



ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PARKS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

AURP Presents Annual Awards of Excellence at 2020 Virtual International Conference

*The University of Utah Research Park, host of AURP's 2021 International Conference,
is named AURP's 2020 "Outstanding Research Park / Innovation District"*

Tucson, AZ, November 17, 2020 – The Association of University Research Parks (AURP), a global non-profit membership organization serving the institutional research park and innovation district community, presented its 2020 Awards of Excellence honorees last week at AURP's 2020 International Conference held virtually, November 2-6.

"On behalf of the AURP membership, we are delighted to announce our 2020 Award winners. This year's awards winners, especially in the midst of crisis, have distinguished themselves in leading our communities of innovation," said Dan Duncan, AURP President and Executive Director, Nebraska Innovation Campus.

"Congratulations to all of our 2020 Awards of Excellence honorees," said AURP CEO Brian Darmody. "Each of these remarkable individuals and the organizations they represent are truly deserving of AURP recognition. We're delighted to honor their energy, devotion and commitment to advancing the mission of growing university-based innovation and technology communities in the US and worldwide."

Presiding over the 24th Annual Awards of Excellence ceremonies was Chris Carlson, AURP Board Member and Senior Vice President of The Whiting-Turner Contracting Company. Awards Emcee Carlson emphasized, "Especially in this unprecedented year, it is important that we once again gather, even if in a virtual world, to recognize and honor excellence in innovation, leadership, and discovery." Adding that, "The members of the AURP network are proving the 'power of our parks and districts', uniting to discover new innovations, providing high-paying jobs, and impacting communities through economic advancement. Our global communities of innovation will turn-around economic recovery for healthy, sustainable communities."

AURP's 2020 Awards of Excellence honorees are:

OUTSTANDING RESEARCH PARK / INNOVATION DISTRICT AWARD:

University of Utah Research Park: The University of Utah Research Park is recognized for creating an exceptional ecosystem that supports bringing technology from inception to market and positively impacting the sustainable growth of scalable businesses, creation of



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high-wage jobs and contributing to the economic health of Utah's communities. The University of Utah Research Park also is set to host AURP's 2021 International Conference next October 2021, in Salt Lake City, UT.

"Education and innovation are two pillars which stand at the foundation of every great community," said Erin Mendenhall, Salt Lake City Mayor. "In Salt Lake City, we are lucky to have both at the University of Utah. Research Park is a tremendous asset and I've seen its successes firsthand over the years. I'm thrilled to continue our strong partnership in fostering the entrepreneurial spirit in our community and watch as those innovations help people around the world. This accolade is certainly well-deserved and my hope is it will serve as a springboard to even greater advancements in the future."

"We're happy to hear Research Park at the University of Utah is receiving such a prestigious award. Their work to foster early-stage companies which drive technology and innovation forward is an incredible economic development tool for our City," said Ben Kolendar, Salt Lake City Department of Economic Development Director. "We look forward to strengthening our partnership with Research Park-based businesses and supporting their long-term growth."

AURP INNOVATION AWARD:

EarthSense, Inc. (based at the University of Illinois Research Park): EarthSense's first robot – TerraSentia – is helping accelerate crop improvement and agricultural product development by providing large quantities of accurate in-field plant trait data rapidly and at low cost, especially for under-canopy traits that cannot be obtained by other technologies. Responding to the COVID-19 crisis, EarthSense also has accelerated the creation of products for Healthcare.

RISING STAR- A NEW GENERATION OF INNOVATION LEADERSHIP AWARDS:

Merry Hunter Caudle, Associate Director - Economic Development with the Georgia Institute of Technology: Merry Hunter has established herself as a critical piece to the partner engagement, planning, and overall efforts in Technology Square and her works amplify Georgia Tech's impact on Atlanta's economy by supporting development within all of the innovation and discovery hubs, including Tech Square.

Eric Smith, Executive Director, University of Arizona Center for Innovation: As executive director for the University of Arizona (UA) Center for Innovation, Eric Smith is responsible for the daily operations and growth of the UA Center for Innovation, which includes



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administration, budgeting, financial management, grant submissions and sponsorships, client recruitment, building mentor and advisory networks and staff management. Eric Smith brings to this task almost a decade's worth of technology commercialization experience and a passion for entrepreneurship.

EXCALIBUR AWARDS - COVID-19 NATIONAL RESPONSE AND RESILIENCY:

National Governors Association (NGA): The NGA's award is based on the individual and combined leadership that US state governors exhibit in representing their constituents and providing protective and forthright leadership in these unprecedented times.

Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO): Under the leadership of Dr. Michelle McMurry-Heath, a medical doctor and molecular immunologist by training, BIO continues to play a vital role in convening its member companies and institutions in the race to develop a proven vaccine to prevent COVID-19 infections.

National Institute for Innovation in Manufacturing Biopharmaceuticals (NIIMBL): The COVID-19 pandemic vividly demonstrates the need to invest in domestic drug manufacturing and foster academic-government-industry partnerships to create robust and new approaches to drug manufacturing technologies. That NIIMBL was launched long before COVID 19 arrived on our shores shows the foresight of NIST, the University of Delaware and others in launching this initiative. Locating NIIMBL at the University of Delaware Research Park is a testament to the key role research parks play in advancing US competitiveness. Moreover, in keeping with its name, NIIMBL 'nimply' pivoted once the pandemic arrived to develop accelerated ways of manufacturing vaccines using \$9 million in CARES Act funding from NIST. We are proud that research parks and bio tenants, at many of our member parks, support the work of NIIMBL and its partners.

Nebraska Innovation Campus (NIC): The NIC pivoted quickly this year to produce personal protective equipment (PPE) when PPE items became scarce. By mid-March, the Nebraska Innovation Campus helped to address these needs. The NIC's Nebraska Innovation Studio designed and manufactured 33,000 face shields and an army of volunteers were lined up to make the disposable PPE gowns. Likewise, the Nebraska Innovation Campus' Food Processing Center served as the manufacturing hub of hand sanitizer, in partnership with ethanol producers across the state eventually producing and distributing over 200,000 gallons of hand sanitizer. This included supplying hand sanitizer to hospitals, nursing homes, universities, all 6,500 USDA Food Inspection Service Offices and every secondary school in Nebraska.



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CHAIR RECOGNITION AWARD

Kevin Byrne, MBA, Past President, AURP; President, The University Financing Foundation:

Kevin Byrne is recognized for his exceptional contribution to the AURP network, its innovation ecosystem and for his service as Conference Planning Chair for the 2020 Digital International Conference. Kevin, who is a respected leader amongst his colleagues, is always among the first to contribute leadership and support, both in time, talent, and financial realms always in AURP's time of need.

About AURP:

AURP, a non-profit international organization with offices in Tucson, AZ at the University of Arizona Science & Technology Park (UA Tech Park) and in the Washington, DC area at the University of Maryland Discovery District, 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

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