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Student Inc programme sees MTU creating next generation of entrepreneurs

The Student Inc. programme was first developed eleven years ago to encourage student entrepreneurs to start businesses in a safe and nurturing environment



Brendan O'Regan (sponsor of the O'Regan Entrepreneurship Scholarships) with MTU Student Inc participants, Idowu Akinyimika, Divya Shree Srinivas, Kyle Tenkrooden, Ethan Morrissey, Daineadh Power and Conor Hall, with Carole O'Leary, Programme Manager, and Michael Loftus, VP for External Affairs

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Ireland's longest running student entrepreneurship accelerator programme, Student Inc., kicked off this month at Munster Technological University's start-up incubators, the Rubicon Centre in Cork and the Tom Crean Centre in Kerry.

This year, for the first time since the programme's inception in 2011, Student Inc. participants at MTU will be supported through the O'Regan Scholarship programme, which is being funded by MTU alumnus and entrepreneur, Brendan O'Regan.

Brendan was founder and executive chairman of Zenith Technologies, which was acquired by Cognizant in 2019.

Speaking at the launch of the scholarship programme on June 7th at the Rubicon Centre MTU, Mr. O'Regan said: "I am delighted to support the next generation of MTU entrepreneurs at the start of their business creation journeys, and I look forward to seeing many of their ideas translating into new businesses, driving employment and regional development over the years to come. I built an international business based in Cork, but it wouldn't have been such a success without having MTU on our doorstep. We had 12 people in the management team at the time of selling Zenith to Cognizant, including those leading our operations in the US and Asia, and they were all ex-MTU graduates. It would be great to see this year's Student Inc participants enjoying similar levels of success."

The Student Inc. programme was first developed on MTU's Cork campus (then CIT) eleven years ago, with the overarching goal of encouraging student entrepreneurs to assess the feasibility of their business ideas and start businesses in a safe and nurturing environment. Running annually from the beginning of June to the end of August, it is a full-time immersive programme that provides students with seed funding and access to a network of entrepreneurs, trainers, mentors and investors across the South-West region.

In addition to receiving €4,000 in cash, student entrepreneurs gain access to expert mentoring and training, as well as to free office space, in their respective university start-up incubators.

Since its inception, Student Inc. has gone from strength to strength. From its origin on MTU's Cork campus, the programme was rolled out to University College Cork and MTU Kerry campus in the summer of 2019, and further to Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (now part of Atlantic Technological University), University of Limerick and Limerick Institute of Technology (now part of Technological University of the Shannon) in 2021.

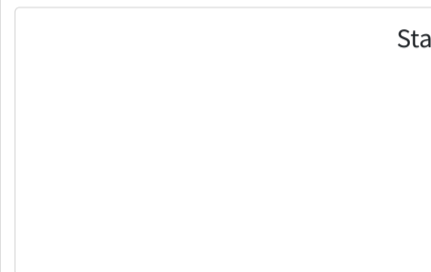


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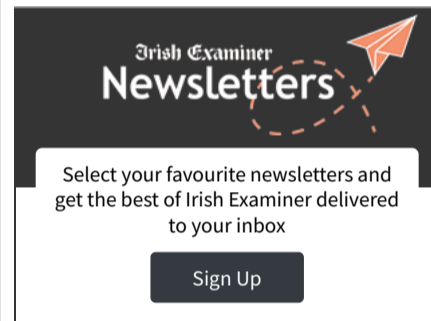


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This year's cohort of twenty-one student entrepreneurs were chosen for the programme from over ninety student applicants.

The expansion of the programme was supported by funding won under the Innovation and Transformation Programme funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in 2018. The expanded programme ensures that all higher education students in the partner universities have the opportunity to see if their business ideas and inventions are viable as commercial opportunities or social enterprises.

All students in participating universities, regardless of their year of study or academic discipline, can apply for a place on the Student Inc. programme.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Student Inc. team at the Rubicon Centre worked closely with the Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Department on MTU's Cork campus and the E-learning Development and Support Unit (EDSU) on MTU's Kerry campus to create and implement an innovative online version of the Student Inc. programme. As a consequence, participants in the 2022 Student Inc. programme can now enjoy a hybrid experience, participating in online training and mentoring while attending their on-campus incubators for the duration of the summer period.

Michael Loftus, Vice President for External Affairs at MTU, said: "We are very grateful to Brendan O'Regan for his generous support of MTU student entrepreneurs. Brendan has had an amazingly successful career which has been differentiated by his incredible achievements on the entrepreneurship front.

"Over a period of many years, he has always been determined to support MTU and its students in a broad range of ways. It is fitting that one of the most entrepreneurial members of our alumni would now support the development of the next generation of entrepreneurs in MTU, an area of strategic focus and differentiation for our university."

Carole O'Leary, Project Manager at MTU's Innovation & Enterprise Office, said: "It is wonderful to see how the Student Inc. programme has grown so successfully over the past decade. We are very much looking forward to following the progress of this year's cohort of twenty-one student entrepreneurs who were chosen for the programme from over ninety student applicants.

"The students come from a wide variety of courses including culinary arts, public relations and software development, and range from undergraduates who have just completed first year through to those undertaking Masters' programmes. This year's participants are developing a great mix of innovative business ideas covering sectors such as fitness, food, medical devices, software, clothing and service industries. Some of the businesses that will be developed over the summer months include a revolutionary speculum for cervical checks, an insect-based food and a wellness resource app for mothers who are coping with the loss of a baby."

Two former Student Inc. participants, Tracey Ryan of Bia Beauty, who participated in the first ever Student Inc. programme in 2011, and Dylan Hennessy of Frostbyte Cocktails, who completed last year's programme, spoke at the scholarship launch during which they outlined their entrepreneurial paths since participating in Student Inc. and imparted useful entrepreneurial insights to the new 2022 cohort of Student Inc. entrepreneurs.

For further information about the Student Inc. programme, please contact Carole O'Leary, Regional Programme Manager for 3rd Level Student Entrepreneurship by emailing carole.oleary@mtu.ie, or see more at www.mtu.ie.