

February 22, 2016 | By Paul K. Mueller

Ten UC San Diego Student Teams Awarded First Funding for Promising New Projects

Ten teams of innovative students at UC San Diego have been awarded proof-of-concept funding to validate the product concepts behind their innovative projects.

It's the first round of funding in a new campus initiative to drive innovation and entrepreneurship on campus, and help move students' creative business concepts into the region's and the nation's marketplaces.

The competition attracted dozens of student teams from every area of campus, from the arts and humanities to engineering and healthcare, from STEM to the social sciences.

For this Phase 1 competition, each team is provided up to \$2,000 in funds to be used to advance their product idea. A second-phase competition will be held later this year to provide additional funding to the teams that have made the most progress.

Sponsored by the Office of Innovation and Commercialization (OIC) and The Basement, a collaborative space for student innovators, the competition asked teams of undergraduates to develop product concepts and submit those ideas to a panel of experts in business creation, product development, and venture capital.

Awardees – with team names such as “Ngenious Design,” “Lego Maze,” and “Micro-Gripper” – were selected based on level of innovation; social or economic potential; competitive advantage; and proposed use of proof-of-concept funds.

“In this first round of competition, we've seen the kind of imaginative problem-solving ideas we've come to expect from every part of the UC San Diego community,” said Vice Chancellor for Research Sandra A. Brown. “It's especially gratifying that these young future leaders are so eager to find real-world solutions and put their educations and imaginations to work for the benefit of so many.”

“These student-entrepreneur projects exemplify the many ways that UC San Diego has become a catalyst for change, from the health and wellness sector and mobile technology, to gaming and doing good,” said Steph Barry, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Alumni and Community Engagement. “Our undergraduates are helping to drive innovation on campus and around the world.”

Phase 1 awardees are:

Game Builder – this mobile application lets users create, share, and publish games on their smart-phones or tablets – Robert Cornwall, Aditya Bansal, and Marisa Leung.

Ngenious Design – their “Shaze” product is an easy-to-use, automated sunshade product for car owners – Justin Cho, Nathan Cohen, Taeha Kim, and Wei Tseng.

Karmonize – this 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization lets you support good causes, collaborate, and volunteer to earn “Karma Points” – Chad Atalla and Karan Arora.

TEAnGO Technologies – will provide the world’s first smart, portable, and fully automated tea brewer – Alexander Boone and Anthony Simeonov.

MakSam Co. – their “ReViSe” product offers a new, more efficient way to separate materials that make up road and truck-tire plies – Yohann Samarsinghe, Guawan Makmur, Daniel Kim, and David Vedra.

Lego Maze – this is a mechanized, motor-driven, and app-enabled Lego-made toy that allows users (ages 8 and up) to design maze layouts and play interactively with others – Yinrou Wang, Yinhao Huo, and Ting Su.

SitRight – this is a medical-grade posture-sensing seat cushion that alerts users to improper posture, and helps prevent associated lower-back pain – Mengyao (Lisa) Chang, Joseph Slaton, and Kenia Duque.

Micro-Gripper – this is a sub-millimeter-scale micro-gripper designed for delicate surgical procedures that require maneuvering through very narrow spaces – Anthony Tran, Alex Kasses, Austin Lee, and Elizabeth Huang.

TremorEnd – this is a tremor-suppression device, for patients suffering tremors, that uses a tuned mass-damper-based system – Pranav Singh and Yajur Maker.

Smartshunt – this is a shunt-cuff designed to adapt to growing infants through controlled dissolution of biodegradable materials – Edward Aminov, Danny Chan, and Chetan Potu.

The winning teams will now work through March prototyping their ideas for presentation at The Basement’s Demo Day and preparing for the follow-on-funding competition.

Teams can spend their proof-of-concept funding on prototype development – designing and field testing – as well as raw materials, basic consumables, equipment or software necessary to the concept, and market analysis.

“Our students and alumni have been at the forefront of bringing ideas to the markets of America and the world,” said Associate Vice Chancellor for Innovation Paul Roben. “We want to encourage more of that.”

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