
Melanie Marquez

Follow this and additional works at: https://digital.usfsp.edu/usfsp_news_press_releases

Recommended Citation
https://digital.usfsp.edu/usfsp_news_press_releases/290

This Other is brought to you for free and open access by the University Advancement at Digital USFSP. It has been accepted for inclusion in USFSP News and Press Releases by an authorized administrator of Digital USFSP.
ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (November 18, 2011) – With the work of USF St. Petersburg entrepreneurship students assisting them along the way, the 14 entrepreneurs selected for the inaugural Gazelle Lab capped their mentor-driven program on Thursday, Nov. 17 by presenting funding pitches to investors from around the country.

View a news story on Gazelle Lab broadcast on WTSP Channel 10.

Presented by Gray Robinson and the Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Innovation Alliance in the USFSP College of Business, the Gazelle Lab Demo Day took place in the Progress Energy Center for the Arts – Mahaffey Theater. The entrepreneurs took turns in the spotlight on stage and had eight minutes to pitch their business.

The entrepreneurs had three months to fulfill their charge – absorb all the training, guidance and support provided by USFSP students and more than 60 community mentors to then successfully pitch an expansion plan for their recently launched businesses. The program continued in the afternoon with a student pitch competition where students from USFSP and other universities in the region pitched for investment from a distinguished panel of entrepreneurs.

“The students involved that are truly motivated toward self-venturing develop skills that will give them more than a leg up in starting their own venture,” said Bill Jackson, the Gazelle Lab director and professor of entrepreneurship and innovation in the College of Business at USFSP. “This works because the students and community mentors are committed to the concept underlying Gazelle Lab – to advance sustainable entrepreneurship in the Tampa Bay area.”

Part of the national TechStars Network, the Gazelle Lab is an initiative of the Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Innovation (SEI) Alliance in the College of Business at USFSP. The term “gazelle” refers to the entrepreneurial companies creating most of the private-sector jobs and revenue growth in the U.S. economy. In Gazelle Lab, local investors provide early-stage seed money and undergraduate students review the investor documentation and models developed by the business founders.

“We’re raising capital and generating jobs without any cost to anybody and with great benefit to the university’s students,” said Daniel James Scott, another Gazelle Lab founder and assistant director of the SEI Alliance. “The company founders put everything on the line for their business ideas and the students have a say in the future of those companies.”
Demo Day took place during St. Petersburg’s Entrepreneurship Month and the Global Entrepreneurship Week.