2020 Competition Summary

The Border Innovation Challenge is a partnership of the Rady School of Management and the Jacobs School of Engineering's Institute for the Global Entrepreneur, made possible by funding from members of the Smart Border Coalition. In its second year, this business plan competition focuses on technologies that can improve the processes, efficiencies, and issues (including the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic) that affect those who interact with the US/Mexico international border.

- This year's selection process:
  - The competition was open to students at any level, faculty, staff, and recent alums within 5 years of graduation) from colleges and universities along the US/Mexico border region.
  - Prior to the application deadline a virtual information session was hosted in English.
  - Applications were received from students, faculty and alums representing UC San Diego, Salk Institute for Biological Studies, University of Oklahoma, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Instituto Tecnologico de Tijuana, and Universidad Tecnológica de Tijuana
  - Seven companies were selected as semifinalists following an application review completed by representatives of the Smart Border Coalition and UC San Diego's Rady School of Management and Jacobs School of Engineering.
  - The seven semi-finalists received support and preparation through IGE:
    - Five teams participated in the NSF ICorps program's Path to Market training consisting of four workshops focused on customer discovery, competitive market, and product market fit.
    - All seven teams were matched with mentors form the IGE program: Dennis Abremski, Rachel Costello, Sam Knight, Albert Liu, Steven Sivitz, Stuart Volkow, Justin Wells, and John York.
  - The semi-finalists presented to a panel of judges composed of leadership from the Smart Border Coalition on November 18th. Five finalists were selected to move forward to the final event.

- The final competition was held virtually on Tuesday, December 1, 2020 from 5:30 to 7:30.
  - Following the reception, guests were welcomed by Lisa Ordóñez, Dean of the Rady School of Management.
  - The event was emceed by **Alan Lilienthal**. Alan has been living in the binational region since 1998. He was born in Mexico City, raised in San Diego, and now lives in Tijuana. His work is fueled by the unique cultural dynamic that exists when you live between two countries. He is the host of Port Of Entry, a KPBS podcast about the unexplored subcultures, creativity, and people who are shaped by the US/Mexico border. He is a member of tulengua, a bilingual hip hop supergroup with members on both sides of the wall. All of his work explores how cross-border collaboration can be used as a tool for joy and community.

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- o Gustavo De La Fuente, Executive Director of the Smart Border Coalition, gave a brief presentation on the state of the border and on the partnership with UC San Diego's Rady School of Management that drove this competition.
- o Finalists were:
  - **Pere:** presented by recent UC San Diego Cognitive Science alums Paloma Santos and Austin Sheaghley. "Pere is an app that will address the problems of inaccurate wait-time information at the US-MX border by utilizing crowdsourced information on travel times and destinations from our users in order to predict traffic flow and provide accurate information for all users."
  - **Smart Border System,** presented by Eduardo Cabrera, a lecturer in Engineering and Technology at Universidad Autónoma de Baja California. "Smart Border System is a Scheduled Cross-border commuting platform supported by digital and physical infrastructure for queues management."
  - **Luna Diagnostic**, presented by Yuan Xue, a post-doc researcher at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies. "Luna Diagnostic - Rapid and affordable COVID-19 diagnostic at the border."
  - **Tijuana Solar River**, presented by Leonardo Trujillo of the Technical Institute of Tijuana. "The revitalization of the Tijuana River channel as a solar power farm and binational water remediation infrastructure. A project that brings back the river canal to Tijuana communities with pedestrians and public spaces along the 11-mile channel."
  - **Tracelinx**, presented by Guillermo Mejia, an alum of Universidad Iberoamericana del Norte, and Antonio Huerta, a computer science student at the Instituto Tecnologico de Tijuana. "Tracelinx is a scalable SaaS platform with Blockchain for the fresh food industry and pharma that enables unprecedented traceability by linking all players in the supply chain, while increasing efficiencies resulting in improved ROIs for all participants."
- o Competition judges were:
  - **Sandy Agnos** is the Head of Product for Robust AI, an early stage software company working toward the goal of making robots that are smarter, safer, more robust, more context-aware and collaborative. As a product management and business development executive, Sandy has been instrumental in the strategy, commercialization and launch of numerous disruptive AI technologies including three different autonomous mobile robots with three different companies across North America, EU, South America and APAC regions since 2011.
  - **Melanie Hagerty** is the senior director of Engineering Applications at Cubic. She and her team collaborate closely with Design Engineering, IT Engineering, and business leads to determine how best to leverage engineering applications/tools and lean techniques to improve our engineers' experience, and speed/robustness

of hardware and software development and delivery. Prior to her current position, she served as the vice president of innovation and corporate engineering.

- **Kimberly Davis King** has over 17 years in the venture capital industry and is the Co-Director for the Rady School's StartR Accelerator. Kim's focus is on investing and mentoring startups and high growth companies. She is on the oversight committee for EvoNexus and an advisor to many early stage and growth companies in San Diego including Clics, Aira, Trials.ai, PhiloMetron and Verve Wireless.
- **Barbara Wight** is the CFO for Taylor Guitars in El Cajon, CA. Barbara started at Taylor in 2009 and is an active participant in National Association of Music Merchants advocacy work. Barbara is on the Board of Directors for the Regional Economic Development Corporation for San Diego and is a member of the World Trade Center San Diego Global Competitiveness Council. She is also a part of the District Export Council Department of Commerce and was a former board member of the San Diego County Water Authority.Each of the finalists were given seven minutes to present their idea, followed by five minutes of questions from the competition judges. Judges scores were submitted to the committee and tallied to determine the Grand Prize and Runner Up.

o In addition to the finalists presentations, Cheslav Versky, winner of the inaugural Border Innovation Challenge, provided an update on the progress he's made with his technology since the competition.

o The audience voted their favorite through a zoom poll and judges submitted their scores through a google form.

o The awards were announced by Alan Lilienthal, emcee for the evening, following Cheslav's presentation.
- Grand Prize ($7,000) – **Luna Diagnostic**
- Runner Up ($3,500) – **Smart Border System**
- Audience Choice ($2,000) – **Tijuana Solar River**

o Attendance at event was 94, with 185 registered.