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Business Innovation Group (BIG) News

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Enactus lands \$1500 partnership grant

November 11, 2015

The student entrepreneurship organization, Enactus, is off to a great start this year. The club hosted a successful kick-off party early in the semester. Since officially re-launching the organization in 2014, they've grown to 20 members and continue to generate support.

Now that the club is official again, they're excited to be revitalizing a 2013 initiative, Supplying Underprivileged Individuals Tools for Success (SUITS), with a huge advantage. The Georgia Southern Enactus club was awarded a \$1500 grant by The Walmart Women's Economic Empowerment Project. The plan is to partner with Career Services on campus to host mock interviews and personal enrichment workshops. They will also partner with local non-profits to supply disadvantaged women with professional attire for job interviews.

Enactus is working hard on a couple of other projects for the regional competition which will take place in the spring. While we are excited and proud for their recent accomplishments, we also look forward to BIGger things to come from this outstanding group of students.

Global Entrepreneurship Week 2015

November 11, 2015



Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) is quickly approaching. This Kauffman Foundation initiative is the world's largest celebration of the innovators and job creators who launch startups that bring ideas to life, drive economic growth and expand human welfare.

This year's BIG GEW theme is 'Ready to Launch' as the team will be launching a new Lunch n Learn series and website workshop. BIG is also bringing back Eagle FastPitch during this exciting week of events.

Becky Brownlee, SBDC Consultant, will be helping to start the Brownbag Lunch n Learn series. On **Monday, November 16** at noon BIG will host the first Lunch n Learn in the City Campus Classroom. Whether you are starting a new business or growing an existing one, a business plan is crucial to your success. The greatest benefits come from examining all of the critical aspects of your business, looking at the factors and trends that can affect your success or threaten your livelihood, and asking yourself the tough questions. This session will cover the necessary components of a business plan including business concept and feasibility, market analysis and financial considerations.

The applications have been evaluated and twelve students are being prepped to compete in Eagle FastPitch. We are excited about the BIG ideas some of our students have. This competition provides a unique opportunity for enterprising students to develop their elevator pitch. Competitors will pitch to a panel of judges with experience in entrepreneurship and investments.

Eagle FastPitch will take place on **Tuesday, November 17 from 3-6 pm** at the Whitaker Black Box Theater on 41 West Main St. Downtown Statesboro. Thank you to our wonderful partners for helping with our event: Gold sponsor – Campus Evolution Villages, Silver Sponsor – [McPherson Manufacturing](#).

BIG has an exciting new partnership with Cable Ad-Concepts to provide a web workshop series for entrepreneurs. The series will provide business owners with tools they need to create a strong online

presence. The first class in the series will be '*Websites 101*' taught by Georgia Southern Web Developer, Keely Hopkins. This class will be held on **Wednesday, November 18 at 4 pm** in the City Campus classroom.

Websites 101 will give entrepreneurs a better understanding of what it takes to create a website from start to finish. Keely will cover everything from choosing the best platform to picking the best domain name.

Thank you CAC for sponsoring this new BIG Web Workshop Series.

Does your business have a digital marketing strategy? Do you know if it is working effectively? How will you improve the digital foot print of your business?

At ***Cable Ad-Concepts, Inc.***, we help you gain control of your businesses online data, submit and optimize it before distributing to thousands of local data aggregators, directories and search engines. We optimize your listing, upload pictures, videos, coupons and a very compelling description of your business and services to entice your potential customers connecting with you. Having accurate citations, profiles and listings for as many searches as possible is the secret to making sure that local customers who are looking for your products and services know you are in their area.

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November BIG Entrepreneur Spotlight

November 11, 2015

Brian Reiss, owner of Party Harbor Inflatables is this month's BIG Entrepreneur. Brian bought the company eight years ago, after realizing a huge potential market in Statesboro. He pulled double-duty holding down a full-time job at Viracon while building his own business for the first two years. Brian said, "I want to be able to build and create something that I can leave for my children one day."

It's a family owned and operated business in its purest form. Brian's wife, Tawnya helps with scheduling and managing the administrative functions. Their four children also enjoy testing new inventory as they arrive and can sometimes be seen with dad delivering and setting up at events.

Party Harbor has grown by leaps and bounds in the past few years. They have nearly 50 inflatable bounce houses, slides, combo units, and interactive games. They also have concessions, tents, and inflatable movie screen and recently added a photo booth. The company has a regional reach and continues to be a great asset to the community.

We wish you BIG congratulations and best wishes for continued success!

Stanford team wins inaugural BIG Pitch

November 11, 2015



Georgia Southern University's Business Innovation Group (BIG) in conjunction with Ocean Exchange has named Stanford University the winner of the inaugural BIG Pitch Competition held Oct. 12 in Savannah, Georgia.

According to Millicent Pitts, CEO of Ocean Exchange, Stanford's team, Opus 12, edged out seven other collegiate teams to take home the \$10,000 cash prize. Its winning sustainable innovation, "Renewable Fuel Production from Carbon Dioxide," uses technology developed at Stanford University to take carbon dioxide and convert it into usable fuel, ethanol, which can then be used by oil refineries and corn ethanol plants.

"Opus 12 is extraordinary, and truly delivers on the vision of Ocean Exchange," states Ocean Exchange panel member Kelly Carnes, president and CEO of TechVision21 and former U.S. assistant secretary of Commerce for Technology Policy. "The team has combined a very innovative solution that transforms climate damaging [carbon dioxide] into useful products with a very sound business plan to scale and commercialize the technology. I would also like to congratulate all of the BIG Pitch teams; all of the concepts were innovative and the presentations were polished and professional."

During the competition, teams from around the nation had three minutes to pitch their sustainable innovations that improve economies, health and the environment to a panel of four members with varying backgrounds in transportation, agriculture, mining and construction, among others.

A panel of three review team members with skills in research and development, business development and marketing selected eight teams to advance to the finals. The finalists pitched their ideas to four distinguished panelists who questioned and judged the teams, and the crowd of 100 delegates in the audience also voted for the winner. Following the eight pitches, the delegates mingled with the finalists during a reception, where they further questioned the teams before voting closed.

"Our first BIG Pitch was a rousing success," said Dominique Halaby, D.P.A., director of BIG. "The enthusiasm, passion and innovation each of the teams exhibited for making our world a better place was truly inspiring. I am very proud of each of the finalists and excited about what the future holds."

BIG Pitch facilitates the adoption of undergraduate and graduate innovations that improve economies, health and the environment. BIG Pitch is part of the Business Innovation Group in the Georgia Southern College of Business and partners with Ocean Exchange.

For more information on the BIG Pitch Competition, the Ocean Exchange or Georgia Southern University entrepreneurship programs, please contact Millicent Pitts, CEO of Ocean Exchange, at 912-257-0209 or email at millicent.pitts@oceanexchange.org; or Dominique Halaby, D.P.A., director of BIG, at 912-478-2733 or email at dhalaby@georgiasouthern.edu.

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers more than 125 degree programs serving more than 20,500 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelors, masters and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. Georgia Southern is recognized for its student-centered and hands-on approach to education. Visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu

2nd BIG Cafe is a great success!

November 11, 2015

On October 14, 2015 at 9 a.m., more than 40 local entrepreneurs, students and faculty gathered at City Campus for Big Café. This monthly networking event is designed to help local entrepreneurs solve business problems using the input from attendees while enjoying a complimentary cup of coffee.

Presenting were Brian Reiss, owner of Party Harbor Inflatables and Paul Johnson, owner of Kingdom Cuts. Brian, looking to expand his business to new locations outside of the Statesboro area, posed the question, "Should I bring on an investor? How do you go about bringing on an investor, and what does that entail?"

Marco George, owner of Covenant Home Security, asked "Have you thought about going into Bluffton and joining the chamber there and getting involved with small business association there? Maybe SBA or Core in that area could help you with how to break into that market or how to get some funding." Demetria Smith, Simplified Flooring, suggested that Brian use a midway point so he could leverage the items he already has. Other suggestions included forming a strategic alliance with people in the targeted community, constructing a market research analysis of the area, and waiving delivery fees in order to help build a presence in the targeted market.

Paul Johnson presented second. His goal is to franchise his business while still being able to give the highest level of customer service, creating an environment that is family friendly. "My problem or my challenge is recreating my philosophy and being able to do that successfully. How do I reproduce my philosophy?"

Demetria Smith suggested creating rules for franchise owners to abide by after opening up the franchise. She said, "Every franchise owner has specific rules and stuff that they have to do to keep that franchise and with cloning yourself, cloning your philosophy, creating essentially your bible, that's going to help whoever wants to buy into your franchise to know what this whole theory is about." Jim Williams provided a contact who has a business very similar to Paul's, and who previously expanded his business just like Paul desires to do. Other suggestions included using discipleship to mold potential employees, creating a playbook that includes a mission statement, paying time plus commission, and finding people who have the skill set along with the same moral compass.

The second, BIG Café was a tremendous success. Thanks to everyone who attended and gave such invaluable feedback. Special thanks to the presenters as well. If you would like to present your business obstacle(s) at BIG Café, please contact Jill Johns at jjohns@georgiasouthern.edu or 912-478-0872. The forum is not only a wonderful networking opportunity, but also a chance to learn from other entrepreneurs. Also, attend five times and you can receive a free BIG Café coffee mug!

The next BIG Café will be Wednesday, November 11, with presentations starting at 9 a.m. [RSVP here](#).