FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

University of Maryland Announces Winners of First Mobility Programming Contest

COLLEGE PARK, MD (April 25, 2011) – The University of Maryland announced the winners of its first Mobility Contest at an awards ceremony held on April 21, 2011. A part of the university’s Mobility Initiative, the contest was open to all University of Maryland students with ideas for new mobile apps that would improve campus life.

About 100 students attended the contest kick-off meeting held in October. The students formed teams and proposed 26 different mobile apps to enter into the contest. A committee chaired by Professor Ben Bederson organized a structured process to mentor and guide the students. After several months, the working apps were judged by faculty with expertise in computer science, journalism, entrepreneurship, information science, and the digital humanities.

The winners are:

First Place: Jam My Jam by Megan Monroe and Jonathan Speiser
Prize: A trophy and $3,000 to be shared by the team members
A social music app, Jam My Jam lets those in the university community see what music other people are listening to in the campus “Jam Zone.” People can see where their music is played and which songs are popular. Jam My Jam, already available in the iPhone App Store, takes the traditionally isolating activity of listening to music while walking around campus and turns it into a social networking activity.

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Second Place: Atmo by Randy Baden
Prize: A trophy and $2,000
Atmo is a social jukebox. Atmo lets attendees of a party, event, or even a bowling alley vote on which song gets played next. It shares control between the DJ and the crowd. Already deployed at the university’s TerpZone, Atmo brings people together to listen to the music they like.

Third Place: Tell The Terps by Alan Buabuchachart, Evan Ponchick, Frankie Abralind, Gary Brendle, and Yi-Chung Chen
Prize: A trophy and $1,000 to be shared by the team members
Tell The Terps is a crowd-sourced reporting mechanism for campus, allowing university community members to take a picture of a problematic condition on campus and submit it along with a description of the issue to the university’s Facilities Management team to address. The mobile app lets campus management know what is wrong on campus and empowers community members to improve their environment.

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Honorable Mention: Mobile Blue Light by Chris DeCaro, Austin Wood, Tyler Dunn, and Michael DeWitt

Prize: Individual medals and $250 to be shared by the team members

The Mobile Blue Light app offers a simple and direct way to call campus police in the case of an emergency and to simultaneously report location, bypassing county police and sending an e-mail or text message with the caller’s location directly to the campus police to aid dispatch.

About 60 people attended the awards ceremony. Ceremony attendees voted for the People's Choice team award, and that winning team is Beagle. More information about the winning apps can be found on the Mobility Contest website by visiting http://www.cs.umd.edu/hcil/mobilitycontest/.

“The students who participated in this contest are incredibly talented and creative,” said contest chair Dr. Ben Bederson. “The work they did for this contest shows the innovative nature of University of Maryland students and illustrates that they have skills that employers are hungry to see in job applicants,” Bederson said.

At the direction of the Interim Vice President and CIO, the Human-Computer Interaction Lab (www.cs.umd.edu/hcil), the Dingman Center for Entrepreneurship (www.rhsmith.umd.edu/dingman), and the Office of Information Technology (www.oit.umd.edu) launched the Mobility Contest at Maryland in Fall 2010. Cisco (www.cisco.com) is the lead corporate sponsor of the Mobility Contest.

“As one part of the university’s larger Mobility Initiative, this mobile app programming contest demonstrates the university’s continuing investment in the fusion of mobile technology and education,” said Dr. Joseph JaJa, the Interim Vice President and CIO. “All of the entries were evaluated for innovation, support of campus life, appropriateness for mobile use, demonstrated demand for the product, usefulness, ease of use, design, technical difficulty, and overall quality. I’m so proud of these student technological thinkers,” JaJa said.

“Mobility is one of the hottest areas for entrepreneurship. Partnership between HCIL, OIT, and the Dingman Center has given students a platform to experiment with developing products and services to improve campus life at Maryland,” said Asher Epstein, Managing Director of the Dingman Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of Maryland’s Robert H. Smith School of Business.

Launched in 2008, the university’s Mobility Initiative was designed to study the effects of integrating mobile technology with the student education experience. During its three years of existence, more than 500 student pilot participants have been given an iPhone, an iPod touch, or an iPad to test inside and outside of class. Several mobile applications have been developed, including mobile versions of the university’s online portal and learning management system. Other program elements include an iPhone programming course, an Android programming course, a mobile device loaner program used to support specific student learning activities, and more than 20 faculty members who are designated as Mobile Learning Fellows. For more information about the Mobility Initiative, visit www.mobility.umd.edu.

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About the University of Maryland

The University of Maryland is the state's flagship university and one of the nation's preeminent public research universities. Ranked No. 18 among public universities by U.S. News & World Report, it has 32 academic programs in the U.S News Top 10 and 73 in the Top 25. The Institute of Higher Education (Jiao Tong University, Shanghai), which ranks the world's top universities based on research, puts Maryland at No. 36 in the world and No. 12 among U.S. public universities. The university has produced six Nobel laureates, seven Pulitzer Prize winners, more than 40 members of the national academies and scores of Fulbright scholars. The university is recognized for its diversity, with underrepresented students comprising one-third of the student population. For more information about the University of Maryland, visit www.umd.edu.

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