Students entrepreneurs look to nature for solutions to climate change

A team from three Greek universities has been awarded third prize in a student biomimicry innovation challenge.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - 7/10/2017 (Missoula, MT) A team of students with members from the National Technical University of Athens, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and the Technical University of Crete has just been named as the third prize winner in the student category of a global design challenge focused on climate change solutions.

Over 100 teams entered the 2017 Biomimicry Global Design Challenge, answering the call to apply biomimicry, or nature-inspired design, to develop solutions to reverse or adapt to climate change. In the open category, winning teams have been chosen to receive a cash prize and an invitation to enter the 2017-18 Biomimicry Accelerator, which culminates in the $100,000 Ray C. Anderson Foundation Ray of Hope Prize™.

In the student category, the third place team from Greece emulated coral calcification to create a design that sequesters carbon dioxide from the sea. This team created CO_2EUS (CO_2 Efficient Uptake System), a device that sequesters excess carbon dioxide (CO_2) seawater into calcium carbonate ($CaCO_3$). This design aims to enhance the ocean's capacity to absorb and process CO_2, ultimately contributing to the re-stabilization of the carbon cycle. The team will receive a $750 cash prize. A full list of the winners can be found here.

"Accelerating the path from idea to prototype to marketplace is our goal," said John Lanier, executive director of the Ray C. Anderson Foundation. "And we are excited about the potential for this new cohort to demonstrate viable and innovative solutions to our climate crisis."

The Biomimicry Institute's Biomimicry Global Design Challenge invites students and professionals to look to our planet's living systems to tackle climate-related issues like energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, food systems, transportation, water management, coastal communities, and fossil fuel usage. The goals are to show how biomimicry - one of *Fortune*'s five business "Trends to ride in 2017" - can provide viable solutions to the current climate crisis and to bring much-needed solutions to market quickly.

Each year, the Biomimicry Accelerator culminates in the $100,000 Ray of Hope Prize to the team with the most viable biomimetic solution, including a functioning prototype, a tested

business model, and customer validation. For the second year, the Biomimicry Institute will be partnering with Bioneers to present this award onstage during the Bioneers National Conference in San Rafael, CA on Saturday, October 21, 2017. This prize will be awarded to one of the six teams who have been part of the 2016-2017 Biomimicry Accelerator program. A full list of the teams vying for the 2017 Ray of Hope Prize can be found here. View a video of last year's Ray of Hope Prize presentation, delivered to a standing ovation from an audience of over 3,000 people.

"Last year at Bioneers the audience jumped to their feet with applause when the teams took the stage. They yelled, 'Thank you!' and stayed standing for three minutes. That is because the people who attend Bioneers know, as Janine Benyus calls it, the antidote to despair when they see it," said Biomimicry Institute Executive Director Beth Rattner. "This is what our Ray C. Anderson Foundation partnership makes possible - bringing these teams' ideas from concept to functioning prototypes that are ready for field testing."

The Ray of Hope Prize honors the legacy of Interface Founder Ray Anderson, who funded the Foundation upon his passing in 2011. Anderson was famously inspired by radical new approaches to centuries-old design and manufacturing techniques, and sought them out when rethinking his $1 billion, global carpet tile company's products and processes.

The Ray C. Anderson Foundation has pledged $1.5 million over four years to support the Biomimicry Global Design Challenge, a multi-year effort to crowdsource, support, and seed promising innovations inspired by nature. Each year, the Institute and Foundation award the $100,000 Ray of Hope Prize to the most viable prototype that embodies the radical sustainability principles of biomimicry.

A new round of the Biomimicry Global Design Challenge will open in October 2017, also focused on climate change solutions. This will be another opportunity for teams to join and compete for the $100,000 Ray of Hope Prize. Individuals and teams can learn more about the previous finalists and winners and register for the next round of the challenge at challenge.biomimicry.org.

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About the Biomimicry Institute
The Biomimicry Institute is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that empowers people to seek nature-inspired solutions for a healthy planet. http://www.biomimicry.org

About Ray C. Anderson Foundation

The Ray C. Anderson Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that seeks to promote a sustainable society by supporting and funding educational and project-based initiatives that advance knowledge and innovation in sustainability.
http://www.raycandersonfoundation.org/rayofhopeprize