



“ The 1999 UC Berkeley Business Plan contest was an excellent experience for me as a Judge. I was impressed by the high caliber of the plans that I reviewed, and the overall strength of the participants. I would strongly encourage anyone with a great idea, and an entrepreneurial spirit to go for it! ”

Chris Rast, Partner
Sequoia Capital

Past Competitions

Class of 2003:

Gastric Retention Technologies, a company that promises the world an ingestible non-invasive device that reduces gastric volume (thus inducing weight loss), walked away from the 2003 UC Berkeley Business Plan Competition with the \$50,000 grand prize. After a grueling four months and three rounds of competition, the team reaped the benefits of their hard work.

Bio's for all of the finalist teams are available below.

[Gastric Retention Technologies](#) - Winner of the \$50,000 grand prize.

[VSee Lab](#) - Winner of the \$10,000 2nd prize.

[Medifuel Corporation](#) - Winner of the \$5,000 3rd prize and \$5,000 People's Choice Award.

[Grizzly Peak Power](#) - Finalist

[Transplay](#) - Finalist

[Aura Medical](#) - Finalist

Class of 2002:

The technology to correct vision problems and cure eye diseases garnered the \$50,000 grand prize of the fourth annual UC Berkeley Business Plan Competition. Iris AO (formerly known as Adaptic Systems) was announced as the winner at the awards ceremony at UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business on April 24, 2002.

Iris AO's technology promises significant improvements in optical applications, including pharmaceuticals that prevent blindness, LASIK surgery, custom contact lenses, and early detection of eye diseases. The company has developed low-cost deformable micro mirrors for adaptive optics that allow eye doctors at least three times the image resolution of current technologies.

“The profound improvements I have seen in the teams and in their business plans over time are absolutely striking,” said Brian Atwood of Versant Ventures, who has judged the competition for the third year in a row. “I was really impressed with the quality of this year's teams.”

E-Mask, an all-student team from the business and engineering schools, took home two prizes -- the \$10,000 cash prize and the \$5,000 People's Choice Award, based on a vote by the audience selected at the final event. E-Mask provides digital lithography for integrated circuit manufacturing that eliminates the need for masks. The technology could save semiconductor manufacturers up to \$20 per chip and make it feasible to manufacture customized chips.

The grand-prize winner, Iris AO, also won the \$25,000 MBA Jungle magazine's second annual business plan competition, which was decided on April 26th in New York.

"UC Berkeley's competition enabled us to take what was a raw idea six months ago and through its workshops and mentor programs develop it into a very viable business opportunity," said Matthew Campbell, second-year MBA and co-founder of Iris AO.

The Iris AO team is comprised of Michael Helmbrecht, a researcher at the College of Engineering's Berkeley Sensor & Actuator Center; Matthew Campbell, a second-year MBA student at the Haas School of Business, and Dr. Nathan Doble, a postdoctoral researcher from the University of Rochester, NY.

The judges who determined this year's winner are Bob Ackerman of Allegis Capital, Michael Rolnick of ComVentures, Steve Domenik of Sevin Rosen Funds, Brian Atwood of Versant Ventures, Todd Brooks of Mayfield, Michael Aleles of Intel Capital, Sameer Gandhi of Sequoia Capital, and Neil Weintraut of 21VC partners.

The 2002 competition received support from the following sponsors:

- Lead sponsors: Allegis Capital, ComVentures, and Sevin Rosen Funds.
- Secondary sponsors: Versant Ventures; Onset Ventures; Sequoia Capital; Intel Capital; Newbury Ventures; Crosby, Heafey, Roach & May; Quimbik; Fenwick and West; and The Price Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies.

Here are the details of the [2001 Competition winners](#) and [pictures of the finalists](#).

Class of 2001:

The 2001 Competition wrapped up with **RAPT Technologies** walking away with both the \$50,000 first prize and the \$5,000 People's Choice Award (as voted on by the audience). RAPT developed a dramatically faster and more cost-effective technology for etching and polishing optical and semiconductor materials.

Aprotea Biochips earned \$25,000 for second place. Aprotea developed a patent-pending biochip for parallel analysis of 100 to 10,000 protein samples, and is designed to be bio-compatible with virtually all proteins and capture agent libraries.

TruVideo rounded out the top three with a \$10,000 prize. They offer superior digital image quality over broadband compared to existing technologies. The company intends to take advantage of the convergence of wireless technology and the Internet to become the standard video platform for the emerging web-enabled wireless device market.

Teams from the 2000 competition have already raised over \$50 million in funding!

Class of 2000:

- DeltaClick (was called iJacker during the competition)- \$1.5M (www.deltaclick.com)
- Onwafer (was called AMS during the competition)- \$350K (www.onwafer.com)
- Opient- \$400K (www.opient.com)
- Skyflow- \$3.5M (www.skyflow.com)

The eight finalists in 2000 were [SkyFlow](#), [MechanEx](#), [Infoprotection.com](#), [Imagize](#), ArriveOnTime, Harmony123, [Somagenics](#) and [Sporteum](#). [SkyFlow](#), a developer of infrastructure software for wireless applications using speech recognition technology, won the \$50,000 First Prize. Second place and \$10,000 went to [MechanEx](#), a web-based equipment exchange. [Infoprotection.com](#), an ASP focused on corporate confidentiality services, took home third place and \$5,000 while [Imagize](#), a semiconductor manufacturer commercializing a new image-processing paradigm, won the \$5,000 People's Choice Award .

Class of 1999:

- Alloptic- \$19.7M (www.alloptic.com)
- AudioBasket- \$29M (www.audiobasket.com)
- GetRelevant- \$4.855M (www.getrelevant.com)
- Hotpaper- \$2M, Acquired for \$10M by GoAmerica (www.hotpaper.com)
- [Timbre Technologies](#) - Acquired by TEL for \$138M

- ZipRealty- \$27.7M (www.ziprealty.com)

The first ever Business Plan Competition took place on May 8th, 1999 at the Haas School of Business, University of California, Berkeley. Over 80 teams registered for the event, 45 teams submitted business plans and eight finalists competed for a total of \$10,000 in prize money.

The eight finalists selected to proceed to the final round were Hotpaper.com, ZipRealty.com, Alloptic, Timbre Technology, InVivo, iLink Corporation, VouchSafe, Inc., and muNetix. Timbre Technologies, an innovative software program that saves semiconductor manufacturers billions of dollars, was the [winner](#) of the competition, taking home \$8,000 in prize money. The second runner-up in the competition was Alloptic, creator of a low-cost fiber optic system designed to break the bandwidth jam currently plaguing providers of telephone, cable and wireless services. The third place People's Choice Award was given to muNetix, manufacturer of ultra-small power supplies, an enabling technology for our increasingly mobile society.

The Business Plan Competition expanded considerably over the years. Entrants came from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds, both technical and non-technical, and ranged in experience from first-time entrepreneurs to accomplished businesspeople from UC Berkeley's alumni community.

More than 60 venture capitalists and successful entrepreneurs served as judges, narrowing the field to 65 First Round teams. After submitting completed business plans, First Round teams were narrowed to 8 finalists. Each of these 8 finalists presented to a panel of leading venture capitalists, competing for the \$50,000 First Prize and prize money totaling \$70,000.

To date, teams from the 1999 Competition have raised over \$86 million in venture financing!