A Hot Idea
University of Dayton, Ohio (url: http://www.udayton.edu/index.php)

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Start-up business ideas ranging from a heated bleacher seat to a device to improve fuel efficiency for tractor-trailers won elevator pitch prizes in the first round of the University of Dayton's 2013-2014 Business Plan Competition.

Taking home first place was Aaron Pugh, a recent University of Dayton graduate, for his one-minute pitch for Hot Seat, a portable stadium seat with back support and a seat warmer.

Terence Lau, chair of the University's management and marketing department said many entries addressed sustainability and improving the quality of life for the sick and disabled.

Now in its eighth year, the competition offers nearly $190,000 in cash and prizes including a $25,000 top prize, free legal help and professional sales and leadership training, as well as expert advice on transforming a great idea into a viable, marketable, innovative business plan.

The competition is aimed at helping start-ups reach the next level of growth by offering expert advice on building a viable plan for launching or growing an innovative business.

University students, alumni and local entrepreneurs were included in the more than 100 teams that submitted entries and presented one-minute elevator pitches Oct. 26, in the first round of the competition.

Fifteen entries were also selected to move on to the five-minute semifinal cameo round and will each earn $1,000 for presenting in that round; five teams will be selected as finalists. Not all elevator pitch winners were selected as semifinalists and not all semifinalists were elevator pitch winners.

Among the 10 elevator pitch winners were University of Dayton students and alumni.

Elevator pitch winners are: First Place, $1,500: Pugh, Hot Seat.

Second, $1,000: Genevieve Catalano, TravelBlender, an online service to match travelers with ideal companions and destinations.

Third, $500: Joseph Battle, Inquiring Minds Entertainment, a multimedia company to help artists record and release music.

Fourth, $500: Ann Kyne, Full Circle Trailer Aerodynamics, a skirt for tractor-trailers to improve fuel efficiency.

Other elevator pitch presenters winning $250 included George L'Heureux, HotIron; David Ricupero, Product Sampling Technology, Emily Meyer, Xtend Workstation; Carson Scheidler, SummerAde; Justin D'Arcy, College Base Camp; and Katie Zikias, Dry Shampooch.

Fifteen semifinalist teams will make five-minute presentations Nov. 23 in the cameo round to compete for five finalist spots. Finalists will be assigned outside mentors to help develop complete business plans to compete for the $25,000 top prize.

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Final presentations will be held in March 2014. Winners are announced at the School of Business Administration's entrepreneurship program spring banquet.
The University of Dayton’s Business Plan Competition has been recognized as one of the 15 largest college business plan competitions by Under30CEO.com, a news and trend media site for young entrepreneurs.

The University of Dayton is recognized nationally for its innovative undergraduate entrepreneurship program. The Princeton Review and Entrepreneur magazine have ranked the program among top 20 in the nation for eight straight years.

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