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Zell Lurie Institute Reveals Semi-Finalists in Michigan Business Challenge

Annual Multi-Round Business Plan Competition Provides Students with First-Hand Experiences in Business Planning Processes

Ann Arbor, Mich. – Jan. 28, 2015 – [The Samuel Zell & Robert H. Lurie Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies](#) at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business today announced that eight teams have been named semi-finalists of the annual University-wide [Michigan Business Challenge](#) and four have advanced to the competition's Social Impact track finals. More than 80 teams of students from across the University applied and competed in Round 1 of this year's multi-round business plan competition, demonstrating the value of these types of action-based learning programs.

"The Michigan Business Challenge gives students a real-world experience entrenched in the business creation process that they'll face as entrepreneurs," said Stewart Thornhill, executive director of the Samuel Zell & Robert H. Lurie Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies. "Every year, students walk away with the tools and knowledge that broaden their skill set and help them get ahead of the competition."

As teams advance through the Michigan Business Challenge, they are exposed to a rigorous, multi-phase business development and planning process with deliverables due at each round. Winning teams have the opportunity to win cash prizes totaling more than \$75,000. In addition to funding, students gain valuable feedback from judges and expand their business network with entrepreneurs and prospective investors.

Eight Teams Named Semi-finalists

Each of the 80 teams that entered the competition delivered a three-minute pitch to a panel of judges. Following the pitches, the judges chose 22 of the most promising teams to advance to the next round. Round 2 of the competition took place on Friday, Jan. 23, where eight teams were named semi-finalists. From medical devices to online marketplaces to sustainability concepts, this year's teams represent a variety of industries. They are:

- **Companion** – Peer-to-peer safety network that lets people keep each other safe and alert
- **CubeWorks** – Glucose monitoring with millimeter-scale sensors that can be easily implanted to take measurements, store data and transmit to a user wirelessly
- **Galeni** – Cups for tremor patients
- **Glyde Co.** – Proprietary technology brings the snowboarding experience to the pavement while fostering a progressive lifestyle based upon art, music and social ideas
- **Graduate** – Platform for students and parents that tracks students' progress toward high school graduation
- **RainDance Recovery** – Recycles wastewater so that it doesn't require disposal and instead may be put to use
- **Stethos** – Stethoscope attachment that converts a traditional, mechanical stethoscope to a digital stethoscope with the ability to record sounds
- **Unfettered Energy** – Harnesses electromagnetic energy to power devices wirelessly

This year's teams were judged by venture capitalists, entrepreneurs and distinguished Ross faculty. Among this year's judges at Round 1 and Round 2 were:

- **Bill McPherson**, Managing Director, [McPherson Commercial Capital](#)
- **Bryan Hogle**, Program Officer, [Kresge Foundation](#)

- **Sarah Okin**, Director, [The Herb Amster Center](#)
- **Michael Nisson**, Managing Partner, [CNM Capital](#)
- **Jonn Behrman**, Chief Product Officer, [HookLogic](#)
- **Joe Marr Jr.**, [Sandler Training](#)
- **Diane Durance**, President, [MiQuest](#)
- **Jim Baker**, Executive Director, Innovation & Industry Engagement, [Michigan Technological University](#)
- **Stewart Nelson**, Senior Risk Advisor, Kapnick Insurance Group
- **Bill Mayer**, Vice President Entrepreneur Services, [Ann Arbor SPARK](#)
- **Satish Malnaik**, CEO & Co-founder, [NextServices](#)
- **Todd Sullivan**, CO-founder, [SpiritShop.com](#)
- **Paula Sorrell**, VP Entrepreneurship & Venture Capital, [Michigan Economic Development Corporation](#)
- **Colm Fay**, Base of the Pyramid Program Research Manager, [William Davidson Institute](#)
- **Rebecca Thompson**, Senior Director of Engagement, [United Way for Southeastern Michigan](#)
- **Tyler Paxton**, CEO, [Are You a Human](#)
- **Maria Thompson**, Entrepreneur-In-Residence, [Arsenal Venture Partners](#)
- **Jim Vincke**, CFO, [3D Biomatrix](#)
- **Rebecca Boylan**, Manager, [JP Morgan Chase](#)
- **Zafar Razzacki**, Entrepreneur & Product/Marketing Professional
- **Phil Tepley**, Director of Tech Commercialization, [Michigan Small Business Development Center](#)
- **Vinay Gupta**, Founder & CEO, [Janeeva](#)
- **Eli Slack**, Corporate Development Associate, [Masco](#)
- **Bob Paul**, Former CEO, [Compuware Corporation](#)

New to this year's competition is the Social Impact Track, presented in partnership with the [Frederick A. and Barbara M. Erb Institute](#) and the [Center for Social Impact](#), which was introduced to stimulate the creation of new businesses, products or services that prioritize social and/or environmental considerations. Finalists for this track include:

- **BetterHope** – an online marketplace for products that make a meaningful social impact by creating safe and sustainable jobs for producers around the world
- **Blueprints for Pangaea** – proves accessible healthcare to communities in emergent nations
- **LessonReel** – High-quality, K-12 lesson materials and videos developed by top teachers for use by fellow teachers
- **Victory Vocational & Business Center** – a social enterprise in Ghana with the mission to empower unemployed youth by providing vocational education and connecting them with jobs after training

The semi-finals and finals will be held on Friday, February 20 from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. at the Ross School of Business. This will be immediately followed by an award reception that is open to the public and where the Institute's Dare to Dream grant recipients will also be announced.

About the Samuel Zell & Robert H. Lurie Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies

The Institute and its Center for Venture Capital and Private Equity Finance bring together a potent mix of knowledge, experience and opportunities from the front lines of entrepreneurship and alternative investments. The student learning experience is further enhanced through internships, entrepreneurial clubs and events that serve to provide viable networks and engage the business community. The School's three student-led investment funds, with over \$6.5M under management, immerse students in the business assessment and investment process. Founding Board Members include Samuel Zell, Chairman of Equity Group Investments and Eugene Applebaum, Founder of Arbor Drugs, Inc. For more information, visit the Institute at www.zli.bus.umich.edu.

About Michigan Ross

The [Stephen M. Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan](#) is a vibrant and distinctive learning community grounded in the principle that business can be an extraordinary vehicle for positive change in today's dynamic global economy. The Ross mission is to develop leaders who make a positive difference in the world. Through thought and action, members of the Ross community drive change and innovation that improves business and society.

Ross is consistently ranked among the world's leading business schools. Academic degree programs include the BBA, MBA, Part-time MBA (Evening and Weekend formats), Executive MBA, Global MBA, Master of Accounting, Master of Supply Chain Management, Master of Management, and PhD. In addition, the school delivers open-enrollment and custom executive education programs targeting general management, leadership development, and strategic human resource management.

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