

## 10th Annual Duke Start-Up Challenge Announces Winners of Elevator Pitch Competition

*Judges, led by Google's Bill Maris, select Biogenic Medical Devices and the audience selects The Produce Purity Project from 74 original contenders*

**December 8, 2009 (Durham, NC.)** - The 10th Annual Duke Start-Up Challenge, the premiere entrepreneurship competition at Duke University, announced today that **Biogenic Medical Devices**, led by **Garrett Muramoto** (MBA'11), took home the Judge's Choice award of \$1000 and **The Produce Purity Project**, led by **Stephanie Fruth** (MBA'11), won the Audience Choice award of \$250 and a special gift of \$500 from lead judge Bill Maris, Co-Founder of Google Ventures. A standing room only crowd of more than 500 packed Geneen Auditorium for the Elevator Pitch Competition Final showdown on Friday November 20 where 14 teams pitched and the winners took home the prize money. The event was broadcast live on the Internet and is now available on the Duke Start-Up Challenge website at [www.dukestartupchallenge.org](http://www.dukestartupchallenge.org).



Judge's Choice Winner Garrett Muramoto MBA '11 (third from right) with Elevator Pitch Competition Finals Judges David Samuel, Bill Maris, Matt Megaro, and Cathey Massey

Lead judge Bill Maris, of Google Ventures, summarized the night well when he said, "I go to a lot of these, mostly in Silicon Valley. This is probably the single best one that I've ever participated in."

The **10<sup>th</sup> Annual Duke Start-Up Challenge Elevator Pitch Competition**, part of Duke's celebration of **Entrepreneurship Week** from November 16 to 20, brought together students from many of Duke University's schools to deliver two-minute pitches to panels of judges and live audience members. The judges determined a Judge's Choice winner, while the audience, voting via SMS text messaging on their mobile phones (similar to American Idol), determined an Audience Choice winner from each of seven competition tracks.

*"I go to a lot of these, mostly in Silicon Valley. This is probably the single best one that I've ever participated in." – Bill Maris, Google Ventures*

Throughout the week, there were 7 semi-finals pitch competitions with 74 Duke start-up teams competing for one of 14 spots in the Finals Event. A total of 38 undergraduate startup teams competed in the competition. The Fuqua School of Business entered 20 student startup teams, and other teams represented the Pratt Master of Engineering Management Program, the Duke School of Law, the Duke Nicholas School of the Environment and Earth Sciences, the Graduate School, and the Divinity School.

Even the Duke Blue Devil made a cameo appearance at the Finals event to make his pitch – "Free Duke Start-Up Challenge T-Shirts". Two new competition tracks were added this year – Women

Entrepreneurs and Energy & Environment – to address the growing diversity of interests and participation across Duke. Close to \$6,000 in cash and prizes were awarded at the competition this year.

Win or lose, every student who participated learned a tremendous amount about how to start a business and attract investors, skills that will serve them well when they leave school for the real world. "The Duke Start-Up Challenge has been a great way to gain valuable feedback on our business idea, and meet contacts who will be great resources in the future. Especially for us undergraduates who don't receive as much business exposure, the Elevator Pitch Competition has provided us experience presenting to potential investors, and will prove invaluable to our entrepreneurial education" said Daniel Certner '10, an undergraduate who participated in the competition.

Duke's participation in its third Entrepreneurship Week was a tremendous success, a reflection of the rising interest in entrepreneurship within the greater Duke community. Led by the Kauffman Foundation, Global Entrepreneurship Week is a world-wide initiative during which millions of young people around the world participate in activities aimed to help them explore their potential as self-starters and innovators. The week included thousands of events in over 70 countries around the world.

Duke's strong alumni network also had a role in celebrating Entrepreneurship Week. The **Duke Global Entrepreneurship Network (DukeGEN)** hosted entrepreneur networking happy hour events for alumni in cities around the world, including Atlanta, Austin, Boston, Chicago, London, Los Angeles, Sunnyvale, and San Francisco. Local alumni from Research Triangle Park (RTP) combined their entrepreneur networking happy hour with the Finals event on November 20.

To see a video recording of the finals of the Duke Start-Up Challenge Elevator Pitch Competition, visit [www.dukestartupchallenge.org](http://www.dukestartupchallenge.org). If you were inspired in some way during the week to explore your potential as an entrepreneur or if you're looking for ways to get involved at Duke, please explore [www.dukestartupchallenge.org](http://www.dukestartupchallenge.org) and [www.dukegen.com](http://www.dukegen.com).

Finally, keep an eye out for the Duke Start-Up Challenge events coming up next year – the Executive Summary Competition in January and the Final Business Plan Competition in April – as teams compete for the \$25,000 grand prize.

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Audience Choice Winner Stephanie Fruth MBA'11 (third from left) with Elevator Pitch Competition Finals Judges David Samuel, Bill Maris, Matt Megaro, and Cathey Massey

### **About the 10th Annual Duke Start-Up Challenge**

The Duke Start-Up Challenge entrepreneurship competition runs throughout the academic year, from November to April. The competition includes an Elevator Pitch Competition in November, an Executive Summary Competition in January, and a live Finals Event in April, with multiple teams winning cash and prizes throughout the competition for the best submissions. The prizes are awarded to overall best plan/presentation and best submission in each of several categories (e.g. Energy & Environment, Healthcare & Life Sciences, Products & Services, and Social Entrepreneurship). Additionally, teams are provided with feedback from knowledgeable judges along the way to help with further development of the business concept into the next part of the Duke Start-Up Challenge and beyond.

Founded in 1999 by an ambitious group of Duke students, the competition is now celebrating its 10th year of operation. More information at [www.dukestartupchallenge.org](http://www.dukestartupchallenge.org)

<<http://www.dukestartupchallenge.org>> and follow @dukestartupchal on Twitter.

### **About Global Entrepreneurship Week**

With the goal to inspire young people to embrace innovation, imagination and creativity, Global Entrepreneurship Week will encourage youth to think big, turn their ideas into reality, and make their mark. During the week of November 16 - 22, 2009, millions of young people around the world will join a growing movement to generate new ideas and seek better ways of doing things. Tens of thousands of activities are being planned in dozens of countries. Global Entrepreneurship Week is founded by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and the Make Your Mark campaign. For more information, visit [www.unleashingideas.org](http://www.unleashingideas.org) <<http://www.unleashingideas.org>>.

### **About DukeGEN**

DukeGEN is a sophisticated and active network that helps create debate, dialogue, and lucky encounters between Duke entrepreneurs. We provide the energy and coordination to encourage Duke entrepreneurs, around the globe, to connect and increase their chances of success. More information at [www.dukegen.com](http://www.dukegen.com) <<http://www.dukegen.com>> and follow @DukeGEN on Twitter.