



Design database software startup wins ideaLabs 2020

College student idea competition brings together 10 NEO colleges and universities

October 29, 2020 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Sonia Velu, an undergraduate college student from Case Western Reserve University, won ideaLabs 2020. Her business, Assess-V, is a software program that helps medical device design teams streamline the process by focusing on quality control and creating individualized design suggestions based on parameters provided by the customer.

Another Case student, Elizabeth Hanna, won second place with Hanna Cosmetiques, a natural cosmetics and skincare brand for Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, and West/South Asian women. Third place was awarded to Kent State University's Trollder, led by Luke Leyden, which makes kits of electronic components to solder together in a wide array of themes and difficulty levels, similar to Lego kits. Music Universities from Baldwin Wallace University won fourth place and College Connect from John Carroll University won 5th place. Both companies help prospective college students connect with peers and colleges to help the selection and application process.

Cash awards included \$4,000 for the first place, \$2500 for second place, \$1000 for third place, \$500 for 4th place, \$250 for 5th place, and \$100 each for five honorable mention recipients from The University of Akron, John Carroll University, Baldwin Wallace University, Hiram College, and Lake Erie College.

Undergraduate students from 10 NEO universities entered the competition on their respective campuses and developed business ideas. The top two from each of the ten participating schools were invited to the regional competition where they presented to local judges for cash prizes.

The competition was open to students from all majors at the ten EEC partner institutions. EEC partner colleges and universities include Ashland University, Baldwin Wallace University, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland State University, Hiram College, John Carroll University, Kent State University, Lake Erie College, Lorain County Community College, The University of Akron.

For the first year in its history, the competition was virtual and took place on October 22, 2020. Judges represented local businesses and entrepreneurship organizations such as Wisr, Jumpstart, Cafilia, the Northeast Ohio Student Venture Fund, and the University of Akron Research Foundation.

Moderated by EEC program graduate Alysha Ellis, Founder and Creator of Mas LaRae, the event featured a student panel of EEC program alumni and past ideaLabs winners who gave an update on their businesses and reflected on their experiences while the judges deliberated.

The final pitch event was sponsored by local accounting firm Corrigan Krause and student engagement software startup Wisr.

This is the 11th year the Entrepreneurship Education Consortium (EEC) offered ideaLabs to NEO students. The ideaLabs competition is offered free of charge to students thanks to generous support from the Burton D. Morgan Foundation and the Fred A. Lennon Trust.

Student participant testimonials

“The Idealabs competition is an amazing opportunity for students with an up and coming business idea to pitch it to a real audience.” - Luke Leyden, Kent State University

“This is such a great program and chance to get feedback on your business idea! It was great to hear the creativity of others and network with other entrepreneurs and business people. I'm very excited and hopeful for the future of my idea and to put the judges' thoughts to work.” - Lesley Rudin, Baldwin Wallace University

“IdeaLabs has given me the opportunity to connect and network with professionals outside my university to further my idea.” - Michael Flynn, John Carroll University

“It was a great experience! Getting feedback from so many knowledgeable judges did wonders to help us expand our thinking on our idea!” – Christopher Rudge, John Carroll University

About the Entrepreneurship Education Consortium (EEC)

The purpose of the EEC is to provide practical “experiential” and theoretical education to students in Northeast Ohio to prepare them to become entrepreneurs or intrapreneurs; create new ventures and jobs and build wealth for the region. The EEC was founded to promote both the concept and the reality of entrepreneurship among college students of all disciplines. Visit us at www.eecohio.org

EEC Supporter

About the Burton D. Morgan Foundation

Burton D. Morgan Foundation champions the entrepreneurial spirit, contributes to a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem, and serves as a leader in the field of entrepreneurship education through grantmaking, ecosystem building, and knowledge sharing. www.bdmorganfdn.org

Event Sponsors

About Corrigan Krause

Corrigan Krause is a mid-size CPA firm located in Westlake, Ohio, specializing in servicing closely-held businesses since 1989. With a team of over 50 individuals, Corrigan Krause provides various accounting, tax, compliance, and consulting solutions to the challenges that small companies face in the ever-changing business environment. www.corrigankrause.com

About Wisr

At Wisr, we help colleges and universities leverage technology to easily and actively engage students throughout their lifecycle. Whether online or on-campus, Wisr knows that prospective students who engage with an institution through Wisr are 3X more likely to attend in the fall. To learn more about our solutions, please visit www.getwisr.com.