

Engineering 101 Class

Fall 2026



The City College
of New York

AGENDA

- Me
- What is a startup?
- The Zahn Innovation Center
- Innovation Combination Game!



My Professional Journey

Architecture & Engineering

Civil Engineering -> Materials Science in Civil Engineering

PennDOT summer internship -> graduate school

**Nano and micromechanics -> materials science techniques for civil
engineering materials**

NCSU -> more sustainable civil engineering materials / structures

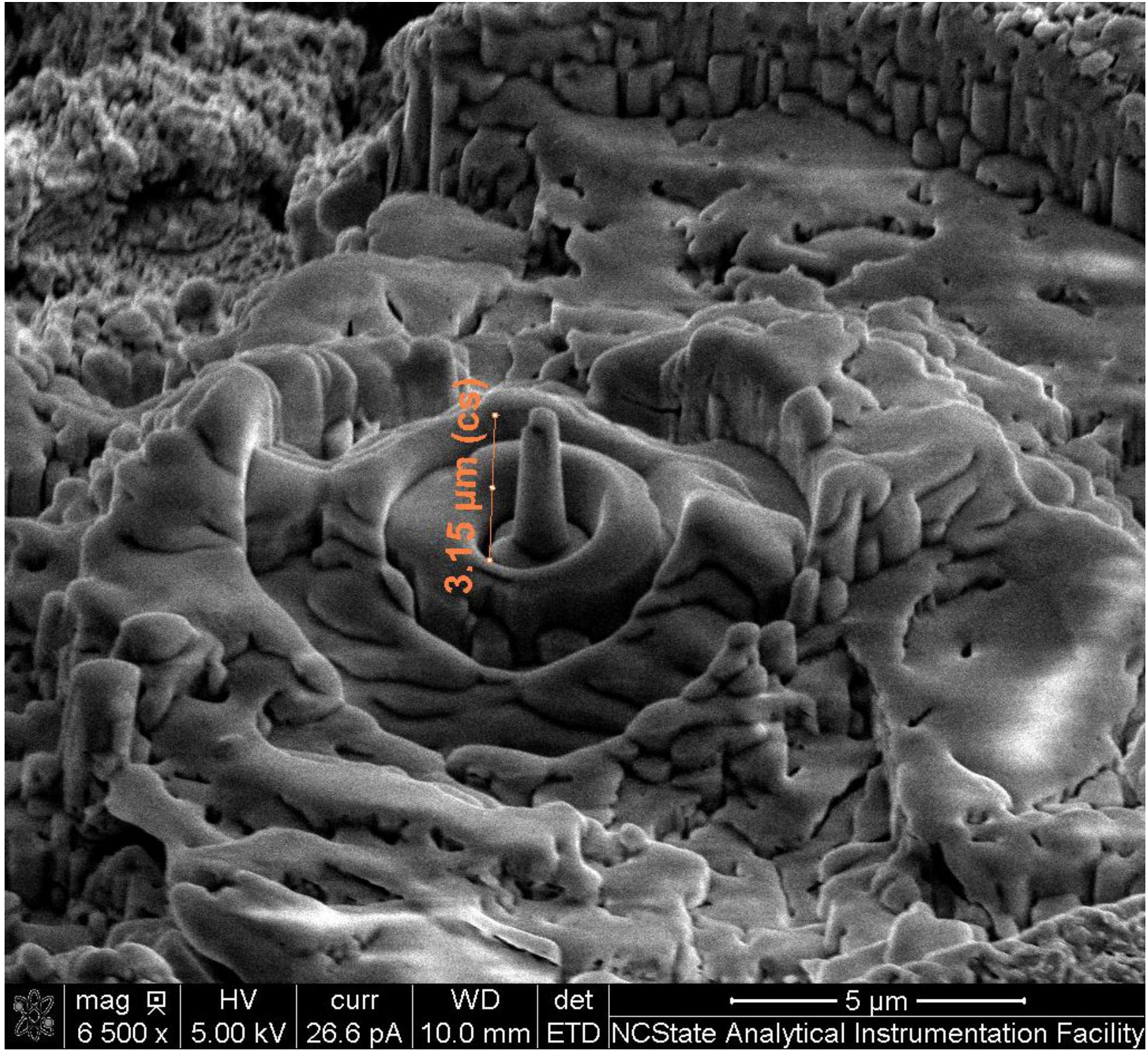
HyperloopTT

Zahn Innovation Center at CCNY













What is a Startup?



What is a startup?

A **startup** is a company or project undertaken by an entrepreneur to seek, develop, and validate a scalable business model.

An **entrepreneur** is an individual who creates and/or invests in one or more businesses, bearing most of the risks and enjoying most of the rewards. The process of setting up a business is known as entrepreneurship. The entrepreneur is commonly seen as an innovator, a source of new ideas, goods, services, and business/or procedures.



What examples can you think of?

...



What pros/cons come to mind?

...





ABOUT US

The Zahn Innovation Center is an incubator that **nurtures entrepreneurial initiatives** at the City College of New York, providing students with the resources they need to transform their ideas into sustainable ventures.





MEET OUR TEAM



**CHRIS
BOBKO**

Executive Director



**KESIA
HUDSON**

Managing Director



**DI
CUI**

Program Manager



WHAT WE OFFER

FALL

- Startup Minicamp
- Freelancing Workshops
- Innovation Sprint

SPRING

- Venture Incubator & Competition
- Innovation Sprint

YEAR ROUND

- AI + Entrepreneurship Certificate
- Special Events
 - Founder Talks
 - Professional Development Sessions
- Mentorship

INNOVATE WITH US

IRL

NAC 1/102

EMAIL

CONTACT@ZAHNCENTERNYC.COM

WEBSITE

WWW.CCNY.CUNY.EDU/ZAHN

INSTAGRAM

@ZAHNCENTERNYC

LINKEDIN

THE ZAHN INNOVATION CENTER AT CCNY

DISCORD

ZAHN INNOVATION CENTER



STARTUP MINICAMP

THURSDAYS | OCTOBER 15 - NOVEMBER 5

12:15 - 1:45 PM | NAC 1/103

EXPLORE

Entrepreneurship

SEARCH

Customer Needs

IDENTIFY

Market and Competition

BUILD

Prototype and Test

**Have an idea?
Just Curious?
LAUNCH HERE**



ccny.cuny.edu/zahn/fall-mini-bootcamp



The City College
of New York

■ got an idea!

■ guided
business building

■ 1 on 1 coaching

pitch for \$15K & launch! ■

apply by
11.8



incubator **VENTURE** *competition*

Early stage startup and nonprofit ideas
Open to all majors & years in school
No business experience required



customer research | solution ideation | business model |
value proposition | financial forecasting | market analysis |
prototype and testing | customer acquisition | presentation

Overview

- **An accelerated, guided and collaborative environment to build and test early stage ventures**
 - Webinars
 - In-person workshops
 - Business building with milestone check-ins
 - Mentorship
 - Pitch practices
- **Compete for up to \$15k in prizes**



Why Apply?

- Step-by-step **roadmap** that resembles a “mini-MBA”
- **Mentorship** from experts across different industries
- A **community** of like-minded peers who bring different perspectives but shared passion for entrepreneurship
- Transferable **skills and experiences** that you can talk about in job interviews and grad school applications even if you eventually decide to not further pursue your startup idea





WHAT CAN YOU TAKE AWAY FROM OUR INCUBATOR?

hear from past participants



A skill that I acquired from the program is being able to **speak confidently** when talking about something I am educated and passionate about. I also learnt to **conduct interviews** and understand customers' needs for my business. My **collaborative skills** have also definitely improved.

Richard Cruz, ReHome





This experience has provided us with invaluable **mentorship** and **resources** to refine our vision. With this support, we are excited to accelerate our growth and bring our solution to a broader audience.

My Anh Phan, *Popped Up!*



Before, I thought that it was more about getting things completely built before showing it to people, but when actually working with **real users**, I realize it's not the right approach. We have to actually get a **MVP** out regardless of how good that you might think that you need it to be and then use that **feedback** from those real users to build towards the actual product.

Wahab Ahmed, *Ortica*





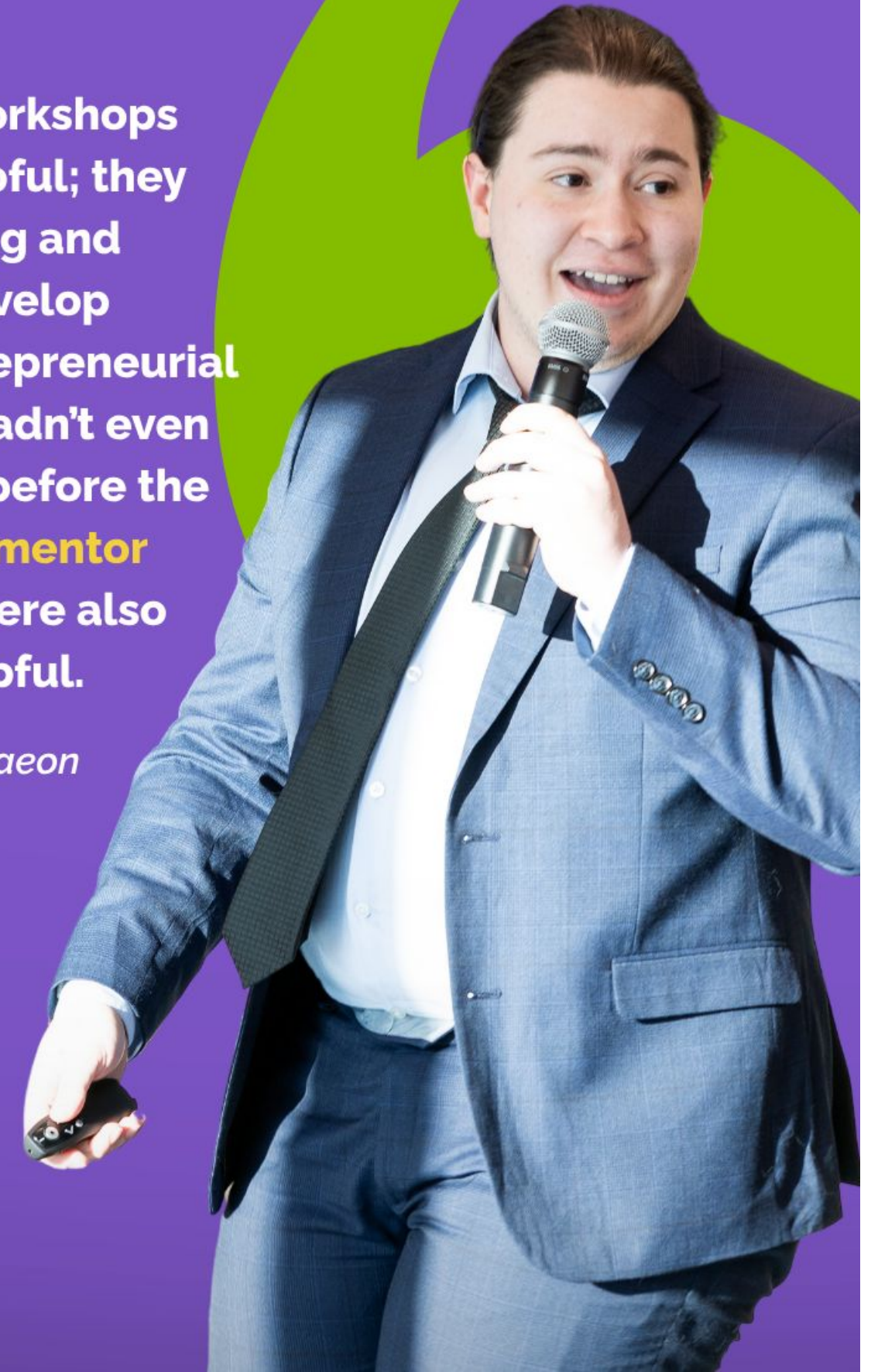
Great staff. They are always willing to help and they listen. Made new friendships thanks to the way the incubator made all participants work together as a group.

Jessi Gomez, *PlantPulse*



The weekly workshops were very helpful; they kept the pacing and helped me develop essential entrepreneurial **skills**, ones I hadn't even known about before the program. The **mentor office hours** were also incredibly helpful.

Mason Enis, *Sensaeon*



Eligibility





WHO WE SUPPORT

Composition

- **1 to 5 members per team**
- Entrepreneurship and this incubator are major undertakings, so we strongly encourage you participate as teams.
- You are allowed to add to your team in the early stage of the process.

CUNY Representation

- Each team has to have at least **one current CUNY student (including those who are graduating from CUNY in December 2026) and CUNY representation must be honored throughout the program.**





WHAT WE SUPPORT

We support

- Physical products
- Service-based businesses
- Apps/websites
- Nonprofits and social enterprises
- Tech-driven innovations

We do NOT support

- Purely brick and mortar businesses
 - Storefronts
 - Restaurants and cafes
 - Food trucks
 - Boutiques
- Multi-level marketing businesses





COMPETITION TRACKS

Kaylie Hardware

- physical products and devices that may or may not include a connected (smart) tech aspect

Standard Chartered Women + Tech

- led by women & team is made up of at least 50% women
- tech is at the core of the idea

Zahn Social Impact

- mission driven businesses and nonprofits that bring about social change

Zahn Software

- apps, software, websites, or platforms

Our competitions are sponsored by

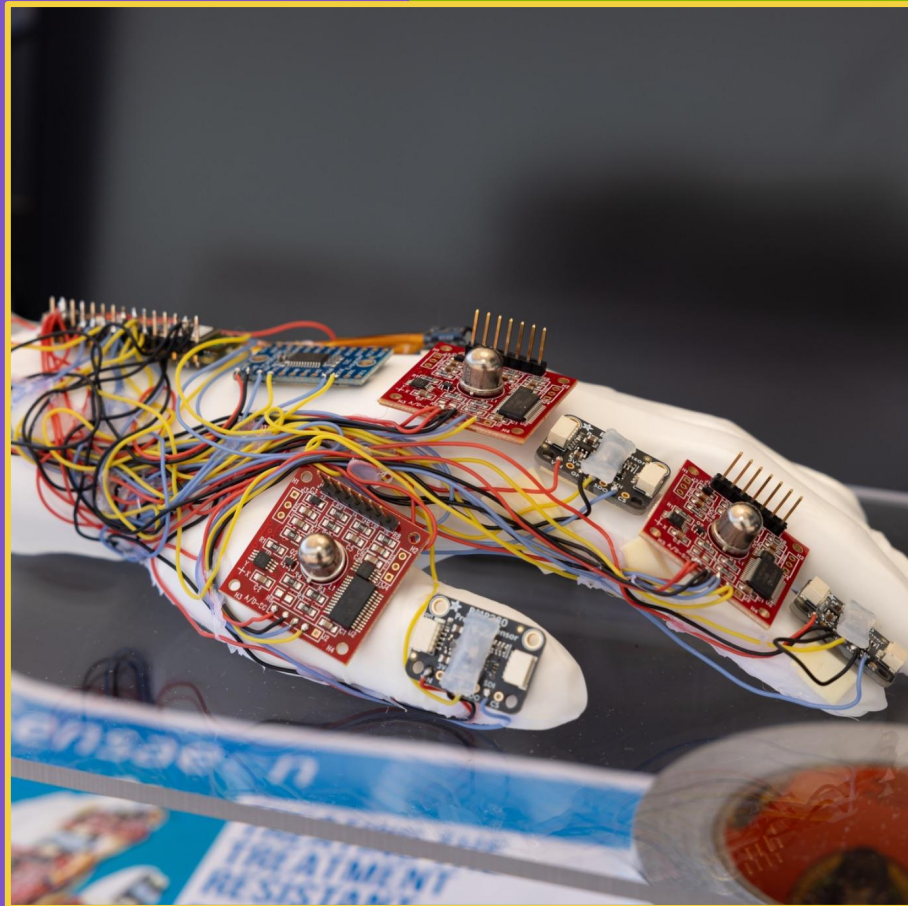


Irwin Zahn



2026 Winning Ideas





Sensaeon

Kaylie Hardware

Sensaeon is a drug-free wearable sleeve that treats treatment-resistant phantom limb pain by restoring movement feedback through biomimetic nerve stimulation.



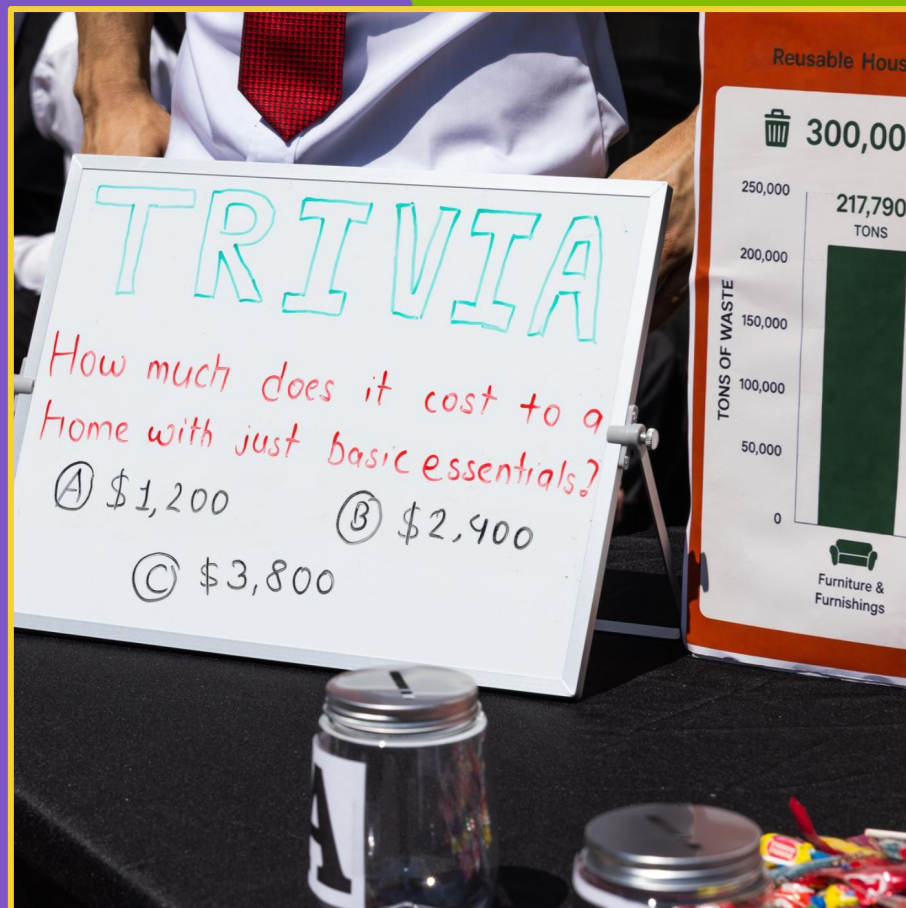


Popped Up!

Standard Chartered Women + Tech

Popped Up! is an app that connects brands to event attendees to improve event experiences and provides real-time analytics.



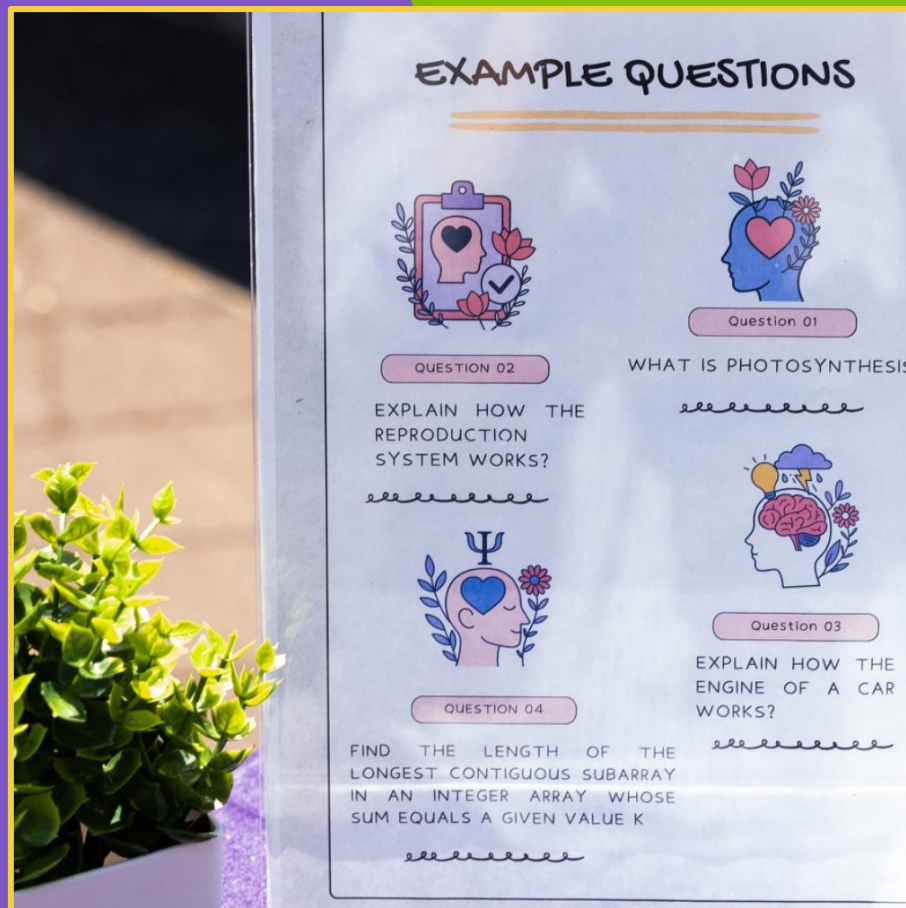


ReHome

Zahn Social Impact

ReHome provides newly moved, low-income families with essential household items by handling the pickup and vetting of donated goods, reducing moving stress for donors and lowering the financial burden of moving for recipients.





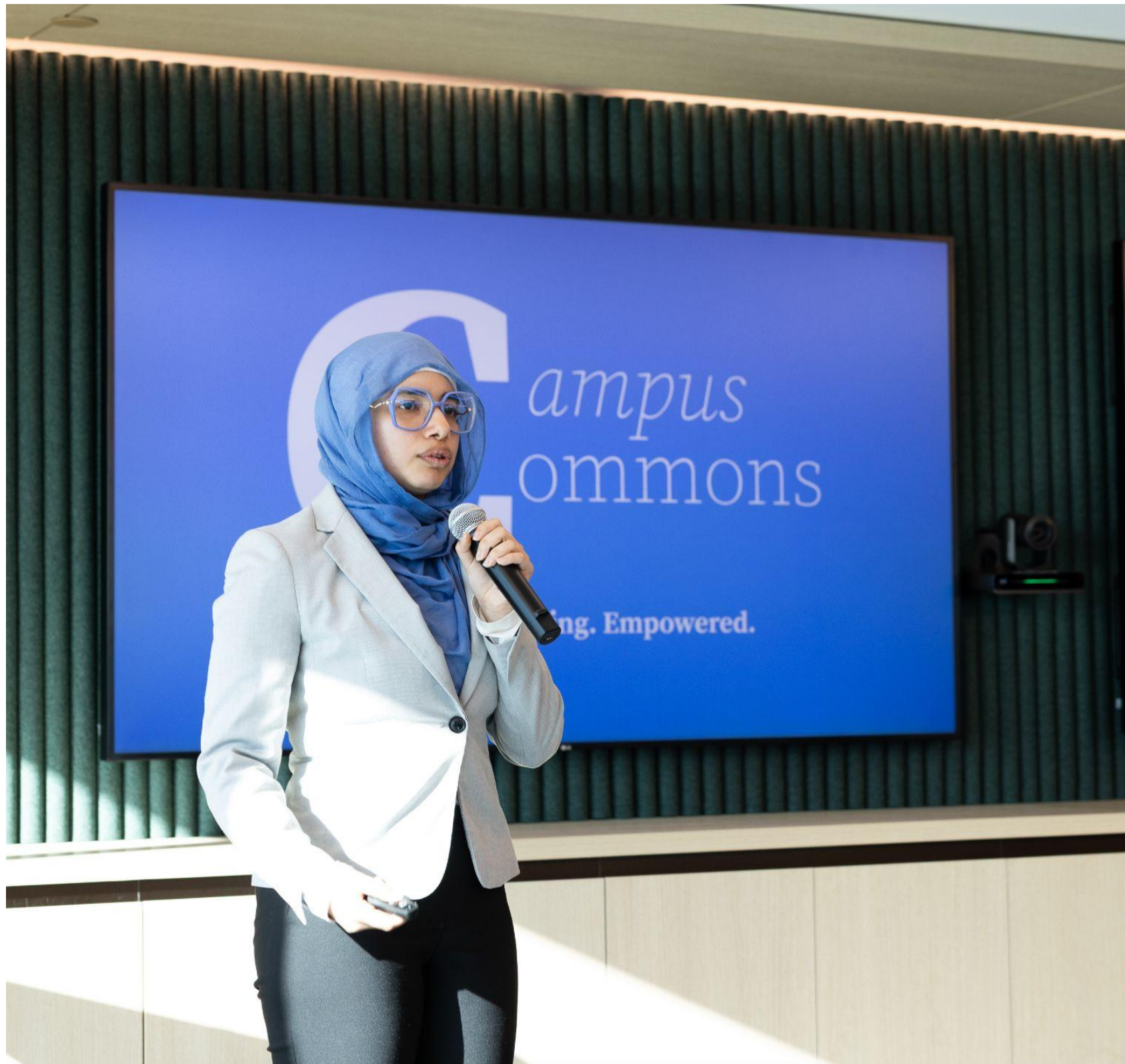
Ortica

Zahn Software

Ortica is an AI powered learning platform that teaches any subject through real time visual explanations.











Questions?



Innovation Combination



Innovate!

- Pretend you work for the selected **brand** and you've been tasked with developing a new **product or service** for that company.
- You'll have 15 minutes to develop the product's
 - target audience
 - name and features,
 - benefits,
 - and a promotional idea.
- One spokesperson from each group will briefly present out at the end



Share Out



THANK YOU!



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