New startup venture connects student entrepreneurs

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Freeman School senior Ethan Levy (BSM '16) first thought of the idea for his startup enterprise FailUp as a first-year student. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Most organizations make a point to choose positive, affirming words for their titles, but one of the new startup ventures at Tulane University is trying a different naming approach. FailUp is the unusual name of a new online platform that drives home the message that failure is often the path to success in entrepreneurship.

FailUp creator Ethan Levy (BSM '16) first thought of the idea for FailUp as a first-year student. Over the years, Levy says help has come from many areas within the university including the Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship program, the

Changemaker Institute, the Center for Public Service, the Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and most recently the Taylor Center for Social Innovation and Design Thinking.

FailUp officially launched on Sept. 17, 2015.

“I always struggled to build a team around my entrepreneurial ideas and I noticed that others at Tulane were also facing the same kind of problem,” says Levy. “Other students who had the initiative and ideas to get things done also struggled to find support.”

FailUp is an online social platform that allows students to connect and collaborate with others on their entrepreneurial ideas. Students can create a profile, post a detailed pitch for their venture and comment or vote on ideas proposed by their FailUp peers.

“This is a place for people with ideas to receive constructive criticism, to brainstorm with others online, and connect with other students to build a team,” says Levy. “For those who don’t have ideas, they are able to look at others’ ventures and join teams.”

Since its release this semester, the platform has more than 200 users and about 35 venture proposals.

FailUp plans to host several events beginning in the spring semester including an entrepreneurship panel and an idea pitching contest.

“Often, there’s a negative connotation with the word fail,” says Jeremy Stenberg, a first-year student and member of FailUp. “At FailUp we have accepted failure as a necessity to succeeding.”

Levy is currently working to build a network of alumni and entrepreneurs interested in working with students. Any alumni who would like to serve as mentors for Tulane student entrepreneurs can contact Levy at ethanlevy@failup.io or by visiting FailUp.io.

— Samah Ahmed is a sophomore majoring in public health and political science at Tulane University.