

Students Win Big in AI Vibe Coding Contest

Students at The Catholic University of America built AI solutions to real-world problems

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, August 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Students at [The Catholic University of America](#) recently competed for a \$5,000 award in [the Busch School of Business](#) inaugural AI Vibe Coding Contest, "How Crazy Can You Get?"

Two students tied, with each winning the prize. Daniel Vincent, a senior from Pflugerville, Texas, developed "Cosmas," which applies artificial intelligence to surgical quality control. Carter Virsik, a junior from Huntersville, N.C., developed "Pulse" to track fitness club individual memberships.



Left to right: David Eisen, Carter Virsik, Courtney Eisen, Danny Vincent, Jack Yoest

Cosmas is a defect detection and analytics tool designed to provide actionable insights and help prevent product recalls for medical device manufacturers.

Pulse, the gym membership management platform, tracks member activity, attendance, and membership status for a gym or fitness club, with layered AI features.

Prizes were provided by David and Courtney Eisen, executives of the Florida-based [LuxRally Travel](#), who also served as competition judges. David is a 2013 alumnus of Catholic University.

Vibe coding uses natural language to let AI generate code instead of an individual writing it. Participants learned vibe coding in 30 days with guidance from contest judges, who included Jack Yoest, associate professor of practice; business executives; and alumni.

Students were required to identify a real-world problem or opportunity, build a working application with AI features, deploy it on cloud infrastructure, and maintain a transparent development history on GitHub.



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*David Eisen, co-founder of
LuxRally Travel.*

Projects were judged on functionality, AI integration, code quality, user experience, and business impact.

"Courtney and I didn't sponsor a business-plan contest; we sponsored a build contest," said David Eisen, co-founder of LuxRally Travel. "Daniel and Carter didn't pitch an idea. They shipped one. That's the difference between a student who studies business and one who does it. We're proud to write two checks."

"What struck me most was that these students learned to

work the way the real world works — AI tools, spinning up a server, version control, real users," added Courtney Eisen, the company's chief marketing officer.

This inaugural competition, which proved the concept of learning to manage an AI process, will be repeated in the fall and incorporated into select leadership courses offered at the Busch School.

"We have always believed that principled leadership requires practical competence," said Andrew Abela, dean of the Busch School. "This competition asked our students to build something real, solve a real problem, and demonstrate it publicly. This is what a Catholic business education looks like in the age of AI."

In addition to the cash prize for each winner, the Eisens provided each winner and their parents a trip to Miami, Fla.

Contest judges included Matt Retterer, a software engineer with Numinar, and Catholic University MBA alumni Jack Wright and Adelaide Mae Machado Ulm.

About the Busch School of Business

The Busch School of Business at The Catholic University of America provides a business education grounded in the Catholic intellectual tradition, emphasizing ethical leadership, entrepreneurship, and practical skill-building. The Busch School prepares students to lead with integrity across every sector of the economy.

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