From the Desk of the Chancellor — May 7

IUPUI students again have demonstrated creativity in improving the world! The Ideas Solving Social and Economic Challenges is a competition for IUPUI students with innovative ideas to solve problems through new approaches, products, services, or ventures. Open to all IUPUI students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional), the competition requires individuals and teams to present their ideas in less than three minutes and yet be persuasive to judges that their concept or solution is viable. In this year's competition, 11 individuals and teams submitted ideas, many based on social networking, some based on engineering, and others proposing new business models. Issues targeted were new parents on public assistance, student loans, diabetes management, childhood obesity, and solar thermal turbines, to name just a few.

The winning entries received a $2,500 scholarship for first place, $1,000 scholarship for second place, and $500 for third place, plus $1,000 for the "Audience Choice." The top three winning ideas, and their "elevator pitches," were:

- Team Positive Farming by Danielle Hall (School of Public & Environmental Affairs Bachelor's in Biology) and Tirajeh Saadatzadeh (School of Medicine Master's in Cellular and Integrative Physiology)—also received the "Audience Choice Award": "The coastal town of Mombasa, Kenya, provides the ideal climate for agriculture. The region is also home to thousands of HIV+ individuals, most of whom lack employment or adequate nutrition. Our idea is to build a farming collective that will be maintained and utilized by a group of 50 HIV+ men and women who are part of the Community Light Programme, a support group co-founded by Tirajeh while volunteering in Kenya. The scope of this farm will include maize, kale, cabbage, spinach, and other nutritious grains and vegetables, as well as the raising of chickens. Consequently, the farm will provide both sustenance and income for community members. The nutrition will help improve their immune systems while the income will allow them to provide for their families as well as send their children to school. An underlying goal of the project is to empower HIV+ individuals, who are generally perceived as outcasts of society, by enabling them to build a self-sustaining community free of discrimination."

- Kitch-On by Ajay Bohra (Kelley School Of Business Bachelor's in Marketing & Finance) and Jim Plew (Kelley School Of Business Bachelor's in Finance & International Studies): "Often, we find ourselves frustrated after perusing the selection of food and ingredients we have on hand while attempting to consider the different possible meals that can be made using these inputs. Every household has a different way of organizing the contents of their pantry, refrigerator, and freezer, but essentially no real way of managing these contents in order to turn them into outputs. Thus, Kitch-On seeks to solve this ubiquitous dilemma by creating a virtual kitchen and recipe management interface. This tool effectively bridges the gap between the pantry and cookbook by giving the users the tools they need to turn their groceries into meals. Now, the common question, "what's for dinner?" can be answered more efficiently and creatively, by identifying different possible permutations and combinations of ingredients the user actually has on hand."

- Project Place: Indianapolis by Frank Giammaria (School of Public & Environmental Affairs Master of Public Affairs) and Cora Griffin (School of Public & Environmental Affairs Master of Public Affairs and Robert H. McKinney School of Law Doctor of Jurisprudence): "Project Place: Indianapolis hopes to build an online tool that connects the people of Indianapolis with a project management platform driven by social networking. Project Place would allow individuals and organizations to create and support community projects by connecting their resources and ideas in a single place."

We are in the process of supporting realization of these and some of the other student ideas presented by having them go through our Innovation-to-Enterprise Central program.

What great ideas our students have! Congratulations to our Center for Research and Learning for encouraging their creativity and innovation.

Comments? Write chancllr@iupui.edu.