

Growing Entrepreneur Community Celebrates Two New Coworking Spaces

Two newly renovated buildings — eHub Collegetown and Rev: Ithaca Startup Works — are opening their doors this week to students and community members, offering a plethora of new resources for local entrepreneurs.

The spaces will allow students and members of the larger Ithaca entrepreneurial community to germinate ideas, receive mentorship, produce their services and products and grow their businesses within Tompkins County.

“The entrepreneurial mindset has always been a core value in Ithaca. In recent years, however, our ecosystem has grown stronger, faster,” said Tom Schryver '93, MBA '02, executive director of Cornell's Center for Regional Economic Advancement. “With the opening of eHub and the re-opening of Rev: Ithaca Startup Works, local entrepreneurs now have access to a range of state-of-the-art facilities designed to meet the spectrum of needs in our community. We believe this is really a case of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts — each part of this system lifts the others along with it.”

Rev, a business incubator and coworkspace on the Ithaca Commons, will mark its two-year anniversary Thursday with a networking event to celebrate the opening of its third floor, offering more space for workshops, coworking and product prototyping.

A partnership among Cornell, Ithaca College and Tompkins Cortland Community College, Rev provides resources for all stages of a startup. For example, the Rev Hardware Accelerator program helps people go from idea to prototype, regardless of whether or not they've built a physical product before and Rev's Passenger to Pilot program supports a cohort of women entrepreneurs through a year-long business growth process.

Just up the hill and focused on students, Collegetown's eHub location, at 409 College Ave., officially opens Saturday. eHub is a partnership between Entrepreneurship at Cornell, Student Agencies Foundation and Cornell's College of Business, College of

Engineering, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and School of Industrial and Labor Relations. eHub construction was funded primarily from alumni donations.

All summer, students who manage Big Red Shipping and Storage, Hired Hands Moving Company and the other four companies that make up Student Agencies, have been “testing” the new space.



Madeline Lieber '16, Student Agencies president, said the giant table in the center of the space, which has always functioned as a gathering and brainstorming spot for Student Agencies business managers, is starting to serve the same purpose for other student businesses who are trickling in.

“People will bring up issues they’re having in a casual way and other students will actively try to find solutions for them,” she said. “We have this collaborative culture and an open atmosphere is so important for that.”

As of Saturday, any Cornell student, faculty or staff member can become a member of eHub and use the space 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

“I think eHub will be the center of gravity for entrepreneurship on the Ithaca campus,” said Michael Karangelen '90, chairman and president of Student Agencies Foundation. “We designed the space so it would work for everyone, from the freshman who wants to meet other people interested in entrepreneurship to the student with a business with revenue and employees who needs a place for them to work.”

The eHub space in Collegetown will house two existing organizations — eLab (a business accelerator program offering intensive mentorship to student companies and their management teams) and Student Agencies Inc. (SAI) (founded in 1894, SAI is the nation’s oldest student-run business).

“The space does feel welcoming, and I believe that it stems from the large space and amount of niches to work,” said Luke Bushner '18, an operations research major in the College of Engineering and general manager for Big Red Shipping and Storage. “There

are more than enough places to work either individually in peace or collaborating with a group.”

The space will ultimately host other organizations that support Cornell entrepreneurship and experiential business learning and offer programs including mentors-in-residence, workshops, seminars and hack-a-thons and start-up weekend type events.

“The addition of non-SAI students will definitely add to the buzz — it will do a great job of giving us exposure to the student body as a whole, as well as enable interesting collaborative opportunities between our businesses and student start-ups,” said Griffin Py ’18, chief financial officer for Student Agencies.

The Collegetown eHub space joins the newly opened eHub space on the first floor of Kennedy Hall, which houses offices for Entrepreneurship at Cornell and Blackstone LaunchPad and also offers work areas, as well as meeting and conference spaces for students. Zach Shulman, Director of Entrepreneurship at Cornell, said “Our two eHub spaces are a huge step forward as they show the University’s dedication to fostering the entrepreneurial spirit in our students, faculty and staff. We are delighted that the eHub project is now complete and fully open for business!”

The connection between eHub and Rev is a strong one. Many business ideas start on campus, then graduate into the Rev community and find support to take a business plan to the next level. At both locations, entrepreneurial students and others who are interested in entrepreneurship can feed off of each other, sharing best practices in both business management and entrepreneurial creativity and growth.