

Student researchers present their 'novel' ideas

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Nicholas Pashos, who ultimately won the experienced researcher category during the 2016 Novel Tech Challenge, presents his product to a panel of judges. (Photo by Ryan Rivet)

Eight teams of student researchers went toe-to-toe on April 13 during the second annual [Tulane Novel Tech Challenge](#), a competition that empowers students to improve the environment, human health, education and urban infrastructure through technology.

Following brief, pitch-style presentations, a panel of judges chose two winning teams, and a third team took home the crowd favorite prize.

In response to last year's competition, wherein students more advanced in their projects competed against less experienced researchers, organizers split the competition into two categories — novice and experienced.

[School of Science and Engineering](#) dean Nick Altiero says that he is impressed by the growth of the competition as well as the quality of the research presented.

“The Novel Tech Challenge is a powerful complement to traditional business plan competitions,” Altiero says. “In the Novel Tech Challenge, students learn the importance of building a team to imagine, design and build a physical product. They also learn the importance of expanding the team to add the skill sets required to bring that product to market.”

The first-place novice team created BiopSci, an automated skin biopsy punch model that makes the biopsy process faster and more accurate.

The first-place experienced team was [BioAesthetics](#). The product presented was an acellular, tissue-engineered nipple-areola complex that allows the patient’s own cells to regenerate a new nipple and areola in the event of loss due to trauma or disease.

The crowd favorite prize went to [Fail Up](#), an online platform to bring entrepreneurial stakeholders together to create a vibrant and well-connected ecosystem on college campuses.

The challenge was sponsored by the Burton D. Morgan Foundation and featured \$16,000 in cash prizes. The first-place experienced team took home \$10,000, the top novice team took home \$5,000, and the audience favorite won \$1,000. Additional support for the program included the participation of faculty mentors and experienced alumni and parents, who served as real-world experts and advisers to the teams.

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