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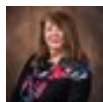
Education

Malleous wins grand prize at University of Pittsburgh's Big Idea Competition



The University of Pittsburgh's Oakland campus featuring the Cathedral of Learning.

JIM HARRIS/PBT



By [Patty Tascarella](#) – Senior Reporter, Pittsburgh Business Times
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It's go big and go home – with cash, kudos and connections – once again through the University of Pittsburgh's venerable innovation challenge for students.

Pitt [announced](#) the winners of the Big Idea Competition 2024 on April 11.

The competition awards monetary prizes to students whose innovative concepts have the most startup potential.

The grand prize of \$25,000 went to Malleous. The team's idea combines suction and retraction tools into one surgical instrument retaining the retractor's malleable/bendable properties – increasing effectiveness and efficiency by reducing surgical duration and risks to patients while saving hospitals millions of dollars annually.

Two second place winners each received \$15,000:

- Conduction, a musical education software tool allowing students to easily compose original songs that come to life via real musicians. It aims to excite kids about music class while enabling schools to meet learning objectives and stay under budget.
- No V Rel, a device that condenses bulky but essential surgical tools into a single, augmented reality headset that aims to improve outcomes and reduce surgical times.

The Big Idea Competition is open to all Pitt undergraduate students, graduate students and postdoctorals across all schools and departments, including UPMC-affiliated medical residents, who enjoy working in diverse teams to bring their ideas to life. Pitt describes the competition as “an experience-based learning opportunity” as the teams pitch, plan and strategize.

The Big Idea Center launched in 2018 but the competition’s inception goes back to 2009. It was originally known as the Randall Family Big Idea Competition.