



News

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SWOSU Students Compete at Prestigious Business Idea Competition

Photo Caption: SWOSU was the only Oklahoma university to be invited to the recent 2018 Richards Barrentine Values and Ventures Competition on the campus of TCU in Ft. Worth. Representing SWOSU were (from left) Ryan Baldwin, Fairview; Alexandra Young, Mangum; and Edwin Martinez, Hinton. SWOSU faculty member Jonna Myers accompanied the trio.

Southwestern Oklahoma State University students in Weatherford were among college students from 55 universities across the nation who recently pitched their unique business ideas at a two-day competition hosted by Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

SWOSU was the only Oklahoma university that made the cut to be invited to the 2018 Richards Barrentine Values and Ventures Competition. Students competed for more than \$70,000 in cash prizes to make ideas a reality.

Representing SWOSU were Ryan Baldwin, senior marketing major from Fairview; Alexandra Young, senior entrepreneurship major from Mangum; and Edwin Martinez, junior finance major from Hinton. They were accompanied by Everett Dobson School of Business & Technology Instructor Jonna Myers, who teaches a Business Plan course at SWOSU.

“It was highly competitive and being invited to the Fort Worth event was an honor,” Myers said. “Our students did not place, but we are thrilled they were invited to the event. Once our students arrived in Ft. Worth, TCU paid for the hotel, meals and other conference expenses.”

Only business plans that benefit the community, environment or a specific population were accepted, and they could not be nonprofit. SWOSU’s entry was entitled ParkIT, an innovative product and service package that aims to provide real-time information about parking availability in high-population spaces like metropolitan areas, universities, arenas and airports. Using machine learning, sensor technology and artificial intelligence, ParkIT feeds data to a mobile application where users can see where parking is available at any time. Additionally, business/parking lot owners can obtain specific information about the types of vehicles filling their lots and the hours of most frequent use. As the mobile application is utilized over time, it will be able to track patterns and make predictions about parking and transportation logistics.

This was the eighth year for the competition, presented by the Neeley Entrepreneurship Center in the TCU Neeley School of Business. Co-founders are Dallas real estate and technology entrepreneurs Nancy Tartaglino Richards and Lisa Barrentine of First Preston HT, who are noted for their philanthropic endeavors. More than 100 business professionals served as judges and mentors for the 2018 competition at TCU.

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