

# THE *Current*

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## **UCSB's Technology Incubator celebrates 10 years on campus**

In 2015, the California NanoSystems Institute (CNSI) at UC Santa Barbara established the Technology Incubator in Elings Hall to support startup companies stemming from technologies developed on campus. It was a big step in extending the impact of the campus's hard-earned reputation as a leading research institution. Since then, 40 startups have spun out of the incubator, including both UCSB spin-outs and community-led technology ventures seeking to connect with the campus's research infrastructure.

Now in its 10th anniversary year, the incubator has become "a humming innovation ecosystem," said [Tal Margalith](#), executive director of scientific initiatives and innovation for CNSI. "We went from zero startups to 40 in 10 years. That's exciting growth."

Margalith knows the entrepreneurial landscape. He cut his startup teeth while working for UCSB-spinoff Soraa in its early years, leading its LED chip development group.

"Effectively, what the CNSI incubator does is to de-risk the whole process of commercialization," Margalith explained. "Instead of having to raise a lot of money to get a big space and build out a facility before you've developed the prototype or proven the market, you can start small and focus your funding on research and development in an environment already stocked with world-class facilities. That way,

your government dollars or your seed investments can go further. We extend the runway for companies in a way that allows them to take more time to develop a proper foundation before they spin out.”

Part of UCSB’s broader network for innovation and entrepreneurship, which includes the Technology and Industrial Alliances office, the Technology Management Department, the Eco-Entrepreneurship program at the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management, and the Center for Science and Engineering Partnerships, the Technology Incubator supports CNSI’s mission to bring scientific and technological innovation into the economy while strengthening connections between the institute’s academic community and industry.

A recent event to celebrate the milestone anniversary included a symposium featuring roughly a dozen founders and representatives from some of those 40 startups — both alumni and current incubator members. Local investors spoke about the growth of innovation in the Santa Barbara area, and the critical nature of resources like CNSI and the Technology Incubator.

“The event was important to create more visibility not only for this program, but for the UCSB innovation engine as a whole,” Margalith said. “It also showcased how much one component can drive the local economy in terms of workforce development and job creation.

“It’s not only about launching technologies out of UCSB, but equally about bringing the value back to campus by getting students hired and engaged, and having our founders come back and participate in the ecosystem to drive the next generation.”

Tags

[Innovation & Entrepreneurship](#)

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