

A newsletter for our community engaged in
innovation, entrepreneurship, and commercialization



L to R: Zap Energy's Brian Nelson, chief technology officer; Benj Conway, president; and Uri Shomrak, chief science officer

UW spinoff Zap Energy steps closer to "breakeven" milestone, raises \$160M in Series C

UW fusion energy spinoff [Zap Energy](#) is edging closer to the promise of fusion power. The company recently announced two milestones: its newest prototype reactor created plasma, a superheated gas needed to generate fusion, and it raised \$160 million in new funding with support from Bill Gates' Breakthrough Energy Ventures and two petroleum giants. The plasma confinement method is an extension of work pioneered by the FuZE team at the UW College of Engineering's Department of [Aeronautics and Astronautics](#) and the [Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory](#).

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COVID-19 vaccines with UW connections are approved in South Korea, India

The government of South Korea has approved a COVID-19 vaccine developed in the labs of University of Washington biochemistry researchers David Veesler and Neil King and the [UW Institute for Protein Design](#). This vaccine marks the emergence of computationally designed proteins in medicine. In addition, Indian regulatory authorities issued an emergency use approval for another shot linked to Seattle startup [HDT Bio](#), for which UW researchers contributed to the initially published research.

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If you're a UW researcher, learn more about how CoMotion can support your innovation journey by [requesting a consultation](#) with one of our innovation managers (NetID required).

Feature Stories

W COMOTION INNOVATION GAP FUND

Spring 2022 Winners

Over \$500K awarded to support innovation in this spring's Innovation Gap Fund awards

The [CoMotion Innovation Gap Fund](#) is a partnership between CoMotion and the [Washington Research Foundation](#) to provide over \$1.1 million annually in awards of up to \$50K to UW project teams. Its mission is to fund and support projects with a high chance of making an impact but are unlikely to do so without gap funding. The program helps teams and technologies transition between the conclusion of academic research grants and achieving the level of development where they can attract seed-stage private investment.

This spring, six teams competing in life sciences and engineering received a full \$50,000 award. In addition, two teams received a \$50,000 BECU FinTech award, three received a \$50,000 [Population Health Innovation Award](#), one received a \$20,000 award to attend the [NSF I-Corps National program](#), and another received a \$10,000 customer discovery support award. Finally, one team was chosen as the University of Washington nominee for the \$150,000 [Murdoch Trust Award](#), which will be decided by September 2022. Learn more about these teams and the vital work they are doing by clicking the link below.

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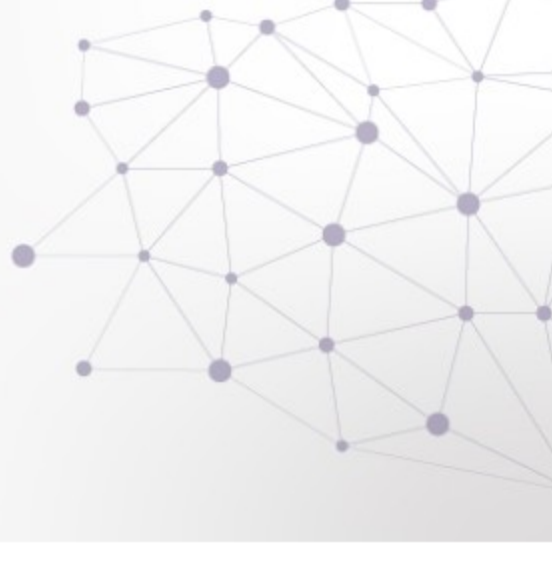


Four fintech startups win this year's competition to join the BECU FinTech Incubator

In its ongoing commitment to help grow the fintech community and drive innovation in the financial services industry, BECU has selected the winners of the fourth annual BECU FinTech Incubator competition: [Asa Honeycomb Credit](#), [NetGiver](#), and [Pocketnest](#). These startups bring collaborative banking, community capital, charitable giving, and financial wellness innovations to the BECU FinTech Incubator. Learn more about them by clicking the link below.

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W COMOTION DUBPITCH



Five startups and two early-stage innovations delivered their pitches at spring CoMotion DubPitch

CoMotion DubPitch brings together UW startups and early-stage innovations with investors and venture capitalists twice a year. In May, seven teams gathered in-person to give ten-minute pitches on their companies and innovations. The event featured teams from a variety of sectors including life sciences, medical devices, IT and software, hardware, and cleantech. Learn more about them by clicking the link below.

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How commuting is shaping up in the new normal - and what employers can do about it

You may have noticed, among friends and colleagues, that this question keeps coming up: "Are you back in the office?" The answers vary -- some have returned for at least a day or two, while others are fully remote. It seems like folks are still trying to figure it out. Learn about a new [UW Mobility Innovation Center](#) project that recently launched to gain better insights into employee commute patterns and motivators.

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Innovation Journeys: Stories of Invention & Discovery at UW

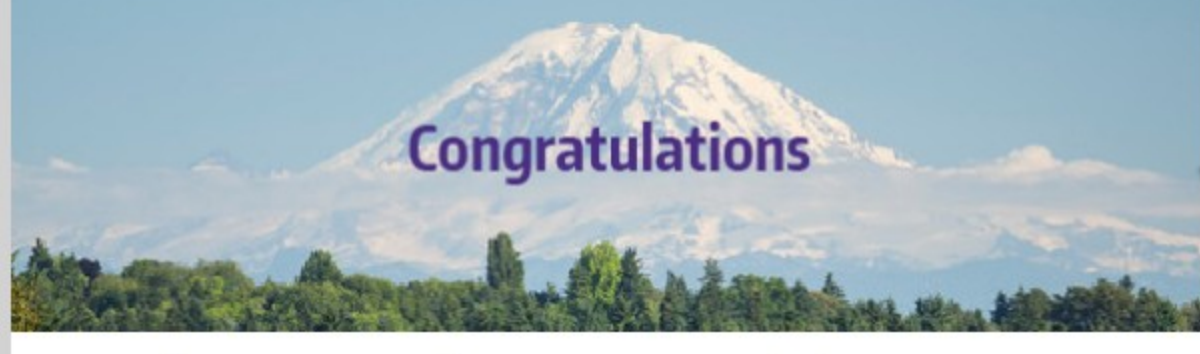


Neil King, Ph.D.
Co-founder & chair of the
Scientific Advisory Board

Transforming vaccines by design

[Icosavax](#) is committed to developing safe and effective vaccines against infectious diseases that address important unmet medical needs to save lives and improve health. They were founded on breakthrough computationally-designed virus-like particle technology, developed at the Institute for Protein Design and exclusively licensed for a variety of infectious disease indications from the University of Washington. Learn more about Neil King's innovation journey in this interview with UW Vice Provost for Innovation and CoMotion Director François Baneyx.

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CoMotion-supported innovators' accolades

- [Xemelgo](#), a software startup based in the CoMotion Labs technology incubator, raised \$4.2M in a recent round led by [FUSE](#). The startup brings Internet of Things (IoT) and cloud technology to the manufacturing industry, with software that uses sensors to track products. Read more in [GeekWire](#).
- [Jessica Ray](#), assistant professor at UW's Department of [Civil & Environmental Engineering](#), is the recipient of a [National Science Foundation Faculty Early Career Development Program \(CAREER\)](#) Award. It supports Dr. Ray's research that aims to develop novel, low-cost composite materials to selectively remove and degrade toxic contaminants in water sources. [Learn more](#).
- UW neuroengineer in the [Department of Bioengineering](#) [Azadeh Yazdan](#) has earned the American Heart Association (AHA) Career Development Award for a promising approach to drive brain repair and recovery following a stroke. [Learn more](#).
- [UW ECE](#) Assistant Professor [Sajjad Moazeni](#) was recently named recipient of a National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER award, supporting Moazeni's work developing 'smart,' energy-efficient links between thousands of networked computer processors and memory units connected by optical fiber. [Learn more](#).
- Several CoMotion-supported teams were among the winners at last month's Buick Center [Dempsey Startup Competition](#). These included two Spring 2022 Innovation Gap Fund (IGF) recipients and two CoMotion Labs members. IGF recipients [CathConnect](#) won the \$15,000 BECU Second Place Prize for a device that improves the safety of urinary catheters and [inSTENT Connection](#) won the \$7,500 Friends of the Dempsey Startup Fourth Place Prize by creating "the first naturally absorbing stent" for patients undergoing gastrointestinal (GI) tract surgeries. CoMotion Labs member [Ultropia](#) won the \$5,000 MOP Pizza Social Impact Prize for developing an all-in-one washer and dryer so people with limited infrastructure can access safe, efficient, and sustainable laundry services. And [DevMatch](#) won the \$2,500 eBay Best Marketplace Idea Prize for creating a coding assessment platform that crowdsources real-life challenges and automatically evaluates candidates for software engineer positions.
- As part of their blog series "Inspiring Academic Female Founders," [Osage University Partners](#) featured [Ka Yee Yeung](#), co-founder and CEO of [BioDeposit LLC](#) and Professor and Associate Dean for Research and Innovation at [UW Tacoma](#). [Read the interview here](#).
- UW [STAR Lab](#) research associate and [AIWavision](#) CEO [Wei Sun](#) won a [Small Business Innovation Research \(SBIR\)](#) award for his work in providing smart mobility solutions using artificial intelligence (AI) and edge computing technologies for safer and more efficient transportation.
- UW cleantech hardware spinoff [Aquaagga](#) received coverage in [GeekWire's Startup Spotlight](#) series after participating in their "Elevator Pitch" competition, which airs later this summer. The startup, which spun out of UW's [Department of Mechanical Engineering](#), participated in [I-Corps](#) and were recipients of a [Fall 2020 CoMotion Innovation Gap Fund](#). They developed technology to break down and destroy "per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances," or PFAS, so-called "forever chemicals" that rarely break down in the environment. CTO and co-founder Brian Pinckard also participated in the CoMotion [Postdoctoral Entrepreneurship Program](#).

CoMotion & Partner Events



Young Investors Network Summit July 19th, 5pm - 9pm

The Young Investors Network Summit will be held on July 19th at The Collective, 400 Dexter Avenue North, Seattle. Students and young professionals who attend this one-day conference will hear from some of the biggest names in business and technology and will network and learn alongside 100+ students who are actively involved in finance, technology, and entrepreneurship. The event is free to students. All others can use the code "UW" to enjoy a 20% discount.

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BIOMEDICAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP FIRESIDE CHAT SERIES

Join WE-REACH on Thursdays in July from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. for VIRTUAL fire-side chats about entrepreneurship in the biotech industries. Hear from biomedical entrepreneurs, investors, and industry experts on topics covering challenges, business models, budgets and funding, resources, regulatory strategy, product development and more. These chats are a component of the Biomedical Innovation Bootcamp, but even if you are not taking part in the Bootcamp, you can attend these discussions. Series runs through July 21st. [Register for these free online events below.](#)



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GeekWire ROOFTOP BBQ +SOUNDERS DAY

PRESENTED BY
FIRST MODE



AUGUST 2ND — 4 PM — PURCHASE TICKETS

Celebrate summer, soccer and sensational views at GeekWire's festive rooftop BBQ, taking place Tuesday, August 2 before the Seattle Sounders face FC Dallas. Take in the views, enjoy a cold beverage, chow down on awesome BBQ and connect with members of the tech community at this fun-filled summer party (+21). Celebrity guests, cool swag, and other surprises are in store. Then, join us for the Sounders game which starts at 7pm.

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Meet a CoMotion Team Member



Compliance Manager Bunny Grewal

Bunny Grewal joined CoMotion in January 2022 as Compliance Manager responsible for managing the federal reporting process for UW federally-funded innovations and intellectual property. She previously worked at the [Hearing, Speech and Deaf Center](#) (HSDC) as Center Support Specialist and Clinical Coordinator in the areas of project management, administration, and customer service. Bunny also worked as a contractor for the [Department of Defense](#), specializing in providing accommodations to break down barriers to perform job duties for those with disabilities. She graduated with both associate and bachelor's degrees from the Rochester Institute of Technology. Find Bunny on our [website](#).

About CoMotion



CoMotion's mission is to partner with the UW community on their innovation journey, providing tools, connections, and acumen to transform ideas into economic and societal impact.

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