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NEWS

For Immediate Release

Ouachita dean and students recognized at Governor's Cup business plan competition

By McKenzie Cranford

May 6, 2015

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Bryan McKinney, dean of Ouachita Baptist University's Hickingbotham School of Business, was recently presented the C. Sam Wells Entrepreneur Educator Award at the Donald W. Reynolds Governor's Cup Collegiate Business Plan Competition in Little Rock. The award recognizes an educator who is impacting entrepreneurship in the state of Arkansas. Ouachita students also competed in the business plan competition, earning a place among the top six of more than 50 teams from across the state.

"It's nice to be honored with something like this on an individual level, but this honor truly is a team effort," McKinney said. "Our faculty, students, administration and Executive Advisory Board have all made an investment in the entrepreneurial process."

In the fall of 2015, Ouachita will begin offering a new Entrepreneurship Program, including an entrepreneurship emphasis, entrepreneurship minor and entrepreneurship certificate within the Hickingbotham School of Business. "The timing of the award couldn't be better," McKinney noted. "Hopefully this award will lend credibility to the exciting program we have developed."

"Bryan has done a tremendous job of promoting entrepreneurship on our campus and within our community," said Dr. Chris Brune, assistant professor of finance at OBU, who nominated McKinney for the award. "He has launched, organized and helped secure funding for two business plan competitions. He has also provided a vision for the development of our new Entrepreneurship Program which will benefit both business and non-business students across campus. His leadership has led to a growing interest in entrepreneurship that continues to gain momentum."

Reflecting on his favorite elements of the Governor's Cup this year, McKinney said, "I enjoyed watching our OBU team, Explosive Performance LLC, deliver an elevator pitch as one of the final six teams still remaining in the business plan competition. Though they didn't win, they did a tremendous job and represented OBU beautifully.

"I also enjoyed seeing so many OBU graduates, who are now among the business professionals supporting this great event, in the room," McKinney added. "The Ouachita network is truly exceptional, and it was nice to see so many OBU people in attendance who were proud to be associated with OBU on that day."

Explosive Performance LLC is a mobile strength and conditioning service for middle school and high school athletic programs. Matt Mainiero, a senior business administration/marketing and sport management major from Austin, Texas, is a member of the Explosive Performance team.

“Through this experience, I learned that entrepreneurship is something I want to do,” Mainiero said. “I also learned about some of my weaknesses I didn’t know I had, which makes me want to work on them. There were many successful business owners at the event to network with, and their advice and mentoring have made a huge impact.”

Other Explosive Performance team members included 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 Legens, a senior business administration/marketing and management major from Martin, Tenn.; and Brooke Schmidt, a junior business administration/marketing major from Rowlett, Texas. Their faculty advisor was Justin Keeler, instructor of finance.

For more information about the Governor’s Cup or Ouachita’s Entrepreneurship Program, contact Chris Brune at brunec@obu.edu or (870) 245-4293.

PHOTOS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT <http://www.obu.edu/news/2015/05/06/ouachita-dean-and-students-recognized-at-governors-cup-business-plan-competition>.