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**UW-Platteville student wins first place for assistive zipper device**

Written by Christine Bellport, University of Wisconsin–Platteville

A University of Wisconsin-Platteville student earned first place in the WiSys Innovation On-Ramp program after presenting an assistive zipper device designed to help people with limited hand mobility.

The Eazy Zip is an attachable cube that fits onto a zipper pull. Its cover wraps around the zipper tab and gently pushes surrounding fabric away from the zipper track, helping to prevent snags. The device was created by Leah Norgal, a junior mechanical engineering major from Waukesha, Wisconsin. Its design is specifically intended for individuals who may struggle to free fabric caught in a zipper due to reduced dexterity.

Norgal developed and presented her invention as part of WiSys Innovation On-Ramp, a multi-campus learning experience that gives Universities of Wisconsin students the opportunity to build innovation skills and advance their ideas, regardless of their field of study or career goals.

“Being recognized with this award shows me that people genuinely value my ideas,” said Norgal. “It reassures me that the effort I put into this project mattered and that others believe in it enough to invest their time and support.”

During the WiSys Innovation On-Ramp course, 54 students from seven Universities of Wisconsin institutions earned an Innovative Thinking badge for their participation and project work.

The UW-Platteville badge recipients were:

* Logan Baird
* Anders Beckes
* Christian Hibru Kelemu
* Leah Norgal
* Sithijaya Perera

To earn the Innovative Thinking badge, students participated in at least two interactive sessions and completed online coursework covering topics such as identifying important problems, testing assumptions and preparing a pitch.