

**The Future of My City – Awards go to student teams in Dortmund, Essen, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis. Grand prizes include trips to Germany and the U.S.**

**July 4, 2019**

An independent jury of experts from Germany and the U.S. selected the winners of the competition [The Future of My City](#). Students and experts from the Ruhr area and the Rust Belt region had been invited to develop innovative solutions to urban, economic and socio-cultural challenges in their regions. From the twenty projects that German, American and transatlantic teams submitted, the seven members of the international jury picked two first prizes, a second and a third prize in addition to four honorable mentions. Donald Carter, Director of the Rethinking Cities Institute in Pittsburgh, served as chair of the jury.

One of the two first prizes went to Gautam Jagdish Thakkar for “Vacancy as Opportunity. Decentralized Bolo.” A student at Carnegie Mellon University, Thakkar studied urban decline in the Wilksburg borough just outside of Pittsburgh and looked at Community Forge and co-operative models as powerful tools to revitalize the borough.

The other first prize was awarded to a transatlantic team from TU Dortmund University (Germany), the University of Missouri and Washington University, both in St. Louis. With their project “Clean Walls = Higher Rents?!” the team looked at gentrification debates from both a quantitative and qualitative analysis in Dortmund and St. Louis. While some neighborhoods in those legacy cities are on the rebound, gentrification has not yet taken place, contrary to what residents perceive to be the case. In addition to the discrepancy between fact and perception, the project recommended empowerment and participation strategies to better include residents in the revitalization of their neighborhoods. From Dortmund, Kristina Ehrhorn, Verena Gerwinat, Annika Guhl, Tanja Schnittfinke, and Carsten Urban participated in this project. Their partners from the US were Adam Brown, Liz Deichmann, Elizabeth Gerard, Sydney Gosik, Mark Kasen, Jodie Lloyd, Julia Spoerry, Nathan Theus, and Chancellor Thomas. Faculty advisors Susanne Frank, Todd Swanstrom and Sabine Weck provided valuable support.

Both winners of the first prize were awarded trips to the U.S. and Germany.

A team from the University of Duisburg-Essen won the second prize with [#essensteigtauf](#), a project on making Essen a more bikeable city. The team consisted of students who study in the interdisciplinary Urban Systems program: Sylvia Birrong, Carsten Bröderle, Klara van Eickels, Ahmed Fakhrul, Philipp Göpfert, Allieu Badarr Koroma, Mariana Sarnicola Pires Holanda Macedo, Bianca Martini, Francis Ndubuisi Okoh, Nora Schramm, and Marleen Wilhelm. The project’s advisor was Klaus Krumme. For the winners of the second prize, a networking dinner will be organized in October of this year.

Oanh Nguyen and Laura Hering, two students from TU Dortmund University, received the third prize for a project on expanding access to education. A combination of co-working space and community center, “C.Space” offers educational opportunities tailored to the needs of 45-year olds who are particularly affected by changes in the labor market in regions such as the Ruhr area. The winners of the third prize will be invited to an event where they can present their project to experts in their field.

The jury selected another four projects with a honorary mention for their creative approaches: “(Re)Brandings, Narratives and Scripts for the Future of the Ruhr Area and the Rust Belt,” a joint project by students from the University of Cincinnati and the University of Duisburg-Essen; “Nordstadt Café,” a theater play developed by students at TU Dortmund University; “Mill Creek Trail

Plan“ by a team of University of Cincinnati students, and “Water Marks, Micro-Urban Hydrophilic Spaces for Water Advocacy and Awareness in Pittsburgh,” a project by students from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

The jury consisted of the following members: Juliane Camfield, Director of Deutsches Haus at New York University; Raymond Gindroz, Co-Founder and Principal Emeritus of Urban Design Associates in Pittsburgh; Prof. Dr. Stefan Gruber, Professor at Carnegie Mellon University; Prof. Dr. Christian Martin, the current Max Weber Chair in German and European Studies at New York University; Dr. Uli Paetzel, Chairman of the Executive Board of Emschergenossenschaft and Lippeverband; Prof. Dr. Ioanna Theocharopoulou, Professor at The New School; and Dr. Larry Witzling, an Urban Design and Planning Expert at GRAEF USA.

[The Future of My City](#) was developed by the New York Liaison Office of the University Alliance Ruhr in cooperation with the German American Chamber of Commerce New York and is part of the [Year of German-American friendship](#), an initiative of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany to promote transatlantic relations. The aim of the project is to foster intercultural exchange of students from both regions as well as the development of new ideas solving common challenges. Students and experts are invited to develop innovative solutions to urban, economic and socio-cultural challenges in their region.

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