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STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

For Immediate Release

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University at Albany, SEFCU, Small Business Development Center (SBDC), and Empire State Development's Small Enterprise Economic Development (SEED) Program Receives 2012 Tribeca Disruptive Innovation Award

Character-Based Microloan Program Recognized with National Award

ALBANY, N.Y. (April 11, 2012) -- The Small Enterprise Economic Development program (SEED), a partnership among the University at Albany, SEFCU, the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and Empire State Development (ESD), has been named a [2012 Tribeca Disruptive Innovation Award](#) recipient. The Tribeca Film Festival, in association with Harvard Business School Professor Clay Christensen and the Disruptor Foundation, recognizes individuals and organizations for “innovative ways of looking at – and often dramatically changing – the world we live in.” Other 2012 recipients include Jack Dorsey, founder of Twitter and Square; music icon Justin Bieber and manager Scooter Braun; Def Jam Records founder Rick Rubin; and noted oncologist Steven A. Curley.

SEED strives to improve local New York Capital Region economies by promoting and fostering small business and microenterprise development. It gives small businesses the necessary training and access to capital to make their company a success.

SEED links entrepreneurs with the expertise and educational resources of UAlbany's [School of Social Welfare](#), the UAlbany [School of Business](#) and its [Small Business Development Center \(SBDC\)](#), and the financial resources of SEFCU and ESD.

During the training, program participants learn the key components of small business

ownership such as business planning, legal issues, marketing, and financial management. The SEED team consists of a program coordinator, UAlbany student interns, and business community volunteers who serve as mentors assisting candidates with the development of their business models and providing social support, including capacity building.

To date, the pilot program, using principles of character-based lending, has interviewed 150 program applicants with 33 accepted to complete the training. Eighteen loans have been made totaling \$630,000. The program has helped establish nine new companies, expand nine existing businesses and create or retain 68 jobs. The individual entrepreneurial business ventures range from a web portal for people with disabilities to restaurants, taxi and concierge services, a spa and a recyclables redemption center. Hear some of the entrepreneurial stories [here](#).

What first started with a concept developed by SEFCU President and CEO Michael J. Castellana, UAlbany School of Social Welfare Dean Katharine Briar-Lawson, UAlbany School of Business [Dean Donald Siegel](#) and Bill Brigham, Director of UAlbany's Small Business Development Center, has led to \$2.5 million in financial support from SEFCU and \$96,700 from ESD to stimulate the creation and growth of small businesses in New York's Capital Region. SEFCU's revolving loan fund uses character-based lending as the underwriting criteria. This non-traditional form of lending assesses an entrepreneur's creditworthiness based on his or her relevant expert knowledge, entrepreneurship, good knowledge of the relevant market, and ability to handle crises.

The program's key goal is to improve local economies in the Capital Region and surrounding counties by promoting and fostering small business and microenterprise development within distressed communities.

SEED will receive the award on April 27 at the Third Annual Tribeca Disruptive Innovation Awards, hosted by NYU Stern School of Business.

“UAlbany’s SEED program is honored to be recognized with a Tribeca Disruption Innovation Award,” said UAlbany President George M. Philip. “In just eight months, the program has invested more than \$750 million dollars and created area jobs. It clearly illustrates the role of a research university in job creation and is a superb example of public-private partnership.”

“As we predicted, the SEED program is proving to be a success in creating a positive economic ripple in the Capital Region. It is great for the program to receive national attention. We’ve only seen the tip of the iceberg with this program. Great things are yet to come,” said Michael J. Castellana, SEFCU President and CEO.

“The Tribeca Disruption Innovation Award is another indication of the SEED program’s ability to leverage public-private partnerships to generate economic growth and create jobs,” said ESD Capital Region Regional Director Peter Wohl. “We’re honored that SEED has been nationally recognized as a real model for small business, character-based lending initiatives.”

Individuals may apply to participate in the SEED program by contacting Ryan Busch, Program Coordinator at (518) 485-7697 or via email at rbusch@albany.edu.

About SEFCU

Established in 1934, today SEFCU is among the 50 largest credit unions in the U.S. with more than \$2.2 billion in assets, over 230,000 members, and 44 branches in the Capital Region, Binghamton, Syracuse, and Buffalo. In addition to full service retail and commercial banking products and services, SEFCU is committed to supporting the community through the donation of time and talent of its staff and members, as well as monetary contributions to help people and make an impact in the communities it serves. Find us on Facebook[®] and follow us on Twitter[®].

About Empire State Development

Empire State Development (ESD) is New York’s chief economic development agency. The mission of ESD is to promote a vigorous and growing economy, encourage the creation of new job and economic opportunities, increase revenues to the State and its municipalities, and achieve stable and diversified local economies. Through the use of loans, grants, tax credits and other forms of financial assistance, ESD strives to enhance private business investment and growth to spur job creation and support prosperous communities across New York State. ESD is also the primary administrative agency overseeing Governor Cuomo’s Regional Economic

Development Councils and the marketing of “I Love NY,” the State’s iconic tourism brand.

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Educationally and culturally, the [University at Albany-SUNY](#) puts "The World Within Reach" for its 18,000 students. An internationally recognized research university with 56 undergraduate majors and 115 graduate degree programs, UAlbany is a leader among all New York State colleges and universities in such diverse fields as public policy, nanotechnology and criminal justice. With a curriculum enhanced by 300 study-abroad opportunities, UAlbany launches great careers. Visit UAlbany's extensive roster of [faculty experts](#).

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