ICAT
International Cross-Curricular Accelerator for Technology
Re-envisioning experiential learning in the liberal arts and sciences and business for the 21st century.
WHAT IS ICAT?

ICAT is a new type of university-based accelerator designed to change the lives of 96 students per year through experiential learning as company founders and project engineers. ICAT launches its first class in January 2015.

A Focus on Computer Technology with the Greater Charleston Area
ICAT is a unique approach for developing a corps of highly-trained, creative, software engineers with creativity and business skills. Gifts to support this program would go directly toward developing the next generation of new software engineers and developers, and ensuring their education is enriched with industry experience.

In addition to offering a range of experiential educational opportunities for students to be innovators and technology creators (in both live and online formats), ICAT will be a community catalyst and sponsor entrepreneurial activities such as hackathons and a range of other learning and networking opportunities that build upon Charleston’s Silicon Harbor ecosystem.

U.S. News & World Report rank software developers #1 in Best Jobs in 2014 for superb job prospects, low unemployment rate and excellent median salary.
Innovation and entrepreneurship are at the heart of the College of Charleston’s mission as a liberal arts college. Our academic programs in digital media and information technology are graduating a pipeline of student innovators and entrepreneurs, while our faculty are a constant source of creativity and new business ideas. As the College embarks on Boundless—the largest fundraising campaign in its history—raising funds to support innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly in high demand fields like computer science, remain a top priority.

The creation of ICAT will leverage the College’s greatest strengths. By investing in the program your gift would help accomplish several key goals for the College and the state of South Carolina. More specifically, it would:

- Provide an outstanding educational opportunity for students from computer science, business, and the liberal arts, to develop their technological business skills and increase their value to established and emerging businesses.

- Connect the College of Charleston into the emerging Silicon Harbor technology ecosystem and amplify South Carolina’s innovation community through the creation of an online accelerator curriculum.

- Ensure that entrepreneurs have adequate access to funding for all stages of business development as ICAT would provide initial prototype funding for 32 ventures per annum plus early seeding funding for four companies in the accelerator model.

- Help equip South Carolina’s workforce with the skills and knowledge that tomorrow’s high-tech companies will require.
HOW IS ICAT DIFFERENTIATING?

ICAT is founded on progressive academic goals and integrated community engagement. ICAT is different from industry accelerators:

- The goal is not to make money. ICAT projects may create valuable IP, but it is the experience that matters. ICAT focuses on talent production, the most valued asset of a thriving community.

- ICAT vets potential and develops talent in the space of globally scalable, tech enabled business. ICAT does not vet ideas as the end goal.

- ICAT funds student projects with gifts not investments. Performance goals are defined by impact and experiential ROI.

- ICAT leverages industry mentors and projects within the university to break down silos. Industry accelerators do not tend to engage with higher education at the student or curricular levels.

- ICAT supports social entrepreneurship. By contributing new solutions to painful problems with no expectation for commercialization. ICAT contributes to the open source movement. Industry incubators are profit focused by definition.

ICAT makes the liberal arts relevant by preparing students of any major to enter the technological workforce of the 21st century. Specifically, ICAT is not hosted at an engineering university, but is better positioned as an accelerator to leverage diversity for creativity, innovation, tech and business. ICAT is distinct among university incubators of the past in a number of innovative ways.

- ICAT does not hold equity in new companies formed from ICAT projects. ICAT does infuse new talent to the community as the primary asset contributed by the College of Charleston.
ICAT measures success through lessons learned. Student entrepreneurs in a successful company will progress into off-campus angel support. Out of unsuccessful startups will emerge an even more powerful and prepared graduate for industry.

ICAT is a model that can scale across the campus. It is conceivable that every student at the College of Charleston can participate in an ICAT experience as part of the general education, reimagined and leveraging valued traditions in the liberal arts.

ICAT projects are tech-based, which makes them practical with low capital overhead. Unlike startups in biotech and chemistry, no expensive equipment and tooling is required. ICAT is founded in the new paradigm of nearly zero-cost start-up costs for globally scalable, cloud-based products and services.

The College is proud to have invented a new pathway forward in the 21st century to reinvent what higher education can do for our students and our economy.

At CofC, the computer science major grew from 68 students in 2006 to more than 350 in 2014.
WHY NOW?

There is a glaring lack of computer science / software engineers trained in South Carolina. Furthermore, business and liberal arts students are better enabled with technical skills and acumen. It is critical the College and emerging technology companies collaborate to address this gap. Their absence is currently a limiting factor in the growth of advanced technological enterprises in the SC economy. Your gift to ICAT would allow the College to satisfy future business demands, and ramp up the number of computer science graduates who also have strong business skills.

The creation and origination of university based nascent tech start-ups is a feature common to successful technology hub cities like Boston and Silicon Valley. As Charleston builds its own Silicon Harbor tech ecosystem, the partnerships that form between the College and companies based here will be key to our economic success. The College of Charleston setting provides diversity, innovation, and the ability to develop business ideas in a controlled and supportive environment.

- 50 percent of the business ideas would emerge from students and faculty within the College.

- 50 percent of the business ideas would be paid projects from clients in the IT cluster, so there is a strong additive research and discovery value to companies within the cluster.

- As students work on funded projects in collaboration with companies like Boeing, BMW, Benefitfocus, PeopleMatter, MUSC and others, internship opportunities and jobs will emerge.

The program also will herald in new formats for learning, as the curriculum would be available online and beamed into learning pods at other learning centers. The program has already scaled nationally and internationally, as we are collaborating with Nebraska Wesleyan University and Tartu University in Estonia on an International Accelerator.
The College of Charleston has embarked on a strategic mission to build and sustain a diverse campus community focused on the social, cultural and economic impact across South Carolina and the Southeast. By making a gift to ICAT, you will play a founding role in establishing a future for the College of Charleston’s best and brightest students.

We invite you to consider a gift to ICAT. Your investment will transform the lives of the students who participate in this unparalleled learning experience and it will help further stimulate the technological ecosystem in Charleston and beyond.

**FOUNDING PARTNER- $50,000**

- Permanent Plaque in ICAT Accelerator Room showcasing name of company or individual
- An ICAT Team will be named for the company or individual for 5 years
- Access to student teams and projects
- Invitation to special events, speaker series, and pitch competitions
- Mentoring opportunities

**SPONSORING PARTNER- Sponsor an ICAT Team**

$10,000 year one and then $5,000 each year for four years

- An ICAT Team will be named for company or individual
- Access to student teams and projects
- Invitation to special events, speaker series, and pitch competitions
- Mentoring opportunities
CONTRIBUTING PARTNER- $5,000

- Access to student teams and projects
- Invitation to special events, speaker series, and pitch competitions
- Mentoring opportunities

Partner with ICAT to inspire and ignite the entrepreneurial spirit that resides in each of these stellar students. For more information, contact Denise Ciccarelli, director of corporate and foundation relations at 843.955.5018, ciccarellimd@cofc.edu or visit giving.cofc.edu/campaign/donate.
INFORMATIONAL APPENDIX

Computer Science Majors
Computer science is the fastest growing major at the College of Charleston. Presently, CofC produces 35 computer science majors per year. We aspire to triple this number over the next five years.

Entrepreneurship
Entrepreneurship is exploding at the College of Charleston. This year we introduced a new ENTR 200 Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice. Both sections of 35 students were “sold out” and approximately 25% had already started a business. A new Entrepreneurship minor was added this Fall.

Community
Charleston now houses over 300 technology businesses. Their biggest constraint to growth is the lack of CS professionals. ICAT’s production of 96 students per annum will help address the shortage of computer science professionals.

Under30CEO.com names Charleston a top location for IT companies and jobs.