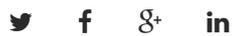




Engineering students rake in investments at the Spark Tank Live Pitch event



February 10, 2016

Entrepreneurial teams of engineering students brought in a combined \$30,000 in seed money in the second annual Spark Tank Live Pitch event Feb. 4, placing among the finalists in the Pakis Social and Sun Devil Igniter Challenges.

Three student teams — 33 Buckets, Humanity X Technologies and Dropspot, all with members from the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering — each secured a \$10,000 investment to develop their entrepreneurial ventures.



Scott Fitsimones, computer science engineering freshman, presents his mobile app, Dropspot, to the Sun Devil Igniter Board at the Spark Tank Live Pitch event Feb. 4. Dropspot allows users to take photos and "drop" them in a geographical location for friends to find later on. Photo by Pete Zrioka/ASU

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Hosted by the W.P. Carey School of Business, the competitions are open to all entrepreneurially minded ASU students with an innovative idea who wish to pursue their ventures through either the Pakis Social Challenge or the Sun Devil Igniter Challenge. The Pakis Social Challenge focuses on social entrepreneurship, inviting students to create a non-profit organization or for-profit venture with scalable, sustainable models to meet a community's needs. The Sun Devil Igniter Challenge invites students to turn their innovative ideas into disruptive commercial ventures.

The six finalist teams competed against approximately 100 other applicants to make it to the event. In the style of the television show "Shark Tank," teams delivered a 10-minute pitch, followed by a 15-minute Q&A with the judges of the respective challenges. The Sun Devil Igniter Board

consisted of Carr Bettis, Les Brun, Thomas Cowan and Allan Kaplan, each an experienced entrepreneur and investor.

In the Pakis Social Challenge, the \$20,000 grand prize went to the All Walks Project, a non-profit dedicated to sex-trafficking education and survivor support. However, the presentations from 33 Buckets and Humanity X Technologies, both teams with key engineering members, impressed the judges so much they each secured a \$10,000 investment.

LetsChat, an app concept aimed at connecting those learning English as a second language with native speakers to practice their English, took home \$50,000 in the Sun Devil Igniter Challenge. The team beat out Sential and Dropspot to claim the top prize. Sential, a team of Fulton Schools alumni Yashwanth Kumar and Ranjani Sampath Kumaran and engineering graduate student Sanchit Chirania, presented a medical device called Unicorn, which delivers chest compressions to patients in cardiac arrest.

Dropspot, a team composed entirely of freshman students in Barrett, the Honors College, presented their functional mobile app, which allows users to take photos and "drop" them in a geographical location for friends to find later on. Scott Fitsimones, Dropspot founder and computer science engineering student, characterized the app as a way to start conversations and leave a digital footprint in the world for others to connect to.

"It was an extraordinarily difficult decision," said Brun, who lauded all three teams for their innovative ideas and presentations.

Brun went on to offer Dropspot an initial \$10,000 investment for marketing purposes, with the

opportunity to ramp up to \$50,000 if the team hit designated milestones.

"They all got to this point because they hustled," said Brent Sebold, director of the Fulton Startup Center, who coached the teams. "This game is all about execution, and simply going for it separates them from people with great ideas sitting in the audience and people willing to try."

Though Dropspot didn't walk away with the \$50,000, Sebold thinks the team ultimately renewed their resolve to succeed from the experience.

"I think this loss is going to make them hungry," Sebold said. "Now they've got something to prove; they've got a chip on their shoulder."

"We're still winners tonight," Fitsimones said. "We're going to work hard to secure the rest of the funding we need and prove we're a viable app. In a year, we aim to have 100,000 users."

Jay Noe, Dropspot's Android developer and informatics engineering student, reiterated the team's dedication to growth.

"At the end of the day, we still have clear goals in mind and the drive to meet them," Noe said. "I joined this team about halfway through the process and developed the Android app in about a month, and I know every person on that stage with me tonight shares the same passion and commitment."

Follow these links to learn more about [33 Buckets](#), [Humanity X](#) and [Dropspot](#).

[Entrepreneurship](#) | [Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering](#) | [Entrepreneurship](#) | [Innovation](#) | [Student](#)



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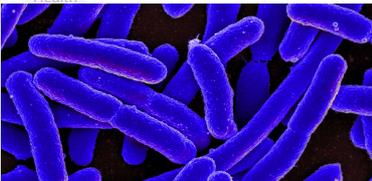
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