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CONTACT: Pamela McLaughlin
315.443.9788
pwmclaug@syr.edu

Libraries' Blackstone LaunchPad wins Fast Pitch Competition at Charleston Conference

The Blackstone LaunchPad won the Judges' Prize at the inaugural Charleston Conference Fast Pitch Competition on Nov. 4. The new innovation competition looks for compelling new ideas in academic library and information management. A committee of professional judges selected the winners from a national field of applicants.

Holding a ceremonial check for Blackstone LaunchPad's win are, from left to right: Braden Croy, program manager, Blackstone LaunchPad Linda Dickerson Hartsock, executive director, Blackstone LaunchPad Scott Warren, associate dean for research and scholarship Natasha Cooper, collection development and analysis librarian Stephanie McReynolds, librarian for business, management, and entrepreneurship

Holding a ceremonial check for Blackstone LaunchPad's win at the Past Pitch Competition are, from left to right: Braden Croy, program manager for Blackstone LaunchPad; Linda Dickerson Hartsock, executive director for Blackstone LaunchPad; Scott Warren, associate dean for research and scholarship; Natasha Cooper, collection development and analysis librarian; and Stephanie McReynolds, librarian for business, management, and entrepreneurship.

Scott Warren, associate dean for research and scholarship at Syracuse University Libraries, pitched the libraries' idea. Warren oversees collections and subject librarian services and is taking part in the 2016-2017 Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Leadership Fellows Program. He developed the Fast Pitch proposal with Linda Dickerson Hartsock, Blackstone LaunchPad executive director; Stephanie McReynolds, the University's business, management and entrepreneurship librarian; and other library staff.

Noting the benefits and added value of placing the Blackstone LaunchPad within the libraries, the winning concept will create a new entrepreneurial resource collection developed by librarians and Blackstone LaunchPad staff. The collection will be installed in "book nodes" adjacent to the LaunchPad in Bird Library. The LaunchPad worked with Syracuse University faculty across many academic program areas to crowdsource the book collection, which encompasses multidisciplinary topics related to ideation, creativity, entrepreneurship, design thinking and more. The collection has already been adopted as a suggested reading list by faculty teaching entrepreneurship and related

subjects. LaunchPad students are planning to start a book club around the collection, to continue the interdisciplinary collaboration

“Winning the Judges’ Prize was thrilling because it further validates the University’s vision to place the LaunchPad inside the libraries,” says Warren. “Our team’s pitch centered on student outcomes and how driving student-focused entrepreneurship from within the libraries helps grow our own capacity to innovate—an exciting double win for Syracuse!”

The Charleston Conference is an international gathering of librarians, publishers, electronic resource managers, consultants and vendors of library materials in Charleston, South Carolina, each November. The 2016 Theme was “Roll with the Times, or the Times Roll Over You.” The conference began in 1980 and has grown to more than 1,600 attendees annually.

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