

**UNIVERSITY OF UTAH MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Lassonde Institute Releases Annual Report for 2016-17**

*Report shows significant growth and achievements after institute opens Lassonde Studios, a $45 million student innovation center*

Aug. 31, 2017 – The Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute, an interdisciplinary division of the David Eccles School of Business at the University of Utah, released its annual report for 2016-17. It shows significant growth and achievements after opening the much anticipated Lassonde Studios building, a $45 million, 160,000-square-foot student innovation center where all students are welcome to “live, create and launch.”

Highlights for the year include top rankings for entrepreneurship education, praise from international news sources, 329 student startup teams formed, 7,800 college students participating, $663,000 in scholarships awarded, $369,000 in cash prizes awarded, 236 students trained on prototyping equipment and 32,000 feet of 3-D printer filament used. [Read the full report for more information.](http://lassonde.utah.edu/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Lassonde-Institute-2017-Annual-Report.pdf)

“We built Lassonde Studios to create a unique space that would engage more students in our already impressive entrepreneur program, and the data in our annual report shows the impact of the Lassonde Studios,” said Troy D’Ambrosio, executive director of the Lassonde Institute and an assistant dean at the Eccles School. “We reached many of our goals this year, and we look to building on our momentum.”

The Lassonde Institute announced plans for Lassonde Studios in 2014 with the goal of becoming the best place in the country for student entrepreneurs. The building combines a 20,000 square foot innovation space for all students on the first floor with four floors of residential space on the upper four floors.

Construction on Lassonde Studios concluded in summer 2016, and students moved into the building in August 2016. The first 400 residents at Lassonde Studios ranged from freshmen to Ph.D. student and studied 44 different areas of study.

During construction and after, Lassonde Studios received worldwide attention for its unique design and purpose.

[*The New York Times* called it a high-tech building](http://lassonde.utah.edu/the-new-york-times-features-lassonde-studios/) in the hopes of “evoking big, high-tech thinking.” [*Architectural Digest* named Lassonde Studios](http://lassonde.utah.edu/lassonde-studios-one-of-worlds-best-new-university-buildings-says-architectural-digest/) one of the “nine best new university buildings around the world.” [Fast Company featured the building](http://lassonde.utah.edu/fast-company-lassonde-studios-is-a-45m-experiment-in-education/), reporting: “No, this is not one of Silicon Valley’s many office spaces cum playground; it’s Lassonde Studios, a $45 million experiment in education.”

“Lassonde Studios was designed to be a one-of-a-kind community of student entrepreneurs and creators,” said Taylor Randall, dean of the Eccles School. “I think the results from the first year show that we have exceeded our expectations for the building. Lassonde Studios has helped grow and energize our community in more ways that we expected.”

Major donors for Lassonde Studios include Pierre Lassonde and the Lassonde Family Foundation, David Neeleman, the Larry H. & Gail Miller Family Foundation and Zions Bank. Partners include University of Utah Housing & Residential Education, Cannon Design, EDA Architects, Arup and Gramoll Construction.

Students involved in the many programs offered by the Lassonde Institute at Lassonde Studios said the experience transformed their time on campus. Beyond helping them start companies, the experience has helped them learn valuable lessons that will be useful in whatever they do in the future.

Jared Piper is one of many students who was involved during the 2016-17 year. While pursuing graduate degrees in engineering and business, he managed a grant program offered by the Lassonde Institute. In part because of his experience at the Lassonde Institute, he was able to secure a job at Tesla.

“Like many others, I was scared to be an entrepreneur,” he said. “I just couldn’t get past the thought of letting my excitement push me into a risky venture where I lose it all. Lassonde has helped me overcome these reservations by teaching me how to de-risk new ventures without spending all my savings. Being able to pivot early and cheap by answering the right questions brings a confidence that enables us to succeed.”

Arielle Hassett is another student involved with Lassonde Institute programs during the 2016-17 year. She participated in a business plan competition and worked on a medical startup.

“Lassonde has helped me develop as a leader and entrepreneur by creating a welcoming environment filled with opportunities to learn, grow, and succeed,” Hassett said.

[Read the full Lassonde Institute 2017 annual report here.](http://lassonde.utah.edu/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Lassonde-Institute-2017-Annual-Report.pdf) Learn more about Lassonde Studios at [lassonde.utah.edu/studios](http://www.lassonde.utah.edu/studios). Find more stories about students who have lived and worked at Lassonde Studios at [lassonde.utah.edu/launched](http://lassonde.utah.edu/launched/).

**About the Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute**

The Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute is a nationally ranked hub for student entrepreneurship and innovation at the University of Utah and an interdisciplinary division of the David Eccles School of Business. The first programs were offered in 2001, through the vision and support of Pierre Lassonde, an alumnus of the Eccles School and successful mining entrepreneur. The institute now provides opportunities for thousands of students to learn about entrepreneurship and innovation. Programs include workshops, networking events, business-plan competitions, startup support, innovation programs, graduate seminars, scholarships, community outreach and more. All programs are open to students from any academic major or background. The Lassonde Institute also manages the Lassonde Studios, a new $45 million innovation space and housing facility for all students. Learn more at [lassonde.utah.edu](http://www.lassonde.utah.edu).

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