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NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita's Hickingbotham School hosts annual Business Plan Competition

By Chelsea Whelpley

March 4, 2015

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Seniors Jayson Harris, Jon Jacks, Jared Lantzsch and Tanner Trantham were recently awarded first place in Ouachita Baptist University's sixth annual Business Plan Competition. A total of \$10,000 was awarded to three student teams for their entrepreneurial ideas.

Harris, a business administration/finance major from Maumelle, Ark.; Jacks, a business administration/finance and management major from Arkadelphia, Ark.; Lantzsch, a business administration/finance and management major from Rogers, Ark.; and Trantham, a Christian studies/Christian missions and business administration major from Benton, Ark.; earned a \$4,000 first prize for their business, The Boom Doctors. The plan provides entrepreneurial experience to college students by running a fireworks stand. Justin Keeler, instructor of finance, served as the faculty advisor.

According to Harris, "The Boom Doctors seek to invest in future business leaders and give them real world experience by cultivating and enabling them to manage a business with integrity, as well as teaching them the core responsibilities of leadership while maintaining a profitable business."

Two teams tied for second place, each receiving a cash prize of \$3,000.

The team of L.B. Hudson, a senior accounting major from El Dorado, Ark., and Evan McKinnon, a junior accounting and business administration/finance major also from El Dorado, created a business plan for Smooth Payment Processing System. Dr. Chris Brune, assistant professor of finance, served as faculty advisor for the team.

Eric Ashburn, a senior business administration/finance major from Monroe, La.; Mitch Bledsoe, a senior business administration/marketing and sport management major from Collierville, Tenn.; Jalen Jones, a senior business administration/marketing and sport management major from Conway, Ark.; Barkley Legends, a senior business administration/marketing and management major from Martin, Tenn.; and Matt Mainiero, a senior business administration/marketing and sport management major from Austin, Texas, were also awarded second place and a \$3,000 cash prize for Explosive Performance, a mobile strength and conditioning service for middle school and high school athletic programs. Their faculty advisor was Justin Keeler.

"One of our main points of emphasis is character building," Mainiero explained. "We realize, as former student athletes, that playing days are numbered and will end. We want to instill a sense of strong character in high schoolers to prepare them for a successful life outside of their high school playing glory."

"From selecting an idea, to thinking through all of the parts of the business, to writing a plan and organizing a presentation, the competition requires a significant commitment," Brune said. "It's not a quick process. But it really is a valuable experience for the students who participate."

These three teams will go on to compete against Henderson State University's top plans in the annual OBU/HSU Business Plan Competition this month. Each winning team's faculty advisor also was awarded \$1,000 to support their work in the classroom.

For more information, contact Bryan McKinney, dean of the Hickingbotham School of Business, at mckinneyb@obu.edu or (870) 245-5513.