



13TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Held in June of 2024 in Raleigh, North Carolina—home to the largest research park in the U.S.—the Academy’s 13th Annual Conference brought together leaders in innovation from academia, government, nonprofits, and industry.

Hosted by North Carolina State University, the conference centered on the theme *Unlocking Innovation: Keys to Societal Solutions* and showcased the vibrant innovation ecosystem of the Research Triangle, anchored by Member Institutions NC State University, Duke University, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Key topics included emerging technologies in energy, biomedicine, and manufacturing; increasing participation of underrepresented inventors; and best practices for engaging the next generation of innovators. The two-day event also featured the induction of the 2023 class of Fellows and the 2024 class of Senior Members.

The Fellows Induction Ceremony, led by Derrick Brent, Deputy Director of the USPTO, welcomed 162 new Fellows. The Senior Members Induction, led by Vaishali Udupa, U.S. Commissioner for Patents, recognized 124 emerging innovators representing a collective portfolio of over 1,000 patents.

Aligned with the Academy’s mission to engage and support young inventors, nearly 500 K-12 students and their caretakers participated in hands-on activities hosted by the Smithsonian’s Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation. The interactive invention challenges were inspired by the Center’s new exhibit *Change Your Game/Cambia tu juego*, which explores the connection between innovation and play.

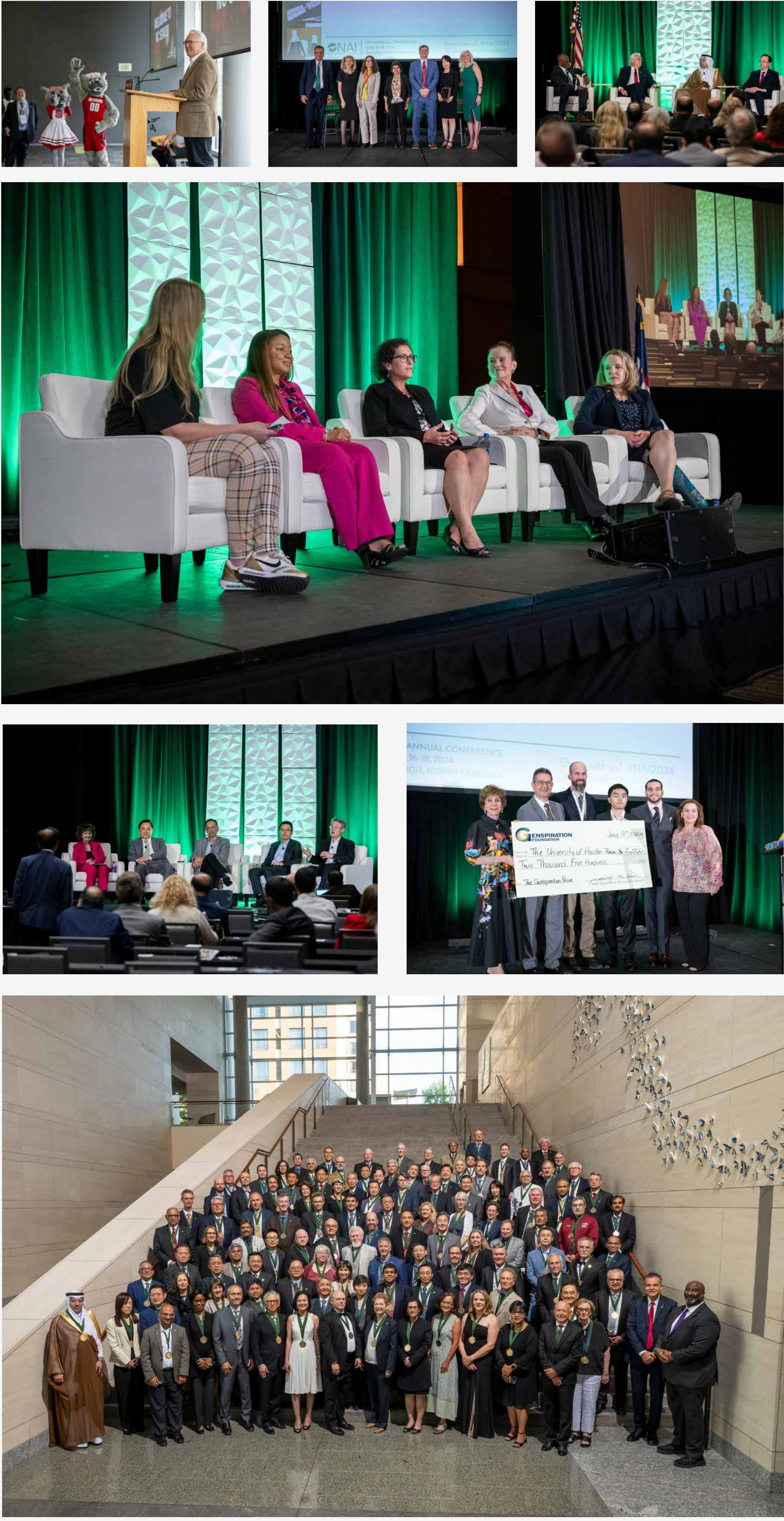
We’d like to thank our Program Committee, whose expertise and guidance were instrumental in crafting the panels and discussion topics for our 13th Annual Conference. It is their contributions that helped make this year’s event the most successful Annual Conference to date. Learn more about them in the Annual Conference Program.

[View the 13th Annual Conference Program](#)

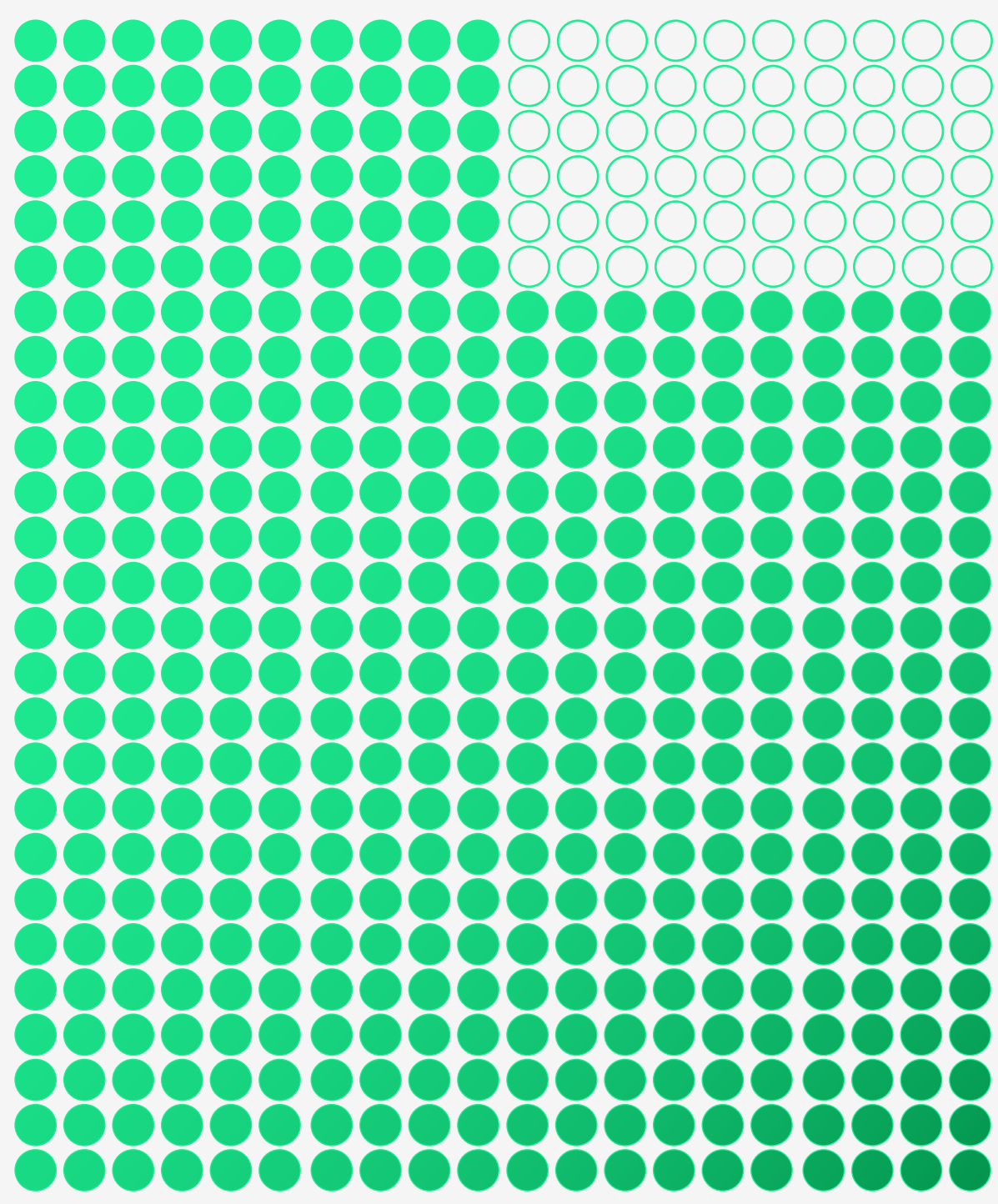
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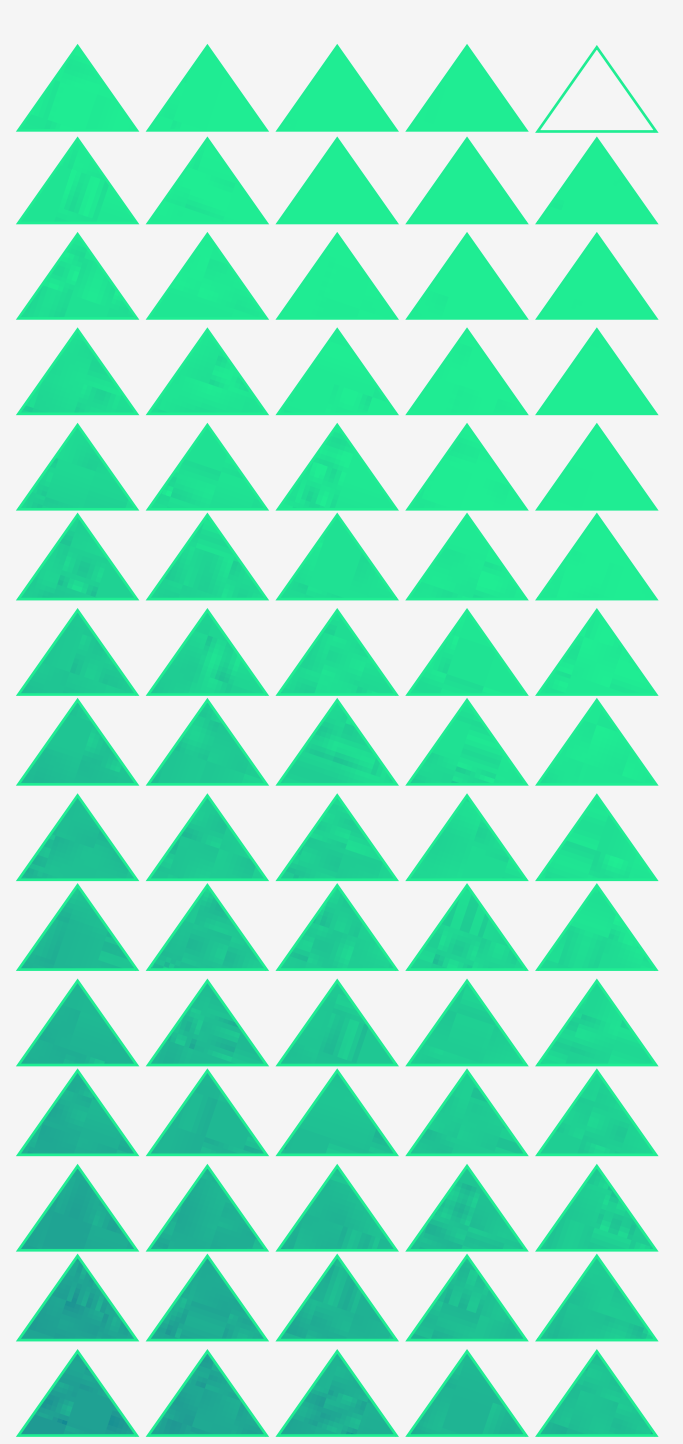


Key Statistics



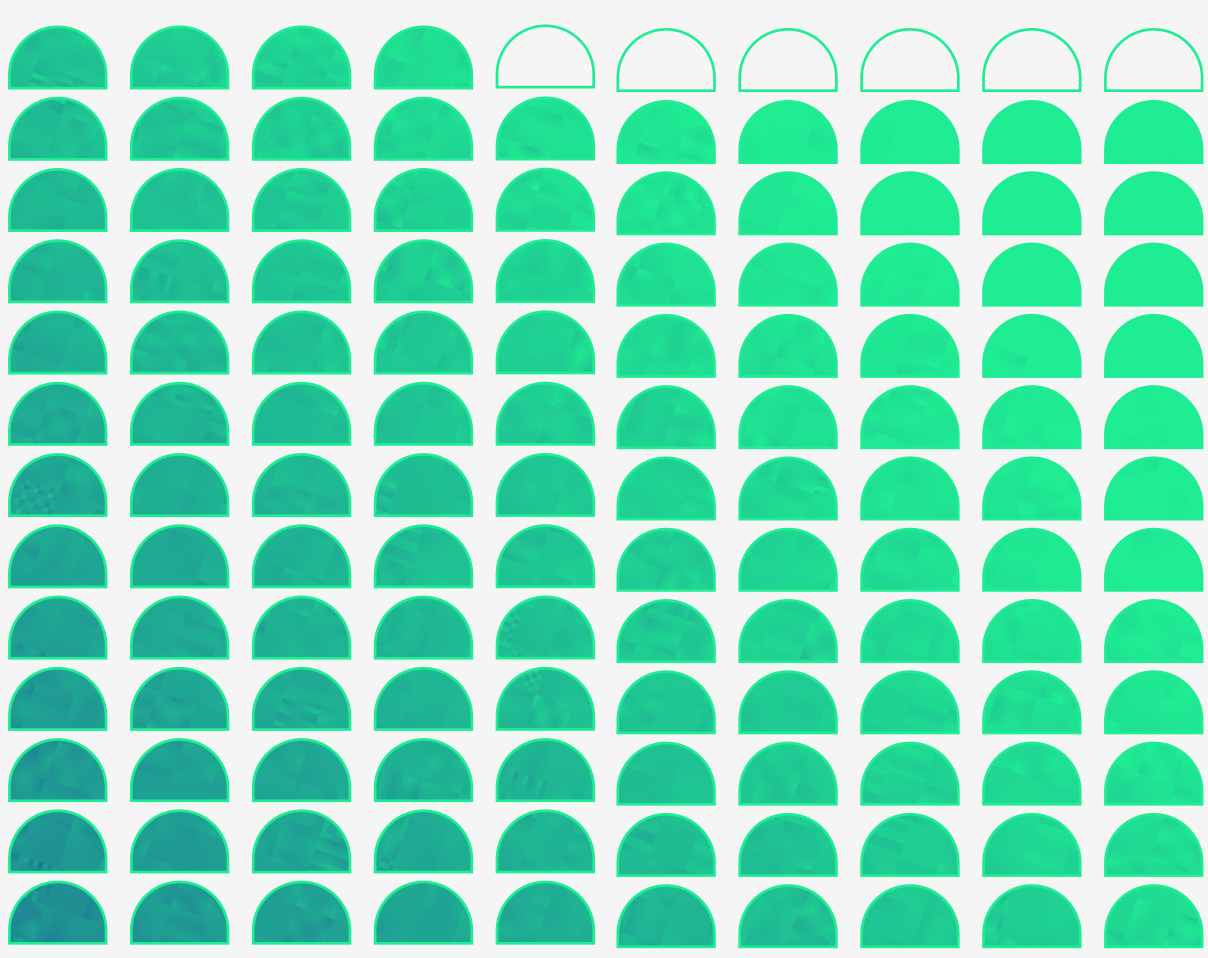
ATTENDANCE

460+



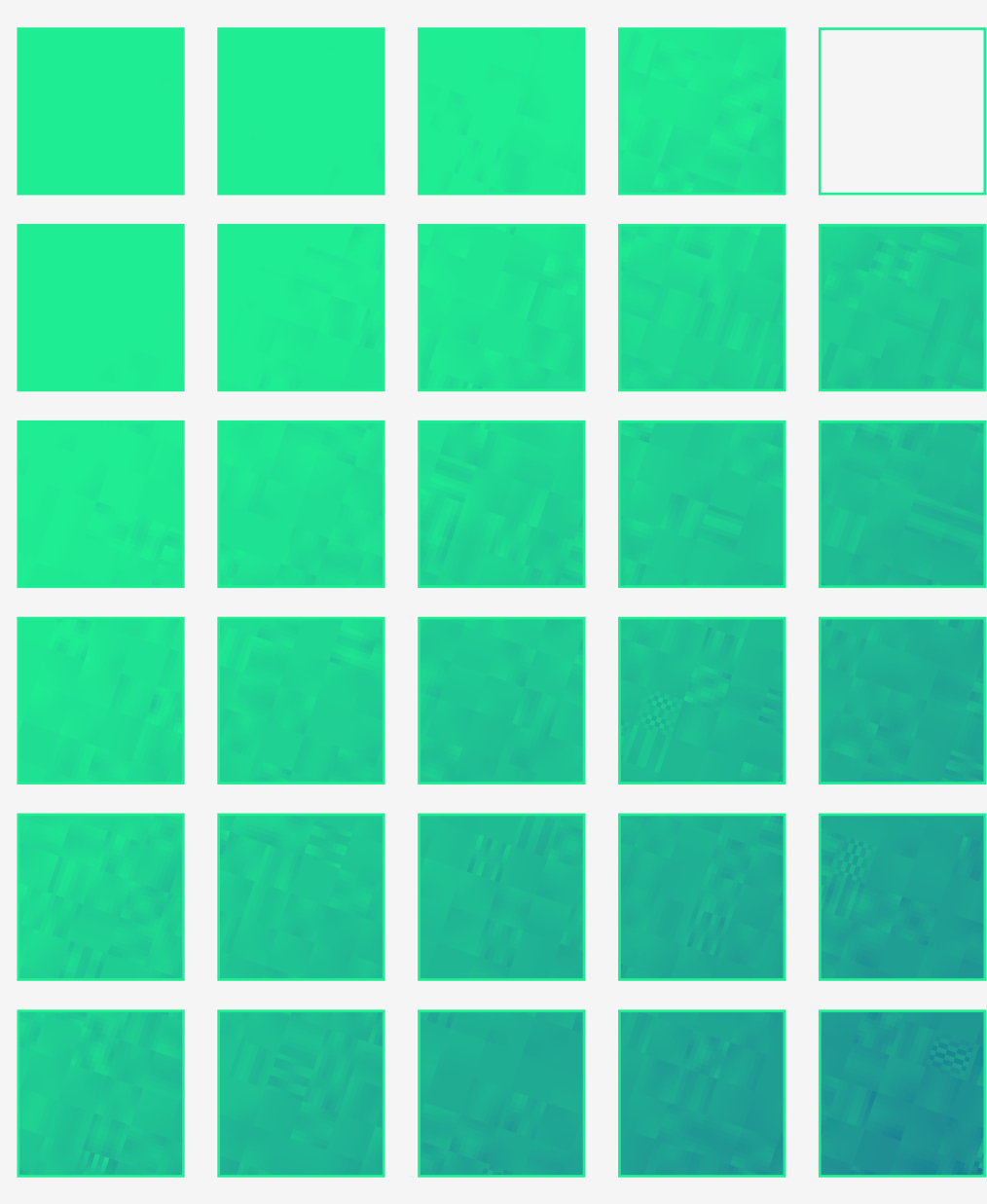
SPEAKERS

74



MEMBER INSTITUTIONS REPRESENTED

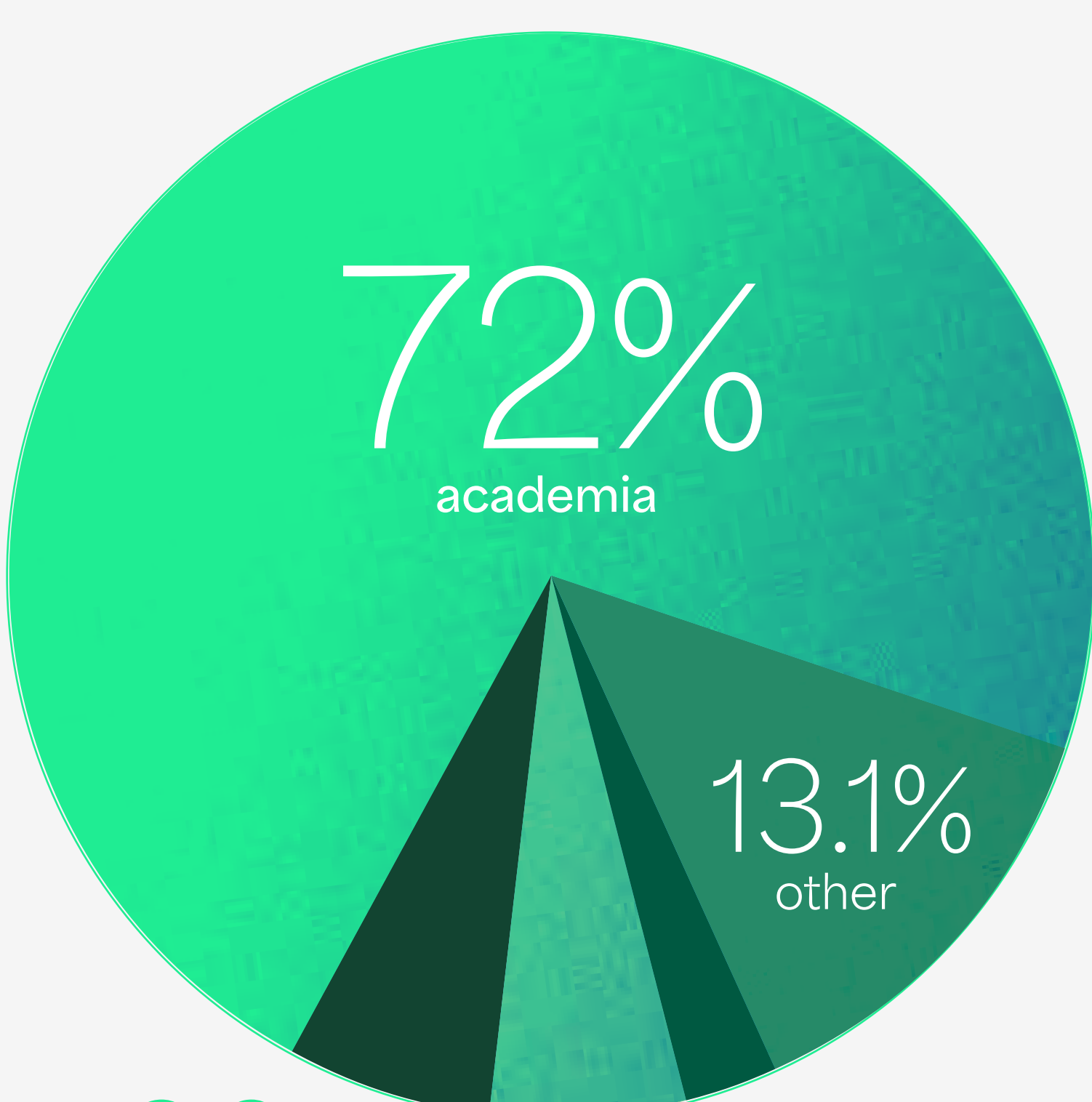
124



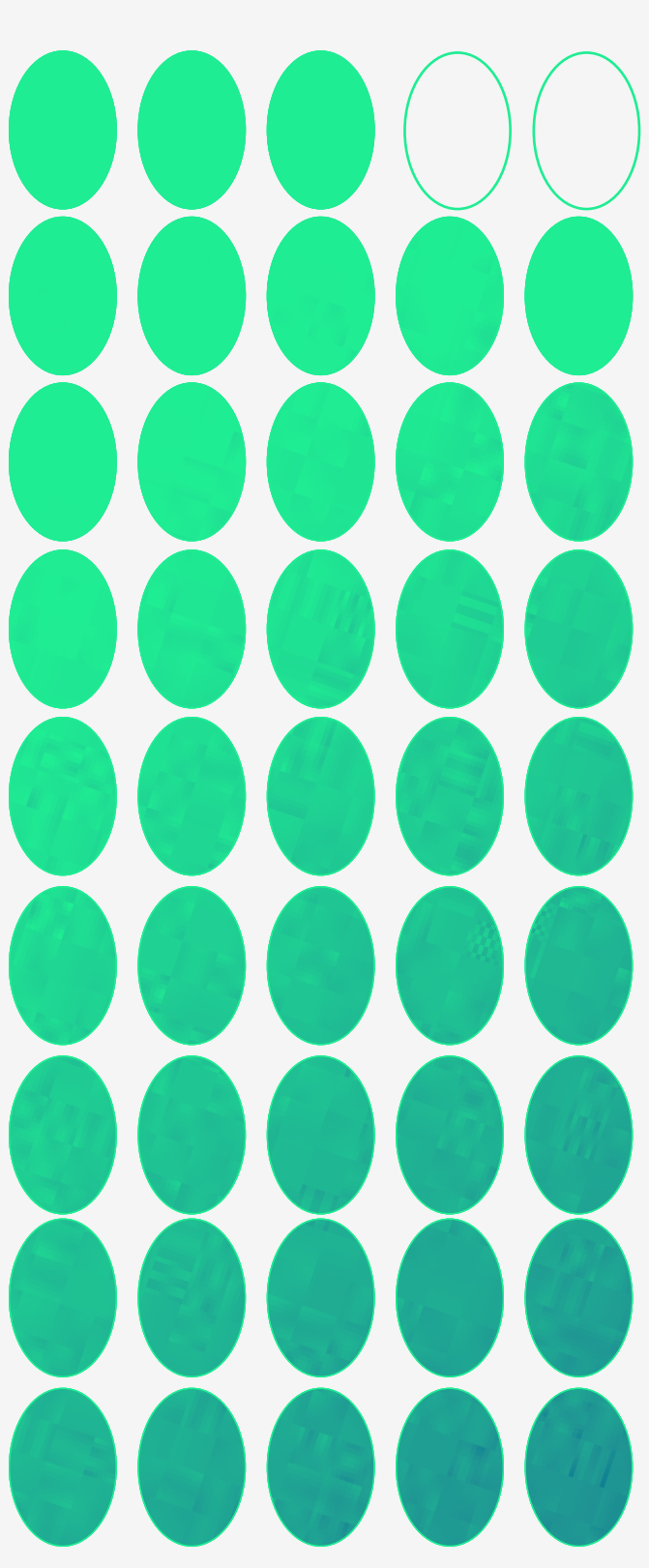
PARTNERS

29

university, industry, and government organizations



ATTENDEE BREAKDOWN



LEADERS IN ATTENDANCE

43

heads of institutions and research departments

STUDENT SHOWCASE

Cultivating the Next Generation of Innovators

The *Student Showcase* highlighted exceptional student inventors from across the globe, providing a platform for them to present their innovations and connect with world-class inventors, academic leaders, and industry experts. Participants gained mentorship, networked with attendees, and received invaluable feedback to refine their work.

This year saw incredible growth for the Student Showcase with the addition of a new category for K-12 inventors. Through this expansion, the Academy aims to foster and highlight the value of innovative thinking in young students and encourage and support them as they continue to create impactful societal and economic solutions. This year's showcase also introduced 2 new awards recognizing excellence in student innovation, both of which include monetary prizes to help fund and grow their innovations. Finalists for the Student Showcase received full accommodations and the opportunity to fully participate in the Annual Conference to learn from and network with top inventors and industry leaders from around the world.

The showcase underscores the importance of cultivating young inventors, who represent the future of innovation and may one day join the ranks of Academy Fellows and Senior Members. This year's applicant pool consisted of almost 30 next generation inventors representing over 25 innovative institutions and organizations. Their inventions covered fields such as biotechnologies, civil engineering, medicine, electrical engineering, and computer sciences.

The event, made possible through the support of partners like the Genspiration Foundation, who are dedicated to advancing student innovations that create societal and economic impact, culminated in the inaugural *Genspiration Prize*, awarded to student teams whose inventions demonstrated significant societal impact.

The Showcase also featured the *Dr. Barry B. Bercu Biomedical University Inventors Prize*, recognizing groundbreaking biomedical innovations that address critical healthcare challenges and hold the potential to transform patient care.

Both the *Genspiration Prize* and *Dr. Barry Bercu Biomedical University Inventors Prize* were created by NAI Fellows and their families as a way to "pay it forward" and through their contributions they have cemented an impactful legacy of supporting and encouraging the next generation of inventors around the nation.

Interested in creating a lasting impact? Learn more about our Legacy Giving program.

[Learn More](#)

Awards Celebrate Excellence in Innovation



TOP: NAI Chapter of Excellence Award recipient, Stony Brook University. ABOVE LEFT: Founder's Award Recipient, Jackson State University. ABOVE RIGHT: NAI Sentinel Award recipient, Yogi Goswami

This year's **NAI Sentinel Award**, acknowledging individuals whose actions and support help fulfill the NAI's mission to continually recognize inventors and enhance the visibility of academic technology and innovation, was awarded to Yogi Goswami. Goswami is a Charter Fellow and was recognized for his consistent and ongoing support of the Academy and his generosity in supporting fellow innovators.

The **NAI Founder's Award**, which honors incredible individuals and institutions who have dedicated their time and expertise since the inception of the Academy and have been fundamental in shaping its vision and impact, was awarded to Jackson State University. JSU was recognized for playing an instrumental part in the Academy for over a decade.

Stony Brook University received the **NAI Chapter of Excellence Award**, honoring NAI Chapters for their dedication to the Academy's mission and achievements in key areas such as celebrating local inventors, supporting the next generation of inventors, and fostering a culture of inclusive innovation through programs and events. The Stony Brook Chapter was awarded for the phenomenal work they do on campus and beyond to encourage and facilitate impactful innovation.

This year, the Academy also introduced four prestigious new awards, each created by Academy Members to recognize and celebrate exceptional achievements in innovation. These awards underscore the Academy's commitment to fostering a culture of creativity, mentorship, and impactful contributions across diverse fields.



The Genspiration Prize, co-created by Judy Genshaft, FNAI, honors student inventors in the K-12 and university age groups who demonstrate exceptional promise in translating their ideas into innovations with significant societal and economic impact. The prize reflects the Genspiration Foundation's dedication to supporting young innovators and their transformative potential. The inaugural Genspiration Young Inventors Prize was awarded to Sonia Patel, representing the Community School of Naples for her Corneal Applanation and Scleral Buckling model; and the inaugural Genspiration University Inventors Prize was presented to University of Houston team Jian Chen and Thomas Hannan for their Revolutionary Sensing Technology.



The Yogi and Lovely Goswami Achievement Award in Energy and Sustainability, co-created by Yogi Goswami, FNAI, highlights groundbreaking contributions to sustainable energy solutions. This award celebrates innovators who address global environmental challenges with creative, practical approaches to energy and sustainability. This year's inaugural awardee was Aldo Steinfeld, Chair of Renewable Energy Carriers at ETH Zürich. Steinfeld was awarded for his commitment to advancing sustainable energy solutions, including the work on his Solar Refinery.

"It is a great honor to receive the Yogi and Lovely Goswami Achievement Award in Energy and Sustainability. I'm truly grateful for this recognition. This award inspires me to continue working towards sustainable energy solutions... I'm deeply honored to be the inaugural recipient of this distinguished award."

- Aldo Steinfeld, Yogi and Lovely Goswami Award recipient

"Thank you for giving us the opportunity to come here and present our work, it's truly an honor... I really hope this effort helps other researchers do more work in this field and bringing out more tests that help women and other people out there and help more and more people not go undiagnosed."

- Nivetha Gunaseelan of the Pennsylvania State University Team, Awardees of the Dr. Barry Bercu Biomedical University Inventors Prize



The Dr. Barry B. Bercu Biomedical University Inventor recognizes outstanding innovation in the biomedical field. Established by the Bercu family to honor the legacy of Dr. Barry Bercu, FNAI, a visionary pediatric endocrinologist and innovator, the prize aims to advance solutions that improve patient care and enhance quality of life through biomedical ingenuity. This year's awardees were students from Pennsylvania State University, Purva Gupta, Ketan Dighe, and Nivetha Gunaseelan for their invention "EndoMark", an improved recognition and prioritization of endometriosis diagnostics.



The US Department of Energy OTT / NAI Innovator of the Year Award, was developed in partnership with NAI Member Institution the US DOE Office of Technology Transitions. This award recognizes DOE innovators with an aim to highlight the invaluable contributions of their lab researchers in advancing technology transfer and commercialization missions across the DOE National Laboratories, plants, and sites. Vanessa Peña, Director of Technology Transfer Policy in the Office of Technology Transitions, presented the award to this year's recipient Jiguang Zhang from the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory for his work in the development of energy storage devices.

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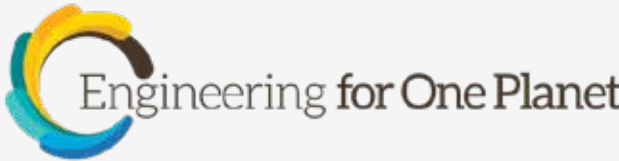


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