

Patton Foundation Awards Top Student Startups at UTC Business Pitch Competition

CHATTANOOGA , TN, UNITED STATES, May 1, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Patton Foundation](#), founded by entrepreneur Spencer Patton and headquartered in Brentwood, proudly announces the winners of its Patton Foundation Entrepreneurship Challenge at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. The challenge, modeled after the popular "Shark Tank" format, was hosted with the university's Gary W. Rollins College of Business.

Six finalist teams competed in the live pitch event, held on April 17th, 2025. After presenting their innovative business ideas to a panel of 5 judges, the top three winners were awarded grants totaling \$8,500.

Abdulkadir won First Place and received a \$5000 grant for Parleii, a tech startup focused on transforming the way students and educators interact with electronics hardware through modernized educational tools.



Entrepreneur Challenge Winners at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga



Gillespie and her four other teammates (Amber Briggs, Knox Brashier, Sydeny Brooks, and Apryl Johnson), were named Second Place (\$2,500 grant) for Rainypak, a stylish and functional crossbody bag designed to carry umbrellas with ease and elevate rainy-day convenience.

Mackey was named Third Place (\$1,000 grant) for 3D Ducks, an e-commerce platform that allows

users to design and order custom 3D-printable rubber ducks for personal use or retail sale.

Finalists also included Pearson Smith and Harrison Faulkner, Carter Ramthun, and Ana Morris.

The judging panel included [Spencer Patton, Founder of the Patton Foundation](#); Clark Holt, Owner of Fifty Fifty Wine and Martini Bar in Chattanooga; Maura Bradshaw, former owner of Look Up, LLC; and Donna Ehart, Managing Director of the CO.LAB Sustainable Mobility Accelerator powered by gener8tor.

“Entrepreneurship isn’t just about launching businesses; it’s about shaping futures,” said Patton. “The drive and creativity of these students inspires me, and I am excited to see the impact they make in our community and beyond.”

The challenge began with a kickoff event in February, followed by a 10-lesson virtual PFEC Workshop series that provided entrepreneurial training and mentorship. On pitch day, each student team had 10 minutes to present their idea, followed by 5 minutes of Q&A with the judges.

Patton, who has built multiple logistics companies—including Patton Logistics, Route Consultant, and Hello Truck Lease—from \$0 to over \$100 million in under a decade, launched the Patton Foundation to invest in the next generation of entrepreneurs. To date, the Foundation has awarded over \$35,000 in grants through PFEC programs. More challenges are planned for high schools and universities across Tennessee in the coming year.

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