



“CPP I-Corps Site program is one of three CSU-based programs funded by NSF. It serves as a miniature incubator by providing resources, infrastructure, advice, training, more importantly, networking opportunities, to nurture and support local entrepreneurial teams (including faculty and students) who want to transition their technology from concept to marketplace.”

- Dr. Olive Li



# I-CORPS

## About NSF I-Corps

The National Science Foundation (NSF) I-Corps program prepares researchers to extend their focus beyond the university laboratory and accelerates the economic and societal benefits of research projects that are ready to move toward commercialization. Through I-Corps, researchers learn to identify valuable product opportunities that can emerge from academic research and gain skills in entrepreneurship through training in customer discovery and guidance from established entrepreneurs. In 2018, Cal Poly Pomona was one of three CSUs to earn an NSF Innovation Corps Grant. As an I-Corps site, Cal Poly Pomona coordinates projects through the various stages of commercialization. Teams participate in a program consisting of team building, customer discovery, developing a Business Model Canvas and finally presenting their ideas to industry professionals. Since 2019, the CPP I-Corps Site program has successfully recruited and trained 59 teams through 10 cohort offerings. These teams consisted of 90 students, 36 faculty members, and 24 local entrepreneurs in a total of 150 participants.



# TEACHING TEAM



**Trayan Kushev, Ph.D.**  
Teaching Team



**Giuseppe Lomiento, Ph.D.**  
Teaching Team



**Yu Sun, Ph.D.**  
Teaching Team



**Winny Dong, Ph.D.**  
Teaching Team



**Sadiq Shah, Ph.D.**  
Teaching Team



**Olukemi Sawyerr, Ph.D.**  
Director



**Yao Olive Li, Ph.D.**  
Program/Project Manager



**Serena Chun**  
Program Coordinator

# COHORT 10 (SPRING 2023)

Held during Spring 2023, Cohort 10 had 5 teams that attended the course consisting of a diverse group of 4 current students, 3 faculty members, and 3 alumni. Their projects included:

- Promoting natural dyeing to the textile and agricultural industry. The dyeing of natural fibers with plants dyestuff is an alternate coloration practice, which is preferable for the trend of Eco and healthy in modern life by consumers and major fashion brands or retailers.
- Developing a new mechanism that allows drones to exchange energy and data efficiently in mid-air. There are several innovations this project aims to deliver from building a new generation of drones that consume less power than the existing solutions while it operates without blades.
- Developing a platform in virtual reality (VR) for students to learn biology and chemistry laboratory techniques while having an immersive and interactive experience.
- Using VR technology to provide immersive, realistic training for UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) pilots to ensure compliance with FAA regulations.
- Identifying the key physiological effects of drumming and assess the user needs of drummers to develop drumming apparel.

Cohort 10 had well attended field trips to the Bio Collaborative Incubator located in Pasadena and the Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator (LACI) in Downtown LA where they gained important insights into building startups to commercialization.

“I really enjoyed the visit to the Pasadena Bio Collaborative Incubator during the I-Corps program. I was incredibly inspired by the engaging conversations and the wealth of experiences shared by its members. Exploring their laboratory and seeing their workstations firsthand only heightened my excitement. As I was heading back home, I couldn't help but think to myself that I want to get into biotech after my current startup venture. A truly transformative experience, highly recommended!”

-Pierlorenzo Peruzzo

“The field trip to LACI was a highly inspirational and rewarding experience for me. Prior to the field trip I was not very familiar with the concept of clean technology, but after visiting the LACI facilities I learned about the multiple fields and industries, including the apparel sector, involved in circular economy efforts. Having this exposure, left me eager to explore new clean technologies as they relate to my apparel background and work.”

-Irma Villanueva, M.S.

“I wanted to express my gratitude for the incredible experience I had on the recent field trip to La Kretz Innovation Campus. The enthusiasm of the students and peer faculty member of the I-Corp cohort was truly inspiring, and it was amazing to see the innovative projects they are working on. The visit to La Kretz was impressive, and I was able to connect with individuals who are eager to support our students' start-up endeavors. The organization of the trip was great, and it made the whole experience even more enjoyable. Thank you for organizing such a wonderful field trip!”

-Seoha Min, Ph.D

# MINI CREDENTIAL PROGRAM

We also offered an additional program for those teams that could not attend the full program. This program was an asynchronous self-paced curriculum which allowed more flexibility for student teams to complete.

We had 6 teams participate in this program from engineering, computer science, agriculture, nutrition, and food science. Some of their projects included:

- The effect of ketogenic diet on physical performance, nutrient intake, and mood and lived experience of active and sedentary young adults.
- Automated solar tracking with batteries.
- Developing foods using orange byproduct.
- Developing a vegan burger using eggplants.
- Designing and building the next advanced robot to combat against pathogens.
- Develop and manufacture a reusable lander system capable of a propulsive landing with the use of a thrust vector control.

“The NSF I-Corps program is a good platform for me to learn things beyond the classroom. I did not have an idea of further developing my research into future applications, but after having the introduction to the NSF I-Corps entrepreneurship program, I started to rethink the possible applications in the future to strengthen my competitiveness in society and to build academic and industry relationships.”

- Shing C.

“Going through the modules of this I-Corps course has given me insight I never had before even thought about. Plenty of what was offered in this course are the internal mechanisms of soft skills and skills necessary to manage, organize, and plan a business. These internal mechanisms can often be overlooked, especially by someone like me who is studying engineering, because we only see the end product (and from an engineering perspective, technical aspects as well), but not beyond.”

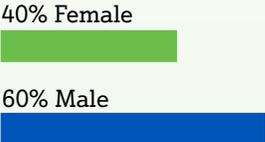
- Natalie C.

“I think that this I-Corps short course was really beneficial to me and other students as well. I was mainly only focused on the technical aspects of my project, and I'm sure that some of the other students in this course were the same way, but it was really eye-opening to learn about more of the business side of things and realize how important it is for the project to succeed.”

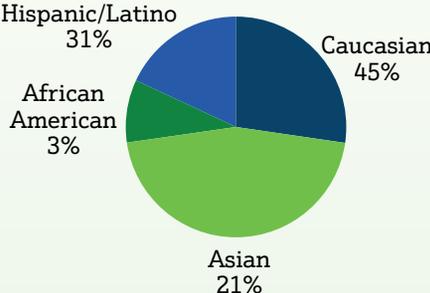
- Alvin C.

# COHORT 10 (SPRING 2023)

## GENDER IDENTITY OF PARTICIPANTS



## ETHNICITY OF PARTICIPANTS



**5**  
TEAMS

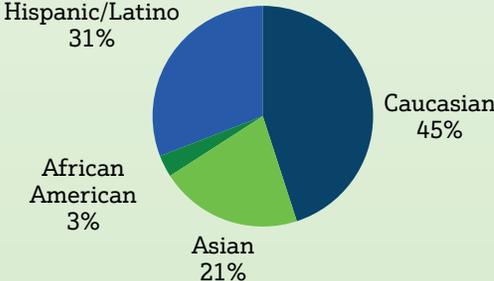
**3** REFERRED TO LA'S REGIONAL HUB & AWARDED THE CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

**ALL** REFERRED AWARDED MINI GRANT

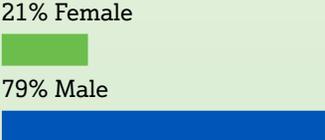
# I-CORPS OVERVIEW

## MINI CREDENTIAL PROGRAM

### ETHNICITY OF PARTICIPANTS



### GENDER IDENTITY OF PARTICIPANTS



## IN MEMORIAM



Sadiq Shah, Ph.D