

HavaStartup Business Plan Competition Information Session Held by ASU

By Jessica Arndt

ASU Lake Havasu hosted an information session on November 14 for the 5th annual HavaStartup Business Plan competition. HavaStartup is organized by ASU at Lake Havasu business faculty Dr. Leepsa Madhabika, partnered with the Lake Havasu Chamber Foundation for Education and Leadership (LHCFEL) and Better Business Bureau (BBB). The information session was open to the public and explained competition eligibility, guidelines, and mentoring and volunteering opportunities, and it ended with a Q&A. HavaStartup is organized to encourage local entrepreneurs to share their innovative ideas and connect with mentors, and the winner receives a cash prize to help finance their business goals. The panel at the HavaStartup information session consisted of Dr. Leepsa Madhabika, Andrea Helart, and Dr. Cristen Mann.

Ms. Helart was the winner of the HavaStartup in a previous year, is currently the CEO/President of the Lake Havasu Chamber of Commerce, and Founder of Ulu Consulting. She shared the application process with the audience—providing her personal experience to help the idea of growing a business. “I never had a whole lot of direction on how to build my overall business plan. I really just needed someone to sit down with me and tell me I’m on track,” she said to the audience. The access to mentors in this competition provides new entrepreneurs and growing business owners a unique and valuable opportunity to learn from people who have been in their shoes and provides guidance for their businesses. Ms. Helart used the prize money to build her business’ website, Ulu Consulting. The prize money can serve as a “financial push to grow your business,” she shared. Participants were encouraged to do their research, such as learning the city’s demographics, doing their market research, and understanding their target audiences.

Setting up and running a business is a challenging task that requires passion, dedication, and resilience. While many individuals embark on the entrepreneurial journey with ambitious goals and dreams, a significant number find themselves falling short of their business objectives. The primary obstacle hindering their success is not a lack of skills or resources, but rather, an intangible force—fear. When speaking on a participant’s fears of getting started, Ms. Helart replied, “There’s a lot of people who don’t reach out to mentors because maybe they’re introverts and more nervous about asking for help. Please get over that. We want to help and make you successful.” Through guidance from mentors, this competition can help business owners grow their businesses. Our community is the perfect place to jumpstart business endeavors—Arizona is among the top ten states with the fastest growing small businesses, and with the LHCFEL, along with the BBB and ASU coming together to organize events such as the HavaStartup, we will continue to see positive economic growth in the community of Lake Havasu City through encouraging and motivating our local entrepreneurs.

Online Registration period is between Tues. Nov 14th at 6:00 pm - Fri. Jan. 19th, 2024, 5pm. If you want to know more about the competition, please visit <https://havasu.asu.edu/havastartup>



Panel Members Ms. Andrea Helart, Dr. Cristen Mann, and Dr. Leepsa Nabaghan Madhabika
Photo Credit Jessica Arndt



Ms. Andrea Helart talking to participants
Photo Credit Jessica Arndt



Dr. Cristen Mann, Dr. Leepsa Madhabika, Ms. Andrea Helart
Photo Credit Jessica Arndt



Dr. Leepsa and attendees signing in
Photo Credit Jessica Arndt