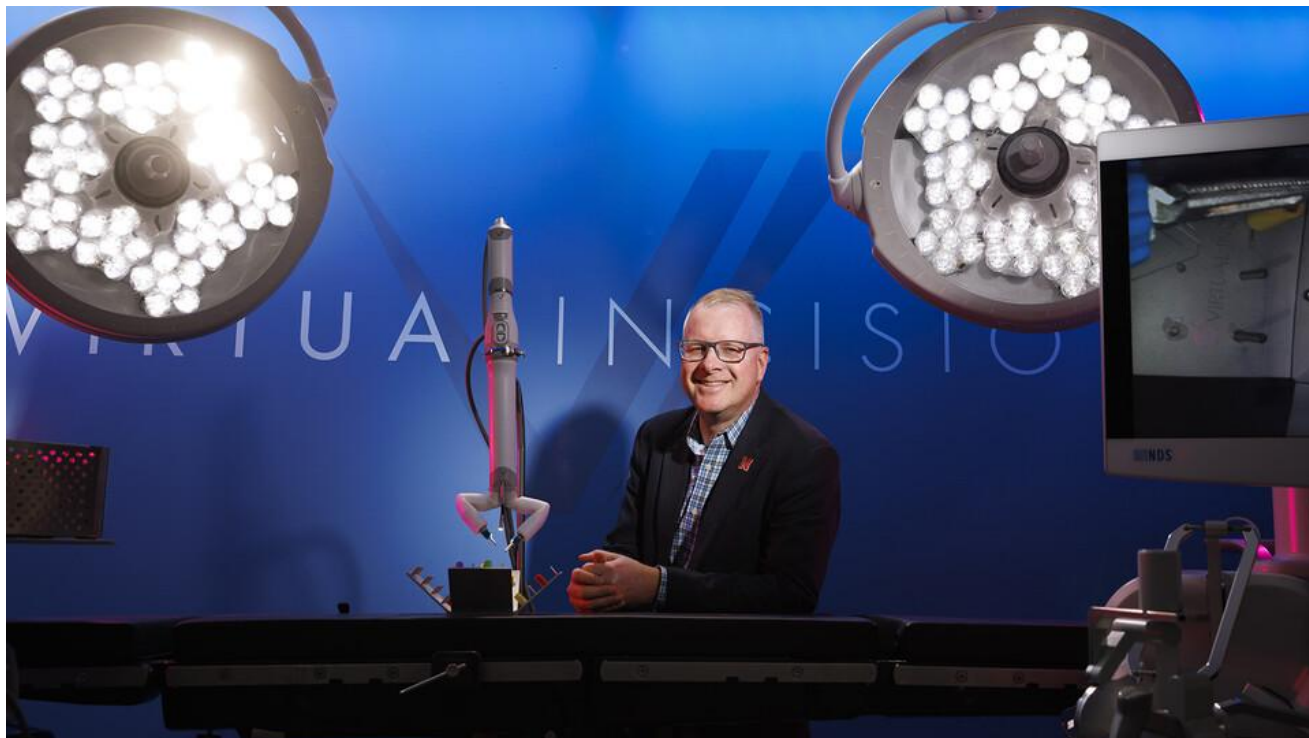




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Farritor wins inaugural NU faculty commercialization honor

by [Melissa Lee](#) | [NU system](#) ([/written-by/melissa-lee-nu-system/](#))



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Nebraska's Shane Farritor is the inaugural winner of the University of Nebraska's Faculty Intellectual Property Innovation and Commercialization Award.

Nebraska's Shane Farritor is the inaugural winner of the University of Nebraska system's intellectual property award.

The Faculty IP Innovation and Commercialization Award, one of the [President's Excellence Awards](https://nebraska.edu/president/faculty-engagement/presidents-excellence-awards), was created to honor NU faculty who have developed and nurtured intellectual property from concept to licensing or startup business.

Farritor, the David and Nancy Lederer Professor of Engineering, is chief technology officer of Virtual Incision, a Nebraska-based startup that he co-founded with Dmitry Oleynikov, former University of Nebraska Medical Center professor of surgery. The duo's goal is to commercialize miniature surgical robots they developed together.

The robots can be inserted through a tiny incision in a patient's navel to perform minimally invasive surgery, significantly reducing the patient's pain and recovery time. Because they are much smaller and simpler than current surgical robots – which are large and function outside the body – Virtual Incision's products could be used in smaller hospitals by more surgeons, ultimately lowering costs and making minimally invasive robotic surgery accessible to more patients.

“We created this new award because it's so important to spotlight the remarkable work that University of Nebraska faculty are doing to turn their research breakthroughs into products and businesses that improve Nebraskans' lives and grow our economy,” said Ted Carter, NU president. “Commercialization is not a simple or fast process. It requires the very highest levels of innovation, dedication and persistence.

“The groundbreaking work that Dr. Shane Farritor and his collaborators have done through Virtual Incision is truly deserving of this recognition. Their efforts will change lives – exactly why the University of Nebraska exists.”

Farritor has secured more than \$100 million in venture capital to move Virtual Incision forward, and has worked through an extensive regulatory process to be able to perform clinical trials with his company's product.

An initial target for the technology is colon resection, a procedure performed about 400,000 times per year in the United States. The robots developed by Farritor and his team have the potential to reduce the hospital stay of colon resection patients by several days each, saving millions in patient care costs and reducing patient risks associated with extended in-hospital recovery.

In addition to his success in commercialization, Farritor is a prolific researcher and highly impactful faculty member within the College of Engineering. He holds about 175 patents with 100 more applications pending, contributing impressively to the NU System's top-100 worldwide ranking in earning patents for faculty research. He was inducted as a Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors – one of only 10 Nebraskans to earn such an honor – and received the Prem S. Paul Innovator of the Year award from NUtech Ventures.

Farritor also contributes significantly to Nebraska’s innovation ecosystem. He employs some 25 graduates of the College of Engineering at Virtual Incision’s facility at Nebraska Innovation Campus, and led a vision to create the Nebraska Innovation Studio at Innovation Campus, a makerspace where members of the university and broader community can work and share ideas.

“His robots are out there doing surgery by real surgeons on patients in need,” said Lance C. Pérez, dean of engineering and Omar H. Heins Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering. “This is not only a best-in-Nebraska effort, it is a best-in the-world level of effort.”

The FIPICA is accompanied by a \$10,000 stipend. Farritor and other President’s Excellence Awards recipients will be honored at an event later this year.

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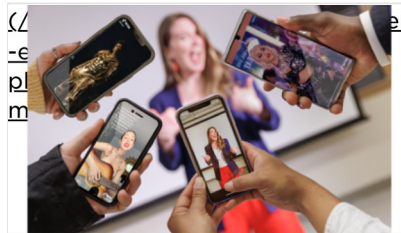
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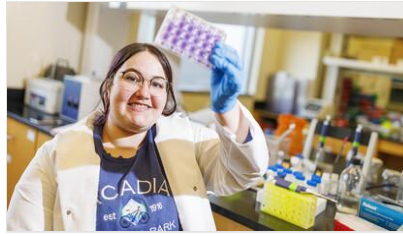
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