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SMU Cox MBAs Compete for Best Business Plan

DALLAS, Texas (SMU) - The 2009 SMU Cox School of Business annual Business Plan Competition will be held on February 13 at 1pm. The SMU Business Plan Competition is a multi-semester competition that gives students the opportunity to work in teams to turn ideas into real businesses. Since 2001, teams have competed for cash prizes and in-kind awards such as office space and legal advice.

Sixteen student teams provided executive summaries describing their business ideas in order to be considered for the competition. Those summaries were then judged by a panel of venture capitalists and SMU business and engineering school faculty and the best five teams moved on to the SMU Business Plan Competition. The five competing teams are as follows:

- **Collabpad** – An Open Source Content Management System and custom web application framework.
- **CraftBerry** – A unique web enabled service designed to help parents digitize, archive, organize and share their children’s paper-based artwork.
- **Reactive Optics** – A company that builds differentiated health care products using its innovative patented photonic integrated circuit design.
- **Skillman Downstroke** – Offers the marketplace a revolutionary pump technology for the extraction of subsurface fluids that looks to make the majority of existing pumps obsolete.
- **Ziawatt Solar** – Plans to be the lowest cost manufacturer of photovoltaic modules by improving upon the inherent cost advantages of thin-film CdTe solar cells.

This year nearly \$50,000 in cash and prizes will be awarded at the competition, thanks to generous sponsors including NTEC, Trailblazer Capital, SMU Cox, Silver Creek Ventures, STARTEch, Andrews Kurth, Silicon Valley Bank, Booth Albanesi Schroeder, The Coulter Group, HP Growth Partners, LaDonna Carrington and Plexon.

“We are very excited about the quality of our final five teams. This year we made a special effort to work with the SMU Lyle School of Engineering to help foster the creation of teams that have both business and technical expertise,” said Darren Grahsl, MBA Candidate 2009 and chief organizer of the competition. “Three of the final five teams have students from both the business and engineering schools, so the initiative worked out nicely.”

The SMU Cox Business Plan Competition will be held in the E&Y Gallery in the Fincher building of the Cox School of Business. It is free of charge and open to the public.

About SMU Cox

SMU’s Cox School of Business offers a full range of business education programs, including BBA, full-time MBA, Professional MBA (PMBA), Executive MBA (EMBA), Master of Science in Management (MSM), and Executive Education. The school also offers a number of unique resources and activities for students, ranging from its Business Leadership Center (BLC), Caruth

Institute for Entrepreneurship, Maguire Energy Institute, and American Airlines Global Leadership Program (AAGLP) to its Associate Board Executive Mentoring Program and an international alumni network with chapters in more than 20 countries. SMU Cox is ranked among the top business schools nationally and internationally by major publications, including *BusinessWeek*, *The Economist*, *Financial Times*, *Forbes*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *U.S. News & World Report*.

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