

Idea Competition Once Again a Success



Competition Winners (left to right): Sujay Soman, Celeste Poley, Chelsea Stinson, Serge Mayfula, Jeffery Kee, Kamal Munshi, Josh Yeboa, Albert Zhou and Asante Hatcher.

The Commons SportsZone was packed on Thursday night, November 17th, as the finalists in UMBC's 3rd annual Idea Competition made their presentations to the judges and a standing room-only crowd of over 100 members of the UMBC community. Forty ideas were originally submitted, with the top 10 selected for the final round. Winners were chosen by a combination of scores from the voting audience and the judging panel, consisting of three entrepreneurial alums: Greg Cangialosi, '04, English, CEO of Nucleus Ventures, LLC; Delali Dzirasa, '96, Computer Engineering, President of Fearless Solutions, LLC; and Jeehye Yun, '97, Computer Science, CEO and President of Secured Sciences Group.

First place went to Jeffery Kee, an Information Systems student, for his idea to help UMBC save electricity and money by installing card key switches in rooms. Kee writes in his proposal, "UMBC students are not being as energy efficient as they should be, especially when it comes to electricity. Students who live in dorms all around campus are constantly wasting electricity by forgetting to turn their lights, televisions and gaming systems off when they leave the room." Card key switches involve a student putting an access card into a slot in order to use the electricity in the room. When the student leaves, they take the card with them making sure the electricity is always off when they leave. Over the

last ten years, UMBC has been moving towards becoming a greener campus. We have made many strides, but Kee's idea is one that will help us get to the next step.

Kee says of his win, "Winning the competition was such a great moment and was definitely the highlight of my college life so far. Knowing that the judges and the audience liked my idea meant a lot because I feel like the key card switches could really benefit UMBC, and I was glad they felt the same way."

Routinely used in hotels, card keys will stop the rampant habit of leaving lights, televisions, computers and gaming systems on within the residence halls at UMBC (and everywhere else in the world!). By forcing UMBC students to take their cards when they leave, this process will not only conserve energy, but will also help to prevent residence hall fires.

Second place winner, Kamal Munshi, a BTA undergraduate major, has a little problem with texting. Well a big problem – texting while driving or at the movies or anywhere else where having your cell phone in your hand when it is dangerous or inappropriate is not ok. Munshi has a solution that will make everyone happy. If you can leave an out of office message on your email and voicemail, why not on your texts? Your mother or your best friend may need a text back immediately, but with Munshi's solution, they can wait a bit longer. He proposed creating software called Smart Auto Reply that you can easily turn on while you're driving that will send a message to your impatient friend saying, "Hey, I'm on the road. Will get back to you when I can." You can even pre-set the message to go on during your daily commute. Munshi says of his second place win, "In the long run, my goal is to make it a standard in cell phones and in the short run my goal is to create a working application. I am very thankful to the judges, students, to the Alex. Brown Center for Entrepreneurship, and to my family for being there to support me."

The third place team involved students Albert Zhou, Josh Yeboa and Asante Hatcher. Their idea is to harness the power of social media to increase efficiency for students on campus, whether they are waiting in line at the Commons or looking for parking before a class. Their idea is that "students will be given access to real-time feeds of different public areas around campus." By consulting this system, students can plan their time accordingly, avoiding long lines when they are crunched for time and reducing lateness to class during peak parking times. This system will be mobile friendly and available to faculty and staff.

Best presentation went to students Sujay Soman, Celeste Poley, Serge Mayfula and Chelsea Stinson, all Mechanical Engineering majors. You wouldn't think to put Mechanical Engineering and babies together, but this innovative group of students proposed just that. Old fashioned baby monitors are a thing of the past. Instead, this group proposes linking up your baby's crib to your cell phone when you have a babysitter, alerting you if little Johnny is crying via a text, call or email. Parents, remotely, can then activate a rocking motion on their baby's crib to gently rock them back into sleep. In addition, you will be able to see a live feed of your baby and even program a lullaby to play in your absence. Sweet, instant comfort for hard working parents is a great idea and this team gave a creative presentation.

UMBC alumnus and judge Greg Cangialosi was inspired by the innovative ideas from the students. He says, "It is truly inspiring to come back to UMBC as an entrepreneur and to see the amount of energy

and the quality of the ideas coming out of the students on campus. The advancements in promoting entrepreneurship at UMBC have been incredible."

All the winners won cash prizes: 1st place \$750, 2nd place \$500, 3rd place \$250 and Most Creative \$250. The Idea Competition was sponsored by the Alex. Brown Center for Entrepreneurship and was part of Global Entrepreneurship Week, a week where universities around the world celebrate entrepreneurship with activities and events for their students, faculty and alumni.