

UTech, Ja Student Team, 'Grey Matter Technologies' Wins Sagicor Innovation Challenge 2023

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*Prof. Sean Thrope (right), Dean, Faculty of Engineering and Computing, University of Technology, Jamaica joins President and CEO of Sagicor Group Jamaica Ltd. Mr. Christopher Zacca (left) in presenting the symbolic cheque of \$500,000 to winners of the 2023 Sagicor Innovation Challenge, **Grey Matter Technologies** at the final round of the Sagicor Innovation Challenge held at the Shared Facilities Building, UTech, Jamaica Papine Campus on Tuesday, June 20, 2023. Students of the winning team (from left) Percival Roberts, Justin Brown and Shawn Grant proudly display their trophies: Absent team member is Kevaughn Pryce.*

A morning sky accentuated by precipitating gray clouds, stood no chance of ‘raining on the parade’ of the 4th annual staging of the Sagicor Innovative Challenge, held at the Shared Facilities Building, University of Technology, Jamaica, Papine Campus on Tuesday, June 20, 2023.

Three University of Technology, Jamaica student teams brought high energy, confidence and creativity in presenting their innovative solutions in the final round of the Innovation Challenge which was hosted by vibrant media personality, Ms. Debbie Bissoon.



Media personality and Host of the 2023 Sagicor Innovation Challenge, Miss Debbie Bisson looks on as Director, Sagicor Innovation Lab, Mr. Ray- St. Michael Williams shares details during the final round of the Sagicor Innovation Challenge, about some of the initiatives undertaken at the Lab located at the UTech, Jamaica Papine Campus.

The Sagicor Innovation Challenge is a joint initiative between the Sagicor Group Jamaica Limited and the University of Technology, Jamaica through the Sagicor Innovation Lab created to engage students at the University in innovating problem solving and developing impactful solutions. Participants in this year's Innovation Challenge were expected to identify and solve the data capture and processing problem that affects Sagicor and other financial organizations and pitch solutions that are innovative and scalable.

In his welcome remarks, President and Chief Executive Officer, Sagicor Group Jamaica Limited, Mr. Christopher Zacca explained that the core task for the 2023 challenge was for the competitors to develop a technology product capable of converting unstructured data into structured formats which can be utilized by Sagicor and other financial institutions to inform business decisions. Another requirement was for the technology product to be fully implemented within a 4-month timeframe. While in previous years the competitors were given problems across varying subject matters to solve, this year, the challenge was the same for all teams.

Pointing to the relevance of such innovative tools for Jamaica, Mr. Zacca stated that, "patients often find themselves scrambling to collect medical data from various multiple sources, making it more difficult for them to keep track of their medical history and to access critical services." In this context, he noted that the focus of the 2023 Sagicor Innovation Challenge, seeks to "revolutionize the way in which medical information is managed in Jamaica."

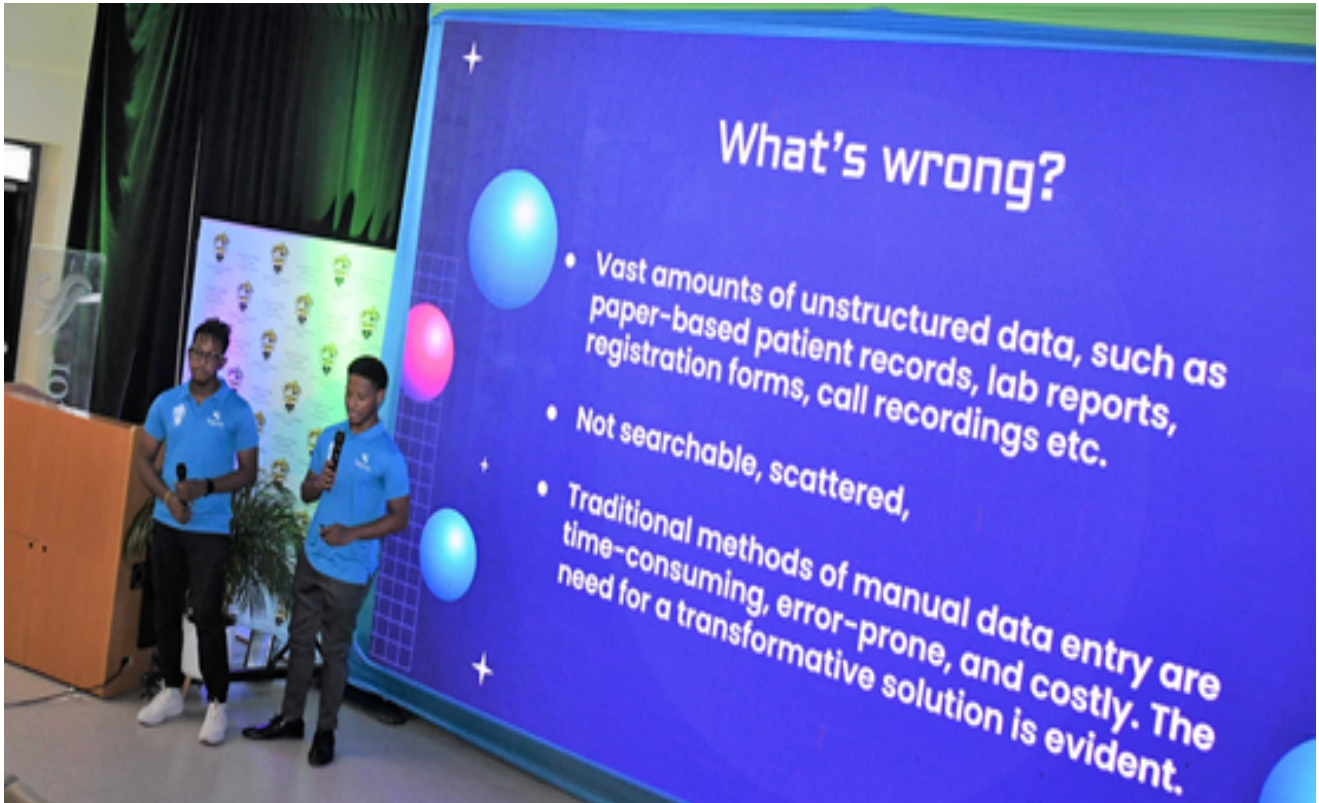
The 2023 teams, **Grey Matter Technologies**, **Silk Cipher** and **Code Crushers** in their final pitches, impressed the 5-member judging panel with their creative and innovative solutions for treating with patients' health records. The judges for this year's competition from Sagicor were: President and CEO, Mr. Christopher Zacca, Chief Technology and Insurance Operations Officer Mr. Willard Brown and Assistant Vice President Corporate Strategy, Ms. Jody-Kaye Ennis. UTech, Jamaica judge were Head of SCIT, Mr. David White and Dr. Lisa Facey-Shaw, Programme Director Graduate Studies, SCIT. The teams comprised first to final year students of the School of Computing and Information Technology (SCIT), Faculty of Engineering and Computing and the College of Health Sciences (COHS).

Following a well contested challenge in which the competitors detailed their business models, revenue streams and growth projections, it was team **Grey Matter Technologies** comprising SCIT students, Percival Roberts, Justin Brown, Shawn Grant and Kevauh Pryce that emerged as champions of the 2023 Sagicor Innovation Challenge. The winners earned the grand prize of

\$500,000, individual trophies and a 1-year internship at the Sagicor Innovation Lab located at the UTech, Jamaica Papine Campus.

The winning pitch from **Grey Matter Technologies** is a web-based application that leverages Artificial Intelligence (AI) to convert paper-based client records such as lab reports and registration forms along with audiovisual recordings into structured readable text files for centralized storage and easy retrieval.

Silk Cipher and **Code Crushers** copped 2nd and 3rd place wins respectively, taking home \$250,000 and \$100,000.



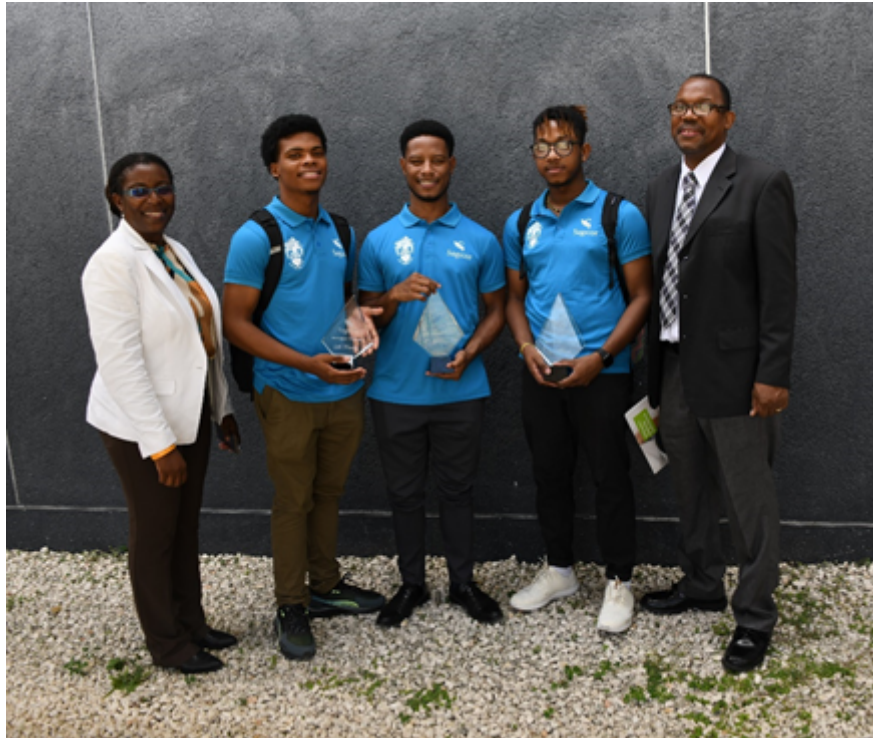
*(L-R) Shawn Grant and Justin Brown of team **Grey Matter Technologies** present their final pitch during the 2023 Sagicor Innovation Challenge on Tuesday, June 20 at the UTech, Jamaica Papine Campus.*

When asked how they felt about their team's win, the unanimous response from the **Grey Matter Technology** team members was a reverberating, "Great!" They noted that though the project was time consuming, they were, at all times, confident that the magnitude and quality of their team's research, innovation and subsequent pitch would have made them the triumphant contender.

Outlining the strategy which he believes led to their group's taking the victory, Justin Brown, a first-year student, who like all his teammates, is enrolled in the BSc. in Computing course of study, SCIT, said, "we delegated tasks based on expertise. There are four members and each of the four members has a specific area in which they are more proficient" Brown stated. He continued, "Shawn would have been the back-end database person with assistance from me. The AI component was split four ways where I dealt with the name entity recognition, Shawn dealt with the conversion of audio and PDF to text, Percival, our team leader dealt with the image to text and Kevaugh dealt with the video aspects."

Among the features of their web-based solution is image\PDF processing, audio transcription and customer uploads. These features all allow for extraction of customers' personal identifiable

information (PII) and other relevant data needed by institutions to make business decisions. In the works, are a business to business (B2B) connect feature, data storage and analytical features, API integration and medical add-ons such as an e-prescription tab.

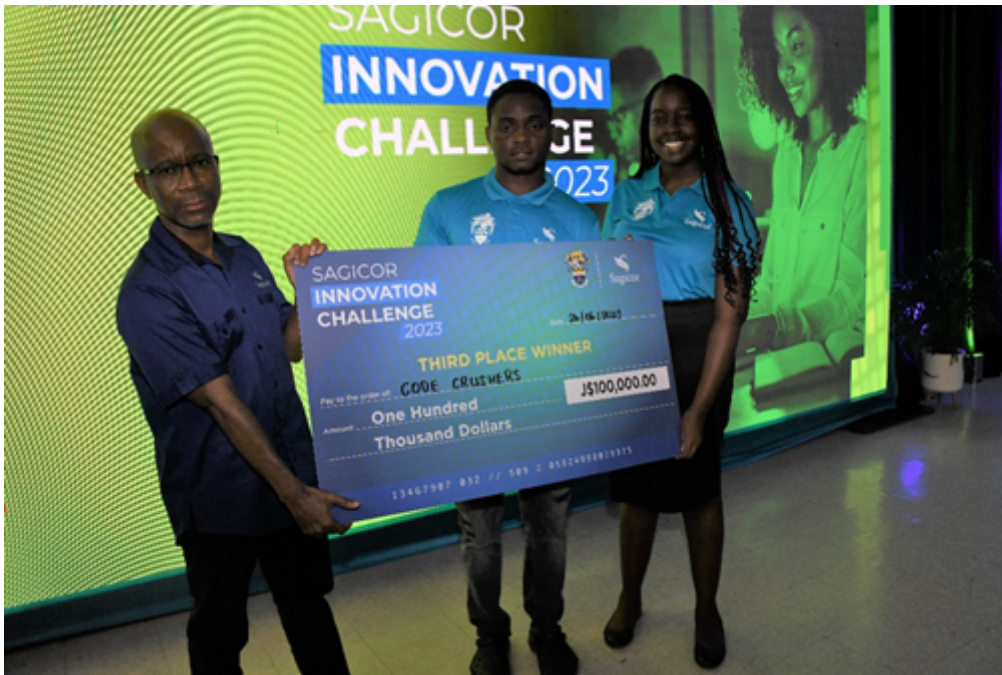


*Competition judges, Dr. Lisa Facey-Shaw (left), Programme Director, Graduate Studies in the School of Computing and Information Technology (SCIT) and Mr. David White (right) Head, SCIT, University of Technology, Jamaica share a moment with winners of the 2023 Sagikor Innovation Challenge, **Grey Matter Technologies** following the final round of the pitch competition at the UTech, Jamaica Papine Campus on Tuesday, June 20. With trophies from l-r are: team members Justin Brown, Percival Roberts and Shawn Grant.*



*Competition judge, Mr. Willard Brown (left), Chief Technology and Insurance Operations Officer Sagikor Group Jamaica Limited, presents second place winner, Angel Pinnock of **Silk Cipher** with her cheque of \$250,000 after she confidently and single handedly developed and pitched a concept called “**Structure – Eyes**” at the final round of the 2023 Sagikor Innovation Challenge on Tuesday, June 20,*

2023 at the University of Technology Jamaica, Papine Campus. The digital platform was designed with the intent of it being recognized as “the vision for data capturing.” Angel, who is a first year Computer Science major in the School of Computing and Information Technology (SCIT) also shared that her website intends to take “messy and chaotic database files, voice recordings, handwriting and hardcopy files” and transfer them into user-friendly documents that can be easily submitted for various legal purposes. The features include: an optimization, summarization and transcription tools with the hope of including analytical and visualization tools in the future.



Competition judge, Mr. Willard Brown (left), Chief Technology and Insurance Operations Officer Sagicor Group Jamaica Limited presents 3rd place winners of the Sagicor Innovation Challenge, Javian Cummings (centre) and Siphany Walters of **Code Crushers** with their cheque of \$100,000, during the presentation ceremony at the Sagicor Innovation Challenge on Tuesday, June 20, 2023. The duo developed the concept “**STEADY**” – a website that helps customers applying to financial institutions to upload their information to the site which would then be translated to readable text files. Siphany who is a final year student pursuing the BSc. in Medical Technology at the College of Health Sciences, said that the idea behind the acronym “**STEADY**” embodies the vision of “safe transparent efficient and accountable data yield” noting that these are attributes that customers would want to prove in any company to which they are entrusting their data. Explaining that the challenge allowed him the opportunity to step out of his comfort zone, Javian Cummings, BSc. Computer Science major at SCIT said that the Challenge gave him something new to do and that he plans to work along with his teammate to further develop the platform so that it can be among the best cloud computing software in the market.



Prof. Sean Thrope, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Computing

Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Computing, Prof. Sean Thrope noted that the partnership between Sagicor and UTech, Jamaica through the Sagicor Innovation Lab which has enabled the annual Challenge commemorates what he considers to be “one of the clear...proof of concept that the University has articulated” and “a solution that is very well needed in our community to aid in youth development and to aid in the opportunities of start-up culture, from pitch development to start-up solutions.” Professor Thorpe also acknowledged that, “quite a few of the students who have come through this programme have started their own businesses and against that background, the University is well poised to continue this grand relationship.”

Attesting to the value of the partnership, Mr. Zacca also expressed that Sagicor was “pleased to have collaborated with UTech, Jamaica for a fourth consecutive staging of the Sagicor Innovation Challenge...we continue to take immense pride in the imaginative ideas of our students...we are consistently delighted to support ventures such as this as they bring forth novel ideas.” The partnership originated in 2019 when Sagicor inked a deal with UTech, Jamaica to create an innovation lab, now known as the Sagicor Innovation Lab (i-Lab) to function as the hub for developmental research pertaining to Information Communication Technology (ICT).



Mrs. Andrea Bolton-Fyffe , Technology Innovation Centre (TIC) Incubator Manager at UTech, Jamaica delivers an informative presentation at the 2023 Sagicor Innovation Challenge on Tuesday,

June 2023 about the services and opportunities for student tech developers at the TIC.

Incubator Manager, Technology Innovation Centre (TIC) , Mrs. Andrea Bolton-Fyffe who gave a presentation on Innovation Transition, in congratulating the teams, reminded the finalists that the TIC is available to them as UTech, Jamaica students to facilitate the continuation of their creative and innovative technology journey. Mrs. Bolton-Fyffe noted that “Our aim and objective at the TIC is to create a high impact incubator and accelerator” which supports the growth of entrepreneurial ventures within the Information and Technology sector.

As a note to the finalists who all signaled that they intend to further develop their product, Mrs. Bolton-Fyffe also noted that the TIC incubator provides “a wide variety of resources such as mentoring, business education, networking, free or subsidized space so that you can grow your business from idealization to commercialization...and access to capital.” All this, she mentioned, is available to UTech, Jamaica students with a start-up tech company for a period of “three to four years with other opportunities such as capacity building and incubation graduation programme.”

*By: Corporate Communications Unit
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Photos: Instructional Media Services (IMS), Calvin McKain Library