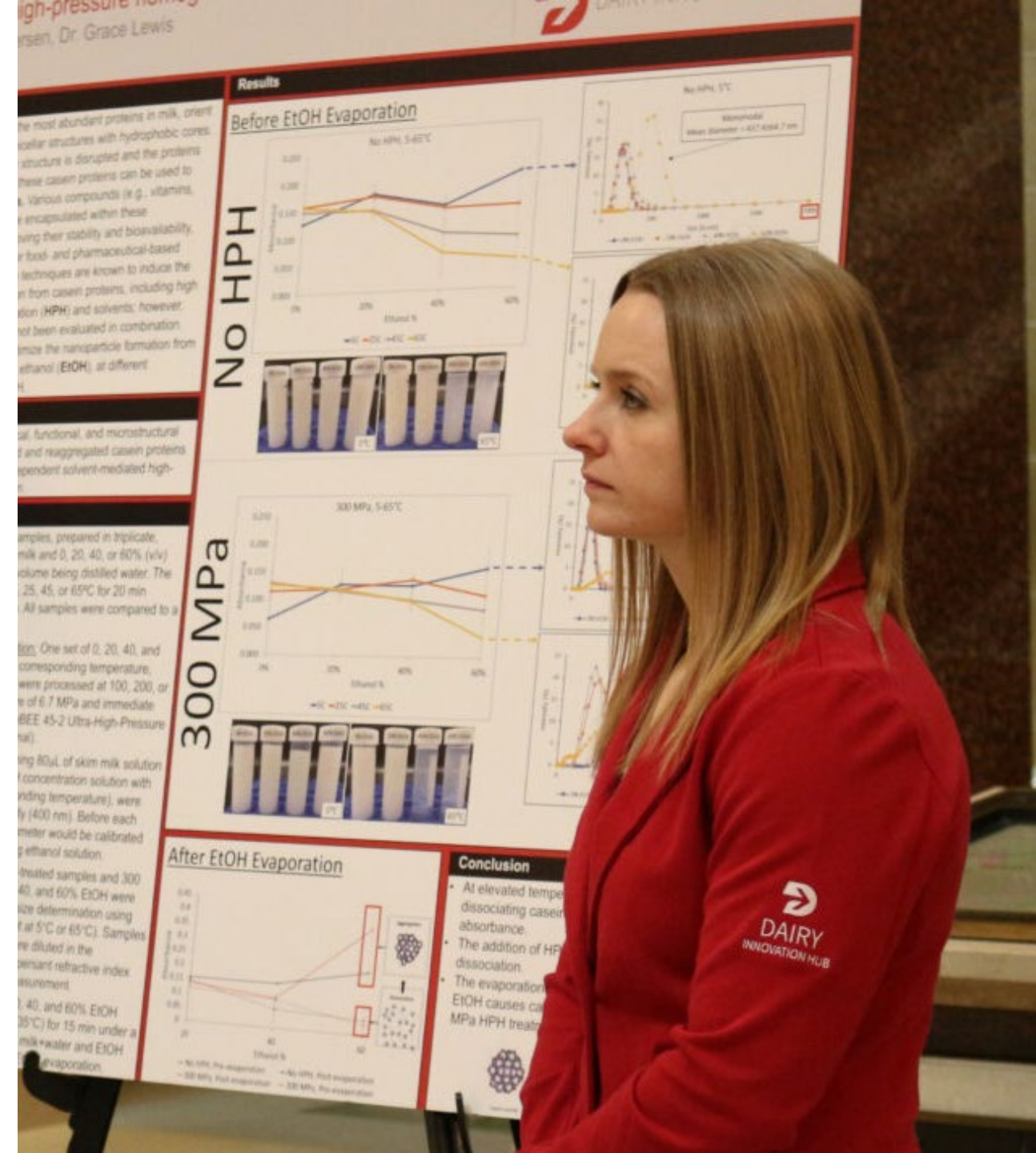
[Learn more about the project.](#)

UW-River Falls's Dr. Lewis researches new uses for dairy

Dr. Grace Lewis, an assistant professor of food science, is researching new ways that dairy can be used. With the support of the Dairy Innovation Hub at UW-River Falls, Dr. Lewis is focusing on the protein casein. Lewis and others “are looking at ways the protein can be broken apart and reassembled, which allows for adding other compounds such as vitamins or medicine.”

Utilizing casein in medicine or other products could help the dairy industry if it's successful since demand for dairy would increase, which helps sustainable agriculture work across Wisconsin, which has the most dairy farms of any state in the country. WiSys is also working with Dr. Lewis on other projects, including product disclosures.

Learn more about the research [here](#).



UW-Stevens Point's Becker earns third place in Quick Pitch State Final

Junior Elliot Becker earned third place at the Quick Pitch State Final, held at the WiSys SPARK Symposium in August. The biochemistry and biology pre-medicine major gave a three-minute pitch titled "Timing of Puberty in Mice Transgenic for CCL2," which initially secured her first place at the UW-Stevens Point Quick Pitch Event in May.

Becker, who plans to attend medical school after completing her undergraduate degree, prepared for Quick Pitch throughout her spring semester by spending several hours in the lab each week and crafting her pitch.

[Learn more about Elliot and her research here.](#)



UW-Stout's Areeba Ali wins Quick Pitch State Final

Areeba Ali won both the UW-Stout Quick Pitch competition and the Quick Pitch State Final, the latter of which took place during the WiSys SPARK Symposium at UW-Oshkosh.

Ali, a graduate student studying food science and technology, won for her presentation "Development of Eco-friendly Milk Whey Protein Isolate Biodegradable Packaging." The objective of Ali's study was to optimize biodegradable whey protein isolate (WPI) packaging films as an alternative to plastic packaging for protecting the environment and sustainability of the food processing industry.

Her project also won the "People's Choice" award at the state final event.





WiSys VentureHome opens in Superior

WiSys VentureHome opened its doors in the Old Post Office at 1401 Tower Avenue in Superior. The updated building, now home to the Small Business Development Center, has co-working space, new business development space, and an entertainment space for large events.

The redevelopment efforts were spearheaded by WiSys and championed by Superior Mayor Jim Paine. Additional support was provided by the Development Association, Entrepreneur Fund, and Superior Business Development Center. This space will provide numerous services for people looking to start a new business and receive support, and VentureHome will help to connect these entrepreneurs to others throughout its VentureHome network throughout the state.

[Learn more about WiSys VentureHome Superior here.](#)



UW-Whitewater hosts the WiSys Big Idea Tournament

UW-Whitewater hosted the WiSys Big Idea Tournament—a statewide student entrepreneurship competition—on April 22, with 10 teams participating from across Universities of Wisconsin schools.

UW-Milwaukee’s Michelle Lyle, a student studying French, took home a \$2,500 prize for pitching International Travel Advisor (ITA), an organization that supports remote workers, creatives and entrepreneurs who would like to live abroad by simplifying international travel logistics and helping them secure sustainability to make it work.

UW-Whitewater’s Chad Tjugum took second place and a \$1,500 prize for presenting RaritiesMarket, Inc., a rare coin marketplace and database which aims to protect collectors, reduce the risk of counterfeits, increase access to information and improve market efficiency.



**Pillar 3: BUILDING &
MAINTAINING A
SUSTAINABLE
INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM**

AUG. 6-8 | UW DSH
CPA

Section Highlights

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- Level Up! Pre-seed Accelerator
 - VentureHome Connect
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- Grant Writing Academy
 - Ignite Grant recipient receives NSF funding
- 50 **WiSys SPARK Symposium**

Building a Regional Innovation Engine



Capitalize on the research, innovation, and entrepreneurial excellence in Wisconsin to catalyze systemic change in agriculture and food systems



Accelerate the **development of the regional innovation ecosystem** with deep and meaningful partnerships



Create a pervasive, distributed network of regional and local partners

- Leveraging WiSys VentureHome[®] as a physical regional network; and
- WiSys VentureHome Connect – digital community



Apply for Type II NSF Engine Award

- Goal of bringing in \$160M in seed funding to build the regional innovation engine
- 2x matched in cash and resources from other sources



External Funding Leveraged by WiSys and partners in support of NSF Engine activities

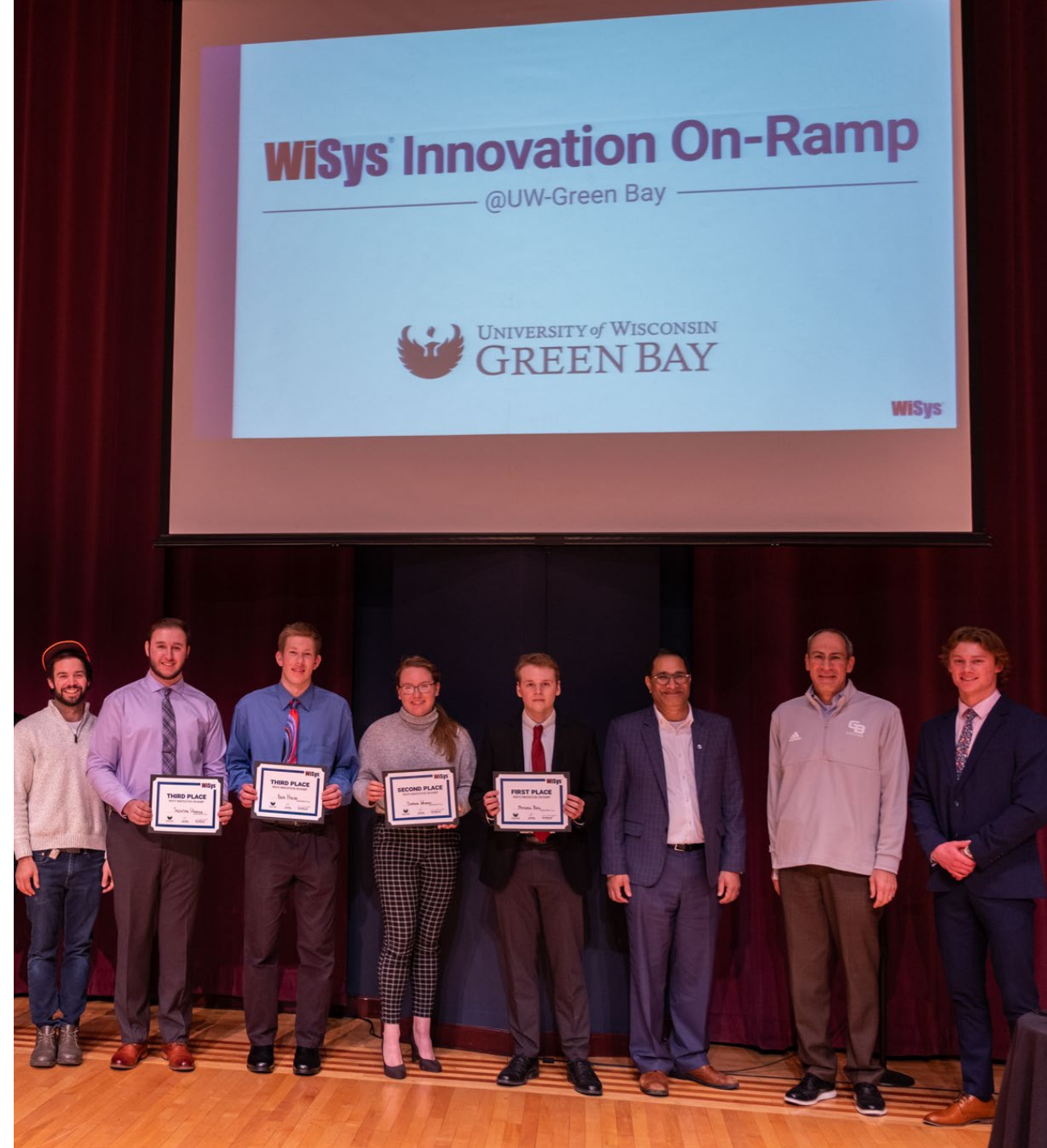
Project	Recipient	Source	Amount
Engine Development Grant	WiSys	NSF Engines Type 1 Grant	\$1,000,000
EPIIC Grant	UW-Eau Claire	NSF EPIIC Grant	\$400,000
Hard-tech accelerator	Starting Block Madison	SBA Growth Accelerator Partnership	\$150,000
Accelerate Biotechnological Innovations in Dairy (ABID)	UW-Madison Center for Dairy Research (CDR)	EDA Build-to-Scale	\$2,400,000
Entrepreneurship Partner Grant	WiSys	WEDC	\$257,500
Capital Catalyst (VentureHome Seed Fund)	WiSys	WEDC	\$700,000
Evaluation & Metrics	Bicentennial Innovation Challenge	WARF, WiSys, UWMRF	\$20,000
UW-Madison Large Research Proposal Assistance	Core implementation team/WiSys	Vice-Chancellor for Research, UW-Madison	\$120,000
Total			\$5,047,500

Innovation On-Ramp

In February, UW-Green Bay student Mitchell Bell won the WiSys Innovation On-Ramp Pitch Competition. Bell, a communications student, won for his idea to redesign tools that are used for social media management, video production, marketing, and public relations to be less expensive and more user-friendly. Five students participated in the pitch competition, which was the second since the program evolved from its original focus, Innovation in Aging.

Dr. Susan Gallagher-Lepak, Dean of the College of Health, Education, and Social Welfare, was part of the team that led the transition and planning for Innovation On-Ramp. “There wasn’t anything on the campus to help students develop innovative entrepreneurial thinking, and we really believe that it was something that any kind of student should have access to.”

With the shift from a focus on aging to a five-week online learning course and openness to all ideas and fields of study, there have been even more participants and ideas than before. When discussing the impact, Gallagher-Lepak spoke about the mission of UW-Green Bay: “We want to build scaffolded opportunities to help students be successful. We’re building high-impact practices where students have high engagement with faculty and staff where they’re doing hands-on activities. They’re trying new things and experimenting with innovative thinking.



WiSys VentureHome®



WiSys VentureHome is a network of startup hubs across the state. It connects entrepreneurs to statewide resources they may have not had access to otherwise, helping them get their initiatives or startups off the ground.

Current VentureHome locations include Eau Claire, Green Bay, Oshkosh, and Superior, with plans to expand to more locations.

Level Up! Pre-seed Accelerator

Throughout 2023, 30 startups participated in the Level Up! Pre-seed Accelerator. So far, 3 have received funding post-graduation. Overall, 76 workshops were conducted throughout the state, and 181 stakeholders and mentors were engaged.

After last year's accelerator was completed, WiSys reached out to participants via survey, and 89% of respondents were actively working on their Level Up! Startup, earning over \$1.2 million in cumulative revenue over the past 12 months.

[Learn more about the Level Up! Pre-seed Accelerator and upcoming sessions here.](#)



VentureHome Connect™

VentureHome Connect™ is the digital platform supporting the VentureHome™ network. The platform helps individuals connect their local initiatives to the statewide network, empowering them with resources and mentors they may not have access to otherwise. The mentor network will help them find new partners and grow their network through alumni who have also gone through VentureHome.

The software StartUpTree uses a series of questions to help match them with the right mentors, potential investors, employees to grow their staff, and more. Robust analytics allow WiSys to see metrics, have a more direct line of communication with local initiatives, and showcase founders.

[Learn more about VentureHome Connect.](#)





Grant Writing Academy

With the goal to empower the faculty and staff on Universities of Wisconsin campuses to apply for and receive more grants, we created the WiSys Grant Writing Academy. The program is conducted virtually over the course of the academic calendar and discusses how to find funding, writing and submitting proposals, grant management, and more. The academy began with a pilot at UW-Parkside in 2020 and 2022, with one graduate awarded the prestigious [NEH Summer Stipend award in 2023](#).

“The grant academy helped create manageable-sized tasks and create reasonable deadlines. I really appreciate the thought that went into creating a framework to help me help myself make progress on my proposal.”

-WiSys Grant Writing Academy participant

The program expanded in 2022 and 2023 and now includes 6 campuses: Eau Claire, Oshkosh, Parkside, River Falls, Stout, and Superior.



Ignite funded project receives federal NSF grant

UW Oshkosh received a \$1.6 million NSF grant for their interdisciplinary research on toxic algae, a project that began with a WiSys Ignite Grant in 2021.

The goal of the grant is to learn more about the impact of freshwater toxic algae blooms, which can threaten ecosystems in and around the bodies of water. Toxic algae blooms can also “result in billions of dollars in economic losses worldwide to industry, recreation and public health.”

[Learn more about the grant.](#)

[Learn more about the Ignite Grant program.](#)

WiSys SPARK Symposium

Over 200 students, professors, and academics from across the state attended the WiSys SPARK Symposium at UW-Oshkosh from August 6-8. There were 55 participants in the poster and innovation showcases, and the Quick Pitch State Final was held. Areeba Ali, a graduate student at UW-Stout, won for her presentation on the development of eco-friendly milk whey and biodegradable packaging. Since then, she has won the Wisconsin Biohealth Summit Communications Competition.

WiSys also hosted a workshop for the NSF Engine Development Grant, which had over 70 attendees ranging from deans to students and community members. The goal of the workshop was to identify key stakeholders and barriers for the Type 2 award.



WHO WE ARE

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- WiSys Staff
- Board of Trustees
- Advisory Committee
- Ambassadors & Interns
- Partners

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- Innovator Engagement by Campus
- Ideas Supported by Campus
- Grants by Campus

WiSys Staff



Arjun Sanga
President



Adhira Sunkara
Director of Strategy and
Innovative Ventures



Wilson Fay
Innovative Ventures
Associate



Tony Hanson
Manager of Intellectual
Property and Licensing



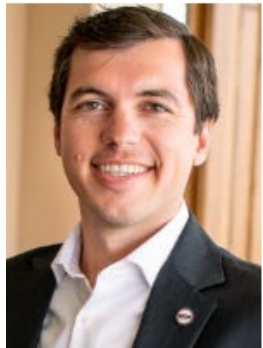
Margot DeBaker
Regional Intellectual
Property and Licensing
Associate



Allee Marti
Regional Intellectual
Property and Licensing
Associate



Sadie Uehling
Administrative
Coordinator



Mike Cenci
Intellectual Property &
Contracts Associate



Gina Polito Jahn
Manager of Research
Development



Carla Molloy
Senior Research
Development Associate



Blane Huppert
Sponsor & Partnership
Associate



Alicia Schiff
Senior Executive
Assistant



Evelyn Olson
Grants Coordinator



Elizabeth Krenzelok
Marketing &
Communications
Associate

Board of Trustees



David J. Ward
Chair, Board of Trustees



David Brukaradt
Secretary and Chair, FAA
Committee



Jeff Buhrandt



Carol Dahl



Jennifer Gottwald



Katherine Frank
Chair, Advisory
Committee



Dean Van Galen
Emeritus



Erik Iverson
Treasurer



Arjun Sanga
President



Melissa Sherman



Tomas Stafford
Vice Chair



Tom Still



Leon J. Ostrowski
Emeritus



**Lorrie (Keating)
Heinemann**
Emeritus

Advisory Committee



**Lawrence (Joe)
Allred**



Johannes Britz



David Brukardt
Secretary and Chair, FAA
Committee



Katherine Frank
Chair, Advisory
Committee



Melissa Hughes



Andrew Leavitt



Cris Peterson



Arjun Sanga
President



James C. Schmidt

WiSys Ambassadors & Interns



Caitlyn Lisota
UW-Stout



Lilianna Rolands
UW-River Falls



Kim Krueger
UW-Green Bay



Oludare Obadiya
Marketing &
Communications
Intern



Charles Zhu
Innovative Ventures
Intern



Zoe Zuleger
Research Development
Intern

Not pictured:

Marty Bond, UW-La Crosse
Dani Lehto, UW-Eau Claire
Sydney Nelson, UW-Whitewater

WiSys Partners

Event & Program Sponsors:

Noble Applications
Platteville Regional Chamber
Boyle Fredrickson
Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation
UW Extended Campus
Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
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UW-Green Bay
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StartingBlock Madison
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UW-Green Bay
UW Oshkosh
UW-Platteville
UW-Superior

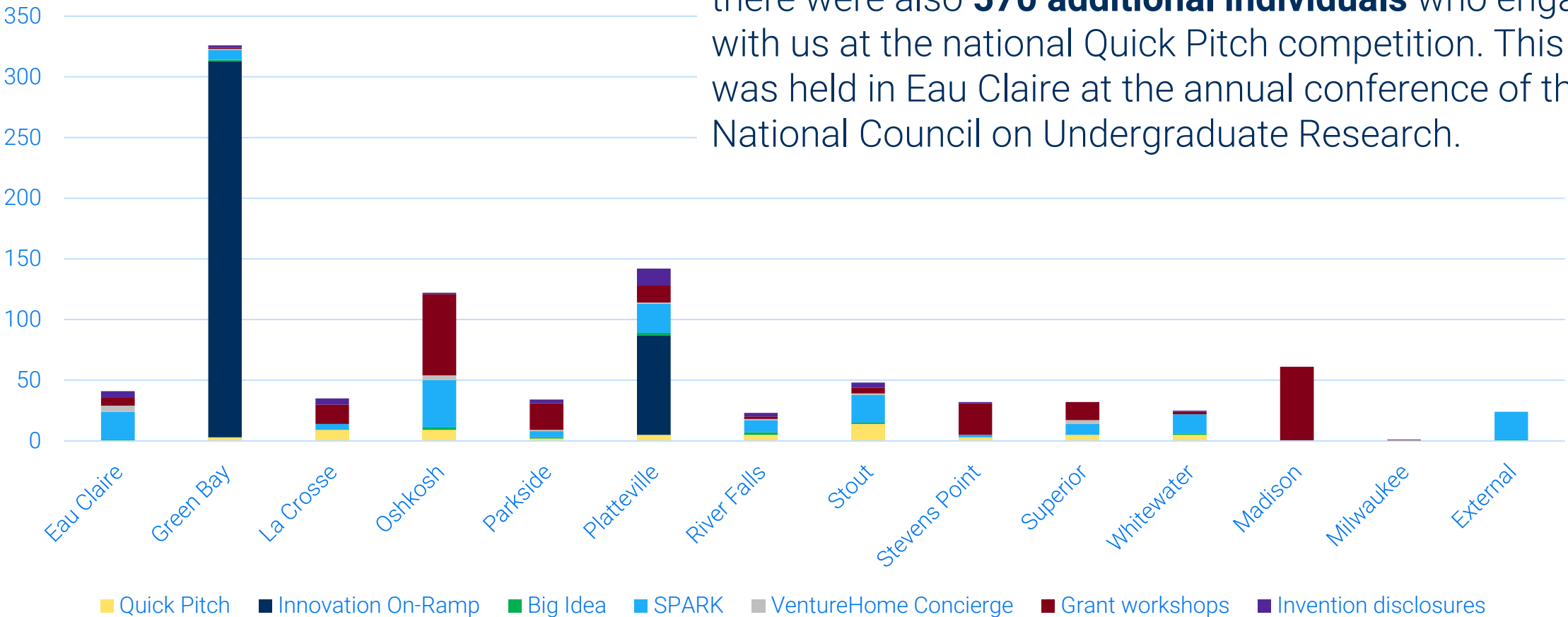
NSF Engines Partners:

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UW-Green Bay
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UW-Madison
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UW-Stevens Point
UW-Stout
UW-Superior
UW-Whitewater
Food and Farm Exploration Center
J.F. Brennan Company
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Pablo Group
The Development Association
The Rural Resiliency Project, Annie's Project
US Geological Survey
WI Department of Natural Resources Waste and
Materials Management Program
UWM Research Foundation
Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation
Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
Wisconsin Technology Council
Grasslands 2.0

APPENDIX

Innovator Engagement by Campus

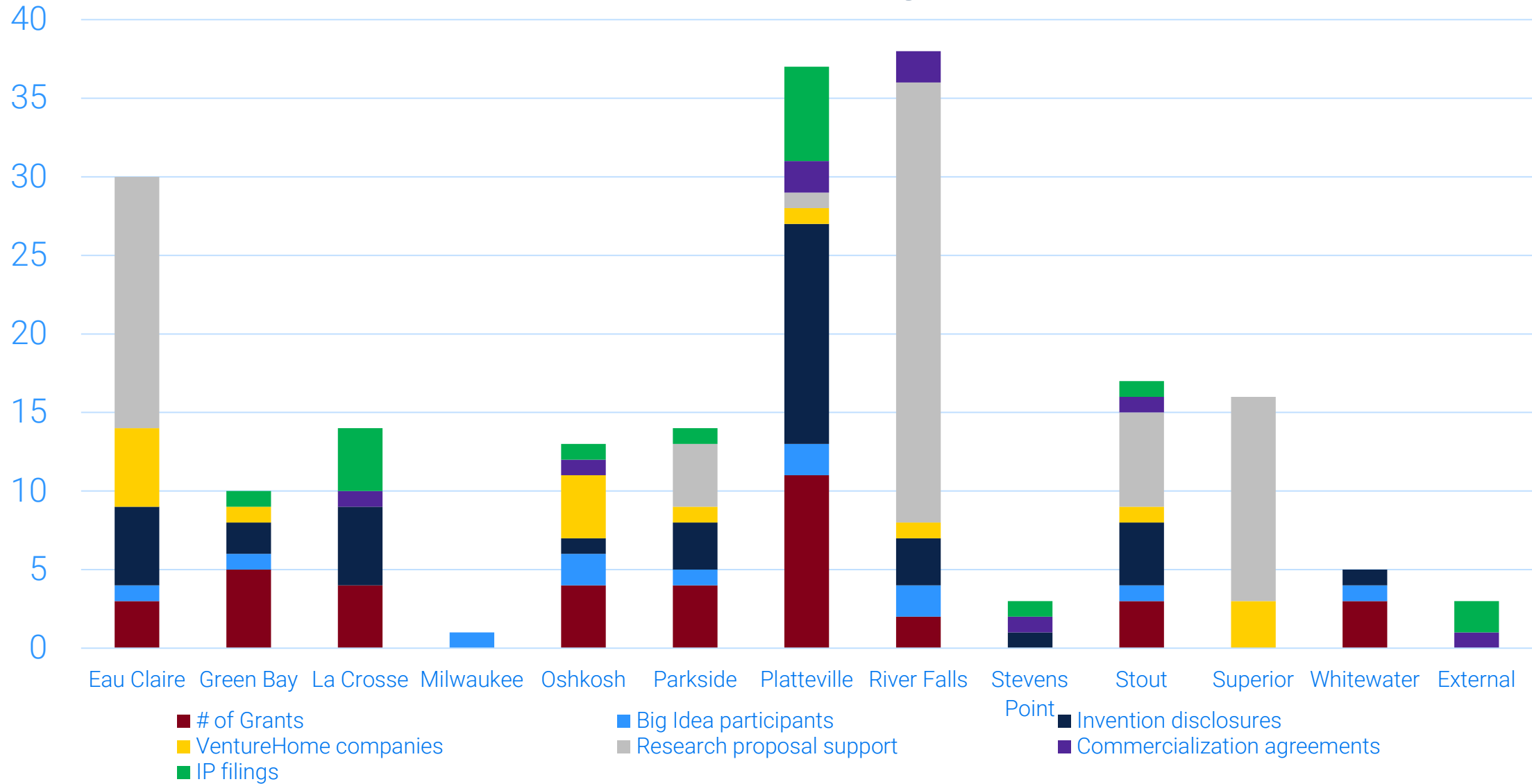
In addition to the 946 engagements represented below, there were also **570 additional individuals** who engaged with us at the national Quick Pitch competition. This event was held in Eau Claire at the annual conference of the National Council on Undergraduate Research.



FY 2023

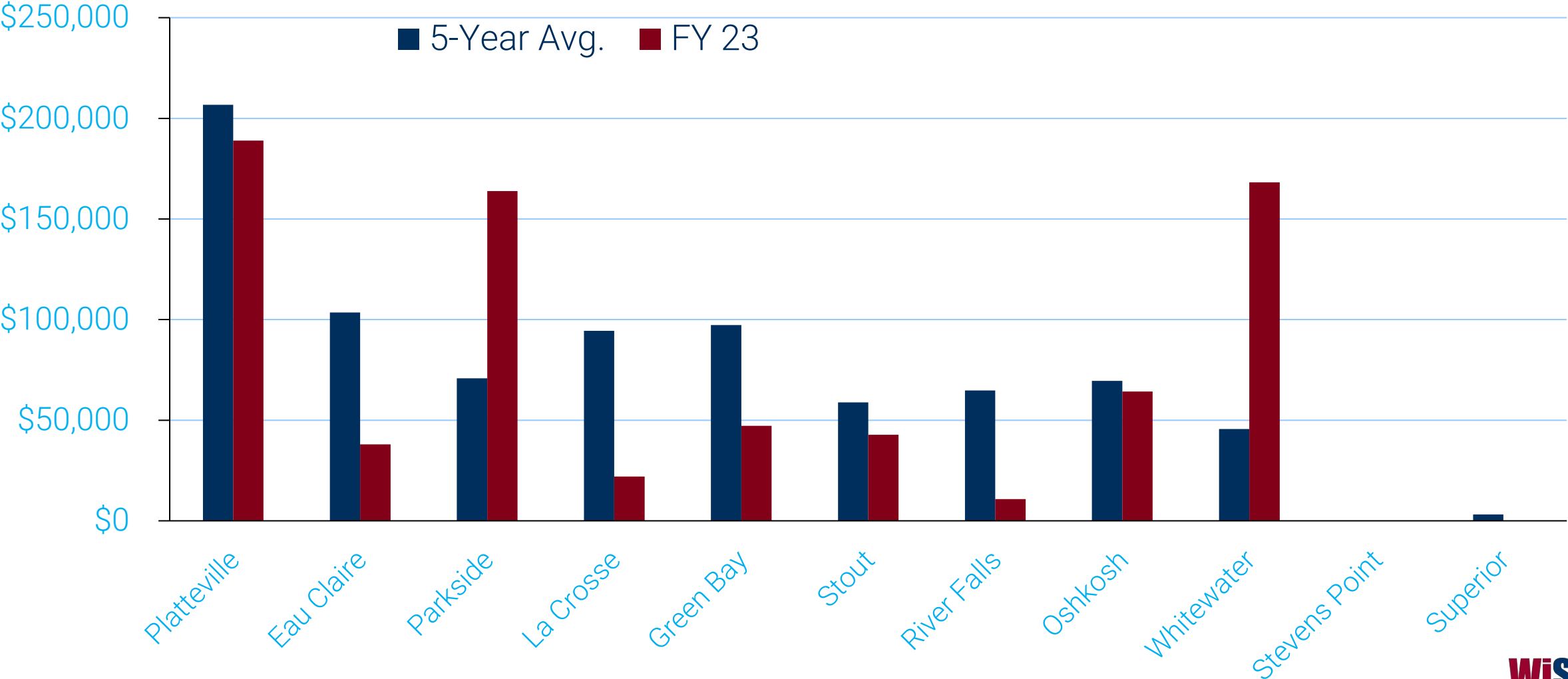


Ideas Supported by Campus

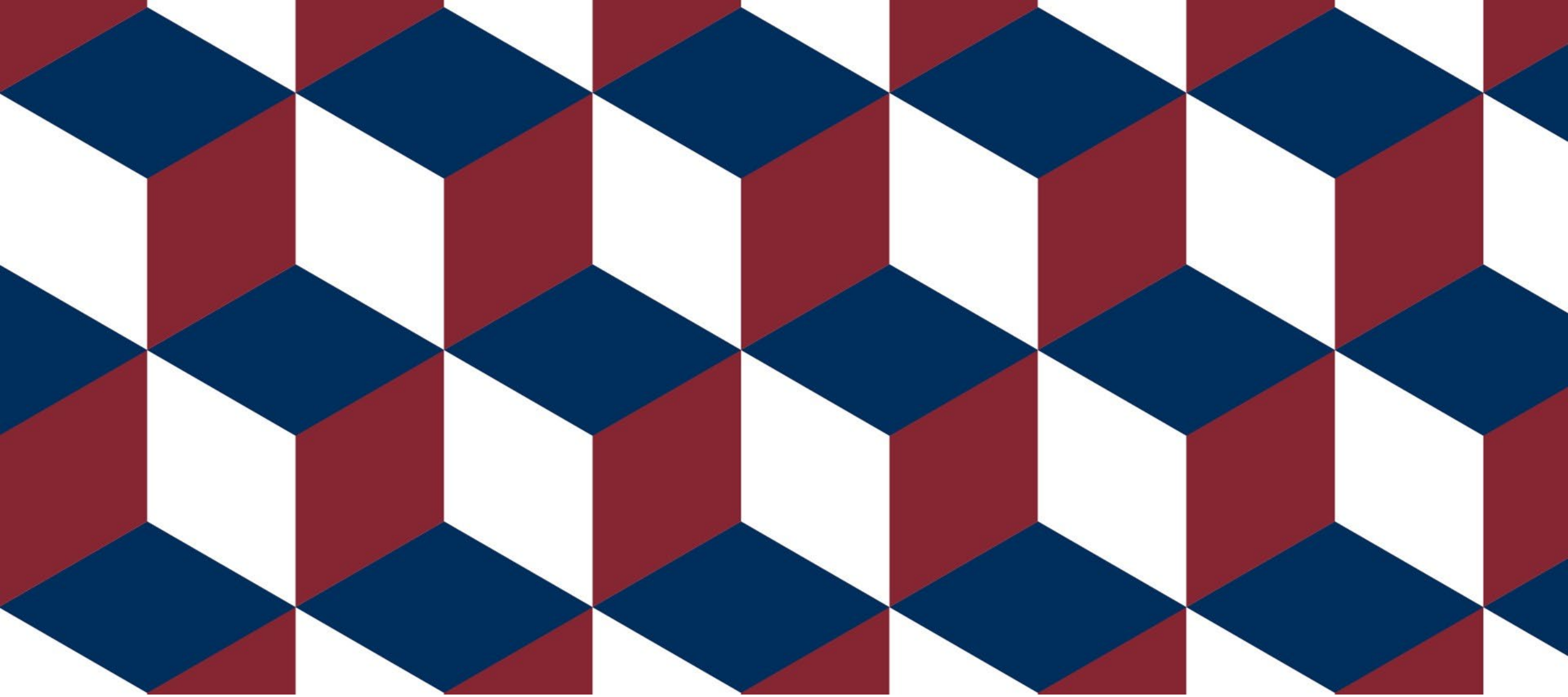


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Grants by Campus



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Eureka isn't a moment. It's a process. ®