Music app takes top prize in Pitch Friday Series

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Josh McCoy (BSM '24), founder of Tipzy, a music app that enables bars to generate insights from customer-requested music, delivers his Pitch Friday-winning pitch at the A. B. Freeman School of Business on April 19.

Music app Tipzy hit a high note at this year's Pitch Friday Competition, taking home the grand prize of $15,000 in cash and $2,500 in pro bono legal services.

The grand prize round of the competition, an annual presentation of the Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Tulane University's A. B. Freeman School of Business, took place on April 19 in the Goldring/Woldenberg Business Complex's Marshall Family Commons.

Founded by Josh McCoy (BSM '24), Tipzy is a modern take on the jukebox that combines customer song requests with data-driven insights. Venues can use Tipzy to learn their customers' music preferences and curate playlists that align with their desired ambiance.

When customers request songs, Tipzy's algorithm filters the selections to play only the requested tracks that fit the venue's vibe. This data-driven approach helps venues create a seamless musical experience that resonates with their customers and matches the overall mood and energy of the space. Customers are also only charged a small fee if their song is played.

“Winning this competition marks a significant milestone for our startup,” said McCoy. “It sets the stage for our official launch in August at Tulane, LSU and Louisiana Tech, and has opened doors to valuable connections.”

Cantaloupe AI, an app co-founded by MBA student and Lepage Center Fellow Rich Simmerman (MBA '24) that aims to revolutionize hiring in the service industry, won second place in the grand prize round and a prize of $2,500.

Kavali Campanella Eyewear, an eyewear company founded by Kaalan Day (SLA '24) that uses influencers and other media personalities to promote affordable sunglasses with a stylish West Coast attitude, earned third place honors and a prize of $1,500.

Rounding out the grand prize round participants were Convyrse**,** a startup founded by Ethan Kraus (BSM '26) and Filip Sentypal (BSM '26) that is developing a library of AI-integrated tools that can be licensed to commercial airlines to improve their customer service, and Cloud IX**,** a Natural Language Processor-powered encrypted chatbot-based app developed by Isabella Kulstad (SSE '25) that can be used for resource referral, self-care/support, crisis response and safety planning.

The grand prize was the culmination of this year's Pitch Friday Series, a monthly competition hosted by the Lepage Center that enables student entrepreneurs from across Tulane's uptown and downtown campuses to take their ideas to the next level. At each monthly competition, student entrepreneurs can pitch their ventures to judges for a chance at $1,500 in cash and a spot in the grand prize round. Just as importantly, the Pitch Friday Series offers participants valuable feedback, mentoring and networking opportunities.

"The Lepage Center also provides pitch prep help for Pitch Friday competitors through our weekly Spark Hours," added Timekia Mallery, manager of student programs with the Lepage Center. "This year, all five of the ventures in our grand prize round took advantage of Spark Hours sessions."

According to Rob Lalka, Albert R. Lepage Professor in Business and executive director of the Lepage Center, the Pitch Friday Series is just one of a host of offerings designed to help students realize their entrepreneurial goals.

"Entrepreneurship education is all about learning how to listen deeply to customers, inspire others, build something novel and lead a team through the highs and lows," said Lalka. "Through our new entrepreneurial business minor, students will not just learn what it takes -- they'll actually be doing it. Next year, we're doubling the Student Venture Accelerator class, where students work in teams to create startups, and we're debuting a new finance course where students will conduct due diligence on real companies that the Tulane Ventures fund is considering. We're also adding new offerings to open up the path to all of these higher-level courses to all Tulane undergraduates, not just business majors.

"With all these new resources and offerings," Lalka concluded, "it's my hope that we'll see even greater participation in next year's Pitch Friday Series."