Puerto Rican student will be part of intensive program of Singularity University in Silicon Valley [1]

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La estudiante doctoral de Química, Simara Laboy López, fue la ganadora de Global Impact Competition, edición de Puerto Rico, de Singularity University (photo by: José R. Madera)

San Juan, Puerto Rico - Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust (PRSTR) presented the winner of the first local edition of the international competition Global Impact of the Singularity University. Simara López Laboy, a 22 years old Biochemistry doctoral student was the

winner of three finalists selected by local judges and representatives of the prestigious institution located in Silicon Valley, California.

López Laboy presented a project that creates a technology that purifies and remedies water contaminated with nitrates providing clean water to billions of people who have no access to or become sick or die, by its consumption. According to López Laboy's research, 57% of world population lacks access to potable water, or consumes contaminated water, out of need.

"I decided to participate by a recommendation of Dr. Eduardo Nicolau, my doctoral thesis mentor, who motivated me to participate of this competition. Even though I believe in the global impact my project could have, I had no further expectations, especially knowing the quality of the other initiatives. This unique opportunity not only helps my professional growth, but it exposes the work of Puerto Rican scientists to the world", said López Laboy.

The winner will travel to California during the month of June to participate in the international competition Global Impact Competition at Silicon Valley. This educational experience of 10 weeks, is possible thanks to the sponsorship of the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust (PRSTR). Curiously López Laboy traveled last March to NASA Ames Research Center, for a summer program in which she contacted professionals in the areas of membranes of water purification and the regeneration of bone marrow, topics related to both of her projects.

"I am very excited of having the opportunity of doing something different from what I've been working up till now. For years I've had a strong commitment to education, being a tutor, mentor of freshmen students and an instructor in the chemistry lab", she added. This is the first time this competition takes place in Puerto Rico, after its known success in countries such as Perú, México, Chile, Norway, Argentina, Italy, and South Africa, among others.

The global competition has the purpose of identifying innovative technological solutions to improve the level of live of millions of people in the world, during the next decade. The participants where challenged to present projects to solve the areas of most vulnerable problems confronted in the planet such as: learning, energy; food supply, health issues, prosperity, safety, water, space, resilience to natural disasters, and governance.

"This competition has allowed us to identify ideas of global reach that Puerto Rico innovators are developing to exponentially advance knowledge and progress of mankind. The result of this first edition of the competition of Global Impact has greatly pleased the Trust. The reception given to and the quality of the proposals received, validates the commitment to continue this initiative each year. We want to give a powerful platform innovators from which can scale their projects to the rest of the world," said Iván Ríos Mena, Chief Operations Officer of the Trust and organizer of the event in Puerto Rico.

Mr. Gary Urteaga, Director and founder of Global Impact in Perú and Dr. Nicole Wilson, Vice President in charge of faculty and curriculum of Singularity University attended the ceremony. Professor Wilfredo Méndez, of the Pontifical Catholic University of P.R. who received the second place in the competition, also participated. Professor Méndez, spoke of his project, which is focused on designing and building structures with materials that respond instinctively to their environment, and investigating materials that mimic nature. On the other hand, businesswoman

Jocelyn Javernick, who stands out in the drones and sensors engineering industry, turned out to be the third finalist in the call, which was attended by 20 people from various local universities and the private sector.

This information was received by press release from the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust.

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