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Better Water Quality for All

A device designed to help scientists study water by making it easier and less dangerous to collect water samples was the winning technological innovation at the UC Santa Barbara Technology Management Program's (TMP) New Venture Competition (NVC) Finals on May 19.

OSMO, a company started by UCSB students Kyle Neumann, Rahul Sangodkar, Edixon Puglisi and Anjana Krishnan, took home the grand prize of $12,000 for their advanced and versatile portable water sampling instrument following a day of pitching ideas and demonstrating technical and business expertise to a room full of peers, mentors and tech entrepreneurship veterans.

For showing the most business promise, OSMO bested five other student-team finalists, who in turn were selected after a rigorous half-year of TMP and NVC entrepreneurial training that started with over 30 student groups. Working with mentors who themselves have successfully built and promoted technology companies, the students learned how to take an innovative idea and turn it into a solid plan from which a promising tech venture can grow.

No one left empty-handed:

• Vibe, a wearable that allows visually impaired users to sense the world around them was also a favorite, taking home a $2,500 California NanoSystems Institute (CNSI) People's Choice Award, as well as a $5000 Citrix Impact Award and the $7,500 second place prize.

• EVMatch, which seeks to connect the growing number of electric vehicle drivers with local owners of EV charging facilities, took the $3,000 third place prize.

• InGrain, a company that turns brewery waste into sustainable packaging for the craft beer industry, took the $5,000 Elings CNSI award and the Sonos speakers presented to the fourth place winners.

• Opal, a company that designs next-generation high efficiency displays, took home a recently established $5,000 innovation award named for UCSB mechanical engineering alum and accomplished tech entrepreneur Cliff Hannel.

• Dermachill, a handheld cooling device that alleviates itchiness associated with eczema and other skin conditions, also received a $2,500 People’s Choice Award.

Now in its 17th year, the NVC has helped train countless business-minded young tech innovators and spun off over two dozen companies, thanks to a combination of the campus’s consistently high performing engineering and sciences colleges and the mentorship and real-world tech entrepreneurial experience of the TMP faculty.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.