

Tulane MBA student's cereal startup claims top category at AWS University Startup Competition

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Tulane MBA student Rich Simmerman's plant protein cereal startup Ceres won \$10,000 in cash and up to \$10,000 in marketing support from Amazon Launchpad at the 2022 Amazon Web Services (AWS) University Startup Competition. (Photo by Rusty Costanza)

[Ceres](#), a plant protein cereal startup co-founded by Tulane MBA student Rich Simmerman, won the national award for Top Physical Consumer Products Startup at the [2022 Amazon Web Services \(AWS\) University Startup Competition](#).

Simmerman and his co-founder Branson Morgan created Ceres, a vegan, keto, non-GMO, and gluten-free cereal that is good for the planet. Each serving contains 20 grams of sustainably sourced plant protein and zero sugar or artificial sweeteners.

[Ceres was one of 13 semifinalists](#) competing for cash prizes and AWS credits in a final virtual live-stream pitch competition earlier this month. The team won \$10,000 in cash and up to \$10,000 in marketing support from Amazon Launchpad.

“Through the AWS University Startup Competition, I got a sneak peek of tomorrow’s revolutionary companies,” Simmerman said. “It’s empowering to share the stage alongside many companies working to tackle important social and environmental problems through innovative concepts.”

Simmerman says Ceres will use the prize money to support its ingredient-sourcing and production process, lower the cost of goods sold, expand its business on Amazon and Thrive Market and market the cereal.

AWS Startups launched the University Startup Competition to find and support student and faculty entrepreneurs as they build and launch their ventures. The competition is in partnership with Amazon Launchpad, a program that supports entrepreneurs by providing resources, expertise, and global support to help showcase and deliver unique products to Amazon customers.

Now in its third year, the 2022 AWS University Startup Competition received over 1,000 applications from startups across 300+ university campuses between September and November.

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