

A L A B A M A L a u n c h p a d

Year in Review

2006-2007



Overview

Alabama Launchpad is a not-for-profit organization formed in 2006 by six of the state's research universities and Alabama's business community to support entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. Founders include:

Alabama A & M University
Alabama State University
Auburn University
University of Alabama
University of Alabama at Birmingham
University of Alabama in Huntsville
Economic Development Partnership of Alabama Foundation

The Economic Development Partnership of Alabama is a privately funded economic development organization supported by 68 leading companies in the state that are dedicated to quality economic growth in Alabama.

The key program of Alabama Launchpad is a statewide business plan competition initiated to bring together entrepreneurs, educators, and the business community. The **Alabama Launchpad Business Plan Competition** encourages faculty, students, employees and researchers to act on their talent, ideas and energy to produce tomorrow's leading firms. Through this competition, Alabama Launchpad provides unique opportunities to obtain startup capital, receive expert guidance, and establish working relationships within Alabama's business, academic, and investment capital communities.

Alabama Launchpad works collaboratively with many organizations to increase economic development and entrepreneurial growth. The goals of Alabama Launchpad competition are:

To increase the number of high-growth entrepreneurs in Alabama.

To create a network of key individuals and organizations that can help new entrepreneurs succeed.

To market and promote the economic opportunities for technology development in Alabama.

Sponsors

Platinum Level:

Alabama Power Company Foundation
The Economic Development Partnership of Alabama Foundation

Gold Level:

Alabama A & M University
Alabama State University
Auburn University
University of Alabama
University of Alabama at Birmingham
University of Alabama in Huntsville

Silver Level:

Alagasco
AT&T
BizTech
Hudson Alpha Institute for Biotechnology Research
Innovation Depot
Palo Alto Software

Bronze Level:

City of Auburn
The Lowder Center for Family Business & Entrepreneurship at Auburn University
Maynard, Cooper & Gale, P.C.
New Horizons Computer Learning Centers
Southern Research Institute
Thomas, Kayden, Horstemeyer & Risley, LLP
UAB Research Foundation

Contributors:

Z1 Ventures, LLC
Greer Capital Advisors, LLC



Directors

Dr. Douglas Ayers*

Associate Professor of Marketing and Director, MBA for Scientists / Initiative for Life Sciences Entrepreneurship Programs, University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Business

Greg Barker

Vice President for Economic Development, Alabama Power Company

Dr. David Berkowitz*

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Dr. Bernadette Chapple*

Research Director, Center for Leadership and Public Policy, Alabama State University

Dr. Daniel Daly

Director, Alabama Institute for Manufacturing Excellence, The University of Alabama

Jim Hayes

President, Economic Development Partnership of Alabama

Dr. David Ketchen (Board Chairman)

Lowder Eminent Scholar and Professor of Management, Auburn University College of Business

Dr. Teresa Merriweather Orok

Vice President for Institutional Research, Planning and Sponsored Programs, Alabama A&M University

*indicates individual is also a member of Alabama Launchpad Working Team

Officers

President

Angela Wier

Vice President, Economic Development Partnership of Alabama

Director

Glenn Kinstler*

Secretary

Sidney Hoover*

House Counsel, Economic Development Partnership of Alabama

Treasurer

David Brown

CFD, Economic Development Partnership of Alabama

Alabama Launchpad Working Team

Dr. William Gathings

Director of Technology Transfer

The University of Alabama

Dr. Sharon Oswald

Department Head and Colonel George Privett Professor of Management

Auburn University

Dr. Larry McDaniel

Assistant Professor, Department of Management & Marketing

Alabama A&M University

Dr. Louis Marino

Associate Professor of Strategic Management and

Frank Mason C&BA Faculty Fellow in Family Business

The University of Alabama

*indicates individual is also a member of Alabama Launchpad Working Team

Judges & Reviewers

Phase I Reviewers

Dr. Art Tipton: President & CEO, Brookwood Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

Richard "Dick" Reeves: President, BizTech

Dr. Roger Graben: Vice President of Business Development, ProEthic Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

Eddie Hill: Business Strategy Consultant

Devon Laney: Vice President of Client Services, Innovation Depot

Phase II Judges

Roddy Clark: Managing Partner, Redmont Venture Partners

Dr. Franz Lohrke: Professor of Management and Entrepreneurship Program Coordinator, Samford University

Dr. Lawrence Greer: Senior Managing Partner, Greer Advisors, LLC

Tim Taylor: Director of Business Development - Engineering, Southern Research Institute

Phase III Judges

Jennifer King: Managing Partner, Greer Capital Advisors, LLC

Dr. Jeremy Short: Associate and Jerry S. Rawls Professor of Management, Texas Tech University

Lisa Williams: President, 3D Research

Richard Wallace: Managing Director, Organizational Success Management

Tanveer Patel: President & Co-Founder, CircleSource, Inc.

Dr. Charles Bugg: Chairman, BioCryst Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

Bo Megginson: SPF Healthcare Capital



Mentors

Alane Barnes – BioCryst Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
Harrison Bishop – Maynard, Cooper & Gale P.C.
Charles Clark – Genexodus Fund
Derrick Copeland – Applied Data Trends, Inc.
Jim Corman – City of Atmore/Corman Foundation
John Cranston – Balance-Certified, Inc. & University of Alabama in Huntsville
Donald Crow – ADL Member Services
Doug Grove – Vaxin, Inc.
Mitch Hamm – Alabama Technology Network, Muscle Shoals
Eddie Hill – Business Strategy Consultant
Jon Holland – Thomas, Kayden, Horstemeyer & Risley, LLP
Devon Laney – Innovation Depot
Alex Leath – Balch & Bingham, LLP
James LeBatt – Blackhawk Enterprises
Danny Markstein – Markstein Consulting, LLC
Jerry Mitchell – North Alabama African American Chamber of Commerce
Curtis Palmer – TechBirmingham
Joe Primm – UAB Small Business Development Center
Dr. Maruf Rahman – Alabama Technology Network/UAH
Dr. Tina Rogers – Southern Research Institute
Remigius Shatas – RNR Ventures, LLC
Dr. Sanjay Singh – CTS, Inc. & UAB School of Business
George Smith – Balch & Bingham, LLP
Gregory Spivey – IBM Global Business Services
Zane Tarence – CTS, Inc.
Dr. Art Tipton – Brookwood Pharmaceutical, Inc.



Competition

Sixty-one teams representing all six participating universities registered to participate in this inaugural year of Alabama Launchpad. The ideas included sophisticated biotechnology ideas, innovative information technology applications, new medical devices and simple service organizations. Twenty-eight teams were led by current students, 19 teams by current faculty members, 10 teams by recent alumni, and four teams by current university staff.

Phase I began in October 2006 when each team submitted a two-page executive summary of their business idea. A panel of experts in technology start-ups and entrepreneurship reviewed submissions and provided feedback to each team. This phase was non-competitive.

In Phase II, teams expanded on their proposal, submitting four-page business plans that covered eight specific criteria including an analysis of the competition, an overview of the management team, and preliminary financial information. Phase II judges graded the plans and using aggregate scores, advanced the top 26 teams.

The 26 semifinalists expanded their business plans for Phase III of the competition. In addition to using judges with experience in start-ups, Alabama Launchpad used technical judges with expertise in specific scientific fields to assess the technical feasibility of the business plans. This panel of judges graded the semifinalists on 10 criteria, and again aggregate scores determined who advanced to the finals.

The Phase IV Finale took place at the Auburn University Hotel & Conference Center on May 21, 2007. A standing-room-only crowd watched eight finalists present their business plans to a panel of judges that included two prominent Alabama venture capitalists, a successful CEO of an Alabama start-up software company, and a professor of entrepreneurship from outside Alabama. After a lengthy deliberation by the judges, three winners were chosen.



Third Place

Intelligent Cellular Systems Inc. (d.b.a. IntelCell) (UAH) is a cell-culture, technology-development company created to design, develop and market a new product platform to modernize research techniques for cell and tissue growth. The company's first product, Cell Drive™, will attempt to replace traditional cell culture equipment by providing a new level of usability and sophistication for the user. For scientists whose research depends upon live cell culture, Cell Drive™ will offer a compact, precision, cell growth system that increases experimental control, improves sterility, provides digitization of data and methods, and reduces human error and labor costs. Unlike traditional cell culture methods such as the common petri dish, Cell Drive™ provides increased control and convenience in a closed system. The team is led by Aaron Hammons, a recent graduate of the Master of Science in Management program at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.



Team members: Micah Harvey; James Anderson; Aaron Hammons; Dr. Amy Bishop; Terrance Opichka

“ Alabama Launchpad showed us the diversity of promising technologies coming from Alabama universities and we would encourage any university start-up to go through the process. The Launchpad process was invaluable to IntelCell, helping us to form a business plan that was focused and investor-friendly. Winning seed money has moved our company forward and enhanced our ability to raise capital from the Huntsville Angel Network, allowing IntelCell to have its first product on the market by 2008.

”

- Aaron Hammons, CEO IntelCell

Second Place



Team members: Dr. Brent Wren, UAH and Mr. Chris Otto, CEO Halo Research; Glenn Kinstler, Alabama Launchpad

Halo Research (UAH) is a technical healthcare product company focused on developing wearable biomedical systems for health and lifestyle monitoring. Halo's products are positioned to address healthcare concerns for a large and growing population of independently living elderly adults. Unlike the majority of competing products which require seniors to manually press a panic button, Halo's products can automatically detect serious health concerns – even a user falling – without any active participation from the user, and remotely notify designated caregivers. The product includes wireless wearable technology for monitoring physiological signals, a wireless gateway for encrypting and transmitting physiological data to a secure health server, and a web-based interface to facilitate continuous and remote monitoring from anywhere in the world, anytime of day. The team leader is Chris Otto, a recent graduate of the Master of Computer Science program at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

“ The Launchpad program has made a huge impact on Halo Research and helped refine our business plan with valuable feedback from judges during multiple phases of the competition. ”

-Chris Otto, CEO Halo Research

Grand Prize

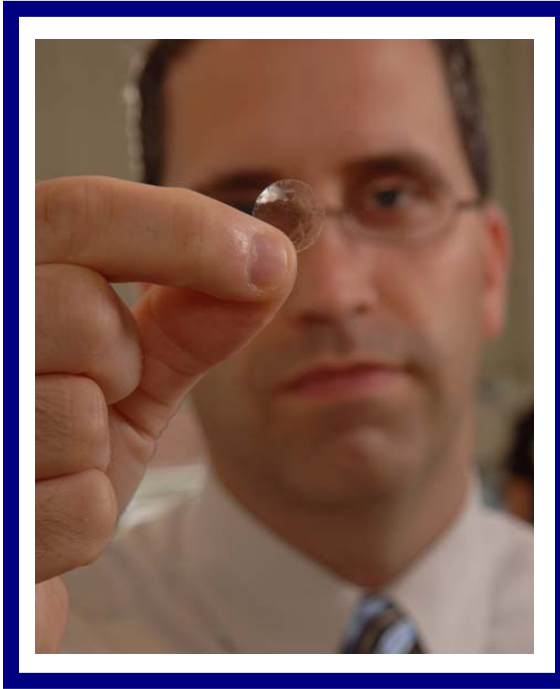


Photo courtesy of Auburn University

OcuMedic (Auburn) is an ophthalmic drug delivery company with a proprietary, patent-pending technology that creates a new architecture in polymeric films to enable enhanced drug loading and delayed drug release for eye treatments including eye comfort, allergy, infection, and inflammation – a new drug delivery system via contact lenses. Most ocular drugs are delivered via eye drops which are marginally effective because of poor patient compliance, high and/or insufficient dosages, irritation, side effects, and the fact that patients cannot wear contact lenses with medical eye drops. OcuMedic's products can deliver medication more effectively and more conveniently versus current treatments. The team leader is Dr. Mark Byrne, an Assistant Professor of Chemical Engineering at Auburn University.

“ It is quite an honor to have been selected as the grand prize winner from such a strong field. I was impressed by the strength of the plans and presentations as well as the variety and depth of the technologies showcased in this competition.

This was a great opportunity for participants to present their business ideas to venture capitalists and chief executives. There were also opportunities to establish working relationships with members of the business, academic and investment capital communities. This award gives us the needed boost to form OcuMedic. ”

-Dr. Mark Byrne

Other Finalists

AT Biosciences, LLC. (UAH)

Team is led by Dr. Jason Feng, a research professor in the Department of Biological Science. AT Biosciences has developed molecular biomarkers for academic research and clinical diagnosis using a new patent-pending technology.

Distributed Carpet Nylon Recycling (Auburn)

Team is led by Dr. Paul Swamidass, a Professor of Management at the College of Business. The company has developed a patented chemical process for recovery and recycling of nylon from waste carpet.

Facilitaire (UAB)

Team is led by Ron Baldwin, a 2005 graduate of the Master of Science in Electrical Engineering Program. Facilitaire uses prototyped tools for improving communications between IT professionals and business managers using a pay-for-use online platform.

Physician Innovations (UAB)

Team is led by Marc Krawitz, an alumnus of the Master of Business Administration Program. The company is a systems integration firm specializing in Electronic Medical Record (EMR) solutions for smaller medical facilities.

Q-Track (UAH)

Team is led by Jerome Gabig. Q-Track uses patented wireless technology using near-field electromagnetic ranging to track people and physical assets indoors on a real-time basis.

Finale Judges

William Brooke

Executive Vice President & Managing Partner, Harbert Management Corporation, Venture Capital

Monroe Lanier, III

Vice President, Hickory Venture Group

Dr. James Combs

Associate Professor of Management, Florida State University College of Business

David Gray

President & CEO, DAXKO Software



Special Thanks

David Anthony – University of Alabama at Birmingham & 21 Ventures, LLC
Dr. C. David Billings – University of Alabama in Huntsville
Greg Blalock – Economic Development Partnership of Alabama
Dr. Paul Bobrowski – Auburn University
Doug Butz – New Horizons Computer Learning Center, Huntsville
Dr. Larry DeLucas – University of Alabama at Birmingham
Phillip Dunlap – City of Auburn, AL
Fournier “Boots” Gale – Maynard, Cooper & Gale, P.C.
Sandy Gathings – Vandiver Gathings, Inc.
Kate Gray – Alabama Information Technology Association
Dr. Lawrence Greer – Greer Capital Advisors, LLC
Jon Holland – Thomas, Kayden, Horstemeyer & Risley, LLP
Dr. Robert Holmes – University of Alabama at Birmingham
Dr. Jim Hudson – Hudson-Alpha Institute for Biotechnology Research
Bill Ivey – New Horizons Computer Learning Center, Birmingham
Dr. Robert Jennings – Alabama A&M University
Wendy Wallace Johnson – Economic Development Partnership of Alabama
Dr. Barry Mason – The University of Alabama
Susan Matlock – Innovation Depot
Stuart Obermann – BizTech
Brian Pollock – Open Biosystems, Inc.
Richard “Dick” Reeves – BizTech
Steve Sewell – Economic Development Partnership of Alabama
Dana Stone – Alabama Technology Network
Whitney Swatloski – The University of Alabama
Amanda Wallace – Alabama Partnership for Biotechnology Research
William “Sandy” White – University of Alabama at Birmingham



Looking Forward

The work of building communities that support entrepreneurs requires the shared vision of many individuals from many backgrounds. The Board of Alabama Launchpad is grateful for the many individuals and organizations that worked together in this groundbreaking first year to find and nurture new entrepreneurs in Alabama.

In its inaugural year, the work of Alabama Launchpad focused on running the competition and connecting the network of volunteers to the teams and to each other. As a result, we launched three new companies that are poised to grow and prosper in Alabama. Additionally, we established a framework for multi-university collaboration for entrepreneurship education. Building upon this important framework for entrepreneurship education will be the focus of efforts next year.

The business plan competition provides an important feedback mechanism for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of Alabama Launchpad's teams, and possibly other would-be entrepreneurs. Aggregate summaries of judges' feedback from each phase of the competition will be used to develop educational programs to support entrepreneurship in Alabama. The Board of Alabama Launchpad believes that universities and the business community play a vital role in building a new economy for Alabama and that this collaborative approach to entrepreneurship education is the key to success.

To build on our success, Alabama Launchpad seeks to expand the community of support established in year one - to identify other individuals and organizations eager to work together to build an innovation economy in this state. Because identifying the talent and the intellectual resources within Alabama and launching them to the next level is not only smart economic development, it's smart growth.



Contact

Alabama Launchpad is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to support entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education in Alabama. It was formed in 2006 by six of the state's research universities and the business community.

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