Rewarding Unique Business Ideas

A company called Unique Lite Design has the technology to save the airline industry hundreds of thousands of dollars in fuel cost each year with their unit load device (ULD) made from composite material. The ULDs, which are used to carry cargo on wide body aircrafts, are lighter and more durable than current aluminum ULDs.

The team members of Unique Lite Design entered the 2012 UH Business Plan Competition in January, and found themselves in the finals, where they beat out two highly competitive teams on April 26 at the Waialae Country Club. Unique Lite Design team member and Mechanical Engineering student, Christian Daoud, said, “The business plan competition was a great experience. It helped me gain a much better understanding of what it means to be an entrepreneur; how to build a business plan; and what it takes to turn an idea into a viable business.”

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—Christian Daoud, Unique Lite Design

Second place was awarded to Surgical Lighting Solutions, a company that licenses semi-autonomous lighting for the medical industry. A cosmetic surgery travel service called MeiLi Voyage captured third prize. The winning teams claimed prize packages, including substantial cash and in-kind gifts of accounting, legal and marketing services.

The UH Business Plan Competition is a semester-long process. This year, 32 teams entered the competition by submitting executive summaries. After a first round of judging, 15 teams continued to a semi-final round. After judging panels reviewed the teams’ written plans and scored their oral presentations, three teams advanced to the finals. While developing their plans, teams were invited to attend two free, day-long workshops, and were offered mentorship through the PACE Professionals-in-Residence programs, both in-house and virtual.

The Competition, which started in 1999, strives to encourage students with business ideas to move them from concept to implementation; build a support network for entrepreneurship; and start and grow new businesses in Hawai‘i. To find out more, and to view a video recording of the final competition, visit the website at www.UHBusinessPlanCompetition.com.
Dear PACE ‘Ohana:

I recently read a study that was conducted by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills called the “Framework for 21st Century Learning.” This work suggests a foundation of learning outcomes, upon which education administrators can build a standards-based curriculum, that focuses on skills students will need in the 21st century to succeed in both work and life.

The study introduces the concept of the 4Cs. As most of you are aware, the education system has historically emphasized the 3Rs (reading, ‘riting and ‘rithmetic). The study calls these skills “core academic subject knowledge.” Built upon these core subjects are skills called the 4Cs:

1. Creativity and innovation
2. Critical thinking and problem-solving
3. Communication
4. Collaboration

What struck me was the similarity between the 4Cs and what I believe are essential skills for entrepreneurs. It has always been my belief that entrepreneurship is not just about starting businesses. It is a process, or way of thinking, that constantly questions the status quo, practices creative destruction and is never satisfied. This study reinforces the idea that everyone needs to be entrepreneurial.

The Partnership is absolutely correct—our students need to achieve competence in both technical skills (3Rs) with soft skills (4Cs) if they are to compete effectively in the 21st century. Our goal at the University of Hawai‘i should be to educate all students in the process of entrepreneurship. After all, aren’t entrepreneurial skills just as important as speech or history or math in this rapidly changing, new world?

With appreciation,

SUSAN YAMADA
PACE Executive Director
[Honor Roll] Mahalo to our volunteers

Mahalo to the many judges, mentors, instructors and volunteers who participated in the 2012 UH Business Plan Competition and the High School Marketing and Business plan Performance-Based Assessments!

Faruq Ahmad
Alan Akina
Raine Armstrong
Pua Auyong-white
Sean Bailey
Steve Baker
Yoichiro Basso
Ken Berken
Rob Bertholf
Anurag Bisht
Raj Bose
Jocelyn Bouchard
Marko Brickman
Benjamin Bystrom
Albert Cercenia
Russel Cheng
Shirleyanne Chew
Jessica Ching
Joel Ching
Bee Leng Chua
Michelle Chun
Sean Cheng
Denis Coleman
Kurt Cullen
Faustino Dagdag
Eric Darmstaedter
John Davidson
Fred Deise
Jasmine Desamito
Tim Dick
Susan Eichor
Aaron Ellis
Neenz Faleafine
Chenoa Farnsworth
Mary Fastenau
Jay Fidell
Libra Forde
Nicole Fukeda
Lena Gan

Jill Gerner
Hans Gerner
Larry Gilbert
Brian Goldstein
Ken Goodman
Debra Guerin-Beresini
DJ Halcro
James Haley
Richard Hata
Davis Hawkins
Chris Helm
Mark Hickson
Tiffany Higa
Steve Hiramoto
May Ho
Mel Horikami
James Houser
Martin Hsia
Ramon Illustre
Jonathan Imai
Kara Imai
Kathryn Inkinen
Kristi Inkinen
Lincoln Jacobe
Tiana Javier
Amol Joshi
Kehau Kali Berquist
Bowha Kang
Nolan Kawano
Peter Kay
Rob Kay
Donavan Kealoha
Caroline Kim
Grant Kim
Gregory Kim
Darren Kimura
Vincent Kimura
Ian Kitajima

Valerie Koenig
John Komeiji
Dave Kozuki
Brandon Kurisu
Jared Kushi
David Laeha
Brendan Larsen
Chris Lee
Richard Leung
Sally Little
Monte Littlefield
Martin Loui
Maria Lowder
Trip Lynch
EricMais
Paul Masters

Cindy Matsuki
Steven Mazur
Chip McClleland
Gracey McCullough
Leslie Miasnik
Karen Miller
Doris Micinovich
Leigh-Ann Miyasato
Cary Miyashiro
James Mo‘ikeha
Keala Monaco
Henry Montgomery
Stephen Morgan
Mike Moses
Wayne Muraoka
Patrick Murphy

David Nakamaejo
Alyssa Nakao
Aimee Nelson
Brett Nesland
Howie Nguyen
Brian Nishida
Lee Nordgren
Mari Olson
Jamie Omori
Michael Orbito
Curt Otaguro
David Oyadomari
Bryant Park
Keith Patterson
David Pettiger
Shannon Pierce
Albert Pleus
Kim Ramos
Matthew Rappaport
Kashmira Reid
Edean Reyes
James Richardson
Bill Richardson
Mark Ritchie
Brooks Robinson
Robert Robinson
Justine Ruan
Jason Rushin
Marc Sabate
Jeff Sakai
Kevin Sakamoto
Karyn Sakata
Rachel Seachris
Brett Seitzman
Joelle Simonpietri
Jill Sims

Bill Spencer
Shan Steinmark
Oswald Stender
Herman Stern
Steve Sue
Loren Swendsen
Dwayne Takeno
David Takeyama
Kano Takitan-Smith
Natalie Taniguchi
Norman Tansey
Mark Tawara
Lee Taylor
Tyler Tokioka
Peter Tomozawa
J Toth
Missy Trippet
Jose Villa
Jeanine Villanueva
Pedro Villarreal
Kristine Wada
David Watsumull
James Wei
John White
Bill Wiedmann
Heidi Wild
Todd Winter
Bennett Wo
Tyson Yamada
Robert Yonover
Garret Yoshimi
Devin Yoshimoto
Joni Young
Tal Ziv

PACE Volunteer Feature: Greg Kim

Gregory Kim is a PACE advisory board member and a key volunteer for various entrepreneurial programs at PACE. He is a current partner of Convergent Law Group, but still finds ample time to be an active volunteer. His motivation comes from his drive to make someone else’s life better. Kim brings his 25 years of experience working with entrepreneurs on idea generation and growing startup businesses to the table and advises aspiring entrepreneurs to view entrepreneurship as a career, not as something you just do. He believes it is very important to develop skills, experiences, and contacts in a sequence, as one would for other career paths. Kim says, “Find the courage, vision and tenacity to dream big and not let anything stop you from carrying it forward. To do so, you need to realize you have the power to achieve greatness. I believe we all have that power in us, and so it’s just a matter of finding it and believing in yourself.”
High school students put classroom knowledge to the test

In addition, a pilot entrepreneurship program was launched, where student teams partnered with existing businesses to analyze their current business model and develop a strategic business plan. A team from Hilo High School took first in this competition with their plan for Aiona Car Sales.

The annual PBA is made possible by the joint efforts of PACE and the State Department of Education. The program relies heavily on support from the business community. More than 80 volunteers helped to make this event a success. Cash prizes were generously donated by HawaiiUSA Federal Credit Union, McDonald’s of Hawaii, Hawaii Venture Capital Association and Tetris Online. The competitions were held on April 9 and 10 at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel.

WINNING TEAMS

**Business Plan**
- First Place ($900): Dent in the Universe Capital Associates, Moanalua High School
- Second Place ($600): Team Ei8ht, Waiakea High School
- Third Place ($300): Dirty Lickn’z, Lahainaluna High School

**Marketing Plan**
- First Place ($900): 4Life Marketers, Moanalua High School (pictured above)
- Second Place ($600): Team Missing Polynesia, Kapolei High School
- Third Place ($300): Zap! Inc. Associates, Hilo High School

**Pilot Entrepreneurship**
- First Place ($450): Aiona Car Sales, Hilo High School

Students represent UH in high stakes BPCs

The University of Hawai’i continues to compete alongside some of the world’s most prestigious schools at high stakes business plan competitions. This year, the Shidler College of Business sponsored teams of students to represent the University at four competitions, including Asia Venture Challenge in Bangkok, Thailand; First Look West (clean technology competition) in Pasadena, California; San Diego State Venture Challenge; and Venture Labs Investment Competition in Austin, Texas.

The star-quality teams, comprised of Business, Engineering and Law students, made strong showings at each competition. MBA student Karol Zemier said, “It was an honor to represent the Shidler College. Participating in this kind of competition has been one of my most valuable experiences in graduate school because I had to put all the pieces of knowledge that I acquired in class together in a way that is creative. It taught me to think bigger and have the confidence to actually go out and pursue a viable business idea.”

Moanalua High School once again took first place in this year’s High School Business and Marketing Plan Performance-Based Assessments (PBA).

The winning entrepreneurship team, Dent in the Universe Capital Associates, developed a plan for Cloud Sensei, an online educational service with instantaneous feedback. The winning marketing team, 4Life Marketers, developed a plan for Cool Roof Hawaii, a company that focuses on roofing treatments that cool down the interior of buildings.

The rigorous assessments are a real-world learning opportunity for students. Natasha White, who worked on the Cloud Sensei team, said, “Besides learning a lot about education in our country, we learned about financial models and how much work it actually takes to put together a business plan.”

Several changes were made this year to emphasize the academic component of the annual event. Besides the name change from “competition,” students had to meet eligibility requirements that included enrollment in a specific business course and a passing grade on an online examination. Students who scored high on the online exam are eligible for free community college credits.

The Entrepreneurs Club was my life for the semester. As I reflect back on this semester as the Entrepreneurs Club president, I see how we accomplished many of our goals. The club, secure a microloan for one of our members, formed many alliances with local business professionals, and continued to keep our student run business afloat. Most importantly, I take away the greater lessons learned from the challenges that made us stronger. Bring Home Aloha, a retail business selling locally made items located at the Ilikai Hotel, was a student formed, lead, staffed, and closed business that gave us huge hurdles to overcome with its unique terms and conditions, varying political interests and marketing and staffing shortages. During our spring 2012 semester, our club figured out that in business you need more than a dream to be successful. You need to have great communication, strong leadership, and dedicated workers. The people that truly understood and took advantage of the opportunity were the ones that gained the most out of this experience.

The Entrepreneurs Club was my life for the last few semesters and it meant so much to me to see people grow from someone who didn't have a clue about business to then opening up their own business. Our club focuses on hands on experiences while bringing in current entrepreneurs to share their story to help inspire us to follow our own aspirations. As I pass the presidential responsibility over to the new president, Michael “Makoto” Harada, I wish him success in his leadership. Hawaii is in desperate need of entrepreneurs like us. With innovation and hard work, we as students and future business leaders can change the world.

Very respectfully, Dwight Witlarge