

ASU TEAM SHINES IN SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE

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Last month, four undergraduate students from ASU traveled to the Wal-Mart home office in Bentonville, Ark., to compete in the “Better Living Business Plan Challenge.” The sustainability competition was created to provide students from around the world with an opportunity to invent sustainable products or business solutions and present them to a panel of Wal-Mart executives, government officials, suppliers and environmental organizations. In addition to gaining an audience with some of the top business and sustainability leaders in the U.S., the winning school was to receive \$20,000.

Wal-Mart invited students from nine leading universities to submit business plans on topics ranging from clean air, water and soil, to energy-efficient and healthy products. ASU looked to its Global Institute of Sustainability and School of Sustainability to find a group of students who could excel in the competition. A panel of ASU faculty and staff, a Wal-Mart executive, local venture

capitalists and industry leaders listened to presentations from student entrepreneur groups and selected the Green Taxi Cab to represent ASU at the national competition.

Designed as an environmentally and socially responsible taxi company, Green Taxi Cab is Arizona's first all-hybrid taxi service. The company was founded by ASU student Andrew Nelson, a supply-chain management senior who received funding for the startup through ASU's Edson Student Entrepreneurship Initiative and included Jenna Schaefer, a junior in non-profit management and leadership; Drew Nelson, a senior in supply-chain management; Jonathan Cooper, a junior in journalism and the Barrett Honors College; and Calvin Bovee, a junior in management.

During the competition, student teams presented their business plans to a panel of judges, including the vice president of BP Solar, vice president of Sam's Club, president of the Environmental Defense Fund, president of Green Strategies, senior vice president of real estate for Wal-Mart, and vice president of home entertainment for Fox.

The judges noted that the ASU team, the only undergraduate team represented, had the best presentation and was the best prepared in responding to very difficult questioning. The ultimate winner was the MBA team from Michigan, which found a plant in Africa that has no food value but produces oil at \$43 per barrel - a deserving winner.



Being invited as one of a select group of leading academic institutions focused on bridging sustainability and entrepreneurship was an honor for our faculty and students. The Green Taxi Cab excelled in the competition because the business model encapsulates the true meaning of sustainability. It's that rare kind of business that has the potential to completely revolutionize an industry in a very positive way. For more information on the Green Taxi Cab, go to <<http://www.green cabaz.com>>

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