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Student-Run Maker of Biomedical Diagnostic Device Takes Top Spot at UCSB's New Venture Competition

The pitch for a diagnostic device that could detect fetal bleeding took the top prize at UC Santa Barbara Technology Management Program's New Venture Competition Wednesday. Presented by the students under the name Asta Fluidic Technologies, the fetomaternal hemorrhage detector was chosen from a select group of six finalists and awarded \$10,000.

In second place, the group Komodo Interactive took home \$5,000 for its customizable robotic children's toys and an additional \$5,000 for being selected as the People's Choice. The educational company Napses LLC took home the \$2,500 third prize for its cloud-based productivity software.

The other competitors, who took home prizes of \$1,000 each, were Gain Changer, a workout tracking service for gyms, health insurers and corporate wellness programs; MyConciergeMobile, an app to enable hotels to sell additional services to guests; and Polyspectra, a selectively transparent window film.

"Congratulations to the New Venture Competition award winners. We're proud of all of the teams that participated in the competition and put in so much effort on their own time during the school year," said TMP Program Manager Mike Panesis.

The New Venture Competition (NVC) is the culmination of over six months of entrepreneurial bootcamp offered by the TMP. Through seminars and discussions led by entrepreneurs; assignments to encourage the students to develop real-world business skills; mentorship by people who have spent years in the industry; and mixers to encourage networking, students learn how to get their innovations off paper and attract the capital needed to push their ideas into the marketplace. The NVC this year culled from an initial group of over 60 teams, and through a series of presentations and pitches, winnowed down to fewer sets of participants as the competition heated up and the students refined their skills.

Now in its 14th year, the NVC has grown in size and popularity. Previous winners include Inogen, 2001 NVC winner and makers of a portable oxygen delivery device; Phone Halo (previously pro.found), 2009 winner and maker of a button-sized tracking device that allows users to find often-lost objects like keys and phones; and aPEEL Technology, Inc., 2012 winner and maker of an organic edible thin-film coating that preserves produce. After their stint in the program and the competition, many of the participants go on to incorporate, attract investors, or get recruited by other tech companies.

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