Clark Atlanta University-Morehouse College Team Ranks Second in International Energy Technology Competition

ATLANTA (April 3, 2009) -- A Clark Atlanta University-Morehouse College team placed second in the Oak Ridge National Laboratory Global Venture Challenge 2009 Idea to Product competition on March 27, 2009 (globalventurechallenge.com). The team received a $10,000 prize for their business and technical presentation detailing a prototype (AP1) that evaluates the properties and quality of raw materials used to produce commercial thermoplastic products.

Energy executives, venture capitalists, technologists, entrepreneurs and legal experts judged the competition.

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The Global Venture Challenge, now in its third year, brings together students and faculty from across the world to demonstrate energy-efficient products and processes. Clark Atlanta University-Morehouse was among 15 teams that qualified for the semi-finals in Oak Ridge, Tenn.

“Our team’s second place showing is significant given the level of competition they were up against,” said Eric Mintz, director of the Clark Atlanta University NASA High Performance Polymer and Composite (HiPPAC) Center and professor of chemistry at Clark Atlanta University. “Some of the other students and schools have participated in entrepreneurial competitions like the one at Oak Ridge for three or more years; Clark Atlanta has not. Also, Clark Atlanta and Morehouse were the only HBCUs [Historically Black Colleges and Universities] in the competition.”

The Clark Atlanta-Morehouse team and their mock company, APEX Plastics, were represented by Yemaya Stallworth-Bordain, who received her bachelor’s degree in engineering from Clark Atlanta University (CAU) in 2008, and is a master’s degree candidate in computer science at CAU; Kamau Sewell, a finance and engineering senior at Morehouse College; and faculty advisor, Donald Hylton, principal investigator with the HiPPAC Center.

“I commend Yemaya and Kamau for showing such a high degree of professionalism and knowledge of their subject. What is so significant about their showing is that they were competing against seasoned veterans in competitions of this type,” says team advisor Donald Hylton. “Moreover, most of the Universities in the competition have formalized collaborations between their science and business departments to commercialize new developments and to seek funds and prizes from these types of forums.”

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Stallworth-Bordain began work on the AP1 prototype as an undergraduate and has based her master’s thesis on research and development of the prototype. “To compete with teams so well seasoned and place was phenomenal for us,” said Stallworth-Bordain. “Our product is practical, usable and solves a problem that has not been addressed in a mature [plastics] market.”

AP1 will enable plastics manufacturers to produce cost-efficient, energy-saving thermoformed and blow-molded products that range from computer cases, signage, food containers and plastic bottles to the canopy of jet fighter planes. CAU’s research team expects the AP1 prototype construction to be completed third quarter 2009.

First place in the Oak Ridge National Laboratory Global Venture Challenge went to Purdue University while Duke University earned third place, receiving $25,000 and $5,000 respectively.

About Clark Atlanta University

Formed in 1988 by the consolidation of two historic institutions, Atlanta University (1865) and Clark College (1869), Clark Atlanta University is the largest of the United Negro College Fund institutions with an enrollment of nearly 4,000 students. Clark Atlanta University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097: Telephone 404-679-4501) to award the Bachelor’s, Master’s, Specialist and Doctor’s degrees. The Carnegie Classification lists CAU as a Research University – High Research Activity. CAU is listed as one of the best southeastern colleges by The Princeton Review and has been selected to the Washington Monthly’s 2008 list of best colleges and universities. National business and consumer publications rank Clark Atlanta high among the best buys in American higher education.

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