

# Public Interest Technology University Network



## WHAT IS PUBLIC INTEREST TECHNOLOGY?

Public interest technology refers to a set of practices to design, deploy and govern technology in ways that advance the public interest. Interdisciplinary by nature, it involves the ability to assess and respond to the core ethical, legal, policy, social, economic and political implications of technology.

PIT includes technical fields like computer science and engineering, along with law, policy, movement-building, the social sciences and the humanities, directing attention to our collective need for justice, dignity, and autonomy and ways to embed such values in an evermore technological world.

Similar to public interest law, institutions of higher learning are defining and driving the growth of this field. Crucially, it draws not only on the knowledge of experts, but on the experiences of everyday people whose lives and wellbeing are increasingly defined by technology.

**WE LIVE IN A NEW KIND OF TECHNOCRACY, WHERE THE RULES OF TECHNOLOGY DETERMINE HOW WE LIVE OUR LIVES. THROUGH PUBLIC INTEREST TECHNOLOGY, WE CAN MAKE SURE THAT OUR DEMOCRACY GETS RESTORED.**

**Latanya Sweeney  
Harvard University**

2020 ANNUAL PIT-UN CONVENING

Learn more at [www.PITcases.org](http://www.PITcases.org)

The Public Interest Technology University Network (PIT-UN) fosters collaboration between universities and colleges to build the field of public interest technology and nurture a new generation of civic-minded technologists.



## Vision

PIT practitioners place equity at the center of tech design, deployment and governance, leading to technologies that work for all, especially those who have been most marginalized.

## Mission

To cultivate inquiry, education, research, and practice that positions the next generation of technologists to design, build, deploy and govern technologies that advance the public interest.

## Membership

PIT-UN is comprised of **59 U.S.** and **4 international members, including 70% of top tech schools in the nation.**

Since 2019, PIT-UN members have created career pathway models for practitioners-in-training while supporting faculty in their efforts to make PIT a well-recognized and well-funded academic discipline.

Through new curricula, research agendas, and interdisciplinary centers, PIT-UN members are developing the capacity, expertise and human capital needed to make public interest the norm in technology.

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| ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY                       | PARDEE RAND GRADUATE SCHOOL            |
| BOSTON UNIVERSITY                              | PENN STATE UNIVERSITY                  |
| BROWN UNIVERSITY                               | PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY                  |
| CAL POLY STATE UNIVERSITY                      | PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY            |
| CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY                     | PRINCETON UNIVERSITY                   |
| CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY                | ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY      |
| CEPI FGV DIREITO-SAO PAULO                     | SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY              |
| CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK                    | STANFORD UNIVERSITY                    |
| CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY                     | STILLMAN COLLEGE                       |
| COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY                            | TEMPLE UNIVERSITY                      |
| CORNELL UNIVERSITY                             | THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY              |
| DUKE UNIVERSITY                                | THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN      |
| FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY               | THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH            |
| FORDHAM UNIVERSITY                             | UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA                  |
| GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY                   | UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BERKELEY      |
| GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY                          | UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SANTA CRUZ    |
| GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (GEORGIA TECH) | UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO                  |
| GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY                       | UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH                |
| HARVARD UNIVERSITY                             | UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO      |
| HOWARD UNIVERSITY                              | UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AT AMHERST |
| ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY               | UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN                 |
| INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON                 | UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA             |
| JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY                       | UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA                   |
| LANE COLLEGE                                   | UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED                   |
| LEMOYNE-OWEN COLLEGE                           | UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA                 |
| MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY          | UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON               |
| MEHARRY MEDICAL COLLEGE                        | VIRGINIA TECH                          |
| MIAMI DADE COLLEGE                             | WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY               |
| MISSOURI UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY    | WILLIAM & MARY                         |
| NAZARETH COLLEGE                               | WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE        |
| NEW YORK UNIVERSITY                            |  |
| NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY                        |  |
| OLIN COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING                    |  |

Network members may choose to focus on one, some, or all six of the field-building areas, in addition to other initiatives. The Network seeks to center equity, diversity and justice within PIT programs and projects, leveraging the use of data and human-centered approaches to foster new solutions.



## Successful PIT Projects include...

- GIS Certificate that increases minority student access to climate tech training and supports flood-prone municipalities (**Miami-Dade College**)
- Training and employing young people from marginalized communities as data wranglers (**Georgia Tech**)
- Cybersecurity clinics where students educate and support local businesses and nonprofits (**Stillman, UC Berkeley, MIT & others**)
- Machine-learning tools that help public interest lawyers and everyday people assess court proceedings (**UT Austin**)

## Network Activities

### NEW MEMBER ONBOARDING

Applicants attend four sessions to learn key PIT concepts, build relationships and develop an institutional framework for success. Applicants who decide to become full members then set milestones and commit to an action plan.

### NETWORK CHALLENGE

Our annual grant program has invested **\$14m** since 2019 in new ideas to build PIT programs and career pipelines. **\$2.3m** was awarded to **18** proposals from **48** institutions in 2022.

The 2023 Challenge will focus on Cross-Disciplinary Educational Initiatives, and Career Pipeline & Placement Efforts.



### ANNUAL CONVENING

PIT-UN faculty, students, administrators and institutional leaders gather at a member campus to learn about and celebrate PIT alongside artists, technologists, nonprofits, government leaders and community organizations.

### WORKING GROUPS

Anyone from a PIT-UN institution can help pilot innovative ideas to push the PIT space forward.

#### 2023 GROUPS:

- Wiki Scholars
- DEI in Cybersecurity
- PIT @ NSF
- Mid-West Regional

### SPECIAL RFP'S

Targeted grant opportunities to develop products, research curricula and programs. Past RFP's include PIT Career Fairs and a Technologist Code of Ethics.