



10<sup>th</sup> January, 2020

## **Asia Pacific Triple E Awards to recognize leaders in entrepreneurship and engagement in Higher Education**

A host of change-makers, innovators, educators and leaders in higher education gathered today in Kochi, India to celebrate together outstanding achievements of universities and individuals in the areas of entrepreneurship, engagement, social outreach and sustainability, as part of the Asia-Pacific Triple E Awards initiated by ACEEU (Accreditation Council for Entrepreneurial and Engaged Universities). The festive Ceremony took place on the side-lines of the 4-day International Conference on Sustainable Globalization.

The ceremony showcased some of the most innovative and inspiring initiatives and individuals who have left an indelible mark on the lives of students, colleagues, children and citizens at large. In total there have been 12 different categories clustered in 3 meta-groups: initiatives, individuals and institutions.

The categories encompassed include:

- Entrepreneurial University of the Year
- Engaged University of the Year
- Green University of the Year
- Entrepreneurial Leader of the Year
- Lifetime Achievement in Entrepreneurs
- Entrepreneurship Educator of the Year
- Engagement Leader of the Year
- Innovation and Collaboration Space of the Year
- Innovation Challenge of the Year
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship Support of the Year
- Community Engagement Initiative of the Year
- Student-driven Sustainability Project of the Year

All entries in these categories underwent a rigorous application and selection process, with an external panel of reviewers – entrepreneurship and innovation experts from Asia-Pacific region – reviewing each applicant on the basis of strict list of criteria.

With over 300 entries, and 60 finalists from 17 countries, Triple E Awards are a testament to the fact that “third mission” at universities is gaining more prominence and universities are embracing more comprehensively this new role. The winners, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> runner up have been presented with trophies while all finalists have been awarded a 12-month affiliate membership to ACEEU resources.


“It has been great to bring together this unique community of leaders in entrepreneurship to celebrate their incredible achievements in promoting higher education’s impact on society. The finalists are true game-changers and we hope that the Awards help to spread their best practices and influence higher education far beyond their own institutions.”

The awards are meant to extol exceptional achievements in university third mission undertakings and provide more impetus to the topic. The initiative is also intended to serve as a forum for like-minded individuals and a platform for further discussion on how to improve the performances of universities so as they can respond to the grand challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is hoped that the initiative will usher in a new era where engaged and entrepreneurial universities are no longer seen as a handful few, but constitute the backbone of higher education.



One of the award entries of JSSAHER, ‘Fungo Mushrooms’ startup: Agripreneurs students of JSS Academy of Higher Education & Research, submitted to the "Student-driven Sustainability Project of the Year Award" category of the 2020 Asia-Pacific Triple E Awards on Entrepreneurship and Engagement Excellence in Higher Education, won the first runner up award among top 5 shortlisted entries by Accreditation Council for Entrepreneurial and Engaged Universities, The Netherlands. Students of JSS Academy of Higher Education & Research, Clint Davis, Raj Kiran, Ajay Jose and Razi Rahman who are entrepreneurs of ‘Fungo Mushrooms’ startup received the award in the Asia Pacific Award Ceremony.





<https://asiapacific.triple-e-awards.com/index/finalist/id/241>



**Student-driven Sustainability Project of the Year**  
PROJECT-LEVEL

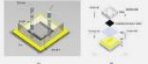




**Social Enterprise for Economic Development (SEED)**  
RISE TO A HEROIC TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE TEACHING AND LEARNING: SOCIAL ENTERPRISE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



**Fungo Mushrooms**  
MUSHROOMS - THE FOOD OF THE PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE  
\*\*\* LEARN  
MORE \*\*\*

1st RUNNER-UP  
\*\*\*



**Miniature Microbial Fuel Cell Based Biosensor**  
LIVING THE DREAMS  
\*\*\* LEARN  
MORE \*\*\*

2nd RUNNER-UP  
\*\*\*

**Electric cycle which runs with renewable energy**  
\*\*\* LEARN  
MORE \*\*\*

FINALIST  
\*\*\*

**MSU MyCoral - Eco Marine Project**  
TRANSFORMING FOREST OF THE SEA, ENRICHING MARINE LIVES  
\*\*\* LEARN  
MORE \*\*\*

FINALIST  
\*\*\*



## Fungo Mushrooms

Finalist of the Student-driven Sustainability Project of the Year Award

*"Mushrooms – The Food of the Past, Present & Future"*



### Summary

Knowledge based and innovation oriented society provides required impetus for faster economic growth. Hence, it is very pertinent to usher in an enabling Eco-system for encouraging and sustaining the Innovations with an aim to make it an instrument of societal progress. Translating technologies and research into product development and revenue generating source is highly time consuming for startup ventures.

With an aim to contribute to this effort, we started to learn mushroom cultivation at Faculty of Life Sciences, JSS Academy of Higher Education & Research, Mysuru during our 3rd year B.Sc., Biotechnology. As a beginning, a few of my classmates along with me were motivated to learn mushroom cultivation through a pre-incubation centre at Faculty of Life Sciences. Motivations and support of Dr. T.S. Gopenath, Associate Professor of Biotechnology was a main driving factor which gave us thought to come up with novel ideas into prototypes and further lead to successful

commercial products of local relevance which can have great impact on the population of this region, in particular.

Towards the end of our Bachelor degree we had already set up our own mushroom cultivation facility outside the campus with our own funding. With a partnership of 4 members we started to cultivate two types of mushrooms, viz., Oyster and Milky white. After initial struggles to find market to our products, now we have reached a stable position in the business and we hope to strengthen it through various by-products.

## Key People

**Mr. Clint Davis, Mr. Raj Kiran, Mr. Ajay Jose and Mr. Razi Rahman, Students of JSS Academy of Higher Education & Research, Mysuru.**

**Prof. B. Suresh –Pro Chancellor**  
*Member*  
Advisory Board, Fungo Mushrooms

**Dr. Surinder Singh-Vice Chancellor**  
*Member*  
Advisory Board, Fungo Mushrooms

**Dr. Manjunatha-Registrar**  
*Member*  
Advisory Board, Fungo Mushrooms

**Dr. T.S. Gopenath-Faculty of Life Sciences**  
*Advisor/Mentor*  
Production/ Quality Control, Fungo Mushrooms

## IMPACT STORY –Clint Davis, Students, JSS AHER

### IMPACTING LIVES

*From my young age I was thinking about innovation/entrepreneurship when I started to spend time with my uncle who was an agripreneur. Hailing from a middle class family, I was interested towards accessory works required to create a setup for agriculture, for instance, mushroom cultivation chamber. With this background I joined JSS Academy of Higher Education & Research, Mysuru in the year 2015 for my B.Sc., Biotechnology.*

*Two years of my degree program went fast before I could realize that I had not yet started the work which was stuck in my mind since a long time. The third year of my degree took the turn when I was motivated to take up activity based assignments. I was not comfortable with theory subjects as my thoughts around entrepreneurship were disturbing me. Knowing my conditions, my mentor Dr. T.S. Gopenath, who was then teaching us, pulled me to start exactly what I wanted to.*

*We wanted to try to produce a wine out of mushroom in the lab as a minor project, which went on to become a huge success among all the teachers and friends. This gave me a huge confidence to take up entrepreneurship activities, especially cultivating mushrooms and that too organically. I had planned to start in my small rental room. Soon after, I got two partners, namely Rajkiran who was already struggling to meet his educational needs and was working part time and Ajay Jose who was a son of a farmer. The innovation took shape when the trio met. We managed to raise Rs. 5 lakhs through our families by now. We found another support in Razi Rahman who could not invest financially but has worked enormously towards the development.*

*We went to set up a Hi-Tech mushroom chamber and named it Fungo Mushrooms which has now got an FSSAI number. To save money, we had undertaken all accessory works like welding, fabricating, setting up electronic circuits etc. We are now supplying mushroom products throughout India.*

*After initial marketing hiccups, now we are a kind of stable entity. We have offers on Diwali or Dusshera. We are also looking to branch out to the value added products of mushrooms such as protein powder, pickle, vinegar, soup and wine in near future.*

## **LEARNINGS**

### LESSONS LEARNED

*We have attended training programs for "Sustainable Development on Agriculture" - Sponsored by University Grants Commission of India. Training on mushroom cultivation from the Horticultural Department of Karnataka has also played an important role in our venture. Training program conducted by FSSAI had provided various insights into food business. Visits to several exhibitions and stalls organized by Government and Private sectors have taught us various strategies of business and product development.*

*Personally, as mentioned elsewhere, I have been learning since my young age on setting up of production facilities along with my uncle Mr. Saju. Many Scientists have given their valuable thoughts for our products, without which we would not have achieved what we are today. My University has set up the stage for our business through the pre-incubation centre at Faculty of Life Sciences and our initial learning processes with friends were really fun and informative. We did not taste success straight away. We had to go through tough decisions and sometimes had even thought to discontinue the project. Timely advice and support rendered by my mentor has a*

*significant impact not only on our ideas but on our character as well. Self confidence is something which kept our hopes alive and we would like to bring to the notice of the future entrepreneurs that without initial struggles it is difficult to achieve what we expect. We have learnt not only to make business but also to share the knowledge to the society. We have also understood that every work with a touch of humanity is much needed in this era of technological advancement and social turmoil.*

*After developing our leaderships through continuous learning, we have started to impart the same to our customers who are very young and yet to begin their journey in entrepreneurship. We derive great joy when we share our knowledge and products for the benefit of human health.*

## **FUTURE PLANS**

### WHAT'S COMING?

*Business is something which we have reached with all hard works in spite of our regular educational affairs and we will achieve further. But we hope this is not all that is making our life a successful one.*

*Awareness on importance of mushrooms is one which is lacking in this part of the country. Though casually everybody knows that mushrooms are good for health, from our experience we have found that not many of them show interest to consume them. So we will look into a strategy to create awareness about the medicinal and health benefits of mushrooms among the population, especially the rural. With uneven rainfall and extreme changes in weather conditions, the most affected ones are the farmers. We believe that if these farmers are educated about the mushrooms and their benefits, there might be changes in their life styles as well. They could start a similar business which is not very risky.*

*Apart from these strategic plans of extension activities, we are planning to cultivate some of the mushrooms which have high medicinal values but not grown in India due to lack of awareness and ideas.*

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to acknowledge JSS Academy of Higher Education & Research for supporting us thoughts through a pre-incubation centre. We would also like to acknowledge all our class mates who stood by us during our initial days of work.