

Media Relations

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UNH Hosts Final Round of Statewide Social Venture Innovation Challenge Dec. 15

DURHAM, N.H. – The final round of the 2014 New Hampshire Social Venture Innovation Challenge will be held Monday, Dec. 15, 2014, beginning at 1 p.m. in the University of New Hampshire’s Paul College auditorium. A keynote address by Eric Schwarz, founding CEO of Citizen Schools, will begin at 4 p.m. followed by the awards ceremony when over \$25,000 in cash prizes will be handed out. The events are free and open to the public but space is limited and registration is required: <http://www.unh.edu/svic>.

The final round will be judged by leading social venture founders, leaders and investors. Alex Freid, founder and director of the Post-Landfill Action Network (PLAN), will help judge the student panel. Freid is a UNH graduate who was the winner of last year’s challenge. Freid and PLAN have used the proceeds from their first place finish to roll-out an innovative model for reducing waste on university campuses, diverting more than 65 tons of waste from landfills.

The Social Venture Innovation Challenge is a unique program hosted by UNH which brings together a diverse group of college students and community entrepreneurs from across the state and encourages them to help address some of society’s most pressing social and environmental challenge using their creativity in designing novel, sustainable, market-based solutions. Rather than full business plans, the challenge is interested in unlocking and jumpstarting innovative thinking with low barriers to entry for students in any major and community members who want to “make a difference.”

In only its second year, the challenge attracted entries from 71 teams representing 158 student and community entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds. Contestants in the student track represent at least 25 different majors and areas of study including business, economics, nutrition, public health, biology, political science, computer science, chemical, civil, mechanical and environmental engineering, biotechnology, outdoor education, and social work. The challenge also drew entries from teams which included students at Antioch, Colby-Sawyer and Plymouth State University.

The program is a collaborative, interdisciplinary event, organized at UNH by the Peter T. Paul College of Business & Economics, the Carsey School of Public Policy, UNH Sustainability Institute, NH EPSCoR and Net Impact UNH. Major supporters of the challenge include Timberland, The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, Pixel Media and Alpha Loft.

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