Driving high-potential student startups

The Edson Student Entrepreneur Initiative gives Arizona State University's student entrepreneurs the opportunity to develop their innovative ideas and launch viable startup companies. The initiative provides funding, office space, training and mentorship over a 10-month period to help students launch and grow their for-profit, more-than-profit or nonprofit ventures.

Encouraging Entrepreneurial Thinking

The Edson initiative encourages entrepreneurially minded students from all areas of the university to develop and grow new ventures based on their own ideas. Each year students from all disciplines participate in a university-wide startup competition, with the winning ventures earning a place in the Edson startup accelerator.

The competition is open to new or recently formed startup teams that have at least one ASU student as a key founder. All ASU students, including undergraduate, graduate, postdoctoral and part-time students, are eligible to apply.

Approximately 20 ventures are accepted into the Edson accelerator each year.

Advancing Student Startups

The Edson accelerator provides a wide range of resources and support to help student entrepreneurs launch their startups, including:

- **Funding**: The Edson endowment provides approximately $200,000 annually in seed funding. Each year approximately 20 student-led ventures receive up to $20,000 each to help launch their ventures. This funding can be used for things such as market research, building a prototype or legal fees. Additional funding was made available in 2013 for patenting, trademark and copyright costs as well as a business-development travel fund.

- **Office space**: All funded ventures are provided with dedicated office space at ASU SkySong. The SkySong facility provides a professional setting for early-stage entrepreneurs to develop their ventures and to interact with and learn from peer entrepreneurs and local, national and international businesses.

- **Training**: Throughout the award year, Edson companies participate in a series of training programs, including ASU's highly successful Rapid Startup School, as well as exclusive workshops featuring expert guest speakers who range from successful entrepreneurs to industry professionals with startup expertise.

- **Mentorship**: In partnership with senior corporate leaders, serial entrepreneurs, faculty, researchers and ecosystem partners, the Edson accelerator connects students to on-demand guidance, resources, connections and support.
Pollen-Tech provides a high-tech way to pollinate crops, eliminating dependence on bee pollination. Unlike bee pollination, the company’s process does not rely on weather or healthy beehives to create substantial agricultural yields. Pollen-Tech won the top prize at the 2013 Arizona Collegiate Venture Competition, beating out 11 other student startups from ASU, Northern Arizona University and the University of Arizona. The company also participated in the 2013 MBA World Trophy competition in Dublin, Ireland, placing second in all but one category.

“The support we have received from the Edson program has been crucial to Pollen-Tech’s success. The funding helped us test our pollination method in the field, and the guidance from ASU staff and mentors has helped us build our business.”

David Wade
Pollen-Tech CEO

WHO: The Edson competition is open to new or recently formed startup teams that have at least one ASU student as a key founder. All ASU students, including undergraduate, graduate, postdoctoral and part-time students, are eligible to apply.

WHEN: The deadline for the competition is April 1 each year. The Edson accelerator program runs from August to June.

WHERE: The Edson accelerator is based at ASU SkySong in Scottsdale, where teams have 24/7 access to dedicated office space.

For more information about the Edson Student Entrepreneur Initiative, visit edson.asu.edu.

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