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Three UCT student entrepreneurs leap into national competition final

Three University of Cape Town (UCT) student entrepreneurs are through to the final round of the Entrepreneurship Intersvarsity competition and will compete with the country's best on the national stage later this year.

The three-day virtual regional event was hosted by Stellenbosch University (SU) and concluded with ululations and cheers on Friday, 10 September. UCT's top eight student entrepreneurs, selected during [the internal round](#) of the competition, went head to head with their peers at SU, the University of the Western Cape, and Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

The Entrepreneurship Intersvarsity competition aims to identify the top student entrepreneurs at each of South Africa's 26 public universities, recognise and showcase their businesses and attract investors to their enterprise. Further, it provides up-and-coming entrepreneurs whose businesses are still in ideas phase an opportunity to pitch their concepts.

"It's no mean feat going up against the region's best, but our students' business concepts stood out and we are thrilled with the outcome," said Nadia Waggie, UCT's Entrepreneurship Intersvarsity coordinator and the head of operations at [UCT Careers Service](#). Participants entered the following categories:

- New business ideas
- Existing business – tech
- Existing business – social impact
- Existing business – general.

Students pitched their business concepts to a panel of judges in a three-minute presentation, and despite their tattered nerves, Waggie said they remained in control and gave it their all. Once they concluded their presentations, the judges conducted a question-and-answer (Q&A) session to gain a better understanding of each concept.

"The Q&A session can be quite stressful because students can't really prepare; no one knows what the judges will ask. But our students handled everything very well. We are so proud of all of them," she said.

In the lead up to the regional round, students also received coaching and mentoring to help them prepare for the gruelling session, which Waggie said paid off. The top students proceeding to the national round of the competition are:

- Chido Dzinotywei – her business Vambo makes learning African languages and culture accessible using an online platform.
- Vuthlarhi Shirindza – the mobile application Chewi makes online veterinary consultations and pet care simple and accessible.
- Tshegofatso Masenya – the GoShare initiative is a crowd-funding platform dedicated to university students in need of financial assistance.

“It was an epic three days. The camaraderie among students was truly something else. They took time out to get to know each other, build connections and even helped each other prepare for their pitches. There was a spirit of ubuntu among all of them and it was wonderful to witness,” Waggie said.

The national round of the competition takes places in Johannesburg in November.

Written by Niémah Davids, UCT News

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