

# HEARTLAND challenge



UNIVERSITY OF  
ARKANSAS

Sam M. Walton  
College of Business

QUESTIONS DURING THE COMPETITION?  
TEXT OR CALL US ON THE HEARTLAND HOTLINE:

**479-308-8535**

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**#heartlandAR24**

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# WELCOME TO THE HEARTLAND CHALLENGE

## Brent Williams

DEAN, SAM M. WALTON  
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS



”

Welcome to the fifth annual Heartland Challenge. I am thrilled to see so many talented graduate students and founders participating this year. You are pushing boundaries in ventures, industries, and regional economies worldwide.

Few regions rival the supportive community of entrepreneurs found in Northwest Arkansas. This area is steeped in the legacies of visionaries such as Sam Walton, John W. Tyson, and J.B. and Johnelle Hunt. We remain steadfast in our commitment to equipping entrepreneurs like yourself with the resources, networks, and encouragement to bring your ideas to market.

You have traveled from all over the world to compete in the Heartland Challenge. It is my hope that you experience the hospitality for which Arkansas is known throughout your stay. While you are competing for \$100,000 in cash prizes, the relationships forged here will carry you through your entrepreneurial journey. Enjoy your time in Northwest Arkansas, and good luck!

”

“

Welcome to Bentonville! Whether you're familiar with our community or discovering it for the first time, we're excited to have you join us for this year's event. On behalf of the Office of Entrepreneurship and Innovation (OEI) at the University of Arkansas, I extend a warm welcome and invite you to immerse yourselves in one of the most unique and fast-growing startup ecosystems in the world. Northwest Arkansas is known as a hub of outdoor recreation and center of gravity for the retail and supply chain industries. It is also a founder's paradise, boasting a unique blend of commerce, talent, innovation, and quality of life. We're passionate about showcasing this region to the world. From our beloved Ozark Mountains to world-class dining and art establishments, Northwest Arkansas invites you to explore, engage, and be inspired. Our competition isn't just about pitches and prize money; it's about community. Here, world-class investors and founders are often just one connection away. Throughout the event, we hope you will take advantage of every opportunity to connect and collaborate with fellow participants, mentors, and industry experts. Let your ideas loose, and watch your connections grow, as we celebrate the power of entrepreneurship to drive positive change.

Our team is here to support you every step of the way.

”

# AND WELCOME TO ARKANSAS

## Deb Williams

SENIOR DIRECTOR,  
OPERATIONS &  
STUDENT PROGRAMS





# 2024 Semifinalist Teams



**Team:** Antony Fuleihan, Evan Haas

**Advisor:** Youseph Yazdi, Nicholas Theodore

**CurveAssure** is optimizing spinal assessment and surgical selection with dynamic posture analysis to personalize patient pathways and improve clinical effectiveness.



**Team:** Priya Kumar, Shaan Kumar

**Advisor:** Elias Kourpas

**Sakura Medtech** offers a superior patient centric imaging device for cervical cancer screening to improve the patient experience and gynecological efficiency.



**Team:** Lauren Fitzgerald, Bhavya Patel, Joshua Upshaw, Devin Dougherty, Landen Burress

**Advisors:** Sarah Goforth and David Hinton

**Hidalga Technologies** utilizes innovative technology to cut through the red tape of oncology care, empowering clinics to treat patients faster and more efficiently.



**Team:** Franklin Taylor, Kelsey Kloezeman, Anna Larizza, Tanvi Jammula, Jason Ti

**Advisor:** Doug Villhard

**Sustain-a-Plate** brings operational efficiency to the food supply chain through a smart barcode tracking solution.



**Team:** Xiao Zhou, Zhongyi Zhao, Yulia (Yiran) Niu, Haotong Zhu, Claire (Xinyi) Kuang, Catherine (Chang) Xu

**Advisor:** Kevin Oye

**Hipond** is a dedicated online community designed for international students in the United States, aiming to improve their social connections and solve life challenges faced during their time abroad.



**Team:** Brandon Burris, Courtney Burris

**Advisor:** Kathleen Driscoll

**RHM Innovations Inc.** is a durable medical equipment company, specializing in assistive shower systems, alleviating caregiver strain and improving the bathing experience for the elderly and disabled in residential care facilities.



**Team:** Valeria Brenner, Max Pinckney

**Advisor:** Bob Pinckney

**Thryft Ship** is for small businesses selling through Instagram. They provide a software solution that streamlines and organizes the shipping process while reducing shipping costs.



**Team:** Armaan Gupta, Conner Ohnesorge

**Advisor:** Megan Graettinger

**Kreative DocuVet** is AI-powered medical records for the everyday veterinarian.



**Team:** Colton Greenwood, Bryan Shoffit, Alexander Shell

**Advisors:** Sarah Goforth and David Hinton

**Wanderist** is set to disrupt the wine industry through its innovative on-tap wine system, featuring smart, connected technologies that provide customers with real-time insights into pour costs and inventory data.



**Team:** Nheim Cao, Angel Treat, Vanessa Gonzalez

**Advisors:** Sarah Goforth and David Hinton

**ProPika** uses its patented technology to process cellulose so fuel producers can transform billions of tons of agricultural waste into sustainable alternative fuels and chemicals.



**Team:** Rida Amjed, Fujia Zheng

**Advisors:** Youseph Yazdi, Soumyadipta Acharya

**YieldEASE** aims to improve the diagnosis of breast cancer in sub-Saharan Africa through its gun structure technology for fine needle aspiration, which intends to de-skill FNA and make the adequacy of samples independent of operator skill.



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

**Team:** Morgan Kerfeld, Steven Bleau

**Advisor:** John Stavig

**Telo** is developing an ecosystem of assistive walking devices with integrated technology to better facilitate physical therapy.

# Guest Speakers



**CHRIS THOMPSON**

Keynote

Founder & Chief Executive Officer

Sober Sidekick



**MITCH BROOKS**

Keynote

Managing Partner

High Street Equity Partners



**BRENT WILLIAMS**

Dean

Sam M. Walton College of Business



**ALEX DE LA FUENTE**

Chief Executive Officer

Hightag



**TYLER ZANON**

Chief Executive Officer

Endoshunt



**MURIELLE GAITHER**

Founder & Chief Executive Officer

Venku

# Final Round Judges



**TRACY POOLE**

Managing Partner

46 Venture Capital



**BOBBY W. SANDAGE, JR.**

Managing Director

Lightchain Capital and Paula and Rodger Riney Foundation



**MK MARSDEN**

Co-Founder

Revscale™



**CLETE BREWER**

Managing Partner

NewRoad Capital Partners



**CHIDOZIE UGWUMBA**

Managing Partner

SymBiosis



**ROSA HATHAWAY**

Head of Non-Local Investments

Atento Capital

# Semifinal Round Judges



**PERMJOT VALIA**  
CO-FOUNDER  
NAVA DEVELOP INC.



**ERIC HOWERTON**  
HEAD OF WALMART  
INNOVATIONS  
FLYWHEEL



**ANOOP PRASANA**  
HEAD OF  
CORPORATE AFFAIRS  
ENGINEERING  
WALMART GLOBAL  
TECHNOLOGY



**ROBYN GOFORTH**  
CHIEF SCIENTIFIC  
OFFICER  
BIOLOGICS MD



**APRIL SEGGEBRUCH**  
MANAGING PARTNER  
GOOD GRAVY GROUP



**STAN ZYLOWSKI**  
CO-FOUNDER &  
CHAIRMAN  
MOVISTA



**JEFF STINSON**  
FOUNDER  
HEALTHTECH AR



**GARROTT  
MCCLINTOCK**  
COO  
ACRETRADER



**TRACY BLACK**  
PARTNER  
NEWROAD CAPITAL  
PARTNERS



**DREW MCKINNON**  
PRESIDENT, MIDLANDS  
REGION  
MAIN STREET HEALTH



**HEATHER NELSON**  
FOUNDER + PRINCIPAL  
GLOBAL HEADWATERS LLC



**ALBERT BEHR**  
CEO  
BEHR & ASSOCIATES INC.



**SPENCER JONES**  
CEO  
LAPOVATIONS



**CANEM ARKAN**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
ENDEAVOR HEARTLAND &  
412 ANGELS



**JEFF AMERINE**  
FOUNDER & MANAGING  
DIRECTOR  
STARTUP JUNKIE  
CONSULTING &  
CADRON CAPITAL



**JORDAN CARLISLE**  
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER  
SOBER SIDEKICK



**MARTIAL TRIGEAUD**  
CO-OWNER & COO  
TIME BICYCLES



**MICHAEL BASCH**  
FOUNDER &  
GENERAL PARTNER  
ATENTO CAPITAL



**MICHAEL PALADINO**  
CO-FOUNDER AND  
CHAIRMAN  
REVUNIT



**DOUGLAS HUTCHINGS**  
CEO  
DELTA SOLAR



**LAWRENCE  
WATKINS**  
HEAD OF TULSA  
INVESTMENTS  
ATENTO CAPITAL



**RAMSAY BALL**  
MANAGER  
CANNON CAPITAL



**JOSHUA STANLEY**  
STUDIO DIRECTOR / CEO  
FIELDBOOK VENTURE  
STUDIO / CARTWHEEL  
STUDIO



**EVAN SCHNUR**  
SR VICE PRESIDENT, STRATEGY  
& BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT,  
HEALTHPILOT





# HEARTLAND challenge

# First Round Judges

**ZACH HALL**  
Tyson Ventures  
Strategic Project  
Manager

**ELIZABETH ALSPACH**  
The Mercy Collective  
Founder

**BILLY RUCK**  
SimpliField  
VP, Revenue  
Optimization

**BJORN SIMMONS**  
Multicultural Business  
Xcellerator (MBX)  
Founder & Executive  
Director

**JON WOOD**  
Wood IP Law  
Intellectual Property  
Attorney

**SHAHEEN  
LOKHANDWALA**  
Food Systems for the  
Future  
US Program Manager

**NICK SMITH**  
Fulcrum Collective  
Senior Associate

**GURSHAGAN  
KANDOLA**  
Celludot  
Co-Founder & CTO

**ANDREW MILES**  
Joyride  
VP, Strategic Projects

**STEPHANIE GANNON**  
Walmart Global Tech  
Senior Product Manager,  
Emerging Technology

**SKYLAR WALLACE**  
The Level Up Lenders  
Founder & Senior  
Mortgage Banker

**KATIE THOMPSON**  
Science Venture Studio  
Executive Director

**GRACE RAINS**  
Conductor  
Executive Director

**NEIL ROSS**  
Walmart  
Sr Director, Corporate  
Real Estate Technology &  
Product Management

**CRAIG RIVALDO**  
Arvest Bank Group  
Regional Executive,  
Southeast Region

**JOHN CHAMBERLIN**  
Chamberlin Research  
Owner

**HEATHER NELSON**  
Global Headwaters LLC  
Founder & Principal

**CALEB TALLEY**  
Startup Junkie  
Foundation  
Executive Director

**AMY HOPPER SWAN**  
Arkansas Research  
Alliance  
Program Dir.

**ELIZABETH PRENGER**  
FemHealth Founders  
Co-Founder & Director

**MATT MCCLANAHAN**  
Vishvos  
Founder

**HALEY ALLGOOD**  
Walmart  
Director, eComm  
Strategy & Governance

**SCOTT HOLLEY**  
Eddyline Kayaks  
President

**COURTNEY GILL**  
Atento Capital  
Early Stage Investor

**LAUREN ROBERTS**  
Atento Capital  
Investment Analyst,  
Special Projects

**MATTHEW WARD**  
Startup Junkie  
Foundation  
Senior Executive  
Consultant

**MICHAEL BURTON**  
UNCL Co  
Founder

**JOE DANIELS**  
Walmart  
Director, Sustainability

**KATE LYNN**  
FortySix Venture Capital  
Investment Associate &  
Platform Manager

**PEDRO SOMARRIBA**  
Lacaida Ropes  
Founder

# Schedule of Events



## THURSDAY, APRIL 11 • 21C MUSEUM HOTEL

- 2:00pm-4:00pm Team Check-In, Lobby
- 4:30pm-6:00pm Team Welcome Reception, Main Gallery
- 6:00pm-8:00pm Opening Dinner with Heartland Ambassadors, Main Gallery  
Sponsored by Visit Bentonville



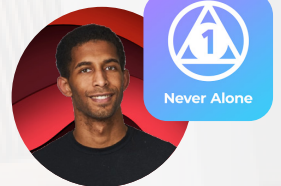
## FRIDAY, APRIL 12 • THE LEDGER

- 7:00am **Shuttles from 21C to The Ledger**
- 7:30am Breakfast, 6th Floor, Room 618
- 8:00am Semifinal Round Overview, Student Teams and Faculty Advisors, 6th Floor, Room 618
- 8:30am-9:30am Judges' Meeting & Instructions, 6th Floor, Room 614
- 8:30am-9:30am Student Teams Technology Checks, Assigned Track Rooms
- 9:45am-12:00pm Semifinal Round, 1st & 6th Floors
- 12:00pm-1:15pm Judge Deliberation & Lunch
- 12:00pm-1:15pm Teams and Advisors Lunch & Panel, Patio  
'Building It Here,' Sponsored by Cortado Ventures
- 1:15pm-2:45pm Individual Team Feedback Sessions with Judges
- 3:30pm-5:00pm **Shuttles to 21C or Crystal Bridges Museum**



## FRIDAY, APRIL 12 • CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

- 5:00pm-5:30pm Reception & Networking, South Lobby & Great Hall
- 5:30pm-5:40pm Welcome, Brent Williams, Dean, Walton College of Business
- 5:40pm-5:45pm Introduction of Keynote  
Jordan Carlisle, COO, Empathy HealthTech
- 5:45pm-6:30pm **Keynote, Chris Thompson, Founder & CEO, Empathy HealthTech & SoberSidekick**
- 6:30pm-7:15pm Elevator Pitch Competition, Sponsored by Natural Capital
- 7:15pm-7:30pm Announcement of Pitch Competition Winners & Finalists
- 7:30pm-7:40pm Closing Remarks
- 7:45pm-8:45pm **Shuttles to 21C**
- 8:30pm-10:30pm Heartland Challenge Reception,  
Sponsored by Dickson & Main  
21C Museum Hotel Gallery 3



# Schedule of Events

## SATURDAY, APRIL 13 • THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS COLLABORATIVE

7:00am **Shuttles will loop (21C • UA Collaborative • The Ledger)**

8:00am-8:30am Breakfast & Overview of Investor Roundtables

Sponsors Welcome  
Jeff Amerine, Co-Founder and General Partner,  
Cadron Capital Partners

8:30am-11:30am Investor Roundtables,  
Sponsored by Cadron Capital, Symbiosis, & UA MS in Finance

## SATURDAY, APRIL 13 • EVENTS MOVE TO THE LEDGER

10:45am-11:45am Final Round Tech Checks at The Ledger, 6th Floor

12:00pm-1:00pm Lunch at The Ledger, 6th Floor, Room 618

12:15pm-12:45pm Judges Meeting

1:00pm-4:45pm Final Round  
Livestreamed on [heartlandchallenge.uark.edu](http://heartlandchallenge.uark.edu)



Moderated by Phil Shellhammer,  
Senior Director, Business Incubation  
Office of Entrepreneurship and Innovation

## SATURDAY, APRIL 13 • THE LEDGER

4:45pm-5:30pm

Judge Deliberation

4:45pm-5:45pm

Break & Setup for Startup Expo at the Ledger

5:45pm-6:00pm

Check-In Begins – Startup Expo

6:00pm-7:00pm

Startup Expo, Sponsored by Arkansas Capital Corporation

# Awards Ceremony

7:00pm-7:15pm

Check-In

7:15pm-7:30pm

Welcome & Intro Keynote

7:30pm-8:15pm

**Keynote: Mitch Brooks, Co-founder  
& Managing Partner, High Street  
Equity Partners**

8:15pm-8:55pm

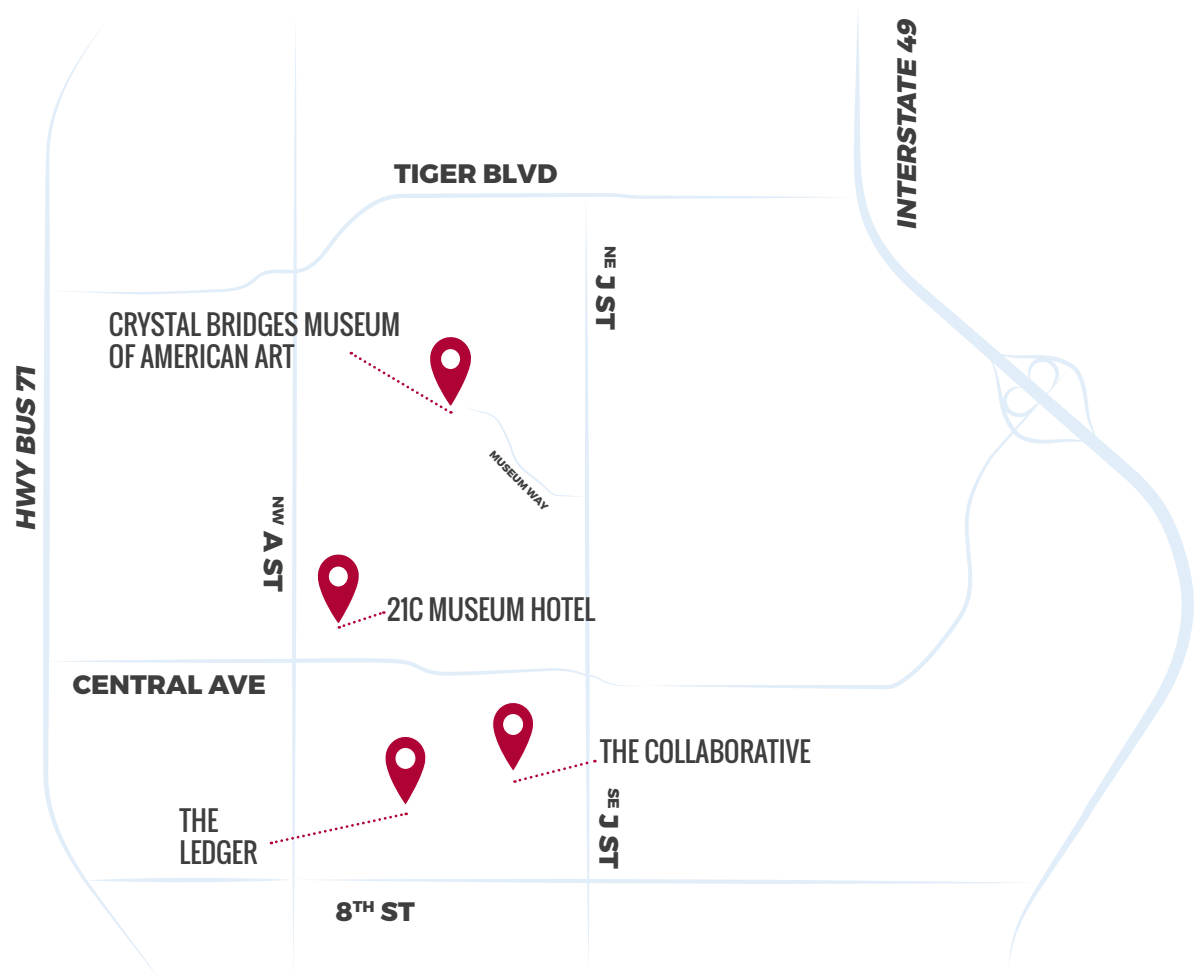
Awards Ceremony,  
Hosted by Permjot Valia, Co-founder,  
Nava Develop, Inc.

8:55pm-9:00pm

Closing Remarks



# Maps + Locations



FIND ALL LOCATIONS AND DIRECTIONS @ [HEARTLANDCHALLENGE.ORG/HEARTLAND-DIRECTIONS](https://heartlandchallenge.org/heartland-directions) OR SCAN HERE →



## ADDRESSES:

**21C MUSEUM HOTEL**  
200 NORTHEAST A ST, BENTONVILLE, AR

**THE LEDGER**  
240 S MAIN STREET BENTONVILLE AR

**CRYSTAL BRIDGES**  
600 MUSEUM WAY, BENTONVILLE, AR

**THE U OF A COLLABORATIVE**  
700 SE 5TH ST #130, BENTONVILLE, AR

**RAZORBACK GREENWAY**  
BENTONVILLE, AR 72712

**UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS**  
1 UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS, FAYETTEVILLE, AR

# NORTHWEST ARKANSAS



# The Heartland Challenge Team

U OF A OFFICE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION



**DEB WILLIAMS**

Senior Director, Operations  
& Student Programs



**MADDY STRICKLEN**

Heartland Challenge Program  
Manager



**HILOLA  
TUYCHIEVA**

Project Manager, Events



**SJAH GONZALES**

Assistant Director,  
Program Operations



**BRANDON  
HOWARD**

Communications  
& Social Media Manager



**JOSH MAST**

Media Designer



**SARAH GOFORTH**

Executive Director



**PHIL  
SHELLHAMMER**

Senior Director,  
Business Incubation

SUPPORTED BY THE STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD, LED BY RYLEIGH WERNER



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## PREMIER SPONSOR



## EVENT & SPECIAL PRIZE SPONSORS



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