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## Head of Woz U, a Silicon Valley Firm, Makes Appearance at UVI's 'Hackfest 2020'

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The University of the Virgin Islands said Thursday that tech savvy industry leaders, facetime with Silicon Valley icons and an extended competition, were just a few of the highlights that made Hackfest 2020 more impactful to students at UVI.

While the COVID-19 Pandemic caused the move to virtual, university organizers did their best to re-imagine Hackfest 2020, according to the release. Typically, a one-day competition, Hackfest offers students an opportunity to innovate and come up with theme-based applications.

“This year was different. We did a virtual hackathon that extended over a week,” said Dr. Tim Faley, program coordinator and distinguished professor of entrepreneurship. “We also added a noon-hour seminar series each day of “Hackfest Week” that provided insights into all aspects of

the tech industry. We were honored to have the president of Woz U, Mr. Chris Coleman. Woz U was founded by Silicon Valley icon and Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak.”

This year’s event ran from Oct. 26 – Oct. 30.

Five teams comprising of 11 University of the Virgin Islands students participated and completed “Hack the Pandemic,” the challenge for HackFest 2020, according to the release. In previous years, participants generated prototype phone apps in 24-hour marathon problem-solving sessions.

Working to “Hack the Pandemic,” student teams were required to check-in on-line with coaches, throughout the week, as they developed their phone app concepts, UVI said. The students completed the week-long hackathon and uploaded their five-minute video presentations of their app.

The Crowd Control app created by Lateefah Evans and Tahlia Frederick was awarded the grand prize of the Best Hack and \$400 for creating the app that was most consistent with the theme, according to the release. This crowd-sourced app will allow persons to know how busy a local business is so one can run your errands at a time when the crowds are minimal therefore reducing your potential exposure to COVID-19.

Effic-U\$ app created by Jackiema Flemming and Celestial Dazle was awarded the most creative presentation award, for which they received \$200. Effic-U\$ is a platform that connects those in need of short-term assistance with those that can provide it. This app is intended to appeal to persons isolated at home due to COVID-19 and are in need of assistance with small tasks, UVI said. Also, persons who need to supplement their income because they were negatively impacted by the pandemic.

Finally, the judges awarded the other three teams \$200 each for their pragmatic approach to addressing coronavirus-related issues in our community.

The Bite Size app by Akyem Prince and Khalai Vanterpool helps to increase the foot-traffic for local businesses and provide discounts to locals by using phone-based coupon books.

The Golden Pyramid by Khaysaun Vanterpool and Chervaunte Lewis highlights local alternatives by promoting local black-owned businesses that have been affected by COVID-19.

The Safe Search by Chris Murphy, Jordina Pierre and Silene Prentice provides information on which beaches or other destinations are the least busy at a particular time, according to UVI.

In addition to the annual student app-development competition, this year’s HackFest Week featured a daily noon-hour seminar series. Guest speakers ranging from UVI President David Hall, faculty and leaders in the business industry such as Chris Coleman, president of Woz U and Leon Hughes, CEO and founder of NEARiX.

Hackfest was made possible through the support of UVI School of Business and the financial support of NEARiX, a St. Croix-based software development firm.