The Gary S. Holmes Center for Entrepreneurship is the hub of entrepreneurship and innovation at the University of Minnesota that inspires, educates and connects the next generation of Minnesota’s entrepreneurs. We mobilize the community and provide support for emerging entrepreneurs, both within and outside the University, through experiential courses and programs like the MN Cup, Grow North, MIN-Corps and WE*. 
Mobilizing the Entrepreneurial Community

When the Carlson School of Management was renamed in his honor in 1996, Curt Carlson had a vision: that “the school bearing my name would become a mecca for would-be entrepreneurs.” At the time, this was a vision yet to be fulfilled. The school was successfully placing thousands of graduates each year with the large companies that came to campus to recruit, but entrepreneurship education was still in its infancy.

Since then, Carlson’s dream has become reality. University alumni have stepped forward to support the school’s efforts to develop engaging courses and programs to nurture entrepreneurial skills that have now become essential for success. Carlson's gift funded the first endowed faculty chair in entrepreneurship at the school, which you followed by support from American Medical Systems co-founder Bob Braasch to add a second faculty chair and establish the entrepreneurship center. CSM Corp. founder Gary Holmes’ 2007 transformational gift redefined the

Holmes Center for Entrepreneurship as a hub for entrepreneurship and innovation that develops experimental concepts and works closely with the business community to improve, connect and advance the next generation of entrepreneurs.

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The Holmes Center for Entrepreneurship is a part of the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota.

Scott Linnan, 
Chair, Board of Directors

Melissa Kibling Lynch, 
MPA ’89, MPA ’93, 
MPA ’00, MPA ’09, 
Director of Public Affairs

John Stavig, 
Executive Director

University of Minnesota Entrepreneurs of Year

Alumni Entrepreneur of the Year
2006 Gary Holmes, CSM Corp.
2007 Robert Stephens, Geek Squad
2008 Tim & Valerie Dofferty, Dofferty Employment
2009 Joel Rinn, Digital River
2010 Steve Flagg, Quality Bicycle Products
2011 Monica Nessel, Coldarea
2012 Bob Coughlin, Cross Telecom
2013 Greg Frankel, Magenic
2014 Steve Ellerton, Gran Millers
2015 Joel Schleicher, Presidio
2016 Nawzi Eftechakht, HealthEZ
2017 Marcia Page, Vedic Partners

Entrepreneurship Faculty of the Year
2014 Steve Spruch, Carlson School
2015 Barry Kudrowitz, College of Design
2016 Jiao Lues, Carlson School
2017 Will Durfee and Art Erdman, College of Science & Engineering

Student Entrepreneur of the Year
2015 Tyler Ebert, Admirecard
2016 Elise Maxwell, OvatoMan
2017 Jamie Glover, Ayoza

Celebrating Student Entrepreneurs
May 9, 2017
5 p.m. reception, 5:30 p.m. presentations
Main atrium, Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota, 321 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis
Register at www.uofmfoundersday.eventbrite.com

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Experiential Education – Learning by Doing

The year's three student-run companies in Entrepreneurship in Action are working on products that channel renewable energy into productive fidgeting, provide comfort for patients going through chemotherapy, and enable mountain climbers to more easily reach new heights.

The Able Midsworks team pictured above has designed a creatively colored injection-molded product that attaches to pens and pencils and provides a means to productively and playfully fidget while improving mental focus, order at ablemidsworks.com.

"Businesses are better served by having the varied perspectives around the table," Page notes. "To the extent that those voices are not included, you come to a lesser decision."

A pioneer in the male-dominated global investment industry, Page demonstrated her value by leading the development of the firm's disciplined investment principles and value-based approach. During a time when diversity wasn’t always appreciated, she was never afraid to lead by example and challenge the status quo. "Businesses are better served by having the varied perspectives around the table," Page notes. "To the extent that those voices are not included, you come to a lesser decision." This team-oriented culture became a cornerstone of the firm's success.

Page serves as a role model to the community, regularly speaking to students while serving on the Carlson School Board of Overseers and the board of trustees at Gustavus Adolphus. She also supports the Mary J. Page Community University Partnerships Fund to honor her mother’s commitment to rural communities and sustainable development. Page is an active leader within the Committee of 200, an organization of the world’s most successful women entrepreneurs and corporate innovators. Fellow Committee of 200 member and Holmes Center advisory board Chair Judy Corson led her selection as the 2017 University of Minnesota Entrepreneur of the Year. "We are thrilled to recognize Marcia on her remarkable entrepreneurial career, and for the inspiration she provides for the next generation of women entrepreneurs. She is a true trailblazer!"

American Express

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Engineering Faculty to Be Recognized

Will Durkle

Art Erdman

Professors Will Durkle and Art Erdman are well known for their academic research and leadership in the Mechanical Engineering Department and Medical Devices Center at the University of Minneso- ta. For the past 20 years, their shared passion has been working with engineering students to help them learn by doing in their New Product Design and Business Development course.

Combining graduate students from mechanical and biomaterials engi- neering and the Carlson School, this course works on sponsored projects to design new product prototypes based on rigorous assessment of customer needs. More than 130 projects and 600 students have participated in this course, gaining valuable experience in researching and designing products that meet market needs. Erdman and Durkle will receive their award at Founder’s Day on May 9.

Asiya Empowers Somali Women

Fatimah Hussein and Jamie Glover (2016 Impact Ventures Winner, Asiya)

Jamie Glover will graduate from the Carlson School MBA program in May, but she hasn’t bothered to interview for a job. Connected with University alums entrepreneurs Monica Nauls and Fatimah Hussein in the first year of her MBA program, Glover is following her passion to turn a short-term project into an entrepreneurial career. Glover’s experience as an athlete at Carlson College instilled in her the positive impact athletic competitions can have on young women’s self-confidence and leadership capabilities. Yet many Muslim girls and young wom- en are discouraged from competing because they have no headcoverings designed for athletic use. Together, Glover and Hussein co-founded Asiya (named for one of the most revered women in Islam) to fill this niche.

Participating in the experiential STARTUP course, Glover was able to test and develop the concept of Asiya Lightweight, breathable and non- restricting hijab. In this course, she received seed funding to design ini- tial prototypes and mentoring to help validate the concept and establish a company.

Asiya is encouraging a constructive dialogue on topics of immigration, racial equality and helping to break down barriers of expression and inclusion for Muslim women.

"What Jamie and Fatimah are doing for these girls is very important," commented University alumnus and benefactor Suleiman Saleh. "They’re empowering and inclusive culture at a time when we desperately need to be inclusive.

Asiya was named $5,000 in the 2016 MN Cup and recently raised $53,000 in a crowdfunding campaign to bring its initial product line to market. In addi- tion to expanding its product line to include warm- and active-wear, Asiya helps encourage constructive dialogue on topics of immigration, racial equality and promoting freedom of expression and inclusion for Muslim women. Find more information on Asiya at asiyaempowers.com.

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Got a Genius Business Idea?
Give It Life by Entering the 2017 MNCUP

Entrepreneurs, start your engines! It’s time to take your innovations to the next level — by applying for the 2017 MNCUP. Since 2005, the MNCUP has been supporting entrepreneurs in Minnesota by helping early-stage businesses get off the ground. The nation’s largest statewide new startup competition is now in its thirteenth year of awarding and accelerating the development of new business ideas. The face-to-face competition is now accepting applications. Participants have until April 28 to submit applications for a chance to compete for a share of the prize money — which last year was a record-breaking $400,000 and this year will exceed $450,000.

ENTER THE COMPETITION

WHAT IS MNCUP?
A competition and hub to connect Minnesota’s entrepreneurial ecosystem.

WHO SHOULD ENTER?
Entrepreneurs, researchers and inventors. Whether you are at the point of inception or already have created a company and are pursuing your breakthrough idea.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED?
Entrepreneurs: Apply. It’s free!
Business community: Engage by mentoring, judging, and sponsorship.

ELIGIBILITY
Entrepreneurs based in MN with less than $1 million in annual revenue.

HOW CAN YOU BENEFIT?
Entrepreneurs: • Mentoring opportunities with industry leaders • Exclusive event access • Business plan feedback • Networking opportunities with potential investors • Media exposure
Business community: • Access to innovative ideas and talent • Support Minnesota’s brightest entrepreneurs and ideas

MORE INFORMATION AND APPLICATION AT MNCUP.ORG

Friday Chats
To help all applicants with the initial round of the competition, MNCUP is hosting a series of online events called Friday Chats featuring its 2016 winners. Join MNCUP via Google Hangouts every Friday from 12 p.m. - 1 p.m. to hear about the process, time commitments, benefits and rewards, as well as ask the most recent division winners pointed questions about their personal experiences. For more information and to register, visit https://2017FridayChats.eventbrite.com

2017 MNCUP EVENTS SCHEDULE

Public Events
• March 20 - MNCUP Application Launch Party
• March 31 - MNCUP Virtual Q&A Session w/ Activated Presents Company and Self-Esteem Garden
• April 5 - 4th Annual Women in Entrepreneurship Conference hosted by WET*
• April 17 - MNCUP Virtual Q&A Session with Berd Spokes and Vaga
• April 14 - MNCUP Virtual Q&A Session w/ Siemens and ExpressionMed
• April 21 - MNCUP Virtual Q&A Session with Akiva and Minnefly
• April 28 - MNCUP Virtual Q&A Session to answer last-minute questions about application
• October 9 - Final Awards Event from 4:00 - 7:00 pm at McNamara Alumni Center

Competition Schedule
MNCUP Participants Only - Application Round
• March 20 - 2017 Minnesota Cup Application Launch
• April 28 - Entry deadline 11:59 pm
• May 30 - Participants are notified of first-round results, semifinalists announced

MNCUP Participants Only - Semifinalist Round
• June 7 - Semifinalist Reception at the Carlson School of Management
• June 14 - Semifinalists paired with mentors
• June 15 - MNCUP Semifinalist Submission Panel and Discussion, hosted by Gray Plant Mooty
• June 28 - MNCUP Semifinalist program on powerful presentations and pitches, hosted by Medwin LLC and Lurie, LLP
• July 22 - 23 - Youth Division Mentor Weekend
• August 7 - Semifinalists submit business plans, investor presentations and videos by 12 p.m.
• August 21 - 24 - Judges convene to select finalists
• August 25 - 26 - Social Entrepreneur Division Reception at CliftonLarsonAllen
• August 24 - FoodAg/Beverage Division Pitch Slam, hosted by 201 Inc.
• August 25 - 26 - Semifinalists are notified of results & given written feedback on their plans; finalists announced

MNCUP Participants Only - Finalist Round
• August 30 - Finalists receive training on speaking/presenting from Spoken Impact
• September 19 - Finalists present to Division Review Boards; winners selected
• September 20 - Finalists present to Division Review Boards; winners selected
• September 25 - Division winners announced and written plans are sent to Grand Prize Review Board
• October 9 - Division winners present to Grand Prize Review Board
• October 9 - Final Awards Event from 4:00 - 7:00 pm at McNamara Alumni Center

MNCUP BY THE NUMBERS 2005 - 2016

122 mentors and 200 competition judges gave advice and guidance to participants in 2016

Awarded $2+ million in seed money from 2005 to 2016

Since 2005, finalists have raised more than $230 million from outside investors, spurring innovation and jobs

8 percent of the teams in 2016 were veteran-led

38 percent of the teams in 2016 were woman-led

1 out of 4 teams were led by a person of color in 2016

GARY S. HOLMES CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP • Apply at mncup.org
February 14, 2017
REPRINT

STEMONIX 2016 GRAND PRIZE WINNER

The Art of the Pitch

Last year, Eden Prairie-based Ste- monix, led by CEO and co-founder Ying Yeh, was named MN Cup’s grand prize winner. The company converts human cells such as those for skin, fat and blood to stem cells, then severs the stem cells to create “micropoons” — currently for the heart and blood, but with plans to expand into other parts of the body.

The technology allows companies to find out not only whether the drug has harmful (even lethal) side effects but whether it does the job of improving a given condition — without ever putting a human subject at risk. It has the potential for making medicines more individualized, with less guesswork for each patient. It also has the potential to reduce pharma companies’ expenses for R&D and streamline their testing process, so they can bring life-saving medicines to market sooner.

Besides the $100,000 in prize money, winning the MN Cup has brought many tangible benefits to Stemrix, which Yeh co-founded in 2014, in- cluding investors and new customers.

I sincerely believe, however, that the MN Cup competition has been integral to the company’s success just by the very fact that it exists.

It allows people to try — and more importantly, to fail. This was our third try. The first time, we were only a few months old, and we didn’t get past the first round,” says Yeh, who speaks with a clear, rapid-fire delivery, almost as if he’s in a race to articulate all the ideas that keep scoring in his mind. “The second time — didn’t get past the second round. The third time, we did.

“They insisted to allow us to answer their questions. They taught me how to explain the company. The month of refinement we spent learning to communicate — how to pitch and repitch and craft and recraft — was invaluable.”

He likens the process to the proverbial about giving a man a fish to eat for a day versus teaching a man to fish so he can eat for the rest of his life. “They didn’t teach me how to fish — they taught me how to pitch.”

Stemonix

Scoti Lamar, Dan Mallin, Ying Yeh (2016 MN Cup Winner, Stemrix), Dave Cleveland, Carolyn Cleveland

WHEN I WORK, 2013 HIGH TECH WINNER

Filling in the Gaps

Sometimes, timing is crucial. But we are trying again.

When Chad Halvorsen was an hourly employee at a grocery store in the 1990s, he had to drive to work to check the weekly schedule, printed on a piece of paper. But he knew “there had to be a better way” — not just for him and fellow employees, but for the managers, who juggled myriad schedules to make an ever-changing puzzle work.

Halvorsen tried to start a business to streamline the process and move it online; nobody bit. He went on to a successful career in software development, then designed and finally ran a consultancy in digital marketing and production development for 10 years.

With the advent of the iPhone, he de- cided the time was right to try again.

Some time it worked.

When I Work, founded in 2010, pro- vides scheduling software that links hourly employees and employers. Managers can see in the right person on the right time, employees can re- quest time off or make shifts with other employees, all from smartphones.

The next year, he tried for the MN Cup. He didn’t make it past the first round, but it was hugely helpful. “I’m a non-blooded entrepreneur,” says Halvorsen, When I Work CEO and founder. “What MN Cup did was help round me out as an entrepre- neur — broadening his perspective on all of the moving parts of building a software company.”

Two years later, the company entered again. This time, it won the High Tech division.

Since then, he has passed two million users: eight capital and setting up a board; he says his visibility from and connections through MN Cup were instrumental for both. In fact, one of his board members is his 2011 mentor, John Tidrow. And in 2016 Halvorsen himself was a mentor in a MN Cup workshop. He’s also found great employees, directly and indirectly, through MN Cup.

The company recently moved to Min- neapolis’ North Loop, a tech startup hub. He’s excited to be building a large community, but knows it goes well beyond a neighborhood; it’s part of the entrepreneurial ecosystem MN Cup has helped grow. “The more startups, the better,” he says. “It helps everybody.”

Chad Halvorsen, CEO/Founder

When I Work

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THE MINNESOTA CUP SUPPORTERS:


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Thank you, 2017 MN Cup sponsors, for making MN Cup what it is: a community-led effort that celebrates the best ideas in the state.

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ORGANIZED BY

Carlson School of Management
University of Minnesota
Leaders in Food Innovation: Boulder, Portland...Twin Cities?
Yes, says Grow North.

Grow North, a resource and connection hub for food and agriculture entrepreneurs, is the latest initiative out of the Holmen Center for Entrepreneurship. Its director, Lauren Pradal, has ambitious goals for how it will support Minnesota’s food community.

“We have so much here. Startups, organizations, nonprofits, tenacity and passion. Our role is to connect the ecosystem so it works harder and smarter together,” says Pradal. “We want Minnesota to be a known leader in this space.”

Inspiration for Grow North came from the immediate success of MN Cup’s Food Ag/Behavior division, founded in partnership with 301 Inc., General Mills’ venture arm. Furthering their commitment, General Mills also provided the foundational support to get Grow North started. “We saw our support for Grow North as an extension of our employees’ passion and commitment to the food start-up space,” says Mary Jane McLendon, director of the General Mills Foundation.

Since launching in January, Grow North built a searchable online repository, source database designed to be a one-stop shop for entrepreneurs through a partnership with Southern Innovate’s Venture Initiative Foundation. They have also launched a series of programming and events for entrepreneurs and the broader community. Learn more and get involved at GrowNorthMN.com.

Sophia Habibas and Miranda Forrest roast North Mallow marshmallows at 2016 Pitch Slam hosted by 301 Inc.

Growing the Food Community through Mentorship

With its latest program, Grow North was inspired by a simple idea: connect the big and the small to help each other.

The organization kicked off its corporate mentorship program this January, matching entrepreneurs of any size with Minnesota’s largest food companies, at a special celebration.

“We believe the right connection can change the game for an entrepreneur. With the wealth of expertise in Minnesota, we want to make these connections happen as often as possible,” says Lauren Pradal, Grow North’s director.

General Mills, a foundational sponsor, has had more than a dozen employees meet one-on-one with food entrepreneurs to talk through specific challenges. Land O’ Lakes, a Grow North sponsor, invited seven entrepreneurs inside Land O’ Lakes in January to showcase their products with hundreds of employees and paired them with subject matter experts to answer their questions.

“We are inspired by the freedom entrepreneurs have to push boundaries and take risks. We want a little bit of that to rub-off on us,” says Jennifer Berta, director of dairy foods research and development at Land O’ Lakes.

“It’s wonderful flat. In the process, we can be a resource for these startups and help them think through particular challenges in their businesses.”

Collen Schlipher of Saint Paul Switch at Land O’ Lakes Showcase Event.

Reaching for next level: WholeMe

About 19 years ago, Mary Koer’s husband Michael was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. That’s not the kind you get because of bad habits — lack of exercise or poor diet. It’s the kind people just get, regardless of lifestyle. She began reading up on autoimmune disease, and, in an act of martial solidarity, decided to eliminate grains from her diet. She says she began feeling better almost immediately. But it made snacking a lot more complicated — no granola bars here, rice cake there.

Mary began experimenting in the kitchen, looking for her perfect snack — grainless and good for you, with nutrients that provided long-lasting energy, including good fats and natural ingredients (a combination that also helps stabilize blood sugars).

She and friend Krista Steinbach founded WholeMe in 2013 (Koer in CEO, Steinbach is COO and went into market with two all-natural, preservative-free bars and an almond-coconut cluster product about a year after). The bar was well received, but the almost-two-year-old company remains on the roster and have recently been introduced in single-serve packaging. The company also offers six other products and is working on a new product line to be released late next winter.

Koer credits much of her success to a great partnership. Steinbach, with a background as a pastry chef, “is the intuitive,” Koer says, as she handles a lot of the behind-the-scenes work such as R&D. “When we came out,” says Koer, “with 20 years at the Carlson School, the last 10 dean of the undergrad program, she brought with her a good understanding of business and a strong relationship with the business community.” Together, says Koer, they make a strong pair.

So with that kind of background, she had no need of what the Holmen Center has to offer, right? Not so fast.

Koer is excited to be part of Grow North, an arm of the Holmen Center that focuses on peer networking. Having a corporate mentor is great, says Koer, but there’s much to be said for an environment where you don’t have to worry about saying something naïve or scaling reasons, the bars have been discontinued, but the almost-two-year-old company remains on the roster and have recently been introduced in single-serve packaging. The company also offers six other products and is working on a new product line to be released late next winter.

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Koer is excited to be part of Grow North, an arm of the Holmen Center that focuses on peer networking. Having a corporate mentor is great, says Koer, but there’s much to be said for an environment where you don’t have to worry about saying something naïve or scalable reasons, the bars have been discontinued, but the almost-two-year-old company remains on the roster and have recently been introduced in single-serve packaging. The company also offers six other products and is working on a new product line to be released late next winter.

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MIN-CORPS MINNESOTA INNOVATION CORPS

Dr. Paul Hines, CEO

You’re a doctor in residency, with a non-stop grading schedule. What do you do on your off-hours?

Most would likely say “Sleep.” For Dr. Paul Hines, it was inventing a new product.

He was on rotation at Abbott Northwestern hospital in Minneapolis in 2014, and he’d watch health provid-
ers spend time and energy ensuring patients got the right medications at the right time. Timing can be crucial, including for widely used meds such as blood thinners and insulin.

The issue hit home—literally, he was also watching his own grandparents and family caregivers struggle with the same issues.

It was a seemingly simple prob-
lem—yet the ramifications can be serious, even life threatening. By one estimate, 125,000 people die each year because of poor medication adherence. Automated meds-dispens-
ers were available. But they were ex-
pensive, big and bulky, and he notes, innovators must consider to set up and use, which can be especially difficult for older patients.

So Hines, also a software nerd, married his two interests: Working with childhood friend Steve Werner, an engineer, they’d experimented with a few ideas for a better pill dispenser.

“It started as a hobby for us,” and it just snowballed,” he says modestly. They developed a “smart pillow” that not only dispenses the meds at the right time, it uses the internet to send telephone, email or text reminders, lets caregivers know if the patient missed a med, and tracks over-
all usage. Eventually he realized that maybe his career lay in health care, not just in direct care. He incorporated Dose Health in early 2015 and went full-time that fall.

“If you have an idea you love, get started on it. It’s better to do it rather than just think about it. It’s always going to be a roller coaster ride; if you love it, that’s what gets you through.”

But he didn’t leap unprepared. A year earlier, he took the STARTUP course at the Carlson School. He realized seed funding to build initial proto-
types and intense mentoring to get started.

Hines and Werner had medical, software, hardware and engineering know how. “What we needed now was the busi-
ness background—a whole different set of issues,” he says.

Dr. Paul Hines designed and tested a smart pill box in a new experiential course developed by the Holmes Center.

MIN-CORPS develops talent and catalyzes technology commercialization across the University of Minnesota.

MIN-CORPS: Progress to date

The University of Minnesota’s mantra is “driven to discover,” and this research has led to many medical, scientific and engineering breakthroughs. But laboratory conditions don’t necessarily translate to the necessities of real life. For great science to become a great product, you need to understand your market and your business model. That’s why the University of Minnesota joined the National Innovation Corps, a National Science Foundation initiative, to increase com-
mercialization of innovations emerging from U.S. universities.

Since launching MIN-CORPS in 2014, the Holmes Center for Entrepreneurship has collaborated across the University to teach innovators how to transition from the lab to the marketplace. MIN-Corps provides commercialization classes, individual consulting, industry connections, and market research grants to students, research staff and faculty. Achieving “product-market fit” is key opening. As one innovator explained, “I can see how this would help us tailor the experiments required to bring the technology to the market in a more streamlined fashion.”

A “smart” pillow. A more effective food contaminant sensor. A biodegradable laundry soap that washes clothes better. A quick fix for urinary tract infections. An app that helps seniors finally get a good night’s sleep. These are just some of the innovations coming from the U to you.

MIN-CORPS: By the numbers

3 years since joining the National Innovation Corps
7 venture competition semi-finalists and prize winners
15 participating UMN colleges
78 business mentors
149 innovation commercialization teams
$3.5M commercialization grants & startup funding

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March 27, 2017
REPRINT

BY STARTRIBUNE
Local women entrepreneurs will gather at Carlson School of Management on April 5 at the 4th annual Women in Entrepreneurship conference to discuss all things business, including product testing, user experience, manufacturing, retail and marketing. The free event is hosted by WE*, a group of dedicated and passionate women entrepreneurs, investors, and community leaders who have rallied to support women developing scalable ideas and startups in Minnesota.

Supporting women entrepreneurs makes good business sense, according to the National Association of Women Business Owners. More than 4.4 million firms in the United States are owned by women and employ nearly 7.9 million people, generating $1.3 trillion in sales (2015 figures). Women-owned firms (51 percent or more) account for 31 percent of all privately held firms and contribute 14 percent of employment and 12 percent of revenues. Female founders also outperform male peers, according to a study by First Round Capital. Companies with a female founder performed 63 percent better than investments with all-male founding teams.

The half-day seminar will kick off at 12:30 p.m. with DEED Commissioner and entrepreneur Shaeavatar Hardy, followed by 3 panels with numerous speakers.

The day will conclude with a keynote from ed-tech entrepreneur Cecilia Retzlaff, co-founder and CEO of Randa, now a part of Wiley.

The Women in Entrepreneurship Conference is also a place to encourage women-led businesses to enter the 2017 MN Cup, the nation’s largest statewide new startup competition. Since 2003, the MN Cup has been building entrepreneurship in Minnesota by helping early-stage businesses get off the ground. “We are thrilled to bring women entrepreneurs together to encourage and support their businesses,” says Melissa Khyshing Lynx, executive director of MN Cup, a founding organization of WE*. “It’s inspiring to see our community of women entrepreneurs grow and succeed. We have proof of that success through the MN Cup — last year, 38 percent of our teams had a female lead. We’re looking to keep increasing those numbers through events like this one.”

For more information about the Women in Entrepreneurship conference and to register for this free event, please visit https://wemcupconference.eventbrite.com

Abby Honeck, Kay Log Rolling

Educating and Connecting Women Entrepreneurs

WE*, a spinoff of MN Cup, is a community of communities focused on supporting scalable, women-led startups in Minnesota. WE* showcases resources and activity happening year-round for women entrepreneurs including unique events organized by WE*. The purpose of the program is to encourage more women entrepreneurs to develop big ideas, gain access to resources and ultimately raise capital or establish key partnerships to grow their businesses. Its marquee event is an annual conference that attracts hundreds of women from across the region.

www.resurantmn.com

MN Cup is a startup competition and hub to connect Minnesota’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. In 2014, MN Cup launched its Women’s Initiative, now known as WE*, with the goal of improving application numbers for its annual competition. Over the last three years, MN Cup has hosted annual conferences, numerous meet-ups and educational programming targeting women entrepreneurs leading scalable ideas and startups. In 2016, with the support and leadership of the Carlson Family Foundation, MN Cup awarded over $25,000 to the top competing women-led startup, Azya.

www.mncup.org

MIN-CORPS provides training and resources to increase entrepreneurial activity across the University of Minnesota. MIN-CORPS hosts an annual Women’s Innovation Conference designed to help female innovators connect the dots between their ideas and make a positive, significant impact. The purpose of this event is to inspire, inform and connect women research scientists, engineers and business professionals to strengthen and extend the diverse talent pool of women innovators in the Twin Cities.

www.mincorps.umn.edu

The Holmes Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of Minnesota is leading multiple efforts to support women students. Through targeted programming and events to engage women from multiple disciplines and backgrounds, the Holmes Center wants to see more women pursue opportunities in entrepreneurship and innovation.

This is not simply a gender issue – it’s an economic issue. The Holmes Center is collaborating with organizations like the Sofia Angel Fund, OOCO, Hack the Cup, and several others to create greater impact within our community. Many women lawyers in Minnesota want to see more women start businesses, raise capital and create jobs. We believe that Minnesota can be the best place for women to start and grow their businesses.

Nzoe Elkhari, Heather EzEE and The Aras Group, and Marilyn Carlson Nelson

MIN-CORPS MINNESOTA INNOVATION CORPORATION