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## Annual Innovation Day honors students, faculty

Economy, UA event point to importance of new technology

By Jordan Handler

Even in the current economic downturn, innovation prevails.

That was one message at the University of Arizona's sixth annual Technology Innovation Awards, honoring faculty members and students who contributed to the development of a new technology were honored.

"Opportunity knocks. Even at difficult times there are always opportunities if you keep your eyes open," said Pouria Valley, optical sciences doctorate student and recipient of the Student Technology Innovation Award.

About 250 people attended the event, which included an awards luncheon and trade-show-style showcase featuring student team presentations from the McGuire Center for Entrepreneurship at the Eller College of Management.

The teams presented their business plans and were judged on booth design, marketing materials, professionalism and pitch to potential investors.

Out of 21 groups, six groups were chosen to present to various investors and judges, and two were declared showcase winners.

### Winners

Innovator of the Year: **Victor J. Hruby**

Victor J. Hruby is a [regents professor of chemistry](#). His research includes how hormones and neurotransmitters affect disease and human behavior. He is working on a way to stop prolonged pain, including phantom pain in amputees.

Student Technology Innovation Award: Pouria Valley

Pouria Valley, a doctorate student in optics, is working on an liquid crystal lens that could be used in various applications including vision care, optical zoom lenses for camera phones, and medical devices. Last year, Valley took his idea to "Mobile Rules," an innovation and technology competition hosted by Nokia. His team was one of 10 finalists, and he is working to develop and market the technology.

Lifetime Achievement Award: **Michael A. Cusanovich**

Michael A. Cusanovich is a [professor in the department of biochemistry and biophysics](#) and serves as the director of the Arizona Research Laboratory. He has authored 300 academic papers, taught 65 different courses, and mentored 70 doctoral students. He formerly was UA vice president for research.

### Showcase winners

Winners of the Innovation Technology Showcase:

- SeeSwag.com
- UVolume

Other showcase finalists:

- BigFootHD
- Ceres Retail Solutions
- Superior Medical Instruments
- Tripline Tours

For more information: [www.innovation.arizona.edu](http://www.innovation.arizona.edu)