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Cal Poly Innovation Competition Picks Top Three Finalists; \$30,000 Awarded to Students

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Three teams of Cal Poly students will be awarded \$5,000, \$10,000 and \$15,000 for their top-placing entries in Cal Poly's 11th annual Innovation Quest (iQ) competition Friday evening, May 16, at Sage Restaurant on campus.

The finalists were selected from 17 teams that participated in the competition's live judging day, on May 3. During the live judging, teams pitched their ideas and were then placed based on several criteria.

Innovation Quest is an annual product creation and entrepreneurship competition at Cal Poly, hosted in cooperation with the Cal Poly Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE). Students submit ideas for projects, inventions, creations and startups for the chance to win no-strings-attached funding to help them launch their ideas.

"The 2014 Cal Poly iQ finalists were among some of the best in the history of our program," said Jim Dunning, a judge and program manager of Cal Poly's Research & Economic Development office. "They all should be proud of their accomplishments."

The top three teams (in alphabetical order) are AccuSpine, Hydrex and Tandemtech Engineering.

— AccuSpine is making a low-cost, smarter pedicle probe — a tool used for accurate placement of screws in spinal fusion surgeries.

— Hydrex is developing a wearable, noninvasive device that detects changes in tissue properties over time to monitor hydration levels and alert individuals of their current hydration status.

— Tandemtech Engineering is developing wall-climbing robots. Their flagship robot will be a portable, modular device designed to assist inspectors of large structures by making their jobs easier, quicker and safer.

The teams have not been told whether they won first, second or third place; the final order of awards will be announced at the May 16 dinner. After the teams give their pitches, the winners will be announced and will be presented with award plaques and checks. Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong , various Cal Poly college deans, all 17 top student finalist teams, startup industry professionals, and judges from the competition will be in attendance.

For more information about Innovation Quest, visit the competition website at <http://innovationquest.org>.

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