

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Chicago State University Launches New Innovation Lab** Center expected to serve as a hub for boosting ideas and student employment opportunities

Chicago, IL - This is an exciting week at Chicago State University filled with talk of innovation and short- and long-term benefits for students. On Friday, April 27, the College of Arts and Sciences will launch a state-of-the-art Innovation Laboratory. The unprecedented addition to the Mathematics and Computer Science (MAC) department places Chicago State University (CSU) among a small, distinguished group of Chicago-based universities to establish an innovation center and one of an even smaller number of facilities to house an innovation lab on the city's South Side.

"The main purpose of the Innovation Lab is to invigorate students to be entrepreneurial," says department Chairman Dr. Rohan Attele. "It will provide an opportunity for students to convert issues into ideas and ideas into enterprises using their academic knowledge. Students can provide innovative solutions employing technology to intractable issues in their communities, thus becoming social entrepreneurs."

Statistics show that group work significantly improves the innovative thinking of individuals which increases the chances of success of a project. "The idea behind an Innovation Lab is simple," says Dr. Anil Mehta, MCS assistant professor. "It is 'an enabling center' where an individual student, or a group of students, can feel at ease in sharing their ideas. Students will have opportunities to interact with their peers, faculty, and industry leaders who can help them bring their innovative ideas to fruition."

According to Mehta, the Innovation Lab is different from either a co-working space where previously developed ideas are worked out simultaneously or an incubator (or an accelerator) where people with developed ideas are looking for business, financial, and legal support. He says, "It is instead a platform for students by students that, through the power of human interaction, provides budding student entrepreneurs a chance to build support networks and it will help to guide CSU students, high school students and community members toward the application of their ideas and into entrepreneurship."

The Innovation Lab brings influence from other successful models such as Harvard Business School's i-Labs and the SFO Converge at the San Francisco airport. "The notion of an airport having an innovation lab was especially invigorating for the CSU concept," said Mehta, "We believe that our plan to have a satellite lab at the 95th and Dan Ryan RedLine train station is equally inventive."

The lab will maintain an extensive roster of national and international mentors involving fellow students, entrepreneurs, industry leaders and professors to provide mentorship, support, and guidance on ways students can adapt their academic studies to more beneficial and useful pursuits for society.

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Mehta says, “By being involved in solving a problem so near to their hearts that is not necessarily trackable, students will have a chance to tap into the infinite potential that an innovative mind can bring, thus making innovators out of our students.”

“One example of a lab project in progress is ‘Cluster Computing,’ where multiple computers are linked and managed via software to compute in parallel. This process conserves power and can be used for streaming services, such as for CSU Radio or CSU-TV. We hope that such discussions will help raise the level of conversations on campus, and nurture students to become problem solvers, in addition to being skilled professionals.”

“We are optimistic that the new lab will play a crucial role in the recruitment, retention, graduation, and post-graduation employment of our students,” says Interim President Dr. Rachel W. Lindsey. “Bringing similar and disparate disciplines together enhance new ways of thinking and foster new avenues for entrepreneurship, an approach that is essentially entrepreneurship of the future.”

Activities will take place Friday April 27 from 10:00 AM until 5:00 PM in the Gwendolyn Brooks Library.

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*About Chicago State University*

*Chicago State University was founded in 1867 with just 62 students enrolled in its first year. Today it is a nationally accredited university with five colleges- Health Sciences, Arts and Science, Business, Education, and Pharmacy – offering 36 undergraduate and 25 graduate degree-granting programs. In addition, CSU has a Division of Continuing Education and Non-Traditional Programs that reach out to the community with extension courses, distance learning and not-for-credit programs. Consistently evolving to reflect state-of-the-art trends in higher education, Chicago State University prepares students for success in the twenty-first century. For more information, please visit [www.csu.edu](http://www.csu.edu)*

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