



News Release

Business and Governmental Leaders Come Together at First-Ever Innovation kNowledge eXchange of 2022 (INX22) to Help Build a Sustainable Future *Inaugural Forum Explored Challenges, Changes and New Opportunities Related to Global Sustainability and Innovation*

RUTHERFORD, N.J., June 15, 2022 – An impressive lineup of international and local leaders in innovation and sustainability came together on June 6 and 7 at [American Dream](#) in East Rutherford, N.J., and [Felician University](#) in Rutherford, N.J., for the inaugural [Innovation kNowledge eXchange of 2022 \(INX22\)](#).

The two-day forum, which focused on developing groundbreaking and sustainable solutions to some of the world's top challenges, was organized by [Felician University's Lenke Family Center for Innovation](#), its [Center for Academic Technology](#), and its Buildings & Grounds Department, plus the [Royal Academy of Science International Trust](#).

“INX22 was an impactful, ambitious event packed with amazing inspiration and big ideas,” said Joseph Lizza, executive director of the Lenke Family Center for Innovation. “We are extremely proud of the caliber of programming at this first-ever event, which brought forward-thinking industry leaders together from our own backyard and across the globe. We'd like to thank our sponsors, speakers, volunteers and, of course, our attendees, for their incredible support. We look forward to seeing everyone next year at INX2023.”

Day 1: Inspiring Global Sustainable Solutions

A diverse roster of speakers set the tone for the two-day event by sharing their journeys, conveying essential lessons, and offering insights. These trailblazers included:

- Khawar Nasim, acting consul general of Canada to the U.S. in New York
- Clare Guinness, innovation district director for Innovation City Belfast (Belfast, Northern Ireland)
- Kai Feder, chief of staff at the New Jersey State Office of Innovation
- David Perlin, Ph.D., Chief Scientific Officer for the Hackensack Meridian Health Center for Discovery and Innovation
- Kemi Olugemo, MD, director of communications for Women of Color in Pharma
- World-renowned spinal surgeon Lawrence Lenke, MD, and his wife, Beth Lenke

Panel discussions focused on food sustainability at restaurants and within the food supply, as well as Felician University student innovation activities implemented at INX22.

Food sustainability panelists included Chef Antonio and Brenda De Ieso, owners of Italian farm-to-table restaurant Fiorentini – the first business in Rutherford, N.J., to be identified on the State of N.J.’s Sustainable Business Registry. The panel also featured Stacey Antine, MS, RDN, founder of Ridgewood, N.J.-based HealthBarn USA; and Ron Mirante, founder of Bone-In Food, LLC, headquartered in Hillsborough, N.J. Felician University students also lead a panel on how they employed innovative technologies and ideas to support INX22 activities. The panel featured students led by Joe Celentano, David Crawford and Gabriela Rivera Pira, along with Kendrick Moran, Richard Mejia, Daniella Ospina, and Ashley Rodriguez.

Day 2: The Student Case Study Competition

Felician University, in Rutherford, hosted the student case study competition on Day 2. Through a rigorous process, five student teams were selected from an international pool of applicants to present their ideas and proposed solutions for the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal #3: "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages."

Two teams each from Felician University and Italy’s John Cabot University, and one team from Italy’s University of Pisa, delivered their presentations broadcast on a live video feed. The four-person team from University of Pisa emerged victorious, capturing the event’s \$10,000 team prize.

The winning team’s idea focused on creating a multiple-step plan for the harmonization of health data around the globe, featuring a two-sided approach through institutional and technological innovation. Students described the challenges to worldwide uniform data collection and evaluation – including weak and fragmented institutional capacities, different and often insufficient domestic financing, and a widespread lack of availability of disaggregated health data. The team’s solution focused on tackling missing data.

Receiving the Honorable Mention designation in the student case competition was a Felician University student team, including Thailina Marrero and Farah Alnami, coached by faculty advisor Janel Owens. The team addressed how to take on the challenge to achieve a systemic global network for Electronic Health Records that provides accessibility, privacy, and accuracy – and can be shared across multiple healthcare provider platforms.

The INX22 team is grateful for the participation and support of Dr. Lawrence and Beth Lenke, and for shining a spotlight on the importance of innovation in healthcare and throughout the intellectual spectrum. As benefactors of Felician University’s Lenke Family Center for Innovation, the Lenkes are year-round champions of collaboration among experts, entrepreneurs, and students; and this think-tank environment that evaluates, synthesizes, and influences innovative market advancement. As our inaugural INX event’s Diamond Sponsor, the Lenke Family Foundation has played a critical role in making this ambitious program a reality.

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Photo caption:

The inaugural Innovation kNnowledge eXchange of 2022 (INX22) forum was presented by a broad team and expert speakers, focusing on developing groundbreaking and sustainable solutions to some of the world's top challenges. Pictured (left to right) are Felician University's Mazdak Zamani, Maura DeNicola, Charity Dacey, Stephanie McGowan, Joseph Lizza, and Louis Ruvolo; then Assemblyman Christopher Tully, Kai Feder of N.J. State Office of Innovation, Elizabeth Lenke of the Lenke Family Foundation, and Felician's Deanna Valente and Meggan O'Neill.

Editor's Note: For additional photos of the event, please contact Ken Hunter of Caryl Communications at ken@caryl.com. Other materials available for media use are at <https://caryl.com/innovation-knowledge-exchange/>.

[About Innovation kNnowledge eXchange of 2022 \(INX22\)](#)

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