

## POSTDOC SOCIETY HOSTS THE FIRST RESEARCH FEST CONFERENCE IN SUTD

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The PostDoc Society organized and hosted the first ever Research Fest conference in the SUTD campus Thursday, 17th of January. The event was a full day internal conference for SUTD researchers to present their research projects in a familiar environment. The participants gave a 5 minute flash talk to introduce themselves and their research, followed by poster sessions for more personal interactions and further details. Judges had a hard time evaluating a very close competition to award the many prizes donated by sponsors, but eventually Hung Nguyen (ESD) emerged as the winner for his work on the history of river flows. In addition to the main competition, the day was packed with distinguished invited speakers and an informative booth by *Entrepreneur First*, one of the main sponsors.



Left to right, Richard O'Rorke, Narasimha Boddeti and Bradley Camburn, handsome members of the PostDoc Society getting everything ready for the Research Fest the day before

The first participants arrived at around 9:15 a.m. to Lecture Theatre 2, where the talks were to be hosted. Even in such a large venue, a number of the lowest rows got quite crowded as the starting time approached. Along with the 38 participants in the competition, organizers,

invited speakers, judging professors, the *Entrepreneur First* delegation and spectators, no less than 60 people were following the Fest during the whole day. Shortly after 10 a.m., the president of the PostDoc Society, Richard O'Rorke, started the event with a quick introduction, before giving way to the first invited talk by MIT Professor Christopher Magee. During his introduction, Prof. Magee remarked how much he liked the idea of having a PostDoc Society in a university, and how this had been a relevant factor for him to accept the invitation and support the inaugural Research Fest. Then, he entertained the audience with a talk on different types of R&D. The first flash talk session immediately followed Prof. Magee's talk. This was a long session with over 15 speakers, but with some brilliant moments as Sophia Chan (Science and Math) and Rupambika Das (EPD) presented their works, respectively winning a GoPro for the best flash talk, and a Sennheiser headset for the special "Research Communication Award".

Lunch was held in the Sparks lounge area, whose walls had been retracted to create an open space with Think Tanks 7 and 8, where the posters were displayed. This created a cozy space for both checking the posters and networking. The latter included *Entrepreneur First*'s booth, which seemed to be really busy at all times in spite of having three people present at all times.



The best overall project winner, Hung Nguyen, receiving his prize from PostDoc Society president Richard O'Rorke

The second block followed a very similar scheme. Professor Sang-Gook Kim, also from MIT, gave a talk on design, undoubtedly one of the main topics in SUTD, followed by another session of flash talks. After a coffee break, the beginning of the third session brought the most emotional part of the day with former SUTD PostDoc Tommaso Demarie's fireside chat. Masterfully interviewed by *Entrepreneur First*'s Tiffany Lau, Tommaso was completely open about his dreams and struggles in his path after leaving academia, joining the *Entrepreneur First* program, and now CEO of his own quantum computing start up, *Entropica Labs*. Following the fireside chat, the last batch of participants delivered their flash talks. This group included the eventual overall winner Hung Nguyen, who won a Surface Pro, as well as the "Innovation Award" winner Siddhant Shrivastava (iTrust), who took home an iPad, and the winner of a Samsung Tablet for best poster, Daniël Reijtsbergen (iTrust).

Following lengthy calculations by judges and organizers, where some of the prizes were decided within a tenth of a point, the 2019 Research Fest was wrapped up with the prize ceremony and a few closing words to thank everyone for their participation. In addition to the aforementioned winners, a few power banks were awarded as runner up prizes to Mahnoush Tayebi (EPD), Mohammad Mahdi Emami (DManD), Ying Yi Tan (ASD), Yee Sin Ang (Science and Math), and Dhileep Kumar (ASD).