Developing Student Entrepreneurs

The creation of the Certificate in Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program in 2005 made entrepreneurship education and experiences possible for undergraduate students at Purdue. This highly successful program has now enrolled over 4500 Purdue undergraduates in its ENTR 20000 Introduction to Entrepreneurship and Innovation course.

Does the program make a difference in the education of Purdue students? We believe that it does.

Mayura Davda, a May 2013 Mechanical Engineering graduate, completed her senior design project and Certificate Program capstone in ME 463 (Engineering Design). Mayura and her former teammates are in the process of filing a patent for their innovative way to enhance how manual wheelchairs manage curbs through CHAIR UP! Inspired in part by her experiences in the Certificate Program’s Global Entrepreneurship Program in China in 2010, Mayura and her team are aiming to make a global impact. They recently took third place in the Mallott Innovation Awards out of 43 competing mechanical engineering senior design projects.

Mayura and her team hope to assist individuals with non-motorized wheelchairs with the adoption of their innovation attachment, specifically in areas with limited financial resources. With a working prototype in hand, CHAIR UP! is fully mechanically driven and is easy to install and operate. Mayura and her team designed it to accompany most standard wheelchairs. Their mission is to design and build wheelchair mechanisms that assist users in safely and independently maneuvering up and down raised obstacles like curbs and door thresholds in less resourced settings.

Tony Coiro graduated from Purdue in May 2012 with a bachelor's degree in Physics and a Certificate in Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Tony developed a fully electric motorcycle, participated in the Certificate in Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program's annual Elevator Pitch Competition, worked with the Indy 500 to develop an electric vehicle track and co-founded Purdue's student ran Electric Vehicle Club among many other entrepreneurial ventures. After graduation, Tony began working in a small start-up, Indy Power Systems, where he worked with energy management systems- “blending electric energy from any source for every purpose” as the head physicist. Now you will find Tony in remote areas in Africa working with an aunt on creating and providing alternative energy sources where there is a great need. Tony has shared the following, "I have really enjoyed the Certificate in Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program because the instructors say what they believe, mean what they say and encourage students to dream big. I consider ENTR 20000 and 31000 instructors my best contacts when it comes to asking business questions or just to bounce off new ideas."