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For Immediate Release

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Network That Turns Students Inventors into Entrepreneurs
Convenes in Washington, D.C. This Week

VentureWell's 19th annual meeting, Open 2015, focuses on launching new ventures from an emerging generation of young inventors driven to improve life for people and the planet.

Washington, D.C.—March 19 - 21, 2015—[VentureWell](#), a higher education network that cultivates promising ideas and revolutionary inventions, will host its 19th annual meeting in Washington D.C. at the Marriott Marquis, 901 Massachusetts Avenue NW. [Open 2015](#) brings together faculty and students from colleges and universities across the country, and global innovation partners, who are cultivating the next generation of technology entrepreneurs. (See the full schedule of events at venturewell.org/open.)

Foundation, government, and global innovation leaders, along with higher education entrepreneurship faculty and students, U.S. collegiate inventors and innovators, journalists, investors—and VentureWell alumni who started tech companies with Venturewell's support while pursuing their degrees—will exchange educational models and best practices to catalyze inventive student ideas into startups that can change the world.

Featured speakers and events will include:

- *Thursday, March 19, 4:00pm to 5:30pm*: [Ann Mei Chang](#) will keynote the Open 2015 session, [Global Connect](#). Ms. Chang, a former Google executive and innovation leader for Mercy Corps and the US State Department, is the Executive Director of [USAID's Global Development Lab](#) where she is marshaling the discovery and scaling-up of breakthrough innovations to end extreme poverty by 2030.
- *Friday, March 20, 12:15pm to 2:15pm*: [Aneesh Chopra](#), former (and first) U.S. Chief Technology Officer and author of *Innovative State: How New Technologies Can Transform Government* (May 2014) will keynote the [Sustainable Practice Impact Award](#) luncheon. The award recipient will be announced at the luncheon.
- *Saturday, March 21, 12:15pm to 2:00pm*: NPR science correspondent [Joe Palca](#) will again moderate the VentureWell Alumni Panel. The panel includes: [Manmeet Singh](#), Stem Cell Partners LLC; Luke Pinkerton, President and Chief Technology Officer, [Helix Steel](#); [Sam White](#), co-founder [Promethean Power](#); and [Tricia Compas-Markman](#), founder [DayOne Response, Inc.](#)
- *Saturday, March 21, 6:30pm to 9:00pm*: [Open Minds](#) is a private showcase where student teams from some of the nation's most prestigious colleges and universities will exhibit biomedical, cleantech and global health innovations. *NOTE: This event only will be at the [Smithsonian's National Museum of American History](#).*

“Open 2015 is one of the most hopeful ‘places’ on earth,” said Phil Weilerstein, president of VentureWell. “Our network prepares colleges and universities to capture the imagination of a new generation of students with the curiosity and drive to pursue new ideas and turn them into technology ventures that solve 21st century problems.”

Student inventors are at the heart of VentureWell. Its programs help cultivate their skills and creativity and bring their ideas to market. Often the first to validate, support and guide an idea with potential, VentureWell enables student entrepreneurs to take the important first step toward launching a business. The organization’s support has given rise to companies such as [Ecovative Design](#) and [Sanergy](#)—recognized as some of the most innovative and environmentally friendly companies in the world.

Faculty are key to the success of the student inventors VentureWell supports. VentureWell has spent the last twenty years revolutionizing higher education by building a community of faculty dedicated to instilling invention and entrepreneurship across campus. The organization funds faculty to create new courses and programs in which students develop inventive ideas and gain the entrepreneurial skills they need to bring inventions to market. With VentureWell’s support, almost 600 new courses and programs have been established across 160 campuses nationwide to transform education, especially in science, engineering and business.

VentureWell makes strategic financial investments that have exponential impact by providing over \$7.5 million in grants to over 500 student teams – and with that they’ve raised more than \$620 million to launch new businesses. More than half of these startup ventures are still in business today, operating in over 50 countries and reaching millions of people with ground-breaking innovations.

VentureWell is supported by leading institutions including [The Lemelson Foundation](#), [National Science Foundation \(NSF\)](#), [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#), [Intel](#) and [USAID](#) that recognize VentureWell’s a powerful model for launching technology entrepreneurs.

Open 2015 is co-sponsored by [The Lemelson Foundation](#), VentureWell’s founding partner, and by the [Kern Entrepreneurial Engineering Network \(KEEN\)](#), and [Herman Miller](#), and by [Epicenter](#), a partnership between VentureWell and Stanford University, funded by the NSF.

About VentureWell

VentureWell was founded in 1995 as the National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance (NCIIA) and rebranded in 2014 to underscore its impact as an education network that cultivates revolutionary ideas and promising inventions. A not-for-profit organization reaching more than 200 universities, VentureWell is the leader in funding, training, coaching and early investment that brings student innovations to market. Inventions created by VentureWell grantees are reaching millions of people in more than 50 countries and helping to solve some of our greatest 21st century challenges. Visit www.venturewell.org to learn how we inspire students, faculty and investors to transform game-changing ideas into solutions for people and the planet.

About The Lemelson Foundation

The Lemelson Foundation uses the power of invention to improve lives, by inspiring and enabling the next generation of inventors and invention based enterprises to promote economic growth in the U.S.

and social and economic progress for the poor in developing countries. Established by prolific U.S. inventor Jerome Lemelson and his wife Dorothy in 1992, to date the Foundation has provided or committed more than \$175 million in grants and program-related investments in support of its mission. For more information, visit www.lemelson.org.

About Epicenter

The National Center for Engineering Pathways to Innovation (Epicenter) is funded by the National Science Foundation and directed by Stanford University and VentureWell (formerly NCIIA). Epicenter's mission is to empower U.S. undergraduate engineering students to bring their ideas to life for the benefit of our economy and society. To do this, Epicenter helps students combine their technical skills, their ability to develop innovative technologies that solve important problems, and an entrepreneurial mindset and skillset. Epicenter's three core initiatives are the University Innovation Fellows program for undergraduate engineering students and their peers; the Pathways to Innovation Program for institutional teams of faculty and university leaders; and a research program that informs activities and contributes to national knowledge on entrepreneurship and engineering education. Learn more and get involved at epicenter.stanford.edu.

About Kern Entrepreneurial Engineering Network (KEEN)

KEEN's mission is to graduate engineers with an entrepreneurial mindset so they can create personal, economic, and societal value through a lifetime of meaningful work. KEEN is a program of the Kern Family Foundation. Learn more at www.keennetwork.org.

About Herman Miller

In much the same way that students tackle complex equations in the classroom, Herman Miller brings an analytical approach to learning space design. The equation *People + Pedagogy + Place = Possibilities* embodies this approach. Herman Miller is committed to partnering with college and university leaders to address change on campus. With its problem-solving, research-driven approach, the company is in tune with evolving trends, issues and the leaders charged with addressing them. Learn more at www.hermanmiller.com.

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