

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

May 30, 2008

**CONTACT:**

Mark Harris (773) 834-1134

[mark.harris@ChicagoGSB.edu](mailto:mark.harris@ChicagoGSB.edu)

## **CHICAGO GSB ANNOUNCES 2008 NEW VENTURE CHALLENGE WINNERS**

*CaptainU, LLC and CureParticle Tie for Top Prize at the Twelfth Annual Business Plan Competition, where a Total of \$80,000 was Awarded*

CHICAGO – The University of Chicago Graduate School of Business and its Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship announced the winners of the twelfth annual Edward L. Kaplan, '71, New Venture Challenge (NVC), after a day-long finals competition yesterday. CaptainU, LLC and CureParticle tied for first place among nine finalist teams, taking home \$25,000 each, among other prizes, with three other finalist teams splitting \$30,000. The NVC is Chicago GSB's premier business plan competition, spanning the entire academic year to prepare students for what it takes to launch and run a business.

“We congratulate CaptainU, CureParticle, and all of the participating teams for a highly competitive event,” said Steven N. Kaplan, Neubauer Family Professor of Entrepreneurship and Finance, and creator of the NVC in 1996. “The New Venture Challenge is an intense, real-world competition that exposes students to the rigors of developing viable businesses, and this year’s finalist companies are indicative of the entrepreneurial drive at Chicago GSB.”

CaptainU, LLC, led by first-year student Michael Farb, is a cutting-edge college sports recruiting platform that connects high school athletes and college coaches, and allows them to manage the entire recruiting process in one place. CureParticle, led by first-year student Naonori Kurokawa, provides pharmaceutical companies a platform technology for reformulation of existing drugs. Using Laser-induced Nanoparticle Technology (LiNTEC), this process helps make drugs soluble, enhances the therapeutic efficacy, and reduces side effects. CureParticle also won the Mitsubishi award for the most innovative business plan.

Other winners included Nursync, a unique supplemental hospital staffing agency, which received \$15,000; and SoCore Energy LLC, a solar energy system developer, which received \$10,000. This year the NVC expanded globally, to allow Executive MBA students from around the world to participate. eSpace, which offers basic registration and promotions for conference and exhibition audiences, received \$5,000 as the Global NVC winner. The eSpace team included students from China, England, France, Germany, and the United Arab Emirates.

The NVC has awarded \$500,000 to date, and has helped launch more than 40 companies, which have gone on to raise more than \$100 million in equity capital. The NVC process includes two phases and a finals competition. During the fall, students pitched business

(more)



ideas, collaborated, and formed teams, which must include at least one current GSB student. In early February, teams submitted feasibility summaries about their proposed venture, and 25 were selected to advance to the second phase. Advancing teams enrolled in a special course where they developed their ideas into full business plans with instructor guidance and critique from venture capitalists, private investors, and established entrepreneurs. Nine teams were selected to present at the finals competition before a world-class panel of investors and entrepreneurs, who determined the winners.

The success of the NVC is made possible through the generous support of corporate and individual sponsors. The title sponsor is Edward L. Kaplan, '71, founder and former chairman and CEO of Zebra Technologies. Other sponsors included Mitsubishi Corporation, Kuczmariski & Associates, Google, Market Strategy Group, LLC, Reed Smith LLP, Neal, Gerber, & Eisenberg LLP, and ARCH Venture Partners. In addition to seed funding, the winning NVC teams will also receive legal services, professional consulting, and incubator space.

**About the Polsky Center:**

The Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship is Chicago GSB's leading resource for students and alumni as they pursue entrepreneurial endeavors and private equity careers. The center supports entrepreneurial development through its cutting-edge curriculum, innovative hands-on learning experiences, leading faculty research, conferences, and community and global outreach programs. Entrepreneurship is the second largest concentration at Chicago GSB and, with an impressive growing network of students and alumni as entrepreneurs, the Polsky Center is dedicated to expanding and capitalizing on this vibrant and active sector of our economy. For more information visit:

[ChicagoGSB.edu/entrepreneurship/](http://ChicagoGSB.edu/entrepreneurship/)

#####