

Meet the 25 Student Startup Teams Headed to e-Fest 2026

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MINNEAPOLIS, March 24, 2026 — Student founders from across North America head to Minneapolis for the 10-year anniversary of the national entrepreneurship competition

Together, this year's finalists represent a diverse group of student entrepreneurs tackling real problems with creativity, insight, and determination.

Each spring, [e-Fest®](https://efest.biz/) (<https://efest.biz/>), **the Schulze Entrepreneurship Challenge**, brings together some of the most promising undergraduate student founders from across North America for a national weekend of innovation, mentorship, and competition.

This year marks a special milestone as **e-Fest celebrates its 10-year anniversary in 2026**, welcoming the next generation of entrepreneurs to share their ventures, test their ideas, and connect with a growing community of mentors, judges, and fellow builders.

After a rigorous online review process evaluated by **more than 50 entrepreneurs, investors, and business leaders**, 25 student startup teams have been selected as finalists and will travel to **Minneapolis April 23–25, 2026** to compete on a national stage.

Hosted by the **Schulze School of Entrepreneurship at the University of St. Thomas**, e-Fest is made possible through the generosity of **Dick Schulze and the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation**, whose long-standing commitment to entrepreneurship education has helped thousands of students pursue bold ideas and entrepreneurial careers.

Together, this year's finalists represent a diverse group of student entrepreneurs tackling real problems with

creativity, insight, and determination. The group includes ventures from returning universities as well as **several schools participating in e-Fest for the first time**, reflecting the growing national reach of the competition.

In April, the University of St. Thomas campus will once again become a gathering point for the national community of student founders, mentors, educators, and startup leaders who support the next generation of entrepreneurs.

Over the course of the three-day event, teams will pitch their ventures, engage with mentors and judges, and compete for a share of **\$250,000 in cash prizes**, the largest prize pool in the competition's history.

The finalists were selected through an online judging round made possible by **more than 50 volunteer judges from across the entrepreneurship and investment community**, whose time and expertise help ensure a rigorous and fair evaluation process. Their thoughtful feedback plays an important role in helping teams refine their ventures as they advance through the competition.

But e-Fest is about more than winning.

For many student founders, it represents an important moment in their entrepreneurial journey — a chance to test their ideas, connect with peers from across the country, and gain the confidence and insight needed to keep building.

Follow the Journey to Minneapolis

Which teams will rise to the top? Which ventures will capture the attention of judges and audiences alike? And which founders will leave e-Fest with new partnerships, insights, and momentum for the road ahead?

In the weeks leading up to the competition, we'll be



sharing stories from the teams, judges, and mentors who make e-Fest possible.

Follow along as we highlight the student founders, showcase the ventures heading to Minneapolis, and share moments from the national entrepreneurship community that gathers around e-Fest each year.

You'll also have a chance to participate by watching the teams' **Brand Builder Award** videos and casting your vote for the concepts that stand out.

Follow the Teams and Cast Your Vote

Leading up to the competition, the Top 25 teams will also participate in the **Brand Builder Award**, a fan-favorite opportunity for audiences to engage directly with the competition.

Student teams will create short concept videos introducing their ventures and explaining the problem they are solving. These videos will be shared publicly for **audience voting in early April**, giving supporters, fellow founders, and the broader entrepreneurship community the chance to weigh in.

The Brand Builder Award recognizes founders who demonstrate exceptional ability to communicate their venture's story, connect with an audience, and build excitement around their idea.

Brand Builder Award

- First Place: \$5,000
- Second Place: \$2,500

Check back in early April to watch the videos and cast your vote for the ventures that stand out.

Follow the journey:

LinkedIn: [e-Fest - Home of the Schulze Entrepreneurship Challenge](https://www.linkedin.com/company/81945977/admin/dashboard/)
(<https://www.linkedin.com/company/81945977/admin/dashboard/>)

Instagram:
[efest_biz](https://www.instagram.com/efest_biz/)(https://www.instagram.com/efest_biz/)

Meet the e-Fest 2026 Finalist Teams

Below are the 25 student startup teams selected to

compete at e-Fest 2026. Each team will travel to Minneapolis this April to share their venture, connect with the national entrepreneurship community, and take their next step as founders.

(Teams appear in alphabetical order)

Avantur

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Advisor: Morgan Kerfeld

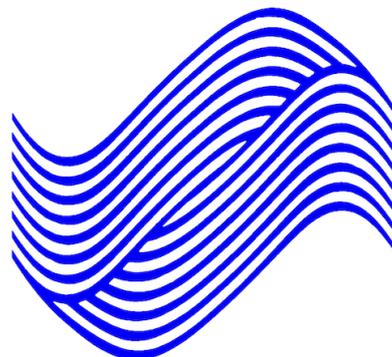


Avantur is an app that helps people save and organize places they find on social media into one structured map. Avantur allows users to send a place into the app, automatically identify it, and store it in a clean, map-based interface. Instead of searching across platforms or forgetting saved spots, users have one place to access everything they've found.

BioMex

Michigan State University

Advisor: Paul Jaques



BioMex is a material-tech healthcare company

developing BioMesh X®, the world's first self-stabilizing surgical mesh engineered with proprietary polymer architecture to improve tissue integration, reduce complications, and enhance healing outcomes. Built on patented material science, BioMex is redefining how implants interact with the human body across surgical applications.

Bobica Bars

Rowan University

Advisor: Greg Payton



Bobica Bars is a health-forward snack company bringing the powerful benefits of smoothie bowl superfoods to consumers in a convenient, shelf-stable, first-to-market superfood-glazed granola bar.

BounceBack Pickle

Florida Gulf Coast University

Advisor: Scott Kelly



BounceBack Pickle is the world's first closed-loop recycling service for pickleball. We are on a mission to eliminate the ever-growing 770,000 lbs of broken

pickleball waste sent to landfills every year by turning it into the world's first 100% recycled pickleballs.

CocoMar

Michigan State University

Advisor: Paul Jaques

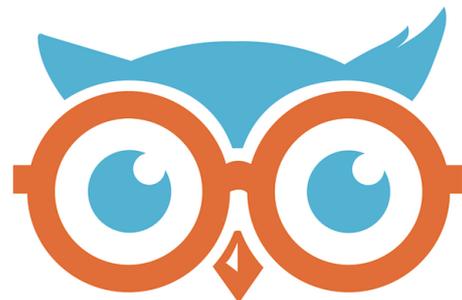


CocoMar crafts ready-to-drink protein smoothies made with real fruit and coconut water. Inspired by Brazil's vibrant tropical fruit culture, we pride ourselves on delivering clean-label beverages made from whole-food ingredients.

CollegeTown

Florida State University

Advisor: Eric Liguori



The OS for Campus.

CognitionIQ

University of St. Thomas

Advisor: Jay Ebben



CognitionIQ is a portable VR-based system that uses eye tracking and a NASA-developed algorithm to objectively measure brain function in minutes. It replaces subjective concussion testing with fast, accurate cognitive assessments that trainers and clinicians can use in real time.

Crack'd Up

University of Wisconsin, Madison

Advisor: Jon Eckhardt



Crack'd Up is the first line of flavored liquid eggs. By mixing whole liquid eggs with all-natural spices and seasonings, we have 4 tasty flavors: Buttermilk Pancake, French Toast, Spicy Chipotle, and Garlic Parmesan.

Crystal-XG

Clemson University

Advisor: Carlos Garcia



Crystal-XG is a predictive streamlining service that leverages machine learning trained on large-scale experimental data to guide faster, greener crystal synthesis.

EZ-Hook

Dartmouth College

Advisor: Roy Schmidt

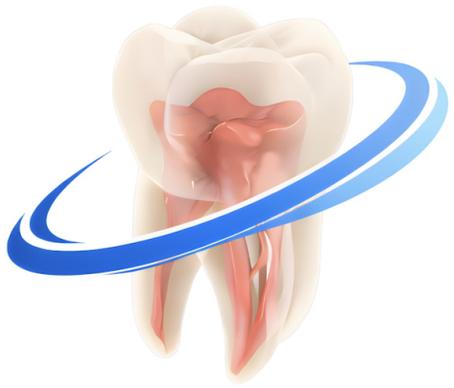


EZ-Hook is a patent-pending consumer product-based startup dedicated to reducing wrist pain in crocheting and making the craft more accessible for all. By reimagining the traditional crochet hook, we empower users to create longer and more comfortably.

FMX Flex

Florida State University

Advisor: Eric Liguori



FMXFLEX

FMX Flex is a flexible, mouthguard-style dental X-ray positioning device that compliments patients' natural dental anatomy to improve comfort, reduce retakes, and streamline clinical workflows while maintaining high-quality imaging.

Fuller Radiance LLC

Buena Vista University

Advisor: Katherine Cota



Fuller Radiance utilizes 3D printing to create custom lamps for the memorial market where personalized products have not modernized with the recent technological improvements.

GG Entertainment

Florida Gulf Coast University

Advisor: Scott Kelly



GG Entertainment aims to bring tabletop games to every table, every night, and everyone; with games that are designed around real social gatherings. Through our "simple but infinite" design philosophy, we are building an ecosystem of social experiences that are easy to start, impossible to outgrow, and built to last.

GuLP

California State University, Sacramento

Advisor: Cameron Law



GuLP is an AI-powered communication app built for nonspeaking and partially speaking autistic children who process language in phrases rather than traditional word-by-word systems, making communication more authentic and easier to access.

Katha

College of Charleston

Advisors: Troy Knauss and David Wyman

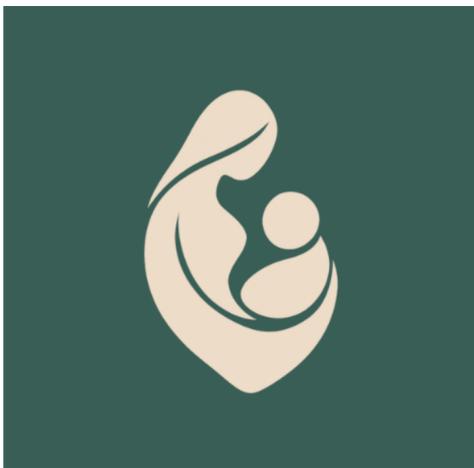
KATHA

The world's cleanest creatine drink. Just push.

Kujali

Johns Hopkins University

Advisor: Soumyadipta Acharya



Kujali is an AI-powered clinical decision-support platform for labor and delivery units that detects early signs of maternal complications using routine patient data. By enabling earlier intervention and creating a clear audit trail of care, Kujali helps hospitals improve patient outcomes while reducing malpractice exposure.

LowCostomy

Duke University

Advisors: Jeffrey Glass and Ibrahim Mohedas



LowCostomy provides a medical-grade, locally-manufactured alternative to expensive imported ostomy bags, addressing a critical health gap for 60,000 annual

patients in Sub-Saharan Africa. By utilizing a Duke-validated bio-adhesive and reusable design, we reduce costs by 95% to restore patient dignity and enable immediate workforce re-entry.

Momentum Endurance

College of Charleston

Advisors: Troy Knauss and David Wyman



Momentum Endurance is the first athlete-grade electrolyte pouch designed for rapid absorption. Natural ingredients absorb through the oral mucosa and enter the bloodstream directly — bypassing digestion entirely for hydration that works the moment you need it.

Neuro Safety Systems

Johns Hopkins University

Advisor: Pierce Perkins



Neuro Safety Systems is ending the \$20B fatigue crisis

in trucking with a wearable that stops accidents before they happen with neuroscience. We provide the objective neural evidence fleets need to prevent the 70,000 annual injuries that reactive solutions miss, keeping families whole and assets safe.

Parkevo

High Point University

Advisor: Lou Anne Flanders-Stec



Parkevo is transforming parking with real-time AI-powered visibility, enabling drivers to instantly find open spaces while providing organizations with actionable data to improve efficiency and reduce congestion.

Pipeline AI

University of California, Irvine

Advisor: Ryan Foland



Pipeline's FERPA-compliant AI generates instant, optimized transfer plans for community college students who want to transfer to university—supercharging counselors, boosting degree obtainment, and unlocking

career opportunities for previously underserved student populations.

+ Pouch

Rowan University

Advisor: Michael Dominik



We are developing an electrolyte oral pouch that is focused on rapid buccal absorption. This pouch is bridging the growing pouch market and hydration market into one delivering a new and faster way to deliver electrolytes into the body.

Seos

University of California, Santa Cruz

Advisor: Nada Mijekvilik



SEOS (Smart Early Observation System) is an AI-powered neonatal monitoring platform that combines computer vision, cry-signal analysis, and genomics to detect early signs of health risks in real time. It enables proactive, data-driven interventions for parents and clinicians through continuous, intelligent monitoring.

SYP

University of South Florida

Advisors: Allen Clary and Andy Hafer



Syp is the wearable for your water bottle. The first system to integrate hydration intelligence into elite sports.

TOZ Hair Care

Drexel University

Advisor: Scott Quitel



TOZ Hair Care is redefining textured haircare through natural formulations, measurable performance, and engineered simplicity. By replacing routine overload with validated moisture-retention systems, we deliver consistent, science-backed results built for long-term trust and multi-generational use.