



2024



Name: Denita Henderson

What year did you start working at FRES? July 2022

Job title (and brief description of what you do at FRES):

Managing Director, Pennovation Works

I manage Pennovation Works, a 23-acre urban technology park with a distinctive blend of offices, labs, and production space that houses over 100 innovation companies. We not only offer space, but exciting educational programs and networking opportunities to help startups grow and thrive.

How does what you do at FRES move Penn, the city, or our region forward?

Pennovation Works is an innovation hub that links the region's intellectual assets, research trailblazers, and entrepreneurial and community leaders...all with the shared purpose of advancing knowledge and generating economic impact. Whether there's an innovator working on proof-of-concept at a single bench in our incubator....or a mature research and manufacturing operation with dozens of employees...Pennovation Works is truly the place "Where Ideas Go to Work".

Have you or any family members attended Penn for classes or a degree (i.e. children, parents, spouse)?

Penn Alumna (BA in Economics – College; BS in Economics - Wharton with concentration in Strategic Management)

What led you to this career?

I grew up in North Philadelphia near Temple University, a formerly blighted community in need of holistic revitalization. After college, I returned to my neighborhood to work on large-scale, transformative real estate and economic development initiatives. I developed a passion for all things community development...a passion which still serves me well as I work to cultivate a thriving innovation community at Pennovation.

What characteristic or trait do you most value in your colleagues?

I work with a talented team at Pennovation. They inspire me everyday with their creativity, warm and inviting demeanor, and their consistent desire and willingness to do what it takes to make Pennovation one of Philadelphia's top resources for the innovation community.

What is your motto, words to live by, or best advice?

"To whom much is given, much is required." When you are blessed with opportunities, it is imperative to give back to the community and do what you can to have a positive impact on others.