

Rapid Innovation Design Challenge Recognizes California Students For Climate Change Solutions

At an award ceremony on May 19, students and teachers from Salinas, Monterey, Pacific Grove and Greenfield were honored for their climate change solutions.

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://www.einpresswire.com/) -- A total of 75 students representing 20 science classes and robotics teams from Monterey County high schools competed in the second annual Naval Postgraduate School Rapid Innovation Design Challenge, offering real-world local solutions to a national security imperative and global problem – climate change.

Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-Calif.) joined NPS senior leaders and Design Challenge collaborators May 19 to recognize winning student-faculty teams from Alisal High School in Salinas, Monterey High School and Pacific Grove High School.

“Tackling the big challenges we face, like climate change, will require a new generation of young people harnessing the power of emerging technology to find solutions,” said Panetta. “Through the Naval Postgraduate School’s Rapid Innovation Design Challenge, our community is creating space for our high school students to think big, deepen their problem-solving skills, and consider how they can make an impact, locally and globally. I was proud to recognize the work and talents of these Monterey County students and faculty and I look forward to seeing their continued growth as leaders in California’s 19th Congressional District.”

The teams competed for a chance to win prizes up to \$2,000 sponsored by the NPS Foundation.



Students from high schools in Salinas, Monterey and Pacific Grove were honored by the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) for their climate change solutions in the second annual NPS Rapid Innovation Design Challenge. A total of 75 students representing 20 sci

Panetta, NPS Vice Provost for Academic Leadership Dr. Jomana Amara, NPS Chief of Staff Capt. Philip Old, NPSF President Rich Patterson and Edua Dickerson, Vice President of ESG and Finance Strategy at ServiceNow, presented student teams with certificates for their efforts.

“Providing STEM opportunities to high school students that challenge critical thinking not only enriches curricula, but also shows these students the diversity of career opportunities in STEM fields, including those possible in the Navy and Marine Corps,” said NPS associate professor Dr. Mara Orescanin, who established the Design Challenge in 2022.



Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-Calif.) congratulates winning student-faculty teams from Monterey County high schools during the second annual Rapid Innovation Design Challenge at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS). Students from Salinas, Monterey and Pacific Grov

The challenge, which ran from February to April, focused on how workflow process automation can address climate change challenges. Participants were encouraged to create low-code or no-code custom applications for their challenge solutions using software provided by NPS' industry collaborators.

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The competition's top honor, the “Global Solution Grand Championship,” and the \$2,000 grand prize went to a team from Alisal High for its thorough efforts to investigate and understand the issues behind climate change as it relates to soil nutrient levels – and generate a solution to help mitigate those issues.

Teacher Lorand Incze's team developed a prototype application, the “Soil Nutrient Tracking App,” utilizing Software as a Service (SaaS) technology that allows users to upload measured nutrient levels into a database, where

this data can be flagged for unsuitable growing conditions and tracked over time. This solution has the potential to notice local trends in nutrients that can be affected by climate change factors including extreme flooding and/or drought.

“Programs like this are very enriching activities for the students. It helps with the student's self-confidence and further develops their skills,” said Incze. “We are extremely thankful for the

opportunity to work on real-world problems, and we hope to compete in this challenge for many years to come.”

Two of the three runner-up categories, each with a \$500 prize, were won by teams representing Pacific Grove High. One team captured the “Climate Change Warrior” challenge with an app design called “Say NO to Palm Oil.” The proposed app not only raises awareness of certain food products that can be harmful to the environment, but also offers alternative, more environmentally friendly food options.

The second winning team from Pacific Grove took home “Best Digital Design” honors for their development and documentation of an app called “E-Commute.” The proposed app would encourage sustainable transportation by analyzing users’ commuting patterns and informing them of their current carbon dioxide emissions, helping them to accordingly reduce their carbon footprint.

The final runner-up category, “Persuasive Problem Solver,” was won by Monterey High’s “Robodores” team for their presentation pitching the “RideNow” app, another proposed transportation app which would help connect potential rideshare commuters in order to reduce the number of vehicles on the road.

Other challenges addressed by students included sea level rise, increased frequency of extreme weather events, drought, habitat and species loss and ocean acidification. Applications that the student teams designed showed a range of technological capabilities including data analytics and reporting, social networking, notifications, climate monitoring and other creative methods to address climate change challenges.

“Climate security is a priority for the Department of the Navy and our nation,” said NPS President, retired Vice Adm. Ann Rondeau. “Addressing this and other challenges will require ingenuity and inspiration, not just from our current Sailors and Marines, but also from the next generation of scientists and engineers. Opportunities like the Rapid Innovation Design Challenge are vital in encouraging our nation’s youth to pursue careers in science, technology and engineering so that we can solve these issues and others to come.”



Students from high schools in Salinas, Monterey and Pacific Grove were honored by the Naval Postgraduate School for their climate change solutions in the second annual NPS Rapid Innovation Design Challenge during a ceremony in Monterey on May 19. (Photo b

The [2023 Rapid Innovation Design Challenge](#) was developed in collaboration with the NPS Foundation, Aecern and their Scoutlier program, and industry and technology experts from ServiceNow, ICF and Carahsoft.

“ServiceNow is a proud collaborator of the Naval Postgraduate School’s Rapid Innovation Design Challenge. This program sits firmly within our values, aligning closely to our mission to uplift young innovators and our commitment to environmental stewardship. We are honored to have contributed our technology to help enable these worthy goals,” said Dickerson.

NPS’ [Rapid Innovation Design Challenge program](#) includes scaffolded curricula that match critical skills for higher education and a modern workforce to school standards. Each challenge integrates critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving and written communication skills as teams explore applications of science, technology, engineering and math to create meaningful solutions with global impact.

This year, student teams were paired with NPS student mentors and had access to industry experts. Both high school and NPS students had the opportunity to earn professional certifications in no-code application development.

The Rapid Innovation Design Challenge aligns with NPS’ commitment to increase educational equity in STEM and is designed to build excitement about STEM, mitigate barriers to experiential learning opportunities, introduce students to emerging technologies, and strengthen community capacity to offer impactful education opportunities.

[Read more.](#)

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