

THE SOUTH FLORIDA BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Polly want a new venture?

The winners of **Florida International University's New Venture Challenge**, an international business plan competition, were announced May 13 at the College of Business Administration's (CBA) Entrepreneurship Hall of Fame luncheon at Parrot Jungle Island.

The colleges of business administration and engineering sponsored the challenge.

A team from the CBA created **Eco-Solutions**, the first-place winner at the undergraduate level. It walked away with \$15,000 and \$4,000 in gifts for presenting the best business plan for a start-up venture. The company created **MelaMulch**, a solution to Florida's invasive melaleuca tree problem.

At the graduate level, the first place winner was **University PlacementServices.com**. The firm offers international students complete and detailed information services concerning all aspects of the university admissions process in the United States. The team, also from FIU, received \$19,000 in other con-

tributions.

Watching students put ideas to work and develop their own companies has been rewarding, CBA Executive Dean **Joyce J. Elam** said.

"This is our third year," she said. "The participation of our students has increased, and the quality of the business plans increased."

One judge even sent a congratulatory e-mail on the presentation of a non-winner and said he would talk to his friends in the venture capital community about getting the student funding.

- John T. Fakler