

For Immediate Release



AUB students win \$15,000 prize for developing a marketable, innovative idea

Beirut, Lebanon- 17/06/2014 -Two AUB students have won first prize in the inaugural edition of the Darwazah Student Innovation Contest for creating an application that helps travelers plan a trip “in a snap.”

Called Planitous, a mobile trip planner for Android and iOS, the application helped its creators Guy Daher and Karim Frenn (both BE engineering 2014) walk away with the \$15,000 Darwazah Student Innovation prize for the best innovative and entrepreneurial business idea.

The runner up prize of \$5,000 went to Doctor-Patient Communication Service, which allows patients to get a consultation from their doctors when a clinical visit is impractical. The service also allows doctors to be reimbursed for their phone consultation, in addition to accessing lab results and other medical records.

The mobile-based service was developed by Diana Abou Daher, Sabine Karout, and May Tehaili, all three are doing a master’s in business administration.

The top two projects were selected out of 108 submissions, of which six made it to the finals.

The purpose of the contest is to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation among AUB undergraduate and graduate students, as well as collaboration among students from different disciplines, while sharing knowledge and coming up with a well-rounded and complete proposal for an innovative product or service, explained Bijan Azad, director of the Samih Darwazah Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship Center at AUB.

“Before the contest we simply had no idea about the hard work required to turn an idea into a realistic innovation that has even a tiny chance in the market,” said Guy Daher, of the Planitous team. “This contest was hugely important for our team, and we had a fantastic time every step of the way,” added teammate Karim Frenn.

Members of the runner-up Doctor Patient Communication Service team also commended the contest for enriching their formal education.

“We really cannot think of a better way of integrating what we learn in the classroom with the competitive market realities,” said Sabine Karout.

Darwazah Center Director Bijan Azad was all praise of students and the quality of submissions. “We have always known that students are a pillar of our great institution,” he said. But we did not expect that in our first season, four of the six finalists to be already getting either investor or incubation inquiries! This is very gratifying for us and we will

continue to showcase and grow the innovation and entrepreneurial capabilities of AUB's students."

The Darwazah contest was launched in February by the Samih Darwazah Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship Center at AUB, which was established in 2011 through a gift by the Darwazah family, who owns and operates Hikma Pharmaceuticals plc, the Middle East's own pharmaceutical giant with manufacturing plants in USA, Europe, Gulf and MENA, a \$2.6 billion capitalized company listed on the London Stock Exchange and part of FTSE 250.

Other finalists in the contest included: Limni, a third-party administration service among insurance companies, accident experts, and GPS locators for tow trucks, repair shops, and spare parts providers to streamline any actions related to road mishaps; SpaceOS, which uses nano-micro satellites at 500-1500 kilometers above Earth's surface, to provide web access to locations that currently do not have Internet access across the globe; Ringaged, a ring that broadcasts a unique ID, coupled with a mobile application, with access to personal info and access to personal belongings, based on a simple handshake between two people wearing the ring; and BreatheGreen, which addresses new cement technologies, mainly Lafarge and Novacem, that would drastically reduce the air pollution problem in Chekka.

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 700 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 100 programs leading to the bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full service 420-bed hospital.

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