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UNH Paul College Launches Innovation Lab for Rapid Prototyping of New Products
3D Printer, Image Scanning System Made Possible by Support from Borealis Ventures, Unitil

DURHAM, N.H. – For the first time, University of New Hampshire students will be able to rapidly prototype new products – in a matter of hours – with a 3D printer and 3D image scanning system that are part of the new Innovation Lab at the Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics.

Paul College recently launched the Innovation Lab, which was made possible by support from Borealis Ventures, New Hampshire’s largest venture capital firm, and Unitil, a public utility holding company with operations in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts. The lab is equipped with a 3D printer from MakerBot and 3D image scanning system from NextEngine.

“The Innovation Lab will leverage Paul College's considerable reputation in the areas of product innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainability, and supports the college’s commitment to collaborative and experiential learning. We are delighted that we are able to provide this new facility for UNH students and the next generation of entrepreneurs,” UNH Provost Lisa MacFarlane said.

“The new Innovation Lab gives students a complete experience starting from a concept and translating that creative idea into a product prototype. Normally, developing a prototype takes months, and entrepreneurs usually have nothing to show during the market research phase. However, the Innovation Lab allows students to have a prototype in hand in a matter of hours that can then be refined based on customer feedback,” said Venky Venkatachalam, professor and associate dean of academic programs at Paul College.

Todd Black ‘87, senior vice president for external affairs and customer relations at Unitil and chair of the Paul College dean’s advisory board, said providing UNH students the technology and environment to learn how to rapidly move from concept to commercialization will give them an entrepreneurial edge.

“For people like me, the ability to develop a prototype in a matter of hours is awesome. The new Innovation Lab is a huge service to the students who are coming through the new business school. We will probably find in a year or two that these students will assume that this is just how product prototyping always has been done,” said Black, who earned a bachelor’s of business administration from UNH.

Jesse Devitte, co-founder and managing director of Borealis Ventures, sees his company’s investment in the new Innovation Lab as an investment in the future.

"We created the Borealis Granite Fund as the first-ever venture capital fund dedicated to New Hampshire entrepreneurs because we know New Hampshire has the raw material to create successful technology companies. We are pleased to support the Innovation Lab’s launch because we also know that UNH students
have the vision and passion to use the lab as a hands-on opportunity for experimenting, learning, and innovating. In short, today's Innovation Lab students are the future of tomorrow's technology companies," Devitte said.

Spencer Roux, a Paul College MBA student who has a background in mechanical engineering, has already taken advantage of the Innovation Lab to test product ideas.

“The Innovation Lab grants myself and other students the ability to apply our education. This lab furthers the possibilities for my education, bridging the gap between concept and reality. From a mechanical engineering perspective, the lab is a necessary tool for testing the validity of an idea and is an exciting addition to my MBA experience,” said Roux, of Newmarket.

The UNH Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics offers a full complement of high-quality programs in business, economics, accounting, finance, information systems management, entrepreneurship, marketing, and hospitality management. Programs are offered at the undergraduate, graduate, and executive development levels. The college is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the premier accrediting agency for business schools worldwide. For more information, visit paulcollege.unh.edu.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,300 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

PHOTOS
http://www.unh.edu/news/img/innovationlab1.jpg

Venky Venkatachalam, associate dean of academic programs and professor at the University of New Hampshire Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics (left), Todd Black, senior vice president of Unitil (center), and Jesse Devitte, co-founder and managing director of Borealis Ventures, discuss the significance of the new Innovation Lab at the Paul College.
Credit: Mike Ross/UNH Photographic Services

http://www.unh.edu/news/img/innovationlab2.jpg

Kevin Klosek-Stevens, left, and Spencer Roux observe a 3D printer in the new Innovation Lab at the Paul College.
Credit: Mike Ross/UNH Photographic Services

-30-

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