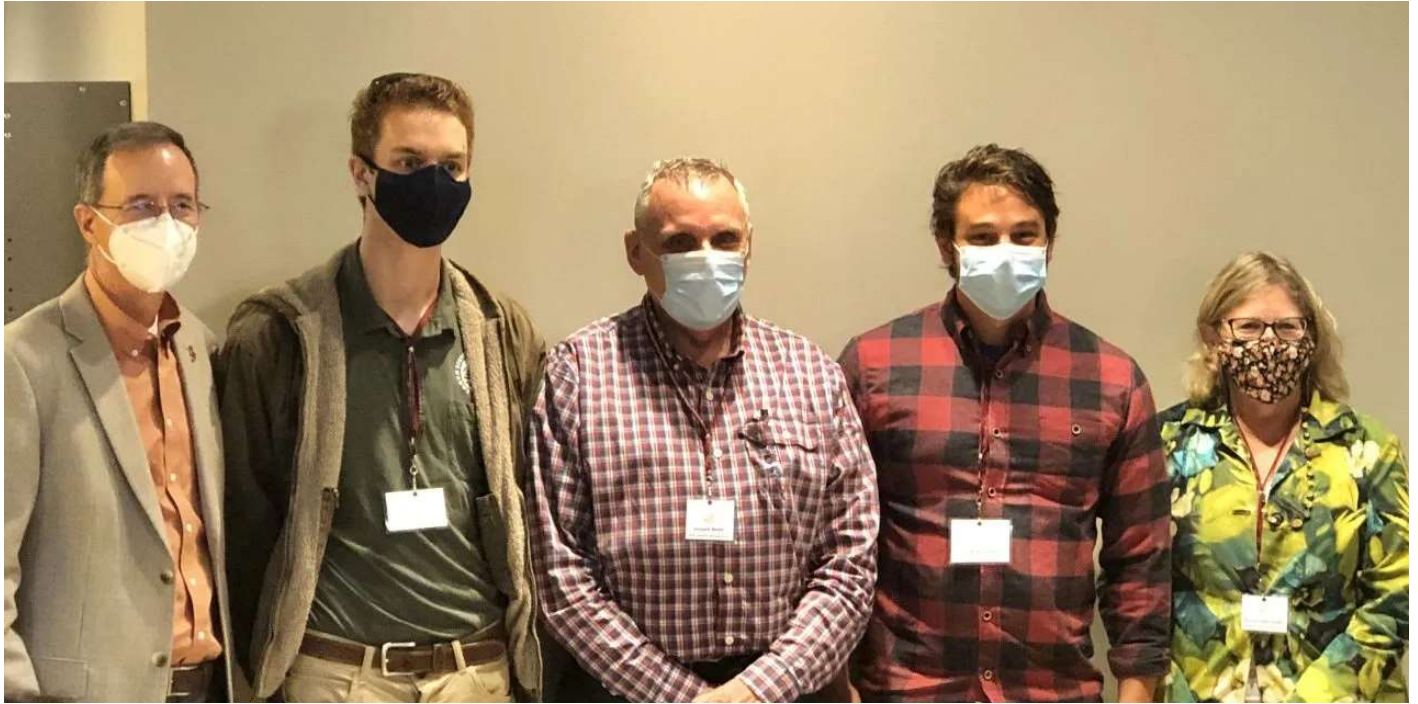


Local students win 2nd in Philip E. and Carole R. Ratcliffe Foundation Shore Hatchery entrepreneurship competition

Nov 22, 2021 – Author: Bill Stirling



Pictured: From left are Salisbury University President Charles White, Jesse McCaleb, instructor Joe Betit, Lucas Antunes and University Provost Karen Olmstead. Unable to attend due to taking exams at college were Joslyn Herold, Dade Walker and Phillip Le.

A group of local college students who have formed Earth Systems Management, LLC, led by Joseph Betit of Pungoteague, won second place and \$25,000 in the recent Philip E. and Carole R. Ratcliffe Foundation Shore Hatchery entrepreneurship competition in Salisbury, Md.

Held in person for the first time since 2020 due to COVID-19, this semester's competition also marked the opening of SU's new Dave and Patsy Rommel Center for Entrepreneurship at SU Downtown. Some 13 applicants from throughout the Mid-Atlantic competed for their share of \$100,000 in prize money.

Jesse McCaleb made the presentation that demonstrated the firm's capability to provide near-shore, shallow water environmental and bathymetric mapping services and production of hydro-drone systems, as well as marine infrastructure inspections, and change monitoring for environmental projects, aquaculture crops and other areas. Also in attendance at the presentation was Lucas Antunes and Betit. Unable to attend due to taking exams at college were Joslyn Herold, Dade Walker and Phillip Le.

"Everyone participated in putting the project together," said Betit. "They are experienced at working together on site or at a distance."

The drone built by the team has the capability to measure flow, salinity, and temperatures of the waterways it covers and would be of use to environmental scientists, aqua farmers and marine engineers.

"We have developed our own hydro drone technology design with good GPS and sonar mapping performance plus 360 degree cameras but at a consumer cost point level," said Betit.

As a winner in the Shore Hatchery competition Earth Systems Management, LLC will be provided with an

assigned free office for 6 months in the Downtown Center for Entrepreneurship starting in January of 2022. Two business mentors have also been assigned.

The office includes use of the meeting rooms and the presentation area, high speed internet and use of the Makerspace containing 3D printers and CNC cutters.

The Philip E. and Carole R. Ratcliffe Foundation Shore Hatchery program was established with an initial \$1 million contribution in 2013. In 2017, the Ratcliffe Foundation announced a second \$1 million gift to continue the Shore Hatchery through Spring 2023. It is administered through SU's Franklin P. Perdue School of Business. Its goal: to fund entrepreneurs and have new businesses opening within six months, with the potential of employing three or more within three years.

Up to \$200,000 annually is available for those applying for grants through the Shore Hatchery program. Its board of directors selects recipients based on presentations.

For more information call 410-546-4325 or visit the Ratcliffe Shore Hatchery website at www.salisbury.edu/shore-hatchery.

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