

iZone

A Vision to Support Student Ideas, Innovation, and Imagination

► Think of the iZone as an idea incubator where students will gather to explore and imagine ideas for social, cultural, community, and economic impact—a place that does not currently exist. As part of the Rush Rhees Library Master Plan, the River Campus Libraries (RCL), in collaboration with other areas within the University of Rochester, has a vision to create this new, vibrant environment.

In the future, students from all disciplines will gather within the iZone to build skills, get advice, access tools and resources, and connect with a community of collaborators to generate, refine, and communicate ideas. The iZone will offer programs, services, and experts dedicated to cultivating ideas, innovation, and imagination. It will also make available a variety of experts including librarians, faculty members, local business leaders, and entrepreneurs.



Why We Need It

In focus groups, students identified a shortage of resources on campus that support idea exploration and those that are dedicated to connecting and convening like-minded students with complementary skills. For them, the innovation and entrepreneurship support they experienced here focuses on bringing an idea to market, not on developing the

student who has the idea and providing him or her with a platform for exploration.

The iZone will develop the student rather than actualize the idea or bring it to market. By creating support for nascent ideas, students will be better prepared to participate in activities offered by the other innovation-focused groups on and off campus.



“The collaborative environment has helped me and my peers grow from our own unique experiences and from each other’s. The iZone will help facilitate more of this—the sort of peer-to-peer and experiential learning that is truly invaluable for us as students.”

—Grant Dever '16

business major and Students' Association president



“The iZone will underscore the University’s commitment to experiential learning, offer students state-of-the-art technology and resources, and foster the kind of ideas that successful entrepreneurs need in any discipline.”

—**Dennis Kessler**, the Edward J. and Agnes V. Ackley Executive Professor of Entrepreneurship at Simon Business School and co-owner of Kessler Restaurants LLC

iZone in Action

Once open, RCL envisions the following scenarios taking place.

- Raj, a freshman majoring in anthropology, attends a presentation about social entrepreneurship given by a design firm.
- Joseph, a sophomore computer science major, sees an iZone display that showcases problems and ideas he is interested in. He notices the team needs a programmer, so he joins the team’s table to see how he can contribute.
- Annie, a senior majoring in digital media studies, is on a committee affiliated with the iZone. She meets with one of the iZone’s entrepreneurs-in-residence to brainstorm potential ideas for a student group event.

- Connect with and get advice from experts
- Showcase work through physical and virtual displays
- Participate in professional development and programmatic workshops
- Use specialized tools in project rooms and collaborative spaces
- Build a network they can rely on throughout their careers

How You Can Help

Donor funding is essential for this capital project and will make a significant impact on our students’ abilities to explore ideas that can help make the world ever better. Your generosity will help provide a strong, state-of-the-art infrastructure that will include a variety of interactive technologies. It will also help create new, collaborative spaces, exhibition areas, and team study rooms as well as the development of innovative programming.

What Students Can Do Here

- Form a team (find and recruit peers to collaborate on projects)

Partners and Engagement

A director and staff will oversee the iZone, working closely with the RCL, the College, and the Center for Entrepreneurship. Other partners include the Ronald Rettner Hall for Media Arts and Innovation; the Gwen M. Greene Career and Internship Center; University Information Technology; student groups such as Spark Entrepreneurs; and more. In addition to working with these groups, the iZone will create opportunities for meaningful outreach and engagement with the Rochester community and area organizations such as High Tech Rochester.

Endowed positions are another priority. They help to attract and retain exceptional staff and are visible honors recognized across the University and by other top educational institutions. By endowing the directorship of the iZone, your support lives in perpetuity and becomes a vital part of the success of our students.

Learn, Discover, Heal, Create—And Make the World Ever Better

www.library.rochester.edu

For more information on giving opportunities, please contact
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