

Finalists selected, winners to be announced in Student Business Plan Competition

***State System university students competing
for \$10,000 top prize, other awards***

Harrisburg – Putting their education to good use even before they earn their degrees, 10 teams of student entrepreneurs are in the running for the \$10,000 top prize in Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education's eighth annual Student Business Plan Competition.

The winner of the competition—along with the second- and third-place finishers, who will receive prizes of \$5,000 and \$2,500 respectively—will be announced April 3 at an awards ceremony to be held at the Dixon University Center. The program will begin at 5:15 p.m. with a student poster reception; the awards ceremony will follow.

The annual competition provides students an opportunity to share their original business plans and to win funds to assist in the start-up or expansion of their businesses. Students from all 14 State System universities were invited to participate in the competition in the fall.

"We want all of our students to succeed, and not just in the classroom, but well beyond," said Board of Governors Chairwoman Cynthia D. Shapira. "This competition is a perfect example of how our universities are preparing students for that success. Several past winners have gone on to launch successful businesses based on the plans they developed as part of this practical, real-life experience; no doubt, more will follow."

"The ideas generated by the entrepreneurial young minds that take part in this competition each year demonstrate the tremendous level of creativity and inventiveness our students possess," said Chancellor Dan Greenstein. "These students, and the faculty who help guide them, deserve our congratulations for the hard work they already have put in to make it this far in the competition."

The 10 business plans selected as finalists in this year's competition and the students who developed them are:

- ***AFC Signals, Andrew Frederick (Clarion University)***

Increases the safety and visibility of motorcyclists on the road by providing hand-crafted flush mount turn signals for select European motorcycles.

- **Clarae's Drive-Thru Coffee, Rendell Weaver (Millersville University)**

A drive-thru/walk-up coffee kiosk that offers artisan, air roasted coffee drinks and complimentary homemade food items to commuters and Penn State Harrisburg students.

- **GreenBean Energy, James Russell (Lock Haven University)**

Takes residue from used coffee beans and recycles it to create the "coffee log"—an environmentally friendly alternative fuel source to traditional firewood.

- **Higher'd, Tyler Klenk, Morgan Hartley and Olga Plaksina (California University of Pennsylvania) and Trevor Dewaele (Shippensburg University)**

A mobile app and website that matches job openings from local area small businesses and chambers of commerce with high school and college-aged students who are looking for work.

- **Marqo, David Brantley, Alec Stimson and Patrick Luebben (Shippensburg University)**

A customer loyalty program for local businesses that incentivizes and rewards customers through drawings and cash prizes.

- **Nexus Integrated Security Solutions, William Todd (West Chester University)**

Provides premium security services to commercial, industrial and retail clients.

- **Revamp Recruiting LLC, Tyler Hickey, Matt Lynch and Blake Lazur (Shippensburg University)**

Provides the ultimate recruiting experience for young athletes by using detailed analysis and video footage to give them the tools to market their individual talents and abilities.

- **Sassy Girl Project, Samantha Schlak (Clarion University)**

Inspires, motivates and connects empowered women from around the globe by offering all-in-one plurnals (planner journals), quarterly journals, webinars, blogs, free printables and more. For every plurnal purchase, one prompted journal is donated to a young woman in the American Foster Care System.

- **TUS: Tutors 4 University Students, Salih Salaam (West Chester University)**

Connects college students with tutors whenever, wherever and for the subject where help is needed now, at a price point affordable by the student and attractive to qualified tutors.

- **Wish Respect, Matthew Heilman (West Chester University)**

Offers a first-of-its-kind advance care documentation ecosystem that allows healthcare payers to store and share their members' wishes with loved ones and providers.

Judges for the finalist round are Sheri R. Collins, deputy secretary for the Office of Technology & Innovation in the state Department of Community and Economic Development; Michael Gildea, founder and CEO of Brain Gain, LLC; Chris Rhine, university development manager for the Pennsylvania State Employees Credit Union (PSECU); Laura Potthoff, director of business & workforce development for the Cumberland Area Economics Development Corporation; and Matthew Lancaster, president of the Pittsburgh Chapter of the Keiretsu Forum.

In addition to the business plan awards, prizes of \$350 and \$150 will be presented for the best poster displays. The 10 finalists and seven additional semi-finalists have been invited to design posters and display them during the reception preceding the awards ceremony.

Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education comprises 14 public universities, which combined enroll the largest number of Pennsylvania residents among all four-year colleges and universities in the Commonwealth. With nearly 100,000 degree-seeking students and thousands more enrolled in certificate and other career-development programs, the State System is a vital contributor to the Pennsylvania economy, generating an estimated \$6.7 billion of economic activity annually. Collectively, the State System universities offer more than 2,300 degree and certificate programs in more than 530 academic areas. The universities have nearly 800,000 living alumni, the vast majority of whom reside in Pennsylvania.

The State System is undertaking a System Redesign, which began last year with a top-to-bottom review of the universities and the Office of the Chancellor. As a result of that review, the Board established three priorities: ensuring student success; leveraging the universities' strengths; and transforming the System's governance structure. The Board also affirmed its commitment to ensuring the long-term sustainability of all 14 institutions within the System so that each may continue to serve students, its region and the Commonwealth. To view regular updates of the redesign, go to <http://systemredesign.passhe.edu>.

The State System universities are Bloomsburg, California, Cheyney, Clarion, East Stroudsburg, Edinboro, Indiana, Kutztown, Lock Haven, Mansfield, Millersville, Shippensburg, Slippery Rock and West Chester Universities of Pennsylvania. The universities also operate branch campuses in Oil City (Clarion), Freeport and Punxsutawney (IUP), and Clearfield (Lock Haven), and offer classes and programs at several regional centers, including the Dixon University Center in Harrisburg and in Center City in Philadelphia.

