



# Contest Finalists Display Inventions

By Benjamin Gottlieb / Staff Writer; Published Friday, April 13, 2007



Photo Courtesy of Yoni Berk

Semi-finalists at the New Venture Competition present their projects to judges on Wednesday. Nine groups competed for five spaces in the final round, which will be held on Friday, April 27

Technology became strictly business Wednesday, as aspiring student entrepreneurs faced off in the semifinals of UCSB's Eighth Annual New Venture Competition.

At the competition - hosted by the UCSB Technology Management Program - a panel of 25 judges from various local business and investment companies chose five finalists to compete in the final contest, slated for April 27 at 4 p.m. in Corwin Pavilion. The teams who made it to the final round - chosen from a group of nine - include Active Life Technologies, Magnetic Micro Tag, Nanofresh, Power of Minus 9, Rothman Index (Medalive), will compete for cash prizes in categories such as Best Business Plan, Best Pitch, Most Fundable Idea, Dow Materials Use and Alumni's Choice.

The first-place winner of the final competition will receive \$10,000 to start up their business. Another \$23,000 will be given out for the various other prizes.

From 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, judges moved independently from group to group and based their assessments on creativity, production costs and government approval.

To evaluate each team's product, judges were allotted a \$100,000 imaginary budget, which they used to invest in products made by each team of their choice. At the end of the judges' evaluation, the five teams that received the highest investment rates were selected for the final round.

The competition attracted students of all class levels and disciplines, including English, business economics and engineering. Each of the nine groups that participated in this week's semifinals were required to present a poster board display of their product, pass out informational pamphlets and demonstrate product prototypes.

The final five groups will also create a business plan this week, specifically laying out the steps they plan to take to implement their ideas and deal with potential investments.

Davis Brimer, a fourth-year computer engineering major and member of the Active Life Technologies team in the competition, said Active Life's product - the "Osteoprobe" - was developed by UCSB physics professor Paul Hansma to measure the density of bone material without surgically removing bone fragments. The probe is inserted into the skin and uses vibrations to determine density.

Brimer said he felt his participation in the competition was a valuable experience, one that is also unique to UCSB.

"[The New Venture Competition] has given me an opportunity to team up with fellow students and faculty in a great mutual project," Brimer said. "I've been given the opportunity to work with Professor Paul Hanson, and I am honored to help develop his idea of the Osteoprobe into a marketable item to help people."

Students from the competition's NanoFresh group had their own innovative ideas. The team presented a water purifying mechanism designed for backpackers, travelers and commercial facilities such as schools and offices. According to team member Lyle Kaplan-Reinig, a fourth-year chemical engineering major, the group's goal for the product was for it to be an easy-to-use household mechanism that eliminates harmful carcinogenic compounds found in tap water.

The Power of Minus 9 team developed a concept model for a solar panel and battery pack system for the competition. The product, the team members said, would be used to power vehicles and mobile electronics through nanotechnology.

Technology Management Program Manager Katheryn Greenaway said she was very pleased with the event's turnout.

"We've invited venture capitalists, lawyers, financial planners and other members of the local business community to come tonight to help us judge the event," Greenaway said. "It's great to see them all here."