

Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff

**TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON INNOVATION TRANSFER
AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

DISCUSSION ITEM

For Meeting of June 2, 2023

RECOGNITION PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the purposes of the Special Committee is to oversee the successful implementation of the proposals detailed in the May 2021 report of the Regents Working Group on Innovation Transfer and Entrepreneurship. Recommendation #10 in the report is to create a program to recognize innovation and entrepreneurship. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Special Committee propose that the Regents establish a Regents Innovation Awards program for the purpose of recognizing inventors and encouraging a culture of innovation.

BACKGROUND

During its year-long inquiry, the Regents Working Group engaged extensively with many of the nation's premier innovation transfer universities in order to identify best practices and to study their most successful strategies. One of the common threads shared by each of these universities is they consider translational research, innovation, and entrepreneurship to be on par with other fields of research, scholarship, and university enterprises. They celebrate, support, and often incentivize faculty, who as inventors and founders, strive to translate their ideas into new products, services, and innovations, especially those with societal impact. Consultation with UC's own highly successful faculty entrepreneurs revealed similar desires to highly value and celebrate translational research and entrepreneurial endeavors.

The following Regents Innovation Awards recognition program is intended to signal the Regents' high prioritization of and continued enthusiasm for translational research and entrepreneurial endeavors and also celebrate and elevate the individuals or teams excelling in these efforts. Over the next several months, the Regents will be exploring potential sources of funding to execute this idea.

Objectives:

- To challenge the UC community of students, faculty, and researchers to solve the world's most pressing challenges through use-inspired research, civically responsible

entrepreneurship, and the translation of academic-based research into real-world solutions having societal benefit.

- To recognize UC inventors and entrepreneurs who have demonstrated an exceptional spirit of innovation through the creation of new technologies, products, and services aimed at uplifting the human condition.
- To promote a culture of innovation that encourages the UC community to vigorously pursue academic discovery for the purpose of creating practical solutions serving the needs of our global society.

Award Categories:

It is proposed that the Regents Innovation Awards be established in five categories. A model of the proposed program is outlined below.

- *Regents Gamechanger Award* – awarded to that year’s most impactful product to market. The invention must have been translated into a new or improved, widely used technology, product, or service that has improved societal well-being, provided economic benefit to the region or state, or advanced scientific understanding.
- *Regents Disruptive Research Award* – awarded to use-inspired research that has not yet been translated into real-world applications but has demonstrated exceptional novelty and discovery with strong potential to be developed into new or improved technologies, products, and/or services that will address societal needs and improve lives.
- *Regents Best Startup Award* – awarded to a new company utilizing UC research to develop new technologies, products, and/or services that improve the lives of others and address societal needs.
- *Regents Community Changemaker Award* – recognizes a private sector leader or organization that has contributed significantly to improving social and economic prosperity by supporting UC’s innovation enterprise.
- *Regents Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award* – awarded to a serial inventor or entrepreneur whose career accomplishments include innovations that have led to long-term positive impacts on the lives of others and who inspires UC innovators.

Award Prizes:

With the exception of the winner of the Regents Community Gamechanger Award, the proposal is to award prize money to each award recipient to support the winner’s future use-inspired research, entrepreneurial endeavors, and/or commercialization activities. These can include (but are not limited to):

- funding for a specific project;
- compensation for time off from teaching or other duties;
- funding for research assistants;
- funding for work-related equipment and living expenses which will allow winners to focus on their work.

Award recipients and their achievements for which they received recognition will be showcased in that year's UC commercialization report. In addition, award recipients will be invited to serve as advisors to the President's Entrepreneurship Network Council for one year, representing the viewpoints of inventors and entrepreneurs who have benefitted from UC's innovation and entrepreneurship enterprise.

Nomination Process:

UC chancellors and the directors of UC's three national laboratories may submit nominations. These 13 nominators are empowered to establish local-level processes and public events to determine nominees.

Eligibility, Selection Criteria, Timetables, and Procedures

The Board of Regents in consultation with the Office of the President, the President's Entrepreneurship Council, and the Chancellors will develop the following:

- Minimum eligibility criteria and general rules to be observed during the nomination process. These criteria and rules will give great deference to the chancellors and national laboratory directors in selecting their respective best innovators who deserve systemwide recognition. The rules will encourage local recognition events.
- A selection protocol, rubric, and timetable to be publicly available and used by the Board of Regents in the review of nominations and the ultimate selection of winners.

Awardees will be selected by the Board of Regents.