

## OU Research Office, School of Business Administration launch 'Ideas 2 Business' program

Oakland University's (OU) [Research Office](#) and the [School of Business Administration](#) (SBA) have recently launched the Ideas 2 Business (I2B) program, a real-world, project-based experience connecting students with local businesses.

The program is an initiative of the newly-formed Mobilization Zone (MZ), focused on mobilizing university knowledge into the public domain for economic and community development.

The program serves as a next step for startup businesses in the community, some of which are referred to I2B by the Oakland County One Stop Shop for new businesses. The program connects a team of students and a mentor to each company in short engagements to help the company along its path to success. A cohort of six businesses has just completed the program.

According to Michael Long, executive director of the MZ, startup companies require a vast amount of resources in the crucial first phase of business development. The I2B program equips these small businesses with targeted assistance from the mentor-led student teams, focusing on specific gaps in the early phases of development.

"A particularly important aspect of I2B is that it teaches students an entrepreneurial mindset: the ability to think creatively about problems in which resources are often limited," Long said. "In the end, both the companies and students benefit."

Areas of support include, but are not limited to: market research, business planning and development, and patent searches. The volunteer mentors, consisting of local executives, successful entrepreneurs, and OU faculty, staff, and alumni, oversee the student teams, providing advice and needed expertise.

"I2B has aided my education in many ways," said Cooper Hazel, who is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. "I have benefited from the experience because I am meeting new people and getting a feel for what work projects will be like in the future. I recommend participation by other students because of this project's uniqueness and the variety of people a student can meet."

Upon completion of the I2B program, companies are prepared to move further down the path to commercialization, including seeking funding, officially launching the company, or moving into one of OU's business incubators for additional assistance.

"The I2B program is a great initiative and beneficial not only for the startup companies but for the students as well," said Deepshikha Bhadana, who is pursuing a Master of Science in Information Technology Management. "It is a great platform where we get an opportunity to add value and learn the practical application of what we are learning at school, as well as improve upon our own experiences."

Aaron Helander, who is pursuing a Master of Business Administration degree with a concentration in finance, added, "It is great to be able to work with a startup and see how much actually goes into it. Being someone who wants their own company, the experience I am gaining is proving to be invaluable. I would recommend the I2B program to anyone who is interested in startup companies or to someone who wants to be a part of growing something."

Companies participating in the I2B pilot program include:

- **Green Light Go Entertainment** produces publicity campaigns for musicians and groups and is developing a subscription, cloud-based, music-manager dashboard.
- **Innovative Dronomics** utilizes 360-degree photography, drone images, and mobile software to provide first responders with 3D interior and exterior maps of their destination.



*WORK365 is one of six companies participating in the "Ideas 2 Business" pilot program, a real-world, project-based experience connecting students with local businesses.*

- **The Memory Works** has invented a computer-assisted memory training tool for aging and clinical populations, the first of its kind demonstrated to provide effective short- and long-term cognitive benefits.
- **Titan Trach Ties** creates stylish neck-bands for tracheotomy patients. These improve confidence and comfort, and reverse skin breakdown.
- **WORK365** devised the BladeRunner 365, a strength- and conditioning-training exercise machine geared toward athletes to enhance speed, and agility.
- **Zoesen** has developed an over-the-counter, topical-cream analgesic for joint pain and boosting joint function.

### **About the Mobilization Zone**

The MZ builds and supports platforms that allow Oakland's faculty, its students, its business engagement efforts, and its technology-focused business incubators, to effectively engage with local, regional and other partners, both public and private. The economic development arm of the MZ provides an innovative approach to increasing jobs and prosperity in the region. Specifically, MZ programs address educating the future workforce, creating an entrepreneurial culture, advancing innovation and company formation, and promoting the region's resilient workforce, and businesses. The community development arm of the MZ hosts programs to support faculty, staff, and students, by sharing their knowledge, skills, and expertise outside university.