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RIT Three Minute Thesis Competition

Finalists of the three-minute thesis: Kristina Chomiak, Arianna Giguere, Mehran Mansouri, Jan Wasilewki, Sai Sri Nidhi Munagonuru, and Khushbu Zope. Taking photo with judges.

Rochester Institute of Technology has recently joined 900 universities in participating in the three-minute thesis contest, Graduated student competitors must present their thesis in under three minutes in a language accessible to all. Following a rigorous set of rules assigned by The University of Queensland in Australia the founders of the competition, while being engaging in both delivery and body language. The committee of reviewers received more than twenty submissions in the preliminary round and in two rounds lowered it down to nine and finally the final six.

The Dean of RIT Graduate School, Diane C. Slusarsrki, the announcer for the competition, opened the event by presenting the esteemed judges. President Dr. David Munson of RIT, Cassandra Nickles, Associate vice president marketing strategy, Frank Sklarsky of the Alumnus and RIT Board of Trustee Member, and Vanessa J. Herman, Vice president for Government and Community Relations.

Diane C. Slusarski opening the three-minute thesis competition

Proceeding the judge's announcement came the long-awaited prizes of what each graduate student would be competing for, the grand first place prize of 1,500 and the

chance to compete in the regional three-minute thesis against other institutions. The runner up prize of $750 and lastly the most unique prize, the people's choice prize of $250 sponsored by the Eugene H. Fram Chair in Applied Critical Thinking. The audience was given a ballot and asked to select one competitor of their choice they felt should win; at the end of the competition attendees would cast their ballots.

Ms. Slusarskri concluded her opening by wishing the judges good luck with much enthusiasm "It will not be easy; I've seen their preliminary," she said before exiting the stage, for the contestants to present.

Sai Sri Nidhi Munagonuru, a mechanical and Industrial Engineering Graduate student was the first to present her thesis, "Can carbon composite 3D technology revolutionize the world?" Her presentation was seamless and confident, as she explained her technology of combining weaving metal 3D printing and metal sheets and their future as materials for spacecraft and aircraft.

Kristina Chomiak, a Sustainability Graduate Student was second to present her thesis "Unraveling trends of plastic pollution in the wasted food stream." She presented an idea of how to preserve the benefit of plastic while keeping the waste out of our food stream.

Jan Wasilewki, an Imaging Science graduate student, was the third presenter of his thesis, which introduced "AI-Powered Crop Protection: Detecting Plant Diseases Before They Strike." His technology uses AI to detect colors in plants we cannot see, and to catch diseases in plants early. His overall stage presence and confidence left a lasting effect on the audience.

Khushbu Zope, a Mechanical and Industrial Engineering Graduate Student, was the fourth thesis involved in "predicting the future of 3D printed metal parts." Her technology suggested the capabilities of 3D printing metal parts, such as screws, and knowing their internal structure before they are created by creating simulation modeling.

Mehran Mansouri, a biomedical and Chemical Engineering Graduate Student, followed Ms. Zope as the fifth presenter. His thesis explored the role of topographical memory in cell migration, and whether cells can remember their terrain.

 Arianna Giguere, an imaging Science Graduate Student, was the last to present her thesis, which presented technology that would help those who suffer from cortical blindness caused by strokes

with VR. Currently, there is no treatment for this type of vision loss, but she is optimistic with this technology there is hope for a new form of recovery.

Attendees casting their vote for People's Choice Award

The competition ended leaving the judges and audience with a hard decision to make, who should win, each competitor presented well, clearly and consciously in unique and different ways. The attendees, including judges and contestants flooded out into the main lobby for a short recession. The audience filled the ballot box with their choices some still deliberation on who they should choose. The room filled with anticipation, with the votes tallied, all we could do was wait.

The judges deliberated for only 30 minutes before they came back with their decision, after giving out awards to the finalist and honorable mentions they announced the runner up, Arianna Giguere Imaging science for her thesis of "Navigating Vision Loss: Driving Toward Recovery with VR." Then finally announced the first-place prize and people's choice winner Sai Sri Nidhi Munagonuru for thesis work in Carbon composite 3D printing technology revolutionizing the world.