

NEWS & NOTES

Breathing easier

Wearable air quality sensors receive EPA backing

With nearly \$15,000 already in their pockets, a group of JMU engineering students is hoping to earn an additional \$75,000 from the Environmental Protection Agency to create wearable air quality sensors.

Air quality is traditionally monitored by fixed stations. Wearable air quality sensors would collect data at various locations and times for use by both individuals and communities. People who exercise outside, for example, could use the data to plan the best times and places for doing so. And communities could use the space and time data to make better policy decisions regarding air quality.

In Fall 2015, students majoring in industrial design, computer science and engineering developed a prototype using 3-D printers. It uses GPS to monitor its location and an accelerometer to measure



Engineering students' research into wearable air quality sensors could improve the health of individuals and communities.

its movement. Data is stored on an SD card.

This semester the engineering team is collecting data around Harrisonburg using six prototypes. They can then compare that data to what is collected at traditional stations.

Empowering student leaders

University Innovation Fellows team boosting JMU's national profile

Chris Ashley ('17) didn't have any qualms about giving up part of his spring break to attend the SXSWedu Conference in Austin, Texas, in March. "It was easily worth it," the economics major said. "It was a great opportunity, and I didn't know if it would come back around."

Ashley was part of a University Innovation Fellows team that discussed ways stu-



Chris Ashley ('17)

dents can influence the direction of their universities.

The University Innovation Fellows program strives to empower students to become leaders of change in higher education. The program is run by the National Science Foundation-funded Epicenter, which is directed by

Stanford University and the nonprofit VentureWell. To become a Fellow, students have to complete a week of training at Stanford

and then conduct programs at their home institutions. Ashley is part of JMU's second cohort of University Innovation Fellows.

Nick Swayne, director of 4-VA at JMU and an advisor to JMU's University Innovation Fellows, said presenting at SXSWedu is impressive recognition for JMU. "Being on the same stage as Stanford and Clemson and some of those other guys ... I think that really adds value to the institution."

Ashley also participated in a national meeting March 17-21 at Stanford, where our University Innovation Fellows team had a leading role in workshops and other activities for a new class of Fellows from universities across the country.

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