Students Win Business Plan Competition With Idea for 'Skatewalkers'

Two industrial technology seniors' proposal for a product that would transform inline skates into safe walking shoes won first place and $4,000 in Cal Poly's second annual Ray Scherr Business Plan Competition.

The students, Jason Kaltenbach of San Luis Obispo and Brandon Carey from Fremont, also won a trip to participate in the Central Coast Venture Forum June 14 in Santa Barbara with their plan for "Skatewalker," a device that would fasten to the bottom of inline skates to allow people to walk safely. Theirs was one of 22 business plans submitted in the competition, sponsored by Cal Poly's Orfalea College of Business and organized by the Cal Poly Entrepreneurship Club.

Trent Mueller, an MBA student from San Luis Obispo, won the second-place prize of $2,000 with his plan for Turbo Photo, an online photo business to provide high-resolution "stock" photography for graphic designers and art directors on a CD-ROM set.

Angelo Alcid, a computer engineering senior in the College of Engineering, won the third-place award of $1,000 for his plan for No Dice, a network gaming center.

Additional finalists were Courtney Montague's proposal for a Red Barn Restaurant, and Ryan Anderson's proposal for Equilibrium, a chain of airport stores providing quality-of-life services and products. Montague is an agricultural business senior from Hilmar, and Anderson is a business administration senior from San Luis Obispo.

Overall, 22 teams submitted initial executive summaries for prospective business plans, and 10 full plans were submitted. Judges from the business community selected five finalists and made the awards to the
top three plans. Management Professor David Peach announced the awards at a reception and ceremony May 29.

William Pendergast, a professor in the Orfalea College of Business, said that the number of initial submissions this year was double that of last year. He hopes next year "to engage a larger number of students in colleges throughout Cal Poly and to emphasize the formation of multidisciplinary teams."

The annual competition is supported by a gift for entrepreneurship programs from Ray Scherr, founder of the Guitar Center, a retail store with more than 100 outlets throughout the country. For more information, e-mail Pendergast at wpenderg@calpoly.edu.

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(NOTE TO EDITORS: For accompanying photographs, please contact Stephen Hughes at shughes@calpoly.edu.)