



## CONTACT

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2019 Commemoration

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## VIRGINIA'S 2019 COMMEMORATION, AMERICAN EVOLUTION ANNOUNCES STUDENT TEAM SEMIFINALISTS AND CELEBRITY JUDGES FOR AMERICAN EVOLUTION INNOVATORS CUP COMPETITION

*Unique Competition Challenges Undergraduate Students from Across Virginia to Develop Innovative Solutions Addressing Issues Facing the Commonwealth and the Nation*

**Charlottesville, VA (March 19, 2019)** – Today Virginia's [2019 Commemoration, American Evolution](#) announced the celebrity judging panel and student team semifinalists for the [American Evolution Innovators Cup](#) competition. The annual competition, which showcases Virginia's academic excellence, will be held April 12 at the [Tom Tom Summit & Festival](#).

The 2019 [American Evolution Innovators Cup](#) competition features two challenges: *The Social Impact Challenge* and *The Commonwealth Challenge*. *The Social Impact Challenge* encourages participants to reimagine the high school of the future and design a concept addressing a need or gap that exists given today's high school model and develop an innovative approach to education that will prepare students with the skills they will need to succeed in the workplace of the future. In *The Commonwealth Challenge* student teams will submit entries based on their existing startup, or identify and commercialize intellectual property where a Virginia higher education researcher is a "principal investigator."

A [panel of industry expert judges](#) will hear presentations from the Virginia student team finalists and select winners of the competition's cash prizes totaling \$60,000, as well as access to mentorship opportunities and investor meetings. The competition's celebrity judges include:

- Jason Feifer, Editor-in-Chief of *Entrepreneur* magazine, and host of the podcasts, *Problem Solvers* and *Pessimists Archive*
- Henry Hips, Deputy Director of the Education team at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Karen Jackson, Former Secretary of Technology for the Commonwealth of Virginia
- David Hall, Partner at Rise of the Rest Seed Fund
- Navin Thukkaram, Lead Investor and Board Member of SkyKick
- Shawn Boehn, Chief Transformative Officer at Year Up

"The diverse panel of judges selected for the American Evolution Innovators Cup represent Virginia's innovative spirit," said Kathy Spangler, Executive Director of the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution. "By challenging undergraduate students to develop solutions to social issues facing both Virginia and the nation, this competition helps lay the foundation to continue this innovative success in future generations."

This year, [42 student teams](#) representing 17 Commonwealth colleges and universities and two high schools have been selected to participate in the American Evolution Innovators Cup.

Virginia's 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution has partnered with notable Virginia institutions and national partners like Tom Tom Festival to inspire local, national and international engagement in the themes of democracy, diversity and opportunity. American Evolution is commemorating formative events that occurred in 1619 Virginia, including the first representative legislative assembly in the New World, the arrival of the first recorded African in English North America, the recruitment of English women in significant numbers to the Virginia colony, the first official English Thanksgiving in North America and the entrepreneurial and innovative spirit of the Virginia colony. A full schedule of American Evolution programming, upcoming events, and educational initiatives can be found at: <https://www.americanevolution2019.com/events/>

### **About the 2019 Commemoration**

The 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution™, highlights events that occurred in Virginia in 1619 that continue to influence America today. Featured programs, events and legacy projects will position Virginia as a leader in education, tourism and economic development. American Evolution™ commemorates the ongoing journey toward the key ideals of democracy, diversity and opportunity. Dominion Energy is an American Evolution Founding Partner and Altria Group and TowneBank are Virginia Colony Partners.

### **About the Tom Tom Foundation and Founders Festival**

The Tom Tom Foundation is a nonprofit organization that champions innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship in America's small cities. Tom Tom's flagship event is a weeklong festival that takes place in conjunction with Thomas Jefferson's birthday each April. The Festival welcomed over 20,000 attendees to Charlottesville, VA in 2018 and has channeled nearly \$3.1 million to new ventures since its inception in 2012. Learn more about Tom Tom and its mission at [www.tomtomfest.com](http://www.tomtomfest.com).

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# AMERICAN EVOLUTION INNOVATORS CUP SEMIFINALISTS

## Commonwealth Challenge

- **George Mason University**
  - **Nuemi:** Sai Gurrapu, Raheel Tauyyab, Jared Ponmakha
- **Hampton University**
  - **Island of Stability:** Andrew Gray, Alexis Darko, Kyree Sullivan
- **James Madison University**
  - **Hich, Inc.:** Trey Rustand, Patrick McQuown, Zach Casey
- **Liberty University**
  - **Vortex Apparel:** Alan Sexten
- **Norfolk State University**
  - **Wearable Cells:** Jada Oakes, Jasmine Blair
- **Old Dominion University**
  - **Bookworms:** Girish Sreevatsan Nandakumar, Michael Osorio
- **The University of Virginia's College at Wise**
  - **CROWDIQ:** Hunter Hess
- **University of Lynchburg**
  - **Doctor Now:** Nicholas Louvros, Stephanie Quaranto, Claudia Lopez Perez
- **University of Richmond**
  - **LifeCap:** Kyle Sheehan
- **University of Virginia**
  - **PurPics:** Victor Layne, Raahish Kalaria, Aneesh Dhawan
  - **Riley-The Social Network for the disability and illness community:** Elizabeth Tikoyan, Aditya Gupta
  - **Shakti Apparel:** Shafat Khan, Jane Hammaker
  - **Minimally Invasive Spinal Technology, LLC:** Alexander Singh, Rohit Rustagi, George Vithoukias, Eric Taleghani
- **Virginia Commonwealth University**
  - **Hyperloop at VCU:** Arthur Chadwick, Matthew Kozak, Harrison Powers
  - **HeartComm:** Carter Spiers, Alexa Lightfoot, Aysha Brown, Ben Bethard
  - **HeartSaver:** Samuel Yohannes, Cameron Johnson, Ya Wen, Reem Alsulooly
  - **Guide-wire Clamp, No wire left behind:** Gabriel Davis, Hannah Wale, Shai-Keria Dwight, Veronica Dunbar
- **Virginia Military Institute (VMI)**
  - **DRM-1:** Patrick Fowler, Jonathan Chamberlain, James Seal, Bennett Johnson
- **Virginia State University**

- **Natural Black Velvet:** Destiny Hodges, Chanel Brown, Amaya Moses, Marcus Jones, Alex Wade
- **Virginia Tech**
  - **OcuBloc:** Jeremy Myslowski, Demisha Porter, Aditya Sircar
  - **QuickTech Medical:** Gregory Grande, Jacob Merizian, Glenn Feit, Pim Jansen, Matthew Severance
  - **GiraffeGear:** Nick Tang, Thomas Kronenberg, Parker Smith
  - **Rendyr:** Kaelum Hasler, Martin Angst, Elijah Hodges, Liam Lawrence, Callan McGill, Reid Holbert
- **William & Mary**
  - **CounterPoise:** Paige Ash, Shireen Ardaiz

## Reinventing High School Challenge

- **George Mason University**
  - **Turning High School Into Life School:** Yassmin Salem
- **Germanna Community College**
  - **Spanish Dual-Immersion:** James Caras, Kyle Close, Helen Padilla, Jose Diaz-Rivera, Bryan Palmeri, Andrew Pinney
- **Albemarle High School**
  - **The SAGE Model:** Christian Opitz, Jack Kircher, Sadie Carfagno
- **Monticello High School**
  - **Innovative Humanities:** Lucy Abell
- **James Madison University**
  - **Reinventing High School:** Sina Shahcheraghi, Peyton Major
  - **The Bridge Project - Reinventing the High School Experience:** C Shea Burch, Cameron Robinson, Lexy Foor, Christian Caruso
- **Roanoke College**
  - **Education for the Individual:** Matthew Myers
  - **COLLAB Learning Curriculum:** Cameron Guernsey, Erik Stefanowicz, Grayson White, Trey Perry
  - **Module Learning:** William White, Samuel Carpenter
  - **Creating Winners in High School:** Kieran Ridgway, Ryan Denholm
- **University of Virginia**
  - **The Pick-Me-Up Box:** Sasha Duckworth, Srijay Kasturi, Emily Smith, Kurien Thomas
  - **MetaCTF:** Jake Smith, Mariah Kenny, Roman Bohuk, Marina Sanusi
  - **InternLab:** Kate McGinn
  - **ReinventED's Reinventing High School Kit:** Melissa Wu, Keaton Wadzinski, Aditya Narayan

- **Project HD:** Amanullah Waheed, Jake Wisnicki
- **Virginia Commonwealth University**
  - **MGMT 436 - Computer Science Curriculum for Richmond Public Schools:** Wolfie Schrader, Sam Slocum, Michael Meilinger
  - **Global Classroom:** Hu Zhai, Zhixin An
- **Virginia Tech**
  - **Redshift Education, Inc.:** Maria Jernigan, Kiran Bagalkotkar, Taylor Carroll, Jooyoung Whang, Vince DiNardo, Mark Carman