



ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PARKS

For Immediate Release

The Association of University Research Parks Kicks Off Its 2017 International Conference in Huntsville Today

Cummings Research Park Opens its Doors as Conference Host to Global Business, University and Research Park Leaders

HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA, OCTOBER 9, 2017 – The Association of University Research Parks (AURP) launches its annual International Conference (IC2017) today in Huntsville, Alabama with university research park host, Cummings Research Park (CRP)—one of the largest and longest standing research parks in the world. The conference is primarily being held at The Westin Huntsville today through October 12, 2017, with the Awards of Excellence Dinner taking place at the stunning U.S. Space & Rocket Center. Additionally, a tour of HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology will conclude the conference on October 12.

Innovation centers, university research parks and incubators are home to some of the most innovative minds, strategies and technologies in the world. The campuses, communities, buildings and spaces have been designed and planned to ignite and inspire the scientific and creative minds that call these places “home.” As leaders of these communities, research park directors are helping drive new ideas and foster communities of innovation. AURP arms its members with top strategies, best practices and innovations that will help take these communities to new levels. That’s why this year’s theme for the AURP 2017 International Conference is **“Launching Cities. Catalyzing Legacies.”**

“Our theme isn’t just a token phrase for a conference—it’s a way of life for countless cities and communities across the world that are made better by the work we do,” said AURP Conference Chair and Director of Centennial Campus Partnership Office and Industry Alliances at NC State University Leah Burton. “The AURP conference planning team has worked tirelessly to bring our attendees a speaker lineup that will challenge and inform them to think beyond the status quo. Attendees will gain strategies and best practices to help their university research parks and innovation centers thrive.”

Highlighted national and international plenary session speakers include:

- **James (Jim) Hughes** – Co-Chairman and Founder, HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology (**U.S.**)
- **Wayne Olson** – President, Wayne Olson Consulting, LLC (**U.S.**)
- **Michael Gullion, MBA** – Vice President, Business Development & Strategy, SCI, a Sanmina Company (**U.S.**)
- **Farhan A-Sharhrani, PhD** – Manager, Tenant Affairs, KAUST Research & Technology Park (**Saudi Arabia**)
- **Eyad Kutbi** – Manager, Strategy & Planning, KAUST Research & Technology Park (**Saudi Arabia**)



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- **David Winwood, PhD, RTTP** – Assoc. Exec. Director and Chief Business Development Officer, Pennington Biomedical Research Center, Louisiana State University (U.S.)
- **James (Jim) K. Woodell, PhD** – Vice President, Economic Development & Community Engagement, Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities (U.S.)
- **Brian Darmody** – Past President, AURP; Association Vice President for Corporate and Foundation Relations, University of Maryland (U.S.)
- **I-Hung Li, PhD** – President, Nanjing iLink Incubator, Ltd. (China)
- **Ariel Jones** – Manager, City of Knowledge (Panama)
- **Majed Bakhsh** – Head of Strategic Planning for Information Technology, KAUST IT (Saudi Arabia)

Notable events during this year's conference include:

- **Communities of Innovation 101** – Highly-experienced research park directors, innovation district creators and their partners will discuss the complex world of university-based economic development during this interactive seminar. They will also provide information on how new or existing research parks and innovation districts can achieve success.
- **Leadership Roundtable: What Keeps You Awake at Night?** – This leadership roundtable focuses on research park leaders that deal with changing trends in real estate, manage multiple stakeholder groups, or handle partner attraction and foreign direct investments.
- **HudsonAlpha Institute of Biotechnology Tour** – Attendees will tour HudsonAlpha Institute of Biotechnology, a nonprofit genomics and genetics research institute, located in Huntsville and positioned in the center of CRP. Founded by entrepreneurs Jim Hudson and Lonnie McMillian in 2008, the Institute brings together research, education and entrepreneurship under one roof. The opening of it was a significant game-changer for CRP and has helped shape the future of the park.

"We're thrilled to kick-off our AURP 2017 International Conference in Rocket City," said AURP President Mason Ailstock. "In its 50 years of prominence, our conference host, CRP has shown an incredible ability to develop a deep network both locally and abroad—fostering innovation in its past, present and well into the future. We have many great experiences and learning opportunities in store for our attendees this week.

For more information on AURP's 2017 International Conference in Huntsville, visit: <http://international.aurp.net/>.



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About the Association of University Research Parks (AURP)

The Association of University Research Parks is a professional association of university related research and science parks. AURP's mission is to foster innovation, commercialization and economic growth through university, industry and government partnerships. For more information, visit AURP's web site at www.aurp.net.

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