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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Business Innovation Group (BIG) News" (2013). *Business Innovation Group News*. 222.

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Georgia Southern student wins runner-up at the 2013 FastPitch Competition

April 9, 2013



Freshmen students walking around Georgia Southern University's campus are always easy to spot- aimlessly wandering and asking for all types of directions. Surprisingly, this actually happens to students other than just freshman. Even as a junior, marketing major Jason Roe found himself struggling to find his English 1101 class in a remote part of campus receiving all kinds of misguided directions.

After going through the experience as a junior, Roe and friend Taylor Trapani (**pictured left Taylor Trapani, Richard Murray, and Jason Roe**) had the idea to create UNav mobile application, a navigation tool that incorporates maps, virtual tours and points of interest of Georgia Southern's campus.

Roe and his team were the runner-up for the fourth annual Savannah FastPitch entrepreneurial competition on Thursday, March 28 at the Savannah Morning News Auditorium in Savannah, Ga. Organized by Georgia Southern, Creative Coast and ATDC, the FastPitch is a one-day competition designed to give students and local entrepreneurs a chance to pitch their innovative ideas to potential investors.

Roe's innovative navigation application was judged best of the student category and second best overall of 19 other concepts presented to a 12-member jury by local entrepreneurs. *"The connections I was able to make far surpassed the cash prize," Roe said. "Panelists and investors gave us insight that we would not have been able to learn on our own for many years."*

Roe's team includes COO Richard Murray, CFO Taylor Trapani, partial owners and IT consultants Marcus and Malcolm Howard, graphic design interns Rocky Roarke and Michelle Cruz, and IT intern Tyler Stephen. Together the team is working to have Georgia Southern experiment UNav in combination with freshmen orientations this fall. *"It took a long time for us to find the right team of graphic designers and computer programmers because we had very little initial start-up capital," Roe said. "The first year we started this project all we had was a vision to keep us going."*

UNav includes maps, virtual tours and points of interest. Although it was designed for college campuses, the platform is appropriate to other destinations, such as shopping malls and theme parks. *"Initially it*

was for new and current students to help them find their way around campus,” Roe said. “It has evolved into more of a benefit to visitors who would like to see the campus on or off-site and save people time and money.”

The team is scheduled to meet with Vice President of Economic Research and Development Dr. Charles Patterson, Vice President of Information Steve Burrell, and Assistant Administrative Director of Enterprise Application Services Ron Stalnaker on April 16 to discuss the future of the business venture. *“Our goal is to have a finished product available for the school this upcoming fall, pending a successful closed test this summer,” Roe said.*



Roe and his team weren't the only success of the FastPitch. Tarah Roe (no connection with Jason Roe), and her toddler hand washing device, scRIBBIT the frog, took home first prize overall and the \$6,000 cash prize. Tarah **(pictured right with Charles Patterson, left and Jason Roe, right)** was inspired to create scRIBBIT after she experienced frustration with efficiently washing her toddler's hands. scRIBBIT is a device shaped like a frog's head. A child simply puts their hands in the frog's mouth, and inside soap and water is dispensed with a collection basin at the bottom. Rubber bouncing balls in the liquid help hold the toddler's attention allowing for a more effective hand washing. Tarah has secured a trademark and has a patent pending for scRIBBIT.

Other presentations at the FastPitch included concepts for a web and software development tools, pet products, games, and landscape planters. *“Each year the competition continues to build on its successes,” Director of the Entrepreneurship Zone at Georgia Southern and one of the organizers of the competition. “The introduction of a question time panel was a definite improvement which helped clarify the entrepreneurs' ideas. It was wonderful to have such great sponsors which helped us to award greater prizes.”*

Next year, the FastPitch will take place in Savannah once again. *“I was on cloud nine,” Jason Roe said. “There were so many other great ideas and presentations it was a shock to win in my own division, let alone second overall.”* As for the future, Roe has high hopes for UNav. *“We hope that UNav will be a huge success at Georgia Southern and we will continue to expand our operations into universities and malls in the upcoming months.”*