



Alabama
Entrepreneurship
Institute

AUGUST 2025



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Scroll down to see all of the upcoming events.

- Entrepreneur Resource Group: August Meeting
 - Guest Speaker, Charmie Chirgwin
- Crimson Catalyst Pitch Competition
 - NEW NSF Sponsored Event
- Alabama Launchpad Regional Meetup
- Meet the Drapers TV Show being filmed in Tuscaloosa
 - Sign-up for a chance to pitch your business idea
- UA Faculty + Staff Innovation Pitch Competition
- River Pitch Competition
- Demo Day

Details and registration information below.



Fall 2025 will consist of 3 Entrepreneur Resource Group meetings:

- August 19th
- September 16th
- October 21st

AUGUST EVENT DETAILS:

Date: August 19, 2025

Event Time: 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Location: The EDGE | 2627 10th Avenue | Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

Website: aei.culverhouse.ua.edu/entrepreneur-resource-groups-ergs

Guest Speaker: Charmie Chirgwin, RN, MBA

Company: Founder and CEO, PRO-Spectus LLC





Charmie Chirgwin, RN, MBA
Founder and CEO, PRO-Spectus LLC

Charmie Chirgwin is a distinguished leader in Market Access and Patient Services, with more than 30 years of experience spanning the full spectrum of healthcare, from direct patient care and patient support services to strategic roles within the Biopharm sector. As a registered nurse, Charmie brings a unique clinical lens to her work, grounded in the ability to assess complex situations quickly, go deep into the unknown, and act decisively, skills that have profoundly shaped her strategic approach and the company she built.

Before founding PRO-Spectus in 2008, Ms. Chirgwin held a series of progressively senior positions in Health Economics and Reimbursement, strategic marketing, brand development, and commercialization. Her career has supported breakthrough therapies and technologies across the medical device, diagnostic laboratory, pharmaceutical, and biotech industries, consistently driving patient-centered innovation and measurable impact.

Charmie's trauma nursing experience taught her that in moments of uncertainty, when no clear guidelines exist, you must rely on your instincts and clinical judgment. That same ethos is embedded in PRO-Spectus: a company built to navigate complexity, bridge access and outcomes, and deliver meaningful solutions for patients when it matters most.

SAVE YOUR SEAT BY RSVPING TODAY!

CRIMSON CATALYST
PITCH COMPETITION



The finalists (4) have already been selected, but you can attend, learn, grow, and cheer on the final competitors while learning more about the program.

- Up to \$25K per translational research project
- Expected number of awards 2-3

The Crimson Catalyst Program, supported by the National Science Foundation's Accelerating Research Translation (ART) program, helps UA research teams turn high-potential innovations into real-world impact. As part of Innovate UA, the Crimson Catalyst offers targeted funding and structured support to move technologies from the lab to the marketplace.

This spring, four applicant teams were selected to participate in the inaugural Crimson Catalyst cohort. At the final competition, each team will deliver a five-minute pitch to a panel of judges, competing for up to \$25,000 in milestone-based funding and the designation of an NSF-ART Seed Translational Research Project. We expect to award 2–3 teams whose projects show strong potential for commercialization and public benefit.

EVENT DETAILS:

Date: August 28, 2025

Competition Time: 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

Reception Time: 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM

Location: The EDGE | 2627 10th Avenue | Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

LET US KNOW YOU ARE COMING! RSVP HERE!



DATE CHANGE: SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

Alabama is full of amazing talent with big ideas. Alabama Launchpad is dedicated to raising them up to greater heights that propel job growth and prosperity in their wake. Our competitions give Alabama's budding entrepreneurs the tools they need to turn their ideas into real-world businesses, helping propel our state to a bigger, brighter, and better tomorrow. Rigorous training and invaluable feedback from our expert Launch Advisors help prepare our contestants for the challenges of business, and our financial seed funding gives rising stars the opportunity they need to reach their full potential.

Learn more about the opportunities and meet members of the Launchpad team at this regional meetup event.

EVENT DETAILS:

Date: September 16, 2025

Time: 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Location: The EDGE | 2627 10th Avenue | Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

SIGN-UP HERE TO ATTEND!



DRAPER AMERICA TOUR

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APPLY: WWW.MEETTHEDRAPERS.COM/USA
DEADLINE: AUGUST 31ST

Halogen

We are thrilled to share that *Meet the Drapers*, the largest startup pitch show on television, is partnering with the Alabama Entrepreneurship Institute to film an episode in Tuscaloosa, Alabama on September 24, 2025.

Founders will pitch **Tim Draper** (legendary VC behind Tesla, SpaceX, Coinbase), **Jesse Draper** (founding partner of Halogen Ventures), and guest judges during a live taping of *Meet the Drapers*, broadcast globally across TV and digital platforms. Competitors will get a rare opportunity to share their story on the world's biggest startup stage and compete for up to \$1M in investment.

Meet the Drapers is looking for early-stage startups (Pre-Seed to Series A) from any sector — from AI to Healthtech, sustainability to consumer — led by inspiring founders with bold visions. The show is open to **Alabama-based startups**, and selected companies will be invited to participate in a state-wide pitch competition in Tuscaloosa on Sept. 23 and to film their pitch live on September 24, 2025.

The **application deadline is August 31, 2025**. Upon applying, you'll be asked to submit a short pitch video or deck and fill out a quick form.

This is more than a pitch — it's your chance to go global. Don't miss it.

EVENT DETAILS:

Pitch Competition Date: September 23

Episode Filming Date: September 24

Location: Tuscaloosa, AL

Website: meetthedrapers.com/usa

Application Deadline: August 31, 2025

APPLY TO COMPETE!

RSVP TO ATTEND THE COMPETITION ON SEPT. 23RD



FACULTY + STAFF INNOVATION PITCH COMPETITION

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!!

This competition is open to ALL University of Alabama Faculty and Staff members!

The Faculty and Staff Innovation Pitch Competition offers The University of Alabama's faculty and staff the opportunity to win cash resources for an original business idea. All you need to do is record your 3-minute pitch and be ready to do a question and answer session with judges.

PRIZES TO BE WON:

Alabama Power Foundation's Innovative Technology Grand Prize - \$15,000

- the most innovative technology-focused idea

Culverhouse Entrepreneurial Growth Award - \$10,000

- any business idea that is most likely to scale or grow (either non-profit or for-profit)

Division of Finance Staff Innovation Pitch Awards - \$5,000 | \$3,000 | \$2,000

- dedicated to STAFF innovative ideas

COMPETITION DETAILS:

Date: October 10, 2025

Competition Time: Noon - 5:00 PM

Location: VIRTUAL

Website: aei.culverhouse.ua.edu/faculty-staff

SIGN-UP TO COMPETE



COMING SOON!!

Registration portal is scheduled to open on September 15th!

The River Pitch Competition was created to help innovators and entrepreneurs with new ideas and early-stage businesses obtain feedback on their work and potentially win one of 10 different \$1,000 prizes. The competition provides a way for each competitor to get valuable feedback on the idea presented. Contestants may meet someone who can help develop the idea into a business.

This competition is open to **ANYONE** in West Alabama!

All you need is three minutes to pitch one idea!

COMPETITION DETAILS:

Date: November 18, 2025

Competition Time: 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Location: Tuscaloosa River Market | 1900 Jack Warner Parkway | Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

Website: aei.culverhouse.ua.edu/river-pitch-competition

Deadline to Register: November 3, 2025



COMING SOON!!

Demo Day is part of Global Entrepreneurship Week. Using an open-house format, we invite you to meet our teams and network. Entrepreneurs will showcase their businesses, and be part of several presentations during the day.

EVENT DETAILS:

Date: November 20, 2025

Time: 11:00 AM - 8:00 PM

Location: The EDGE | 2627 10th Avenue

Fee: FREE

Website: aei.culverhouse.ua.edu/demo-day

Format: Open house format with lunch, networking, product presentations, and guest speakers.

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Connect with us using the links below

Contact Us

Phone: 1.205.348.3343

Email: aei@culverhouse.ua.edu



The Alabama Entrepreneurship Institute is housed at **The EDGE**, Tuscaloosa's home for startups. The EDGE is a partnership between The University of Alabama, the West Alabama Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Tuscaloosa. Resources from all three groups come together to help grow a vibrant ecosystem that supports entrepreneurship, business growth, and personal enterprise. The Alabama Entrepreneurship Institute is a campus-wide initiative powering the programs that are offered at The EDGE.
