

Heading to Houston for business plan competition

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On the Advano team are, from left, Arpit Bhopalkar, a Tulane MBA student; CEO and founder Alexander Girau; and Shiva Adireddy, a Tulane research professor in physics who is in the professional MBA program. Not pictured: Brian Mitchell, a chemical and biomolecular engineering professor whose lab housed Advano during its infancy, and Tulane chemistry professor Mark Fink. (Photo by Ryan Rivet)

From a company that commercializes low-cost medical products to another that is developing gel patch therapy for eardrum repair, startups abound in the Tulane University [School of Science and Engineering](#).

This year, excitement is building for yet another Tulane spinoff company ? [Advano](#) ?

that will be competing this week in the Rice Business Plan Competition.

Headed by a team of Tulane students and professors, Advano is commercializing a nanoparticle manufacturing process. Specifically, the company is making silicon nanoparticles (SiNPs), which among other applications can be used as additives to dramatically enhance the performance of lithium-ion batteries that are common in consumer electronics.

“Advano is pursuing emerging markets for our federally funded technology that cover a broad range of industries, including energy storage, healthcare, and 3-D printing,” said [Brian Mitchell](#), a Tulane chemical and biomolecular engineering professor whose lab housed Advano during its infancy. “The Rice Business Plan Competition is a unique opportunity for the Advano student participants to showcase their talents and potentially attract investor funding.”

Besides Mitchell, team members include CEO and founder Alexander Girau; Tulane chemistry professor [Mark Fink](#); Shiva Adireddy, a Tulane research professor in physics who is in the professional MBA program; and Arpit Bhopalkar, a Tulane MBA student.

“Advano's mission is to accelerate the adoption of advanced technologies by streamlining nanomanufacturing in ways that are immediately beneficial to industry,” said Girau, a Tulane doctorate student on hiatus as he works to grow Advano's business and technology.

As part of that growth, he and his team are heading to Rice University in Houston this week to tell 300 venture capitalists why their company deserves more than \$450,000 in cash and prizes. They are competing for the grand prize against 41 other teams, including those from Harvard, Stanford and MIT.

The competition also features the \$5,000 Comcast Business People's Choice Award. Through Saturday (April 18) at 1 p.m., Advano fans may cast their votes [here](#).

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