

Three UA teams in the mix for \$100,000 prize

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Three teams of entrepreneurs and researchers from the University of Alabama are among the 16 teams from state universities that will compete in the 2012 Alabama Launchpad competition.

Alabama Launchpad is a program of the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama Foundation that tries to help bring innovative business concepts with growth potential to commercial development.

The winning team in the state competition will receive \$100,000 in seed money to further develop their business concept. Up to four of the other teams will receive \$25,000 in seed money.

The UA teams are:

n Bulheller Consulting Inc., whose Autommax customized software simplifies and standardizes process planning, robotics code generation and other automated process in the automotive industry. BCI's other products, Robmax and Factoryworkx already are used on more than 3,000 robots in the auto industry. BCI's team is headed by Karlheinz Bulheller and other members are Jeff Gray, Nick von Baillou and Christian Fischer.

n MicroGreen Technologies, which is developing a cost-

effective, and environmentally sustainable crop fertilizer that delivers phosphates to plant roots through microbes. Its team leader is Robert Martinez.

n Nanogn, which is developing a nano drug delivery platform that can be used by the pharmaceutical industry. Terrance Opichka is the team leader, and Carol Duffy is the other team member.

The 16 teams were selected by a panel of entrepreneurs, investors and university officials from six participating universities.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham has six teams in the competition; the University of Alabama in Huntsville and the University of South Alabama each have three teams and Auburn University has one team.

The teams will now submit business plans, which will be judged by a second panel that will select the competition's finalists. The business plans will be judged on the intellectual property and technology proposed, market potential and the management team.

"The Alabama Launchpad business plan competition is an activity that feeds into a larger plan for economic development in the state of Alabama," said EDPA President Bill Taylor.

"This competition is a microcosm that demonstrates the success that we can achieve on a larger scale," he said. "There are innovations taking place daily within the state, and this is a small window into those activities."

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