Freeman ranked among nation's best for entrepreneurship

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Freeman MBA students Lydia Winkler (MBA/JD '19), left, and Marco Nelson (MBA '19) pitch their startup Rent Check to judges at the 2019 Tulane Business Model Competition.

Tulane University's A. B. Freeman School of Business has been named as one of the best schools in the nation for entrepreneurship.

In its latest survey of university entrepreneurship programs, the Princeton Review and *Entrepreneur* magazine ranked the Freeman School 42nd on its list of the best graduate programs for entrepreneurship. The ranking appears in the December 2020 issue of *Entrepreneur* magazine and can also be viewed online at www.princetonreview.com/entrepreneur.

"Over the last several years, we've put special emphasis on leveraging our expertise in entrepreneurship to develop programs that provide students with a truly differentiated experience," said Ira Solomon, Freeman School dean. "While rankings are not our primary objective, it's gratifying to see external validation that we're achieving what we set out to."

"This ranking results from the Freeman School's commitment to create an environment that inspires students to start businesses and solve complex challenges," added Rob Lalka, executive director of the Freeman School's Albert Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. "Thanks in large part to our community of Innovators-in-Residence and other excellent mentors, our programming provides students with valuable advice and feedback as they move through their entrepreneurial journey."

The Princeton Review selected the schools and tallied its rankings based on a summer 2020 survey of administrators at more than 300 undergraduate and graduate schools offering entrepreneurship studies. The survey asked administrators more than 60 questions about their school's commitment to entrepreneurship studies inside and outside the classroom. The Princeton Review analyzed more than 40 survey data points to determine the school lists and rankings for 2021. Freeman was the only business school within a 300-mile radius of New Orleans to make this year's rankings.

In addition to questions about students, faculty and courses related to entrepreneurship, this year's survey also asked schools about efforts undertaken during the pandemic to assist their entrepreneurial communities. Following the March 2020 issuance of the stay-at-home order, the Lepage Center shifted to online programming, enabling it to continue offering mentorship programs for students as well as host the 2020 Tulane Business Model Competition, which awarded $125,000 to three college-based startups following a virtual competition. The Lepage Center also launched a website with pandemic-related resources for entrepreneurs and partnered with community organizations to recruit business owners impacted by the pandemic and connect them with mentors from across the country. In the summer of 2020, the Lepage Center launched the Lepage Strategic Advisers program, which matched students and recent graduates with local businesses in need of assistance due to the pandemic. These paid positions were offered at no cost to the businesses.

"The Lepage Center team has worked hard to assist local entrepreneurs impacted by COVID-19 while quickly expanding opportunities for students to gain relevant real-world experience," said Lalka. "Given the tremendous response, I'm hopeful we'll be able to build on these programs and offer additional support to startups and other small business owners, strengthening our region's economy over the longer term."