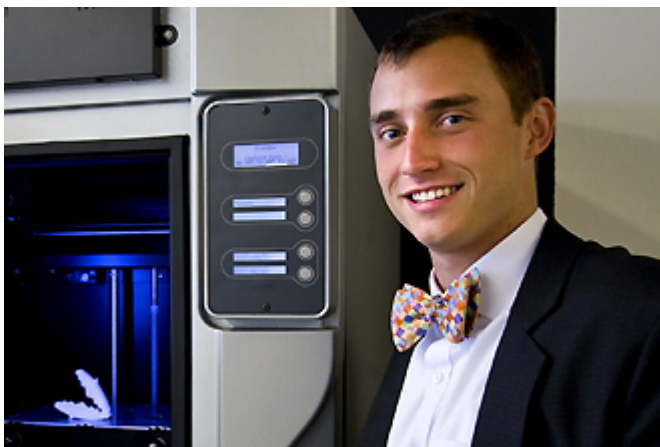


Med Student Wins Start-up Pitch Contest

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Third-year Tulane medical student William Kethman has to make room in his studies for a trip to San Francisco. His fledgling company, NOvate Medical Technologies, won the 2011 New Orleans Entrepreneur Week IDEApitch, so he is getting a free trip to California to meet top investors.



Medical student William Kethman is leading the development of the SafeSnip device. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

NOvate's first product, [SafeSnip](#), is a disposable obstetric device that simultaneously cuts, clamps and shields the umbilical cord from infection. It is designed for use in the developing world where infants are susceptible to infections caused by unsanitary birth conditions.

"I started this company because I wanted to make a difference and save lives," says Kethman, who is vice president of research and development for NOvate. He applied for the patent for SafeSnip with fellow 2008 Tulane School of Science and Engineering graduates Bryan Molter, Stephanie Roberts and Mark Young, as well as David Rice, associate professor of biomedical engineering at Tulane.

The [Idea Village](#) honor is an “amazing opportunity,” Kethman says.

NOvate was selected through a combination of live, “American Idol”-style audience voting and a vote by a panel of prominent investors. Kethman's company receives a suite of HP office products, \$5,000 in legal services and the San Francisco trip, arranged by Jim Coulter and TPG Capital, as well as a custom-designed presentation for use during the trip.

“The Coulter Challenge IDEApitch specifically identifies scalable ventures, such as NOvate, and gives them the opportunity to pitch their plans to some of the world's leading growth capital firms,” says Coulter, founding partner of TPG Capital.

The [entrepreneur week](#) is an initiative of The Idea Village, a nonprofit whose mission is to encourage a culture of innovation and to provide the focused tools and resources necessary to accelerate the development of high-growth entrepreneurial ventures based in New Orleans.