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Making the cut

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Five teams of aspiring entrepreneurs will move into the final round of the University of Dayton's 2013-14 Business Plan Competition, competing for a \$25,000 top prize, and earning the opportunity to meet with the venture capital firm, Draper Triangle Ventures.

"This year, our finalist teams emphasize improving people's lives in one way or another. They involve concepts to help people pursue more fulfilling collegiate studies or help them complete their work more easily. They aim to help people improve their nutrition and lessen their negative impact on the environment. Finally, they aspire to help people enjoy their free time and travel experiences more fully," said Diane Sullivan, competition coordinator and associate professor of management.

Now in its eighth year, the competition offers nearly \$190,000 in total support with a \$25,000 top prize along with expert advice on transforming a great idea into a viable, marketable, innovative business plan.

This year, finalist teams will compete for new prizes including free sales training through the newly launched University of Dayton Center for Professional Selling as well as \$5,000 in free training and development through the University's Center for Leadership.

"Aside from the cash prizes, we believe one of the biggest benefits of the University of Dayton Business Plan Competition is the mentoring finalist teams receive through the competition," said Terence Lau, chair of the management and marketing department. "Every year, the competition offers more learning and mentorship opportunities and continues to increase its impact in the Miami Valley and beyond. We view the competition as a unique opportunity to provide a state-of-the-art learning experience for our students and support the launch of new companies in the region. Through the Business Plan Competition, both the University and the entire region benefit."

Finalists are:

College Base Camp offers summer courses between high school and college to help high school and college students identify the courses of study and careers they will find fulfilling. Team members: Justin D'Arcy and Emily Meyer, University of Dayton students.

Lagoon - intelligent water usage will provide a consumer friendly water sensor/measuring system that attaches to the main line in the house and includes a display that can be installed next to the thermostat. Lagoon provides a companion mobile app for keeping track of water usage. Team members: William Wiebe and William Blum, University of Dayton students, Nathan Heidt and Eric Elias.

Liquid Hope offers the world's first shelf-stable organic, whole-food tube feeding formula. Team members: Robin Gentry McGee, Namrata Maguire and Jim Danis, University of Dayton alumnus.

Product Sampling Technology offers a mobile application and analytics dashboard to help brands better execute product sampling campaigns. The current way brands manage these campaigns is through text messages and phone calls; Product Sampling Technology simplifies the process through a mobile app. Team members: David Ricupero, Venkata Ayyadevara.

TravelBlender connects travelers with each other and customizes trips based on preferences in destinations, time frame and travel group demographics such as age and gender. Users sign up online for free. Team members: Genevieve Catalano and George L'Heureux, University of Dayton alumnus.

All finalists will also be assigned industry-specific outside mentors to help them develop full business plans. Final presentations will be held in early March; winners are announced at the School of Business Administration's entrepreneurship program banquet in late March.

The University of Dayton is recognized nationally for its innovative programs in entrepreneurship education. For the past eight years, The Princeton Review and *Entrepreneur* magazine ranked the University of Dayton as having one of the top 20

entrepreneurship programs in the nation.

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