Three Sac State teams in I2P competition

All three Sacramento State teams that entered the 2012 statewide CSUPERB I2P early-stage biotechnology commercialization competition have qualified for the finals to be held Thursday through Saturday, Jan. 3-5, at the Marriott Anaheim.

Two engineering/business teams and one biosciences/business team will work with Adjunct Professor John Chapman, CEO of Stem Cell Partners, and business and engineering faculty mentors to compete against Idea-to-Product (I2P) teams from Cal Poly-Pomona, San Diego State and Fresno State during the CSUPERB Biotechnology Symposium. I2P involves applying creative thought to a technology (“Idea”) and developing a market application (“Product”) for that technology.

Professor Warren Drew Smith is bullish on Sac State’s chances of winning because Hornet teams account for half of the six entries. Factor in last year’s showing, when a team of Sac State undergraduate engineers and business students captured first place in Santa Clara, and Smith’s optimism seems justified.

The teams consist of Igor Chouzhyk, Carlo Dela Cruz, Kayla Horton and Megan Showalter; Justin Creason, Aleksey Makasarashvili, Victor Martinez and Robert Prior; and Jonathan Gallo, Adam Naber, Bolor Saruul and Bernadette Vansickle. The squads ran through practice sessions in Riverside Hall in late December to hone their presentations. Smith and his colleagues gave pointers on how to personalize the performances.

Teams will make 10-minute presentations to the preliminary judges Thursday, Jan. 3. The judges’ panel will question each team for an additional 10 to 15 minutes; all team members must be present to answer questions. Each team has 40 minutes with the panel, providing time to ask questions and receive extra feedback to prepare for the finals Saturday, Jan. 5.

The final presentations will begin Saturday afternoon; judges will question the teams. Private feedback on the product ideas will be provided, with the winners announced during the closing awards banquet.

CSUPERB’s symposium broadens 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.

“I’m proud of our entries this year,” Smith says, “and think Sac State will make a compelling case in Anaheim.”

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