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Touch Light Innovations named winner of Georgia Southern College of Business' BIG Pitch competition

NOVEMBER 15, 2016



Dominique Halaby, D.P.D., director of the Business Innovation Group, stands with Swarnav Pujari of Touch Light Innovations, the 2016 BIG Pitch winner.

[Touch Light Innovations](#) has been named the winner of the second annual BIG Pitch Competition, hosted by Georgia Southern University's Business Innovation Group (BIG) in conjunction with [Ocean Exchange](#).

Touch Light Innovations, a startup invented by Swarnav Pujari, a student at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, is pioneering in harvesting ambient energy to power daily use tools and create a green environment. Their flagship product, Power Pad, is a low-profile device that sits beneath any

moderate-to-heavy foot traffic location. Each step a passerby takes on the Power Pad generates up to 10 watt-mins of power.

"The BIG Pitch event showcased young professionals who are challenging cross-industry status-quo through very disruptive ideas, technologies and business models," said Dr. Bartosz Wojszczyk, a judge on the panel. "The winner, Touch Light Innovations, is a great example of how 'a single step idea' can revolutionize access to energy through day to day activities. We could have only one winner, but all presented technologies deserve our highest praise."

By targeting the commercial building market space in city locations, Touch Light Innovations is able to offer a clean technology product that is designed for city-like environments. This product is estimated to save an average commercial building up to \$80,000 per year on electrical bills and increase real estate value by 7 percent each year. The Power Pad has been tested at a Westchester Knicks game as well as in a New York High School for one month.

"Ocean Exchange is insanely good. Fostering change and putting you in uncomfortable situations is something people don't always like. Disruptive technology delivers change, always creating something new and advancing development for the future," said Pujari of Touch Light Innovations. "The BIG Pitch competition seeks different innovations in all fields. I really enjoyed it because those are the values I hold in my heart and harness in the company."

Other [teams](#) included Reservoir from the University of Georgia; BioCellection and RevoLOotion from the University of Pennsylvania; Wavve Stream from the University of Houston; Renewal Mill and Catalytic Electrolysis for Sustainable Fuel Generation from Wastewater from Yale University; and Antibiotic Resistance from the Sea from Valdosta State University.

"This year's BIG Pitch finalists were remarkably strong," said Allen C. Amason, Ph.D., dean of the College of Business. "They were innovative, thoughtful, prepared, articulate, but most of all, they were the sorts of people who are going to make a positive difference in this world. And so, we were very proud of all of them and very proud to invest in them."

BIG Pitch facilitates the adoption of undergraduate and graduate innovations that improve economies, health and the environment. BIG Pitch is part of the Business Innovation Group in the Georgia Southern College of Business and partners with Ocean Exchange.

For more information on the BIG Pitch Competition, the Ocean Exchange or Georgia Southern University entrepreneurship programs, please contact Millicent Pitts, CEO of Ocean Exchange, at 912-257-0209 or email at millicent.pitts@oceanexchange.org; Dominique Halaby, D.P.A., director of BIG, at 912-478-2733 or email at dhalaby@georgiasouthern.edu; or Steve Stewart, Ph.D., assistant

professor of management/entrepreneurship at 912-478-8594 or email at sstewart@georgiasouthern.edu.

GPC brings noted Cuban-American poet Virgil Suarez to Georgia Southern

NOVEMBER 15, 2016



Noted Cuban-American poet, novelist and professor Virgil Suárez will offer a poetry reading on Thursday, Nov. 17 at 7 p.m. in the IT Building, room 1005.

Suárez, a professor of English at Florida State University, is currently working on a new collection of poems called "Indigo." His most recent publication was a short story collection entitled "The Soviet Circus Comes to Havana" and "90

Miles: Selected & New Poems." Suárez will read selections from both during the event.

"Suárez's poetry, novels and short stories address the Cuban-American immigrant experience, so his campus visit is a wonderful opportunity for students and the public to expand their interests in not only creative writing, but also writing about immigration, identity and family, particularly in Latinx communities," said Christina Olson, assistant professor in the Department of Writing and Linguistics.

This poetry reading is sponsored by Georgia Southern University and the Georgia Poetry Circuit, a consortium of 10 Georgia colleges and universities working together to bring three poets of national and international reputation annually to all members' campuses, providing an important access to the literary arts for Georgia residents across the state.

The event is free and open to the public. Books will be available for purchase at the event.

For more information contact Christina Olson at colson@georgiasouthern.edu.