



# NEWS

**From the Robert J. Trulaske, Sr. College of Business**

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Date:

## **St. Louis Business Leaders Help Launch MU Entrepreneurs**

Three prominent St. Louis businessmen are using their experience to train the next generation of University of Missouri entrepreneurs to compete in today's global economy.

Steve Trampe, David Mueller and Gary Eldridge served as judges of the fifth annual Show-Me Business Plan Competition held in early December at the University of Missouri Robert J. Trulaske College of Business. Trampe, owner of St. Louis-based Owen Development and chairman of Sequoia Sciences, has sponsored the business college competition's \$5,000 Eldridge Award since 2005.

Trampe considers the Trulaske College of Business competition a "remarkable experience" that gives students an opportunity to practice the skills they will need to succeed in an increasingly competitive economy. Trampe, an MU alumnus, said he fosters student presentation skills, salesmanship and business financial savvy through the competition in hopes of stimulating and encouraging the intellectual capital he believes to be America's greatest economic asset.

"We need to continue to be the leader in innovation, patents and technological advances," Trampe said. "This is a long-term issue."

Xandra Sifuentes, a second-year MBA student; Matthew Granberry, also a second-year MBA student; Nathan Corley, who received his MBA in mid-December; and Claire Li, who also graduated last December, took first place as members of Adroit Motion LLC in this year's competition for their plan to commercialize an innovative laparoscopic medical instrument. Each team member will receive \$1,250 of the prize.

The students comprised one of six teams drawn from the Trulaske College of Business course called "Launching a High-Growth Venture—the Business Plan." After selecting six commercial opportunities for the course, each student chose a venture team upon which to work for the semester.

The business plans those teams developed were put to the test during the Show-Me Business Plan Competition. Trampe, Mueller and Eldridge judged each team's 15-minute

business presentation as well as team member performances during a subsequent question and answer session. The judges' criteria reflected their own professional experience in what Trampe described as an "'American Idol' style" approach.

"After we judge, we'll tell each team what we did and didn't like about them, and where they screwed up," Trampe said.

Sifuentes, who acted as CEO for the Adroit Motion team, said her group's winning effort started with research into the surgical medical device industry that the laparoscopic product targeted. Each week team members assigned themselves tasks and deadlines for each section of the 20-page business plan, to which they attached 10 pages of financial statements, Sifuentes said.

By creating a demanding real-world business situation, the course and competition provided a unique and effective learning environment, team members said. Corley, who acted as Adroit Motion's chief marketing officer, considers the class the "most hands-on" business course he took at the business college.

"I think in the end the experience was even better than I thought it would be," agreed Sifuentes, whose decision to enroll in Mizzou's MBA program was driven by the opportunity the business plan class presented.

Granberry pointed to the investor presentation as an important component of the project. Learning how to condense and verbally frame the group's ideas was challenging, he said. "That's a pretty big skill that we learned in the last couple of weeks of the course," Granberry said. Members of the team may go on to compete in other venture competitions, Halliday said.

## **ABOUT THE ROBERT J. TRULASKE, SR. COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**

The Trulaske College of Business, founded in 1914, today enrolls approximately 4,000 undergraduate students and 350 graduate students. The college has four academic units – Accountancy, Finance, Management, and Marketing – with 59 full-time faculty members. The college offers an undergraduate degree in business administration, an MBA degree, a 150-hour program that confers both undergraduate and master's degrees in accountancy, and PhD degrees in both accountancy and business administration. The college takes great pride in its graduates. More than 31,000 alumni are contributing their expertise to the public and private sectors in every state in the U.S. and in a host of foreign countries.