

DE-EE0007147

Cleantech University Program Regional Competition
The Regents of the University of California -Berkeley

Final Scientific/Technical Report

Award Number: DE-EE0007147

Award Period: September 1, 2015 to August 31, 2018

Recipient: The Regents of the University of California
2150 Shattuck Avenue, Suite 300 Berkeley CA 94704-5940

Project Title: "Cleantech University Program Regional Competition"

Principal Investigator: Paul K Wright

Working Partners: Berkeley Energy and Resources Collaborative (BERC)

Report Date: February 26, 2020

Executive Summary

The Berkeley Cleantech University Program (CUP) provided aspiring student entrepreneurs with the mentorship, business development skills and training, and investor feedback they need to turn their clean energy ideas into businesses offering real-world solutions. Annually for three years, the Berkeley CUP recruited teams of students across the country to develop their clean energy technology and refine their business plan, and provided them with mentorship and training during the crucial incubation phase. Each year, the regional program culminates in a final pitch competition, where two finalists and one grand prize winner are determined. Teams are judged on a variety of factors, including but not limited to technical feasibility, scalability, and impact. A total of 18 teams representing 10 universities have participated in the Berkeley CUP. The contest attracted and sustained a growing body of innovative cleantech ideas, young entrepreneurs, investors, and corporate partners in the western region of the United States.

Accomplishments

We set out to provide training in cleantech entrepreneurship for at least 75 students and high quality mentorship for at least 18 cleantech startups during a crucial incubation phase. A total of 18 teams with 56 participants across three years have been provided unique mentors across academia and industry tailored to each team's needs. Teams who participated in this program have gone on to raise at least \$3 million combined in follow on funding.

We also set out to engage at least 24 universities and at least 12 corporate partners in the U.S. western region focused on cleantech development and investment. No industry sponsors were formally secured by the end of the project period, though many organizations provided in kind contributions to the program throughout.

Summary of Project Activities

In Year 1, a website was developed as a tool for reaching applicants and to act as a portal for the application process, and an initial advisory board was formed. Otherwise, the project activity timeline was similar from year to year.

Formalize mentors and assemble competition advisory board:

The competition advisory board members, which consisted of experts in clean energy or technology across a variety of fields, were notified of the program timeline and their level of participation was confirmed. Board members would indicate whether they had the capacity to additionally serve as potential members. Board members who were unable to participate at all were asked to name a replacement.

Design applications and perform outreach; select competition participants:

Each year, a call for applications was publicized through various channels across universities in the United States to attract student teams to compete in the Berkeley CUP. Applicants submitted information regarding their idea, their progress thus far, their team composition, and other relevant information for review by the CUP Advisory Board. Semifinalist teams were chosen from the pool of applicants and notified of their acceptance to the program.

Workshop development:

Semifinalist teams were able to participate in one to two interactive training workshops covering topics such as technology commercialization, target market discovery, value proposition development, market strategy, pitch coaching, and developing further funding strategies. The structure and content differed for each year, but all workshops were held in Berkeley with the option of digital participation whenever possible for those teams who could not travel to Berkeley.

Mentorship and training:

Teams were also partnered with mentors shortly after being accepted into the program. Teams and mentors were encouraged to schedule regular, focused sessions (physically or digitally) to help identify opportunities and overcome the challenges necessary to achieve specific team milestones, and to identify and connect teams to resources. The

mentors represent a wide range of organizations and expertise related to cleantech, and were selected for each team based on the mentors' unique backgrounds and the teams' specific needs.

Throughout the 8 week program, participating teams had regular meetings (physically or digitally) with competition staff to discuss their progress, next steps and current challenges in achieving their milestones.

Pitch competition, judging, and award:

At the end of the program each year, an annual competition event was held in the spring to allow teams to present their pitches in front of a live audience and a panel of judges.

Teams were ultimately evaluated on their submitted pitch deck developed and refined throughout the course of the Program and their live pitch to Competition Judges. They were scored on the following areas:

Solutions/Products

Value Proposition

Barriers to Competition

Technical Feasibility

Go-to-Market Strategy

Feasibility of Go-to-Market Plan

Customer Access and Traction

Scalability

Team Composition

Impact on EERE Mission

Identification of EERE Mission Space

Overall Energy and Environmental Impact

The Grand Prize winner along with 2 finalists were formally selected and announced at the competition. \$50,000 was awarded to the Grand Prize winner each year. These top three teams were also given the option to participate in the National Cleantech University Prize Competition held by the CleantechUP Hub every year.

Products

Website: cup.berkeley.edu