

UW-La Crosse: Erin Hanson wins WiSys APPStart Challenge

Posted on Thursday, Sep 24, 2020

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

UW-La Crosse's Deputy Director of Athletics Erin Hanson has won the 2019-2020 WiSys APPStart Challenge.

The annual contest connects great mobile app ideas with the expertise and resources needed to launch them.

Hanson's winning "Team Travel" app helps coaches and teams handle the complexities of travel coordination and documentation.

As the winner of this year's WiSys APPStart Challenge, Hanson has the option to tap into \$5,000 in WiSys funding to launch the app as a business venture.

"Every member of the UW community can innovate and contribute their great ideas to make a difference. From faculty, staff, students and alumni, this year's APPStart Challenge brought to light the UW System's incredible talent and that capacity for innovation," said WiSys President Arjun Sanga. "Congratulations to Erin Hanson for stepping up and innovating a solution to the problem of team travel administration."

In her role as deputy director of athletics, Hanson supervises internal operations within the athletic department including event management, facilities, athletic training, sports performance, camps and clinics and student-athlete wellness as well as advising the student-athlete advisory committee.

Since January, Hanson and two other finalists have been working with app development partners to create an app prototype, as well as with their local Small Business Development Center to craft a business plan.

This year's WiSys APPStart Challenge began during the 2019-2020 fall semester, as UW-Eau Claire, UW-Green Bay and UW-La Crosse faculty, staff, students and alumni were challenged to submit an app idea in 250 words or less.

More than 40 ideas were submitted. In December, nine semifinalists were selected to pitch to panels of judges with the three finalists emerging to continue on with the contest.

A team of UW-Eau Claire alums Aaron Accola and Ethan Kilgore and current UW-Eau Claire student Christian Hoyer was the runner-up in the contest with the app "ALO: Photo." The app is a platform for freelance photographers to show off their work and easily schedule photography services with new clients. The team has the option to tap into \$2,500 in WiSys funding to launch the app.

UW-Green Bay student Celine Massereau was the second runner-up with the app "VIGRID," which connects eco-friendly product sellers to consumers with a personal shopper user experience. Massereau has the option to tap into \$1,500 in WiSys funding to launch the app.

The contest was sponsored by Madison-based Noble Applications. The software company also served as an app development partner for the VIGRID and Team Travel apps.

"We are so excited for Erin and Céline, and we congratulate them on their recognition and awards. It was our honor and pleasure to help them articulate their vision and bring their innovative ideas to life," said Noble Applications CEO Steve O'Brien.

WiSys also partnered with UW-Parkside's App Factory—a creative, professional,

interdisciplinary group that develops mobile apps for community clients throughout southeastern Wisconsin on the APPStart Challenge. The App Factory was the app development partner for ALO: Photo.

The Next Challenge

WiSys has renewed and expanded the challenge for 2020-2021.

The new season of the challenge will be open to all WiSys universities (UW-Eau Claire, UW-La Crosse, UW-Green Bay, UW Oshkosh, UW-Parkside, UW-Platteville, UW-River Falls, UW-Stevens Point, UW-Stout, UW-Superior, UW-Whitewater).

WiSys will accept submissions throughout the month of October. The easy submission process requires only a description of the app idea in 250 words or less.

To learn more about the WiSys APPStart Challenge, visit wisys.org/appstart.