Tricontinental Hackathon at École Polytechnique: Innovating in a cross-cultural environment

In March 2016, École Polytechnique, also known as l'X, hosts students from the University of Tokyo and from Columbia University. During their stay on campus, the students from Japan and the USA will partner with students from l'X to participate to a unique cross-cultural experience: a 48-hour Tricontinental Hackathon. The students will be working at the Drahi X-Novation Center in teams of six during two complete days on a technological project defined in partnership with Valeo, sponsor of the event. Their goal: to create a product which will enhance safety and comfort in cars, using the Internet of Things.

This Tricontinental Hackathon will take place from **Wednesday March 16th to Friday March 18th** in "LA FIBRE ENTREPRENEUR – Drahi X-Novation Center", École Polytechnique new center entirely dedicated to entrepreneurship and innovation. The aim is for these students coming from three different universities (École Polytechnique, the University of Tokyo and Columbia University), with various backgrounds and strengths, to get involved together in an innovative project that will enhance safety and comfort in cars and thus learn both the pleasure and difficulties of working in an inter-cultural environment. Being hosted at the heart of the École Polytechnique entrepreneurial ecosystem is also a great opportunity for them to exchange

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with the incubator's entrepreneurs and team, including the fabmanager, and be mentored by experts of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program as well as professors from l'X. An award ceremony celebrating the projects is organized on March 18th, in presence of Jacques Biot, President of École Polytechnique.

École Polytechnique has chosen to launch this new initiative to further develop its existing exchanges with the University of Tokyo and Columbia University. Thus, l'X already had short-term exchange programs with those two world-class universities. Furthermore, all three institutions regard innovation and entrepreneurship as a key priority.

Since 2012, the **University of Tokyo** selects ten of its best undergraduate students to participate in a short term program entitled "Hands-on activities" in partnership with the best universities in the world, including l'X. This year, the students from Japan are hosted for a month on École Polytechnique campus, and the focus of their trip is on technological innovation: they met start-up creators from l'X, visited incubators and discovered several laboratories as well as installations from Université Paris-Saclay, a major scientific cluster in the South Paris region, founded by l'X and 18 other higher education and research institutions. The students have also been preparing for the Hackathon through specific courses on innovation given to them by the University of Tokyo prior to their departure for France.

École Polytechnique and **Columbia University** are linked through the Alliance program, which facilitates the creation of academic links and synergies. Since 2015, with the guidance and support of the Alliance program, students from the Columbia Organization of Rising Entrepreneurs or CORE, Columbia's student organization dedicated to entrepreneurship, and students from the Cabinet Start-up, their counterpart at École Polytechnique, organize exchange trips to discover the respective local entrepreneurial ecosystems.

This Tricontinental Hackathon thus strengthens École Polytechnique's existing collaborations with Columbia University and the University of Tokyo while encouraging cultural exchanges between Japan, the US and France and supporting initiatives in favor of entrepreneurship and innovation.

The automotive supplier **Valeo**, partner to all automakers worldwide, is the special partner of this Hackathon. With this partnership, Valeo is demonstrating once again that innovation and R&D are the Group's top priorities. Day in and day out its teams are guided by a constant commitment to innovation as they work to invent the car of tomorrow. Valeo invests 10% of its original equipment sales on R&D. Most of Valeo's research and development programs are focused on the design of technologies that reduces motor vehicle CO_2 emissions and promote intuitive driving. Ranking among the leading patent filers in France, Valeo has close to 12,000 researchers in 52 research and development centers around the world.

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ABOUT ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE / École Polytechnique is the leading French institute which combines top-level research, academics, and innovation at the cutting-edge of science and technology. Its various programs – Bachelor, Ingénieur Polytechnicien, Master's, Graduate Degree, PhD track and PhD – are highly selective and promote a culture of excellence with a strong emphasis on science, anchored in humanist traditions. As a widely internationalized university, École Polytechnique offers a variety of international programs and attracts a growing number of foreign students and researchers from around the globe (currently 30% of students and, 39% of faculty members).

École Polytechnique offers an exceptional education to prepare bright men and women to excel in high-level key positions and lead complex and innovative projects which meet the challenges of 21st century society, all while maintaining a keen sense of their civil and social responsibilities. With its 22 laboratories, 21 of which are joint research units with the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), École Polytechnique Research Center explores the frontiers of interdisciplinary knowledge to provide major contributions to science, technology, and society. École Polytechnique is a founding member of Université Paris-Saclay.

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