

Innovation Week prompts involvement with NDSU research and tech

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The 3rd annual NDSU Innovation Week will take place from Jan. 23 to Jan. 27 across campus. The NDSU Research and Technology Park puts on Innovation Week.

According to Executive Director of the Research and Technology Park, Tony Grindberg, the Park has been bringing students and businesses together for both business and educational reasons for nearly 11 years.

Innovation Week '12 is comprised of two main components, and the second is the competition.

The break out sessions has speakers who teach the audience about different aspects of business and how to find and take charge of opportunities. These break out groups are taking place all day on Tuesday, Jan. 24 and Thursday, Jan. 26.

This is the first year that the Research and Technology Park has implemented a competition into Innovation Week. Each group must create a presentation that is central around an innovative business idea. These presentations will be given to a panel of judges whom are involved with entrepreneurship and business.

There are 20 groups that consist of a broad selection of students. The competitors

range from sophomores to graduate students, are from all over the world and study an array of majors. This competition isn't just for engineering or other technology-based students; some students on the list are studying zoology, English, education, finance, and even university studies.

The competition consists of an oral element and a visual element, and will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 25. Posters can be viewed at 9 a.m. in the Memorial Union Prairie Rose Room.

Contestants will be judged on the object, purpose of their idea, their methods and application, and the outcome. Bonus points will be given for style. First place winners will

receive \$5,000. Second place winners will receive \$2,500 and following suit, third place winners will receive \$1,000. The winners will be announced on Jan. 26 at 4 p.m. in the Great Room.

Another one of the judges, and also the keynote speaker, is Tom Walker, the CEO of Tasty Catering. Walker is from the Chicago area and speaks nationally about leadership, employee engagement, entrepreneurship and brand image. He has been in business for 40 years and in that time has started 29 companies and acquired three. He is still a principle in nine of those companies. His speech will be given on Jan. 26 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the Great Room.

Brenda Wyland, Associate Director of the NDSU Research and Technology Park, stresses that all students should get involved with Innovation Week.

"Innovation Week provides a platform for NDSU students to see firsthand how innovation drives entrepreneurship and that leads to opportunity," Wyland stated.

Students will be able to attend the break out sessions and listen to what successful entrepreneurs have to say about innovation and business. Bruce Rafert, NDSU provost, agrees with Wyland.

"We all live in a global knowledge economy, and higher education is on the front lines. At NDSU, innova-

tion is everywhere. This is a chance for students to hear and learn from some of the best entrepreneurs in North Dakota—in both formal and informal one-on-one discussions," Rafert said.

Students who don't think that Innovation Week is right for them could find Innovation Week a useful tool for the future, especially if they are interested in entrepreneurship and business.

"It's about creating opportunities for yourself as well as others," Grindberg said.

Students can find more information about Innovation Week and the full schedule by visiting <http://www.ndsuresearchpark.com/about/Pages/Events.aspx>.