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Cooper Foundation grant to expand Innovation Studio



The Cooper Foundation of Lincoln has provided a grant of \$200,000 to support the Nebraska Innovation Studio, a 16,000-square-foot maker space in the Innovation Commons Building at Nebraska Innovation Campus.

"This charter investment in Nebraska Innovation Studio embodies one of the hallmarks of Cooper Foundation grant making," said Jack Campbell, chairman of the board of trustees of the Cooper Foundation. "We strive to provide early investment in ventures of significant promise, and the development of this maker space certainly fits the bill."

The one-of-a-kind place for all kinds of makers will let students, faculty members and the community design, prototype, create and learn. The studio will provide membership access to high-end equipment, classes on a variety of ways to make things and access to an innovative community. The studio will offer a wide range of equipment, including tools for 3D printing and prototyping, woodworking, metal working, welding, sewing, screen printing, electronics, robotics and more.

With the support from the Cooper Foundation, plans for the studio are getting off the ground, said Shane Farritor, professor of mechanical and materials engineering and faculty adviser to the UNL Maker Club.

"This is a significant gift for us, and really changes the trajectory of our plans for Innovation Studio," Farritor said. "This support will also have a huge impact on our students, who will benefit most from this makerspace."

Maker spaces are a growing trend, but Nebraska Innovation Studio will be unique. No other maker space features an in-house business accelerator and the close proximity of tenant companies and research labs offered by the [Nebraska Innovation Campus](http://innovate.unl.edu/) (<http://innovate.unl.edu/>) community.

"Innovation Studio will enable students and the community to unleash their creativity, which will go a long way in helping us develop the type of culture we want for all of NIC," said Dan Duncan, executive director of Nebraska Innovation Campus.

Once complete, everyone who enters the studio will be greeted by a gallery that celebrates the creative items being made within the space. It will be named the Cooper Foundation Makers Gallery in recognition of the foundation's support for the program and its tradition of helping the university.

"This initiative celebrates innovation and creativity in a tangible way, and in supporting it, we continue the strong tradition of partnership between the Cooper Foundation and the University of Nebraska," Campbell said.

With the building space provided by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the Nebraska Innovation Studio has partnered with the University of Nebraska Foundation to raise \$4.2 million in private donations needed to build the studio and equip it. The studio will be completed in phases as funds are available, and the grant from Cooper Foundation enables it to move forward with phase one of construction.

To learn about ways to support the Nebraska Innovation Studio, contact James Keim at the University of Nebraska Foundation at 402-458-1140 or james.keim@nufoundation.org (<mailto:james.keim@nufoundation.org>).

For more information about Nebraska Innovation Studio, contact coordinator Liana Owad at 402-472-5510 or lowad2@unl.edu (<mailto:lowad2@unl.edu>).

Source

UNL Today (<http://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/unltoday/article/cooper-foundation-grant-to-expand-innovation-studio/>)

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