



# Annual Report 2025



Derby Entrepreneurship  
Center at Tufts

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“I’ve learned that my ability to innovate and embrace an entrepreneurial mindset can have an impact beyond my Entrepreneurship minor. By fully adopting these values, I found that I could improve my performance both academically and personally.”

**Nolan, A25, Entrepreneurship Minor**

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# Welcome

## Dear Friends of the Derby Entrepreneurship Center,

This year reminded us how quickly an entrepreneurial community can evolve when people are given the support and tools to pursue their ideas. Our students—and our broader community—continued to grow in number, engagement, and accomplishments. We celebrated a record 157 graduates from the Entrepreneurship Minor and the Entrepreneurship & Social Impact Minor, and our co-curricular programs now reach thousands across Tufts and beyond.

At the same time, new enabling technologies—including generative AI tools —have lowered the barrier to market research, rapid prototyping, and launching fully working businesses with minimal startup costs. We embraced these tools in our courses and programs to help students learn foundational skills faster, explore concepts more deeply, and bring ideas to life with greater confidence. The impact is clear: more students are launching real ventures, gaining meaningful hands-on experience, and developing the entrepreneurial mindset and skillset that will serve them well in any career they choose.

Above all, we remain grounded in our purpose: helping students become the entrepreneurial leaders they aspire to be. We are proud of what this community achieved, and we are even more excited for what lies ahead.

**Kevin and Elaine**



# We Build Entrepreneurial Leaders



▲ **Katie and Christine** pitching their idea from an Entrepreneurship course at the Tufts New Ventures Competition.

Right now, a Tufts student is prototyping an app using AI. Another student is brainstorming with their friends to create community spaces for families who don't have access to basic resources. A third student is building a social media campaign for a customer as part of an entrepreneurial internship project.

This is the **Derby Entrepreneurship Center**. We help students, alumni, and the Tufts community develop an entrepreneurial mindset and skillset through hands-on learning experiences, and student grants and prizes to transform ideas into action.

Here, students discover they can defy expectations and achieve what they didn't think was possible: philosophy majors create and launch apps, social impact entrepreneurs pilot potential solutions, and students in corporate settings lead at every level.

The award-winning Center is where students bring entrepreneurial ideas to life at Tufts. Through academic programs, hands-on learning experiences, and equity-free funding, students see opportunities and create change.

As part of the **Gordon Institute**, students access a large portfolio of courses and co-curricular experiences in entrepreneurship, innovation, leadership and management, tied together with profound purpose.

Together, we're building an ecosystem where entrepreneurial thinking meets applied research meets leadership development. Every major, every background, every idea. They all belong here.

Let's show you how it works...



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### Kevin Oye

Executive Director  
Tufts Gordon Institute

### Elaine Chen

Director  
Derby Entrepreneurship Center



# We Build Entrepreneurial Leaders



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Let's show you how it works...

# 2025 By the Numbers

793

UNIQUE  
STUDENTS  
+9% YOY

1,246

COURSE  
ENROLLMENTS  
+9% YOY

60+

EVENTS  
HOSTED  
+20% YOY

32

ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
COURSES

157

ENT AND ESI MINORS  
GRADUATED  
+60% YOY

2,500+

UNIQUE  
PARTICIPANTS  
+14% YOY

\$300k+

COMPETITION, PRIZES,  
GRANTS, AWARDS  
DISTRIBUTED



# Where We Fit

## Innovation thrives at intersections.

Derby Entrepreneurship Center operates where disciplines meet. Intersections happen across majors, identity groups, and academic levels. Students, alumni, and faculty connect across disciplines and engage with the diverse Greater Boston innovation ecosystem—extending collaboration beyond campus into a vibrant community of practice.

### Who We Serve

**Undergraduates** building foundational capabilities through minors, courses, and experiential learning outside the classroom.

**Graduate students** applying entrepreneurial thinking to advanced disciplines.

**Alumni** continuing their entrepreneurial journey with ongoing support.

**Faculty** integrating entrepreneurial methods into diverse curricula.

**Community** that shares our students' and alumni's passion for innovation and entrepreneurship.

**Industry partners** who are building their future workforce.



▲ **Nayab, founder of Matka**, won the Fletcher D-prize. She received a grant from the **Entrepreneurship and Innovation Fund** and joined our **Tufts Venture Accelerator** for summer 2025.



▲ **Jane, BFA25, founder of Jane Priester: Handmade in New York**, won the inaugural Creative Arts Prize offered in partnership with the SMFA.



▲ First year student **Marcela** cofounded **Know.Period**, a breast cancer prevention startup.

# Undergraduate Academic Programs



▲ Amir Hasson, who teaches Entrepreneurship for Social Impact, addresses students at an event.



# Building The Entrepreneurial Foundation

Entrepreneurship Education at Tufts focuses on developing the entrepreneurial mindset and skillset among our students. Our flexible, award-winning program is open to students from every discipline, creating custom pathways that meet each student where they are and take them where they want to go.

## Starting Where Interests Begin

Students often begin with a single course—usually a foundation or core—and quickly experience the value of learning the language of business from instructors who are practicing innovators and entrepreneurs. Many then go on to take additional courses that speak to their professional interests.

## Foundation, Core, and Electives

Foundation courses teach entrepreneurial methods in context, tailored to each field. Core courses build skills in finance, marketing, sales, and leadership, while electives let students explore creativity, innovation, and product development. Together, they form a flexible curriculum that adapts to student interests while reinforcing fundamentals.

## Pathway to the Minor

For students who want deeper engagement, the Entrepreneurship Minor offers formal recognition of this mindset. Complete 15 credits across foundation, core, and electives, and you graduate with the skillset to transform ideas into action. In 2025, 152 students earned the minor—a 60% increase year-over-year—underscoring both demand and impact.



# Our Minors

## The Entrepreneurship Minor

This year, 152 students graduated with the Entrepreneurship minor, representing a 60% increase year-over-year. Complete 15 credits across foundation, core, and electives, and you earn the Entrepreneurship Minor.

## The Entrepreneurship for Social Impact Minor

The Entrepreneurship for Social Impact Minor, created in partnership with Tisch College, follows the same flexible structure with an additional focus on civic purpose and community impact.

“Since my first year at Tufts, I’ve learned that my entrepreneurial spirit thrives most when I’m collaborating, prototyping, and solving real-world problems with others. Courses in Engineering Psychology and hands-on projects in Entrepreneurship taught me how to translate curiosity into action.”

**Caroline, A25, Entrepreneurship Minor**



▲ **Gavin Finn**, Professor of the Practice, speaks to a student about entrepreneurial marketing

## Faculty Who’ve Done It

Every course is taught by practitioner faculty—entrepreneurs who’ve built ventures, executives who’ve scaled organizations, innovators who’ve launched products. They bring real-world experience and connections into every classroom. They don’t just teach frameworks; they share what actually works.

# 1,246

COURSE  
ENROLLMENTS  
(9% YOY INCREASE)

# 793

UNIQUE  
STUDENTS  
ENROLLED



## Access for Everyone

Entrepreneurship courses are open to students in the School of Arts & Science, the School of Engineering, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, as well as graduate students. This cross-pollination creates richer discussions, stronger teams, and serendipitous innovations.

“I have learned so much about myself and grew as a person all thanks to the Derby Entrepreneurship Center. The engagement from professors and my peers throughout these past 4 years have been incredible in shaping who I am.”

**Luke, A25, Entrepreneurship Minor**



▲ Students with no engineering background learn to build interactive prototypes in just one semester.

## The Result

Graduates leave with more than entrepreneurial knowledge. They leave with confidence in their ability to create change. They launch ventures, join startups, drive innovation in corporations, and improve how nonprofits and government serve communities. They know how to identify opportunities and transform them into impact.

32

ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
COURSES

57

SECTIONS

# Faculty Recognition



## Jack Derby Receives Teaching and Mentorship Award

This year, Jack Derby, **Founder of the Derby Entrepreneurship Center and Professor of the Practice**, received the Faculty Teaching and Mentorship Award from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering.

His commitment to student success extends years beyond graduation: coaching undergraduates, graduate students, and alumni, making critical introductions, celebrating victories large and small. Jack exemplifies how practitioner faculty bring real-world experience to the classroom while maintaining connections long after commencement.



▲ Award winning author and marketing thought leader **David Meerman Scott** guest speaks at **Jack Derby's** Entrepreneurial Marketing class.



▲ **Kevin Oye, Elaine Chen, Jack Derby and Dean Karen Panetta** at the Awards Ceremony for the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering.



# Community and Connection

## Where Magic Happens

The best collaborations start with bringing the right people together. We consistently strive to build an innovation ecosystem within the Tufts community, creating experiences where students and alumni can make meaningful connections.

This year, we brought 2500+ unique participants together across 60+ events. We create spaces where students from different majors, schools, and universities cross paths, alumni share resources, and everyone can learn new skills.

### Our Programs and Events

Competitions and Prizes

Cross-University Events

Entrepreneurial Internship Program

Entrepreneurial Speaker Series

Entrepreneurship and Innovation Fund

Hackathons and Workshops

Infosessions and Open Houses

One to One Coaching

Socials, Mixers, and Events

Tufts Venture Accelerator



▲ Carol and Ishika, A25, Entrepreneurship Minor, welcome students to our signature event, the Entrepreneurial Taco Social.



▲ Students making connections at the Entrepreneurial Taco Social



# Learning by Doing Through Small Business Creation

Students are transforming ideas into action, moving beyond simulations to run companies and solve real problems. In the fall, workshops at the **FIRST Resource Center** helped students test concepts and build skills. Students learn how to take their ideas and transform them into impact.

The new **Starting a Small Business** course challenged students to build and launch a real business in just six weeks. Instead of final presentations, the course culminated in a trade show where students showcased their ventures. Every student conducted market research, several developed working prototypes, and a few even made first revenue.

Outside the classroom, the **Consumer Product Fair**—held each fall and spring—has become a signature event. Students set up booths, engaged customers, and learned lessons no simulation could teach. Student entrepreneurs offered apparel, food and beverage, art, photography, crochet plushies, custom jewelry, and more.



▲ Students build small businesses in class and at the **Consumer Product Fair**.

# 700+

TOTAL COACHING SESSIONS  
WITH ENTREPRENEURS IN  
RESIDENCE



▲ **Idicula Mathew** speaks to a student after a pitch competition.



▲ **Cody** offers impromptu advice at the Entrepreneurial Taco Social.

# 500+

STUDENTS AND  
ALUMNI SERVED



▲ **Carol and Entrepreneurs in Residence** give advice to entrepreneurial teams in a workshop.

## One to One Coaching

### Guidance When It Matters Most

This year, over 500 students and alumni gained clarity through more than 700 coaching sessions with Entrepreneurs in Residence. Sessions ranged from career path planning to idea validation, customer discovery, pitch preparation, and growth strategy.

Students left with sharper focus, stronger insights, and confidence in their next steps — guided by practitioners whose advice reflects real-time market realities.



▼ Semifinalists pose with faculty and staff at the Tufts new Ventures Competition.



▲ Neelofar, E25, presents her venture, Talk-Motion, at the **Tufts New Ventures Competition**. She first presented this venture as a first-year student, and in her senior year, she won 1st place in the Social Impact track.

# Competitions and Prizes

## Celebrating Excellence and Innovation

In the Fall, innovators took their first steps at the **Ideas Competition**, open to all students across Tufts. For many finalists, this was their first experience pitching a venture on stage. Undergraduate students earned recognition for extraordinary entrepreneurial achievement through the **Montle Prize**, also awarded in the fall.

In Spring, the **Tufts New Ventures Competition** brought students, faculty, staff, and recent alumni together to celebrate innovation.

Teams presented ventures across three tracks: General, Social Impact, and Healthcare and Life Science.

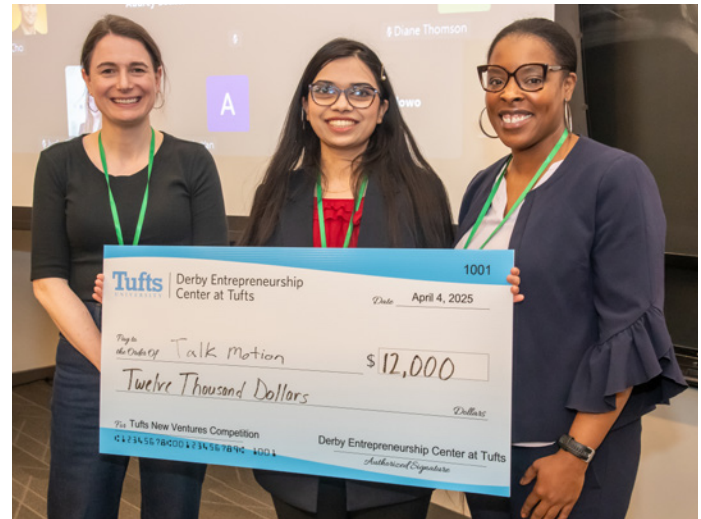
Months of work, countless iterations, customer interviews, and sleepless nights were distilled into minutes on stage. These moments revealed what entrepreneurship truly requires: passion matched with execution.

These competitions do more than distribute funding. They create momentum, build confidence, and are a turning point for when an idea becomes a venture. Many teams continue building regardless of results in the competition. This is the true measure of entrepreneurial commitment.

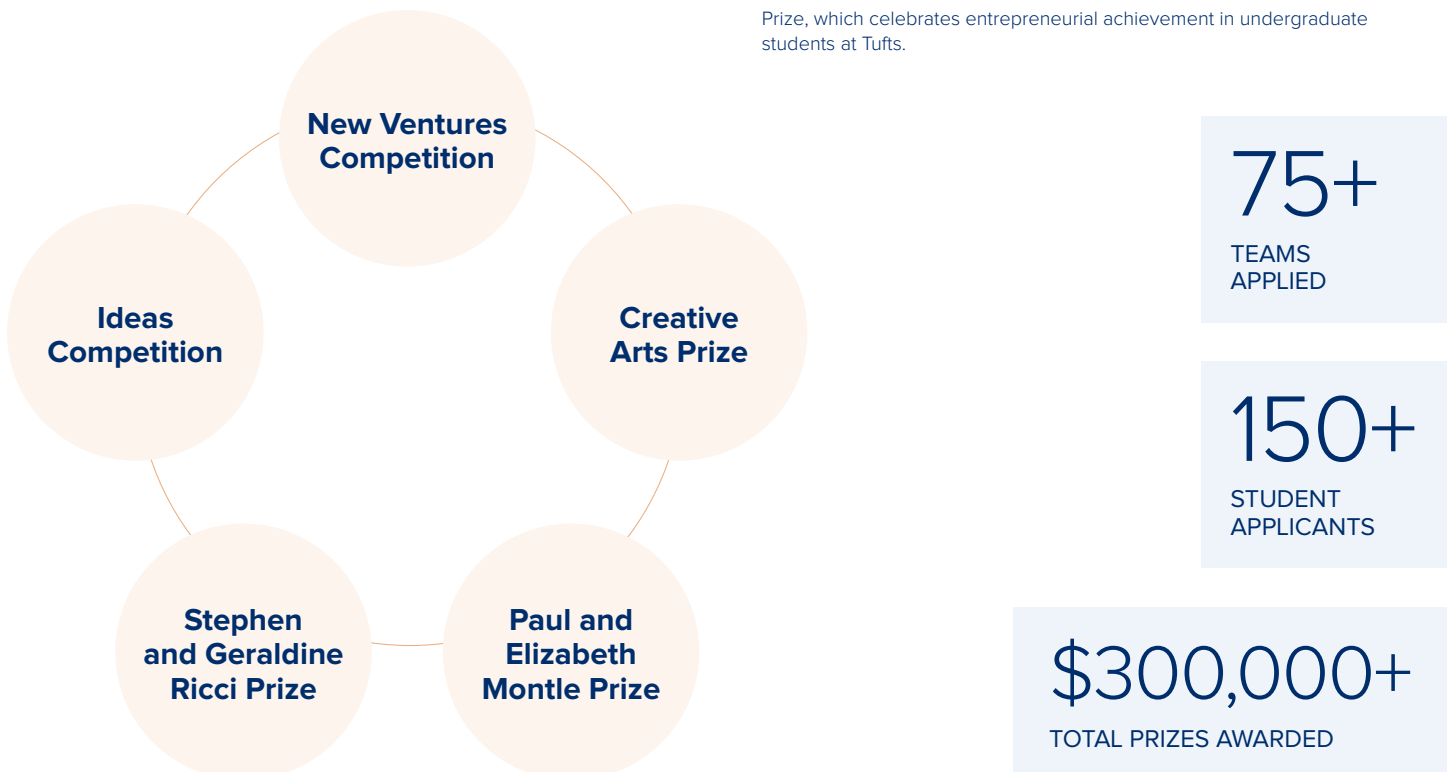


“As a person with a science background and no entrepreneurship experience, it gave me the confidence I needed to pursue this venture full time. It also opened a lot of doors and gave us connections to many people who have helped us.”

**New Ventures Competition Participant**



▲ **Neelofar** was also a winner of the Grit Award for the 2024 Montle Prize, which celebrates entrepreneurial achievement in undergraduate students at Tufts.





▲ Accelerator cohort with faculty and staff.



▲ Cohort members chatting.



▲ Accelerator cohort members and mock board members gather together on the last day of the program.

# Tufts Venture Accelerator

## From Traction to Scale

The **Tufts Venture Accelerator** helps student entrepreneurs transform promising ideas into viable ventures through ten intensive weeks of structure, accountability, and support.

This year, 20 student entrepreneurs across 8 teams worked full-time on ventures ranging from biotech innovations to social enterprises. Through weekly CEO roundtables, 1:1 coaching sessions, mock board meetings, and up to \$10,000 in venture funding, participants developed both their businesses and themselves as leaders.

The program demanded full commitment. In return, founders gained clarity, confidence, and capabilities that extend far beyond their current venture.

8

VENTURES  
IN COHORT

60+

MENTORS  
ENGAGED

\$80,000

TOTAL FUNDING PROVIDED



▲ **Natalia, MSIM 2025** and **Tufts Venture Accelerator** cohort member with an ed-tech venture, presents to high school students at the 2025 Entrepreneurship and Innovation Bootcamp.



▲ **Nayab, Fletcher MIB'25** winner of the Fletcher D-prize and **Tufts Venture Accelerator** cohort member with a social impact venture, speaks to high school students.

## Learning From Near-Peers

This summer, accelerator participants created a unique bridge between the accelerator and Pre-College programs for more than 50 high school students who are attending the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Bootcamp at Tufts.. Accelerator participants taught sessions to high school students, then delivered polished three-minute pitches as demonstrations.

Pre-College students practiced their pitches and learned from Accelerator participants. Some of these students will go on to start their undergraduate studies at Tufts, already connected to an entrepreneurial community from day one.

# Spotlight

## From PhD Research to Cellular Agriculture Startup:

Sophie Letcher and Michael Saad, Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering at Tufts University Center for Cellular Agriculture, 2025

For Sophie and Michael, PhD research on insect cell lines evolved into a venture transforming veterinary medicine. Their team won 1st place in the Healthcare and Life Science track of the **Tufts New Ventures Competition**, then joined the **Tufts Venture Accelerator** to accelerate progress.

Over the summer they translated scientific innovation into business language, validated market demand, and built a sustainable model—while simultaneously participating in Mass Challenge Switzerland, balancing days in Medford with nights collaborating in Europe.

The Accelerator delivered venture fundamentals and Tufts network support. Now in NSF I-Corps with the Auster Center for Applied Innovation and Research, part of the Gordon Institute, Entocellular shows how the Derby Entrepreneurship Center and Auster Center together provide ecosystem support from lab bench to market.



▲ **Sophie and Michael** in the lab. *Photo Credit: Jake Belcher.*



# Entrepreneurial Internship Program

## Real-World Experience, Real Impact

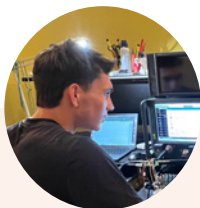
Learning entrepreneurship in the classroom builds foundation. Experiencing it firsthand creates transformation.

Our **Entrepreneurial Internship Program** places students in roles with real responsibility at startups, small businesses, nonprofits, and innovation initiatives. This year, they worked directly with founders, shaped product strategy, engaged customers, and experienced the daily realities of building something impactful. Many placements were with Tufts alumni-led ventures, creating lasting mentor relationships.

During fall and spring, students earned academic credit for semester-long internships. In summer, qualified students applied for \$4,500 Entrepreneurial Internship Grants, enabling them to cover the compensation for internships with early stage ventures or entrepreneurial roles. Students gain experience and, in many cases, we support alumni in their new ventures.

This summer, nine students worked across seven organizations in industries ranging from biotechnology to social impact.

### 2025 INTERNSHIP PLACEMENTS



**Brady**  
Electrical Engineering  
AMRF



**Caleb**  
Marketing and Sales  
Markit AI



**Cullen**  
Software Development  
Ganance



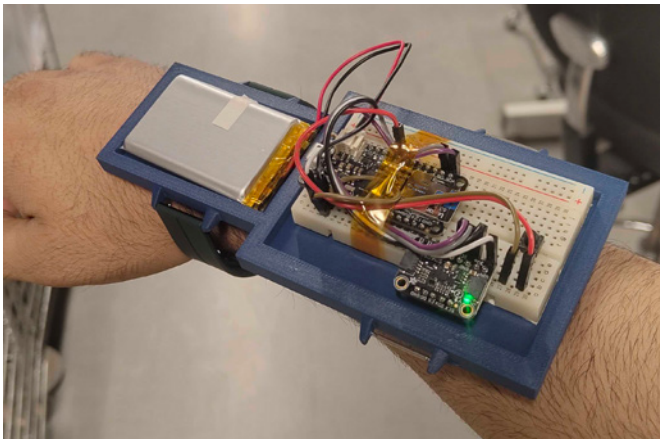
**Fritz**  
Data Science and  
ML Applications  
Tymewear

“I was drawn to Ganance because of their innovative idea, a device that could make any watch “smart.” Without this grant, I would never have had the chance to work on such a unique product. Not many people can say that they’ve contributed to a project as distinctive as this, and feel fortunate to be able to showcase the product and the impact that I was able to make with Ganance in the future.”

**Ronan, undergraduate intern for Ganance**



▲ **Ganance** team members relax at a ballgame.



▲ **Ronan** showcases a rapid prototype for a wearable technology product at **Ganance**.

“Ronan brought a rare mix of discipline and curiosity as both a collegiate baseball player and engineer. He dove into our industry with tools he had never used before, and his project helped the team rethink how we leverage data with customers. The impact was immediate, and we’re fortunate to draw on such a talented pool of Jumbos through the Derby Entrepreneurship Center.”

**Alex Ocampo, A14, Entrepreneurship Minor, Lecturer for “Paths to Entrepreneurship” at Tufts; Founder & CEO, Ganance.**



**Jonathan**  
**Marketing**  
Sana Capital



**Nancy**  
**UX Design**  
Markit AI



**Ronan**  
**Software Engineering**  
Ganance



**Sonia**  
**Marketing and Sales**  
Markit AI



**Theo**  
**Marketing**  
SureBenefit

# Entrepreneurship & Innovation Fund

## Removing Barriers to Action

Sometimes, a few hundred dollars can change everything. The **Entrepreneurship & Innovation Fund** provides grants from \$200 to \$2,000, removing financial barriers that might otherwise stop students from pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities.

This year, the Entrepreneurship & Innovation Fund supported 28 student initiatives, for a total of \$38,622. Funds supported prototype development, conference attendance, travel subsidies, as well as student-led events. This year we co-sponsored a two-day **“Production”** hosted by Product Studio, and the first **Global Innovation Entrepreneurship Conference** hosted by the Fletcher Entrepreneur Club.

The Entrepreneurship & Innovation Fund operates on trust and simplicity, streamlined applications, quick decisions, and belief in student potential.

28

PROJECTS  
FUNDED

\$38k+

TOTAL  
DISTRIBUTED



**Aria**

BS Biopsychology /  
BFA Studio Art '26

Aria used Fund grants to launch two ventures. First came **LUNEAERA**, a boutique consulting firm for environmental nonprofits. Funded conference attendance led to new clients.

Then in May 2025, she launched **jadewell**, a telemedicine platform delivering personalized Chinese Herbal Medicine. Within the first month, jadewell achieved \$1,000 in monthly recurring revenue. Aria was named one of Boston Business Journal's 25 under 25 in 2025.

“The Entrepreneurship & Innovation Fund's support generated substantial early traction, including key mentors, business partnerships, and potential angel investors,” Aria shares.



**Rob**

A16, MS Computer Science '24,  
MS Mathematics '27

Rob used his Fund grant to create an LLC and cover cloud costs for machine language trading models. “We’re developing quantitative models to help democratize trading. We’re close to finishing our MVP, and we wouldn’t be here without the grant.”





# Spotlight

## Building Bridges Across Tufts Sophie, Fletcher MIB 2025

Sophie, Co-president of the **Fletcher Entrepreneur Club**, created and launched the inaugural cross-university **Global Innovation Entrepreneurship Symposium (GIES)** in February 2025. The Center was a sponsor and provided mentorship throughout the planning and implementation process. Sophie reflects:

“The Derby Entrepreneurship Center empowered me to be a bridge-builder across schools, disciplines, and communities. What began as an ambitious idea for GIES grew into a region-wide initiative with 150 students from across New England.

The Center trusted us to lead, offering guidance while keeping student voices central. That experience reshaped how I see entrepreneurship—not just as business creation, but as ecosystem-building—and continues to influence my career and belief in student-driven innovation.”



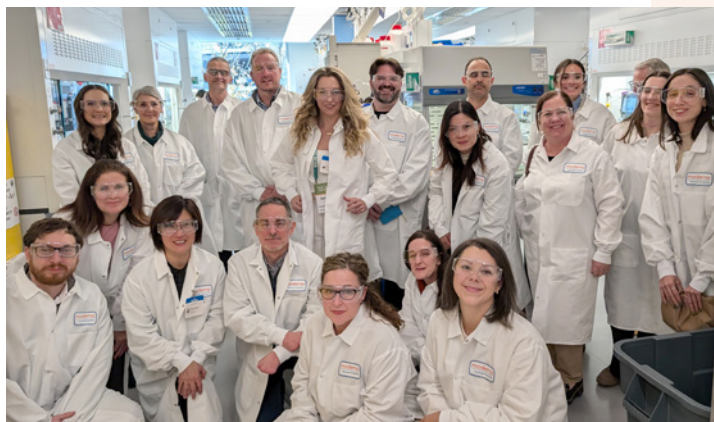
◀ All-star speaker lineup attracted over 100 people from the Greater Boston Area to the student-led Symposium



# Cross-University Leadership

**Innovation thrives when institutions collaborate.**

The Center has emerged as a catalyst for entrepreneurship education throughout New England.



9

CROSS-UNIVERSITY  
EVENTS



2000+

STUDENTS FROM PARTNER  
SCHOOLS ENGAGED

◀ **Derby Entrepreneurship Center led a Life Sciences field trip to Moderna and LabCentral** for an international delegation of entrepreneurship educators during the annual conference for the Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers.



## Greater Boston Collaboration

At **Cross-University Student Innovator (CUSI) Mixers** hosted at Tufts and peer institutions, students connected with Boston's broader innovation ecosystem. They met co-founders, formed diverse teams, and accessed resources across multiple universities.

With 250,000 college students in greater Boston, we're creating connection opportunities that benefit everyone.



▲ **Entrepreneur in Residence Marcus Johnson-Smith** runs a Pitch-to-Match event to help students form teams across universities.



▲ **45 entrepreneurial students** from 9 NESCAC schools convened at MIT for a hackathon



▲ **Madison**, a **Tufts Venture Accelerator** cohort member, and founder of **Lynx**, a pet health startup, presents at a Babson-Tufts event.



▲ **Tufts undergraduate delegates** pose with alumna mentor, **Anushka Singh**, MSIM 2023, Founder & CEO, Kathalyst at the NESCAC Entrepreneurship Day at MIT.

## NESCAC Entrepreneurship Day at MIT

The **New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC)** connects through more than Division III sports. This year, we partnered with the Martin Trust Center for MIT Entrepreneurship to host the first NESCAC Entrepreneurship Day, along with 8 other NESCAC colleges. Students and alumni mentors from across NESCAC institutions gathered for a full-day innovation sprint.

Cross-school teams tackled real business challenges, bringing together diverse perspectives and complementary skills. The ventures emerging from these collaborations couldn't happen within single institutions alone.



# Entrepreneurial Speaker Series

## Learning from Leaders

Our **Speaker Series** welcomes accomplished entrepreneurs and innovators to campus, offering students direct access to leaders actively shaping our economy and society. Many speaker events are hybrid **“Inside-the-Classroom”** events, where we invite the public to learn from guest speakers for our Entrepreneurship courses.

Speakers shared authentic, real-life stories and insights from diverse sectors, functional roles, and career stages—from recent graduates to seasoned leaders.

These were conversations, not lectures. Students engaged with speakers about challenges, insights, and the realities of entrepreneurship.

13

SPEAKER SERIES  
EVENTS HOSTED

600+

TOTAL  
ATTENDANCE



▲ **Bill Cummings, A58, H06, J97P, M97P**, returns to the Joyce Cummings Center for a fireside chat and book signing event with Usha Pasi, who teaches Nonprofits, Philanthropy and Impact at Tufts.



“I was very glad to get to listen to a myriad of guest speakers over my tenure in the minor—I feel as though I was able to see a lot of diverse perspectives from alumni and will take their wisdom forward.”

**Mira**

# Speaker Event Spotlight

## Women Entrepreneurial Leaders at Tufts

Every October, we celebrate Women Entrepreneurship Week by inviting women entrepreneurs to return to Tufts and share their journeys with current students. This year's panel featured **Judy Charamand** (E22, Engineering Management and Entrepreneurship Minors), **Tisa Berman** (A11), and **Hillary Sieber** (A12), moderated by **Mitchie Qiao** (MSIM 2023).

The panelists shared diverse entrepreneurial paths—working as a UX designer, starting a bootstrapped tech venture, serving as an innovation consultant, and working as Chief of Staff for a venture capital firm.

Their varied experiences highlighted the many ways entrepreneurship shows up across industries and roles.

Hosted as an **“Inside the Classroom”** speaker event for our introductory **Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurial Thinking** course, the panel connected students with real founders and leaders navigating entrepreneurial careers.

Students appreciated the insights shared and the opportunity to hear directly from women who've built entrepreneurial paths. For many, these connections helped them take the first step toward expanding their own professional networks and seeing what's possible in their own journeys.



▲ Entrepreneurial alumna share insights at **Betsy Goodrich's** undergraduate class.

# Our Alumni: Partners in Impact



▲ **Derby Entrepreneurship Center board members John Cuming, A81 and Catherine Popper, J87** serve as judges in the **Tufts New Ventures Competition**.

Alumni are essential to everything the Derby Entrepreneurship Center creates. They mentor current students, bringing real-world perspective to entrepreneurial challenges. They share lessons from their journeys in classes. They judge competitions, providing feedback that sharpens thinking. They make introductions that create opportunities.

This engagement happens because alumni remember their own Tufts experience and want to give back. They see value

in helping the next generation of entrepreneurial leaders. They build relationships with students that extend far beyond graduation.

This year, alumni provided mentorship, delivered guest lectures, judged competitions and prizes, served as mock board members, and created internship opportunities. They build real relationships with students that last long after graduation.

## 4

TUFTS  
ENTREPRENEURIAL  
NETWORK MIXERS  
IN DIFFERENT CITIES

## 60+

MOCK BOARD  
MEMBERS ENGAGED  
IN TUFTS VENTURE  
ACCELERATOR

## 200+

VOLUNTEERS  
ENGAGED



“After decades of engaging with entrepreneurial students as a lecturer, mentor, coach, and judge, I still find it truly rewarding. Jumbo alums: any time you can offer will have real impact. I continue to get far more back than I put in.”

**Catherine Popper**, Advisory Board Member,  
Derby Entrepreneurship Center

## Alumni Spotlight

### From ENT Minor to Teaching Entrepreneurship: Joshua Reed-Diawuoh, A'13

Josh's journey embodies the full cycle of Derby Entrepreneurship Center's community impact, from student to entrepreneur to teacher.

As an undergraduate, Josh completed the Entrepreneurship minor while majoring in Political Science. After graduation, he worked in corporate consulting and international development, both valuable experiences that taught important skills.

During his MBA at MIT, a study abroad experience in Ghana changed his trajectory. Witnessing the challenges farmers face in his father's homeland inspired him to launch **GRIA Food Co.**, a fair-trade cashew company that keeps economic benefit in African communities.

“I could purchase cheaper cashews,” Josh explains, “but without fair-trade certification, the whole mission falls apart.”



For four years, Josh ran GRIA while maintaining his day job. Then he took the leap to focus full-time on the venture. He ensures initial production stages happen in Africa, supporting local economic development.

Now Josh has come full circle, co-teaching **Starting a Small Business** with Elaine Chen. His course culminates in trade shows where students sell actual products, just like Josh does at farmers markets throughout Boston.

“The best business plan won't cover 10% of issues that come up,” he tells students from experience.

Josh now works at **MassHousing** a public non-profit affordable housing organization, while continuing to build GRIA. He proves entrepreneurial thinking applies everywhere: in new ventures, nonprofits, government, wherever problems need solving.

# Keeping the Network Strong

**Connection doesn't end at graduation.**

It deepens through local events where alumni live, and through an active Slack community, keeping our alumni network vibrant and valuable.

▼ **Elizabeth Amador, J91, A22P**, President of the Tufts Alumni Council, addresses alumni at the annual Tufts Entrepreneurial Network mixer in New York City.

## Local Convenings

This year, we gathered alumni in Boston, New York, and San Francisco, bringing Tufts entrepreneurs together for evenings of connection and collaboration.

These gatherings create opportunities for alumni to reconnect, meet current students and recent graduates, and strengthen the entrepreneurial network supporting everyone.

From cocktail receptions at iconic venues to casual mixers at local startups, these events reminded alumni they're part of a thriving community. Conversations began with "What are you working on?" and evolved into introductions, advice, and sometimes investment.



4000+

TUFTS ENTREPRENEURIAL  
NETWORK MEMBERS

600+

ONLINE COMMUNITY  
MEMBERS

3

CITIES HOSTING  
GATHERINGS



▲ **Dean Kyongbum Lee and Kevin Oye** chat about applied business education in San Francisco

## Fireside Chat with Dean Kyongbum Lee in San Francisco

In San Francisco, alumni leaned in as **Dean Kyongbum Lee** and **Professor Kevin Oye, Executive Director of the Gordon Institute**, discussed the future of applied business education.

They explored emerging trends in engineering management, remote mentoring opportunities, and AI's role in entrepreneurship education. Alumni took notes, made connections, planned collaborations.



▲ **Adonai, E24, Elaine Chen, Cummings Family Professor of the Practice in Entrepreneurship & Director, Derby Entrepreneurship Center and Ezgi, E24.** catch up at the San Francisco event

## Building Community Everywhere

We are building entrepreneurial community in person and online. Alumni connect through events with the dean, guest speaking, and judging, while also engaging virtually in hybrid programs.

Through the **Tufts Entrepreneurial Network (TEN)** online community, alumni share real-time support and participate in hybrid events across the globe. Job postings, advice, introductions, and resources flow freely. An alum in Seoul can help a New York alum within minutes—distance is no barrier to connection.

“I met more Jumbos in our SF alumni event than I’ve met in all my time here in the Bay. It was a truly wonderful experience for me.”

**Addonai Addo, E24, Entrepreneurship Minor**  
Cofounder and CTO, Stealth Startup



# Meet Our Faculty

**Entrepreneurship at Tufts** is taught by practitioner faculty who bring real-world experience to every classroom.

In 2024–2025, these faculty brought lessons from building companies, leading organizations, and navigating the challenges our students will face.



**Frank Apeseche**



**Moneer Azzam**



**Jack Derby**



**Jimmy Edgerton**



**Luke Fraser**



**Betsy Goodrich**



**Amir Hasson**



**Beth McCarthy**



**Andy O'Brien**



**Joshua Reed-Diawuoh**



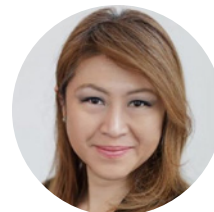
**Kendall Reiss**



**Thomas Van de Velde**



**Joe Volman**



**Tina Weber**



**Tim Buntel**



**Elaine Chen**



**Phillip Ellison**



**Gavin Finn**



**Alex Ocampo**



**Usha Pasi**



**Kate Weiler**



**Josh Wiesman**

# Meet Our Team

Everything at the Derby Entrepreneurship Center happens because of our dedicated team. Led by **Elaine Chen** and **Carol Denning**, supported by our **Entrepreneurs in Residence Cody Damon, Marcus Johnson-Smith**, and **Idicula Mathew**, we bring entrepreneurship to life across Tufts.

We also welcome current students as coordinators each year, bringing fresh perspectives and ensuring our programming meets evolving community needs.

Thank you to our team who make transformation possible every day.



▲ **Left to Right:** Cody Damon, Elaine Chen, Marcus Johnson-Smith, Carol Denning, Idicula Mathew

# Meet Our Board of Advisors

**Our Board guides  
our strategic direction.**

Beyond governance,  
they mentor students,  
open networks, champion  
our mission, and engage  
as classroom speakers and  
judges in business plan  
competitions.



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**Kofi Asante**



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**Earle Yaffa**

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## With Gratitude

Every program, every opportunity, every student success story exists because of generous supporters who believe in the power of entrepreneurship education. Your investments create access, fuel innovation, and transform lives.

This year, your support enabled us to expand programs, increase funding, and serve more students from diverse backgrounds with different entrepreneurial aspirations.

You've helped prove that entrepreneurship is for every student willing to see opportunities and take action. You're not just funding education; you're building the entrepreneurial leaders of tomorrow.

Thank you for making our work possible.

## Connect With Us:

<https://derbycenter.tufts.edu/donate>

## Center And Space Naming Gifts

### Jan and Jack Derby:

Jack and Jan Derby Lobby  
Derby Entrepreneurship Center at Tufts (2021)

### Joshua Kapelman, A12 and

**Emily Hawkridge Kapelman:**  
Kapelman Collaborative Space (2021)

### Stu Birger, A85, A22P and Debi Birger, A22P:

Birger Family Seminar Room (2021)

## Multi-Year Sustaining Gifts

### Earle Yaffa, E61 and Elizabeth Yaffa, J85P, Kim Hartman, J85 and Alan Hartman, and the Joseph H. Flom Foundation:

10-Year Sustaining Tufts Venture Accelerator  
Sponsorship (2021)

### Anonymous Donor:

Eight-year Sustaining Gift to support  
Derby Entrepreneurship Center operations (2022)

### Stephen Herrod, Ph.D. and

**Flavia Herrod, A22P, A27P:**  
Five-year Sustaining Gift to promote the  
Spirit of Entrepreneurship (2023)

### Vivek R. Shah, A94 and Katherine Shah:

Three-year Sustaining Gift for Consumer Internet  
and Digital Innovation (2023)

### Saul B. Hamond:

Entrepreneurial Summer Internship Fund (2025)

## Grant Awards

**Cummings Foundation:**

Ten-year Sustaining Grant (2024)

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**Healthcare and Life Science Track:**

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**Social Impact Track:**

The Joseph H. Flom Foundation

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**Stephen and Geraldine Ricci Interdisciplinary Prize:**

Stephen J. Ricci, E67, E88P, J88P and  
Geraldine R. Ricci, E88P, J88P

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**Paul and Elizabeth Montle Prize  
for Entrepreneurial Achievement:**

The Montle Family

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**Cummings Properties Rent Credit:**

Cummings Properties

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John Salzman



# Looking Ahead

## **The entrepreneurial spirit at Tufts has never been stronger**

Students are building ventures that address global challenges. Alumni are opening doors for the next generation. Faculty are bringing cutting-edge thinking into classrooms. Industry partners are providing real problems to solve.

As we look to the year ahead, we're expanding access to entrepreneurship education, deepening cross-university partnerships, and ensuring every student who wants to learn to become entrepreneurial can, regardless of background, major, or resources.

The future belongs to those who see opportunities and have the courage to act on them. Together, we're building the community that develops those leaders.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

## **Connect With Us:**

<https://derbyecenter.tufts.edu/donate>



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