

The Virgin Islands Consortium

UVI Announces 2018 Hackathon Winners

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The University of the Virgin Islands on Wednesday announced the winners of the 3rd annual Hackathon which was held on both the St. Thomas and Albert A. Sheen Campuses on September 14 and 15 and October 12 and 13, respectively.

This year's marathon problem-solving event was themed "Hack UVI". The competition was keenly contested by 15 students, nine on the St. Thomas Campus and six on the Albert A. Sheen Campus. The seven student teams identified and created solution concepts to fix frustrations they identified around the campus, according to the release.

As is customary, on the final day, the students present their app concepts before a panel of judges who determine the Best Hack, Most Innovative Hack and Most Impactful Hack.

The “Best Hack” winners from the Albert A. Sheen Campus were the team consisting of Edwin Joseph and Khadijah O’Neill who created UVI Up. UVI Up is an app that solves the problem of not being able to connect to Blackboard because the internet is down. This team’s solution is to create a Wide area network (WAN) across the University that will allow student to up-load and down-load onto Blackboard information stored on the UVI servers. Once the internet is back up, these servers will re-sync with the cloud-based Blackboard application.

The “Best Hack” on the St. Thomas Campus was focused on readily providing information to students. Thus, the team consisting of Tommy Wise and Christopher Jamil dubbed their app Campus Connect. The app shows the location of the shuttle bus using a GPS tracking system, allows you to see what buildings wifi is available and accessible, a weekly cafeteria menu, and allows you to stay connected to your campus club.

The “Most Innovative” hack on the Albert A. Sheen Campus, Office Hours, created by Cardinal Dames and Anverly Jones helps students connect with their professors. Professors could update the app weekly indicating their availability. Students could sign up for specific time slots with the professors via the app and also by selecting from a drop-down menu, let their professor know the nature of the appointment. Jones is a full-time High School student and part-time UVI student. She is the first high-school student to participate in UVI’s Hackathon.

The “Most Innovative” hack on the St. Thomas Campus, Student Hill, created by Quianah Joyce and Torhera Durand provides an efficient and comfortable way for students to voice and resolve their issues with the University. Student suggestions, wants, needs or complaints are crowd-sourced via this app to the student government. The app lets the student representatives prioritize the intensity and impact of the requests and then find the appropriate University authority to resolve the issue.

The “Most Impactful” hack on the Albert A. Sheen Campus was Hydrate UVI, created by Mackenzie Gross and Alexandra Wozniak. The problem this team addressed was the lack of drinking water around the Albert A. Sheen campus. Unlike the other teams, their solution was not a phone app, but water fill stations that students could use to fill their water containers. The water would be supplied by local water distributors. This solution seeks to also reduce the amount of plastic waste on campus by encouraging students to use reusable water containers.

Che-Raina Warner, Nigencia James and Keari Parris, members of the UVInventory created an app concept that would let students and faculty check to find out what UVI bookstore textbook and supplies are in-stock, eliminating physically going to the bookstore or calling to inquire when supplies would have arrived. The app, J-squared, created by Jamilla Connor and Joevarny Herbert was another app that seeks to locate the campus shuttle via a GPS indicator on the shuttle bus. Both teams, UVInventory and J-squared were awarded “Most Impactful” hack on the St. Thomas Campus.

“I wish to congratulate all the teams. The bar gets higher and higher every year. The presentations this year were among the best I’ve seen anywhere,” said Dr. Timothy Faley, Hackathon director and Sokoloff professor of Entrepreneurship.

This initiative was possible through the kind sponsorship of Mr. Leon Hughes, founder and CEO of NEARiX, a St. Croix software development company. Other support came from UVIDEA club, WUVI radio station, and the faculty and staff across the University.

“I particularly want to thank Mr. Aron Gumbs for his extraordinary event coordination, Dr. Tom Lombardi, VP Sharlene Harris, Professor John Munro, Mr. Elroy Richard, RMP of NEARiX and Mr. Sims Lawson of VI Small Business Development Center (SBDC) on St. Croix for mentoring teams and judging the competition. I also must thank the entire library staff on both campuses, for opening early on Saturday and otherwise allowing us to disrupt their normal weekend,” Dr. Faley said.

Through NEARiX’s sponsorship, winning teams will be awarded monetary prizes at the annual awards luncheon gala in Spring 2020. The teams who were awarded “Best Hack” will receive a \$500 cash prize. The teams who were awarded “Most Innovative” and “Most Impactful” will receive a \$100 cash prize.