

The Virgin Islands Consortium

UVI Announces 2016 HackFest Winners

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Fifteen teams and over 40 University of the Virgin Islands students participated in HackFest 2016, UVI announced on Tuesday.

Participants generated prototype phone apps in 24-hour marathon problem-solving sessions on Sept. 9 and 10, on the Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix and on Sept. 16 and 17, on the St. Thomas Campus.

Student teams, supported by other UVI students, faculty and NEARiX Corporation staff members, generated creative apps related to this year's theme, "Health and Wellness." HackFest team prizes were \$500 cash for Best Hack, \$100 cash for Most Innovative Hack and \$100 cash for Most Impactful Hack.

Now in its third year, HackFest would not be possible without the support of NEARiX, a St. Croix software development firm founded by Leon Hughes, CEO. HackFest participants are “all winners” said Hughes. UVI President David Hall was on hand to personally congratulate all of the 2016 HackFest teams.

“I am so proud of what our students accomplish in 24 hours,” said Dr. Timothy Faley, UVI’s Sokoloff Professor of Entrepreneurship. “But to me this is not about the product they produce; it’s about their own personal development. I see their confidence and leadership skills grow exponentially over the 24-hours of HackFest – that’s a fantastic thing to watch happen before your eyes.”

St. Croix Winners This year’s “Best Hack” on St. Croix was awarded to the team comprised of computer science major Amali Krigger and business major Mackenzie Gross for their phone app “WhatUEatin?” The concept phone app allows you to upload your recipes and any chronic health issues you may have. The app offers suggestions for healthy substitutes for ingredients in your recipes. The social component of the app lets you connect with others and share recipes and healthy eating advice.

In a surprise announcement, Hughes awarded Krigger and Gross a gift certificate each good for 40 hours of free consulting with top developers of his firm. These certificates, which have a total value of over \$5,000, will provide the resources necessary for this team to further develop their concept app. “Participating in the HackFest was a life-changing and learning experience,” said Krigger. “It gave me a chance to imagine an idea and bring it to life. It has given me hope, resources and new ideas towards my entrepreneurial and career goals.”

The “Most Impactful Hack” on St. Croix was awarded to the concept phone app “Mom.” This concept app was created by the team of Kalunda Cuffy, Tijani Shabazz, Alicia Taylor and Kaheem Thomas. “Mom” acts as a life coach for college students. Like your real Mom, the app gathers information from you on your NASA – Nutrition, Activity, Sleep, and Academics. Based on this input, the app responds with concern and behavior modification suggestions.

The “Most Innovative Hack” on St. Croix went to the team of Terrance Emmanuel, Leanne Morancie, and Geron Richards – the first English major to participate in UVI’s hackathons. This team created the “Holistic Practitioner Healers” app that assists in helping you to maintain your health by alerting you when your emotions are out of balance. The concept app interprets an IR scan of your body, available by using UVI’s 3D imaging cameras, to determine the state of your chakra centers. The app then makes personalized recommendations based on its analysis.

The concept phone app “Mood Makers” earned a UVI Bookstore gift certificate courtesy of VI EPSCoR. “Mood Makers” was developed by Yolanda Felix-Medina and Khadijah O’Neill, the first all-female team to participate in UVI hackathons. “Mood Maker” addresses the challenges college students face regarding, their lack of physical activity, imbalance of social and productive life, time-management, depression and stress. The app functions as a portal offering suggested links to information on specific topics of students’ concerns.

St. Thomas Winners: The “Best Hack” on St. Thomas was awarded to the team of Eliakin del Rosario and Jodie Dasent for their concept phone app “GourNet,” which will help you eat a more balanced diet by providing nutritional information about the food you are consuming. By either taking a photo of the food you are about to consume or verbally describing it, the app will search databases and return the meal’s nutritional information.

“I will continue, alongside my partner, to develop our app,” said del Rosario, who will pursue a career in software development. “I believe we can really make a change by informing the world about the nutritional values in the meals they consume throughout their day. A healthy diet can truly extend our lives.”

“Participating in the HackFest is always a fun experience,” said del Rosario, who has participated in all three Hackathons with Dasent. “I enjoy exploring new ideas and sharing with others the perks of technological advancements.”

The most “Innovative Hack” on St. Thomas, which awards creativity, was presented to two UVI freshmen and first-time hackers for their phone app “Binaural Healing Waves.” The user of this concept app would self-diagnose their feeling... anxious, sad, stressed, etc. The app would determine which of the five essential binaural waves may be responsible for the user’s negative symptoms. The app puts these waves back in balance by delivering the out-of-balance waves to the user as they watch a video or listen to music.

The most “Impactful Hack” on St. Thomas, which awards utility and impact, was awarded to the three-person team of Jesus Arista, Samuel Jones, and Shaneé Richards for their concept app” NutriSmart.” This app delivers a recommended, user-specific diet plan based on the user-supplied food preferences, and their medical and physical conditions.

VI EPSCoR provided a UVI bookstore gift certificate to “\$martFit,” which was developed by Michael Garcia, Natisha Hodge, and Tommy Wise. The app is a gamification of exercise app that motivates people to exercise by providing financial rewards. Sponsoring companies that also advertise on the app will provide gift certificates for achieving specific levels of exercise-related points.

The remaining seven concept apps and development teams were:

- “Balance;” developed by Sean Benjamin and Jonathan Woods
- “Diagnizer;” developed by Jason Baron and Riviere King
- “Hive;” developed by DeWein Pelle and Elangeni Yabba
- “L.G.M.,” Developed by Nakeshma Cassel, Lorne Joseph, Morvel Fahie, and Davindra Ramsundar Jr.
- “My Aid;” developed by Lawrence White and Kiarra Vanterpool
- “NetMed;” developed by Zandria Acosta; Jahnelle Rivera, and Alayna Belshe
- “UnderTake;” developed by Asel Mustafa, Fatimah Hussein, and Haya Mustafa

The hackathons will be followed this year by a new software development competition called “Design Slam.” That program will kick off on both UVI campuses on Friday Oct. 14. During this months-long Design-Slam competition, the student teams will develop detailed click-able prototype apps or websites. Cash prizes and a trip to the national competition await the winners of this new competition, which is sponsored by the firm

Social Wellth.

Feature Image: Most Best Hack: GourNet (left to right) Dr. David Hall, Eliakin del Rosario, A.Jodie Dasent, Mr. Leon Hughes, and Dr. Tim Faley pose for a photos after the 2016 HackFest on St. Thomas. (Credit: UVI)

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