Sac State scores back-to-back titles at CSUPERB

Sacramento State’s first-place finish in California State University’s CSUPERB I2P (Idea-to-Product) competition is the Hornets’ second title in as many years.

This year’s winning I2P team consisted of biology undergraduates Megan Showalter and Kayla Horton and business undergraduates Carlo Aristeo Dela Cruz and Igor Chouzhyk. They presented a novel handheld device for use in the operating room that quickly and safely produces thrombin, a substance for bone healing, from a small sample of the patient’s own blood.

The I2P contest is designed to broaden exposure to cutting-edge biotechnologies, product-focused innovation, and the spectrum of career paths available in the life sciences. It brings CSU students, faculty and administrators together, as well as biotech professionals working in academia, government and industry.

Bob Linscheid, chair of the CSU Board of Trustees, served as one of the three finalist judges. He was “blown away” by the exceptional quality of the student presentations, saying they were better than many business pitches to investors.

“Excellence in applied research is a hallmark of Sacramento State” says President Alexander Gonzalez, “and I congratulate the students and faculty who represented our campus with distinction at the CSUPERB competition.”

“We are so grateful for the support from Professors Warren Drew Smith and John Chapman. This has been a transforming educational experience,” Showalter says. She recalls her team getting precious little sleep prepping for the finals. But it paid off as the squad made a compelling case to the judges.

Smith correctly predicted the team would prevail for the second year in a row. The electrical and electronic engineering specialist had cause to be confident because he and his wife, Judy, spent day and night helping with the intense preparations of all three teams from the campus during their days in Sacramento and Anaheim.

Smith is particularly proud that Sac State had three teams in the finals and noted the victory was truly a group effort. “All the teams practiced together and helped and learned from each other,” Smith says.
Smith was point person, mentor, and liaison with CSUPERB for the I2P competition. The technical mentor was John Chapman, adjunct professor of Electrical and Electronic Engineering and Biological Sciences. The business mentor was Professor Anne Fuller.

Sac State engineering senior design instructors Fethi Belkhouche and Russ Tatro provided technical mentoring during the fall semester. Engineering professors Suresh Vadhva, chair of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, and Professor Justin Reginato and entrepreneur John Selep served as practice judges in Sacramento.

The other Sac State I2P team finalists were engineering undergraduates Aleksey Makasarashvili, Adam Naber, Robert Prior and Bernadette Vansickle, and business undergraduates Jonathan A Gallo, Victor Martinez and Bolor Saruul. Also present to assist the teams were engineering undergraduates Brandon Arnst-Goodrich and Shiva Hassan and recent business graduate Michael James Gilles.

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