



PRESS RELEASE

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VIP Consortium Announces Winner of 2021 Innovation Competition

Atlanta, GA. – June 4, 2021 – VIP Consortium Inc., a non-profit alliance of higher education institutions with Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) programs, today announced the winners of the prestigious 2021 VIP Consortium Innovation Competition.

This year's overall winner is the Mini Solar VIP Team from the University of New South Wales in Australia for its work on building small solar energy harvesting devices that can provide a continuous source of power for IoT sensors for early bushfire detection. The team is developing inexpensive, miniature devices which include a solar panel, integrated battery, and communications technology. The devices create a 24/7 communication network that can alert authorities when fires break out. Dr. Morri Pagnucco, Deputy Dean, Education, UNSW Engineering commented, "We are so excited about winning the 2021 VIP Consortium Innovation Competition. This is fantastic recognition of all the hard work and effort by staff and students."

Tied for second place honors are the Sixth Sense Team from New York University which is developing an integrated system of technologies to assist visually impaired individuals with navigation and obstacle avoidance, and the AREND Team from University of Pretoria for its work on unmanned aerial vehicles to detect and track Rhino poachers in Kruger National Park, South Africa.

Ray Sokola, Executive Director of the VIP Consortium, said "It was incredibly difficult to select winners from the many fascinating projects submitted this year. The ingenuity of VIP students as they tackle and develop real world solutions for these ambitious challenges continues to astound me and the entire selection committee. It also demonstrates how well prepared these students will be as they transition into the workforce already well versed in working on interdisciplinary teams."

The VIP Consortium Innovation Competition provides a forum for students on VIP teams from around the world to showcase their work and be recognized for their accomplishments. The additional six finalists named in this year's competition are from; Georgia Institute of Technology (*USA*), Inha University (*South Korea*), Riga Technical University (*Latvia*), Universidad Mayor (*Chile*), University of Campinas (*Brazil*) and University of Strathclyde (*Scotland*). These teams gained recognition for multi-disciplinary projects spanning diverse topics such as autonomous vehicles, health informatics, waste water reuse, biological batteries, decision making tools for regional investments, and sustainable solar microgrid energy solutions.

About VIP Consortium Inc.

VIP Consortium Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit alliance of higher education institutions with Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP). In VIP programs, teams of graduate and undergraduate students from various academic disciplines work with faculty and often industry partners on ambitious, long-term, cross functional projects. The Consortium currently has 45 participating academic institutions across the United States and 12 countries. www.vip-consortium.org

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