

University of Saskatchewan mounts another successful business plan competition

After last year's inaugural contest, the **Pharmasave-Rubicon Annual Innovation in Pharmacy Student Business Plan Competition** was held Thursday, March 29, in Convocation Hall at the University of Saskatchewan.

Judges and sponsors included Paul Melnyk from Pharmasave, Christopher Fedorowich from Rubicon Pharmacies LP, Conrad Amenta from Blueprint for Pharmacy National Coordinating Office, Rosemary Killeen from the *Canadian Pharmacists Journal*, Trista Gallant from Hergott Duval Stack Chartered Accountants, Myla Wollbaum from the Pharmacists' Association of Saskatchewan, Mark Thibeault from Value Invest/Value Drug Mart and Stephanie Yong from the Wilson Centre for Entrepreneurial Excellence. Leah Phillips also joined the judging panel as a past winner of the competition. The competition was very successful, with most sponsors committed to participating again in the future.

Inspiration for the competition arose out of recognition that pharmacists may not be providing new clinically effective services because of a lack of the business skills required to implement them. The ultimate goal of pharmacists is to improve patient outcomes, but if the services required to do so are not financially sustainable, then pharmacists may not be providing the standard of professional



The first-place HEATID team members (from left to right): Kyle Wray, Tyler Little, Brayden Leclair, James Nataraj, Kellie Towriss and Marc Legge, with CPJ editor-in-chief, Rosemary Killeen.

practice that individual patients and the overall system deserve. This competition recognizes the challenges one will likely face when implementing a new professional service and encourages students to overcome these barriers, which will ultimately lead to improved patient outcomes and a greater sense of professional fulfillment.

In the third-year Management in Pharmacy course at the University of Saskatchewan, students are instructed to develop a business plan that implements a new service into an existing practice. The course provides students with an introduction to managerial concepts, including management strategy and marketing and business planning. In addition to the basics, students became self-directed learners and further educated themselves about topics they

felt were necessary to successfully complete their plan.

Sixteen teams participated, competing for cash and other prizes donated by sponsors. Each team had a maximum of 10 minutes to present their plan, followed by a 5-minute question and answer session with the judges. The 9 judges then assessed each presentation on 6 criteria, including presentation skills and the plan's feasibility. Prizes were awarded to the top 3 teams, with first place going to the plan for Holistic Education, Awareness and Treatment of Infectious Disease (HEATID), second place going to AMETHYST – Adolescent Mental Health Services and third place to the Jae's Pharmacy team.

Plan Summary: HEATID is a 3-year pilot program, which is an integrative approach to treating, manag-

ing and preventing infectious diseases in the Prince Albert Parkland Health Region and surrounding northern communities. HEATID is aligned with the HIV Provincial Strategy Team's goals to decrease the prevalence of HIV in Saskatchewan and improve overall population health in the immediate future. HEATID aims to integrate an Infectious Disease Pharmacist into the already established interdisciplinary team at the Prince Albert Sexual Health Clinic.

The Competition continues next year, with the tentative date for presentations set for Thursday, March 28, 2013, in Saskatoon. For more information on the winning plan and/or the competition, please contact Jason Perepelkin at jason.perepelkin@usask.ca. ■

— Jason Perepelkin