



INNOVATION PARTNERSHIPS
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

2026 IMPACT REPORT



Table of Contents

A Letter from Kelly Sexton | 1

About Innovation Partnerships | 3

Areas of Service | 4

Our Performance | 5

Five-Year Breakdown | 6

Research Breakthroughs Reaching Patients: FDA-Regulated Products on the Market | 7

Accelerate Blue Fund | 8

Rob Bronstein: Support of Accelerate Blue Fund Brings U-M Alum Full Circle | 9

Accelerate Blue Foundry Hits Its Robotically Enhanced Stride in Year Two | 11

Michigan University Innovation Capital Fund | 14

Feature Story: U-M, ASICS Launch Groundbreaking Sport Innovation Initiative | 15

Commercialization Leadership at U-M | 19

Innovation Champions: First Year, Lasting Impact | 19

Technology Transfer Talent Network and EDA Global Epicenter for Mobility Fund Twelve Postdoctoral Commercialization Fellows | 21

How U-M Created a Midwest Startup Movement | 22

Alumni Association Brings U-M Breakthroughs to Life | 23

Feature Story: H. David Humes Named 2026 Distinguished University Innovator of the Year | 24

Feature Story: U-M Startup HistoSonics Acquired for \$2.25B | 27

Feature Story: Leukemia Treatment Receives FDA Approval | 30

Innovation Partnerships Programming | 33

New Event Series Celebrates U-M Research Breakthroughs | 33

Innovation Spotlight Brings U-M Inventions Into Focus | 33

Project Highlights | 34

U-M Startup Amplitude Vascular Systems Acquired by Stryker for Up to \$835 Million | 34

Ecovia Bio Closes Series B Financing to Expand Michigan Manufacturing of Biodegradable Alternative to Microplastics | 35

New U-M Startup General Orbit Is Out of This World | 37

New Musical Makes Opioid Education More Accessible | 38

Feature Story: Celebrate Invention 2025 Highlights U-M Innovators, Announces New Programs | 39

Thank You to Our National Advisory Board | 42

National Advisory Board Members | 43

A Letter from Kelly Sexton

At Innovation Partnerships, we believe in the transformative power of research and its ability to shape and improve our future. Our Annual Impact Report showcases another remarkable year for innovation at the University of Michigan, one defined by breakthrough discoveries, strong partnerships and real-world impact. Fiscal Year 2026 may also come to be known as the year the innovation flywheel began turning under its own weight, thanks to years of collaborative investment in building the infrastructure to support the translation of research into real-world impact.

This past year we witnessed landmark achievements from the startups and innovations that have been maturing within our portfolio. University of Michigan startups made national headlines, including HistoSonics' successful acquisition valued at \$2.25 billion and Amplitude Vascular Systems' acquisition by Stryker, a global leader in medical technologies, for up to \$835 million. Ambiq Micro went public on the NYSE, fueling its continued growth as a leader in low-

power semiconductor solutions for edge AI.

In a historic milestone for patients, Komzifti, a first-in-class treatment for certain types of acute myeloid leukemia, received FDA approval, offering new hope to patients and becoming the 10th therapeutic originating from the university's research portfolio to achieve this significant milestone.

In FY26, our office once again received a record number of invention reports, executed hundreds of license agreements and developed new research collaborations with industry and foundations to support faculty research. This year we supported the launch of 40 startup companies, among the highest number of startups ever reported by a U.S. university. These 40 startup companies are poised to advance new medical devices, therapeutics, clean energy solutions, space technologies, inclusive health and wellness innovations and other areas of urgent need. These are the startups that will become Michigan success stories 5, 10 and 15 years from now, delivering

breakthroughs that improve lives, strengthen our economy and extend the impact of U-M research far beyond campus.

Our forecast for future years looks incredibly promising thanks to the strength of our innovation pipeline. These successes are possible thanks to the dedication and brilliance of U-M's faculty, and the engagement of investors, entrepreneurs and ecosystem partners. Together, we are accelerating economic opportunity and extending the reach of Michigan research across the globe.

I invite you to explore this year's report to learn more about the innovations, people and partnerships that drove progress in FY26. Thank you for your continued engagement and support, as we advance the impact and legacy of Michigan innovation.

Sincerely,

Kelly Sexton

Associate Vice President
for Research -
Innovation Partnerships
& Economic Impact



The Innovation Partnerships team.

About Innovation Partnerships

Innovation Partnerships accelerates the path from discovery to impact at the University of Michigan, working with faculty and researchers to translate their research into real-world solutions. Our team brings expertise in intellectual property strategy, licensing, startup formation and industry engagement, helping move discoveries from the lab into the marketplace.

Through our Alliances, Licensing and Ventures teams, we support research relationships with industry and foundations, develop and commercialize U-M intellectual property and connect innovators with entrepreneurs, investors and industry partners to launch high-impact startup companies. As part of the Office of the Vice President for Research, we're committed to faculty-centered service, meeting research teams where they are in their journey and coordinating support across the commercialization lifecycle.

We also invest directly in the success of U-M startups through the Accelerate Blue Fund, an early-stage venture fund that provides critical capital to reach key milestones and attract follow-on investment. Paired with mentorship programs and a strong network of experienced advisors, this support helps university inventors and startup founders navigate the complex path from discovery to growth and impact.

Together, these efforts contribute to a robust innovation ecosystem that consistently places the University of Michigan among the nation's leaders in startup creation and research commercialization. Innovation Partnerships plays a defining role in this success, helping ensure that breakthrough ideas generate meaningful impact for society, drive economic growth and strengthen Michigan's innovation economy.



Areas of Service

Innovation Partnerships brings together the expertise, partnerships, programs, talent and capital needed to move U-M research from discovery to real-world impact. This work is organized across three integrated areas of service:

Alliances

- Connect faculty with corporate and foundation research opportunities
- Provide strategy and negotiation support for corporate and foundation research agreements
- Establish new large-scale corporate and foundation research partnerships
- Manage ongoing research alliances

Licensing

- Support invention intake
- Develop intellectual property strategy and funding
- Negotiate license agreements
- Support data licensing and open source innovation

Ventures

- Provide translational research funding
- Connect innovators with experienced business and social entrepreneurship mentors
- Provide early-stage venture investment and investor connections
- Connect promising technologies with entrepreneurial talent

Together, these capabilities create a pipeline that helps more Michigan discoveries move toward the marketplace, patients and communities.

Our Performance

Years of investment in the people, programs and capital that support research commercialization are translating into record momentum.

Alliances

195

New Corporate Sponsored
Research Agreements Supported

\$75.8M

New Corporate Research
Funding Supported

8

New Industry Consortia and
Master Research Agreements Established

In FY26, U-M faculty received **\$128.8M** in sponsored research awards related to research outside of clinical trials. The Corporate and Foundation Research Alliances team within Innovation Partnerships strengthened this campus effort by providing direct relationship and negotiation support for **195** new corporate sponsored research agreements totaling **\$75.8M**.

Licensing

726

Invention
Reports

339

License/Option
Agreements

\$60.5M

Licensing
Revenue

295

New Original
Patent Applications

197

Issued U.S.
Patents

Ventures

40

Startups
Launched

6

IPOs and Secondary
Public Offerings

\$796M

Venture Capital
Raised

\$3.83B

Public Offerings, Buyouts,
Mergers & Acquisitions

The record number of startups launched in FY26 reflects years of investment in a robust commercialization pipeline, including translational funding, mentors-in-residence, a founder-friendly startup licensing framework, an inventor-centered service approach and the Accelerate Blue Foundry. The Foundry pairs entrepreneurs from across the country with U-M researchers to accelerate startup launch. Five of the 40 startups launched in FY26 were enabled by the Foundry.

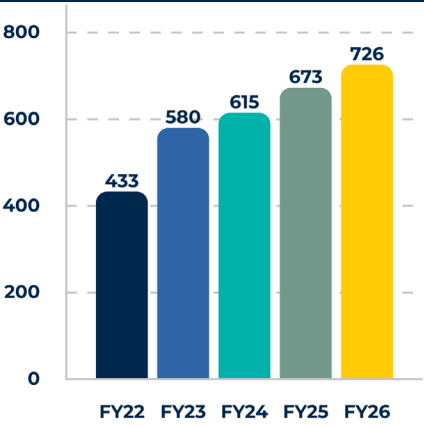
FY26 Startups

A3 Technologies | Academic Assistance | AureSeal Medical | Behavioria | Bloodscan Biotech | Blue Arbor Technologies | Camden Space | Carbon Scavenger | Connected Traffic Intelligence | Corner3d | DR-TRAC | Enexa Bio | Eradix Therapeutics | General Orbit | HealthyLifetime | iGym | In the Making Studios | Intero Biosystems | Linkage Community | Medication Data Science | MELD Health | Metria Oncology | MI-SAFESAM | Mixel Studios | Modal Mobility | Novall | OcularDX | Orades | Osteologic Therapeutics | Parallel Robotics | Phigi | PreEmptBio | PreSense Health | Qure Dynamics | Saros Therapeutics | Scan Lab | Skeletalix | Space Plasma | Tulip Healthy Living | WeAdaptify

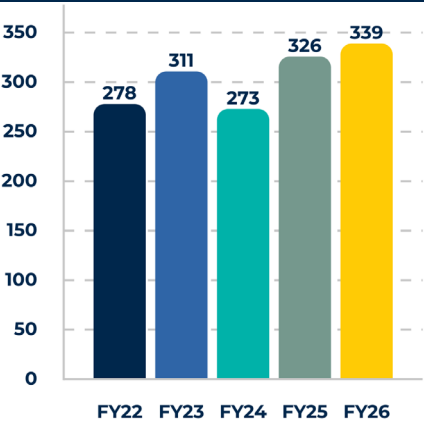
Five-Year Breakdown (FY22-FY26)

FY26 marked a record year across multiple measures of commercialization activity, reflecting the growing strength of U-M's innovation pipeline and startup portfolio.

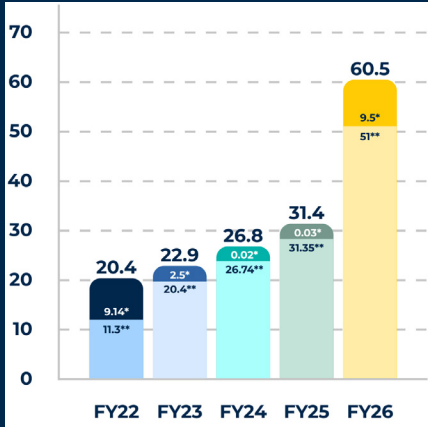
Invention Reports



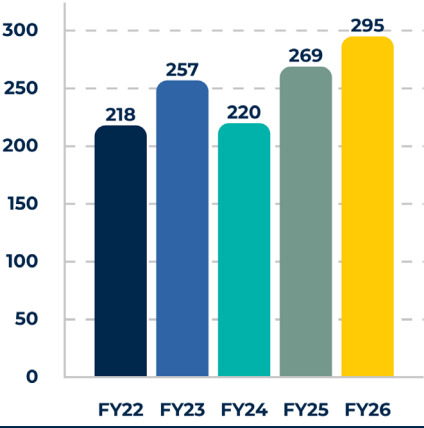
License/Option Agreements



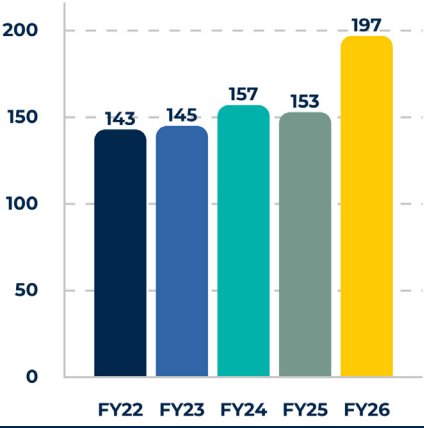
Licensing Revenue (millions)



New Original Patent Applications

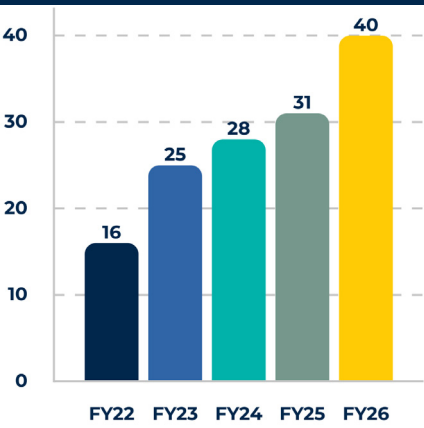


Issued U.S. Patents

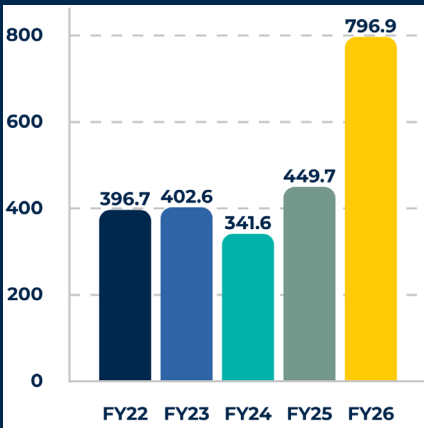


*Equity or Paid-Up Royalties (millions)
**Royalties (millions)

Startups Launched



Venture Capital Raised (millions)



Research Breakthroughs Reaching Patients: FDA-Regulated Products on the Market

University of Michigan research has contributed to **38** FDA-approved or marketed diagnostics, medical devices and therapeutics commercialized by U-M licensees that are improving patient care around the world. With another 131 innovations in the pipeline, this portfolio demonstrates both a proven track record of research translation and extraordinary potential for future patient impact.

Diagnostics & Medical Devices

28

Marketed Diagnostics
& Medical Devices

54

Diagnostics/Devices
in the Pipeline

Marketed Diagnostics/Devices

| **2001:** 4D MSPECT | **2003:** IntraLase FS Laser, Paxscan | **2006:** Multi-Channel Radiofrequency Generator, Pulmonary Vein Ablation Catheter | **2007:** Microfluidic Diagnostic System BM Max, SJM Epic & Trifecta Cardiovascular Valves | **2013:** Cranial Filler, TruSight CF NBS Test & MiSeqDX Assay | **2014:** Alertwatch AC, Alertwatch OB, Alertwatch OR, Lung Density Analysis | **2017:** First-Gen Needle Driver | **2021:** Aerosolve Tent, LumiCare Detection Rinse | **2022:** AHI, INOWill N200 N.O. Generator, MRI Imaging Software Techniques | **2023:** Axius Needle Driver, Edison Platform, MyProstateScore 2.0, RAVIN Cam, Selective Cytopheretic Device | **2024:** SurePlan MRT | **2025:** Alpha Spect Mini, DC Automate & DC Inform, OcuMet

Therapeutics

10

Approved
Therapeutics

77

Therapeutics
in the Pipeline

Approved Therapeutics

| **2003:** Amevive, BEXXAR, FluMist Quadrivalent | **2005:** Orencia | **2014:** Auryxia, Cerdelga eliglustat | **2017:** Kymriah | **2021:** Livtencity | **2023:** TAK-755 | **2025:** Komzifti

Accelerate Blue Fund

The Accelerate Blue Fund brings innovations from University of Michigan research laboratories into the marketplace by supporting founders at the first stages of company formation. Investing in early-stage startups based on U-M–licensed technologies, the AB Fund helps transform breakthrough research into high-growth companies.

Supported by philanthropy, grants from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and

the Michigan Strategic Fund, the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the University of Michigan, the Accelerate Blue Fund operates as an evergreen venture fund, reinvesting returns with an ultimate goal to sustain future investments in U-M startups for generations.

[Learn more about the Accelerate Blue Fund at myumi.ch/39kV1](https://myumi.ch/39kV1)



Accelerate Blue Fund By the Numbers

\$4.25M

Invested by the
AB Fund (FY26)

23

Startups Supported
by the AB Fund (FY26)

\$500M

Additional Investment
Raised by AB Fund Startups

\$12.68M

Invested by the AB Fund
(since 2019)

45

Startups Supported
by the AB Fund
(since 2019)

284

Michigan Jobs Created
by AB Fund Startups

\$40

Additional Investment
Capital Raised by
Startups for Every \$1 of
AB Fund Investment

\$10.6M

New Support from
the Michigan
Innovation Fund

\$30M

Assets Under
Management by the
AB Fund

Rob Bronstein: Support of Accelerate Blue Fund Brings U-M Alum Full Circle

“I think that’s it.”

With those four words in 2018, LSA alum Rob Bronstein made the first leadership-level philanthropic commitment to an idea that would become the Accelerate Blue Fund. Bronstein had just met with Innovation Partnerships’ Mike Psarouthakis to discuss an idea that was still taking shape: a new fund that could provide early-stage investment capital to promising U-M startups.

The need was clear. University startups often require funding at their earliest and riskiest stages to develop their technologies, build their teams and attract additional investors. Yet

that capital can be especially difficult to secure in the Midwest.

The Accelerate Blue Fund was designed to help close that gap by investing in U-M startups at critical points in their development, helping them reach the milestones needed to grow and compete. Its evergreen structure would allow returns from successful investments to be reinvested in future companies, creating a lasting source of patient, risk-tolerant investment capital for promising university startups.

Bronstein saw the potential and decided to help make it possible.

A Builder Bets on U-M Startups

Bronstein knows something about building from the ground up. Four years after graduating from U-M’s College of Literature, Science, and the Arts with a degree in economics, he co-founded The Scion Group and has since led its evolution from a two-person consulting firm to the world’s largest owner of off-campus student housing, providing homes for nearly 120,000 students across the United States, comprising approximately \$13 billion of assets under management



Rob Bronstein made the first leadership-level gift to the Accelerate Blue Fund and is now its first \$1 million donor.

in partnership with leading global investors.

For a Detroit-area native who built his career on calculated risk, betting on the potential of U-M technologies to positively impact the world and generate economic benefits for the region was an easy call. Soon thereafter, Bronstein began hosting events to bring more prospective supporters to the table, helping to jumpstart the AB Fund's early momentum.

Coming Full Circle

Eight years later, the impact of that early commitment is clear. The Accelerate Blue Fund has grown to more than \$30 million in assets and invested more than \$12 million across 45 U-M startups. Portfolio companies have gone on to raise more than \$500 million in additional capital, advancing innovations ranging from new cancer therapies and sustainable green fuel production to large-area braille products for visually impaired computer users.

In 2025, Bronstein increased his cumulative commitment to \$1 million, becoming the inaugural member of the newly established Leadership Circle. This milestone brings the story full circle since Rob's initial gift was

the first philanthropic contribution that helped bring the Accelerate Blue Fund to life.

Bronstein sees it simply.

"This gift achieves my goal of supporting the university in a direct and tangible way," he said. "In addition to promoting research and innovation, the Accelerate Blue Fund is the perfect vehicle to create opportunity and economic growth. The evergreen structure means that I can give once, but the university will continue to see the benefits of that donation."

Bronstein's continued support, advice and advocacy have helped Accelerate Blue grow from an ambitious idea into a durable source of early-stage capital for promising U-M startups.

"In addition to promoting research and innovation, the Accelerate Blue Fund is the perfect vehicle to create opportunity and economic growth. The evergreen structure means that I can give once, but the university will continue to see the benefits of that donation."

Rob Bronstein

**Chief Executive Officer,
The Scion Group**

Accelerate Blue Foundry Hits Its Robotically Enhanced Stride in Year Two

An implantable therapy that restores natural hormone production in girls and women with ovarian failure from cancer treatment. Powered lower-limb robotic exoskeletons designed to reduce fatigue and injury for delivery drivers. Sustainable building materials made from recycled post-industrial plastic waste. Pulsed laser technology that protects military and civilian spaces from drone swarms.

These inventions have one thing in common: each had the potential to become a startup company, but lacked the entrepreneurial leadership needed to move forward. Through the Accelerate Blue Foundry, each technology was matched with an entrepreneur ready to help build a company around it.

“Great technologies don’t build companies on their own,” said Dave Repp, director of ventures and managing director of the [Accelerate Blue Fund](#). “They need the right talent to turn potential into impact.”

With more than \$2 billion in annual research activity, the University of Michigan generates an extraordinary pipeline of discoveries with

commercial potential. But a promising technology alone does not create a successful startup. Early-stage companies also need experienced entrepreneurial leadership, mentorship and capital.



Dave Repp welcomes attendees to Pitch Day 2026.

The [Accelerate Blue Foundry](#) was created to help close that gap. The program connects U-M innovators with entrepreneurs from across the country who are interested in building companies around Michigan technologies, then surrounds those teams with mentorship and early-stage investment to accelerate the path to startup launch.

Now in its second year, the Foundry attracted 86 entrepreneur applicants and marketed 59 U-M technologies

“Great technologies don’t build companies on their own. They need the right talent to turn potential into impact.”

Dave Repp

Director of Ventures and Managing Director of the Accelerate Blue Fund

for commercialization. Selected entrepreneurs were introduced to U-M inventors, and teams spent several months refining startup concepts, developing business and fundraising plans and preparing to pitch.

Throughout the program, teams received hands-on guidance from U-M mentors-in-residence and technology licensing professionals. The program culminated in Pitch Day, where 14 teams presented to panels of investors and other ecosystem leaders.

When a Foundry team successfully launches a U-M startup, Innovation Partnerships provides a minimum of \$50,000 in pre-seed investment through the Accelerate Blue Fund.

The Foundry is one element of the broader Innovation Partnerships commercialization pipeline, which

provides hands-on startup mentoring and support to promising U-M spinouts. The Foundry’s focus on building strong working relationships between inventors and entrepreneurs to facilitate startup company formation is a force multiplier, accelerating the commercialization of promising technologies. The best teams quickly identify what matters most, adapt their strategies and arrive at Pitch Day ready to clearly communicate the company’s value proposition to investors.

“The Accelerate Blue Foundry is helping us unlock more of the potential within Michigan’s extraordinary research enterprise by pairing promising U-M technologies with entrepreneurs who are ready to build,” said Kelly Sexton, associate vice president for



Panelists provide feedback on a startup pitch presentation.

research - innovation partnerships and economic impact. “These newly launched startups are still early in their journey, but they represent exactly the kind of ambition, talent and momentum needed to turn university discoveries into meaningful impact.”

“The Accelerate Blue Foundry is helping us unlock more of the potential within Michigan’s extraordinary research enterprise by pairing promising U-M technologies with entrepreneurs who are ready to build.”

Kelly Sexton

**Associate Vice President for Research -
Innovation Partnerships & Economic Impact**



Attendees listen to a presentation at the 2026 Accelerate Blue Foundry Pitch Day.

Interested in learning more about the Accelerate Blue Foundry?

[Visit the Foundry website at myumi.ch/7J3Jr](https://myumi.ch/7J3Jr)

[Access the 2026 Pitch Day Lookbook at myumi.ch/X8Vg3](https://myumi.ch/X8Vg3)

Accelerate Blue Foundry 2026 By the Numbers

86

Entrepreneurs
Applied & Screened

59

Technologies Marketed
for Commercialization

14

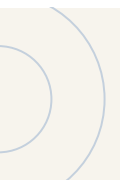
Teams Presented
at Pitch Day

32

Introductions Made Between
Entrepreneurs & U-M Investors

5

Startup Companies
Launched



Michigan University Innovation Capital Fund

Established in 2024, the [Michigan University Innovation Capital Fund \(MUICF\)](#) is a pre-seed venture capital fund that invests in founders building fast-growing technology companies based on research from the state of Michigan's public universities. MUICF portfolio startups accelerate the commercialization of innovations from Michigan's state universities for the public good.

The fund focuses on accelerating innovative university technology startups by providing risk tolerant patient investment capital and a state-wide network of business support services to accelerate the completion of key business milestones that unlock long-term value to drive economic and job growth in Michigan.

The MUICF was made possible by a \$5 million award to Innovation Partnerships from the Michigan

Strategic Fund and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

Strategic guidance is provided by the MUICF Consortium, a statewide network of leaders from university tech transfer offices, university-managed pre-seed funds, university-associated economic development organizations and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

MUICF Consortium Members

**Biosciences Research
Commercialization Center of Western
Michigan University |
Grand Valley State University |
Innovation Partnerships |
Michigan Economic Development
Corporation | Michigan State
University | Michigan State University
Research Foundation | Michigan
Technological University | University
of Michigan | Wayne State University |
Western Michigan University**

MUICF By the Numbers

\$1.65M

Invested by the
MUICF (FY26)

9

Startup Companies
Supported (FY26)

\$4.09M

Invested by the
MUICF (since 2024)

23

Startup Companies
Supported (since 2024)

\$27M

Additional Investment Capital
Raised by Startups

\$5.76

Additional Investment Capital
Raised by Startups for Every \$1
of MUICF Investment

U-M, ASICS Launch Groundbreaking Sport Innovation Initiative

The University of Michigan and ASICS announced the ASICS x Michigan Sport Innovation Center, a pioneering research effort aimed at advancing human performance and sport science, through a new multi-year research collaboration.



ASICS will commit \$25 million in funding to support the research program.

Announced in December 2025, the initiative will bring together an interdisciplinary team of researchers from across the university to partner with the Japan-based sportswear company, uniting experts from medicine, engineering, human performance, robotics, textiles and the social sciences to drive innovation and advance sport performance.

The Ann Arbor campus will also host ASICS' first research hub in the United States.

"We are thrilled to partner with ASICS, an organization that shares

our commitment to solving complex challenges through innovation and a human-centered approach," said U-M President Domenico Grasso. "Welcoming ASICS' inaugural U.S. research hub is a tremendous honor and affirms the strength of our faculty, students and collaborative research culture, both locally and globally."

The ASICS x Michigan Sport Innovation Center (AMSI) aims to create disruptive innovations that enhance athletic performance, blending ASICS' global integrated enterprise of research with U-M's comprehensive research strengths and well-established running community. Interdisciplinary collaboration with U-M faculty will

“Welcoming ASICS’ inaugural U.S. research hub is a tremendous honor and affirms the strength of our faculty, students and collaborative research culture, both locally and globally.”

Domenico Grasso

President, University of Michigan

further accelerate research and the development of new technologies, benefitting athletes at all levels.

Together, ASICS and U-M will leverage cutting-edge facilities and engagement programs to collaborate directly with athletes. This collaboration will deepen an understanding of human performance needs and advance data-driven solutions for peak performance by adopting ASICS’ approach toward human-centric science.

“We are honored to enter into a strategic partnership with the University of Michigan, one of the world’s leading research-oriented universities,” said Mitsuyuki Tominaga, President and COO of ASICS Corporation. “Since our founding, ASICS has upheld the philosophy of

‘Anima Sana In Corpore Sano’ — a sound mind in a sound body — and has long supported athletes of all levels in achieving peak performance through fundamental research and advanced technology. Under our Mid-Term Plan 2026, we are driving long-term research focused on athletes to further strengthen innovation. Establishing this research entity in the United States — home to many of the world’s top athletes and a key market for our future growth — is a source of great pride for us. This initiative is part of that effort, aimed at building a global R&D network and accelerating athlete-focused research. Going forward, we will continue to make “what benefits athletes” the standard for all decisions, listen sincerely to athletes’ voices and pursue product development that contributes to their success. By integrating the latest research, we will also strive to create breakthrough innovations.”



ASICS leadership & U-M researchers visit the Athlete Innovation Lab at U-M.

“This announcement will bring together researchers from one of our flagship public universities with ASICS to pioneer new advances in sports. This is a huge win for Michigan. Let’s keep working together to grow our economy, foster innovation and make a real difference in people’s lives.”

Gretchen Whitmer
Governor, State of Michigan

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer applauded the new research collaboration, calling it a “huge win for Michigan.”

“Michigan has a proud tradition of innovation from our auto industry to health sciences, and we’re building on that tradition to make our state the best place to have an idea,” said Governor Whitmer. “This announcement will bring together researchers from one of our flagship public universities with ASICS to pioneer new advances in sports. This is a huge win for Michigan. Let’s keep working together to grow our economy, foster innovation and make a real difference in people’s lives.”

ASICS conducted a rigorous process to identify an academic collaborator, evaluating multiple universities. The company reached out to the University of Michigan through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), which serves as a partner to companies looking to invest in the state.

The university’s culture of cross-disciplinary collaboration was pivotal in the company’s decision



Members of the ASICS leadership team visit U-M to learn more about its research facilities.

to establish its first U.S.-based research presence at U-M. Innovation Partnerships, a division of the Office of the Vice President for Research and the university’s research commercialization arm, convened a broad team of researchers to join forces with ASICS. Ken Kozloff, co-director of the Human Performance & Sport Science Center, worked closely with Innovation Partnerships

to develop the strategic vision and research plan. Kozloff, along with Nori Taniguchi, co-director from ASICS, will lead the interdisciplinary team as they approach complex challenges from multiple perspectives.

Faculty representing the College of Engineering, School of Kinesiology, Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Institute for Social Research and College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, as well as Michigan Medicine, are engaged in this initiative. Including Kozloff, the inaugural faculty members of the new research initiative steering committee include: Sean Ahlquist, Rich Gonzalez, Talia Moore, Elliott Rouse, Max Shtein and Ram Vasudevan.

“The University of Michigan ecosystem is rich with experts who share a passion for making a difference in people’s lives through their research,” said Kozloff, who is the Steven A. Goldstein Collegiate Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery, and professor of kinesiology and biomedical engineering. “The ASICS x Michigan Sport Innovation Center is an incredible opportunity to unite talent from different disciplines to collaborate with ASICS. By tackling the challenges of athletic performance from diverse vantage

“The ASICS x Michigan Sport Innovation Center is an incredible opportunity to unite talent from different disciplines to collaborate with ASICS. By tackling the challenges of athletic performance from diverse vantage points, we will strengthen our impact in unique ways.”

Ken Kozloff

Co-Director, Human Performance & Sport Science Center

points, we will strengthen our impact in unique ways. The collaboration between the University and ASICS will yield new innovations in athletic footwear and training gear, supporting athletes of all levels.”

Commercialization Leadership at U-M

Innovation Champions: First Year, Lasting Impact

The Innovation Champions program is designed to deepen Innovation Partnerships' connections with innovators across the University of Michigan's research community. The main goal of the Champions is to serve as peer-level contacts within their departments — connecting colleagues with resources and expertise to amplify the impact of their innovations.

The Innovation Champions were chosen for their passion and dedication to advancing innovation within their units. Together, they have achieved more than 190 inventions, formed 40 commercialization partnerships and launched 10 startups based on U-M discoveries. The group includes two past recipients of the Distinguished University Innovator of the Year Award and one National Academy of Inventors fellow.

The program's first year was marked by active engagement across training, programming and peer collaboration. The Champions completed six

training modules related to research commercialization, attended a guest lecture from a venture capitalist on investment trends and explored how shifts in federal funding are affecting university research. Additionally, the Champions helped shape the new Impacts of Innovation event series, shared learnings from entrepreneurial sabbaticals and brainstormed ways to make them more common across the university.



Innovation Champion Alexandre DaSilva (far right) with his commercialization team at the MELD Health bell ringing.



Innovation Champion Zhen Xu.

Innovation Champions

College of Engineering

Krisztian Flautner

Professor of Engineering Practice, EECS -
Computer Science and Engineering

Wei Lu

James R. Mellor Professor of Engineering; Professor
of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science;
Professor of Materials Science and Engineering

Chinedum Okwudire

Professor, Mechanical Engineering; Director,
University of Michigan Advanced Manufacturing
Institute

Zhen Xu

Li Ka Shing Endowed Professor of
Biomedical Engineering

College of Information

Kevyn Collins-Thompson

Associate Professor of Information

College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Robert Kennedy

Hobart H. Willard Distinguished University
Professor of Chemistry, Pharmacology

College of Pharmacy

James Moon

Chair Pharmaceutical Sciences, J. G. Searle
Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences, College of
Pharmacy; Professor of Biomedical Engineering,
College of Engineering; Professor of Chemical
Engineering, College of Engineering

Life Sciences Institute

Alison Narayan

Mary Sue Coleman Collegiate Professor in the Life
Sciences; Research Professor, U-M Life Sciences
Institute

Medical School

Zaneta Nikolovska-Coleska

Associate Dean for Graduate Postdoctoral Studies;
Professor of Pathology

Arvind Rao

Professor of Computational Medicine and
Bioinformatics; Professor of Radiation Oncology

Katherine Rosenblum

Professor of Psychiatry; Professor of Obstetrics and
Gynecology; Professor of Pediatrics; Co-Program
Director of Zero to Thrive and Women and Mental
Health Program

Simpa Salami

Associate Professor of Urology; Associate Director,
Medical School

Eric Shah

Clinical Associate Professor of Internal Medicine

Alan Sugar

Professor Emeritus of Ophthalmology and Visual
Sciences

Maria Woodward

Edward T. and Ellen K. Dryer Career Development
Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences

School of Dentistry

Alexandre DaSilva

Professor of Dentistry

School of Nursing

Melissa Bathish

Clinical Associate Professor of Nursing

School of Public Health

Justin Heinze

Associate Professor of Health Behavior and
Health Equity

Taubman College of Architecture & Urban Planning

Mania Aghaei Meibodi

Assistant Professor of Architecture

UM-Dearborn

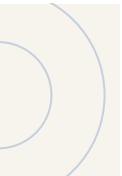
Kas Kasravi

Clinical Professor and Founding Director of EPIC,
Industrial & Manufacturing Systems Engineering

UM-Flint

Khalid Malik

Director of Cybersecurity; Professor of Computer
Science



Technology Transfer Talent Network and EDA Global Epicenter for Mobility Fund Twelve Postdoctoral Commercialization Fellows

Twelve doctoral students from across the U-M ecosystem were selected for Tech Transfer Talent Network (T3N) postdoctoral commercialization fellowships. These fellows were selected based on the strong commercialization potential of their doctoral research. With up to \$50,000 in funding and matching university contributions, as well as mentorship from a T3N mentor-in-residence, the fellows' time in the program provides them with the opportunity to further develop their innovations into marketable products and services and explore commercialization pathways, including startup company formation.

The postdoctoral fellowships are supported through a partnership with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's T3N, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) Global Epicenter for Mobility program and Innovation Partnerships.

Awarded research projects range from testing a novel hybrid knee orthosis to improve mobility and comfort for patients with osteoarthritis to developing artificial reefs to help restore tropical coastal ecosystems.

[Read the full T3N postdoc story at myumi.ch/bDRV6](https://myumi.ch/bDRV6)

2026 Postdoctoral Commercialization Fellows

Ala'aldin Alafaghani

U-M Mechanical Engineering

Nikhil Divekar

U-M Robotics

Abdullah Hamadi

U-M Electrical and Computer Engineering

Pratik Kalkal

UM-Flint College of Innovation and Technology

Dongduk (Daniel) Kim

UM-Dearborn Electrical & Computer Engineering

Hualong Liu

U-M Electrical and Computer Engineering

Katrina Munsterman

U-M Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Anna Park

U-M Molecular and Integrative Physiology

Nasir Rahim

UM-Flint College of Innovation and Technology

Brian Ross

U-M Biomedical Engineering

Chunlei (Karl) Song

U-M Mechanical Engineering

Luke Wormland

U-M Electrical Engineering & Computer Science

How U-M Created a Midwest Startup Movement

Turning a research breakthrough into a thriving startup is a Herculean task — requiring refinement, regulatory navigation, fierce competition and funding at every step. Yet over the last decade, the University of Michigan has emerged as one of the nation's leaders in commercializing academic discoveries.

The university ranks second nationally among universities for both startups launched and new inventions reported — a remarkable achievement for an institution far from the coastal entrepreneurial hubs of San Francisco, New York and Boston.

At the center of this momentum is Innovation Partnerships, which has built a layered ecosystem of mentorship, translational funding and startup support to carry discoveries

from the lab to the marketplace. Programs like the Accelerate Blue Fund, which generates \$40 in outside funding for every \$1 invested, and the statewide mentors-in-residence program have helped U-M startups not just launch, but stay and grow in Michigan. To date, U-M startup companies have created more than 8,000 jobs with more than 2,500 of them staying in the state.

[Read the full story about Michigan's economic impact at myumi.ch/QMeWk](https://myumi.ch/QMeWk)



The University of Michigan has built a thriving ecosystem for research commercialization.

Alumni Association Brings U-M Breakthroughs to Life

In Fiscal Year 2026, Innovation Partnerships collaborated with the Alumni Association of the University of Michigan on [ALUM 101: From the Campus to the World — How U-M Innovations Are Changing Lives](#). This four-part virtual mini-course was designed to connect alumni with the discoveries emerging from the university.

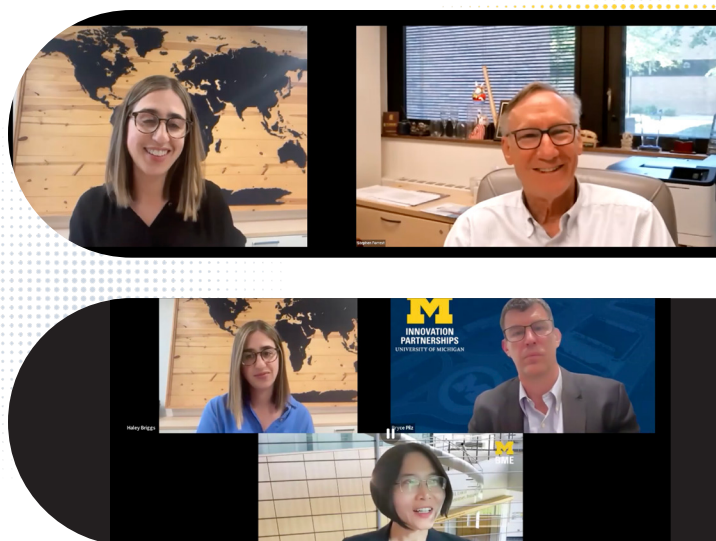
The course attracted almost 900 registrants with about 50% attending the majority of sessions. The series also reached a broad cross-section of the alumni community, attracting participants from all three U-M campuses, 43 states, 17 countries and graduates spanning from ages 21-97.

The course also offered participants a front-row seat to the ideas, people and partnerships behind U-M innovation, featuring topics like non-invasive surgery via targeted ultrasound waves, a newly approved therapeutic for certain types of acute myeloid leukemia, the development of OLED screen displays and a baseball that can help athletes reduce injuries. Each session featured a 30-minute presentation by a topic expert,

followed by a Q&A with the alumni audience.

The partnership reflects Innovation Partnerships' commitment to sharing the story of U-M research commercialization beyond campus — engaging alumni worldwide in the innovations their university is bringing to market. The course concluded with an optional in-person field trip to U-M's histotripsy lab.

The ALUM 101 series embraces the idea that curiosity never graduates and this installment demonstrated that U-M innovation is changing lives across industries, from medicine to materials science to athletics.



Attendees learned from U-M innovators including Stephen Forrest (top) and Zhen Xu (bottom).

H. David Humes Named 2026 Distinguished University Innovator of the Year

Sepsis is a life-threatening medical emergency that is brought on by the body's extreme response to an infection.



And for patients with severe sepsis that is complicated by acute kidney injury and multiorgan failure, mortality remains extraordinarily high even under the best care available.

The conventional approach to treating sepsis focuses on targeting the bacteria responsible, but H. David Humes identified a different culprit.

In severe sepsis, the immune system becomes dangerously overactivated, with white blood cells flooding the body and attacking its own organs; the bacteria, in a sense, are only the trigger.

This understanding from Humes, a nephrologist and professor of internal medicine at the University of

Michigan, led to the development of the Selective Cytopheretic Device, the first and only FDA-approved therapy specifically for children with acute kidney injury and sepsis or a sepsis-like condition.

“Our technology focuses not on treating the bacteria, but on treating this dysregulated immunologic system that is overreacting and destroying tissues within the body. That’s the breakthrough,” Humes said. “However, the breakthrough would not have happened without the commercialization support we received at the University of Michigan.”

Humes’ device acts on that insight, drawing a patient’s blood through a

specially designed filter outside the body that captures and quiets the overactive immune cells driving the damage. After early clinical trials in adults were derailed by a nationwide drug shortage, Humes pivoted and secured funding to test the device in children. Two pediatric trials produced a 50% reduction in mortality compared to standard care, with no



The SCD captures and quiets the overactive immune cells driving the damage.

device-related serious adverse events.

“These are not modest gains,” said Lenar Yessayan, professor of medicine and director of the Acute Dialysis Program at Michigan Medicine. “These are outcomes that fundamentally alter the natural history of a disease long defined by high mortality and incomplete recovery.”

In recognition of the impact of this work, Humes is being awarded this year’s Distinguished University Innovator of the Year. The award is the highest honor for U-M faculty members who have developed

transformative ideas, processes or technologies and shepherded them to market for broad societal impact. It was established in 2007 and is supported by endowments from the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) and the Stephen and Rosamund Forrest Family Foundation.

“Dr. Humes exemplifies what it means to be a physician-innovator,” said Kelly Sexton, associate vice president for research - innovation partnerships and economic impact. “He identified a clinical problem that had seen little progress for decades, and he kept working until he had a solution, one that has now received FDA approval and is improving outcomes for critically ill children. That kind of vision, persistence and real-world impact is exactly what this award was created to recognize.”

OVPR selected this year’s recipient based on the recommendation of a faculty selection committee that reviews a pool of nominees. Humes will receive the award Sept. 24 at the annual Celebrate Invention event.

From Approval to Impact

In February 2024, the FDA approved Humes’ device under a Humanitarian Device Exemption, now commercialized as QUELimmune

by SeaStar Medical, for children with acute kidney injury and sepsis in the ICU.

SeaStar, a publicly traded company on the Nasdaq, projects that more than 30 centers will be utilizing its technology by the end of 2026. Additionally, SeaStar's QUELimmune was awarded the National Kidney Foundation's Corporate Innovator Award in 2025.

The FDA has since granted the device six Breakthrough Device designations across additional indications. An ongoing multicenter trial in adult patients is expected to be completed in late 2026, with interim data already showing potential clinical benefit. FDA submission may follow as early as 2027, potentially opening up a therapy to patients that previously had seen little advancement in care.

Innovation Without Borders

Humes is now extending his work globally. A new philanthropic initiative pairs his device with low-cost dialysis technologies developed, in part, by an Ann Arbor-based research and development company Innovative BioTherapies, including systems designed to operate without electricity, to expand access to critical

care in low- and middle-income countries.

The program, structured as an interdisciplinary initiative with U-M as a central partner, targets pediatric sepsis, malaria and maternal sepsis in underserved regions.

Humes holds more than 70 issued or pending patents, has published nearly 250 scientific articles and book chapters and previously chaired U-M's Department of Internal Medicine. The development of the Selective Cytopheretic Device was supported by more than \$30 million in grant funding and over \$100 million in private equity investment.

"Despite some of the challenges along the way, this journey has been incredibly exciting," said Humes. "Identifying a problem and achieving a solution to solve it is why many of us enter academic medicine. The impact we're seeing from this technology is a prime example of how medicine can be translated into a product that serves the public good."

The University of Michigan and Humes have a financial interest in SeaStar Medical and Innovative BioTherapies.

U-M Startup HistoSonics Acquired for \$2.25B

The University of Michigan has another unicorn.

HistoSonics, a U-M startup founded in 2009, announced a \$2.25 billion acquisition by a consortium of top-tier investors, becoming one of the largest venture-backed medical device startup transactions in history.

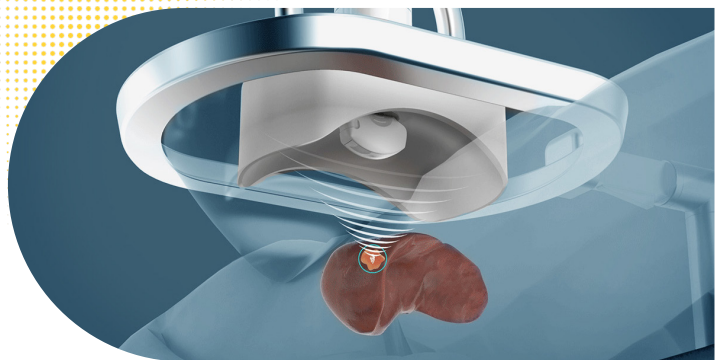


The infusion of funds will allow HistoSonics to accelerate the expansion of its Edison Histotripsy System and novel histotripsy therapy platform across new clinical indications and global markets.

“I am thrilled about this landmark moment for HistoSonics, the University of Michigan and the patients that will benefit from this increased momentum behind the Edison System,” said Kelly Sexton, associate vice president for research – innovation partnerships and economic impact.

“Two decades ago, the first invention report describing what we now call histotripsy was disclosed to our office. Today, it’s an FDA-cleared treatment

for the destruction of liver tumors, with clinical trials underway for renal and pancreatic cancers. This milestone is a powerful example of how NIH-funded research, combined with entrepreneurial drive and strategic venture investment, can create transformational impact.”



Histotripsy provides a noninvasive alternative to traditional surgical procedures.

“This milestone is a powerful example of how NIH-funded research, combined with entrepreneurial drive and strategic venture investment, can create transformational impact.”

Kelly Sexton

**Associate Vice President for Research -
Innovation Partnerships & Economic Impact**

HistoSonics' Edison System received FDA clearance in October 2023 for the destruction of liver tumors. To date, it has been used by more than 2,000 patients at over 50 U.S. medical centers. The company is also enrolling patients in trials for use of the Edison System in renal and pancreas tumors with more disease area trials planned for the future.

The Edison System leverages histotripsy, a term coined by U-M researchers. Designed as a noninvasive alternative to surgical procedures, the novel technology uses focused ultrasound to mechanically disrupt target tissue.

A team of U-M researchers, led by Professors Charles Cain (*deceased*), Zhen Xu, Timothy Hall, Jonathan Sukovich, J. Brian Fowlkes and William Woodruff Roberts from Michigan

Engineering and Michigan Medicine, invented and developed histotripsy. In 2023, they were recognized for their work as Distinguished University Innovators of the Year. This is the highest honor for U-M faculty members who have developed transformative ideas, processes or technologies and shepherded them to market for broad societal impact.



*The Histotripsy Team receives the 2023
Distinguished University Innovator
of the Year Award.*

“When I first learned of Charles and Zhen and the team’s work on histotripsy and saw what their system could potentially do, I knew this could revolutionize surgery,” said Jim Adox, chairman of HistoSonics’ board and a member of Innovation Partnerships’ National Advisory Board. “It took a long time to get others to see this innovation in the same light as I did. We stuck with it, and I am ecstatic to see where the company is today and look forward to where it goes in the future.”

“It took a long time to get others to see this innovation in the same light as I did. We stuck with it, and I am ecstatic to see where the company is today and look forward to where it goes in the future.”

Jim Adox

**Chairman, HistoSonics Advisory Board;
Managing Partner, Clarevia**

Adox’s fund, Clarevia, led the Series A and B investments in HistoSonics and has invested in numerous other U-M spin-offs.

HistoSonics accomplished what had been out of reach for others — to successfully utilize sound wave energy to mechanically obliterate diseased tissue. This breakthrough has enabled patients to receive treatment with minimal hospital time and little to no discomfort.

“One of the best parts about science is turning the impossible to possible,” Xu said. “It has been the challenge and highlight of my lifetime to see our response to a simple question ‘Can we create a non-invasive interventional technology that performs surgery?’ evolve into a platform that is revolutionizing cancer treatment.”

“I am proud of what we have accomplished for patients so far, and with this acquisition I anticipate quickly expanding histotripsy to benefit patients with various tumor types and neurological diseases all over the world.”

The University of Michigan, Xu, Hall, Sukovich, Fowlkes and Roberts have a financial interest in HistoSonics.

“One of the best parts about science is turning the impossible to possible. I am proud of what we have accomplished for patients so far, and with this acquisition I anticipate quickly expanding histotripsy to benefit patients with various tumor types and neurological diseases all over the world.”

Zhen Xu

**Li Ka Shing Endowed Professor of
Biomedical Engineering**

Leukemia Treatment Receives FDA Approval

Patients with acute myeloid leukemia — a rare cancer of the bone marrow and blood — have long faced limited treatment options.



That is until now, thanks to a drug developed through innovative research by Jolanta Grembecka and Tomasz Cierpicki, professors of pathology at the University of Michigan providing a promising new option.

Komzifti™ (ziftomenib), the first and only once-daily oral therapy for patients with relapsed or refractory NPM1-mutant acute myeloid leukemia, received approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in November 2025.

The drug was discovered by Grembecka and Cierpicki in collaboration with Kura Oncology and is being developed and commercialized by Kura Oncology

and Kyowa Kirin.

“Acute myeloid leukemia is a very aggressive blood cancer with poor clinical outcomes,” said Grembecka, also the Richard and Susan Rogel Professor of Cancer Therapeutics. “Seeing our pioneering work on menin inhibitors evolve into an FDA-approved treatment for leukemia patients is extremely rewarding. It is remarkable to witness the direct impact of our research, which resulted in a drug that benefits leukemia patients. This is an achievement we could only dream of, and now it’s a reality.”

Research led by Grembecka and Cierpicki, in collaboration with College of Pharmacy researchers

“It is remarkable to witness the direct impact of our research, which resulted in a drug that benefits leukemia patients. This is an achievement we could only dream of, and now it’s a reality.”

Jolanta Grembecka

**Richard and Susan Rogel Professor of Cancer Therapeutics;
Associate Professor of Pathology,
Medical School**

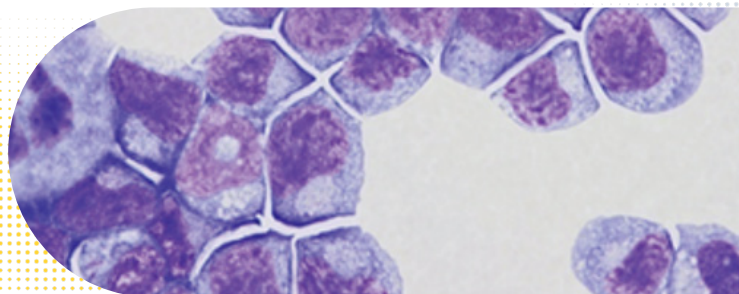
including Duxin Sun – professor of pharmaceutical sciences and director of the Pharmacokinetic and Mass Spectrometry Core at U-M – resulted in foundational discoveries that were licensed to Kura Oncology in 2014 with the help of Innovation Partnerships.

The research team identified first-in-class small molecule inhibitors blocking the protein, menin. These inhibitors were designed to disrupt the protein-protein interactions that drive leukemia cell growth and survival, allowing the cells to mature into white blood cells instead of cancerous ones. This is a transformative approach for AML patients with NPM1 mutations, who often do not respond to standard therapies.

“To develop menin inhibitors, we had to pioneer an entirely new area of research — producing the human protein, creating robust biochemical assays, conducting high-throughput screening and solving the crystal structure of menin,” Cierpicki said. “We accomplished this at a time when the pharmaceutical industry remained skeptical that targeting protein-protein interactions was even feasible.”

A collaboration between Grembecka and Cierpicki with Kura Oncology led to the discovery of ziftomenib. Clinical trials for patients with AML using ziftomenib were launched by Kura in 2019. In late 2024, Kura partnered with the Japanese pharmaceutical and biotechnology company Kyowa Kirin to expand development and commercialization globally.

Cierpicki and Grembecka’s research began at the University of Virginia



Komzifti disrupts leukemia cell growth by blocking menin, the protein that supports their function.



Kura Oncology, in partnership with Kyowa Kirin, is leading the commercialization of Komzifti.

School of Medicine before they moved to U-M in 2009. In addition to Kura Oncology, their research has been funded by Blood Cancer United (formerly known as the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society), the National Institutes of Health and the American Cancer Society.

“The achievement of Drs. Cierpicki and Grembecka illustrates how sustained federal support for science, combined with the vital contributions of research foundations, fuels discoveries that positively impact patient lives,” said Kelly Sexton, associate vice president for research – innovation partnerships and economic impact. “This FDA approval highlights U-M’s commitment to translating research discoveries into medical breakthroughs that serve patients and advance the public good.”

Ongoing clinical trials are exploring

the use of Komzifti (ziftomenib) in combination with other therapies for leukemia and solid tumors.

Cierpicki, Grembecka and U-M have a financial interest in Kura Oncology. The technology was licensed to Kura Oncology by Innovation Partnerships.

“To develop menin inhibitors, we had to pioneer an entirely new area of research — producing the human protein, creating robust biochemical assays, conducting high-throughput screening and solving the crystal structure of menin. We accomplished this at a time when the pharmaceutical industry remained skeptical that targeting protein–protein interactions was even feasible.”

Tomasz Cierpicki
Professor of Pathology

Innovation Partnerships Programming

New Event Series Celebrates U-M Research Breakthroughs

In FY26, Innovation Partnerships launched an event series called Impacts of Innovation. The series celebrates U-M research discoveries transforming industries and improving lives.

Zhen Xu, Li Ka Shing Endowed Professor of Biomedical Engineering was the inaugural speaker for this new series and shared her journey

as an inventor of histotripsy and co-founder of U-M startup HistoSonics. The series also featured Jolanta Grembecka and Tomasz Cierpicki, professors in the U-M Department of Pathology and developers of the FDA-approved leukemia treatment Komzifti. Each presentation explores the technology behind the breakthrough and the innovators' journeys from lab to market.

Innovation Spotlight Brings U-M Inventions Into Focus

In November 2025, Innovation Partnerships launched Innovation Spotlight, a monthly feature designed to showcase promising University of Michigan research, the inventions emerging from it and the researchers behind it. Each edition profiles a U-M principal investigator, lab or curated portfolio of technologies exploring the real-world problems their research aims to solve. The series aims to connect researchers with

industry partners and entrepreneurs positioned to help advance their work beyond the university.

Since launch, the Innovation Spotlight has featured a diverse range of U-M innovations across life sciences, sustainability, medical devices, digital health and translational research.

[See more on our Available Inventions page at myumi.ch/QMew3](https://myumi.ch/QMew3)

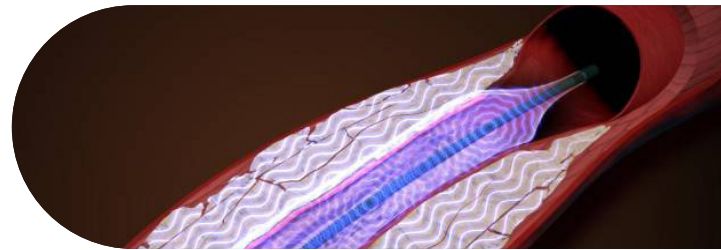
Project Highlights

U-M Startup Amplitude Vascular Systems Acquired by Stryker for Up to \$835 Million

Amplitude Vascular Systems (AVS), a University of Michigan startup addressing arterial calcification, [was acquired by global medical technology leader Stryker for up to \\$835 million](#) — a milestone that reflects the strength of U-M's research commercialization ecosystem.

AVS was founded by Hitinder Gurm, Park Willis III Legacy Professor in Cardiovascular Medicine, professor of internal medicine and Chief Medical Officer, U-M Health and Robert Chisena, then a doctoral student in Mechanical Engineering and currently the Chief Technology Officer of AVS. The technology came out of a long-standing interdisciplinary collaboration between Gurm and Albert Shih, Yoram Koren Collegiate Professor of Engineering and professor of mechanical engineering and biomedical engineering. The company's Pulse Intravascular Lithotripsy (IVL) System uses hydraulic pulse waves delivered through a balloon catheter to break apart calcium buildups in arteries, restoring

blood flow in patients with complex cardiovascular disease.



Stryker's acquisition of AVS will help to bring the Pulse IVL system to more patients worldwide.

"When arteries become hardened by calcium, it can make treatment more challenging and limit how well we're able to restore blood flow," Gurm said. "Pulse IVL is designed to break up calcium in a safe and efficient fashion that helps the artery open more effectively and potentially improve outcomes for patients with complex disease. Moving this technology toward broader global adoption through Stryker's worldwide reach would not have been possible without the remarkable resources offered at the University of Michigan."

The technology's path from lab to market was shaped by early support

from the Michigan Translational Research and Commercialization (MTRAC) Life Sciences Innovation Hub, recognition at the 2019 Michigan Business Challenge and a \$36 million Series B funding round in 2025.

Clinical trials have shown promising results, with successful completion of the company's peripheral IVL trial, POWER PAD II and the coronary trial, POWER-CAD I, which is currently enrolling patients.

The acquisition by Stryker is expected to accelerate the Pulse IVL System's path to broader clinical use and expand access for patients worldwide.

“Pulse IVL is designed to break up calcium in a safe and efficient fashion that helps the artery open more effectively and potentially improve outcomes for patients with complex disease. Moving this technology toward broader global adoption through Stryker’s worldwide reach would not have been possible without the remarkable resources offered at the University of Michigan.”

Hitinder Gurm

**Park Willis III Legacy Professor in Cardiovascular Medicine;
Professor of Internal Medicine;
Chief Medical Officer, U-M Health**

Ecovia Bio Closes Series B Financing to Expand Michigan Manufacturing of Biodegradable Alternative to Microplastics

University of Michigan spinout and Accelerate Blue Fund portfolio company Ecovia Bio closed a Series B financing round to expand manufacturing of its biodegradable alternative to synthetic superabsorbent polymers, a ubiquitous source of microplastics.

The financing marks an important milestone as it will allow the Michigan-based company to scale its production to meet growing demand across the agriculture, cosmetics and hygiene sectors. It also highlights the strength of the University of Michigan's research

commercialization ecosystem and the importance of early support for high-potential startups addressing major environmental challenges.

Microplastics, which result from the breakdown of everyday products such as water bottles, diapers and cosmetics, have spread into landfills, waterways, soil and even the human body, creating a growing environmental and public health challenge. Demand continues to rise from both industry and consumers for practical, cost-effective alternatives.

The company spun out in 2014 and developed a novel process to produce gamma polyglutamic acid, a natural, biodegradable polymer that can replace synthetic, petroleum-derived materials used in a wide range of products that can shed or degrade into microplastics.

The startup's biopolymers, produced through fermentation from low-cost, renewable feedstocks such as corn and sugarcane, are an emerging solution to the global environmental challenge of microplastic buildup.

This novel fermentation process was developed through the postdoctoral research of Jeremy Minty, now Chief Technology Officer of Ecovia Bio, under Xiaoxia "Nina" Lin, professor of

chemical engineering and associate chair of the Department of Chemical Engineering at the U-M College of Engineering.

"Taking a novel fermentation technology from proof-of-concept to commercial production is not a short road," said Kousay Said, CEO of Ecovia Bio. "Critical early support from the Accelerate Blue Fund, federal funding and Michigan's innovation ecosystem gave Ecovia Bio the foundation to scale and we're proud that our growth is now reinforcing the very infrastructure that made it possible."

"Critical early support from the Accelerate Blue Fund, federal funding and Michigan's innovation ecosystem gave Ecovia Bio the foundation to scale and we're proud that our growth is now reinforcing the very infrastructure that made it possible."

Kousay Said
CEO, Ecovia Bio

New U-M Startup General Orbit Is Out of This World

University of Michigan researchers Mark Moldwin, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor of Climate and Space Sciences and Engineering, and Lauro Ojeda, research scientist in mechanical engineering, have spent years developing a high-quality and more radiation-tolerant magnetometer that eliminates the need for a boom — the arm traditionally used to mount instruments away from a spacecraft. Their innovation opens opportunities for space applications and is changing the future of the satellite industry.

After being approached by a company interested in purchasing the technology, Moldwin and Ojeda connected with Innovation Partnerships and decided to commercialize it themselves. Their path to startup launch began with funding from the Michigan Translational Research and Commercialization Advanced Transportation Innovation Hub, which helped the team de-risk the technology and advance toward market readiness.

The team was then selected for the inaugural cohort of the Accelerate Blue Foundry, an Innovation Partnerships program that pairs innovators with entrepreneurs to launch a new startup company. Through the Foundry, they were introduced to entrepreneur Parker Boundy, and together the three officially launched General Orbit, receiving seed investment from the Accelerate Blue Fund.

Since launching, General Orbit has raised over \$1.5 million in pre-seed funding, highlighted by a \$375,000 win at the PitchMI Detroit competition. In addition, General Orbit now has nine employees and contractors and won its first NASA contract.



In 2025, General Orbit won the Pitch MI Detroit competition.

New Musical Makes Opioid Education More Accessible

Painless: The Opioid Musical is a novel approach to opioid education that combines music and real-life stories to help young audiences better understand the complexity and human impact of the opioid crisis. Developed by the Overdose Prevention Engagement Network in collaboration with the University of Michigan's Precision Health and School of Music, Theatre & Dance, the production draws on personal narratives from Face Addiction Now (formerly Families Against Narcotics) to bring the subject to life.



Actors perform Painless: The Opioid Musical.

Designed for schools and community settings, *Painless* pairs live performance with free educational resources that support deeper learning before and after the show. These resources include teacher

guides, health modules, a cast album and a toolkit that enables educators and community leaders to facilitate informed conversations about opioid use, addiction, stigma, prevention and recovery. By combining evidence-informed education with an accessible creative format, the project offers a scalable model for reaching students and families with critical health information in a memorable and emotionally resonant way to address the opioid crisis.

Since its public premiere in 2022, *Painless: The Opioid Musical* has reached almost 6,000 students through 40 school and community performances across Michigan. The production has also received national attention, including coverage by *The Today Show*, underscoring its potential as an innovative platform for opioid education and prevention. The musical materials are [available for free licensing from the Innovation Partnerships website](#) and have already been licensed by more than seven organizations nationally.

Celebrate Invention 2025 Highlights U-M Innovators, Announces New Programs

On September 24, 2025,
Innovation Partnerships hosted more
than 300 attendees at its annual
Celebrate Invention event.



More than 300 members of the University of Michigan community and the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem gathered together at the Michigan League to honor campus innovators and the societal impact of their discoveries at the annual Celebrate Invention event in September.

The event hosted by Innovation Partnerships kicked off with the Distinguished University Innovator of the Year Award panel and presentation. The 2025 award recipient was Dr. Zhong He, professor of nuclear engineering and radiological sciences. He received the award for the wide-ranging academic and economic impact of his work in nuclear radiation.

Following He's presentation was a panel discussion titled "From Lab to Launch: Radiation Detection Technology Transforming Industry and Healthcare." Moderated by Kelly Sexton, associate vice president for research – innovation partnerships and economic impact, the panel included He and the CEOs of his three startups: Willy Kaye, CEO of H3D; Mike



*Zhong He was the recipient of the 2025
Distinguished University Innovator
of the Year Award.*

Hopkins, CEO of M3D and Xiaopei Huang, CEO of MH3D.

After the panel, the Celebrate Invention networking reception with technology demonstrations began. Sexton opened the remarks where she shared updates from the Innovation Partnerships team, including new resources such as the next round of the [Accelerate Blue Foundry](#) opening and the new WAVE Venture Studio in Ann Arbor.

“We would not be having this level of impact if not for the brilliance and drive of our faculty, coupled with a strong partnership with our surrounding innovation ecosystem,” Sexton said.

“We realize it is the combination of efforts from our partners in the venture and entrepreneurial communities that make our region successful, and at Innovation Partnerships we are committed to increasing our collaboration with all of you to accelerate our economic impact in our region.”

Vice President for Research and Innovation Arthur Lupia also spoke and presented the Distinguished University Innovator of the Year Award to He.

“We realize it is the combination of efforts from our partners in the venture and entrepreneurial communities that make our region successful, and at Innovation Partnerships we are committed to increasing our collaboration with all of you to accelerate our economic impact in our region.”

Kelly Sexton

**Associate Vice President for Research -
Innovation Partnerships & Economic Impact**

“Celebrate Invention is a wonderful time for us to honor U-M inventors and recognize their efforts to move research discoveries to the marketplace, where they can improve and even save lives, enhance societal wellbeing and create economic opportunity,” Lupia said.

Upon the conclusion of remarks, attendees toured the room, where nine dynamic U-M startups and technologies showcased their work. The projects and startups included:

Detroit River Story Lab

[The Detroit River Story Lab](#) is a university initiative that addresses the

widespread fraying of our social fabric by catalyzing civic engagement and community empowerment through place-based narrative infrastructure.

Fragmatics

[Fragmatics](#) is developing the “Gold Standard” in proteomic search engine optimization and related tools for use in academic and commercial settings.

General Orbit

[General Orbit](#) is revolutionizing the commercial space industry creating scientific sensors, attitude determination and control system technology that combines low-resource sensors with machine-learning algorithms to operate in any orbit on any platform.

GripFusion

[GripFusion](#) is an AI-powered sports technology company pioneering grip-sensing sporting equipment that delivers real-time biomechanical feedback.

Intero Biosystems

[Intero Biosystems](#) is developing adult stem cell-derived miniature human organs to predict drug behavior in humans before clinical trials.

M3D

[M3D](#) is developing real-time radiation imaging cameras to assist surgeons in the operating room, monitor patient radiation treatments, support in the cleanup of radioactive contamination and perform dosimetry for patients undergoing radiotherapy treatment.

MELD Health

[MELD Health](#) created a next-generation, mobile-based conversational AI agent called DocTrek™ that is transforming patient-centered care by focusing on chronic pain management. Powered by advanced Large Language Models, the technology engages patients and streamlines clinical workflows.

Sequestro, Inc.

[Sequestro, Inc.](#) is a B2B advanced materials manufacturer revolutionizing the water purification market with its innovative, bio-based PFAS adsorbents based on a patented wood-fiber functionalization process.

Taza Aya

[Taza Aya](#) is developing maskless personal respiratory protection against airborne viruses.

Thank You to Our National Advisory Board

Innovation Partnerships' National Advisory Board (NAB) was founded in 2002 to provide advice and connections to enhance technology transfer performance. Composed of industry, venture, government, university and community leaders, the NAB has transformed the university and the state of Michigan with several initiatives, including Ann Arbor SPARK, the Technology Transfer Talent Network (T3N) and the Accelerate Blue Fund. We would like to extend a warm thank you to our National Advisory Board Members for their expertise and support.

Congratulations, Jim Adox



National Advisory Board member Jim Adox had a banner year, earning recognition for his significant influence on Michigan's innovation ecosystem. Adox, along with HistoSonics CEO Mike Blue, was named one of Crain's Detroit Business' 2025 Newsmakers of the Year. He was recognized for his leadership with Clarevia, formerly Venture Investors Health Fund, and for his role in supporting HistoSonics' \$2.25 billion acquisition. Adox was also honored by the Michigan Venture Capital Association at its 2025 Annual Awards Celebration, receiving the Hall of Fame Award in recognition of his outstanding leadership and commitment to mentoring the next generation of investors. Congratulations to Jim Adox on an exceptional year!



Welcome, Dan Feder

In the spring of 2026, Dan Feder was appointed to the Innovation Partnerships National Advisory Board. Feder is the Senior Managing Director of the University of Michigan Investment Office, where he leads the university's endowment investments in private equity and venture capital.

National Advisory Board Members



Jim Adox
Clarevia
Ann Arbor, MI



Patti Glaza
Invest Detroit
Ventures
Detroit, MI



Chris Rizik *(Board Chair)*
Renaissance Venture Capital
Ann Arbor, MI



Bill Brinkerhoff
EVOQ Therapeutics
Ann Arbor, MI



Serena Glover
Angel Investor, Advisor
Redmond, WA



Mira Sahney
IPG Photonics
Marlborough, MA



Jeff Donofrio
Business Leaders
for Michigan
Detroit, MI



Paul Krutko
Ann Arbor SPARK
Ann Arbor, MI



Rich Sheridan
Menlo Innovations
Ann Arbor, MI



Richard Douglas
Genzyme Corp *(Retired)*
Southborough, MA



Kirsten Leute
Osage University
Partners
Bala Cynwyd, PA



Maria Thompson
Arsenal Growth
Superior Township, MI



Dan Feder
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI



Ben Marchionna
State of Michigan
Lansing, MI

The Regents of the University of Michigan

Jordan B. Acker, Michael J. Behm, Mark J. Bernstein, Paul W. Brown, Sarah Hubbard, Denise Ilitch, Carl J. Meyers, Katherine E. White

U-M has a financial interest in some of the companies featured in this report through licensing agreements.

University of Michigan Nondiscrimination Policy (effective July 2026)

The University of Michigan, as an equal opportunity employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination. The University of Michigan is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions.

Inquiries or complaints may be addressed to the Equity, Civil Rights and Title IX Office (ECRT), 2030 Administrative Services Building, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1432, 734-763-0235, TTY 734-647-1388, ecrtoffice@umich.edu.

For other University of Michigan information, call 734-764-1817.



innovationpartnerships.umich.edu

innovationpartnerships@umich.edu

1600 Huron Parkway, Building 520, 2nd Floor, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2590 | 734.763.0614