

THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS:

Mercy Business Students Compete for Coveted Entrepreneurship Award

The world of work is changing, and Mercy College is on the leading edge. For one, there is increasing demand from employers for entrepreneurial graduates, and Mercy is becoming more of an entrepreneurial school, according to Scorpio Rogers, interim vice president, MercyManhattan and former assistant dean, School of Business.

“We’ve all heard of the old paradigm where people go to college to get a good job,” Rogers said. “There’s a newer paradigm now, which is that people go to college to create their own jobs. Here at Mercy, we’re helping students develop an entrepreneurial mindset and understand that they can take control of their own destiny and create their own jobs — not just for themselves but for other people too.”

In order to continue fostering the entrepreneurial ecosystem on campus, Mercy College hosted the 2nd Annual Student-Preneur Conference and Business Plan Competition in April, an event that promoted Mercy’s student entrepreneurs — or “Student-Preneurs” — and gave them an opportunity to learn from seasoned business owners. Approximately 100 Mercy students, alumni, faculty, staff and community members attended the one-day conference.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 conference was held virtually. Hosted on the Hopin platform, the event simulated a live conference with an expo area, networking and even a DJ playing between sessions. Event sessions included a panel

of entrepreneurs, a panel of Mercy student entrepreneurs, a keynote address by entrepreneur and business coach Lucinda Cross ’14 and the final round of the Business Plan Competition.

“It was really cool listening to the panel speakers and the keynote speaker talk about their businesses, their life experiences and words of wisdom,” said Ryan Miglio ’22, who is majoring in business administration and entrepreneurship with a minor in international relations. “I did miss the experience of being at a conference in person, but this was a great substitute.”

Rogers, who previously managed entrepreneurship activities across the Dobbs Ferry, Bronx and Manhattan Campuses and created the Student-Preneur Conference, was particularly excited for the Business Plan Competition. “As a society, we’re competitive, so we always like to see who wins,” he laughed. School of Business professors offered optional weekly sessions between October and April to help students prepare for the competition, and Rogers reported that participants significantly improved their business plans over the six months.

Tasnimah Rahman ’23, a finance major, won first place in the Business Plan Competition and a \$1,500 prize after pitching MealCheck, a technology-supported system that enables restaurants to create personalized, healthy meals for diners.

Janet Gomez ’24 and Emily Mozdziak ’24 won second place for their company, MyCareer, a mobile application and website with an online course provider, employment-

related search engine and a direct connection to recruiters. Miglio and Kaycee Moreno ’22 won third place and a \$500 prize after pitching Lavish Liquors, a company that customizes glass bottles such as wine bottles to both create keepsakes and reduce glass pollution. In preparation for presenting their business plan, he and Moreno watched episodes of ABC’s “Shark Tank” to see what kinds of questions investors asked entrepreneurs about their company or product. They noted good questions and made sure to have answers prepared for the competition.



Credit:
Etsio Flores, '21



The School of Business looks forward to hosting the Student-Preneur Conference again in person next year. In addition to expanding the audience to reach more Mercy students, he hopes to attract more high school students. This year’s audience included two classes of students from the Academy of Finance at Lincoln High School in Yonkers, New York, and Rogers believes that the conference is a great way to expose high schoolers to business, entrepreneurship and Mercy College in general.