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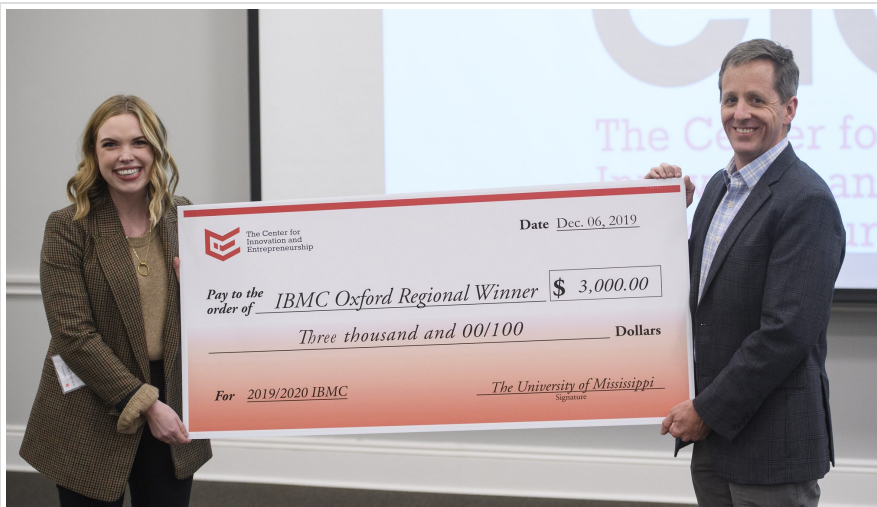
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Women’s Health Startup Takes First Spot at Business Model Competition

Monarch, aimed at improving information about women's health, will advance to regionals

DECEMBER 27, 2019 BY **RACHEL STABLING**



Richard Gentry (right), UM professor of management and co-director of the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, presents Milly Thornton with a check, her prize for being named the overall winner of the Business Model Competition. Photo by Thomas Graning/Ole Miss Digital Imaging Services

OXFORD, Miss. – More than 70 student entrepreneurs drew from their experiences and pitched start-up businesses at the fourth annual Business Model Competition Regional Qualifier hosted by the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, a division of the University of Mississippi School of Business Administration.

The Dec. 6 event at the university’s Jackson Avenue Center featured 11 development teams from Ole Miss plus four teams from John Brown University and one from Southern University Law Center.

Throughout the day, teams pitched their ideas to a panel of judges including UM professors and local business owners. The program was founded on the idea of educating student entrepreneurs on principles that create lasting ventures.

“The Fall Business Model Competition is designed to provide students a more approachable way for to get started on their business idea,” said Rich Gentry, the center’s co-director. “We do not require a formal business plan, and we offer a lot of developmental programs and workshops.

“This fall, we had a pretty good turnout and a great response from other universities in the surrounding states. It is always exciting to host people from outside Oxford, and this year’s competitors were nothing short of inspiring.”

The overall first place was claimed by John Brown University student Milly Thornton, a senior marketing and management major from Springdale, Arkansas. She is the founder of Monarch, a company aimed at educating consumers on the functions of the female body to promote a powerful message amid complicated and sensitive topics about being a woman.

Thornton received \$3,000 for her business and will represent the Mid-South region at the Business Model Competition Global in May 2020 in Provo, Utah, where students will compete for prizes up to \$10,000.

“Overall, it was an incredible experience to be able to show Monarch’s hard work to judges with no bias and have it validated,” Thornton said. Obviously, we thought it was a great idea and we’re very

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Civil Engineering Professor Receives Most-Cited Paper Award

OXFORD, Miss. – Peer recognition is a rewarding experience for anyone, but University of Mississippi researcher Amir Mehrara Molan was elated when an article he co-authored recently received the Most Cited Paper Award at the 102nd Transportation Research Board meeting in the nation’s capital. The International Journal of Transportation Science and Technology presented the civil engineering

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Young Alumna Gives Back to School of Accountancy

OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy’s new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying “thank you.” “It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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Reuters: Keep an Eye on the Money Supply

U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to

passionate about it.

"To see our idea spark passion and excitement in others was very fulfilling. We've had a crazy semester full of hard work, and our win at regionals made it worth it. We look forward to seeing where Monarch goes in the future and competing in nationals in the spring."

The competition also awarded prizes to several Ole Miss students. Nicholas Neilson-Slabach and Kyle Herbert, founders of Dais Notes, an academic social network allowing students to connect with other students in their class, received recognition along with Dipa Bhattarai, founder of Deeva Brows and Co., a beauty business that specializes in facial hair removal using the "threading" technique.

Final recognition went to Maverick McSparin, Victoria Smith, Kathryn Bickerstaff, Thomas McLellan, Jacob Baldwin and Nathaniel Gutierrez, founders of Vaught It, a storage service for Ole Miss tailgaters and football fans.

The university's first place winner, Dais Notes, is automatically a semifinalist in the Gillespie Business Plan Competition, coming up in April 2020. Each team also was awarded a prize from Delta Denim Co., as well as additional coaching and feedback from the panel of judges.

"I was impressed by the innovative ideas our students had and was really happy to see how passionate they were about their business," said Tong Meng, instructor and director of programs at the CIE. "It was an incredible amount of time and effort they put into their ventures while being full-time students.

"The Business Model Competition is a great learning experience, as our judges are mostly entrepreneurs from different industries and are willing to provide expert feedback and support to the students."

While some students entered the competition with business concepts in the initial stages and intentions of building on them, others entered with new ideas or just for the entrepreneurial experience. Overall, the event was aimed to give students professional experience as well as receive advice and mentoring for their business development.

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