

Purdue names first senior university fellow for innovation and entrepreneurship

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Christian Butzke (Purdue University Photo)



The *SUFIE*

Because ...

"We want to foster an academic culture of innovation and entrepreneurship that elevates the societal impact of Purdue's use-inspired research."

Christian Butzke, SUFIE

Innovation & Entrepreneurship



#5 IN THE U.S. FOR
PATENTS

Top 5 in the U.S. 3 years running

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, 2023

#3

IN STARTUP
CREATION

275 STARTUPS

IPWatchdog Institute (2020)

Purdue Research Foundation's



**PURDUE
INNOVATES**



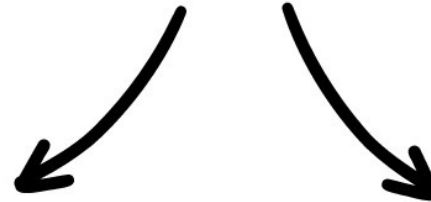
COMMERCIALIZATION

STARTUP CREATION

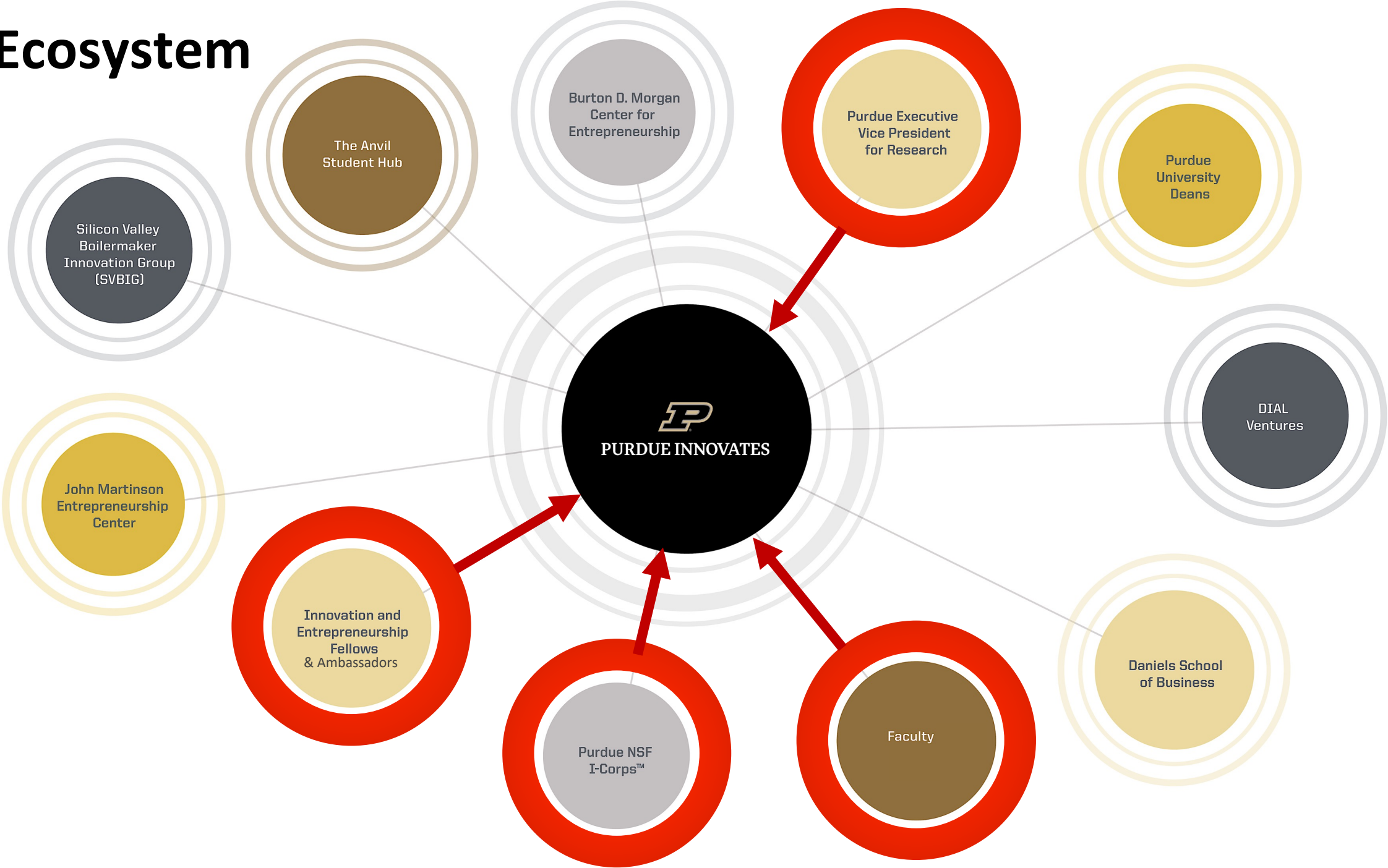
**OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY
COMMERCIALIZATION**

INCUBATOR

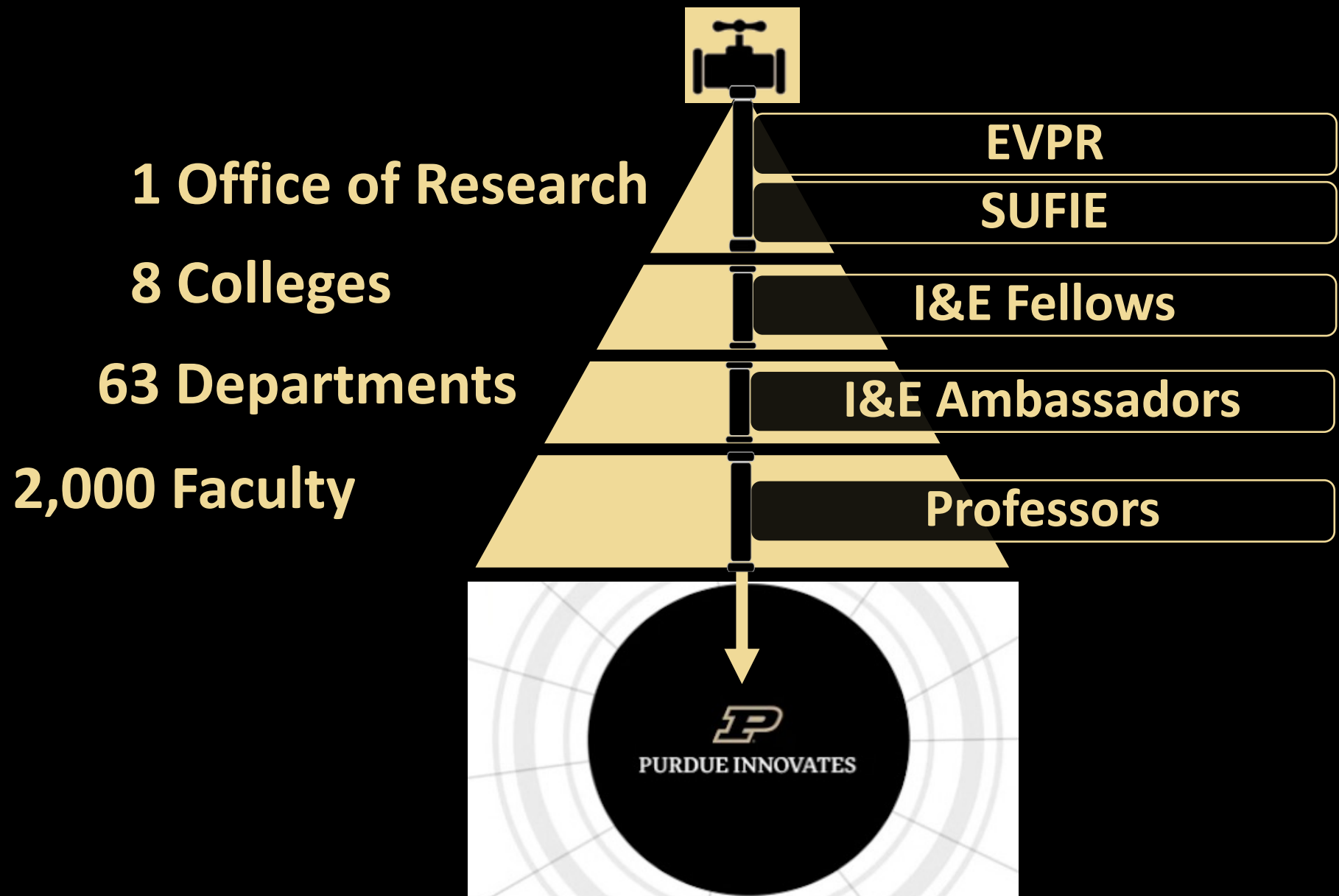
VENTURES



I&E Ecosystem



Purdue's *Research* Commercialization Pipeline



PURDUE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Ambassadors

Purdue names first Senior University Fellow for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Past generations of high-achieving Purdue University researchers might be surprised by the entrepreneurial nature of their modern counterparts. Today's Purdue researchers are nationally recognized for commercializing their work even as they continue to break university records in established quests for funding and publishing.

To support and grow Purdue's entrepreneurial momentum, the Office of Research has announced the appointment of Christian Butzke as the first senior university fellow for innovation and entrepreneurship (I&E). Butzke, professor of food science and co-founder of a startup himself, began serving in the role Nov. 1 after having been an I&E fellow for the College of Agriculture since January 2021.

Butzke's new mission to foster a universitywide academic culture of innovation for societal impact also is designed to help recruit and retain talented faculty and graduate students.

"As a teacher and practicing entrepreneur, Christian brings a wealth of experience to this important role," said Karen Plaut, executive vice president for research. "He will lead a campuswide network of faculty to coach, mentor and support each other through their own commercialization or entrepreneurship journeys."

Working in collaboration with the Purdue Research Foundation and the newly formed Purdue Innovates organization, Butzke said his role will synergistically and systematically feed the pipeline of potential research-based innovations.

"Stronger engagement with our faculty is critical to our entrepreneurial and commercialization success," said Brooke Beier, senior vice president for Purdue Innovates. "Having a champion like Christian working with his peers across the university will enhance our capabilities to increase the societal impact of Purdue technology, whether through licensing to industry or startups.

"We want to encourage an academic culture where researchers inherently consider potential commercialization to maximize the societal impact of their ideas, discoveries and innovations. We don't want to turn professors into CEOs, but rather guide them toward our support ecosystem to make it easy for them to start working on the next big idea with their students and colleagues."

Butzke will oversee college- and school-based I&E fellows and departmental I&E ambassadors who will provide individual guidance to faculty who have specific needs and questions on how to balance an academic career along with family and personal life.

"The I&E ambassadors and fellows are our boots on the ground. These are the colleagues — the storytellers — you can talk to in the hallway, people who have walked the walk of entrepreneurship or whose research has led to commercialization opportunities via licensing as a faculty member," Butzke said. "Initially we're going to engage with six, eventually eight, colleges and schools as we begin our outreach. Eventually we want to engage as many professors as we can to expand the impact of research and enhance the innovation potential among our faculty community."

Butzke brings firsthand entrepreneurial experience to his new position. He is co-founder and chief enologist for VinSense, an agricultural management-decision software company for grape and wine producers. Based at the Purdue Research Park of West Lafayette, VinSense was licensed by the Purdue Innovates Office of Technology Commercialization.

Butzke acknowledged that taking on a startup posed lots of personal challenges, but the rewards are valuable on many levels. For him, learning from both successes and failures is a thrilling part of the entrepreneurial journey.

"I empathize when a faculty member wonders how they can take this on with all the responsibilities and time commitments they already have," Butzke said, noting that teamwork has been critical to his success with VinSense. "I partnered with like-minded colleagues here at Purdue that had expertise in completely different areas. That's how I got into this and persevered — by collaborating with other researchers to build something bigger than what I could do on my own and to tackle more complex stakeholder problems in key technology areas."



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Agricultural Research
and Graduate Education

Purdue's Innovation & Entrepreneurship Metrics

"Enabling Purdue technologies, startups, and Boilermakers to impact the world"

Key Metrics of *Purdue Innovates* Success:

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. # of Purdue technologies licensed | OTC & Incubator |
| 2. # of Purdue-connected startups receiving Series A investment | Ventures |
| 3. # of Students at Purdue-connected startups | Incubator & Ventures |

Key Metrics for *Entrepreneurial Faculty* Success:

1. # of IP disclosures
2. # of ideas de-risked through *Incubator* and *NSF I-Corps*

Issues

- **Mandatory or voluntary?**
- **The relevance of a Public University**
- **Promotion & Tenure guidelines**
- **Career-family-life balance**
- **IP ownership and benefits**
- **Ethics and conflicts of interest**
- **Mutual expectations and bottlenecks**

The Ask

- **University Senate Standing Committees**
 - **Faculty Affairs**
 - **Subcommittee**
 - "Innovation & Entrepreneurship Policy"*



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