

NATO-ACT design competition drives innovation at AECT international convention

By James Shea

Las Vegas, Nevada - Ten teams from Universities around the (world/US) participated in the first design competition sponsored by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization-Allied Command Transformation (NATO-ACT) at the annual international convention of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The NATO-ACT Design and Development Competition is designed for advanced graduate student teams to design effective learning approaches for NATO's twenty-nine member agencies in diverse settings around the world. Judges evaluated these solutions in terms of theoretical excellence, creativity and feasibility.

"NATO-ACT was very happy to support the AECT Design & Development competition," said Cem Kumsal, NATO's Civilian Training Technologies Staff Officer. "The competition is a good fit with the educational part of NATO's mission for our members. We will use parts of all finalists' ideas on implementing micro learning to create a coherent capability for NATO. We were quite impressed with the caliber of submissions and it was difficult to pick the overall winner."

The finalists were:

- Michelle Jensen and Aprel Mendenhall-Utah State University
- Jessica Marzi and Makhosanzana Lunga-University of Tennessee, Knoxville

The team from the Utah State University won the competition. Their presentation detailed the design and development of an hour of focused instruction divided into 5-minute flexible modules to be delivered to learners across NATO-ACT's twenty-nine member agencies.

"The NATO-ACT design competition was a fantastic opportunity to hone our design skills on real-life problems," said Michelle Jensen, an advanced doctoral student at Utah State University. "The problem presented by NATO-ACT stretched us as instructional designers to develop learning approaches to reach NATO's diverse members."

"AECT is delighted that NATO-ACT sponsored this competition," said AECT Executive Director Philip Harris. "We are pleased to partner with NATO-ACT on their educational mission for their members and this competition underscores NATO-ACT's commitment to improving learning."

The second annual NATO-ACT design competition will be conducted at AECT's international convention in Jacksonville, Florida, November 3-7 2020. Information about the competition will be available at aect.org in January 2020.

About the Association for Educational Communication and Technology (AECT)

AECT is an international organization that values diversity of thought, culture and people whose activities are directed toward improving learning. AECT members may be found in colleges and universities; in the Armed Forces and industry; in museums, libraries, and hospitals; and in any other places where educational change takes place. AECT members include instructional designers, researchers, professors and teachers, educational technologists, and other professionals united by a passion for improving teaching and learning. AECT members serve in many different settings including education, business and industry, non-profits, military, health care, and other environments.

Website: www.aect.org

Twitter: @AECT

About the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

NATO's purpose is to guarantee the freedom and security of its 29 members through political and military means. Allied Command Transformation is NATO's Warfare Development Command to enhance the Alliance' posture, military structures, forces, capabilities and doctrines to improve its military effectiveness.

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