



THE CIE

CONNECTED. INNOVATIVE. ENGAGED.

by Caitlin Taylor '18M

Whether the focus is on marine science, biotechnology, aquaculture commercialization, computer science technology, nonprofit entities or small business start-ups, the CIE works to provide every entrepreneur with the resources needed to turn promising ideas into commercialized realities.

Established in 2013, the UNCW Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship is a creative hub where members of the business community join UNCW faculty and students to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams. The CIE is an integrated “one-stop shop” for entrepreneurs, a catalyst for entrepreneurial growth linking emerging ventures and entrepreneurs with support organizations to foster business growth.

- Also housed within the CIE is the Office of Innovation and Commercialization. The OIC commercializes UNCW technology and innovations, provides mentoring and manages intellectual property, patenting and licensing decisions.



Startup challenges are nothing new for **Diane Durance**, newly appointed CIE director. In her role, she will collaborate with various campus units and centers as well as businesses, government agencies and investors to enhance the mission of the CIE as a leading business accelerator and incubator space for UNCW and Southeastern North Carolina.

CIE at a Glance

- 11,000 square feet
- 19 offices
- Event and teaching space
- Interactive touch boards
- 3D printing
- Videoconference capability
- Staffed student media center
- Entrepreneurship library

Economic Impact

- ▶ 34 current tenants with 6 more in development. Dominance in health tech, ed tech and marine tech
- ▶ Examples of current CIE tenants:
 - Lapetus Solutions Inc.** – 14 employees
lapetussolutions.com
 - Seahawk Innovation** – 15 employees
seahawk.biz
- ▶ Thousands of hours of free business/IT mentoring for community entrepreneurs each year; 5 formal focus groups for local nonprofits and businesses in 2016
- ▶ 70 sponsored events in 2015 with approximately 4,700 attendees. Events cover a wide variety of business topics, such as lean entrepreneurship, financing, start-up skills, IT and coding
- ▶ 54 groups, companies and nonprofits currently utilize the CIE event space
- ▶ 35 professional commercial video and media projects for tenants and local businesses created in 2016 by student media team, which consists of five film studies students

Commitment to Underserved Communities

- ▶ The Chancellor's High School Entrepreneurship Competition for 10-county region, entrepreneurship training for high school counselors and teachers
- ▶ Entrepreneurship program for veterans (with the Small Business Administration), ex-offenders entrepreneurship program (in development)
- ▶ The "Shark Tank" Think Tank teaches children ages 12-18 how to pitch their own ideas and become entrepreneurs
- ▶ Programs to support entrepreneurship in the arts; sponsor of Cucalorus Connect entrepreneurship program with 2,700 attendees
- ▶ Summer Youth Entrepreneurship Program
- ▶ Free tax assistance for low-income residents (in collaboration with the accounting department)