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2-26-2015

## Business Innovation Group (BIG) News

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### Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Business Innovation Group (BIG) News" (2015). *Business Innovation Group News*. 256.

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## 3DS a Student's Perspective

February 26, 2015

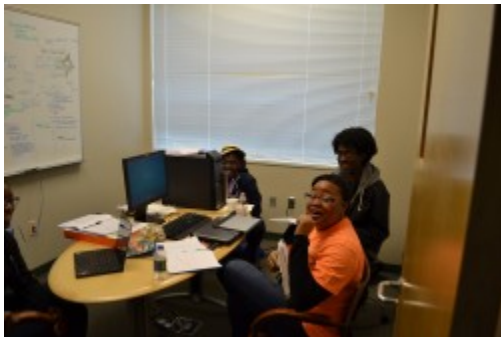
written by Jessica Raymond

So, you're sitting on your couch—bored out of your mind. It is the beginning of a three-day weekend, and you have nothing to do. You heard from a friend of a friend that some awesome party is going down tonight, but he is notorious for over-hyping things. After a long battle with silence, you pull out your phone to check your social media network for a solution. It's a total bust. You are bombarded by photos of your friends hanging out and having a blast while you sit at home. Where are they anyway? And how did they know about this event?

What if there were an app that filled you in on the best moves going on in town? No false advertising—no fake posts, just genuine fun.

This was one of the ideas pitched during Georgia Southern University's 2nd annual 3 Day Startup (3DS) event, February 20-22.

3 Day Startup is an opportunity for college students from freshman to doctorate levels in any field of study to gain entrepreneurial experience. Over the course of three days, participants are tasked with building a business from the ground up. It is indeed as difficult as it sounds.



Having gotten the opportunity to participate, I can say first hand that despite the lack of sleep, I learned a lot from this program. I learned a lot about people, investors, and a ton about entrepreneurship and business startup that will definitely stay with me.

Day 1 kicked off with an information session hosted by the 3DS representative Jackson Dyre-Borowicz, who is an entrepreneur himself. After this, the participants were sectioned off into small groups and put into separate rooms where we pitched our business ideas. This part was pretty intimidating. The best way to describe it is telling your deepest secret to a group of six strangers to be judged. Put yourself in this situation: Here is an idea you have pondered or contemplated for perhaps a day, possibly a week, and in some cases, years, and you are opening it up to a very harsh, cut-throat critique. Even if you aren't "re-inventing the wheel," you still have to "come up with a valid point as to why your idea will work despite its competition. Essentially, this is what entrepreneurship is all about. It is also here, where you realize how possible it is to make this happen.

After everyone pitched their business ideas, we voted on the two best ideas, and they 'moved on to the next round.' Everyone regrouped and, from at least 14 winning pitches, the participants selected the top six. From here, we branch off and work to polish our idea. As we work on who we are as a business, our

target audience, the problem that we're addressing, and the solution our business provides, mentors travel from room-to-room giving their advice and expertise on some of the problems we will face.

The group I chose to work with was an event planning business, Spark. I worked alongside Khalil Ford—a Sophomore Graphic Designer student, Mesha Russell—A Georgia Southern Alumni, and Xxavier Robertson, the founder behind Spark. What Xxavier wanted to do was mix passion with fundraising. You take an artist and a charity, bring them together, and create an event that tailors to personal exposure, networking, and fundraising. What he saw from working with multiple events was a lack of passion in fundraising. Sure people will donate to a cause they support, but at the same time why do a 5k run if the issue is domestic violence? Why not choose to run an event centered on art therapy to uncover the psychological damage behind domestic abuse? Here, money is brought in and both the artists and charity have exposure and can network with like minds. It is a great idea in my opinion;; however, it took us hours to get to this condensed version, and, if it had not been for the guidance of Rick Robins and the insight from Erin Heck, I don't think we would have gotten there.

At the end of Day 2, we did a second pitch and had more mentors evaluating us. If that were not enough, we were given five minutes to present. This critique, however, was harder than the first. With more mentors came more questions. One revealed to our "CEO" that, though very fluent in business vernacular, he was using too much fluff and not telling enough about what Spark was and its purpose. So, we returned to the drawing board to polish up before our final pitch on Day 3. This pitch was harder than any of the others; a guest investor was watching; and it was possible that one of the six groups could participate in FastPitch in Savannah.

On Day 3, running on fumes and sleep deprivation, we gathered more information, condensed the presentation even more, played around with Powerpoint, and prepared for the final pitch. Luckily, the nerves didn't set in until just about 20 minutes before Xxavier presented. By this time, two other groups had already gone.



**The Pitch was flawless, and, even though we were not the group that moved on to FastPitch, we learned a lot along the way from both our mistakes and our mentors. We learned more about business; we networked with our fantastic mentors, and made potential lifelong friends. 3DS was a wonderful experience. I learned an enormous amount of information, and I hope to participate again.**