



January 23, 2020

Dear Alumni,

I am excited to announce the launch of the Center for Innovation: Alumni Incubator Initiative. The Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) will be offering incubator space and access to educational programming for FIT alumni who are engaged in entrepreneurial pursuits that fall within the creative industries and demonstrate an innovation focus. For these purposes, innovation is being defined in the following manner:

- The development of a pioneering business model.
- An altered approach to commercialize a concept that reflects the next generation of business pursuits.
- An Entity with an underlying social impact agenda that applies concepts of innovation.
- Technology that is impacting the creative industries.
- A collaborative entity that engages industry to create unconventional solutions to business challenges.

The incubator will be located in the newly established Center for Innovation at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. For those who are unfamiliar with this New York institution, the Brooklyn Navy Yard is a former shipbuilding complex that was converted into an industrial zone where more than 400 businesses now operate. One of these businesses, Lafayette 148, is giving us some of its space for the FIT Center for Innovation. Deidre Quinn, the co-founder and CEO of Lafayette 148, is an FIT board member, and she has generously given the space and absorbed all associated costs, to enable us to realize our innovation goal of establishing faculty research, industry collaboration, and entrepreneurial incubator destination.

The new Center for Innovation at the Brooklyn Navy Yard is approximately 2,000 square feet. A key focus of the space is to support an entrepreneurial ecosystem rooted in innovation. FIT has also formed a strategic alliance with PoliHub, the Startup District and Incubator of the Politecnico di Milano—a new, academic-based venture, incubator, and accelerator. PoliHub is the 3rd largest university accelerator in Europe with the focus of seeking collaboration with U.S. entities and alumni who partake in the incubator space could experience collaboration opportunities on a global scale to facilitate the development of innovative ideas.

Additionally, the Center for Innovation will also serve as a hub for faculty research, and an extension to the FIT/Infor Design and Technology Lab, an innovation lab where design, technology, and industry expertise fuel the innate curiosity and desire of FIT students and faculty. As with the PoliHub relationship, it is the hope that alumni working in the incubator space will have an opportunity to network and collaborate with the faculty and industry-led projects that will occur at the Center.

Individuals working in the incubator will be expected to bring their own laptop computers and phones. Businesses housed within the incubator will have access to space during the building's normal operating hours – between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Because of space constraints, the incubator is unable to accommodate studio, chemical, or laboratory-like requirements.

In partnership with Alumni Relations, this alumni incubator is a benefit extended to graduates from one of FIT's credit-bearing programs.

The Center for Innovation Alumni Incubator Initiative includes:

- Access to a workspace from the hours of 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday.
- Wi-Fi connection
- Ability to participate in FIT programs where the topic matter is appropriate, and there is availability.

In exchange for the use of space, the alumni will agree to the following:

- At the time of application, the applicant must disclose any existing partnering, collaborating, or funding relationships of the project.
- Agree to present to the members of the FIT community an overview of the concept and progress six-months into the program and during the final month. The purpose of this request is not to disclose proprietary information, but rather to support the College's commitment to sharing innovation.

Upon being granted space, the alumni entrepreneur will have access to the coworking space for a period of approximately 12 months that coincides with the College's academic calendar. The application details can be found within the attached document.

The following summarizes additional application considerations:

- The venture being pursued must be led by an individual graduate from an FIT credit-bearing program. At this time, the space is unable to accommodate multi-person teams.
- While the College values all entrepreneurial efforts to be housed within the incubator, the venture being developed must demonstrate innovation as defined at the beginning of this document.
- At a minimum, businesses housed within the incubator are expected to spend 16 hours per week within the course of normal business hours (8 AM to 6PM) at the Center for Innovation.
- Since the Center for Innovation will be an open environment for sharing information, space recipients will be expected to maintain their work areas in such a way as to allow visitors to be within the space during the normal hours of operation (8 AM to 6 PM).

Applications and instructions are attached but are also available on the FIT Innovation web page <https://www.fitnyc.edu/about/initiatives/innovation/incubator-initiative.php>. Completed applications are due to the Center for Innovation: Alumni Incubator Initiative Review Committee through Cory Rohr at [cory\\_rohr@fitnyc.edu](mailto:cory_rohr@fitnyc.edu) no later than Monday, February 24<sup>th</sup>. As part of the application process, selected candidates will be invited for an interview.

If upon review of this document you have questions, please contact Jacqueline M. Jenkins, Acting Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Innovation, at [jacqueline\\_jenkins@fitnyc.edu](mailto:jacqueline_jenkins@fitnyc.edu). We look forward to considering your application for participation in this alumni engagement initiative centered on innovation and entrepreneurship.

Sincerely,

Amy Garawitz  
Director of Alumni Engagement



Center for Innovation:  
Alumni Incubator Initiative  
Application Form and Instructions

Clear Page

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name While at FIT: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_ Program: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Period:  1/20 to 1/21  1/21 to 1/22

Application:

- Application must be accompanied by a 500-word substantive company overview that includes:
  - an explanation of the business concept;
  - a description of the target market;
  - an explanation of what makes this concept innovative;
  - a work plan on how the one-year space will support the stated venture milestones;
  - a description as to the potential benefits of the space to the short- and long-term goals of the venture.
  - although the College is unable to extend support beyond the physical location, the Application must also include a projected budget for the purposes of understanding the venture’s plans and expectations;
  - at the time of application, the applicant must disclose any existing partnering, collaborating, or funding relationships connected in any way with the proposed project; and
  - As part of the application process, selected candidates will be invited for an interview.

Process:

Completed applications must be submitted to Cory Rohr at [cory\\_rohr@fitnyc.edu](mailto:cory_rohr@fitnyc.edu) no later than Monday, February 24<sup>th</sup>.

*Please attach Project Description to this Application Form (Required)*

**I have reviewed and understand the expectations of this opportunity. Further, I understand that sharing business insight is an integral part of this program, and that should my application be approved, I give permission for my Project Description to be made available online to the FIT Community.**

Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_