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Students Pitch Their Best Innovations at Local Competition

Winthrop University

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Students Pitch Their Best Innovations at Local Competition

March 13, 2019

HIGHLIGHTS

- The competition is a partnership between Winthrop University and the Technology Incubator at Knowledge Park.
- A total of nine teams developed an "innovation" company and created a business model canvas for it.



ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA—Autumn's Harvest, a produce company that would create and use advanced industry-standard hydroponic planting systems, captured the top prize at the 5th Annual Student Innovation Competition on March 1. The competition is a partnership between Winthrop University and the [Technology Incubator at Knowledge Park](#).

A total of nine teams developed an "innovation" company and created a business model canvas for it. The Technology Incubator offered coaching to teams as they honed their pitches. Teams had five minutes to pitch their ideas to the judges. Judging criteria included innovation and the uniqueness of the idea; how business-ready the idea was; the use of technology; and response to feedback from potential customers.

"We had the largest participation yet with nine teams, which is the limit, and 22 students participating with most academic colleges represented," said Patricia Riley, assistant director of student activities.

Biology major Autumn Haynes and philosophy and religion major Jared Nodine came up with the winning Autumn's Harvest concept, noting that the hydroponic agriculture market—the method of growing plants without soil through mineral nutrient-saturated water solvents—is already worth \$25 billion with a 6.8 percent growth rate. Produce from the fictional farm would be shipped to retail outlets such as Earth Fare and export markets.

"Our goal objective is to provide an ecologically conscious grow cycle, provide fresh and organic produce, and provide economic stability to our farmers," the team wrote in its pitch.

Other winners included:

*2nd place: "Guidely: Let's Discover Different," an online platform in which travelers could book their own local tour guide. Users could select pre-established routes or customize their experiences. This was developed by **Faisal Alhazmi**, computer science major, and **Driton Bytyqi**, integrated marketing communication major.

*3rd place: "Plaza," a freelancing app designed for university faculty, staff and students in which they could share and advertise services. This was developed by the team of **Akiera Davis** and **M'Kel McDaniel**, both health care management majors, and Timothy Smith, a social work major.

*Audience Choice: "Politiforum: Stay in the Know," an app that would give users unbiased, factual information to help with voting and political knowledge. This was developed by the team of **Kalea Young-Gibson** and **Kiana Todman**, both political science majors, and Malik Frazier, a social studies education major.

All teams won \$500 thanks to sponsor [Coroplast](#).

A fifth team, which devised a financial app for students, was chosen to present at [1 Million Cups York County](#), a free program in which aspiring entrepreneurs can meet for coffee with mentors who can educate, engage and inspire them. The 1 Million Cups effort is active in more than 180 communities.

This team is comprised of **James Kachamila**, a business administration major; **Daniel Burkhart**, a computer science major; and **Trenton Chantemerle '18**.

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