



Gatton College of  
Business and Economics

Von Allmen  
Center for Entrepreneurship



# YEARBOOK

## FALL 2023 - SUMMER 2024

### THE VON ALLMEN CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

# THE MISSION OF THE VON ALLMEN CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Von Allmen Center for Entrepreneurship (VACE) is housed within the Gatton College of Business and Economics at The University of Kentucky. Our mission is to provide training and education for entrepreneurs seeking to start new business ventures in the state of Kentucky. These entrepreneurs include students, faculty, staff, and community members throughout the Bluegrass. Entrepreneurs seeking our assistance range from industries centered around healthcare, engineering, mobile apps, brick & mortar startups, consulting services, fintech, fine arts, and education to name a few. By utilizing Kentucky's dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem, VACE can assist those starting their businesses for the first time, while also providing access to Kentucky's startup capital and community partners.

VACE also partners with various colleges, faculty, and staff across the University of Kentucky. These partnerships have helped create awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities for students, faculty, and staff seeking to start their own companies, or donate time to mentor and/or guest speak. We are proud to work with a variety of entrepreneurial talent from all 17 colleges across campus:

College of Business	College of Education
College of Engineering	College of Arts & Sciences
Lewis Honors College	College of Dentistry
College of Agriculture	College of Fine Arts
College of Medicine	College of Health Sciences
College of Pharmacy	College of Social Work
College of Design	College of Public Health
College of Law	College of Communication and Information
College of Nursing	



## COMMITMENT TO KENTUCKY

The VACE network spans across Kentucky, including a diverse range of contacts within The University of Kentucky, the local entrepreneurial community in Lexington, and college campuses throughout the state. Through VACE's outreach efforts in our monthly newsletters, educational webinars, student pitch competitions, the Kentucky Angel Investor Network, and partnership with the Governor's School for Entrepreneurs, the Center continues to impact Kentucky's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

## DONATE

Consider donating to support entrepreneurship. Your generosity allows us to continue assisting and supporting Kentucky's future founders and startups.



# GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL FOR ENTREPRENEURS

## SUMMER 2024

The Governor's School for Entrepreneurs (GSE) identifies, inspires, and empowers Kentucky's future innovators. GSE's Summer Startup program develops entrepreneurial skills in high school students and qualifies them for college scholarships. GSE's Collegiate Pitch program is Kentucky's largest collegiate pitch competition, offering thousands of dollars in prizes. Program alumni have launched more than 70 businesses and filed for multiple patents. Because of strong partnerships with entities like the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet and the Cabinet for Economic Development, along with private and public supporters, GSE programs are free for selected student entrepreneurs. For more information, visit [kentuckygse.com](http://kentuckygse.com).

# HOSTED AT THE GATTON COLLEGE

The University of Kentucky session was held from June 23 to July 13, 2024, at the Gatton College of Business and Economics in Lexington. "Collaborating with GSE marks a significant milestone for the Gatton College of Business and Economics. Together, we are charting the course for a new era in entrepreneurship education within our commonwealth. With GSE's expertise, this partnership will be the cornerstone for nurturing the next wave of leaders and entrepreneurs, shaping a dynamic and innovative future," says Silas Deane, Chair of the Von Allmen Center of Entrepreneurship Advisory Board, Gatton College of Business and Economics.

The first week at the University of Kentucky was a flurry of activities, filled with energy and anticipation. Before the Es (aka "entrepreneurs") arrived, meticulous preparations were made to ensure a smooth and welcoming experience. This involved decorating the residence halls and event spaces with vibrant, inspiring themes that reflected the entrepreneurial spirit of the program. The effort paid off, as the Es were greeted with a lively, welcoming environment that set the tone for their exciting journey.

Our Es were thrilled to welcome Governor Andy Beshear to the University of Kentucky Gatton College of Business! Governor Beshear emphasized the importance of fostering Kentucky-grown businesses, and encouraged the Es to keep innovating within their local communities. He spoke about the entrepreneurial spirit that drives Kentucky forward, highlighting the successes of local businesses that started with a simple idea and grew into thriving enterprises. He took questions from the group and visited with teams to learn about their business ideas and provide feedback.

The Governor's encouragement served as a powerful reminder of the impact that up-and-coming entrepreneurs can have on their communities, not just economically, but socially and culturally, too. University of Kentucky Es also ventured to the Frazier History Museum in Louisville and were immersed in Kentucky's rich history and its potential as an entrepreneurial home base. Mick Sullivan from the Frazier team, along with Guest Entrepreneurs David Stadler, Heather Howell, and Dan Ross-Li, shared inspiring stories and practical advice, encouraging the Es to dream big and set ambitious goals. Back on campus, Guest Entrepreneurs Emma Preston, TJ Barnett, Isaac Hamlin, Katarina Midelfort, and Chris Rhodes shared their expertise. Their sessions left these young entrepreneurs motivated and ready to forge their paths in the business world.

The GSE Summer Startup Program is made possible by parents, stakeholders, and donors. Donations help support these budding business leaders while providing the resources and opportunities needed to chart their future and impact Kentucky's communities. GSE's Summer Startup program is a one-of-a-kind experience that encourages independence and creativity, giving aspiring innovators the skills to start their ventures in Kentucky.

GSE is entirely free for every E. Please donate to Empower the Es fundraising campaign so this life changing program can continue to make a difference across the Bluegrass. Giving to the GSE Summer Startup program is an investment in the future.

**GSE**  
Governor's School  
for **Entrepreneurs**



# GSE COLLEGIATE PITCH COMPETITION

## SPRING 2024

The Governor's School for Entrepreneurs (GSE) Collegiate Pitch Competition encourages innovation and entrepreneurship by engaging students from Kentucky's colleges and universities with an opportunity to develop and pursue their business ideas. The competition rewards business models judged by an independent panel as the most innovative and complete, and the most likely to result in successful ventures that create new jobs for Kentuckians. All university and college students throughout Kentucky are encouraged to compete. The competition is organized and governed by the Governor's School for Entrepreneurs with support from the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet and KY Inno.

The University of Kentucky was represented in the Exploratory Track by two founders and graduates of the Entrepreneurs Bootcamp Accelerator. Both founders are PhD Candidates in the College of Engineering at UK.

1st Place - Maame Abena Afrifa, NanoMed Adaptive Technologies

2nd Place - Madison Bates and Makenna Pelfrey, R.A.M. Medical Device Co.



# PNC WILDCAT PITCH COMPETITION

SPRING 2024

On April 20, PNC Bank and the Gatton College of Business and Economics' Von Allmen Center for Entrepreneurship presented the PNC Wildcat Pitch Competition, during which University of Kentucky graduate and undergraduate students competed for cash prizes totaling \$20,000. This event gave students the opportunity to build their entrepreneurial skills and share ideas for ground-breaking products and services.



The PNC Wildcat Pitch Competition captures the talent and entrepreneurship for which Gatton students are known, while providing a glimpse into the future of our region's business innovation and talent pipeline," said John Gohmann, PNC regional president for Lexington. "All of us at PNC extend our congratulations to the competition's prizewinners and participants, and we look forward to witnessing their future success and the impact they will create."



Warren Nash, director of the Von Allmen Center for Entrepreneurship, shared, "It was very exciting to see the quality of the students' pitches. All the participants truly embodied the entrepreneurial spirit. We are also grateful to our volunteer judges who brought tremendous expertise to the table and to PNC for investing in our UK student entrepreneurs!"



**SPRING 2024**

# INNOVATION SUMMIT

The University of Kentucky's Gatton College of Business and Economics, Kentucky's flagship business college, and in collaboration with PNC Bank, hosted the 2024 PNC Innovation Summit, "The State of Generative AI," on March 20, 2024. This year's keynote was presented by Sarah Sanders, co-founder of Native AI and vice chair of the Von Allmen Center for Entrepreneurship. In addition, Mark Liu, director of the MS finance program and associate professor at the Gatton College of Business and Economics, presented on "How Machines Learn."

Now in its fourth year, the PNC Innovation Summit provided UK students insight into the AI arena, as well as a platform for exploring the challenges and opportunities organizations face in the emerging technologies space. "As today's students and tomorrow's leaders prepare to deliver on the most transformational trends impacting businesses, all of us at PNC look forward to joining the Gatton community for this time of education and enrichment," said John Gohmann, PNC regional president for Lexington.

"We are delighted to team up with PNC to offer UK students the chance to build their entrepreneurial and networking skills as well as showcase their business ideas for ground-breaking products and services to a panel of judges, including UK alumni, who work primarily in the business sector," said Simon Sheather, dean of the Gatton College of Business and Economics.

The PNC Innovation Summit is an in-person event, offered at no charge to all members of the UK and Lexington community, and the PNC Wildcat Pitch Competition is available for UK students at the Gatton College of Business and Economics.



## "How Machines Learn"

**Mark Liu**

*Director of MS Finance Program,  
Associate Professor*



## "The State of Generative AI"

**Sarah Sanders**

*Native Co-Founder &  
Chief Operating Officer*

# INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING CERTIFICATE (INET)

## SPRING 2024

When Ethan Jackson decided to pursue the Innovation and Entrepreneurial Thinking (iNET) certificate, he didn't know the long-term impact that the program would have on his professional development. This multidisciplinary, 12-hour certificate, housed in the University of Kentucky College of Communication and Information and offered in partnership with the Gatton College of Business and Economics, provides entrepreneurial educational opportunities and meaningful experiences to help students succeed in an entrepreneurial world.

The iNET certificate requires 12 hours of unique coursework, including COM 381 Communication, Leadership and Entrepreneurship, two electives and an EXP (Experiential Education) Capstone course. The certificate connects students to a network of innovators and entrepreneurial mentors at UK and in the local community.

"I first heard about the iNET Certificate through iNET certificate director Dr. Amanda Lawrence," Jackson said. "Meeting with Dr. Lawrence multiple times throughout the process was incredibly helpful. She was always willing to answer my questions and help me understand what the iNET certificate is all about."

A highlight of the iNET certificate program was the entrepreneurial bootcamp offered through the Von Allmen Center for Entrepreneurship (VACE) in the Gatton College of Business and Economics. The Entrepreneurs Bootcamp is an online business accelerator designed to assess and validate the feasibility of a business concept, create a business model and provide hands-on experience for entrepreneurs seeking to launch a startup for the first time in the state of Kentucky. Certificate students are strongly encouraged to take the EXP 396: Entrepreneurs Bootcamp course as their culminating capstone experience.



College of Communication and Information

# Innovation and Entrepreneurial Thinking Certificate



# RESEARCH POSTER PITCH COMPETITION

## SPRING 2024

The 19th Annual Clinical Center for Translational Science (CCTS) Spring Conference was held on April 9, 2024 at the Central Bank Center in downtown Lexington, Kentucky. The Von Allmen Center for Entrepreneurship (VACE) in the Gatton College of Business and Economics hosted its 7th annual 1-minute research poster pitch competition. This year's conference theme is "Dissemination and Implementation across the Translational Spectrum." Hundreds of researchers, clinicians, students, and community members will gather to foster collaborations.

Lexington Mayor Linda Gorton's proclamation recognized the critical role of translational science in bringing new findings and knowledge into use for patient care and population health. While it often takes many years for innovations to be "translated" into use, the UK CCTS works to catalyze that process by providing research infrastructure, funding, and training. As Kentucky's only clinical and translational science program funded by National Institutes of Health, the CCTS helps to ensure that innovations by University of Kentucky researchers can directly impact the health needs of the Commonwealth and beyond as quickly as possible.

This year's CCTS conference focused on "Dissemination and Implementation across the Translational Spectrum" and featured: two keynote speakers, 10 breakout sessions, 63 oral presentations, 312 poster presentations including 11 by students from the Frederick Douglass High School Biomedical Pathways Program, the Von Allmen Center for Entrepreneurship 60-Second Poster Pitch Competition, and Mentor Recognition and Special Recognition Awards.

A grand total of \$2,000 in prize money was awarded to the top 4 winners in the Von Allmen Center for Entrepreneurship's 1-Minute Poster Pitch Competition. A total of 24 participants competed in the poster pitch competition. The winning participants were represented by the Colleges of Medicine, Engineering, and Communication & Information.



# 5ACROSS PITCH COMPETITION

## SPRING & SUMMER 2024

The 5 Across Entrepreneur Pitch Competition brings together aspiring business owners and the local startup community in Lexington, Kentucky. All are encouraged to dress their best and pitch their ideas for the chance to win funding and prizes. 5Across features five Kentucky startups that pitch against each other for an opportunity to win \$5,000 in funding for their business ideas.

Each business pitches to a panel, with panelists voting on the best idea and determining which pitch wins the prize money. The winning entrepreneur will claim \$500 cash and a \$5,000 SAFE note from local bank Keyhorse Capital. 5Across also includes a catered meal for attendees and participating competitors.

The event organized by Awesome Inc., located in downtown Lexington, and gives Lexington residents the opportunity to celebrate local startups and the small business community.

In Spring 2024, The Von Allmen Center for Entrepreneurship showcased four startups that graduated from the Bootcamp online accelerator compete in several 5Across rounds:

- NanoMed Adaptive Technologies | June 2024 round
- State Street Ice | June 2024 round
- Apollo Automations | April 2024 round
- Complet3D | February 2024 round



## AWESOME INC



## 5 ACROSS



# SEC PITCH COMPETITION

## FALL 2023

The Fall 2023 SEC Pitch Competition was hosted at the University of Georgia, at the Terry College of Business. The SEC Student Pitch Competition provides a showcase for entrepreneurs, pitting student teams representing each of the 14 Southeastern Conference universities against one another in a startup business pitch competition. Students present their innovative business to a panel of judges to determine those most worthy of a funding investment.

The Von Allmen Center for Entrepreneurship represented the University of Kentucky, with team "Dating Apps Made Better" aka DAMB. The team included founder and University of Kentucky student, William Burroughs. William graduated from the University of Kentucky College of Arts & Sciences with a Bachelors Degree in Biology. He received honorable recognition for participating in the SEC Pitch competition, and completed Bootcamp 1.0 in Fall 2023.



The University of Georgia  
**TERRY**  
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS




The University of Georgia Entrepreneurship Program,  
housed in the Terry College of Business,  
welcomes our SEC competitors.



# EDUCATIONAL WEBINAR SERIES: RAISING CAPITAL IN KENTUCKY

FALL 2023 - SPRING 2024

 Gatton College of  
Business and Economics

Von Allmen Center for  
Entrepreneurship


## FUNDRAISING FOR STARTUPS: Strategies & Lessons Learned

Guest Speaker: Silas Deane, Vice President of Tyler Technologies

REGISTER TODAY

VIRTUAL EVENT  
Tuesday, October 17 | 12:00 - 1:00



 Gatton College of  
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Von Allmen Center for  
Entrepreneurship

## TEAM BUILDING FOR STARTUPS: How to Build a Successful Team

Guest Speaker: Brad Zapp, Co-Founder & CFO of Connetic Ventures

REGISTER TODAY

VIRTUAL EVENT  
Tuesday, November 7 | 12:00 - 1:00



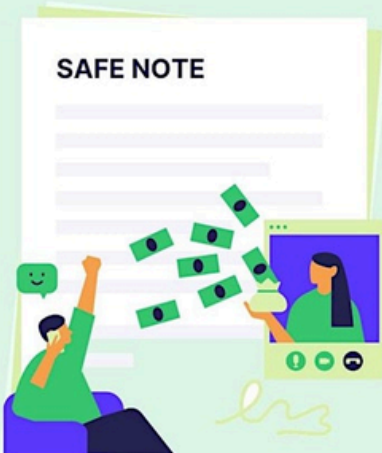
### SAFE NOTE


## "SAFE Notes: A Simple Way to Raise Funding for Startups"

Date: Oct. 10, 2023 (Tues)  
Time: 12:00-1:00pm EST

Guest speakers: Rave On Sports,  
Kentucky based startup!

RSVP for this Webinar!



 Gatton College of  
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Von Allmen Center for  
Entrepreneurship



# EDUCATIONAL WEBINAR SERIES: RAISING CAPITAL IN KENTUCKY

FALL 2023 - SPRING 2024

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## Winning an Investor: What Startups Need to Know

Guest Speaker: John Reinhart, VACE Advisory Board Member, Serial Entrepreneur & Strategic Advisor for Digital Health & Age Tech

**REGISTER TODAY**

**VIRTUAL EVENT**

Tuesday, January 30 | 12:00 - 1:00 PM



 Gatton College of  
Business and Economics

Von Allmen Center for  
**Entrepreneurship**

## Keyhorse Capital: Learn About Kentucky's Venture Capital

**REGISTER TODAY**

**VIRTUAL EVENT**

Tuesday, February 20 | 12:00 - 1:00 PM

Guest Speaker: Keyhorse Capital



# KENTUCKY ANGEL INVESTOR NETWORK

FALL 2023 - SPRING 2024

The Von Allmen Center for Entrepreneurship, in partnership with Keyhorse Capital, identifies new deal flow for The Kentucky Angel Investors Network.

The Kentucky Angel Investors Network (KYAN) is a virtual network of investors that brings new ventures and investors together across the Commonwealth. Monthly online meetings provide investors access to early-stage deal flow on a statewide basis. Entrepreneurs have access to investors with a passion for investing in Kentucky's companies of tomorrow. Keyhorse Capital is a seed-stage venture capital firm supporting a thriving community of Kentucky-based entrepreneurs willing to build and grow innovative companies.

Over the last year, several companies worked with VACE to access this virtual network. These companies are highlighted below.



# ENTREPRENEURS BOOTCAMP BUSINESS ACCELERATOR



## FALL 2023 - SPRING 2024

The Entrepreneurs Bootcamp is an online business accelerator designed to assess and validate the feasibility of a business concept, create a business model, and provide hands-on experience for entrepreneurs seeking to launch a startup for the first time in the state of Kentucky.

### Who Can Participate

The Entrepreneurs Bootcamp Online Business Accelerator is open for enrollment to Kentucky-based entrepreneurs. This includes:

- Current Students
- Faculty
- Staff
- Post docs/Alumni
- Community Entrepreneurs
- Extension offices

### Academic Credit

Currently enrolled University of Kentucky student(s) can register for Bootcamp 1.0 to receive academic credit. Bootcamp is offered through four (4) different elective course codes outlined below. An option to earn a pass/no pass credit in this elective is available to eligible students that successfully complete the program as outlined in this syllabus. Please consider the intensity of an online accelerator prior to registering for academic credit.

- B&E 396 (undergrad) - Currently enrolled undergraduate Gatton College of Business students
- B&E 650 (grad) - Currently enrolled graduate Gatton College of Business students
- EXP 396 (undergrad) - Experiential credit for all undergraduate majors
- EXP 650 (grad) - Experiential credit for all graduate majors

### Offered Every Semester

The Entrepreneurs Bootcamp is offered every semester:

- Fall Bootcamp 1.0 - Monday section, online from 5:00pm-7:00pm EST
- Fall Bootcamp 1.0 - Thursday section, online from 4:00pm-6:00pm EST
- Spring Bootcamp 1.0 - Monday section, online from 5:00pm-7:00pm EST

### Eligibility, Intensity, and Expectations

Bootcamp is time consuming and demanding outside of regular job/class schedules. It is offered in the evenings to mimic the life of an entrepreneur. All participants are held accountable to meet various milestones, schedule zoom/team meetings outside the scheduled sessions, and perform the duties of an acting CEO.

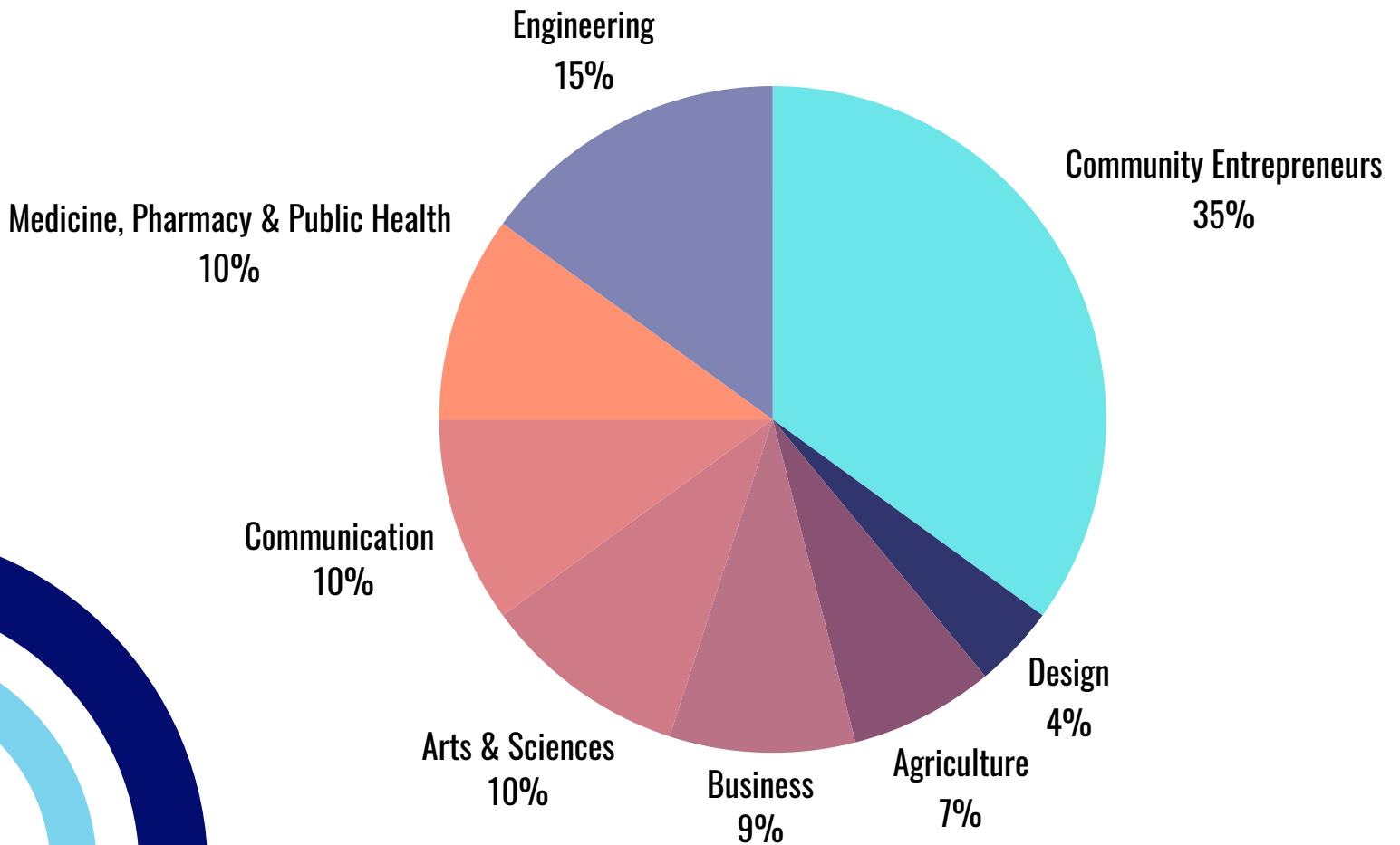
### Handbook

All participants in Bootcamp must read the handbook and digitally sign the Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) associated with the accelerator.

# ENTREPRENEURS BOOTCAMP BUSINESS ACCELERATOR

FALL 2023 - SPRING 2024

## CAMPUS DEMOGRAPHICS\*



\*Demographics are represented by Colleges at the University of Kentucky that include students, faculty, and staff. Community Entrepreneurs represent Kentucky entrepreneurs that are not current students at UK, nor affiliated with UK campus (i.e. faculty, staff, etc.).



# YEARBOOK PHOTOS

CELEBRATING  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP!

 Gatton College of  
Business and Economics

Von Allmen  
Center for Entrepreneurship

# GSE

Governor's School  
for **Entrepreneurs**



# GSE

Governor's School  
for **Entrepreneurs**

## FIRST PLACE



GSE  
Summer Startup

## SECOND PLACE



GSE  
Summer Startup

## THIRD PLACE



GSE  
Summer Startup

**GSE**

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**GSE**  
Summer Startup



# PNC WILDCAT PITCH COMPETITION | SPRING 2024

## GRADUATE TRACK WINNERS



**1st Place - \$5,000**  
**NanoMed Adaptive  
Technologies**  
**Maame Abena Afrifa**  
**College of Engineering**



**2nd Place - \$3,000**  
**Go With Me**  
**Eumin Michelle Shin, College of Business**  
**Anya Deaton, College of Engineering**



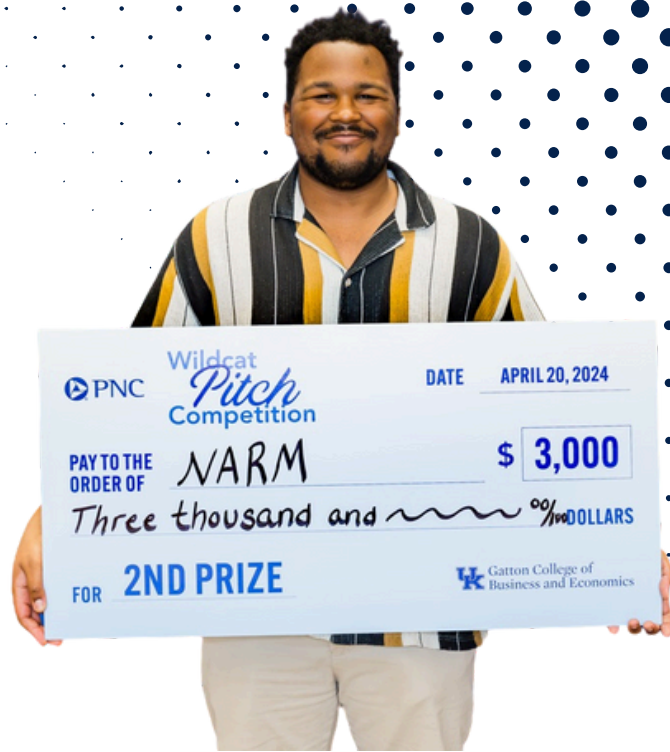
**3rd Place - \$2,000**  
**MagnaHat**  
**Wyatt Hench, College of Engineering**  
**Bron Bourque, College of Dentistry**

# PNC WILDCAT PITCH COMPETITION | SPRING 2024

## UNDERGRADUATE TRACK WINNERS



**1st Place - \$5,000**  
**DocAI**  
**Sarisha Lohano**  
**College of Arts & Sciences**  
**Lewis Honors College**



**2nd Place - \$3,000**  
**NARM**  
**Omar Brown**  
**College of Nursing**



**3rd Place - \$2,000**  
**TriStacker**  
**Austin Hirtzel**  
**College of Design**



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[WWW.VACE.UKY.EDU](http://WWW.VACE.UKY.EDU)

THE VON ALLMEN CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP