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WSU Students Take First at UW Health Product Contest

SafeShot prototype stops the spread of disease



Engage winners Katherine Brandenstein, left, and Emily Willard.

Two Washington State University student entrepreneurs won first place and \$10,000 in the inaugural, regional Health Innovation Challenge (HIC) at the University of Washington on March 3. They were the only non-UW affiliated entrepreneurs among the 18 finalist teams that pitched ideas to more than 100 judges from business and health science professions.

At the UW Business Plan Competition held in May, Engage won fourth place and \$5,000. Additionally, Engage earned the \$5,000 WinWin Tri Sector Prize awarded to a for-profit venture with a product that creates a win-win with the public, private, and social sectors.

Emily Willard of Everett, Wash., and Katherine Brandenstein of Woodinville, Wash., are cofounders of Engage and won with the prototype for their product SafeShot. It is a lid that attaches to a multi-use medicine injection vial to sterilize the needle each time it enters the vial.



In the developing world, needle reuse is not uncommon. SafeShot's sterilizing liquid stops the spread of common contaminants such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV.



"This award will help us do further research on how SafeShot can become a standard in the vaccine market," said Willard.



"This is a great example of how our WSU engineering students are learning real-world problem solving skills through programs like the Harold Frank Engineering Entrepreneurship Institute," said Howard Davis, director of the institute and a professor in the Gene and Linda Voiland School of Chemical Engineering and Bioengineering. "We're proud to see these students address some of our most critical, real-world health challenges."

Willard and Brandenstein were in a joint senior capstone class with the WSU Carson College of Business to build a product and then build a startup company around that product.

"Emily, Katherine and their startup are a great example of the interconnectivity of entrepreneurship endeavors that we strive for at WSU," said Marie Mayes, director of the Center for Entrepreneurial Studies and a clinical assistant professor at WSU.

Read more about Engage's success:

Biotech Startup Engage wins the University of Washington's first Health Innovation Challenge

Cross-state Collaboration Fosters Student Entrepreneurship

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