

Alternative energy plan wins contest

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An alternative energy company called Aurora BioFuels has won the \$25,000 first prize at the eighth annual UC Berkeley Business Plan Competition at the University of California, Berkeley's Haas School of Business. Aurora BioFuels presented a plan showing how to create bio-diesel fuel with yields 125 times higher than existing bio-diesel conversion technologies, and at half the cost.

The company also won the People's Choice Award of \$5,000 for garnering the most votes from the audience at the final awards ceremony on April 27.

The UC Berkeley Business Plan Competition is organized by Berkeley MBA students at the Haas School of Business. It is hosted by the Lester Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation in partnership with UC Berkeley's College of Engineering and School of Information, as well as with the UC San Francisco Innovation Accelerator, a lab-to-market program for ventures coming out of UCSF. Berkeley MBA students founded the competition in 1998 to help transform university innovations into viable commercial enterprises.

To participate in the competition, each venture's management team must have at least one student, alumnus or a faculty member from UC Berkeley or from UCSF's life sciences campus.

The winning team is comprised of full-time UC Berkeley MBA students Matt Caspari and Guido Radaelli; Bert Vick, a UC Berkeley Ph.D. student in molecular and cell biology; and Tasios Melis, a UC Berkeley professor of plant and microbial biology. The students met in a course offered through UC Berkeley's interdisciplinary Management of Technology program.

The \$10,000 second prize was awarded to Kirsan Radio Vision, a company whose new approach to security technology produces instant 3-D "see-through" identification of objects that also differentiates among materials.

CellASIC, a team developing a platform capable of mimicking the body's cellular environment for improved drug screening, tissue engineering and stem cell research, won the \$5,000 third prize. Team members include Michael Kingston, a UC Berkeley MBA student; and Philip Lee and Paul Hung, both graduates of UC Berkeley's Ph.D. programs in bioengineering and electrical engineering and computer science.

The volunteer judges involved in the three rounds of competition included numerous venture capitalists, and Tom Kalil of the UC Berkeley Chancellor's Office.

For more information go to:
<http://bplan.berkeley.edu>

Source: UC Berkeley, by Kathleen Maclay

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