



LAKE FOREST COLLEGE

ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION

THE LATEST

12 ENTREPRENEURS. 90 SECOND PITCHES. \$10,000 TO LAUNCH.

The 2021 Venture Design Challenge concluded on Saturday, April 24th with an entirely virtual final pitch event. Six finalist teams presented their startups, showcasing the progress each has made over the course of the semester and attracting a total of \$10,000 in prize money. Every finalist team brought their A-game, and were awarded the following prizes:



Best Pitch: Christine Hanna '21 with MyBody

Best Pitch runner-up: Thomas Anderson '21, Jay Patel '21 & Molly Gniady '21 with SES Labs

Best Venture Idea: Alec Brent '21 & Eoghan Kelly '21 with REPS Sports Networking

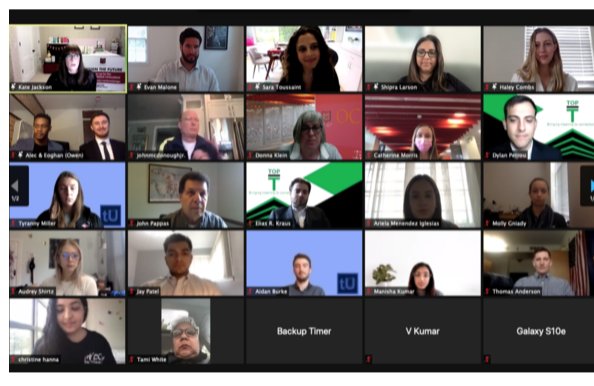
Best Idea runner-up: Dylan Petrou '21 & Elias Kraus '21 with TOP

Best Investment: Audrey Shirtz '21 & Manisha Kumar '21 with Optical Inclusion

Best Investment runner-up: Tyranny Miller '21 & Aidan Burke '21 with TunesU

During our halftime show, the audience cast their vote for **Best Pitch**, awarding it to team TOP.

[VIEW THE PITCHES](#)



While the judges deliberated, our audience enjoyed a halftime show that included a presentation by Mauricio Calderon-Castro '24 winner of the 2021 Davis Project for Peace and musical performances by Lake Forest College students.

Because this year's event was 100% virtual, our judges Zoomed in from all across the US. Our 2021 judges included:

Haley Combs, Nashville Entrepreneur Center Program Lead focusing on healthcare and music tech

Shipra Larson, Executive Director of Product Management at the Walt Disney Company

Evan Malone, RBC Investments and Wealth Management

Sara Toussaint, Vice President of Sports Sponsorships at Wells Fargo

We are grateful for their time, expertise, and encouragement.

We are also grateful to this year's mentors for their strong coaching and tireless support throughout the semester: Cheryl Ashley, Brandon Berish '20, Alice Boswell, Brian Bowen, Kristin Globell, Kris Jennings, and John McDonough.

And last, but certainly not least, the [Entrepreneurship Advisory Council](#) for its generous and continued support of our pitch competition and the Entrepreneurship and Innovation program.

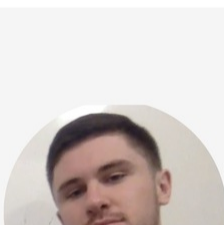
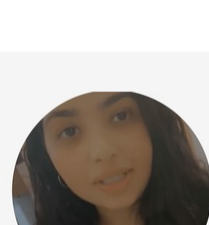
Thank you to everyone who participated in and supported the 2021 Venture Design Challenge. You helped make it one for the record books. We look forward to welcoming students back to the Lake Forest campus for the 2022 competition.

Design the Future in 2022

WHAT ARE STUDENTS SAYING ABOUT THE VENTURE DESIGN CHALLENGE?

"This experience truly teaches you how to pitch your product! Although challenging, you learn so much. Be connected & passionate about your product/service. Really open your lenses! Resilience & empathy are key."

– Christine Hanna '21 founder of MyBody

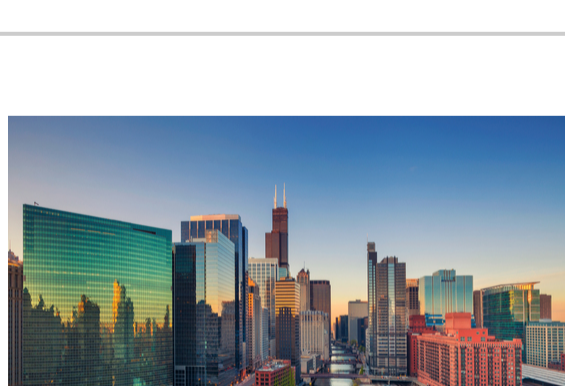
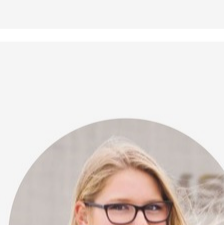


"The Venture Design Challenge was a great opportunity for us to learn about ourselves as entrepreneurs and gain the experience of pitching to a panel of high-quality judges. This gave us access to great feedback as we hope to launch our app."

– Eoghan Kelly '21 co-founder of REPS Sports Networking

"The Venture Design Challenge has introduced me to many insightful and fascinating professionals. Learning to work as a team and seeing all of the entrepreneurial components we've learned over the years come together has created an unforgettable experience."

– Audrey Shirtz '21 co-founder of Optical Inclusion

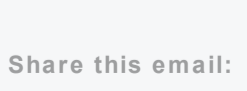


How will the Chicago startup ecosystem support our aspiring entrepreneurs?

The future certainly looks bright for our Forester founders. Chicago startups are enjoying a fundraising bonanza in 2021. According to the Polsky Center at the University of Chicago, in just the first three months of the year, Chicago startups have successfully raised \$2B in funding - making this the most funded quarter in 15 years. Almost surpassing the \$2.2B total raised in all of 2019 and the \$2.8B raised in 2020, this data released by PitchBook and National Venture Capital Association (NVCA) signals a red-hot start to the year for second city startups. And what's more exciting, according to the same [PitchBook and NVCA report](#), this massive spike in year-over-year growth in venture capital investments in Chicago is the largest of the top ten markets in the country. Read [more](#) now. And [more](#).

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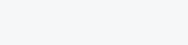
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