

BIG BANG!

UC DAVIS BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

Ensembles and Mesolytics Share Winners Circle

Two start-ups aiming to fill a niche for convenience, speed and efficiency in their markets—a retail outlet that helps busy families prepare nutritious, home-cooked meals and a biomedical venture that is developing a handheld device to instantly diagnose infections—each won \$10,000 in this year's UC Davis Business Plan Competition.

Ensembles LLC of San Ramon and Mesolytics of Davis shared the first place award and prize money in the sixth annual Big Bang! Business Plan Competition, organized by MBA students of the Graduate School of Management to promote entrepreneurship, innovation and hands-on learning. The winners were announced at an awards ceremony on May 17.

was slated to open on May 31 in San Ramon—not far from the San Ramon Valley Conference Center, the home of the Bay Area MBA program. Hodder said she's already signing up her classmates and their friends as Ensembles customers.

Visitors to Ensembles will be able to create eight to 14 healthy, ready-to-cook meals that are personalized to their family's tastes. Hodder said customers can save hours of shopping, preparation and clean-up time.

Hodder said the advice and feedback from mentors and judges and the network of contacts they have plugged into through the competition have been invaluable.

"The Big Bang! experience has helped us to think big and move beyond our first store," said Hodder. "It's pushed us out of our initial go-to-market bubble and made us think beyond our first few milestones."

With technology born out of UC Davis research labs, Mesolytics hopes to give health care professionals a portable tool to quickly diagnose infectious diseases using a swab of a patient's saliva or a drop of blood. The biomedical venture's platform is based on nanowires that hold antibodies proven to detect a single virus with laboratory sensitivity. Based on a disposable razor-and-blade model, the device's interchangeable test cartridges will target influenza, including the avian flu subtype. Future applications include other respiratory ailments, HIV and common sexually transmitted diseases, and biosecurity hazards such as exposure to anthrax and plague. The team hopes to set up its manufacturing in West Sacramento.

GSM alumnus Farley Stewart '05 teamed up with Mesolytics' lead researchers Zane Starkewolfe and Dan Masiel, both UC Davis graduate students in chemistry. Stewart then brought on board Kara Schmelzer, who has a Ph.D. in pharmacology.

Ensembles, the meal service, was cooked up by Juliet Hodder, a student in the UC Davis Bay Area MBA program, and her co-owners Leslie Leach, a former brand manager for The Clorox Co., and executive chef Ann-Marie Ramo. Their first store

GSM alumnus Farley Stewart '05 explains Mesolytics' designs for a portable device based on UC Davis nanotechnology research. The device will give health care professionals the ability to instantly and accurately diagnose viral infections using a swab of a patient's saliva or a drop of blood. The biomedical venture shared the winners circle in the Big Bang! and will invest the \$10,000 in winnings to advance their proof of concept in the lab.



Stewart and Schmelzer met this past year when she participated in the GSM's Business Development Certificate program for campus scientists.

"We were able to bring together physics, chemistry and bioelectrical engineering, plus the management capability, all to form a team. This would not have been possible without the UC Davis Little Bang and Big Bang! competitions," said Farley Stewart. "It's a great example of campus researchers and MBA students coming together in a powerful way that has the potential to commercialize technology here in the Sacramento area."

MBA student Pramod Parihar, chair of the competition, called the quality of the business plans "superb."

"The connections that have been made are a testament to the goal of the Big Bang!," Parihar said. "Many of the teams represent partnerships between Graduate School of Management students and alumni and world-class UC Davis scientists and researchers."

The MBA students launched the competition in October, offering a series of events and workshops ranging from protecting intellectual property and business plan writing to financial planning and marketing. More than 50 firms provided financial sponsorship or their representatives led workshops, groomed teams or judged the competition. It culminated on May 17 when a panel of eight judges, including veteran venture capitalists, angel investors, innovation experts and intellectual property attorneys, selected the two winners to split the first and second place prize money, giving each \$10,000.

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LITTLE BANG— THE SPARK OF SOMETHING BIG

Opening more doors of opportunity, MBA student organizers of the Big Bang! Business Plan Competition for the second consecutive year coordinated with UC Davis CONNECT Business Development, a campus program that supports the commercialization of UC Davis technologies, to hold a series of five "Little Bang" poster competitions to encourage more graduate and post-doctoral students to explore the market potential for their research.

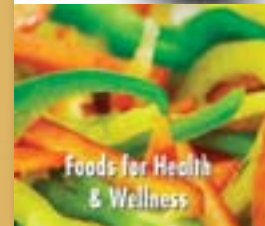
Held in February, the Little Bang contests drew more than 20 teams that participated in five sectors: clean energy and environmental sciences, computational science and information technology, foods for health and wellness, medical and biotechnology innovations, and nanotechnology.

Each winning team received \$3,000. The winners and runners-up of each Little Bang earned a berth as a semi-finalist in the Big Bang!

Four of the six finalists teams in the Big Bang! this year—including Mesolytics, which tied for first—followed the path from the Little Bang. The three other finalists were Nova Chemicals, IDA Technologies and SOYum! All of the teams involved Graduate School of Management MBA students or alumni partnering with the researchers.

"We are delighted with this year's Little Bang competitors who made it all the way through the Big Bang!," said Meg Arnold, director of UC Davis CONNECT Business Development.

"The teams' successes are a direct result of their commitment, creativity and hard work throughout the year." ■





GSM TEAM MAKES FINAL EIGHT IN JUNGLE BUSINESS PLAN CHALLENGE

A team with two UC Davis MBA students that was a finalist in the Big Bang! also advanced to the final eight in Jungle Media Group's 2006 Business Plan Challenge, a prestigious international competition that drew nearly 200 entrants from across the country and from as far away as Israel, India and Pakistan.

Innovative Design Automation (IDA) Technologies is working on new software for improving the design of microchips. IDA's team includes Jorge Campos, a UC Davis doctoral student in electrical engineering who is also a participant in the GSM's Business Development Certificate program; MBA students Brian Hoblit and Ben Mok; and Matthew Caldwell, a graduate student researcher in the Institute of Transportation Studies. The software aims to use random changes and selection to reduce semiconductor chip development time and costs by up to 30 percent.

IDA joined 24 semi-finalist teams (including another team of GSM students behind Fantasy Sports Gaming Network) at Fenwick & West's Silicon Valley law offices on April 28 to present their business plans to a panel of judges comprising leading venture capitalists, entrepreneurs and attorneys.

At the grueling one-day pitch off, IDA made the cut to the final eight. The winner of the sixth annual competition was SunPhocus Technologies of the University of Chicago, which took home \$35,000 in cash and legal services from Fenwick & West and other in-kind prizes.

UC Davis MBA student Brian Hoblit said IDA has inked an agreement to start beta testing their software later this year. "We have a great idea, but we need funding to put together a bigger team that will actually be able to bring it to fruition," he said.

"The IDA team has made tremendous progress in a very short time," said Jim Schraith, an active angel investor in the Sacramento region who is advising IDA and is managing partner of the El Dorado Hills Technology Incubator. "To make it as far as they did in a large competition such as this is a great indication of how well they will be received by the professional investment community." ■

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—UC Davis MBA student
Brian Hoblit



At the Big Bang! Final Awards event, UC Davis Bay Area MBA student Juliet Hodder and her business partner Leslie Leach present the business plan for Ensembles, a ready-to-cook meal service that plans to open its first store in San Ramon, Calif. in late May. Hodder said the \$10,000 first prize will be a big help as they plan future store locations.

"There was a nice spread of different types of finalists—consumer product, food sciences, electronic design automation, biomedical and nanotechnology—which shows a much broader engagement with the university's technology community," said Harry Laswell, general partner of American River Ventures in Roseville. Laswell, who had judged the first three competitions, said he has seen a significant improvement in the quality of the business plans and the preparation of the presenters.

"For the first time, we have a field of teams in the Big Bang! that are going to get funded—some may be funded by angel investors, maybe one or two will actually be venture capital-funded," said judge Scott Lenet, managing director of venture capital firm DFJ Frontier in West Sacramento. "It speaks well to what is happening at UC Davis.

"In particular, Ensembles has shown that without a lot of resources they've been able to make great progress and demonstrate their commitment to doing this with their own money. They're real entrepreneurs," he added.

"Mesosyltics is based on core UC Davis science that is hard to duplicate," said Lenet. "It's really interesting technology that could fill a real need in the point-of-care market."

SmartMomsCircle of Sacramento won the People's Choice award and \$2,000 as the audience's favorite at the awards event. The team plans to build an online community for stay-at-home parents who want to keep up with their careers, stay networked and take on

At the Big Bang! Finals in May, Jim and Georgia Corbett announce their intent for their student fellowship for entrepreneurs to be awarded to students who are involved with the business plan competition.



project-based work. The circle of entrepreneurs includes UC Davis alumni Rose Elley, Elena Naderi and Alexander Vanderbilt; UC Davis economics student Jason Montgomery; and Laura Iriarte and Garrett Wilson.

The three other Big Bang! finalists were:

- **SOYum!**, which is manufacturing a soy powder substitute for eggs and milk that could be used to produce healthier food that is lower in cholesterol and saturated fats, and by people who are allergic to eggs or dairy products. The team members are MBA student Mark Gannon, and Brad Olsen, Laura Pallas and Marco Garcia, all graduate students in the UC Davis Department of Food Science and Technology.
- **Nova Chemicals**, which aims to develop and sell new types of materials for packaging microelectronic circuit boards. The new materials have better physical properties and are more reliable than current products on the market, and could reduce packing time by almost 50 percent. Dakota Coe, a joint MBA/JD student, teamed up with two Ph.D. researchers, Frank Shi and Beth Schneggenburger.
- **Innovative Design Automation**, which is working on new software for improving the design of microchips. Jorge Campos, a UC Davis doctoral student in electrical engineering who is also a participant in the GSM's Business Development Certificate program, teamed up with MBA students Brian Hoblit and Ben Mok. Taking a lead from evolutionary biology, their product aims to use random changes and selection to reduce semiconductor chip development time and costs by up to 30 percent.

"The Big Bang! continues to expand exponentially," said Dean Nicole Woolsey Biggart. "The competition plays a major role in spreading the entrepreneurial spirit across the UC Davis campus and offers a proving ground for some of the university's most promising technology and start-up ideas. It's all about education, inspiration and making a difference." ■

CORBETTS DESIGNATE FELLOWSHIP FOR MBA STUDENTS INVOLVED IN BIG BANG!

Jim and Georgia Corbett's ties to UC Davis and the Graduate School of Management run deep. The president and chair of Spectrum Capital Corporation, Jim served as chair of the School's Dean's Advisory Council from 1990 to 1995, and as a special advisor and volunteer. He is also a former trustee of the UC Davis Foundation Board. Georgia is a UC Davis alumna.

Four years ago the Corbetts pledged \$100,000 to establish an endowment that would provide an annual fellowship for a UC Davis MBA student with the potential to succeed as an entrepreneur. They recently requested that the student be involved with the Big Bang! Business Plan Competition.

Jim Corbett founded the Sacramento Entrepreneurship Academy in 1986 to help UC Davis and Sacramento State students become entrepreneurs. He remains chair of the academy today.

GSM alumnus Jacob Rivera '05 inspired the Corbetts to revise their fellowship. "It was our privilege to know Jacob first through the Sacramento Entrepreneurship Academy and later when he was chair of the 2005 Big Bang!," they explained. "If in some small way we can honor his efforts, as well as those of future Big Bang! participants, we are quite proud to be in that light."

The James R. and Georgia K. Corbett Fellowship for Student Entrepreneurs will recognize at least one student per year for their exceptional capability, talent and passion. "The fellowship will have a positive impact on our entrepreneurial students for generations to come," said Dean Nicole Woolsey Biggart. ■

Thank You!

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