

Ithaca High students compete in 'Shark Tank'

Lois Wilson, loiswilson@ithacajournal.com | @CNYLoisWilson 2:59 p.m. EST December 21, 2015



(Photo: Shutterstock)

Eight student teams from Ithaca High School recently made pitches for start-up money for products they developed as part of the school's Engineering Design and Development course.

The teams spent weeks developing product concepts, marketing plans, a business plan and a funding pitch, according to a news release from IthacaSTEM Advocates, an affiliate of the Ithaca Public Education Initiative.

Illa Burbank, president of Ithaca STEM Advocates and who created "Pitch Night," connected the students teams with expert mentors from Cornell University, Ithaca College, Advion, Taitem Engineering, BorgWarner, Cabrera Research, venture capital company Greengage, and business incubator Rev, according to the release.

The products created were: a stand-up vehicle for people with limited mobility, called UNO; a propane-fueled demonstration buggy; a small, hydro-powered device for charging electronic devices in the wilderness; a controller for electric vehicle motors; an automated control device to raise and lower plastic greenhouse covers; a sweat-suppressing glove for video game players; a mobile app that packages games together; and a high-performance dustpan.

The groups made pitches during "Pitch Night" to a panel that featured: district Superintendent Luvelle Brown; Tompkins Cortland Community College's chair of the Entrepreneurialism Department, Tim McCabe; Ithaca College business school dean Sean Reid, and Cornell University Director of Entrepreneurship Zachary Shulman,

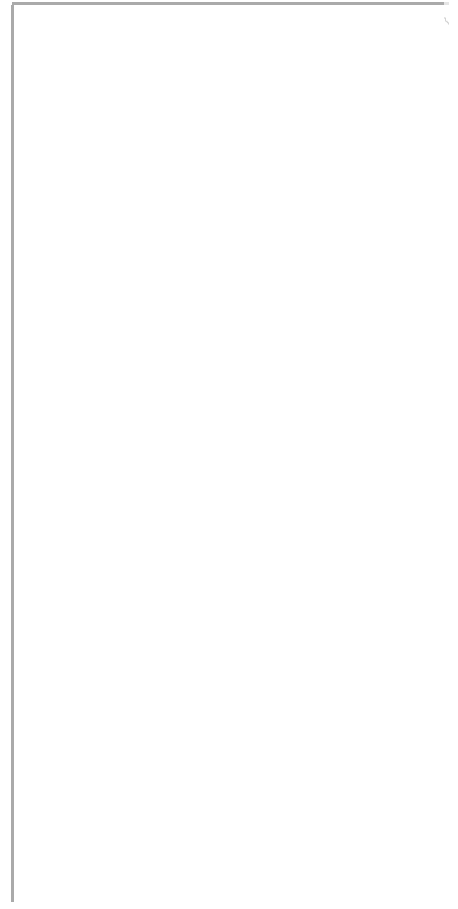
More than \$2,000 in product development funding was at stake, the release stated.

All eight teams received at least partial funding for their projects; some got the full amount requested. The projects that received the most funding were: UNO with \$375; the hydro charger with \$350; the Disco Buggy with \$320, and the electric motor controller with \$300.

Scott Breigle and Ian Krywe teach the Engineering Design and Development course.

Pitch Night sponsors were: Cornell Engineering, Tompkins Insurance, Cabrera Research, Tompkins County Area Development, CFCU Community Credit Union, and other donors to IthacaSTEM Advocates.

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