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Cal Poly Announces Startups Accepted Into Accelerator Program

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Cal Poly's Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (CIE) has accepted 11 startup companies into this year's SLO HotHouse Summer Accelerator program, an intense 13-week program aimed at helping new ventures succeed.

The program provides seed money, hands-on mentorship, and dedicated office space during the summer at SLO HotHouse's new downtown location. Companies will also receive training through workshops and be given resources to develop skills and ideas. At the end of the program, they will have an opportunity to pitch their ideas to investors during Demo Day in September.

The chosen ventures represent a variety of industries such as mobile apps, software, intelligent alarms, healthcare, environmentally friendly products, and radio-frequency identification (RFID) technology. "Our accelerator teams reflect all the domains of expertise at Cal Poly," said Jonathan York, professor in the Orfalea College of Business and CIE co-founder and faculty director.

York helped found CIE in 2010 as a way to provide startup help to students with innovative business ideas. The SLO HotHouse Summer Accelerator Program remains one of the CIE's core programs, even as it has vastly expanded its academic yearly offerings to provide early-stage venture support, consultants and resources for student and recent graduate entrepreneurs.

More than 30 applicants representing teams from across campus competed for a place in the fifth annual accelerator program. Twenty-two finalists presented their ideas to a panel of judges.

"We have a terrific group of students participating in this year's accelerator," said Chelsea Brown, manager of student innovation programs, who is overseeing the program. "These startups are offering exciting new solutions to pressing problems. During the program, we'll match them with mentors in their industries and provide them with strategic business guidance to get these ventures ready to launch."

2015 CIE SLO HotHouse Accelerator Teams:
- AppScrolls, conceived by Chad Kihm, an industrial engineering student, Ryan Ridley, history, and Marshall Zia, economics, aims to build the largest online community to connect, educate and entertain mobile gamers.

- Brandplug is a website and agency to help advertisers buy promotion from online influencers. Sam Betesh, business administration, and Andrew Graunke, graphic communications alumnus created it.

- Chipper, developed by David Levi, electrical engineering, Jacob Stewart, mathematics, Dylan Brodsky, business administration, and Fred Wilby, computer science, is an intelligent alarm that makes sure individuals get out -- and stay out -- of bed.

- SENCE, the brainchild of Eric Adler, mechanical engineering, James Fazio, computer science & software engineering, and Jeffrey Hufford, electrical engineering — is a company that designs a non-invasive device that allows a homeowner or renter to access their water usage data in real-time via a Smartphone and web app, enabling them to increase consumption awareness, reduce usage and detect leaks.

- Clock'd, created by Katherine White and Eli Burch, business administration, Colton Stapper, computer science, Tyler Dahl, computer science & software engineering, and Cameron Oelsen, graphic communications — uses iBeacons to check hourly wage workers in and out of work.

- Mantis Composites makes carbon 3D printed parts with unmatched performance. Ryan Dunn and David Zilar, aerospace engineering students, Michael Chapiro, materials engineering, Michael DeLay, electrical engineering, and Ning Jeng, bioresource & agricultural engineering, started it.

- Reach is a mobile personal relationship manager for business professionals developed by students Tyler Beaty and Jessica Estrada, business administration, Kurt Jiang and Clay Jacobs, computer science & software engineering, and Neal Nguyen, computer science & software engineering.

- Reduce. Reuse. Grow. Alex Henige, a landscape architecture student, and Natalie Webber, business administration, designed the world's first plantable coffee cup to be used for reforestation.

- MonsterCreate, a suite of mobile applications designed to engage the creativity of children, was created by Luke Bayard, agricultural business student, and Jacob Johannesen, Francis Pak Yuen, Andrew Adriance, and Elliot Fiske, all computer science & software engineering.

- Pinventory is a venture that uses RFID in retail settings to find items for the customers' and stores' benefit. It was developed by Azra Skeljo, electrical engineering, Kim Payne and Raleigh NeJame, business administration, Andrea Savage, computer science & software engineering, and Aaron Rostad, industrial & manufacturing engineering.

- U-Turner, developed by Stanley Laszczyk and Harvir Humpal, both biomedical engineering & general engineering, provides a paradigm-shifting product that will change healthcare by assisting nurses in turning patients, thereby improving patient comfort and reducing work-related injuries.

About the Cal Poly Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship

The Cal Poly Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship manages and supports a wide variety of programs and activities to stimulate the entrepreneurial Learn by Doing spirit at Cal Poly and to assist entrepreneurs in following their dreams. For more information, go to cie.calpoly.edu.

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