

LaunchNET Turns 10 and Moves to DI Hub

LaunchNET celebrated its 10th anniversary on Oct. 20, 2022, and officially opened its offices in the Burton D. Morgan Foundation Entrepreneurship Suite, on the second floor of Kent State's Design Innovation Hub.

Kent State President Todd Diacon and LaunchNET Director Zach Mikrut, BBA '10, MEd '19, were among those who spoke. The event included a showcase of current and former student entrepreneurs, a gallery exhibit displaying LaunchNET's impact over the past decade and a reception for guests.

The suite of offices serves as the new home for the business startup advising program (formerly housed at the University Library), which provides advice, guidance and workspace for fledgling entrepreneurs as they develop and determine the viability of their ideas.

The new suite includes the Marty Erbaugh (I3) Lab, a workspace where student teams can ideate, innovate and incubate to build their businesses. This product accelerator program launched in 2022 Spring Semester and is led by LaunchNET and Design Innovation programs.

LaunchNET began as Blackstone LaunchPad and, after partnering with the Burton D. Morgan Foundation about six years ago, rebranded into LaunchNET. Kent State became part of NEOLaunchNET, which includes four other collegiate partners: Case Western Reserve University, Baldwin Wallace University, John Carroll University and Lorain County Community College.

In its first decade, Kent State's LaunchNET has served more than 2,200 clients, most of whom are Kent State students, and it boasts success stories across Northeast Ohio. For its next decade, Mikrut says, "We will continue to focus on the needs, gaps, questions and problems that our KSU entrepreneur community is facing and will support with responsive programming."

Learn more at www.kent.edu/launchnet.



Above: Guests celebrate the 10th anniversary of LaunchNET at the opening of its new Burton D. Morgan Foundation Entrepreneurship Suite.



Above: LaunchNET Director Zach Mikrut holds a team meeting at the program's new offices in the Design Innovation Hub on the Kent Campus.



Above: Angela Spalsbury, PhD, dean and chief administrative officer for the Kent State University Twinsburg Academic Center, kicked off the celebration of the center's 10th anniversary at its current location. She highlighted the center's vibrant presence in Twinsburg and noted, "We remain committed to preparing the workforce for the future."

Twinsburg Academic Center Celebrates 10 Years

The Twinsburg Academic Center celebrated the 10th anniversary at its current location by hosting a public open house on Sept. 13, 2022. Alumni, donors, faculty, staff, students, business leaders and community members were invited for a commemoration, tour and refreshments.

Speakers at the event highlighted Kent State University's commitment to making higher education accessible, affordable and relevant to the local community and its workforce, thanks to vibrant community engagement.

While the academic center building has been a landmark on Creekside Drive for a decade, the Geauga Campus has offered workforce development classes in Twinsburg since 1990. As demand for courses grew, a LEED-certified facility, then known as the Regional Academic Center, was built in 2012 as a satellite of the Geauga Regional Campus. The 44,000-square-foot, two-story building is located within a 30-minute drive for students in a four-county area.

In late 2019, its name was officially changed to the Twinsburg Academic Center to better reflect the community it serves. Through Kent State Geauga, the Twinsburg Academic Center now offers a range of courses, including business, accounting and computer science, as well as professional development and educational opportunities for employees. Educational offerings range from non-credit continuing education, workforce development, job training and executive development courses to two- and four-year degrees and even online master's degrees.

The center also helps address ongoing staffing shortages in healthcare, offering the Associate of Applied Science degree in Nursing (ADN). This program prepares students for the registered nursing profession in community hospitals, clinics and home healthcare settings.

Noting the partnerships the center has nurtured with the city of Twinsburg and its business and service leaders, Angela Spalsbury, PhD, the center's dean and chief administrative officer, says, "We keep our finger on the pulse of emerging workplace trends and offer the training to meet those needs."

Learn more at www.kent.edu/geauga/twinsburg-academic-center.

Scan QR code to view a video recording of the event.

