

FINALISTS IN WDI'S 16TH ANNUAL IMAGINATIONS DESIGN COMPETITION REFLECT THE DIVERSITY OF DISNEY CONSUMERS AROUND THE WORLD.

Activated theaters. Piloted stunt planes. Interactive dining tables. GPS assistance for visually disabled Guests. That's just some of the high-tech magic you might expect to see at Disney theme parks, attractions and resorts in the not-so-distant future, according to design teams from universities around the world who recently competed in Walt Disney Imagineering's (WDI) 16th-annual ImagiNations design contest.

ImagiNations invites college students to use their technical, artistic or writing skills to design an attraction, hotel... even a land within an existing Disney theme park or resort! Pre-qualified teams of no more than four members submit their materials in storyboard, model or video format to WDI, and a team of Imagineers selects finalists to travel to Glendale and complete their projects with hands-on input from WDI staff.

Last month, 11 finalists from universities located around the globe, including Virginia, Canada, Brazil and the UK, were invited to WDI headquarters to present to a panel of seasoned Imagineers. Joanna Birch and Christopher Holmes from Exeter University in England snagged top prize this year for their project, which uses a GPS-based device that can direct visually impaired Guests to any location within the Park, giving them the freedom to explore at their own pace, with custom commentary and attraction information.

All 31 finalists were interviewed for internships or positions throughout Disney. ImagiNations is part of an overall corporate strategy to look for diverse creative and multi-

cultural talent that can make sure that Disney stories, films, theme parks and TV shows remain relevant to an increasingly global audience.

Co-winner Joanna, a third-year Mechanical Engineering student, has her eyes on the prize. "I've wanted to become an Imagineer since I was 14, so for me this is a dream come true! It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience being there with the Imagineers. I think the best part for me was meeting all the other finalists and seeing the amazing things they came up with." Christopher, who is also studying Mechanical Engineering, agrees. "My career plans have changed since this competition opened my eyes to the fantastic creativity involved in doing this kind of work. It would be a privilege to build on my love of Disney by working for them."

After their time spent in hands-on learning at WDI, not only was the student energy level high, so was their enthusiasm for the "dream, do, diversify" attitude of our Imagineers! "One thing was evident," says Tori McCullough, director, Interior Design, WDI. "The name of the game is interactivity. This generation is not interested in passive experiences."

Bruce Vaughn, executive vice president, chief creative executive, Walt Disney Imagineering, says the competition earns an A+ for delivering on its intent: to identify diverse talent from a global group of outside-the-box thinkers. "ImagiNations is such a special program because it helps us to find people with different cultural perspectives and a variety of experiences," he says.

ImagiNations finalists celebrate along with Mickey, Vice President of Global Diversity and Inclusion Carmen Smith, Manager of Diversity & Inclusion Global Strategies Allie Braswell and Walt Disney Imagineering's Ambassador Marty Sklar.



Joanna Birch and Christopher Holmes from Exeter University in England won the ImagiNations Best in Show Award.

