



Building
Communities
of Innovation™

AURP  **2025**
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
NOV 11-14 • LAS VEGAS

Hosted by **UNLV** HARRY REID
RESEARCH &
TECHNOLOGY PARK

*Preliminary Agenda – Subject to Change
(As of 10.31.25)*

DRIVING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION ACROSS SECTORS

Get ready for an unforgettable experience as the Harry Reid Research and Technology Park and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas take center stage and host the 2025 AURP International Conference. As always, the conference is packed with exciting learning opportunities, from dynamic collaborative sessions and lively discussions to exclusive tours and more! Come experience a different side of Las Vegas this fall.

Why Attend? This high-impact program brings together thought leaders, economic developers, research park managers, and university and industry partners to unite and discuss the innovation of tomorrow. This is where the Community of Innovation comes to build our global network.

CONFERENCE HEADQUARTERS

[Durango Hotel](#), 6915 S Durango Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89113

Group Rate: \$249/Night plus \$40 Resort Fee

NEARBY SUGGESTED HOTELS:

[Home2Suites by Hilton Las Vegas](#) I-215 Curve, 8470 W. Sunset Road

Tuesday, November 11, 2025

9:00 – 12:00 AURP BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

Off property

2:00 – 5:00 HOSPITALITY DESK IN LOBBY REGISTRATION CHECK IN (BALLROOM FOYER)

2:45 – 4:30 COMMUNITIES OF INNOVATION 101: MEET THE LEADER SPEED-DATING STYLE

ADDITIONAL FEE

Saguaro

Step into a vibrant networking scene where curiosity meets expertise. Enjoy an exclusive opportunity to connect with AURP's thought leaders in a relaxed, welcoming environment. Have questions? They've got answers – and insights you won't want to miss. With adult beverages and snacks in hand, plan to address your most pressure challenges with our expert veterans.

- Chair: Kate Engel, Executive Director, Nebraska Innovation Campus

6:00 AURP BOARD OF DIRECTORS' SPONSOR APPRECIATION DINNER

Off Property / By Invitation Only

Raise a glass to toast our 2025 International Conference Sponsors during this welcomed in-person tradition.

The AURP Board of Directors, Past Presidents, 2025 Conference Planning Committee and invited Sustaining Member representatives, gather to honor our Annual and Conference Sponsors

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

7:30 – 5:00 REGISTRATION CHECK IN

MORNING BREAKFAST ON YOUR OWN

7:30 – 8:30

NEW MEMBER BREAKFAST

(By invitation only)

Cactus

Kick off your AURP Conference experience with a high-energy breakfast meet-up! Mix and mingle with the AURP Board of Directors and Membership Committee plus other first-time attendees as you join the heartbeat of our community. It's the perfect launchpad for making powerful connections and setting the tone for collaboration and inspiration.

9:00 – 11:00

LEADERSHIP ROUNDTABLE: NAVIGATING THE TIDES OF CHANGE

ADDITIONAL FEE

Saguaro

In a year where political changes are driving fluctuations at the national and local scale, these universities, communities of innovation and their partners are weathering a lot of upheaval. How do leaders navigate uncertainty and missives that negatively impact our organizations while trying to drive the mission of keeping innovation, collaboration and development within our communities?

A closed door-session designed for top-tier executives and seasoned professionals ready to dive deep. This isn't your average roundtable – expect bold ideas, real talk, and game-changing discussions that shape the future of innovation communities.

- Chip Cherry, CCE, President & CEO, Huntsville/Madison County Chamber
- Chair: Erin Koshut, Immediate Past President, AURP; Executive Director, Cummings Research Park

11:15 – 12:45

GROUP LUNCHEON – All attendees invited

ANNOUNCEMENT OF 2026 OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NEW MEMBER RECOGNITION

Agave EF

Join us as we kick off the **2025 AURP International Conference** with a warm welcome and celebration of our community! During this luncheon, we'll **introduce the 2026 AURP Officers and Board of Directors**, recognize our **outgoing board members** for their dedicated service, and **welcome our newest AURP members** into the Community of Innovation.

Following the recognition program, enjoy engaging **roundtable discussions** on key topics shaping our innovation ecosystems—an excellent opportunity to connect with peers, share insights, and spark new collaborations.

- Allison Madden, MBA, President, AURP; Chief Operating Officer & Corporate Secretary, University of South Florida Research Foundation
- Jeff Smith, MBA, Vice President, AURP; Director, University Corporate Research Foundation, Michigan State University Research Foundation

12:45 – 1:00

AURP 2025 CONFERENCE WELCOMING REMARKS

Agave EF

- Zach Miles, JD, MBA, Interim Vice President for Economic Development, UNLV; Executive Director, UNLV Research Foundation
- Mayor Shelley Berkley, City of Las Vegas

1:00 – 1:35

ICONS OF LAS VEGAS

Las Vegas is known worldwide for entertainment, but behind the scenes is a remarkable story of transformation and vision. This panel introduces key leaders who helped shape the city's growth—from booming construction and cultural investment to bold economic development strategies. Hear how Las Vegas evolved from a hospitality-driven town into a fast-growing, dynamic metro now pursuing innovation and diversification. As UNLV builds a 122-acre research and technology park, meet the icons whose leadership laid the foundation for a city—and a future—built on more than just bright lights.

- Guy Martin, President, Martin-Harris Construction
- Don Snyder, Strategic Advisor for Presidential Initiatives, UNLV
- Jan Jones Blackhurst, Executive Director, UNLV Black Fire Leadership Initiatives
- Betsy Fretwell, Principal Consultant, C4WARD Strategies
- (Moderator) Danielle Casey, President and CEO, Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance

1:35 – 2:10

FUTURE OF INNOVATION DISTRICTS

Las Vegas is entering a new chapter in economic development, one defined by innovation districts and research-driven opportunity. This panel brings together leaders from UNLV, Clark County, and the City of North Las Vegas to discuss how their aligned efforts are positioning the region for sustainable, tech-forward growth. Topics will include the continued development of UNLV's 122-acre Harry Reid Research and Technology Park, Clark County's vision for its Innovation Corridor, and a transformative 5,000-acre master planning initiative in North Las Vegas. Together, these projects represent a bold and strategic approach to regional economic diversification.

- Shani Coleman, Director of Community & Economic Development, Clark County Office of Community & Economic Development
- Jared Luke, Senior Director of Government Affairs and Economic Development, City of North Las Vegas

- (Moderator) Zach Miles, JD, MBA, Interim Vice President for Economic Development, UNLV; Executive Director, UNLV Research Foundation

2:10 – 2:30

SPACE AND PLACEMAKING AROUND SPORTS AND TECH

Explore how the intersection of sports, technology, and placemaking is transforming communities and fueling regional innovation. Drawing from the City of Henderson's dynamic development strategies, Troy Westover will share insights on how sports venues, tech-driven design, and community partnerships can activate spaces, attract talent, and create lasting economic impact. Discover how smart planning and visionary infrastructure can turn sports and tech into powerful engines for placemaking and innovation.

- Troy Westover, Facilities Manager, City of Henderson
- (Moderator) Zach Miles, JD, MBA, Interim Vice President for Economic Development, UNLV; Executive Director, UNLV Research Foundation

2:30 – 3:00

NETWORKING BREAK

3:00 – 3:20

THE NEW FRONTIER – LEVERAGING TEXAS HB112

Leveraging a case study from Texas, this legislative proposal explores the creation of science parks as designated taxing authorities, reframing them as engines of regional economic transformation. This approach unlocks opportunities for public-private and public-public (P3/P4) financing, fostering deeper collaboration among universities, regional governments, industry, and investors. The presentation also introduces innovative methods for identifying "best fit" research and economic opportunities, outlines a modern operational framework, and presents a development pathway driven private capital.

- Larry Peterson, Executive Director, Texas Foundation for Innovative Communities
- Harold Strong, Executive Director, STAR Park, Texas State University

3:20 – 4:00

D.C. DOWNLOAD: WHAT'S COMING UP FOR YOUR CAMPUS

Hear the latest from Washington, D.C. as Leslee Gilbert highlights upcoming federal policy shifts, funding opportunities, and legislative trends shaping campuses, research parks, and innovation ecosystems nationwide. Learn what's ahead—and how to prepare your organization for the year to come.

- Leslee Gilbert, PhD, JD, Vice President, Van Scoyoc Associates

4:00 – 4:45

BIOTECHNOLOGY AS A NATIONAL SECURITY ASSET

In this timely and critical session, Dr. Monique Mansoura will demonstrate how biotechnology has moved beyond the lab to become a cornerstone of national strength and global competitiveness. Drawing on her extensive experience at the intersection of biotech, policy and public-private partnerships, she will explore how robust bio-industrial capabilities, resilient supply chains and strategic talent investments are essential for economic, health and security resilience. Participants will walk away with actionable strategies for positioning their research parks, innovation districts and campuses as key players in the emerging bio-economy and national security ecosystem.

- Monique K. Mansoura, PhD, MBA, Founder and CEO, Beacon Biostrategies

4:45 – 5:30

POWERING WHAT'S NEXT: THE ELECTRIFY NEVADA STARTUP SHOWCASE

See the future of innovation unfold as emerging startups breakthrough solutions in clean tech, mobility, and sustainability. Hosted by UNLV, the Harry Reid Research & Technology Park, and Gener8tor's Electrify Nevada program, this session spotlights how research parks and entrepreneurial networks collaborate to attract and grow high-impact companies – turning Nevada into a launchpad for the technologies and jobs that will define tomorrow's economy.

- Donna Ehart, Managing Director, Electrify Nevada Accelerator, Las Vegas, Gener8tor
- Jessica Halsey, Managing Director, Reno Accelerator, Gener8tor
- (Moderator) Jamie Schwartz, Director, Industry and Business Engagement, Office of Economic Development; Associate Director, UNLV Research Foundation

5:30 – 6:00

OPENING RECEPTION

EVENING

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Thursday, November 13, 2025

MORNING

Breakfast on your own

8:30 – 5:00 REGISTRATION CHECK IN

9:00 – 9:15 MORNING WELCOME

Agave EF

- Commissioner Michael N. Naft, District A, Clark County, Nevada

9:15 – 10:30 MAIN STAGE PRESENTATIONS

Agave EF

Rapid Fire | Scaling University-Industry Partnerships Through Innovation

This session explores how Emerge, a national NSF-supported project led by Halo, is accelerating academic-industry partnerships. In this session, we'll provide insights from discovery interviews with dozens of industry R&D leaders and university faculty and administrators. We will then demo the technology features that were built to facilitate better matchmaking between industry needs and university capabilities and technologies. Attendees will leave with an understanding of key challenges and opportunities for industry- university collaboration and a replicable strategy for improving the research visibility and industry engagement at their institution.

- Lizz Harrell, Leading GTM, Halo

Rapid Fire | Research Park: The Tip of the Spear for Campus/Corporate Engagement

ISURP serves as the front door for businesses at Iowa State and works across campus in a team-based engagement model that coalesces multiple entities with concierge service. The results are record-breaking years of industry funding, corporate giving, the lowest vacancies in history, and a robust construction pipeline.

This session will showcase the value proposition, layers of our offering that have changed how we work with industry, workforce pipelining, macro/micro engagement, and integrating marketing and storytelling.

- Alison Doyle, Associate Director, Iowa State University Research Park; Director of Corporate Engagement, Iowa State University
- Stacy Dreyer, Associate Director of Corporate Engagement, Iowa State University Research Park
- Heather Bray, Corporate Engagement Specialist, Iowa State University Research Park

Rapid Fire | AI-Powered Corporate Engagement: Aligning Industry with Campus Strengths

Research parks thrive when industry partners establish a strong, physical presence on campus, but attracting the right partners requires a deep understanding of a university's strengths. This session explores how AI can help universities identify their core research areas and strategically match them with companies seeking innovation partnerships. Through real-world case studies, attendees will gain insights into AI-driven strategies that facilitate long-term, mutually beneficial corporate engagements, fueling economic growth at universities.

- Chase Bonhag, MBA, CEO & Co-Founder, FirstIgnite

Main Stage | Master Planning: Fireside Chat – Small Areas, Large Impacts

Join a conversation between two AIURP rockstars as they discuss the in's and out's of developing a master plan and how establishing plans

- Aaron Olver, Managing Director, University Research Park, University of Wisconsin - Madison
- Erin Koshut, Immediate Past President, AURP; Executive Director, Cummings Research Park
- (Moderator) David Green, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, Americas Urban Design Lead, Arup, Inc.

10:30 – 11:00 NETWORKING BREAK

Meet-up at the Women of AURP Coffee Break Mixer!

11:00 – 11:30 CONCURRENT GENERAL SESSIONS

Funding & Resources Track | Power of Place: Leveraging University-Industry Partnerships through Co-Location and Core Facilities

Agave EF

This session explores the transformative potential of "place" in fostering successful university-industry partnerships, focusing on how innovation districts, strategic co-location and access to core facilities can drive technology development and collaboration. Drawing on case studies from Georgia Tech, Michigan State University Research Foundation and University of Delaware session highlights how these institutions have created dynamic environments that bring together academia and industry to tackle challenges and generate economic impact.

- Merry Hunter Caudle, CECD, Associate Director, Economic Development Office of Institute Relations, Georgia Institute of Technology
- Tracy Shickel, Associate Vice President, Corporate Engagement, University of Delaware
- Jeffery Smith, Director, Research Parks, Michigan State University Research Foundation
- (Moderator) Allison Madden, President, AURP; Chief Operating Officer & Corporate Secretary, University of South Florida Research Foundation

Programming Track | Quantum Computing: Why You Should Prepare for a Quantum-Inspired Future

Cactus

2025 has been declared by the UN as the Year of Quantum Science. Billions of dollars are being Invested by governments around the world to be quantum leaders. Quantum computing is a technology that will disrupt the future from decrypting currently secure financial systems to discovering new drugs. Quantum R&D hubs are under development across the country and around the world in places such as Illinois, Maryland, South Carolina, Colorado, Toronto and Sweden, but quantum will affect all parks as the technology matures and becomes ubiquitous and business facing.

- Leslie Ashor, Director of Science + Technology, HOK
- Harley Johnson, Executive Director and CEO, Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Park
- (Moderator) Brian Darmody, Chief Strategy Officer, AURP

11:30 – 11:45 NETWORKING BREAK

11:45 – 12:15 CONCURRENT GENERAL SESSIONS

Funding & Resources Track | Fueling Innovation Districts in Times of Change

Agave EF

Learn how local, regional, and state governments are helping to Mobilize Innovation Districts. This panel will feature Howard County and HOK (Gateway Innovation District) and George Mason University with Prince William County (GMU Innovation District). Speakers will share strategies, partnerships, and lessons learned for effective engagement of industry partners and government entities. Attendees will gain practical insights into building broad community buy-in and support to catalyze innovation, attract investment, and drive regional economic development.

- Amy Adams, Executive Director, Institute for Biohealth Innovation, George Mason University
- Thomas Flynn, CECD, Economic Development Advisor, Prince William County Economic Development and Tourism
- Suzette Goldstein, Senior Principal, Director of Planning, HOK
- Sarah Sheppard, Director, Office of Talent and Workforce, Division of Innovation and Growth, Maryland Department of Commerce
- (Moderator) Laura O'Blenis, President & CEO, Stiletto: Make A Point

Programming Track | Bridging the Valley of Death: Funding Strategies for Tech Transfer

Cactus

This panel explores the funding landscape for tech transfer initiatives, with insights from university experts. We'll unpack strategies for navigating the "valley of death," including venture capital, angel investment, university grant programs, regional ecosystem grants, SBIR/STTR grants, and university-affiliated funds. Attendees will learn about emerging funding models that support tech transfer, de-risk early-stage science, and support founders moving from lab to market. Ideal for innovators, investors, and university professionals looking to strengthen their commercialization pathways.

- Bruce Hunter, JD, MBA, Chief innovation Officer, University of Utah
- Zach Miles, JD, MBA, Interim Vice President for Economic Development, UNLV; Executive Director, UNLV Research Foundation
- Katie Pettinger, MBA, Chief Innovation Officer, NSF Futures Engines of the Southwest / ASU
- (Moderator) Maggie Bachenberg, Consultant, Franklin Advisory

12:15 – 1:15 GROUP LUNCHEON – HIT THE JACKPOT WITH A WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE

LUNCHEON TABLE TOPICS – Don't just attend...engage! Pick a table topic or create your own conversation on the issues that matter most to your organization. Pull up a chair and exchange real ideas with fellow innovators shaping what's next.

1:15 – 1:45 CONCURRENT GENERAL SESSIONS

Funding & Resources Track | Real Estate Developments: Factors that Impact Project Feasibility

Agave EF

To de-mystify the real project development process, this session will share insight on the concepts of value and cost, the factors that affect those concepts, and what park leaders and developers can (and cannot) do to impact them.

- David Tyndall, Founder & CEO, Collaborative Real Estate
- (Moderator) Alison Doyle, Associate Director, Iowa State University Research Park; Director of Corporate Engagement, Iowa State University

Programming Track | Research Parks Partnering with DOD and Intel Community: What You Need to Know

Cactus

University Research Parks and Innovation Districts have a long history of partnering with DOD and the Intel Community, and DOD R&D appears to be the one area of federal funding that may not be reduced. Nevertheless, working with this sector of the federal government is hard, with many barriers and need for trust built up over many years. Explore leaders who have successfully

navigated the federal labyrinth of funding opportunities and restrictions to build communities of DOD and Intel community innovations, and how your park or region might benefit.

- Rod McSherry, Associate VP for Innovation and Economic Development, University of Texas at San Antonio
- David Norfolk, Jr., Vice President, Construction + Development, COPT Defense Properties
- Tom Sadowski, Executive Director, Maryland Economic Development Corporation
- (Moderator) Brian Darmody, Chief Strategy Officer, AURP

1:45 – 2:00

NETWORKING BREAK

2:00 – 2:30

CONCURRENT GENERAL SESSIONS

Funding & Resources Track | Implementing Research Security Best Practices in Research Parks, Innovation Districts and Hubs

Cactus

Federal research security regulations and operational guidelines have mandated that research universities and startups implement security and compliance controls to reduce unmitigated foreign influence risks. University-based research parks, innovation districts, technology hubs, and entrepreneurial companies supporting innovation growth and development play an essential role in research security, including protecting research IP assets. This session will provide practical guidance on research security best practices and how AURP stakeholders can implement them.

- Allen Phelps, CPP, PCI, CISSP, CISA, Founder & CEO, IPTalons, Inc.
- (Moderator) Rod McSherry, Associate VP for Innovation and Economic Development, University of Texas at San Antonio

Programming Track | The Bioscience Collaborative – An Innovative Approach to Building Biotech

Agave EF

Bioscience collaboratives can be an innovative yet resource-efficient approach to building biotech ecosystems. Our panel will discuss successful strategies for recruiting and retaining biotech start-ups focusing on collaboration between venture capital, state and private economic development, and academic partners.

- Len Jessup, Managing Director, Desert Forge Ventures
- Ray Liu, CEO & Co-Founder, Vena Vitals
- Jeffery Talbot, Vice President for Research, Roseman University of Health Sciences
- (Moderator) Jamie Schwartz, Director, Industry and Business Engagement, Office of Economic Development; Associate Director, UNLV Research Foundation

2:30 – 3:00

NETWORKING BREAK

3:00 – 3:30

CONCURRENT GENERAL SESSIONS

Funding & Resources Track | The Community-led Innovation Community: A Conversation with Three County Leaders

Cactus

Innovation communities comprise all shapes and sizes. Dozens are led by universities, and others by economic development agencies, institutions, municipalities, and consortiums. The rise in leadership by larger government sectors – counties and parishes – is creating a phenomenon of transformative impact on regional innovation ecosystems. The panel will explore how three communities from across the U.S. are serving as change agents, owning the moniker of innovation catalysts – through the strategy, design and implementation within their districts.

- Shani Coleman, Director of Community & Economic Development, Clark County Office of Community & Economic Development
- Christina Morris, Economic Development Director, Osceola County Government, Florida
- Neil Schneider, MPA, Director, Churchill Technology & Business Park Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission, Louisiana
- (Moderator) Stephen Coulston, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, Principal, Perkins&Will

Programming Track | What's Next? Reimagining and Reinventing in Real Time

Agave EF

Mature innovation districts and research parks face a new era of leadership, resource constraints, and the balancing act between legacy infrastructure and future-forward development. This candid panel will unpack how leaders are navigating the 'here and now' in an ever-changing workforce environment while developing 10-year growth strategies. We'll dive into what it takes to lead boldly and build value despite limitations.

- Randal Froebeli, Project Executive and Senior Advisor, MaRS Discovery District
- Greg King, CECD, Associate Vice President, Economic Development, Georgia Institute of Technology
- (Moderator) Laura O'Brien, President & CEO, Stiletto: Make A Point
- Carol Stewart, Vice President, Tech Parks Arizona, University of Arizona

3:30 – 3:45

NETWORKING RECEPTION

3:45 – 5:30

MAIN STAGE PRESENTATIONS

Agave EF

(3:45-4:25) Main Stage | Clean Energy Technology: How Communities of Innovation are Confronting the Headwinds in Search for New Clean Energy, Data and Water

Communities of innovation are at the forefront of tackling today's most pressing energy and water challenges. This panel brings together leaders advancing clean energy technologies, infrastructure innovation, and sustainable systems to discuss how they're navigating policy, financing, and operational headwinds while accelerating solutions for a cleaner, more resilient future. From scaling renewable technologies to integrating smart water systems, panelists will share insights on collaboration models, public-private partnerships, and emerging technologies shaping the global clean energy transition.

- Andy Wunder, Tech for Innovation and Energy (TECH-IE)
- Michael Swords, VP Government and International Relations, Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator
- Dan Wright, CEO, Co-Founder, Armada
- Thomas Burns, Executive Director, Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development
- (Moderator) Christopher Rooney, Senior Director, Research and Innovation, Cleantech Commons, Trent University

(4:25-4:45) Rapid Fire | 2026 Programming and Topics

- Vickie Palmer, CEO, AURP

(4:45-5:30) Main Stage | The Bloopers Reel

At Spring Training in 2024, AURP's audience learned that every compelling story has a low point from which the positive narrative emerges of a "hero" overcoming some obstacle or challenge, thereby demonstrating growth and being relatable. All research park stories likely share at least one similar arc, otherwise leading one would be easy! We believe that reflecting on the "low points" of our parks' journeys offer important insights that can be instructive to other members on their own pathway -- particularly newer members representing younger organizations who are the lifeblood and future of AURP.

- Jordan Peterson, Chief Operations Officer, Collaborative Real Estate

5:30 – 6:15

AURP 29TH ANNUAL AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION

Raise a glass and celebrate the visionaries shaping the future of innovation! Join AURP as we honor the outstanding leaders, organizations, and communities recognized with our 2025 Awards of Excellence. Receiving an AURP Award of Excellence is the highest distinction bestowed each year—recognizing trailblazing achievements, groundbreaking park developments, and exceptional community leadership that illuminate and advance our global innovation ecosystem. Let's toast to innovation, collaboration, and the luminaries driving progress forward!

- Emcee: Harry Brislin, AURP Treasurer; Executive Director, Real Estate Services & Asset Management, USA Technology and Research Park

6:15 – 6:30

CLOSING REMARKS

- Allison Madden, President, AURP; Chief Operating Officer & Corporate Secretary, University of South Florida Research Foundation

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Friday, November 14, 2025

9:00 – 12:00

OPTIONAL TOUR

- **(9:00-10:30)** KIRK KEKORIAN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
- **(10:00-11:00)** OPPORTUNITY VILLAGE

<https://aurp.org/education/international/>