



COLLEGE OF  
ENGINEERING, ARCHITECTURE  
AND TECHNOLOGY



First Annual Impact Report of the

# ZINK CENTER FOR COMPETITIVE INNOVATION

ENGAGE  
INSPIRE  
EMPOWER

FALL 2024







*Enhance*  
Inspire  
Empower

## ABOUT THE ZINK CENTER

**ESTABLISHED IN 2022** by a generous gift from The Zink Family Foundation, the goal of the Zink Center for Competitive Innovation is to enrich the engineering curriculum by providing the tools, resources and experiences necessary for students to succeed at the highest levels of technology, innovation and entrepreneurial endeavor.



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE ZINK CENTER

# ENHANCING THE ENGINEERING CURRICULUM AND STANDARD OF PRACTICE



**THE ZINK CENTER FOR COMPETITIVE INNOVATION** Oklahoma State University's College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology (CEAT) was established in 2022 with a generous gift from The Zink Family Foundation. The mission of the Zink Center is to create, develop and promote interdisciplinary design, innovation and competition teams for the benefit of current and future generations of OSU students, the OSU system and the people of Oklahoma and beyond.

The Zink Center is designed to enrich the undergraduate engineering experience by providing the tools and resources necessary for students to succeed at the highest levels of technology, innovation and entrepreneurial endeavor. The Zink Center experience includes rapid prototyping and simulation tools to focus on solving industry problems; seven sponsored design-build competition teams; five interdisciplinary innovation teams; and other interdisciplinary senior design teams.

The Zink Center partners with industry, alumni, the OSU Riata Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, the Spears School of Entrepreneurship and the OSU Foundation to create hands-on design and innovation opportunities for CEAT students.

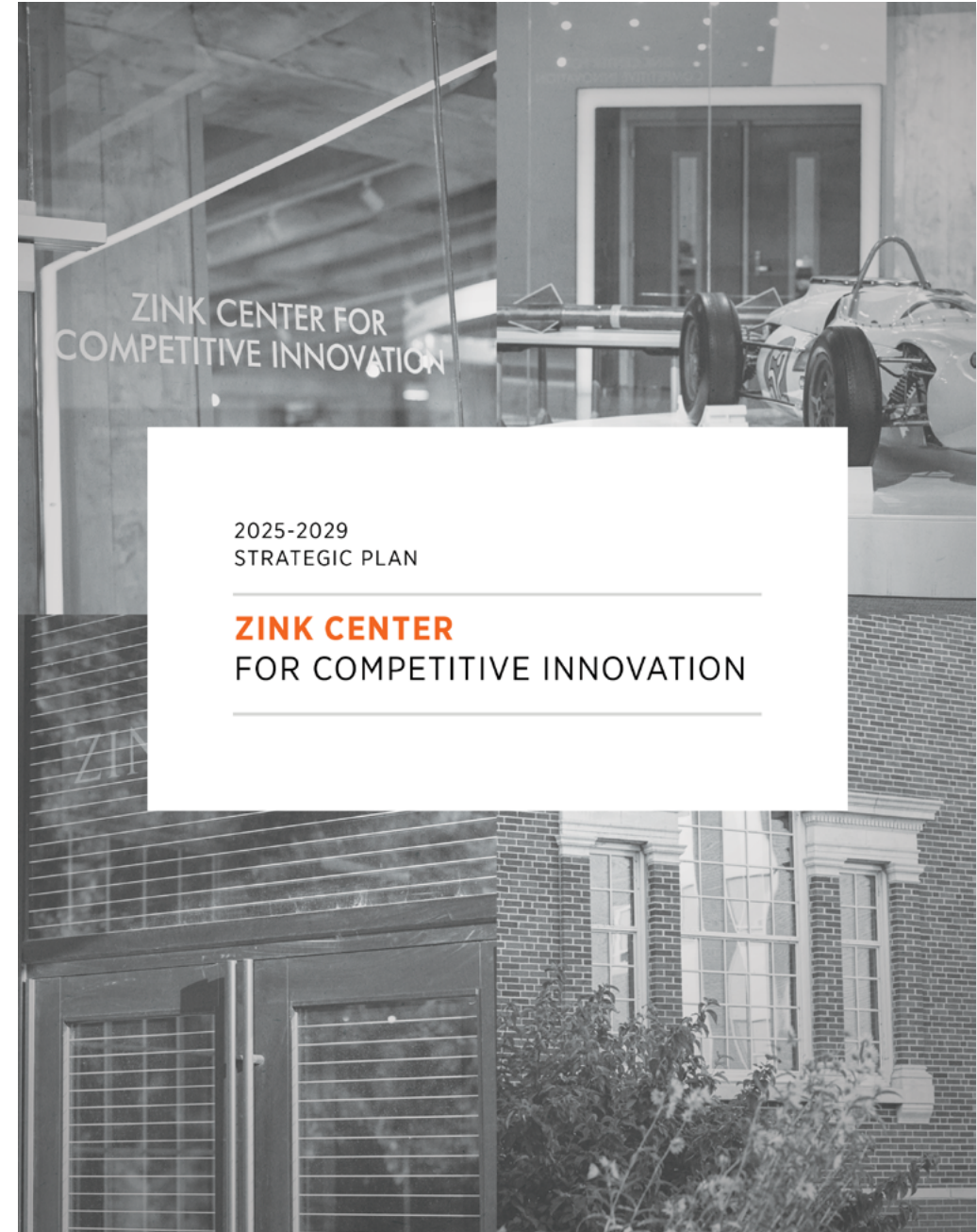
As the founding director of the Zink Center, I invite you to share in some of our accomplishments and successes in this—our first—Annual Report to stakeholders. I hope that you will agree that our mission, structure and programs serve as a platform for advancing technology and innovation for transformational and sustainable change.

**DAN FISHER, PH.D.**

Director, The Zink Center for Competitive Innovation  
*College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology*

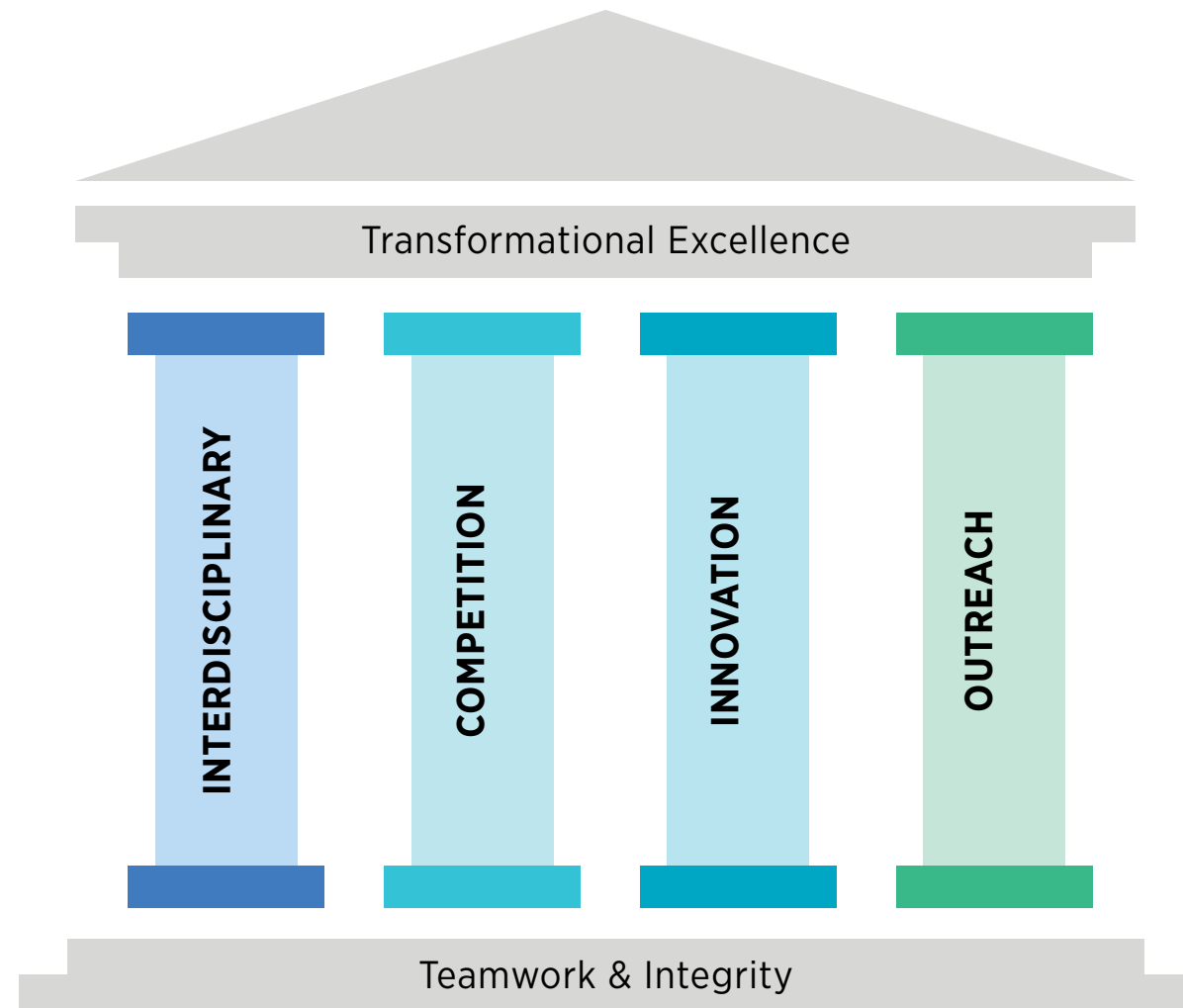
STRATEGY

# ZINK CENTER STRATEGIC PLAN



STRATEGY

# THE FOUR ZINK CENTER PILLARS



PROGRAMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

# A FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE EXCELLENCE

**1 ACADEMY OF MENTORS**  
*Fosters academic support, peer connections, and positive role modeling.* Mentors connect with students both virtually and in person. Mentees gain technical, leadership, career advice and a sense of community all of which contribute to academic, professional and personal growth and success. Launch the program! Be a mentor!

[LEARN MORE! GET INVOLVED](#)

**2 COMPETITION HUB**  
 Encourages teamwork, grit, and intellectual curiosity. Competition teams coalesce around an interdisciplinary design challenge requiring ingenuity, perseverance, and technical expertise in multiple disciplines to solve complex engineering problems. Students develop a shared sense of responsibility resulting in a culture of collaboration, growth, and mutual success. Support the teams! Build the hub!

[LEARN MORE! GET INVOLVED](#)

**3 INNOVATION HUB**  
*Cultivates creative prototyping and essential business skills.* Teams bring together CEAT and Spears students who desire to launch a technology-based business. By partnering with the School of Entrepreneurship, Cowboy Innovations, the Riata Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and the CEAT ENDEAVOR laboratory, the Zink Center positions these teams for a successful business launch. Support the teams! Build the hub!

[LEARN MORE! GET INVOLVED](#)

**4 INDUSTRY SPONSORED PROJECT TEAMS, SEMINARS, AND EVENTS**  
*Foster academic support, peer connections, and positive role modeling.* Mentees gain technical, leadership, career advice and a sense of community all of which contribute to increased retention and success. The program encourages academic and practical life support, long-term networking, and a culture of collaboration, benefiting both mentors and mentees in their academic and personal growth. Sponsor a project, seminar or event!

[LEARN MORE! GET INVOLVED](#)



# 1 ACADEMY OF MENTORS

**BRINGS STUDENTS, ALUMS AND INDUSTRY MENTORS TOGETHER TO FACILITATE THE GROWTH AND SUCCESS OF THE ZINK CENTER COMPETITION AND INNOVATION TEAMS**

- The Academy of Mentors is an informal network of experienced and interested alumni and friends who are eager to engage with CEAT students.
- The Academy of Mentors will assist in developing technical and team leadership skills as well as facilitating peer-to-peer mentoring within the student teams.
- Zink Center leadership will provide a variety of avenues for students and mentors to connect through in-person and online opportunities.



## FUNDING STRATEGY

### CREATE PEER-TO-PEER MENTOR SCHOLARS PROGRAM

(\$5M endowment)

- This program will be designed to award scholarships to excellent CEAT student mentors at the junior and senior levels.
- The program will include enrichment activities, including workshops, specialized training and conferences.

### CREATE PEER-TO-PEER SCHOLARS PRIZE FUND

(\$1M endowment)

- This fund will provide excellent peer-to-peer scholars with state-of-the-art computer hardware and software to support their mentoring activities.

### CREATE NAMED MENTOR SPACES WITHIN THE ZINK CENTER

- The mentor spaces will provide Zink Center competition and innovation team members with a place to meet in person or virtually with their mentors.
- Virtual meetings will be supported by state-of-the-art hardware and software.

# 2 COMPETITION HUB

**CULTIVATES CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING, TEAMWORK AND GRIT IN COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENTS**

- Competition teams bring together CEAT and Spears students with a common interest to compete in national and international collegiate competitions.
- Teams learn to successfully manage all aspects of complex new-product development including marketing, finance and performance specifications. Students develop communication, collaboration, time management, and business organization and leadership skills in a positive, high-energy environment.
- Teams engage with industry mentors and sponsors and learn to value the experiences and perspectives of others.



## FUNDING STRATEGY

### CREATE COMPETITION SCHOLARS PROGRAM

(\$5M endowment)

- Program will be designed to recruit top students to an immersive, multidisciplinary experience focused on CEAT competition teams and the design-build-competitve experience.
- Program will include enrichment activities, leadership workshops, and recruitment scholarships.

### CREATE TRAVEL AWARD FUND

(\$2M endowment)

- Fund will underwrite travel costs to national and regional competitions for selected competition team members.
- Funds will be awarded to selected students based on their contributions to the overall success of the team.

### CREATE COMPETITION PRIZE FUND

(\$1M endowment)

- Fund will provide for three named annual competition team awards in perpetuity.
- Fund will award prizes for the top two teams and the most improved team.

### DIRECT TEAM SPONSORSHIP THROUGH GIFTS AND IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

- Funds will be distributed to the teams to support their activities.
- Sponsors will be recognized on the Zink Center and team websites.



# 3 INNOVATION HUB

**CULTIVATES CREATIVE PROTOTYPING AND ESSENTIAL BUSINESS SKILLS THROUGH INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMWORK**

- Benefits for students include incubator resources, business startup skills training, business competition opportunities, networking, and startup funding.
- Teams bring together CEAT and Spears students who desire to launch a technology-based business.
- Team guidance focuses on successful business launch provided by a partnership between the Zink Center, the Riata Center, the Spears School of Entrepreneurship, and the CEAT ENDEAVOR Laboratory.
- Teams include freshman students for a unique multi-semester mentoring opportunity with upper-class CEAT and Spears students.



## FUNDING STRATEGY

### CREATE INNOVATION SCHOLARS PROGRAM

(\$5M endowment)

- This program will be designed to recruit top students to an immersive, multidisciplinary experience focused on product ideation, design, development and market launch.
- It will include enrichment activities, programs, startup workshops, and recruitment scholarships.

### CREATE INNOVATION PRIZE FUND

(\$1M endowment)

- This fund will provide for three named annual awards in perpetuity.
- The awards will be designed to complement existing Riata Center competitions and will focus on technical excellence, innovation and collaboration.

### CREATE INNOVATION MAKERSPACES WITHIN ENDEAVOR

(3 named spaces in ENDEAVOR)

- The makerspaces will provide Zink Center Innovation teams with resources and collaborative spaces in a stimulating and mentoring environment.
- Spaces will be outfitted with hardware and software to support rapid prototyping and product design.

# 4 DIRECT TEAM SPONSORSHIP

**PROVIDES INDUSTRY SPONSORS WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE AND CONNECT WITH OSU STUDENTS**

- **Sponsored Projects:** Semester-long interdisciplinary senior design projects are developed by sponsors in collaboration with the interdisciplinary senior design coordinator. Sponsored project teams meet regularly with their sponsors throughout the semester.
- **Sponsored Seminars:** Zink Center seminars feature a reception, signage information table, and seminar keynote speakers. The sponsor's representatives have the opportunity to meet informally with students during the reception and after the seminar.
- **Sponsored Competition Teams:** Competition team sponsors underwrite the annual cost of materials, supplies and travel for the Zink Center competition teams. The sponsor's logo is featured on the Zink Center competition team website and on the competition vehicle. Sponsors are invited to attend the annual Zink Center fall barbeque where they can meet and interact with Zink Center competition team members.

*Inquiries about 'Ways to Give' can be directed to:*

**JILL BLAKE, OSU FOUNDATION**

jblake@osugiving.com  
(405) 612-3339



## FUNDING STRATEGY

### THE ZINK CENTER EXCELLENCE FUND

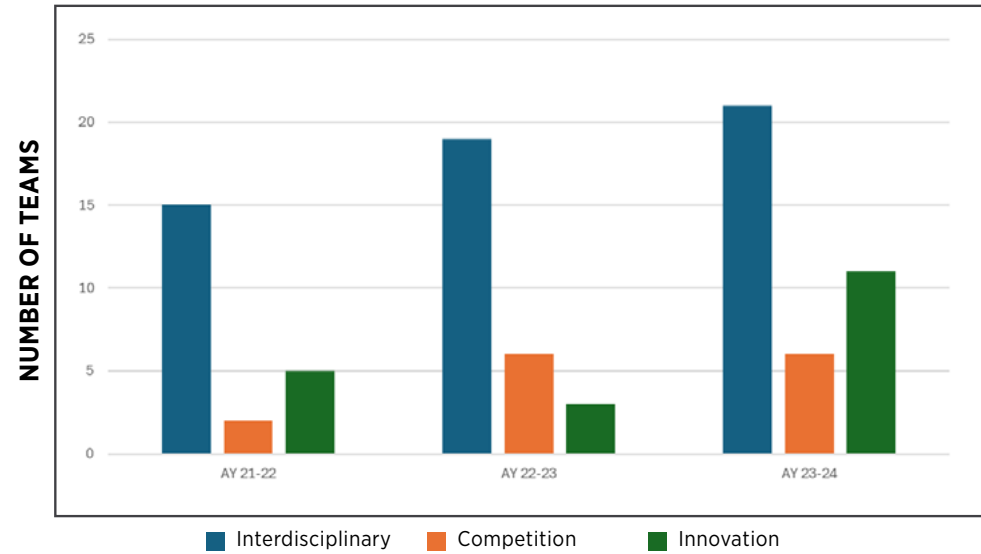
(non-endowed funds)

- **Sponsored projects** require a commitment to attend weekly design meetings online, and to participate in person in project evaluations at the end-of-semester Senior Design Expo. Projects are selected from a list of available projects by the student teams. Upon selection, a sponsored project requires \$5,000 in sponsor support plus materials and supplies.
- **Sponsored seminars** require \$10,000 in sponsor support and coordination with the Zink Center leadership. All logistics and expenses, including the catered reception, and speaker engagement will be handled by Zink Center staff.
- **Sponsored Competition Teams:** Competition teams may be sponsored at three levels: \$1,000, \$5,000 and \$10,000. Sponsors are encouraged, but not required, to engage with their team. In-kind donations of materials, supplies, and travel costs solicited by the team are welcome.

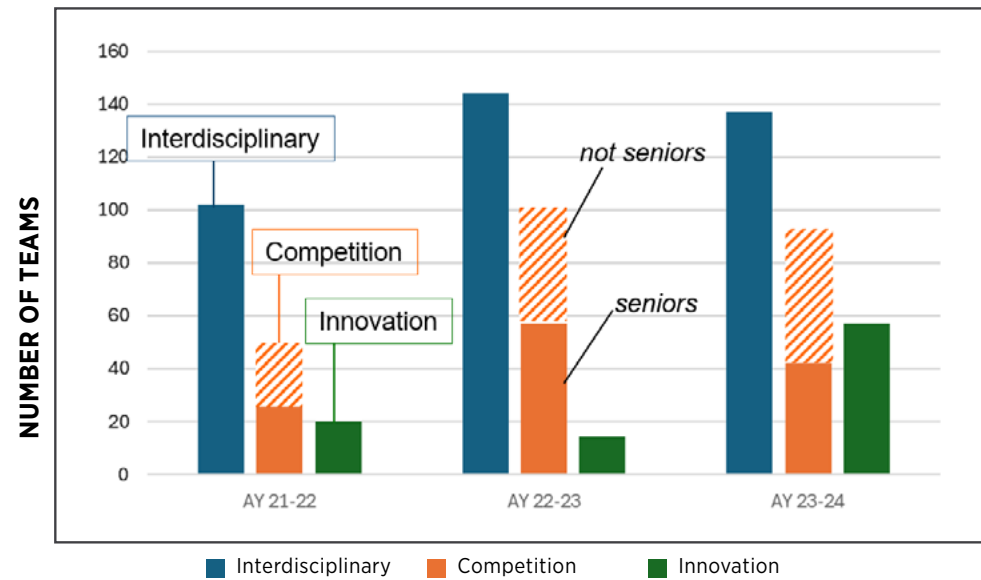


# METRICS

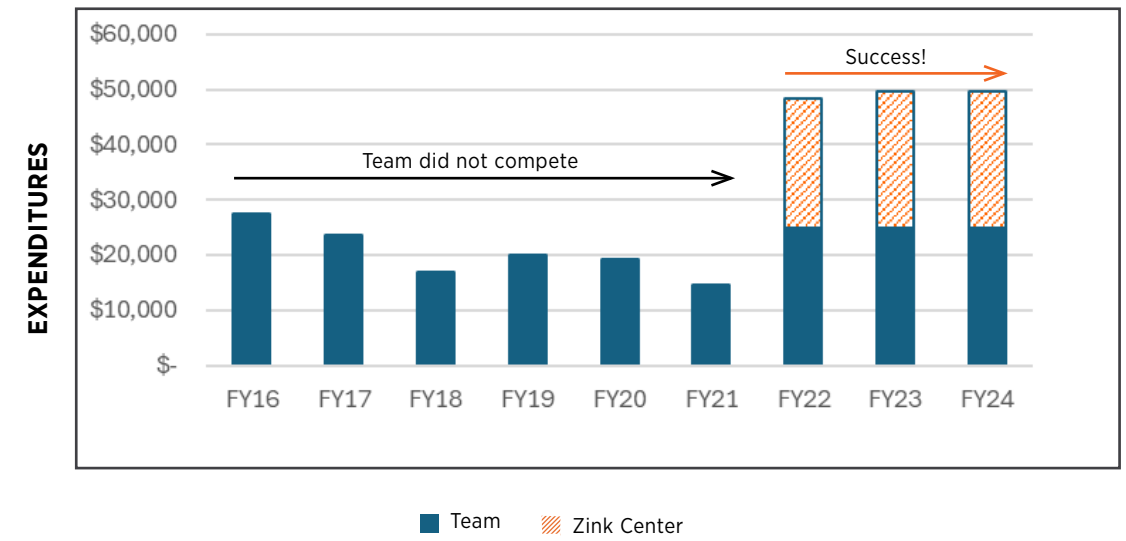
ZINK CENTER STUDENT TEAMS



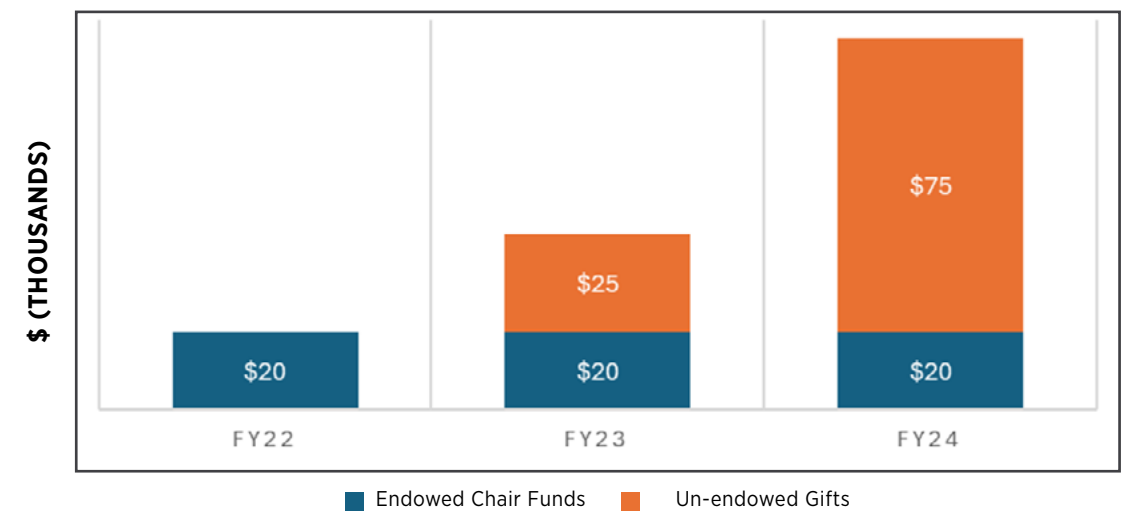
STUDENTS ON ZINK CENTER TEAMS



BULLET RACING ANNUAL EXPENDITURES



ALUMNI GIFTS





# KEY GOALS FOR 2025

**INCREASE**

the Zink Center resource infrastructure – faculty, staff, mentors and laboratory facilities and capabilities

**INCREASE**

the number of design, innovation and competition teams and the number of students participating on these teams

**BUILD**

greater collaboration with the Spears' Riata Center and School of Entrepreneurship

**CONTINUE**

to work with the OSU Foundation to engage more alumni and friends of the university to increase funding for the Zink Center

**DESIGN**

a multimodal marketing and communication platform to tell the “Zink Center story” better

**CONTINUE**

to expand and enrich the student experience through the convergence of technology, innovation, business and entrepreneurship

**ENGAGE**

more first- and second-year students in engineering and innovation activities

**CONTINUE**

to build a “culture of innovation”

**CONTINUE**

the Zink Center Leadership Seminar Series to focus on emerging and disruptive technologies, business principles and practices, and leadership experiences

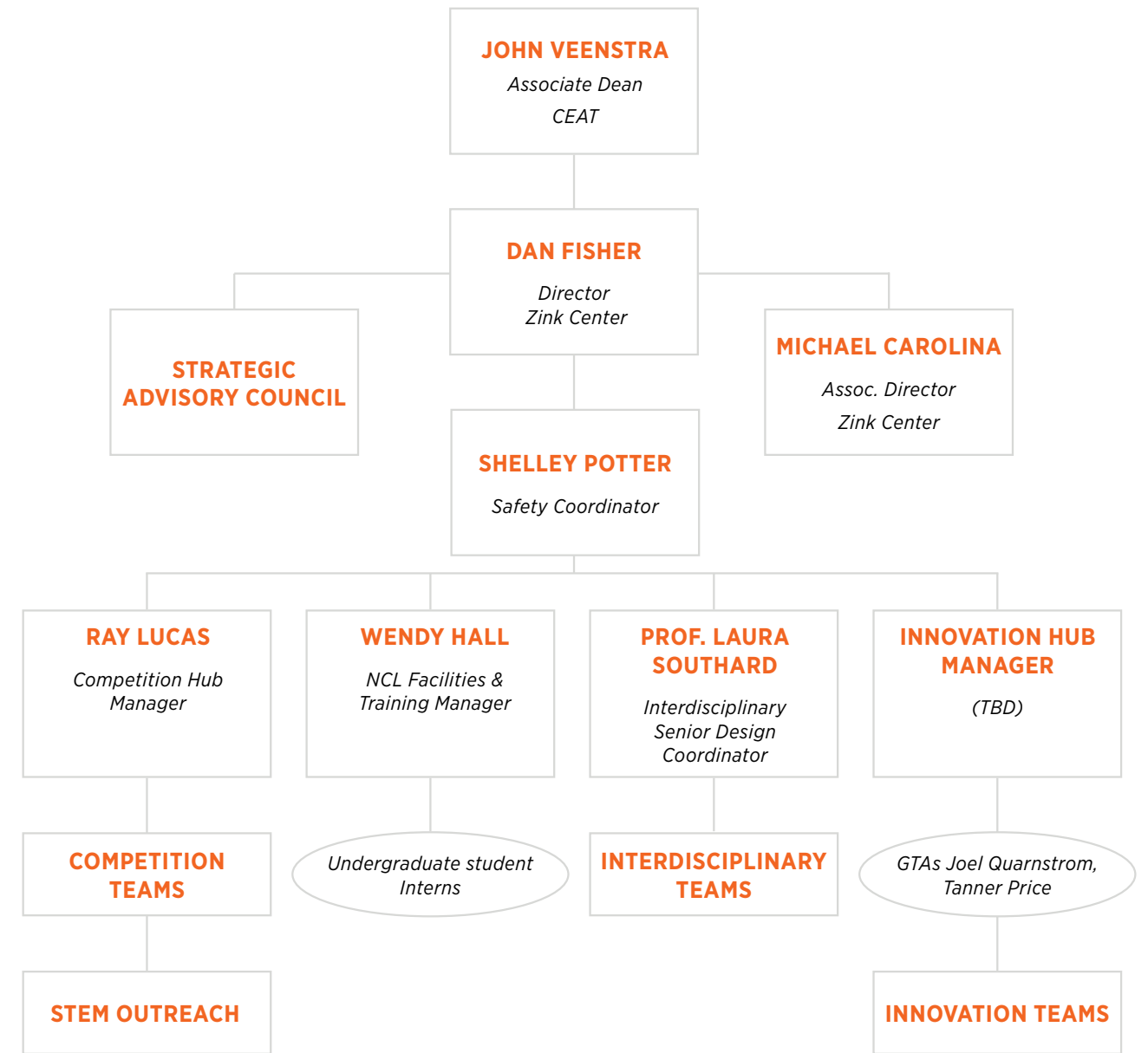
**INTEGRATE**

more professional and ethical content into programs and seminars



ZINK CENTER

# ORGANIZATION CHART





# ADVISORY COUNCIL



**ESTABLISHED IN 2023**, the Zink Center Advisory Council is a community of interest consisting of eight members who represent a broad set of engineering and leadership backgrounds and experiences and who are recognized for outstanding achievement in their respective fields. The Council's collective insights are vital in setting strategy, strategic priorities, and goals and objectives toward building and sustaining a unique and transformative student-centric model that focuses on a balance of excellent theoretical knowledge, superb knowledge-application practices, interdisciplinary collaboration, exceptional interpersonal skills, and grit and determination.

**JOHN AWEZEC**

Senior Vice President, Corollo Engineers (Retired)

**BUDDY BAYER**

Chief Operating Officer, Colt Technology Services

**MATTHEW CLIFTON**

Director, Zink Family Office

**TERRY DARK,**

Senior Director, Combustion Systems and Package Equipment Groups, Zeeco, Inc.

**DENAY HUDDLESTON**

Manager of Digital Products, Phillips 66

**CHRIS HUMES**

Consultant and former executive with TC Energy

**CHERIE HUMPHRIES**

Director of Special Projects, Williams Companies

**JODY VIVION**

Director of Business Development, Flintco, LLC

**JILL BLAKE**

(ex officio member, OSU Foundation)





# JOHN ZINK



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