

Tulane Entrepreneurs Association Kicks Off 8th Annual Business Plan Contest

April 15, 2008 9:45 AM Keith Brannon
kbrannon@tulane.edu
(504) 862-8789

Window shades that double as solar panels, a database that tracks available parking spaces and a mobile phone-based banking service are just some of the innovations behind student-led business plans competing in the 8th Annual Tulane Entrepreneurs Association Business Plan Competition this week.

Five teams will compete in each business track – general business and social entrepreneurship – for two top prizes of \$10,000 in startup capital. Second and third place entries in each track will receive \$5,000 and \$2,500, respectively. The competition, which is designed to showcase student-led business ventures to investors, will take place from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Friday, April 18, in Goldring/Woldenberg Hall II on Tulane University's uptown campus. Winners will be announced later that evening at an awards ceremony at the Westin New Orleans Canal Place.

"This is an exciting opportunity for student business not only for the potential prize money, but also because of the expert feedback and exposure they get from the competition. Most will likely go on to become actual businesses and social enterprises," said Lina Alfieri Stern, director of the Levy-Rosenblum Institute for Entrepreneurship at Tulane's A.B. Freeman School of Business. "The benefits extend beyond the academic to the practical, economic and social spheres."

Entries will be evaluated by a panel of judges based on the soundness and implementation potential of the business idea, and in the case of the social entrepreneurship track, judges will also consider the benefits to the community after addressing a social, environmental or economic problem.

Teams competing in the general business category include four groups from Tulane University – Coursepack.net, Just-In-Time Logistics, Studio-Life Development and Viking Software – and EnviroBlinds from Brown University in Rhode Island.

The social entrepreneur track finalists and school affiliations are: A"s and Aces (Tulane University), Banque Pour Tous (University of Georgia), Opportunity International (Tulane University), Ref for the Deaf (University of Texas at Dallas) and Shallow Crossings (University of Texas at Austin).

The Tulane Business Plan Competition program began in 2000 with the goal of teaching students interested in entrepreneurship the set of skills needed to start a new venture as well as to expose these young entrepreneurs to investors who could fund their businesses. The competition has been held annually, with one exception following Hurricane Katrina, and has regularly attracted participation from local, regional and national university students.

For more information, please visit <http://www.tulanebusinessplancompetition.com/> .