

Students win money to help start their own company

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Four students walked away \$5,000 richer last Friday after their company won first place in the Opportunity Quest business competition.

The first place winner, Thermoscan, submitted by Robert Teel, Kirk Anderson, Jon Lindsey and Heather Trecker, represents a noninvasive method of diagnosing vesicoureteral reflux (VUR), a cause of kidney infections, in children.

The Thermoscan method potentially can replace the current VUR test, in which pediatric urologists insert a catheter into the urinary tract and up to the bladder, which they fill with radioactive dye to take X-ray photos.

Thermoscan's technology, the "Thermoflux Scanner," uses ultrasound to develop a picture so doctors can diagnose VUR without inflicting pain or using chemicals.

"We'd like to continue on and see it through; hopefully, we can become the next medical imaging company," said Robert Teel, an MBA student.

Two other student companies, Rescue Medical Systems and Quick Clinic, won second and third place, winning \$3,000 and \$2,000 respectively.

Opportunity Quest is a contest for students wishing to start their own business after graduation. The students design a product and submit an executive summary.

Out of 30 teams, 10 finalists were selected to present their product to a panel of judges. The teams also received advice from mentors in the local business community.

The \$5,000, \$3,000 and \$2,000 awards will help the proposed business plans become reality, but some of the people involved with Opportunity Quest believe that the experience of actually working toward an entrepreneurship goal was the real reward.

"The biggest prize teams get out of this is that their executive summary has been critiqued by professionals and they have solidified their ideas through the presentation," said Erin Peterson, student chairwoman for Opportunity Quest.

"I think this is wonderful, a great opportunity for our students," said Martha Eining, associate dean of the School of Business.

Despite the large turnout this year, the program developers have plans to try to make next year bigger.

"We would like to see more participation throughout the university, students from architecture, humanities and dance who want to start their own schools," said Brian Wells, vice chairman of Opportunity Quest.

Now the student companies are preparing for the next business competition: the Utah Entrepreneurial Challenge.

The statewide competition provides the winner with \$50,000 in cash and \$50,000 worth of legal services.

The competition is open to all students at accredited universities to submit business plans.



Robert Teel, Jon Lindsey, Kirk Anderson and Heather Trecker won first place in Opportunity Quest for Thermoscan—a noninvasive method of diagnosing vesicoureteral reflux (VUR), which causes kidney infections. It could replace the current VUR test in which pediatric urologists insert a catheter (seen above) into the urinary tract to fill the bladder with radioactive dye for X-ray photos.



Kirk Anderson presents his company's business plan to a panel of Opportunity Quest judges on Saturday, Jan. 14.

"The first place winner (of Opportunity Quest) gets an automatic entry into the statewide competition," Peterson said.

For more information concerning the challenge, go to www.uechallenge.org.

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