



MEDIA RELEASE

Memorial University students win \$40,000 in seed funding at business idea competition

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Innovative business ideas related to health care and lighting design won the top prizes at the 2018 Mel Woodward Cup last night.

BreatheSuite, VitalMIST and WARP PAR Corp. won \$10,000 each during the business idea competition for Memorial University's student entrepreneurs.

The trio of companies were among eight finalist teams that pitched their ideas to a panel of judges from the business community during the 2018 Mel Woodward Cup, hosted by the Memorial Centre for Entrepreneurship (MCE) on March 28 at the Johnson GEO CENTRE.

BreatheSuite, founded by Brett Vokey, a fourth-year mechanical engineering student, is developing an add-on device for inhalers that allows people with asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease to receive optimal dosages of medicine. VitalMIST, founded by Anna Gosine, also a fourth-year mechanical engineering student, offers a nasal optimizer that allows physicians to administer liquid medication effectively. WARP PAR, founded by fifth-year electrical engineering student Warren Parsons, makes Enzo, a light dimmer that provides power monitoring and is compatible with most bulbs on the market.

Two other companies received honourable mention prizes. Delta Innovations (Mark Belbin and Nathan Hollett) won \$3,000 and BlueBrick Design & Development (Bailey Dalton, John Ennis, Ms. Gosine, Luke Tremblett and Nick Warren) won \$2,000.

The Mel Woodward Cup provides up to three prizes of \$10,000 each to teams of Memorial University students for their innovative business ideas. Winning teams are also reimbursed for up to \$1,500 in approved marketing and legal expenses and will receive access to MCE's co-working space at Memorial University, enrolment in the Genesis Centre's Evolution Program, a free seminar from the Gardiner Centre, mentoring and other services.

"One of the biggest challenges that student entrepreneurs face in starting their businesses is funding," said Florian Villaum , the centre's director.

"Through the Mel Woodward Cup, we're supporting entrepreneurial students in their business development journeys, providing them with much-needed funding so they can take their business ideas to

the next level. By supporting these student entrepreneurs, we're also providing a pathway for young people to stay in Newfoundland and Labrador as the province's future business leaders.”

Forty applications were received for the 2018 Mel Woodward Cup, from which eight finalists were selected.

The Mel Woodward Cup was created from a donation in 2017 by the family of the late Dr. Mel Woodward, a well-known entrepreneur who founded the Woodward Group of Companies. Peter, Melvin and Tana Woodward collectively donated \$1.13 million to Memorial's Faculty of Business Administration, in memory of their father, to support student entrepreneurs through the MCE. The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency provided a further \$130,000 for the competition.

The MCE is a pan-university centre initiated as a partnership of the Faculty of Business Administration and the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science.

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