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Organic fast-food restaurant takes first place in new venture competition

WATERLOO – Local business leaders selected FreshLife, an organic fast-food restaurant developed by Laurier business students, as the winner of the BDO New Venture Competition held March 28 at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Students Cory Bettel, Caroline Chu, Yusuf Kachchi, Laura Beth Wilson, and Shaun Young took home \$2,500 in scholarship money.

“We were blown away by the calibre of the presentations this year,” said Tim Sothern, partner at BDO Dunwoody LLP. “By supporting programs like these, Laurier and the Waterloo community are providing students with valuable business skills.”

In its seventh year, the BDO New Venture Competition introduces entrepreneurship to all first-year business students at Wilfrid Laurier University. The students develop business ideas and business plans as part of their course requirements. The student teams then contend for one of six spots in the final round of competition, where their mock ventures are presented to a panel of judges from the local business community.

Joining Sothern on the judging panel were: David Chilton, author of *The Wealthy Barber*; Dean Elliott, partner, BDO Dunwoody LLP; Rick Endrulat, founder and president, Virtual Causeway; and Angela Mondou, founder and president, ICE Leadership.

“We are experiencing a surge in student-run entrepreneurial ventures in our business program,” said Laurier dean of business and economics, Ginny Dybenko. “We support youth in entrepreneurship, which we believe to be a critical factor in the growth and rebound of the Canadian economy.”

The BDO New Venture Competition is sponsored by BDO Dunwoody LLP chartered accountants and advisors. Run by Laurier business professors Laura Allan and Jim McCutcheon in conjunction with Laurier’s Schlegel Centre for Entrepreneurship, the competition is a critical component of the school’s curriculum.

2009 BDO New Venture Competition Finalists:

Winner: Freshlife organic fast-food restaurant, developed by Laurier students Cory Bettel, Caroline Chu, Yusuf Kachchi, Laura Beth Wilson and Shaun Young.

First runner-up: Savourco, a heating and cooling portable food container, created by Laurier students Carlo Catingan, Minwoo Choi, Mark Livschitz, Iris Mok and Linda Xu.

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Laurier students win BDO New Venture Competition/2

Second runner-up: SmartPack, a child's backpack that adjusts for the weight of the contents to protect from back strain, developed by Laurier students Shannon Lee, Tara Tompkins, Laura Pym, Steve Masse and Ryan Lessard.

Third runner-up: Alpine Heat, a heated snowboard and ski boot, created by Laurier students Aaron Dunn, Alex Lindsay, Nathan Saxton and Stephen Zagrodny.

Fourth runner-up: Zowla, an online resource to compare grocery store products and prices, developed by Laurier students Zhansaya Pazylbbekova, Karim Albatish, Jonathan Mendonca, and Alex Pepper.

Fifth runner-up: Skinz Rentalz, an advertising-subsidized car rental company, created by Laurier students Danielle Cook, Matthew Gauld, Vicky Lee, Nirushan Mahendran and Geoff Oldfield.

For more information on the competition please visit www.wlu.ca/sbe/schlegel/nvc.