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Mechanical engineering major shines in startup contest

Sacramento State mechanical engineering major Joy Lane is creative – and very persuasive.

She was a member of one of two local teams to qualify for an international competition with a product she designed. DashBar, an app/hardware combination, takes existing technology from a smartphone and various bicycle components to charge that smartphone while the user is riding the bike. DashBar includes a generator, a light, turn signals, a rear-view camera, and GPS and tracking software.

“A lot of the accessories we wanted to use are already in production, so we decided to use that to our advantage and integrate them into one affordable item,” Lane says. “We also wanted to be able to use your phone as the ‘brain’ of our operating system. This way, no one can steal it because you simply put it back in your pocket when you’re done riding.”

Lane says much of what she has learned at Sac State helped her create DashBar. “For me, as a mechanical engineer, building stuff is what it’s all about. My goal is to keep all of my designs as sustainable and environmentally friendly as possible,” she says. “This is why I got into engineering, so that I could make fun things for people, or at least make them better. Sacramento State is providing me with all the education and resources that I need to meet these goals. I am very excited for the future.”

Lane stood out during the Sacramento Startup Weekend Women’s Edition, which created a venue for women to make startup pitches in a world still dominated by men. Although men could be team members, the competition compelled women to pitch their respective products.

The field consisted of 10 teams that pitched their ideas during 60-second time slots. Lane’s presentation was followed by a question-and-answer session. She convinced the judges of DashBar’s commercial potential.

The competition included mentoring from developers, big names in big companies, coaches with their own successful startups, venture capitalists and marketers.

Lane’s team now will compete in the Global Startup Battle (www.globalstartupbattle.co), a nonprofit venture sponsored by Google, among other companies. The contest pits startups from around the world seeking to get views on their videos and to earn votes from judges. The winner is determined 50 percent by popular vote and 50 percent by the judges. Voting continues through Wednesday, Dec. 3. To sign in and vote: <http://bit.ly/1tErMxo>.

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