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## E FOCUS

### Tufts Entrepreneurs Plan Big

***The winners of this year's annual business plan competitions at Tufts look forward to the opportunity to expand their businesses.***

Medford/Somerville, Mass. [04.17.07]

Tufts senior Mike Lewis wasn't sure how Combat Studios would fare in the university's annual business plan competition for student entrepreneurs. "There were a lot of strong contenders," he says. But his military-themed, online gaming company stood out from the competition. Experience, he says, worked to his advantage.



Bright business ideas

"We have been operational with a product in the marketplace for a few years, which is a big bonus," says the history major, who founded the company in 2004. "This would be the third or fourth business plan I've written."

The practice has served Lewis well. In March, he won Tufts' 3rd Annual Business Plan Competition for his company, Combat Studios, which organizes tournaments to give online gamers an opportunity to compete against each other.

The honor came with \$5,000 in consulting services from Deloitte & Touche USA, \$8,500 in cash and a \$25,000 real estate grant from Cummings Properties, a Massachusetts development and property management company founded by Tufts graduate William S. Cummings (A'58).

Sponsored by Tufts' [Entrepreneurial Leadership Program](#), the [Annual Business Plan Competition](#) and its sister contest, the [Frigon Family Prize in Social Entrepreneurship](#), attract aspiring entrepreneurs from throughout the Tufts community. According to Lewis, this year—like every other—was marked by tough competition.

"Many of the other teams had extensive professional experience," he says. "I think our plan stood out because it was meticulously crafted, drawing on a variety of primary and secondary source data, and it presented a realistic growth model."

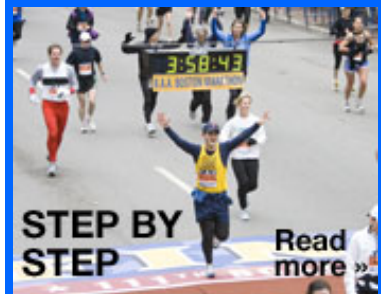
According to Pamela Goldberg, director of Tufts' Entrepreneurial

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Leadership Program, the quality of the entries in both competitions was impressive. “We had some that were better than we ever had,” says Goldberg. “Tufts has some of the most entrepreneurial students and leaders.”

Fletcher School student Jessica Dunsmore certainly fits that bill. She and two students from Harvard Business School took top prize in this year’s Frigon Competition, which encourages members of the Tufts community to think about developing businesses that benefit society.

Dunsmore and her teammates created the Charitable Donations Group (CDG), which helps nonprofit organizations achieve greater financial sustainability. To that end, CDG “facilitates the risk-free, tax-efficient transfer of real estate donations to nonprofit organizations, namely schools,” says Dunsmore, who is slated to graduate from The Fletcher School in 2008.

As part of the prize, Dunsmore’s team received \$10,000 cash, a \$25,000 real estate package from Cummings Properties, \$5,000 in Skadden Arps legal assistance, a \$5,000 consulting package from Deloitte & Touche USA, free advising from Kodiak Ventures and a helping building a website from *Web.com*.

She plans to put the resources to good use.

“We are currently holding investor meetings, and we are scheduled to meet with representatives from various schools throughout the spring and summer,” Dunsmore says. “We are looking forward to working with Tufts as we get CDG started.”

Lewis, who previously worked for Electronic Arts, a game developing, marketing and publishing company, is eager to expand his business as well. He intends to use his prize to fuel “Tour of Duty,” the company’s proprietary service that simulates actual warfare by organizing players into squads and platoons that compete against each other. He says the group also plans “to use the generous real estate grant as a springboard to help grow the company.”

The support from Tufts has helped boost the companies that won last year’s competitions. Brian Yun (A’07) and Noah Spitzer-Williams (E’06) won last year’s classic competition for their business plan for EMS Planner—a nationwide scheduling service designed for volunteer EMS and fire squads. In the past year, the company’s paid client base has grown from three squads to 23 and its revenues have jumped to more than \$13,000 per year.

The winner of last year’s Frigon Competition—The Community Language Bank in Somerville —has grown, too. The nonprofit that provides translation services has worked with Cross-Cultural Communication Solutions, Inc. (CCCS) to provide training to new employees.

Beyond the opportunity to expand his company, Lewis says the competition was valuable in other respects.

“It was a fantastic experience,” Lewis says. “And the support we got was excellent.”

*Profile written by Robert Anthony C. Siy, III, Class of 2010*



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