

Impact Report:

Advancing Innovation through Gap Funding



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A Word from Cornell Leadership



It is wonderful to see the effect of this investment and we look to expand these efforts across all of our campuses in the coming years.

Michael I. Kotlikoff
President at Cornell University



Since 2021, Ignite has advanced Cornell’s efforts to translate innovative early-stage research projects into startups and inventions. We are excited to see Ignite’s potential, impact, and return on investment continue to grow.

Kavita Bala
Provost at Cornell University



Ignite has elevated Cornell’s commitment to research-fueled innovation, and to our innovators and entrepreneurs who cross the gap to make solutions accessible to the world. Recent successes of this investment, including technology-driven startups launched from all Cornell campuses, show Ignite as a key bridge to impact that grows each year. Thank you to the extended Ignite team and our intrepid innovators.

Krystyn Van Vliet
Vice President for Innovation and External Engagement Strategy

Ignite Funding Donor and Trustee Emeritus, Peggy Koenig ‘78



When I made this gift in 2021, I could never imagine the magnitude of its impact for Cornell and beyond. It is ever more important to light the spark that will spawn innovation and growth. I could not be more proud of what has been accomplished and what may continue to be created in the future.

Message from the Executive Director at CTL



Welcome to the inaugural **Ignite Impact Report**, a milestone that reflects Cornell’s commitment to turning research into real-world solutions. Originating from the earlier Cornell Technology Acceleration and Maturation (CTAM) funding initiative and reimagined in 2021 to expand its scope, scale and impact, Ignite has become a catalyst for innovation—bridging the gap between research and commercialization and creating new opportunities for inventors, entrepreneurs, and partners.

Ignite’s growth since 2021 has been fueled by strong institutional leadership support, including funding from the Provost’s Office, along with a generous gift from Peggy J. Koenig ’78. Together, these contributions provide up to \$2.2 million annually in gap-funding support. Through targeted, milestone driven funding programs, Ignite enables the next inflection points that accelerates commercialization, venture creation and growth, and industry collaboration across Cornell’s campuses.

The impact of the gap funding series has been remarkable. Ignite-supported projects have attracted **\$231 million in follow-on funding**, reflecting a **42:1 ratio** to every Ignite dollar invested; **38 new licenses and options** have been executed for technology commercialization; and **32 startups have secured significant funding** for growth.

This report shares not only metrics but also stories of Ignite awardees in our three signature programs—advancing toward market and shaping diverse industry sectors. Their journeys illustrate what happens when ideas are supported with the right resources at the right time.

Ignite is managed by the Center for Technology Licensing (CTL), which designs and implements Ignite programs at both the strategic and operational levels, working closely with strategic partners including the Praxis Center for Venture Development, Center for Life Science Ventures (CLSV), and the Runway Startup Postdoc Program, as well as our collaborating partner, the Center for Regional Economic Advancement (CREA), to ensure inventors have the infrastructure they need to succeed. We are deeply grateful to many external committee members and advisors who make this work possible.

Looking ahead, we aim to broaden researcher engagement, deepen connections with industry, investors, and entrepreneurs, and further enrich Cornell’s innovation ecosystem to amplify impact across disciplines and markets.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Alice Li

Ignite Strategic Partners

- Praxis Center for Venture Development
- Center for Life Science Ventures (CLSV)
- Runway Startup Postdoc Program

Collaborating Partner

- Center for Regional Economic Advancement (CREA)

Ignite: Purpose and Impact

Every year, Cornell researchers create innovations with the potential to transform industries and address societal needs. Yet many of these technologies emerge at a stage too early to attract industry partners or private investors. Technical risk remains high, market fit is uncertain, and critical proof-of-concept work for commercial applications has not yet been completed. This widely known “valley of death” prevents promising technologies from progressing toward real world impact.

Ignite: Cornell Research Lab to Market was created to bridge this gap. Ignite provides targeted, milestone driven funding and acceleration programs that enable inventors and founders to reduce technical and commercial risk and transition innovations into deployable technologies—increasing value and reaching the next inflection point with clear results that justify further engagement from corporate partners and investors. The program also helps grow entrepreneurs and startup teams, building the human capital essential for long term venture success.

Just as importantly, Ignite strengthens Cornell’s role as an engine of innovation by catalyzing commercialization, deepening partnerships, promoting startup creation and growth, stimulating job creation, and supporting career development for students and researchers.

The program is gaining recognition within the national university innovation community and is regularly highlighted in proof of concept and gap funding forums as well as best practice exchanges followed by technology transfer leaders across the country.

Metrics Highlight

\$231M

Follow-on funding

42-to-1

Ratio for every Ignite dollar

38

New licenses & options for technology commercialization

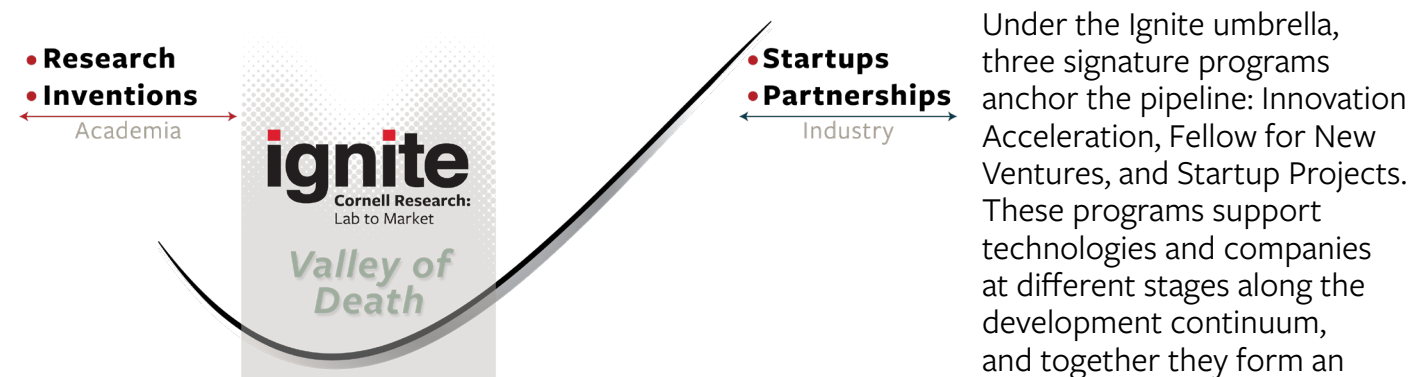
32

Startup companies secured significant funding for growth

Ignite Key Impacts

- Significant de-risking of early-stage technologies
- Greater readiness for licensing and commercialization
- Promoted startup creation and venture growth
- Increased opportunities for follow-on investment
- Enhanced career pathways for students and postdocs
- Stronger support for faculty research translation

The Program Series



integrated system that advances a diverse portfolio of innovations toward market impact. The table below summarizes key aspects of each program, with further highlights provided in the following sections.

Across all three programs, projects undergo competitive review by committees of subject matter experts—including industry leaders, early-stage venture investors, and successful entrepreneurs. Projects are selected based on their demonstrated market need and potential for meaningful impact. Awards are structured either as grants to research laboratories or SAFE notes to startups, ensuring that funding mechanisms align with each project’s stage of development and its path toward commercialization.

Program	Innovation Acceleration	Fellow for New Ventures	Startup Projects
Purpose	Advance inventions to licenses, startups and partnerships	Launch technology startups with trained entrepreneur fellows	Reach milestones to help raise external capital and form partnerships
Targeted Stakeholder	Inventors	PhDs, master’s graduates and faculty launching startups based on Cornell IP	Startups with licensed Cornell IP or clients of Cornell incubators
Funding Amount	Up to \$50K	\$120K package	Up to \$75K
Funding Type	Grant to lab	SAFE Note to company	SAFE Note to company
Application Cycle	Two cycles per year	Annual Cycle	On a rolling basis
Stage of Development	Validation of commercial relevance to attract industry engagement	Inventions ready to launch startups	Startups at pre-seed and seed stage

Spotlight Story: Igniting Semiconductor Innovations

From Jena-Xing Discovery to Commercial Applications

Ignite, reimagined in FY2021 to expand its scope and impact, has been guided by a clear goal: advancing cutting edge discoveries toward world changing solutions through targeted, staged de-risking and acceleration. Nowhere is that commitment more visible than in the semiconductor breakthroughs emerging from the laboratories of Professors Debdeep Jena and Huili Grace Xing, whose pioneering research continues to push the limits of next generation electronics.

Two promising technologies from the Jena-Xing labs — aluminum nitride (AlN) and gallium oxide (Ga₂O₃) devices — demonstrate what becomes possible when new semiconductor architectures are developed to address long-standing challenges in RF power, thermal management, and high voltage power electronics. Together, Jena and Xing and their former Ph.D. students Austin Hickman, Reet Chaudhuri and Jon McCandless have advanced these innovations beyond discovery and publication, moving them toward commercialization and venture creation.

Ignite has supported multiple steps in the earliest stages of this journey, from invention maturation to startup formation and growth, through coordinated partnerships across Cornell's innovation ecosystem. These include the Center for Technology Licensing (CTL), the Praxis Center for Venture Development, the Center for Regional Economic Advancement (CREA), and college level innovation programs.


In 2020, an Ignite Innovation Acceleration award — then operating under its precursor, the Cornell Technology Acceleration and Maturation program (CTAM) — helped the Jena-Xing labs advance an early AlN based RF power amplifier invention. The funding supported proof of concept development,

including *in silico* design and initial minimum viable product fabrication, enabling the technology to reach a critical technical inflection point. That progress made it possible to license the technology to [Soctera](#), a company co-founded by Hickman and Chaudhuri with Jena and Xing.

“The support from Ignite was a **turning point** for Soctera at its earliest stages,” Hickman said. “The funding enabled our first scaling efforts for our AlN-on-SiC technology — essential for future grant wins and **engaging industry partners.**”



In 2022, Soctera received further support through an Ignite Startup Projects award, which provided early funding through a SAFE note. That support enabled the company to demonstrate crystalline AlN growth on silicon carbide substrates and begin early engagement with potential suppliers — key milestones that helped position Soctera for national visibility, subsequent funding, and continued progress toward commercial wafer production.



Through innovative optimization of nitride semiconductors, Soctera is developing a power amplifier that operates at lower temperatures and greater efficiency, enabling higher power density operation.

- Co-founded by **Austin Hickman and Reet Chaudhuri**, with Professors Jena and Xing.
- Ignite Innovation Acceleration (2020)**: Supported early proof of concept work on AlN device performance in the lab.
- Ignite Startup Projects (2022)**: Early SAFE note

funding enabled crystalline AlN on SiC demonstration and initial supplier engagement.

- The company has since progressed toward first commercial 4 inch wafer production and gained national visibility through selection as an NSF featured awardee. **Currently Incubated at Praxis.**

Another example illustrates how a distinct semiconductor technology emerging from the Jena-Xing research group advanced through a different Ignite mechanism. In 2023, McCandless joined the Ignite Fellow for New Ventures program, allowing him to focus full time on maturing a Ga₂O₃-based technology and shaping the venture that would become [Gallox Semiconductors](#). The fellowship provided both financial support and structure to de-risk technical milestones, refine the commercial roadmap, and prepare for early investment. Since then, Gallox has attracted competitive awards and early stage funding as it continues to build its team and advance the technology.

“One of the biggest challenges for university spin-outs is **bridging the gap** between academic discovery and external investment,” McCandless said. “Ignite fills that critical gap by providing early-stage support that allows founders to **focus on de-risking the technology** and building momentum before traditional funding is available.”




For Xing, Ignite plays a critical role in translating academic research into societal impact.

“The Ignite programs are amazing in that they provide faculty with **clear pathways to translate research** results from the lab into startups that create jobs and technologies **for a better society,**” she said.



In a field as strategically critical as semiconductors — one in which Cornell has long history of research leadership — the Ignite programs operate as part of a broader innovation ecosystem at Cornell. Together, these mechanisms help propel technologies and startups like Soctera and Gallox toward commercial readiness, moving high potential semiconductor discoveries one step closer to real world impact.



Gallox commercializes ultrawide bandgap gallium oxide transistors and diodes, eliminating power conversion inefficiencies and enabling more powerful electronics circuitry.

- Founded by **Jon McCandless**, with Professors Jena and Xing.
- Ignite Fellow for New Ventures (second cohort, 2023)**: Provided full time focus to mature the technology in the lab, validate key milestones, and shape the venture.
- Graduated from the Fellow accelerator program in

November 2024.

- This progress helped the company **raise over \$1M** in investment and earn prestigious awards, including Breakthrough Energy and Activate.
- Today, with a growing team, Gallox Semiconductors is **incubated at Praxis.**

ignite
Innovation
Acceleration

ignite
Fellow for
New Ventures

ignite
Startup
Projects

Accelerating



Ignite Innovation Acceleration provides competitive grants to help advance Cornell inventions toward licensing, startup formation, or industry partnerships. Open to CTL-disclosed innovations from the Ithaca, Geneva, and Cornell Tech campuses, the program runs two application cycles each year. Annually, 10 to 16 projects receive awards of up to \$50,000.

In numbers

70+
Completed Projects
across 8 Cornell colleges

32
Licenses/Options Executed
for Innovation Acceleration
projects

\$64.4M
Follow-on Funding

Innovation Acceleration Impact Stories



Buz Barstow
Associate Professor, Biological and Environmental Engineering
Year awarded: 2022 and 2024

Professor Buz Barstow’s lab received two Ignite Innovation Acceleration awards, each enabling the de-risking of distinct technologies and ultimately

leading to the incorporation of two startups: REEgen and Forage Evolution Bio, with licensed Cornell IP positioned for market impact.

Providing funding to transfer technology out of the lab and into a company is essential, and it is often overlooked by federal grants. Ignite filled that gap for us. It helped us move from finishing science to starting a company, building a minimum viable product, validating the technology in peer-reviewed articles, and ultimately licensing the innovations that became REEgen and Forage Evolution.
– Buz Barstow



REEgen Inc.
Ignite support helped the Barstow Lab de-risk a bio-based method for rare earth recovery, helping to the launch of REEgen and a licensing agreement with Cornell. The company is advancing engineered bacterial solutions that make critical mineral production cleaner, safer, and more sustainable.
[Visit REEgen’s website](#) →



Forage Evolution Bio, Inc.
With Ignite funding, the team validated key elements of their Active DNA Foraging technology, helping the formation of Forage Evolution Bio and execution of a Cornell license. The company is developing a first-of-its-kind molecular data port that turns living bacteria into programmable biological assistants.
[Visit Forage’s website](#) →



Robert F. Shepherd
John F. Carr Professor of Mechanical Engineering
Year awarded: 2021



The award enabled the team to build a functional stretchable waveguide sensor, along with the supporting algorithm and dataset, to demonstrate the technology’s proof of concept. This invention is the foundational technology for the startup Organic Robotics (DBA Llume). Today, Llume has grown to eleven employees and has brought its first flagship product, Light Lace—a soft and stretchable fiberoptic sensor—to market. [Visit Llume’s website](#) →

Ignite funding is an excellent way to translate your technology to a more sophisticated level, helping with some initial sales to prove a market and get further investment. This program also allows for academic discourse and philosophical discussion with brilliant minds that I did not think would be possible at these later stages of tech development. What a delightful experience. – Robert Shepherd



Alyssa Apse
Ellis L. Phillips Sr. Director of Electrical and Computer Engineering
Year awarded: 2022



The award supported development of a proof-of-concept system built around a novel tunable transceiver featuring a dedicated semiconductor integrated chip. The technology advanced further through the Ignite Fellow for New Ventures program and the launch of EchoICs. EchoICs is now a client of the Praxis Center for Venture Development and is actively engaging with industrial customers to offer more flexible and higher performance radio communication. [Visit EchoICs’ website](#) →

The Cornell Ignite Gap funding programs (Innovation Acceleration, Fellow for New Ventures and Startup Projects) are critical for startups navigating the “valley of death” between initial development and sustainable growth.

These programs provide short-term, targeted financial support to bridge critical funding gaps

—such as delays in grant disbursement, the need for prototype validation, or the interim time periods between pre-seed, seed and Series A rounds—without incurring significant bureaucratic paperwork or delays associated with due diligence. The use of standard, easy to understand term sheets and simple submission structures enables the process to operate with minimal friction.



Robert Scharf, Director
Praxis Center for Venture Development



Selected Innovation Acceleration projects that helped the technologies reach inflection points and enter into licenses and options with companies:

Faculty awardee	Associated college	Company partner resulted
Ehsan Afshari	Engineering	Lassen Peak
Minglin Ma	Agriculture and Life Sciences	Novo Nordisk
Alex Travis Roy Cohen	Veterinary Medicine	TET Medical
Edwin Kan	Engineering	Sensvita
Syed Rizvi	Agriculture and Life Sciences	Geler
Matthew Delissa	Engineering	UbiquiTx
Richard Cerione	Veterinary Medicine	GLS Therapeutics
Robert Shepherd	Engineering	LLUME
Harvey Tian Harold Craighead	Engineering	INSO Biosciences
Paul McEuen	Arts & Sciences	OWiC Technologies
Debdeep Jena Grace Xing	Engineering	Soctera
Heidi Reesink	Veterinary Medicine	Calyxis
Shu-Bing Qian	Human Ecology	EzraBio
Minglin Ma	Agriculture and Life Sciences	Persista Bio
Alyssa Apsel	Engineering	EchoICs
Yadong Wang Warrick Ma	Engineering	Anova Biomedical
Frank Wise Henry Haig	Engineering	Oscillate Photonics
Buz Barstow David Specht	Agriculture and Life Sciences	Forage Bio
Matthew Delissa	Engineering	June Bio



Beyond critical gap funding and other valuable resources, the Ignite program builds a supportive community where researchers feel encouraged and empowered to take their first steps toward entrepreneurship.



The program allows researchers to work across both academic labs and incubators, giving them unique perspectives to translate research into real-world impact.

Through meaningful connections with mentors, peers, and alumni who have successfully pursued entrepreneurship, Ignite fills not only a funding gap, but also gaps in skills, confidence, and aspiration.

**Ying Yang, Interim Director
Center for Life Science Ventures**

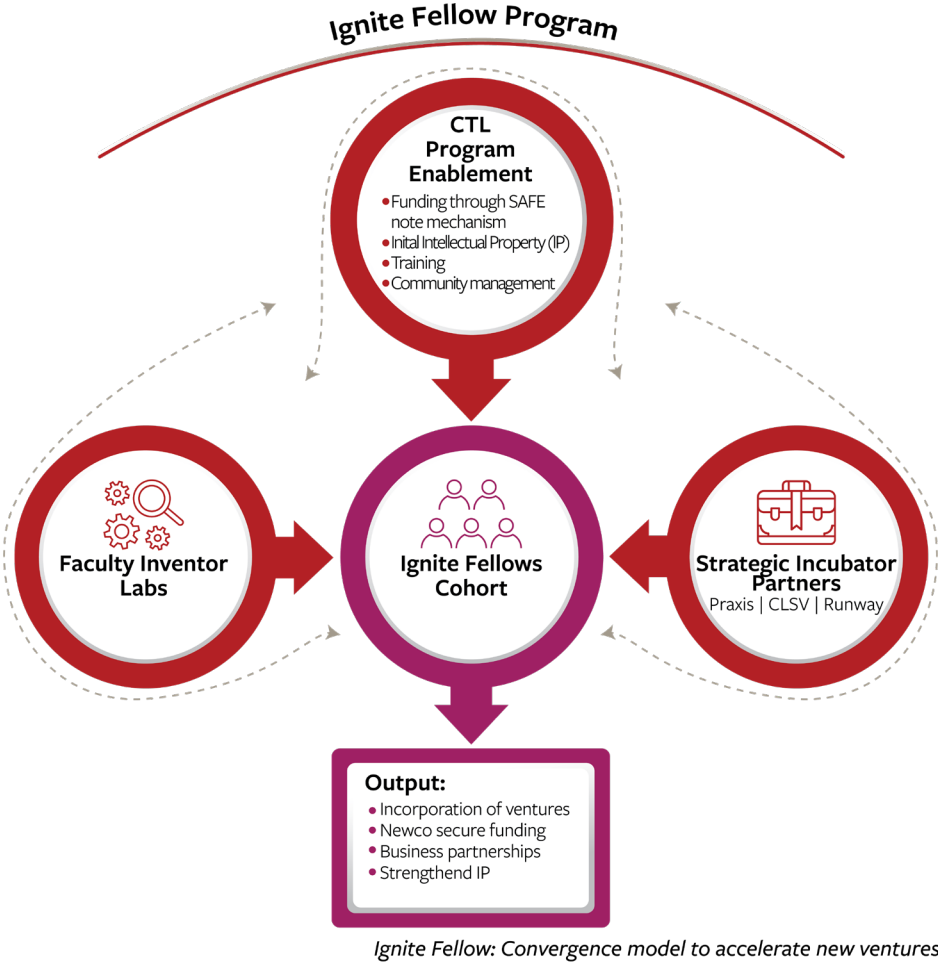
Venturing

ignite Fellow for New Ventures

Ignite Fellow for New Ventures is a unique venture accelerator model that empowers entrepreneurial scientists or engineers to transform cutting-edge university research into high-impact startups by combining entrepreneurial training with technology acceleration.

Fellows partner with faculty inventors’ labs on technology development while receiving business guidance from an incubator director from Praxis, CLSV, or Runway Postdoc, leveraging both the technical expertise of the labs where the inventions are created and the venture-incubation capabilities in the Cornell ecosystem. The model helps build a solid foundation for new ventures and provides the Ignite Fellows with the technical and business support they need.

This program differs from traditional startup accelerators in both structure and intent. Fellows focus full-time on advancing a specific university invention portfolio and building the new venture, engaging with selected domain-aligned incubator partners for business guidance with trainings in customer discovery and pitch readiness offered as part of the program. This convergence-based design, reflects the realities of university-based innovation and the longer development timelines required for deep-tech ventures.



With 3 to 6 Fellows selected per cohort, each Fellow receives support at an annual rate of approximately \$120,000, which converts into the principal of a SAFE note upon company formation, giving the team the momentum to build and launch a company.

In numbers


18
Awarded Fellows
past and current since 2022


14
New Ventures Incorporated


8
Raised Significant Funding
and operating independently, with
more in progress

Fellow for New Ventures Impact Stories



Conor Loy, Co-founder and CEO of Romix Bioscience
Faculty inventor: Iwijn De Vlamincx, Associate Professor
Cohort: 2024 | Graduated: 2025
Romix Bioscience develops an AI-enabled molecular diagnostics platform to decode inflammation and enhance precision in healthcare and drug development.

Fellowship Outcomes

During the fellowship, Conor validated the platform to predict CAR T-cell therapy response pre-treatment, broadened the company’s vision in diagnostics and drug discovery, and attracted lead investors. This progress helped the company raise more than \$1 M in investment and attract pharmaceutical partners. [Visit Romix’s website.](#)

I would highly recommend the Ignite program to any interested colleague or peer. It provides crucial funding and training during the transition from academia to start up. Having time to explore commercialization avenues, participate in trainings, submit grants, and validate our data was incredibly helpful. Time is the most valuable resource for founders, particularly at the early stages of company formation. – Conor Loy



Amir Mokhtare, Co-founder and CTO of IVSonance
Faculty inventor: Alireza Abbaspourrad, Associate Professor
Cohort: 2023 | Graduated: 2025
IVSonance supports embryologists with engineered precision for the most delicate steps of in vitro fertilization.

Fellowship Outcomes

During the fellowship, Amir and his team developed a prototype product that improves the oocyte denudation process, built key clinical collaborations at Weill Cornell Medicine, and identified a co-founding CEO. Their progress led to multiple awards, including FuzeHub Commercialization and the Resnick Prize, as well as an NSF SBIR award. [Visit IVSonance’s website.](#)



Anthony D’Amato, Co-founder and CEO of Anova Biomedical
Faculty inventor: Yadong Wang, McAdam Family Foundation Professor of Heart Assist Technology
Cohort: 2022 | Graduated: 2024
Anova Biomedical develops next-generation vascular prosthetics with cutting-edge biomaterials.

Fellowship Outcomes

During the fellowship, Anthony de-risked the biomaterial-based vasculature technology by demonstrating efficacy in animal models and building the network needed to advance toward regulatory clearance. This work helped secure NSF and NIH SBIR grants, FuzeHub support, and more than \$900K funding. Anova Biomedical has incubated at CLSV since graduation. [Visit Anova’s website.](#)

Companies formed through the Fellow program:

Anova has re-designed vascular graft materials to create vascular prosthetics that match the mechanics of the vascular system transforming into autologous conduits.

Calyxis Biosciences develops naturally-inspired biolubricants for joint disease treatment leveraging a natural lubricating glycoprotein called lubricin, present in joint fluid.

IVSonance is developing an ultrasound-based ova handling technology used in IVF treatment.

Romix Biosciences is an early-stage biotech developing a platform to transform how disease is understood and treated.

VIVA Viral Vaccines is developing a new vaccine platform that could provide more robust, longer-lasting protection from both COVID-19 and influenza.

OTO has developed a novel, localized delivery method for antibiotic treatment of the common middle-ear infection for use in human patients.

Cloaked Bio has developed and is marketing a protein-cloaking product that allows intracellular delivery, applicable as both a research tool and for use in therapeutic development.

EchoICs is developing a reconfigurable radio platform with extended battery life, enhanced dynamic range, reduced size and system cost.

Gallox produces ultrawide bandgap gallium oxide (GazO3) semiconductor devices that eliminate inefficiency and enable more powerful electronics.

Neural Solid, Inc. has developed physics-augmented AI and Machine Learning material models for engineering simulations in complex materials.

Objective Pain, Inc. seeks to make the subjective self-reported measurement of pain objective through the analysis of bio signals using a machine learning model.

Carbon to Stone perfected a reactive crystallization process that matches the scale and speed of climate crisis demands.

ExoPower uses novel wireless power transfer technologies to charge electric vehicles in the materials handling industry.

Color legend:

- Medical Device & Therapeutics
- Semiconductor & Artificial Intelligence
- Energy & the Environment

The Ignite Cornell Lab to Market program plays a pivotal role in transforming early-stage academic research into impactful, market-ready innovations. By providing critical early support to researchers, Ignite enables the identification and development of strong commercialization pathways.

The companies launched through Ignite are now creating meaningful economic and societal value
—demonstrating the program’s effectiveness in translating research excellence into real-world impact.

Fernando Gomez-Baquero, Director
Runway Startup Postdoc and the Spinout Programs

Growing ignite Startup Projects

Ignite Startup Projects provides early funding through SAFE notes to help Cornell-founded startups reach important development milestones and strengthen their ability to raise external capital.

The program supports pre-Series A companies that have a license with Cornell or participate in Cornell-affiliated incubator/accelerator programs. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis, and each year up to 4 to 10 startups receive awards of up to \$75,000.

In numbers


\$162M
Follow-on funding


69%
Companies secured significant funding


50%
Companies located in NY state

Startup Projects Impact Stories



TETMedical is a clinical stage platform nanomedicine company focused on in vitro diagnostics that enable insights for high-consequence disease decision making.

Funding Outcomes

Awarded in 2022, Ignite funding supported optimization of an automated diagnostic platform based on Tethered Enzyme Technology (TET) for neural injury detection, with a focus on point-of-care use and nucleic acid-based diagnostics.

Today TETMedical is in clinical trial of its first product NSE-FAST (Neuron Specific Enolase Functional Activity Stroke Test), the first in-vitro diagnostic for brain injury from stroke and has raised \$6M.

[Visit TET Medical’s website](#) →



The award came at a moment when we needed early support to move from concept to company. It funded critical development work on our diagnostic platform and helped us generate the evidence needed to secure follow-on grants and investor interest. – David R. Fischell, AEP, B.S. ’75, M.S. ’78, and Ph.D. ’80, CEO at TET Medical



Ecolectro’s membrane technology unleashes the green hydrogen revolution with a stable and low-cost alkaline exchange materials process.

Funding Outcomes

The early-stage gap funding helped Ecolectro scale membrane fabrication from lab-scale production to larger, consistent membrane sheets and to generate Membrane Electrode Assembly-level performance data needed to de-risk the technology for federal funders, customers, and investors.

Today the company has reached best-in-class performance milestones in green hydrogen generation and successful raised \$10M Series A financing in 2024. [Visit Ecolectro’s website](#) →

Startup Projects: Companies to Watch

Selection of completed Ignite Startup Projects and their post-award progress toward commercialization.

Company	Associated college	Description	Milestones (Raised to date data is from Pitchbook 2025)
Abstractive Health	Weill Cornell Medicine	Transforms unstructured clinical data into real-time, AI-generated insights that improve healthcare delivery.	Pilot deployment with Weill Cornell Medicine is live.
Avant-Guard (formerly Halomine)	College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS)	Develops next-generation, long-lasting antimicrobial solutions using its proprietary Avantamine™ chemistry.	Secured a \$2M Phase IIB grant to combat biofilms. Has raised \$11M to date.
Bactana	College of Veterinary Medicine	Advances microbiome-based therapeutics, including metabolic health products for companion animals.	Acquired by Kemin.
Conamix	College of Arts & Sciences	Develops ion-conducting polymer materials that enable safer, higher-performance energy storage.	Continued advancement of core polymer platform toward commercial energy applications. Has raised \$14M to date.
Dimensional Energy	College of Engineering	Converts captured CO ₂ into sustainable aviation fuels and chemicals through proprietary catalyst technology.	Secured its first licensing customer for its Fischer–Tropsch catalyst technology (DEFT). Has raised \$31M to date.
Ecolectro	College of Engineering	See page 14.	
Elm AI	Cornell Tech	Automates supplier due diligence and sustainability compliance through enterprise-grade AI and risk analytics.	Finalized its customer-facing dashboard, secured its first five customers, and closed its first financing round totaling \$1.7M.
Exostellar	Cornell Bowers College of Computing & Information Science	Optimizes cloud infrastructure to enhance performance and reduce costs across hybrid and multi-cloud environments.	Launched AIM, a unified AI infrastructure management platform, with full NVIDIA accelerated computing support. Has raised \$32M to date.
Organic Robotics Corp. (Llume)	College of Engineering	Builds adaptive sensing and lighting technologies inspired by soft robotics for human-centered environments.	Graduated from the Praxis incubator.
OWiC Technologies	College of Engineering	Develops light-powered microsystems for sensing, control, and communication.	Has raised \$3M to date.
Soctera	College of Engineering	See page 6.	
TET Medical	College of Veterinary Medicine	See page 14.	

Engaging the Cornell Innovation Community

Ignite Connect

Annual | Virtual

Ignite Connect is CTL’s flagship annual virtual partnering program highlighting a curated portfolio of university-born technologies and venture teams that have progressed beyond concept validation and into investable projects. Presenters are recipients of the [Ignite](#) or [Catalyst Fund](#), competitive gap-funding programs designed to de-risk Cornell early technologies, validate market hypotheses, and advance projects past technical or commercial inflection points.

Through live pitch sessions, inventors and founders highlight their projects poised for licensing, partnership, or venture formation.



Ignite Showcase

Biannual | In-person

Ignite Showcase is an internal-facing gathering designed to highlight outcomes from Ignite-funded projects and activate the next rounds of applicants. The event brings together Cornell researchers, students, entrepreneurs, and commercialization partners to learn from awardee trajectories and observe how Ignite funding accelerates research translation.

Through panel discussions, poster presentations, and pitch sessions from Ignite-emerging startups, the Showcase provides concrete examples of progress, lessons learned, and commercialization pathways.



Ignite Committee and Review Network

Ignite programming is supported by a broad network of committee members and technology advisors who are industry experts, early stage venture investors, and successful entrepreneurs. Their engagement and contribution enable project selection and guidance on translation.

External Committee Members

Participate in proposal review and vote on project selection



Gregory J. Galvin
MS '82 PhD '84
MBA '93



Anupendra
Sharma
MBA '98



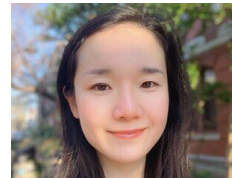
Blake
Stevens '05



Alexandra
Cantley



Meghan Cross
Breeden '08



Siyu Huang
PhD '12 MBA '14



Diego Rey
PhD '10



Steve Shapiro
'84 MBA '91



John Alexander
'74 MBA '76



Richard Curtin
MS '78



Yonn K.
Rasmussen '83
MS '86 PhD '89



Sean X. Hu



John Reilly
MS '05 MBA '07



Jessica Baker
Flechtner
'93 PhD '00



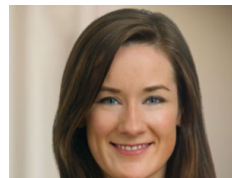
Jon Greene
MBA '02



Sanjay Reddy



Alisa Band



Megan
MacDonagh



Sherman
Williams



Timothy S.
Callahan



Haroon Chohan
MS MBA

Technology Advisors

Provide written feedback on proposals

- Marc Appel
- Joe Hadzima
- Josh Palmer
- Xinjian Zhou, Ph.D. '07
- Emily Aston, '11 DVM, '15, Ph.D.
- Omar Zahr
- Ryan Luginbohl, MD, A&S '03
- Margalit Haber
- Mason Leist '20

- Mike McCourt
- Frederick Barken, BA '76, MS '77, MD
- Hua Liao Job
- Nabil Ullah
- Delma Jarrett, MD, MBA/MS '25
- Jenna Abelli
- Gregory Mouchka
- Ashish Batra

Ignite Management Team



Lynda Inseque, MS, MBA
Director
Technology & Venture Initiatives
and Engagement



Aaron Delahanty, Ph.D.
Manager
Technology Acceleration and
Venture

Acknowledgments

Our appreciation goes to the external committee members and technology advisors for their commitment and expertise, and to donor Peggy Koenig for her generous support in advancing Cornell innovation through the Ignite program.



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LICENSING**
AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY

395 Pine Tree Road, Suite 310
Ithaca, NY 14850
607-254-4698
[Visit our website](#) —>