The germination of an idea into a marketable product or service requires talent and dedication, but the right support will accelerate and amplify the impact of innovators and entrepreneurs.

In this newsletter, we highlight how talent at Johns Hopkins and around Baltimore have utilized Johns Hopkins Technology Ventures (JHTV) programming to pursue exciting careers, advance innovation and improve their community.

**First Ph.D. Candidates Selected for Johns Hopkins-MedImmune Scholars Program**

Last year, Johns Hopkins University and MedImmune announced their collaboration on a unique new initiative, the Johns Hopkins-MedImmune Scholars Program. The program has just selected its first Ph.D. candidates for a curriculum that will prepare them for careers in the biopharma industry.

“Having the combined resources of MedImmune and Johns Hopkins, a large network of people who can help guide me as well as access to more equipment will allow me to have a more wholesome Ph.D.,” says Majewska, who is studying chemical engineering at the Whiting School of Engineering.

Over the next few years, Majewska will focus her research on developing a better Chinese hamster ovary cell production platform. Chinese hamster ovary cells, often referred by the shorthand CHO cells, are used by research and commercial institutions for the production of therapeutic proteins. Because Majewska will work on a proprietary cell line, she anticipates that she will spend most of her time at MedImmune’s Gaithersburg, Maryland campus but will have weekly meetings with her Johns Hopkins advisor, Michael Betenbaugh.

“This is an opportunity for someone like me to delve into a problem that they’ve been thinking about but haven’t had the time or resources to do,” says Majewska, who aims to go into the biopharma industry once she completes the program and is considering doing so with a business focus.

Lam, a biomedical engineering Ph.D. student in the Institute for Computational Medicine, will focus on building computational models to better understand how drugs work in the body. Lam is currently working with her Johns Hopkins advisor, Feilim Mac Gabhann, and MedImmune to determine where their scientific interests overlap in order...
MoTrack Therapy Wins 2017 Summer Award for Undergraduate Entrepreneurs

MoTrack Therapy aspires to bring at-home rehabilitation into the 21st century.

Three major issues limit the effectiveness of at-home hand therapy: adherence to a tedious rehab regimen, incorrectly performing exercises and a lack of quantifiable data for therapists to evaluate.

MoTrack aspires to develop a computer program that modernizes the physical therapy space and will ultimately increase patient adherence to rehab programs, expedite patient recovery with live corrective feedback and quantifiably show therapists their patients’ progress. The technology the team is developing currently focuses solely on rehabilitation from hand injuries, including wrist fractures and carpel tunnel, but it has the potential to be used for other parts of the body as well.

“Physical therapy is a field that has seen many new devices over the years but that has been untouched by the newest advances in computer science like computer vision and machine learning,” Yerrabelli says. “These advances will dominate the future in almost every field of health imaginable, and we want MoTrack Therapy to be at the forefront of their revolution on physical therapy.”

One of MoTrack’s goals for this summer is to move its clinical testing beyond Johns Hopkins and into other health care providers around the country. Additionally, they will look to their mentors for guidance on how to solidify their business model and how to identify new ways to provide value to employers, insurance companies and other intermediaries associated with patient care.

“With the money we received from the Summer Award, we can finally fund our growth to these other clinics, helping us with the logistical, transportation and time costs,” Yerrabelli says.

Interest in the Summer Award nearly tripled as JHTV received 35 applications in 2017 compared to 13 last year. From those nearly three dozen student ventures, three members of JHTV’s FastForward team ranked 10 finalists based on their in-person pitches. The anonymous donors chose the winner based on how much value they felt the startup would receive from the award.

“There was an extremely strong pool of applicants and selecting the winner was not easy,” says Kasim Ahmad, JHTV’s venture coordinator for student projects. “What set MoTrack apart was their level of commitment, the diversity of skill sets on their team and their plan for executing pilots.”

Last year, Fusiform, a startup led by Param Shah and Alex Matthews that set out to revolutionize the orthotics industry, won the inaugural Summer Award. Shah and Matthews used the funding and mentorship to develop more designs of its revolutionary orthotic, move its enterprise software into two clinics and eventually pivot their business to make it commercially viable in markets outside of orthotics. In January, Forbes named the pair to its 30 Under 30 list.

“Receiving the mentorship of world-class entrepreneurs and advisors at an early stage brought significant confidence to us as founders and to our team,” Shah says. “Additionally, funding from the Summer Award gave us the ability to tangibly grow our company.”

The team at MoTrack sees the Summer Award as only one of the latest ways that Johns Hopkins is supporting student entrepreneurship. Yerrabelli pointed specifically to a new space on the Homewood campus designated specifically for student entrepreneurs and the Ralph S. O’Connor Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Fund, which helped MoTrack grow this past year.

“Johns Hopkins has a lot of talent—especially in the life sciences and health arena—and programs like the Summer Award help fill the gap between excellent research in the lab and products that actually make it to market,” Yerrabelli says. “It gives undergraduates the opportunity to think big and stay committed to their own ideas full-time over the summer.”

MoTrack Therapy Wins 2017 Summer Award for Undergraduate Entrepreneurs

MoTrack Therapy aspires to bring at-home rehabilitation into the 21st century.
Hopkins Students Get 3-Day Crash Course in Building a Business

During his first two years at The Johns Hopkins University, Simon Barnett noticed an abundance of raw entrepreneurial talent and innovative ideas in his undergraduate peers. However, too few turned this potential into real businesses.

“Johns Hopkins has a strong entrepreneurship program, but I felt like something was missing,” says Barnett, who co-founded Nebulab Technologies, a cloud-based data management software company, in 2013. “We lacked programming that demystified entrepreneurship.”

Barnett recalled how a three-day workshop he attended in high school spurred his entrepreneurial pursuits, so he decided to bring that same type of program to his peers. Barnett raised nearly $10,000, did marketing and collaborated with Johns Hopkins Technology Ventures’ Kasim Ahmad to bring 3 Day Startup to campus.

This experiential education program has taught students in 40 different countries the basics of entrepreneurship, idea development and other essential skills for building a sustainable business. The 100 applications that Barnett received from students representing an array of class years and Hopkins schools serve as evidence that the program filled an unmet need.

From April 21 through April 23, the three dozen students accepted to participate in Johns Hopkins’ 3 Day Startup pitched ideas, formed teams and went to work growing a business using the lean startup approach.

“Ideas are a dime a dozen or even a dime for a thousand,” says Jeff Levine, a program coordinator at 3 Day Startup. “While we appreciate ideas, we’re all about action.”

“Our mission is to provide the hands-on aspect of entrepreneurship training. We push them into an uncomfortable zone where they have to take action.”

This uncomfortable zone includes performing one-on-one interviews with potential customers to determine market need and interest for the product or service the teams plan to develop. Additionally, a group of mentors brought in throughout the weekend taught the students how to make prototypes and convey ideas to customers. By Sunday afternoon, the teams pitched judges, entrepreneurs and investors.

“I got really good feedback from our judges about how much progress the students made over the weekend,” Barnett says. “It was good to see how flexible and resilient the groups ended up being.”

Though the event is focused more on education rather than churning out businesses, at least one team that participated in 3 Day Startup will pursue launching a startup based on an idea developed at the event. Senior James Shamul and freshman Jamie Chen, both of the Whiting School of Engineering, teamed with Louis DeRidder, a visiting student at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, to work to bring BarberFleet to Baltimore in the near future.

Once launched, the mobile barbershop staffed with licensed cosmetologists from a local academy will keep Johns Hopkins students from having to make the inconvenient trek to an off-campus barber shop. Moreover, the startup will have a social component where it provides haircuts to Baltimore’s homeless population as well as access to other resources, including employment opportunities.

“I really appreciate all that Hopkins in general is trying to do for young entrepreneurs,” Shamul says. “There are a lot of ideas that students have, but if there’s no way to do it, the ideas just go away.”

The success and opportunity of this year’s event has inspired Barnett to turn 3 Day Startup into an annual installment. With planning for next year’s event already underway, Barnett says he wants to align 3 Day Startup with all of the other resources Johns Hopkins provides to create a linear path that gives student entrepreneurs the resources they need when they need it.

Barnett’s plan would have 3 Day Startup serve as one of the first student entrepreneurship events each academic year so entrepreneurs can learn the basics and formalize their raw ideas. From there, students would have time to work with academic advisors and FastForward’s student venture coordinator to refine strategy.

This would better prepare teams for the JHU Business Plan competition, and student funding programs such as the Ralph O’Connor or Summer Student Entrepreneurship Grant. Hopkins also hopes to increase both the quality and the quantity of student teams.

“What’s important to me is figuring out how we can demystify the entrepreneurial process by bringing together existing programming and talented students,” Barnett says. “It’s a massive undertaking, but I’m optimistic about the future.”

AsclepiX’s Wendy Perrow and Glyscend Among 2017 ICE Winners

TEDCO has announced its 2017 ICE award recipients, and two of the six winners have connections to Johns Hopkins. On May 25, AsclepiX CEO Wendy Perrow was named entrepreneur of the year, and Glyscend received an award for innovation.

Perrow began leading the FastForward startup, a therapeutics company based on technology developed by Johns Hopkins Drs. Jordan Green and Aleksander Popel, in the summer of 2016 and currently manages the company’s business, clinical, financial, licensing and corporate development efforts. Prior to AsclepiX, Perrow served as CEO of Alba Therapeutics.

Glyscend’s ICE award marks the second time the company’s non-invasive treatment for type 2 diabetes has received recognition for innovation in the past six months. Glyscend also won Johnson & Johnson Innovation’s World Without Disease Quickfire Challenge, a national competition that awarded them $500,000.

TEDCO created the ICE Awards to honor innovation, corporate excellence and entrepreneurship at its coolest portfolio companies and to recognize the best and brightest entrepreneurs developing cutting-edge technologies and enriching Maryland.

This is the second straight strong showing by Johns Hopkins-backed startups. Sisu Global Health, a startup developing medical devices for emerging markets, won in the innovation category last year. Additionally, Immunomic Therapeutics, a biotechnology company developing an immunomodulation platform that has the platform to transform the allergy and cancer immunotherapy markets, won for corporate excellence.
**StartUp News:**

- **Sonavex**, a FastForward startup dedicated to improving surgical patient outcomes with point-of-care imaging technologies, announced it received $3 million in recent financing. The funds will be used to advance its product toward FDA approval and commercialization. *The Baltimore Sun, Baltimore Business Journal, Technical.ly Baltimore*

- **Vasoptic Medical**, the developer of a portable retinal imager, raised $1.5 million in a new round of equity financing. The FastForward startup is currently developing a device that will prevent vision loss in diabetes patients through the monitoring of diabetic retinopathy. *MassDevice*

- **Sisu Global Health** won GE’s First Mile Innovation Challenge, a global competition that sought startups developing solutions that addressed health issues in low- and middle-income countries. The win nets the Baltimore-based company $250,000 and access to mentorship and relationships. Sisu Global Health CEO Carolyn Yarina says the company will use the award to help move its device that replaces the need for donor blood during surgery toward commercialization. *Technical.ly Baltimore*

- **Brittany Young** received one of eight microgrants from SmartLogic as part of its Baltimore Women in Tech program. Young, the founder of B-360, a venture that participated in the 2016-2017 Social Innovation Lab cohort, is teaching STEM to Baltimore youth through dirt bikes. *Technical.ly Baltimore*

- Two of the 21 companies selected as finalists for the 2017 Maryland Incubator Company of the Year have ties to Johns Hopkins. **Emocha Mobile Health** is a tenant of FastForward 1812, where it is developing mobile health tools for providers and payers to improve public health outcomes and reduce the high cost of medication nonadherence. **Proscia**, a venture founded by Johns Hopkins University students currently located at the Spark Baltimore co-working space, is developing a cloud-based pathology platform that will allow doctors to store, share and analyze digital pathology for better diagnoses. Click here to see the rest of the nominees. *Technical.ly Baltimore*

- **PathoVax** beat out 70 companies and took home the award for best pitch at the 2017 NYBIO Pitchfest. The FastForward startup is developing a universal Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine that will prevent the development of related diseases.

- To accommodate its growth and expansion, **Rapafusyn Pharmaceuticals** will move into the Rangos building on the Johns Hopkins medical campus this fall. The nearly 8,000 square feet of lab space that the FastForward startup is leasing will be completed in fall 2017. Rapafusyn’s decision to lease space in Baltimore aligns with Johns Hopkins Technology Ventures’ mission to support and grow startups in the City. Press release, The Daily Record

**Features:**

- Not only are blood clots a common side effect of surgery, they are hard to detect and can cause serious problems like organ failure. David Narrow and Devin O’Brien-Coon, whom met as master’s students in the Whiting School of Engineering, designed a novel fix that led to them developing a startup called Sonavex. Narrow, now the CEO of Sonavex, explains how he grew the idea into a business, his life as an entrepreneur and more. *The Hub*

- Five years after founding Headbands of Hope while at The Johns Hopkins University, Jess Ekstrom detailed the advice she would give herself if she could go back in time. The five pieces of wisdom divulged to Entrepreneur include identifying available resources, cultivating an innovative team and drawing from failures.

- Vending machines are no longer just for chips and drinks. CNN profiled eight vending machines tackling health issues. Included in the list was Lacstation, a vending machine that allows nursing mothers to purchase nursing pump accessories and supplies. One of the vending machines is available to Johns Hopkins Hospital employees.

- A profile by Inc. called a product developed by Ready Robotics the “Swiss Army Knife of robots.” The company’s TaskMate robot, which was built off of Johns Hopkins technology, has a shorter programming time and is more mobile than similar robots. These features make TaskMate ideal for short production runs, the lifeblood of many small manufacturers.

- Is the diagnostic tricorder used in Star Trek a far-off fantasy? According to Dr. Gene Fridman, not really. Fridman, a member of the startup Multisensor Diagnostics, is the inventor of MouthLab, a device that uses a small mouthpiece and thumb sensor to track human vital signs. He says tricorder technology will create a revolution in personal health care in the next decade or two. *NBC News*

- FitMango, a member of the Social Innovation Lab’s 2014-2015 cohort, is testing a new product that designs workouts for personal trainers. The product, scheduled to launch this summer, is being tested privately by personal trainers to residents of the Union Wharf and Spinnaker Bay apartment buildings in Fells Point and Harbor East, respectively. In early May, FitMango won $25,000 at Salisbury University’s Shore Hatchery Competition for mid-Atlantic startups. *Technical.ly Baltimore*

- Shantell Roberts, the founder of the Portable Alternative Crib, received $25,000 from the Social Innovation Lab to advance her venture that aims to reduce sleep-related infant deaths. In 2011, Roberts’ 1-year-old daughter died suddenly, and she now works to ensure parents have the proper education and resources to keep their babies safe. *Baltimore Times*

**Baltimore News:**

- On April 19, the Maryland Life Sciences Advisory Board announced a strategy for growing the state’s biohealth industry into a top 3 biohealth innovation hub in the United States by 2023. The recommendations included increasing connectivity among the state’s biohealth resources, increasing the availability of and access to capital for biohealth businesses, and growing the state’s biohealth talent pool. *BioHealth Acceleration Initiative*

- The Maryland Technology Development Corp. (TEDCO) is launching the Gap Investment Fund program. The $1 million fund is designed to help technology firms cover the gap between seed funding and venture capital investments. *Baltimore Business Journal*

- The accelerator Conscious Venture Lab is relocating from Howard County to West Baltimore’s Innovation Village. Coinciding with its move, the accelerator is looking for purpose-driven startups in which to invest. *Baltimore Business Journal*

- On May 18, Gov. Larry Hogan announced the launch of Excel Maryland, a program designed to keep Maryland life science and cybersecurity companies in the state as they grow. As part of the program, the Maryland Department of Commerce is working closely with The Johns Hopkins University, the University System of Maryland and the Maryland Economic Development Corp. *Baltimore Business Journal*
10 Social Ventures Present Visions for a Better World,
The PAC Wins $25,000

Ten social ventures. One $25,000 award. Thousands of people benefiting from emerging social ventures.

Those numbers only begin to summarize Tuesday evening’s Impact+Innovation Forum, the Social Innovation Lab’s (SIL) culminating event for its 2016-2017 cohort of nonprofit and mission-driven businesses.

“The ventures in this cohort started out strong, having made it through a competitive selection process with 53 applicants,” says SIL Director Darius Graham. “Throughout the six-month program, these teams worked hard, learned a great deal and, in some cases, pivoted their approach.

“The forum was our way of publicly sharing their vision for a better Baltimore and world with our larger community of supporters.”

Though each of the SIL ventures has made strides in providing a measurable impact to communities in Baltimore and beyond, The Portable Alternative Crib (PAC) received a $25,000 award to accelerate its mission of lowering the occurrence of sudden infant death syndrome across Maryland. The organization’s founder, Shantell Roberts, provides families with young children information and resources, including a certified sleeping space, that keep babies safe.

“Parenthood is one of those weird spaces for which you could never truly be prepared,” Roberts said during her presentation, noting that new parents often receive well-intentioned advice. “But what if the information they gave you was unsafe? Or it didn’t work? Or led you to create an unsafe environment for your baby?”

In 2011, Roberts’ 1-year-old daughter was one of the more than 100 infant deaths that occur in Baltimore each year. Because of this tragedy, Roberts endeavored to ensure no other family had to endure the loss of a child.

Roberts, a safe sleep coordinator for Baltimore who joined SIL as a community member with no affiliation to Johns Hopkins, says the city has had six unsafe sleeping deaths of babies in the first quarter of 2017 alone. The PAC’s solution—a rectangular box only a couple of feet long—provides a certified, comfortable and safe sleeping space for babies.

For the immediate future, Roberts has set The PAC on a 100 box initiative. By selling 100 of the $150 boxes, which include maternal self-care and infant care items, she will have funding to send 100 additional boxes to organizations in Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

The $25,000 award she received from the Social Innovation Lab will go a long way in helping her achieve that goal. The PAC received the reward based on peer evaluations within SIL’s 2016-2017 cohort. Four times from January through April, each venture rated their peers on a four-point scale across seven categories: Compelling spokesperson – A palpable passion, enthusiasm or commitment to their venture Vision for impact – A reasonably ambitious vision for making an impact in a substantial way Vision for venture – A reasonably ambitious vision for their venture’s future size, scale, impact and profile Resilience – Acknowledgement of challenges and dedication to overcome them Empathy – An extensive understanding of and empathy for the beneficiary of the venture Progress – Demonstrated growth or development of the venture during the program Generosity – Offering time, contacts or ideas to help others in the cohort

“We were inspired to create this peer review process for the award based on the work that Village Capital has done via their Peer Selected Investment Model,” Graham says. “Having such a process where the cohort provides ongoing feedback to each other and where that feedback determines the winner of the award helps us identify the team that best exemplifies what we look for in entrepreneurs.”

Though PAC received top honors at the event, the nine other nonprofits and mission-driven businesses have benefited communities in Baltimore and around the world.

Innovation is essential to our culture at Johns Hopkins. Across our campuses, faculty members and students are eager to develop their ideas and discoveries and put them to use in benefit to society – here in Baltimore and around the world.

We welcome gifts of any size. We would be happy to discuss our range of giving opportunities and other giving options.

For more info, please visit http://ventures.jhu.edu/support-our-mission/
Meet the Entrepreneur: Jenna Shaw Aiding Teachers Through Wellness Programming

At 35 percent, Baltimore’s teacher turnover rate doubles the national average, and Jenna Shaw wasn’t immune to this. A Baltimore educator with nearly a decade of experience, Shaw found it became harder and harder to have the energy she needed to be a really good teacher. Instead of accepting or even perpetuating this reality, the Baltimore resident founded The Whole Teacher.

A member of the Social Innovation Lab’s 2016-2017 cohort, The Whole Teacher launched its pilot program in fall 2016, and is currently building its School Health Platform that connects teacher health data with programming to streamline health solutions within schools.

Shaw answers questions about The Whole Teacher, her goals and the benefits of Baltimore.

In 5 words, what does your company do?
We help keep teachers healthy.

What are your goals, and how will you get there?
The Whole Teacher looks to expand our scope and impact over the next year by offering programming that reaches teachers in Maryland, D.C. and Pennsylvania.

By building school wellness programs that help both predict and prevent teacher burn-out, as well as tend to current teacher health needs, we will move to work with districts across the East Coast to bring in solutions to teacher satisfaction and development that move the needle on changing how the teaching profession feels and treats our educators.

Why have you chosen Baltimore as your startup’s home?
Baltimore is the home of everything I love. I grew up here and my life is here. I couldn’t imagine starting anything meaningful anywhere else.

What opportunities make it a good place for growing a business?
Baltimore is leading the nation in opportunities for edtech and health startups. Baltimore is at a pivotal point both in a social content, but also in education reform.

The issue of teacher retention is huge for our city and we believe we can have an enormous impact on students, schools and community by building the foundation of our company here in Baltimore.

In terms of startups and innovation, what’s one thing that separates Baltimore from other tech hotbeds?
Baltimore offers a diversity and social energy that I believe sets it apart from other startup centers around the country.

If you could give your past self one piece of advice for creating a startup, what would it be?
Start sooner. I wish I would have started a company 10 years ago while I was in college.

What book are you currently reading?
Radical Candor by Kim Scott

What innovator do you look up to? Why?
I am a huge fan of the arts. I think that Banksy is one of the most innovative artists of our time. The way he is able to spread social messages and comment on society is worth paying attention to and fascinating.

It’s after a long day of work, and you don’t feel like cooking. What is your go-to Baltimore restaurant?
Bar Clavel

What’s your favorite non-work-related thing to do in Baltimore?
I love art. I spend a lot of time watching, listening and participating in art in all forms. Our theaters are amazing and I often walk over the Baltimore Museum of Art from my house to unwind.

A
SIL Bootcamp Inspires Budding Social Entrepreneurs to Move Forward

James Shamul’s idea for bringing positive change to Baltimore grew out of shaggy hair and a lack of options for a quick, reasonably priced clip. A member of The Johns Hopkins University’s class of 2017, Shamul noticed many of his peers had similar feelings about the inconvenient walk, bus ride or Uber to an off-campus barber that charged $20 or more for a haircut.

University student enterprise regulations made an on-campus barber shop a near impossibility, Shamul learned, but a vehicle outfitted with chairs, scissors, clippers and licensed talent could provide a convenient solution. Furthermore, it could have a nonprofit component where it provides Baltimore’s homeless with haircuts and access to other support, such as employment opportunities.

With the idea set, a name (BarberFleet) and partners (Jamie Chen, a freshman at The Johns Hopkins University, and Louis DeRidder, a Johns Hopkins visiting student), Shamul was off to a great start, but he had little idea about next steps.

On April 29, he, along with about 20 others interested in developing a social venture, attended the Social Innovation Lab’s (SIL) Bootcamp. The event condensed SIL’s six-month curriculum into a single day to show participants how to lead change as a social entrepreneur, develop an idea into an actionable plan and identify and secure funding.

Shamul says some of the best lessons covered “small details that could end up making a big difference,” such as identifying funding sources and learning how to ask questions, address challenges and forecast future problems. However, the camaraderie between the like-minded attendees also proved beneficial.

“The idea of being around others who are undergoing the same challenges or who have similar questions as I do made me feel better about where I was,” Shamul says. “It also made me a lot more passionate about what we’re doing.”

SIL Director Darius Graham designed this year’s Bootcamp, about a quarter the size of the first, to provide more one-on-one feedback and to help attendees cultivate relationships.

“We created this Bootcamp to help early-stage changemakers gain skills and to think strategically about launching their social venture,” Graham says. “Our first Bootcamp in October 2016 served about 100 Baltimore area residents, but we intentionally made this one smaller so attendees could connect more with each other and develop relationships to help carry their work forward.”

Sabrina Dépestre, an educator and writer with Technically Baltimore, attended the Bootcamp to move forward an idea she says she hasn’t fully fleshed out. She envisions building a venture that connects the area’s movers, shakers and policy makers in the health and wellness space.

“I want to bring together all the faces of health and wellness in Baltimore to see what they’re working on and to create this blueprint of collaboration other cities can use to strengthen their cities,” Dépestre says.

With such an ambitious idea, Dépestre was unsure of where to start, especially considering the early stage of her venture. After only a few hours at the Bootcamp, though, that uncertainty disappeared. Dépestre says she has a better idea for how she and her business partner, Karlene Graham, a Johns Hopkins University alumnus, can move forward.

“What the Bootcamp provided me was the momentum to keep going. I realized I wasn’t alone in this very infant state of my idea,” Dépestre says. “Darius was able to provide very specific action plans and action items that I could take home and run with.”

With a clearer path to create a successful social venture, both Shamul and Dépestre are eager to put their ideas into motion but understand they may need help along the way. Over the next few months, each intends to take action based on information from the Bootcamp and will seek further support by applying to SIL’s 2017-2018 cohort in August.

First Ph.D. Candidates Selected... Continued from page 1

to identify precisely the focus of her thesis. Still, Lam believes that this arrangement will further biological understanding, improve therapies and treatments and, ultimately, produce better patient outcomes.

“Industry is known for having large amounts of data, and they often don’t have the time or investment to make full use of it. In academia, we have more flexibility to look into that data,” Lam says. “I think this program will play to each of our strengths, making the best of all our resources.”

According to Peter Espenshade, associate dean for graduate biomedical education at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, the Johns Hopkins-MedImmune Scholars Program will facilitate more opportunities for students as they can focus on building a career in academia or in industry.

“People are starting to realize that they need to think earlier about what they want to do and what aligns with their skills and personalities,” Espenshade says.

With Ph.D. students shifting their career paths, Espenshade says the question becomes: Are we training them only for careers in academia? The Johns Hopkins-MedImmune Scholars Program, like the Cambridge-AstraZeneca PhD Programme in Chemical Synthesis developed in 2015, enables students to gain exposure to a variety of career paths within industry.

Determining the success of the program will take years, Espenshade says, and will be based on the careers of the Ph.D. students, collaborative publications and the resulting research. For now, Lam and Majewska are pioneers and are relishing the opportunity they have.

“I think this program could be the foundation on which future programs are based,” Lam says. “Natalia and I have the honor of paving the way. How we go through the program will help set an example for other students and similar programs that will be modeled after this. I’m grateful for this opportunity.”
Hundreds Celebrate FastForward 1812’s Promise to Support Innovation

On April 26, hundreds of people came to East Baltimore for the grand opening of FastForward 1812. The event, billed as a celebration of a new physical space to support innovation, was just as much a celebration of the innovation hub’s promise to impact the future of Johns Hopkins, the city of Baltimore and people around the world by helping bring life-changing technologies to market.

“This space is] a physical manifestation of our commitment to bringing together the necessary ingredients of innovation,” Johns Hopkins University President Ronald J. Daniels said during the celebration’s opening remarks.

Daniels added that FastForward, a coordinated suite of resources designed to efficiently move technologies from startup to marketplace, acts as “a launching pad for entrepreneurs from not only Hopkins but also, in fact, from across Baltimore.”

In addition to 8,000 square feet of office, co-working and meeting space, FastForward 1812 features 15,000 square feet of dedicated and shared wet lab space, a much-needed startup resource in Baltimore. But the specs of the innovation hub don’t tell a complete story.

“We’re providing more than physical space,” said the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine’s Executive Vice President Dr. Landon King at the grand opening. “We’re providing a network of mentors and other resources to move ideas forward.”

The myriad resources FastForward 1812 provides—including its affordable space, mentorship from experienced entrepreneurs and business leaders, legal and accounting support, funding opportunities and access to Johns Hopkins’ core facilities—are designed to help startups reach their potential, set roots in Baltimore and, eventually, help establish the city as a leading space for innovation.

For too long, Baltimore lacked the resources startups needed to develop into successful businesses. This lack of support forced them to move their promising businesses to more fertile innovation ecosystems. Now Baltimore has a number of accelerators located around the city, including three FastForward innovation hubs.

Like the leaders at Johns Hopkins, Pugh foresees a future where the startups supported within FastForward will move into their own offices and become a part of Baltimore’s economy.

“These kinds of tech and biotech companies will create new jobs and help bring manufacturing back to Baltimore,” Pugh said. “They will start here, grow here and be part of the city’s economy.”

“When you think about the innovation and the technology and the biotech companies that can grow right here … it doesn’t get much better than that,” she said before officially opening the innovation hub by lighting a sign with the words “Start Here.”