

AirfieldIQ

The AirfieldIQ team, **Andy Cheng, Henry Dowling, Ruelin Man-Martinez, Jonathan Shi,** and **Muhammad Sarguroh** were among those awarded. They proposed an autonomous system that would detect foreign object debris and damaged runway lights. These airports do inspections twice a day while AirfieldIQ's system would work continuously. Larger airports like John F. Kennedy International Airport have these types of systems but they are very costly. Regional airports don't have cost effective systems. In preparation, the team spoke with six airport operations managers from various Georgia and South Carolina regional airports for feedback.

“As an engineer, all you want to do is talk about the cool tech behind your product. When pitching, however, you need to tell a story about the problem you're actually solving and how your solution addresses it,” said third-year student Dowling. He wanted to do an aerospace start up since his first year at Tech during Week of Welcome, but AE's program had yet to begin. He and the other team members met at Tech's Oxford Study Abroad Program in 2024 and when AE announced the Program they knew they wanted to build something. The workshops and mentorship helped them refine their project and their pitch. The feedback that stood out to Dowling was to speak more conversationally when presenting.

“I practiced a lot with my friends. Condensing the pitch into three minutes with so many points to convey was challenging. We developed a script to streamline the narrative, then revised it to flow naturally.”