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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## University of South Florida Research Park Named Outstanding Research Park / Innovation District at AURP Annual Awards of Excellence

*AURP's 27th Annual Awards of Excellence held at its 2022 International Conference (Sept. 19-22) at the MaRS Discovery District in Toronto*

**Tucson, AZ, September 21, 2022** – The University of South Florida (USF) Research Park has been named the 2022 “Outstanding Research Park / Innovation District” at the Association of University Research Parks’ (AURP) 2022 International Conference (Sept. 19-22) at the MaRS Discovery District in Toronto. AURP is the leading nonprofit organization representing research parks and innovation districts.

“The USF Research Park is a significant economic driver for the Tampa Bay region and an important asset when it comes to attracting top life sciences and biotech companies to our area and developing our homegrown talent,” said Craig J. Richard, President and CEO of the Tampa Bay Economic Development Council. “The latest additions to the Research Park and future planned investments will continue to strengthen our region’s competitiveness. Congratulations to President Rhea Law and the entire Research & Innovation team at USF for this well-deserved honor.”

“We are honored that the University of South Florida’s Research Park is receiving international recognition for the work taking place in our robust and renowned research enterprise,” said USF President Rhea Law. “USF’s Research Park serves as a vibrant home for supporting the Tampa Bay region’s rapidly growing innovation economy and solving global problems. The recent expansion of the park represents our commitment to expanding the university’s work in this area and helping our researchers, inventors and partners flourish.”

AURP’s International Conference annually brings together more than 200 research park and innovation district leaders from around the world for high-impact knowledge exchange and networking with the industry’s premier experts and leaders. This year’s AURP conference is co-hosted by Greater Toronto’s MaRS Discovery District, David Johnston Research + Technology Park and McMaster Innovation Park.

“On behalf of the AURP membership, we are thrilled to announce our 2022 Awards of Excellence honorees,” said Leah Burton, AURP President and Director, Centennial Campus Partnership Office at North Carolina State University. “In an era of accelerating change, our 2022 awards recipients – and all of us in the AURP community – demonstrate the skills, values and character critical to fostering growth, balance and success in their organizations.”

This year’s AURP Awards Co-Chairs are Harry Brislin IV, Executive Director with the University of South Alabama’s USA Technology & Research Park, and Keisha Demps, Partnership Developer, Office of Partnerships and Economic Development, Centennial Campus at North Carolina State University.

AURP’s 2022 Awards of Excellence categories and respective honorees are:

The **Outstanding Research Park / Innovation District Award** recognizes research parks and innovation districts and their leadership for their achievements and encourages continuous evaluation and development of best practices for the research park community.



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The AURP Outstanding Research Park/ Innovation District Award recipient is the **University of South Florida (USF) Research Park**: The University of South Florida Research Park covers more than 112 acres in the heart of the Tampa community. The research park's focus on biotechnology, life science research and entrepreneurship represent the centerpiece of USF's innovation enterprise, which sustains over 4,000 public and private sector jobs.

“Our sincere congratulations to all of our 2022 Awards of Excellence honorees, especially the University of South Florida Research Park,” said Vickie Palmer, CEO of AURP. “All of our 2022 awards recipients exhibit resiliency and perseverance in these complex times. Their hard work and focus are major drivers in helping accelerate innovation, economic development and job creation – leveraging the power of research parks, innovation districts and tech hubs – in their communities.”

**AURP's Innovation Award** is given each year to the business or nonprofit institution located in a research park that has brought forward one or more proprietary products, processes or services which represent a substantial technology breakthrough or have potential for a significant positive impact on the economic, health or welfare status of a broad spectrum of humanity.

The AURP 2022 Innovation Award recipient is **Tritan Renew of Eastman Chemical (located on Centennial Campus at North Carolina State University)**: Tritan Renew is a highly durable, BPA-free material made with 50% certified recycled content that breaks down waste plastic back into its chemical building blocks, allowing plastics to be recycled again and again. This process offsets the use of fossil fuels and lowers greenhouse gas emissions.

**AURP's Vision Award** recognizes an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to the AURP network – and to the innovation ecosystem.

The AURP 2022 Vision Award recipient is **Jim Berens, Founder and CEO, Wexford Science & Technology**: As founder of Wexford Science & Technology in 1998, Berens' vision was to address the growing and specialized real estate needs of major institutions, especially those of university-based research parks. In 2005, Berens helped launch Wexford Science & Technology, leading its growth into one of the premier development companies in the US. Berens' overall strategic direction has helped drive the development of flexible, state-of-the-art research and lab spaces for universities, university-based research parks and health care systems.

**AURP's Leadership Award** is given in recognition of a business, university or governmental leader who has made an outstanding contribution to the success and total community impact of a university research and technology park.

The AURP 2022 Leadership Award recipient is the **University of Toronto**: Founded in 1827, the University of Toronto, as one of the world's top research-intensive universities, has a long history of transforming society through the ingenuity of its faculty, students, alumni and supporters. With the increased presence of Google, Amazon, Microsoft and Meta in Toronto, the University of Toronto continues to make vital contributions to helping build the region into a major tech employment center in North America.



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**AURP's Career Achievement Award** recognizes an individual who has made their research community a central focus of their career, who has achieved outstanding successes over a substantial period of time, and who has received peer recognition for advancing the concept of university research parks and innovation districts.

The AURP 2022 Career Achievement Award recipient is **Daniel Duncan**, Immediate Past President of AURP and Executive Director of the Nebraska Innovation Campus (NIC) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL): Duncan began his tenure with UNL in 1987 and moved into his current position of executive director of the Nebraska Innovation Campus in 2011. Under Duncan's leadership, the NIC has grown impactful partnerships between UNL and private sector businesses. In 2021, the NIC delivered an overall economic impact of \$454 million.

**AURP's Appreciation Award** honors an individual who has through the course of his or her career made a significant contribution to the advancement and recognition of the industry.

The AURP 2022 Appreciation Award recipient is **Stephen Frayser**, Executive Director of STAR Park at Texas State University: Frayser served on the AURP Board of Directors' Executive Committee (2013-2019) including officer seats of Treasurer and Secretary in addition to Awards Chair (2015-2019) and many additional positions within the AURP leadership.

**AURP's Rising Star Award: A New Generation of Innovation Leadership** recognizes an individual exhibiting significant contributions to the development and success of communities of innovation.

The AURP 2022 Rising Star Award recipient is **Mary Mumper, Project Coordinator for Aggie Square, University of California, Davis**: Mumper, over the last several years, has been an active member of the AURP community, serving on committees, attending conferences and serving at Aggie Square since the formative stages of this new innovation district.

#### **About AURP:**

AURP, a non-profit international organization with offices in the Washington, DC area at the University of Maryland Discovery District and in Tucson, AZ at the University of Arizona Tech Park, focuses on creating communities of innovation and education for research parks both operating and planned, plus innovation districts, incubators, accelerators and the businesses that support the research park industry. AURP and its global membership promote research, institute-industry relations and innovation districts to foster innovation and to facilitate the transfer of technology from such institutions to the private sector.

Learn more: [www.aurp.net](http://www.aurp.net)

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