

AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE[®]

2025



Building Communities
of Innovation



Celebrating Changemakers & Innovation Leaders!

Enhanced Categories • New Awards • Prestige & Recognition

2025 AURP AWARD NOMINATIONS: Respond by July 1st

THE WORLD RUNS ON BOLD IDEAS —TIME TO CROWN THE BOLDEST.

- Your Distinguished Community of Innovation of the Year (over 10+ yrs) or Emerging Community of Innovation (under 10-years)
- Visionary leadership and next-gen rising stars
- Innovative companies with game-changing business models, products and services

PRESTIGE! Award recipients are celebrated across the globe through media and press

BUILD! Network partnerships and foster support from stakeholders and congressional leaders

POSTERITY! Recognition doesn't end at the awards ceremony! #AURPinAction showcases the 'power of our innovation network' and beyond!

CRITERIA:

Nominee must be an AURP member for 12+ months or a tenant within a member's community.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS (Must be no more than two pages):

- Overview of the nominated Community of Innovation or individual's key activities and accomplishments.
- Why the institution, organization or individual deserves this honor.
- Notable achievements, including any awards or special recognition.

The 2024 AURP Award Recipients



**Submit nominations to
Vickie Palmer, CEO by July 1st
vickiepalmer@aurp.net**

AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION

The AURP Awards of Excellence in Innovation **honors exceptional research parks, innovation districts, their visionary leaders, and the groundbreaking companies driving technological advancements.**

Each year, we recognize those who contribute to fostering innovation, developing tomorrow's workforce, and addressing global challenges, celebrating their achievements in building thriving R&D communities.

► DISTINGUISHED COMMUNITY OF INNOVATION OF THE YEAR

Formerly known as the Outstanding Research Park or Innovation District, this category **honors one distinguished Community of Innovation that has cultivated exceptional ecosystems, driving the journey of research translation from concept to market and creating measurable impact, during the prior calendar year.** These entities are instrumental in fostering sustainable business growth, creating high-paying jobs that outpace regional averages, and boosting the economic prosperity of their communities. A hallmark of success in this category is active engagement with the higher ed or research institute community—through funding, research involvement, and providing valuable experiential learning opportunities for students. Successful candidates will be recognized for their substantial contribution to the region by nurturing a dynamic environment that promotes innovation, entrepreneurship, and translation.

With this annual recognition, a chosen Community of Innovation may receive this honor more than one year and in consecutive years.

2020



2021



2022



2023



2024



► EMERGING COMMUNITY OF INNOVATION

This category celebrates Research Parks and Innovation Districts that have been operational for ten (10) years or less—defined as having either hired dedicated staff or begun construction/renovation within this time frame.

Candidates in this category have built sustainable ecosystems that foster the development of technology from its early stages to market-ready solutions. By nurturing scalable businesses, creating new jobs that exceed the regional average, and enhancing the economic vitality of their communities, these entities are driving sustainable growth. Active collaborators with their affiliated university or research institute community, they make a powerful impact on regional innovation, entrepreneurship, and translation, contributing to a thriving hub that will scale for the next generation of scientific breakthroughs.

2017	2018	2019	2021	2023
 NEBRASKA INNOVATION CAMPUS	 LEHIGH UNIVERSITY	 CAPITALCITY INNOVATION	 MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH FOUNDATION	 WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

► INNOVATION IMPACT AURP's Members' Choice Award

NEW

Honors a business or nonprofit organization residing in a Community of Innovation that has introduced a transformative technological advancement through a proprietary product, process, or service. These innovations make a significant impact on the economic, health, or overall well-being of a broad and diverse population.

Nominees selected for consideration will present at the annual International Conference where attendees will vote and select the annual Innovation Impact Award.

AURP members are encouraged to submit nominations for their tenant companies, especially those that particularly utilized your available programming and engagement features, furthering their development and impact in your region and beyond.

Additionally, I2RP (Insights into Research Parks) hosts will have the unique opportunity to present their nominee at their hosted program, leading up to formal selection at the AURP Awards of Excellence in Innovation ceremony at the annual International Conference.

2020	2021	2022	2024	
 IONQ	 tritan™	 Sc science center	 BLUEHALO	 DREAMSCAPE LEARN

► MASTER PLANNING EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION

Acknowledges Research Parks and Innovation Districts that have successfully completed a comprehensive master plan, setting the stage for transformative development in the next 2-to-5 years. This prestigious award celebrates the vision and strategic planning involved in creating a forward-thinking, sustainable, and community-focused ecosystem.

Eligible Communities of Innovation include new developments or existing park campuses undergoing revitalization. The award highlights master plans that incorporate innovative design, environmental sustainability, accessibility, and community engagement, and are set to positively impact the region for decades to come.

Master plans will be reviewed and rated on their creativity, feasibility, and long-term benefits to the community.

JUDGING CRITERIA:

- The diversity and mix of stakeholders.
- Novel funding sources.
- Projected financial and community impact.
- Creative programs and amenities as best practices
- Compelling visually and contemporary design materials (i.e. resilient materials)

Master planning nominees must have been an AURP Institutional since the prior calendar year.

► LEADERSHIP IN INNOVATION

Celebrates an individual—from business, higher education, government, or the community—who **has made a significant and enduring contribution to the creation, development, or regional impact of an innovation ecosystem.** This award recognizes a visionary leader whose efforts have been instrumental in nurturing the growth and success to dynamic Communities of Innovation.

2019



Chancellor Gary May, UC Davis
Mayor Darryl Steinberg,
City of Sacramento

2022



Scott Mabury
Josh Mitchell
University of Toronto

2023



President Randy
Woodson, NCSU

2024

WALTON FAMILY
FOUNDATION

NOMINATE YOUR CHANGEMAKER!

► CAREER ACHIEVEMENT

This **distinguished peer recognition** honors an individual whose leadership and contributions over the course of their career have had a lasting impact on the advancement and recognition of research parks, science parks, or innovation districts.

2018



Charles
D'Agostino, LSU

2019



Scott Levitan,
RTP of NC

2022



Dan Duncan,
UNL

2023



Jane Shaab,
UMB BioPark

2024



Dan Berglund,
SSTI

SPECIAL AWARD DESIGNATIONS These honors are held for exceptional contributions within the network and recognize outstanding leadership within our members' communities. Nominations are not accepted for these designations; however, submissions received may be considered for elevation to these specific award categories and recognition.

► AURP DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES OF INNOVATION

Recognizes the **milestone anniversaries (25, 50, 75+)** of our **Communities of Innovation** and their lasting and impactful contributions to the industry through years of continued success and operational excellence.

► VISION

Acknowledges an organization or individual who has made a lasting and exceptional contribution to the global Community of Innovation, as demonstrated through their work in the AURP network. This award celebrates those who have significantly advanced the growth and success of innovative ecosystems on a national or multinational scale.

2020



Kevin Byrne,
TUFF

2019



Vickie Palmer,
AURP

2022



Jim Berens,
Wexford

2023



Daisy Magnus-Aryitey,
Code the Dream

2024



Peter Pellerito,
BIO

► RISING STAR: NEXT GEN INNOVATION LEADER

Recognizes individuals in key leadership roles—such as in incubators, facilities, finance, business or workforce development—who have **significantly advanced their organization and contributed to the broader innovation ecosystem**.

Nominees must be put forward by their Community of Innovation executive leadership recognizing the upward leadership trajectory of this next-gen leader.

2019



Kate Engel,
UNL

2020



Eric Smith,
Tech Parks AZ



Merry Hunter
Caudle, GA Tech

2021



Keisha Demps,
NCSU

2022



Mary Mumper,
UC Davis

2023



Jonathan Hunt,
MIP

► EXCALIBUR

Established in 2006 in the wake of Hurricane Katrina's devastation in Louisiana, the Excalibur Award **honors organizations or individuals who, in response to crises at the global, national, or regional level**, have delivered innovative and impactful technology solutions, community outreach, or leadership. This award celebrates those who have made a profound difference by improving health outcomes or creating workforce opportunities, demonstrating extraordinary resilience and dedication to their communities in times of need.

► APPRECIATION

Recognizes an individual whose career has made a **lasting and significant contribution to the advancement and recognition of the industry**. This award celebrates key figures, including those from corporate partners or sustaining corporate members, who have played a pivotal role in shaping and driving the growth and success of the industry.

2019



2021



Charles Dilks,
DilksConsulting



Joe Meredith,
VTCRC

2022



Stephen Frayser,
STAR Park

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NOMINATE BY JULY 1ST!