

AWARD

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ugly," she said.

The prototype of their product was unveiled at the New Venture Competition. Created from backpack-type material, the diaper bag would cost about \$35 in stores, she said.

So far, response to the "Pack-a-roo" has been overwhelmingly positive, she said.

"The juvenile-products industry is really big right now," she said.

Suzanne Abbot's parents own a baby furniture business and helped the couple find information and contacts in the field, she said.

When the Abbots first hatched the idea, they didn't realize how much work their project would require. "Along with everything else, we still had to do our coursework," she said.

During the project's five-month incubation, the couple spent countless hours on the phone, doing research and assembling financial data. "It was hellish but we learned a lot," she said.

Because the Abbots want to run their own business someday, their experience with the diaper bag idea has been doubly valuable, she said.

Steve Abbot, 26, said the couple is much more confident now about starting a business.

"At first we were skeptical," he said, "but after undertaking a project like this, you realize that maybe you can do it."

The couple also realized that, unlike many married couples, they could work on a business project together, he said.

"If we can make it through this, we can make it through anything," Suzanne said.

Before they moved to Eugene from Washington, D.C., this past summer, Steve had worked in accounting and Suzanne had been employed by an advertising agency. They decided to attend the University's M.B.A. program to get experience that would help them with their business goals, Steve said.

"We just didn't expect to come this far in the first year," he said. "We just wanted to get our feet wet."

The couple plans to do more research on their business concept this summer, he said.

Team wins contest with diaper bag plan

By James Sinks

For the Oregon Daily Emerald

A University team's proposal for a diaper bag manufacturing business received the top award at the third annual New Venture Competition Saturday at the Chiles Center.

First-year business graduate students Steve and Suzanne Abbot created and presented the winning entry.

A four-judge panel gave the Abbots high marks for their written business plan, 15-minute oral presentation and the likely real-world success of their proposed venture, McKenzie Baby Products.

The Abbots received \$2,000 for their first-place finish. Ken Dwyer of Boise State earned second place and \$1,000.

"The Oregon team had the best plan, and they were able to articulate their ideas well," said Bill Lazier, a competition judge and a business professor from Stanford University. "They really walked away with it."

In addition to submitting the required paperwork to the judges, the Abbots also created a prototype for their first product, a combination waist pack and diaper bag.

The New Venture Competition, sponsored by the Lundquist Center in the school of business, is designed to give college students who have business ideas an opportunity to have their proposals evaluated by top-notch professionals, organizers said.

"This is an excellent training ground for young people and companies who want to be entrepreneurs," said Carl Flipper, a contest judge and president of the Oregon Enterprise Forum.

Lundquist Center Director Karlin Conklin called this year's event a "phenomenal success," despite the disqualification of the Washington State entry because a videotape of the required oral presentation did not arrive.

"The competition is getting better every year," she said.

Teams from five Northwest schools - Oregon, Oregon State, Washington State, Boise State and Portland State - submitted entries for the event.

The contest should grow again next year because the cash awards will be bigger and schools from the entire West Coast will be invited to participate, Conklin said.

SPEECH

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er education a funding priority. The state cut funding by 25 percent during the most recent biennium.

"Fortunately or not, I've had a lot of experience with budget cuts," he said. "It's important to work with the population of the state to prevent a state funding deficit similar to Oregon's."

Like he did in Oregon, he plans to work with the faculty to decide where to make further budget cuts. He also plans to acquire grants from businesses, alumni and the community, a strategy that recently netted a \$8.6 million dollar grant for the University's College of Arts and Sciences.

He said that he would even try to prevent further cuts by schooling state legislators one on one about the importance of higher

education for the state's economic future.

Another current controversy at Indiana is the debate of whether the faculty should focus the majority of their time on research or teaching.

He reiterated the opinion that saw him through a similar debate at Oregon.

"It's a myth that they are separable and competing activities," he said. "They clearly reinforce one another."

Brand may also face another debate about multicultural curriculum requirements.

Former Indiana student body president Jay Fultz said that a once-a-week discussion course he helped create to help students feel connected to the university and their peers has wrongly been labeled a "diversity requirement." He said that campus conservatives have tried to prevent the class from being taught.

NAACP

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"There's no doubt about that."

Collin said that landfill sites are often introduced to minority communities under the guise of economic development. He said he is tired of "compromises" that encourage support for a new site by belittling the health risks of close proximity to waste sites and emphasizing employment in an economically poor area.

"It never seems to fail that people of color get the short end of the stick," Collin said.

Victor Scher, president of the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, talked about the Defense Fund's role in protecting both civil rights and the environment.

Described by Rosenthal as a "pit bull on crack," Scher said that his job is to sue on behalf of the environment.

"The first point that needs to come out in a discussion about environmental justice ... is that we must turn to the courts. The second thing to say is that the courts aren't everything," Scher said.

Scher advocates alternatives rather than compromises. He told a parable of a woman standing in front of a swift, icy stream. Behind her, risk assessors weigh her chances of making it across the stream. They try to convince her to cross, pulling out graphs and charts to show that the odds are in her favor. The woman refuses. When they ask why, she points out that there is a bridge just upstream.

"We need to get out of risk assessing and get into alternative assessing so we aren't dealing with risk, we're dealing with an environment that sustains the world," Scher said.

Rosenthal agreed and said the NAACP now has an environmental justice program, which includes educating and empowering communities and getting laws passed that are enforced and "written with people in mind."

"One of the most pressing concerns facing the country now is toxic waste sites," he said. "We want to make sure the air you breath ... and the water you drink is clean."

PROVOST

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ident with whom that person would be working.

Committee Chairman Dave Frohnmayer said Brand and state Board of Higher Education Chancellor Thomas Bartlett decided Friday to stop selection work for two weeks while the state board appoints an interim president.

"The search was going along in good shape and now we have had to cancel the visits of some candidates until later," Frohnmayer said.

Committee members echo Frohnmayer's uncertainty about the state of the selection process. The committee was planning to suggest an appointee by the end of spring term.

"Up until Brand's announcement I think the search was moving forward, but given Brand's announcement I am not sure how that will affect the search," said committee member Marshall Saucedo.

"Until we have the opportunity to get together as a committee it's hard to say. Those two positions are so closely tied together (that) we have to be very careful when we decide what to do."

Although an interim president and provost would be appointed, hiring a new provost after a new president could make the transition to leadership at the University harsh for both new administrators and may derail Brand's long-range financial and academic goals for the University.

"I don't think it's wise or necessary to have both an interim president and provost," said Dan Williams, who had served in administrative positions for two decades before coming to University as the vice president for administration.

"Conventional wisdom is that you can't have a successful search for provost without the candidates knowing who the president is. We don't have the luxury of that."

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