This document contains information and data from the second year of the DifferenceMaker program. It discusses the 2014 Idea Challenge, finalist teams, program activities, and more.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DifferenceMaker Program Introduction</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DifferenceMaker Partners and Supporters</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DifferenceMaker Programs</td>
<td>5-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DifferenceMaker Activities &amp; Events</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DifferenceMaker Team</td>
<td>9-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DifferenceMaker Online</td>
<td>11-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DifferenceMaker &quot;On the Road&quot;</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DifferenceMaker $35K Idea Challenge</td>
<td>14-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idea Challenge Finalists</td>
<td>16-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DifferenceMaker Program Outcomes</td>
<td>19-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank You</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Information</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DifferenceMaker Program Introduction

The DifferenceMaker program made great strides this past academic year, expanding the level of student, faculty, alumni and community engagement across the campus. The number of students involved in DifferenceMaker activities increased by 50% (to 5,721), and the amount of startup awards granted students to student teams also increased to $40,000. Due to the increased level of student engagement, we expanded the involvement of alumni and other supporters as both judges and student mentors, including one event where 24 judges reviewed 40 DifferenceMaker student team pitches one April afternoon. Two colleges, the College of Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; and the Manning School of Business added new college-based competitions in the Fall 2013 semester, and the DifferenceMaker team stepped up to coordinate and staff these events. Our students, faculty and alumni have embraced the DifferenceMaker program and the results are evident across campus.

This annual report is meant to provide a snapshot of the activities and impact of the UMass Lowell DifferenceMaker program. As you review these pages you will see examples demonstrating the breadth of the program and the value it adds for our students and our campus. Only two years old, DifferenceMaker is fast becoming an important part of the culture and experience of UMass Lowell students. Administrators, faculty and students regularly discuss “making a difference” through their coursework, extracurricular and volunteer activities. Colleges with lower representation in DifferenceMaker events have begun to examine how the program might be tailored to best meet the needs of their own students and programs (look for announcements during our October Entrepreneurship Month program). New traditions, such as the Convocation Pitch Event and the DifferenceMaker Idea Challenge (both in their third year) are emerging and are now embraced by the broader campus community. DifferenceMaker has “caught on” and is now taking root in our campus culture.

However our greatest success will be measured by the success of our students, their ability to both learn from the DifferenceMaker experience and to succeed in their ventures and pursuits. In this regard, we are off to a promising start. Developing Nation Prosthetic (now a startup company named NonSpec), the 2013 Campus-Wide DifferenceMaker, has gone on to form a company, file a patent and win another $70,000 in competitions across the country. They are now consulting with clinicians from Children’s Hospital and the UMass Medical Center regarding the development of prosthetic usability studies and continue to move forward with their company. The 2014 Campus-Wide DifferenceMaker, Support Our Students, entered the 2014 Sandbox Accelerator and was awarded an additional $2,000 award. They are planning to participate in the Clinton Global University Initiative. 2013 Fan Favorite GrabABite, a localized restaurant sales and order site was sold last year to ClickWaiter for an undisclosed sum, and its
student founder is now working on a new, lost device technology. Bright Future Generations has made two successful trips to Rwanda to aid orphans of the Rwandan genocide. As you can see, our UMass Lowell students are quite busy making a difference.

We also spent time this past year examining just what our DifferenceMaker students are learning. Through the support of a New England Board of Higher Education Vision Assessment Grant, we studied how DifferenceMaker activities aligned with nationally accepted learning outcomes. Our team of Faculty Fellows worked diligently with a team of assessment experts to determine which critical learning outcomes were addressed by the many DifferenceMaker activities our students participate in. Faculty and assessment experts who analyzed DifferenceMaker student artifacts found their work demonstrated the exercise of creative thinking, problem solving skills, global learning and integrative learning (the real-world application of disciplinary knowledge). This coming year the DifferenceMaker team will examine these specific student outcomes in more detail.

The Idea Challenge and other DifferenceMaker activities would not be possible without the generous support of our alumni, foundations, and other organizations that share our vision for engaging students in innovative and entrepreneurial problem solving. We are very grateful for their financial support and for their guidance and encouragement of our efforts. Their financial contributions help support our student Enterprise Scholars, the DifferenceMaker Idea Challenge, student development workshops, and our Faculty Fellows program. If you would like to learn more about how you might support our DifferenceMaker students, please reach out to me directly, and we can discuss an approach that aligns with professional and philanthropic interests.

This report provides a detailed summary of activities for the second year of the program and provides some sense of our plans for expanding the program over the next year. Additional information regarding the DifferenceMaker program and our student’s efforts can be found on the DifferenceMaker website at http://www.uml.edu/differencemaker. If you would like more information regarding the DifferenceMaker program, or wonder how you might be able to help our students make a difference, please reach out to our team. We can be reached at DifferenceMaker@uml.edu, or you can call me directly (978-934-4240).

Thank you for your interest in the DifferenceMaker program, we look forward to working with you as we grow a culture of innovation, entrepreneurship, and creative problem-solving at the University of Massachusetts Lowell.

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DifferenceMaker Partners and Supporters

Our goal is simple: engage students in developing sustainable solutions to real world problems. Tackling “big problems” like climate change, poverty, pollution, and hunger can prove challenging for one person, or even one organization, so DifferenceMaker works with partners to leverage experience, reach, and resources. We also depend on the financial support of alumni, friends, donors, and organizations that value the work DifferenceMaker does with its students.

Partners

Our partners include:

- Merrimack Valley Sandbox
- UMass Lowell Climate Change Initiative
- UMass Lowell Division of Student Affairs
- UMass Lowell Honors Program
- UMass Lowell Orientation Office
- UMass Lowell Office of Residence Life
- Manning School of Business
- College of Fine Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
- Francis College of Engineering

Supporters

Supporters who have helped us make a difference include:

- Digital Credit Union
- Joseph C. Day Chancellors’ Fund for Institutional Priorities
- Deshpande Foundation (through the Merrimack Valley Sandbox)
- Joseph P. Donahue Charitable Foundation
- Mitchell Kertzman Endowed Discretionary Fund
- Francis L. McKone Chancellor’s Discretionary Endowment Fund
- Pernick Chancellor’s Endowed Discretionary Fund
- Spinola Angel Investment Fund for Entrepreneurship
- Jack Wilson Endowed Presidential Entrepreneurship Award Fund
- Robert J. Manning Endowment Fund (Robert and Donna Manning)
- Glenn Morgan, Class of 1986, College of Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
DifferenceMaker Process and Activities

**DifferenceMaker Process**

- Raising Awareness & Entrepreneurial Orientation
- Building Basic Skills & Concept Development
- Supporting Business Formation

**DifferenceMaker Activities**

- Freshman Make a Difference Orientation
- Introduction to DifferenceMaker – Freshman Seminar
- Lego Problem Solving Sessions
- DifferenceMaker Introductory Events
- Living Learning Community (LLC)
- DifferenceMaker Idea Challenge Workshop and Coaching
- DifferenceMaker Credit Course
- DifferenceMaker Reverse Pitch
- College Competitive Events
- DifferenceMaker Faculty Workshop
- DifferenceMaker Idea Challenge
- Merrimack Valley Sandbox Accelerator Program
- DifferenceMaker Central

**Raising Awareness and Entrepreneurial Orientation**

1. **Freshman Make A Difference-Orientation**
A collaboration effort between the Office of Orientation, Student Activities and Leadership, and Residence Life in order to introduce all incoming freshmen to the DifferenceMaker program, as well as help engage them in creative problem-solving.

2. **Freshman Seminar-Introduction to DifferenceMaker**
A series of in-class discussions that introduce the DifferenceMaker program to students of all disciplines. Classroom visits included 630 students throughout The Manning School of Business, The Francis College of Engineering, The College of Fine Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, and The College of Health Sciences.

3. **Lego Problem Solving Sessions in Freshman Classes**
A collaboration effort between the DifferenceMaker program, The Manning School of Business, and The College of Fine Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences to introduce freshman students to ideation sessions, problem solving, and team work. These sessions were conducted in 15 classes with over 292 participants. Faculty Fellows Professor Finch and Professor Jordan from the Manning School of Business led this effort.

4. **DifferenceMaker Introductory Events**
A series of events held on both north and south campus to introduce students to DifferenceMaker program concepts. These events include the DifferenceMaker Convocation Pitch Contest, Climate Change Teach-in, and Kick-off Events to name a few.

5. **DifferenceMaker Living Learning Community (LLC)**
A partnership between the DifferenceMaker program and the Office of Resident Life to provide freshman with the opportunity to reside in a dorm with an entrepreneurial atmosphere focused on creative problem solving. 15 students participated in the 2013-2014 academic year.
Basic Skills and Concept Development

1. **DifferenceMaker Course Credit Projects**
   A collaboration effort between the DifferenceMaker program and various undergraduate and graduate courses in The Francis College of Engineering, The School of Fine Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, The Graduate School of Education, and The College of Health Science to introduce students to the program. Students’ innovative ideas are explored and presented in a format which could enable their projects to be candidates for both the Idea Challenge and the Merrimack Valley Campus Catalyst Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Name</th>
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<td>John Morgan Bush</td>
<td>Art Administration and Marketing</td>
<td>The School of Fine Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Brown</td>
<td>Teaching and Learning with Technology</td>
<td>The Graduate School of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guanling Chen</td>
<td>Developing Mobile Apps</td>
<td>The College of Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edward Hajduk</td>
<td>Introduction to Engineering- Extra Credit Project</td>
<td>The Francis College of Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainat Koren</td>
<td>Role Transition Practicum</td>
<td>The College of Health Science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **DifferenceMaker Idea Challenge Workshop Series**
   Four workshops that assist students in transforming their ideas to sustainable projects. These workshops are conducted on campus, but are also recorded so students are able to retrieve the content from the resource website page if they are unable to attend.

3. **DifferenceMaker Idea Challenge Coaching Session**
   Two days of guidance are provided to students in specific time slots on both north and south campus. These sessions are meant to help refine their idea concepts and final presentation pitch.

4. **DifferenceMaker Reverse Pitch Event**
   Four community organizations pitched their potential problems to a group of 25 motivated students who could help solve them. The goal of this event was to connect students with community members who needed dedicated assistance. Students could then pick a problem they wanted to help with and submit it to the Idea Challenge.

5. **College Competition Events**
   DifferenceMaker co-sponsored two college competitions that emerged from the program:
   - **The College of Fine Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences** launched its first Annual Creative Venture Competition on south campus. The FAHSS Creative Venture Competition seeks to leverage and highlight the entrepreneurial spirit and creative abilities of UMass Lowell students, especially within the FAHSS departments. 15 teams consisting of 32 students participated in this competition. The $2,500 1st place winning team was DreamShare, a social network used to share dreams.
• The Manning School of Business and Digital Federal Credit Union launched the DCU Innovation Contest. The DCU Innovation Contest seeks UMass Lowell students who have a cutting-edge banking and/or financial innovation which will drive the future success in the banking industry. 8 teams comprised of 25 students participated in this contest. AutoCredit was the winner with $500 in prize money awarded to each team member.

6. DifferenceMaker Faculty Workshop
This workshop introduces the DifferenceMaker program to UMass Lowell faculty and assists them in integrating elements of DifferenceMaker into their classrooms and course work. 39 faculty members attended this entrepreneurial workshop.

Business Formation and Development

1. DifferenceMaker Idea Challenge
The Idea Challenge is the signature event for the program. Students present a concept proposal for a needed service, product or business that addresses a real world challenge. Over 190 students participated in the 2014 Idea Challenge, including 72 teams (almost double from 2013), representing 32 various academic departments. 13 teams made it through to the Idea Challenge to pitch their idea to a panel of UMass Lowell alumni. Each of these 13 teams won a portion of the $35,000 award, including an additional Fan Favorite Award, to total 14 winning teams. The Campus-Wide DifferenceMaker winning team, Support Our Students was awarded the top prize of $7,000. Since the Idea Challenge in April 2014 the team has been accepted into the Sandbox Summer Accelerator Program. Additional details regarding the Idea Challenge are included on page 15.

2. Merrimack Valley Sandbox Accelerator Program
DifferenceMaker works closely with the Merrimack Valley Sandbox, a community business accelerator funded by the Deshpande Foundation, in order to support student entrepreneurs to grow their business. The Sandbox Accelerator Program provides 3 month of mentorship, weekly workshops, and seed funding to students with promising start-ups throughout the cities of Lowell and Lawrence, as well as UMass Lowell DifferenceMaker students. Students receive consultation from DifferenceMaker staff when applying to the Accelerator Program. Two 2013 Idea Challenge winners, Robotic Feeding Arm and Hybrid Power Tricycle were selected as 2013 Summer Accelerator projects. Support Our Students, the winner of 2014 Idea Challenge was accepted to the 2014 Summer Accelerator.

3. DifferenceMaker Central
DifferenceMaker Central has a vibrant start-up community atmosphere where entrepreneurial teams come together to work, brainstorm, and network. Students have access to flexible workstations, televisions, computers, mentors, and a dynamic meeting space to develop their ideas and collaborate amongst their teammates and fellow students. This space opened in May 2013.
2013-2014 DifferenceMaker Team

Faculty Fellows

Faculty Fellows are chosen amongst their colleges to help support DifferenceMaker activities and its students.

**John Brown**  
Lecturer  
Graduate School of Education  
English Education

**Guanling Chen**  
Professor  
College of Sciences  
Computer Sciences

**Deborah Finch**  
Professor  
Manning School of Business

**Ralph E. Jordan**  
Visiting Instructor  
Manning School of Business  
Management

**Valerie Kijewski**  
Associate Professor  
Manning School of Business  
Management/Marketing

**Ainat Koren**  
Associate Professor  
College of Health Science  
School of Nursing

**Chad Montrie**  
Professor  
College of Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences  
History, American Studies, Gender Studies

**Tom O'Donnell**  
Visiting Professor  
Manning School of Business  
Management/Entrepreneurship

**Daniel Sullivan**  
Lecturer  
Francis School of Engineering  
Mechanical Engineering

**Steven F. Tello**  
Associate Vice Chancellor  
Entrepreneurship and Economic Development
Staff

Holly Butler
Entrepreneurial Initiatives Program Manager

Ha Pho
Entrepreneurial Initiatives Program Manager

Co-op Students

James Abdallah, Manning School of Business

Dimitrios Booras, College of Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Gianni Falzone, Manning School of Business

Phillip Geoffroy, College of Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Michael Jannino, College of Sciences

Faith Malay, Francis School of Engineering
DifferenceMaker Online

DifferenceMaker went online this year with a new crowd funding site, a tool for helping teams collaborate, an online portfolio, and various social media portals.

Hawk Hatch

UMass Lowell launched a philanthropic crowd funding site called Hawk Hatch. This platform assists projects, programs, and ventures around the campus, including DifferenceMaker projects, in raising money to reach a goal amount. Currently there are three DifferenceMaker projects on Hawk Hatch receiving money donations from various people including alumni, family, friends, faculty, staff, and community members. These donations are used to further these projects and achieve milestones.

• **Nonspec has raised $2,590 so far**. They are developing a low cost, highly functional replacement prosthetic limb customizable for children in developing nations.

• **Fresh Beets** is a food truck and music venue in Lowell that unites music, food, education, and revelry into one vehicle of change. This team has just begun raising money.

• **@That has already raised $1,230**. @That is a smartphone application that promotes student engagement on campus.

Each semester new projects are cycled in and out of Hawk Hatch. [www.uml.edu/hawkhatch](http://www.uml.edu/hawkhatch)

TeamMaker

TeamMaker is an internet-based tool for student collaboration and multidisciplinary team building.

• There are "seekers" who are individual students that post their information wanting to join a current team.

• There are teams who post their project information to “build a team” and are looking for additional teammates, or "seekers”.

Teams are able to meet, share, merge, and work together to strengthen the dynamic of their projects. [www.uml.edu/teammaker](http://www.uml.edu/teammaker)

DifferenceMaker on Social Media

University of Massachusetts Lowell Innovation Fellows Program

This program is run by the National Center for Engineering Pathways to Innovation (Epicenter), funded by the National Science Foundation as a partnership between Stanford University and the National Collegiate of Inventors and Innovators Alliance (NCIIA). University Innovation Fellows call on engineering students and their peers to dream, design, and deliver innovations that solve real-world problems.

UMass Lowell selected four students to fill this role. They developed the UMass Lowell Innovation Fellows Program website through the wiki software that was provided through NCIIA. This wiki site demonstrates UMass Lowell’s current innovative and entrepreneurial efforts.

DifferenceMaker “On the Road”

DifferenceMaker students gain global perspectives on their educations and their projects.

**Bright Future Generation travelled to Rwanda:** Vanessa Colomba, team leader of Bright Future Generation and second place winner of the 2013 Idea Challenge “Significant Social Impact” award, runs a non-profit organization in Rwanda. This organization brings mental health services to Rwandan youth. Since winning $1,500 in 2013 Vanessa has travelled to Africa twice to begin the implementation of her DifferenceMaker project.

**Nonspec travelled to Florida, Washington D.C. and Tennessee:** Nonspec, UMass Lowell’s 2013 $5,000 “Campus-Wide DifferenceMaker” team is developing a low cost, highly functionality replacement limb customizable for children in developing nations. Since 2013, Nonspec has travelled to Florida, Washington D.C., and Tennessee in order to participate in other pitch contests, raise money, purchase prototyping equipment, and to promote their brand and startup.

**BioBubbler travelled to Haiti:** BioBubbler, the first place winner of the 2014 Idea Challenge “Significant Social Impact” award has travelled to Haiti to study how they can provide the people of that impoverished nation with clean drinking water through their low tech, low cost, easy to maintain household system, called BioBubbler. They currently have five BioBubblers in Haitian households and plan to utilize their DifferenceMaker award of $4,000 to expand into churches, schools, and child care centers in the future.

**Mr. Meds travelled to Florida:** Philip Colangelo was the founder of the Robotic Feeding Arm which won the 2013 first place prize of $3,500 in the “Innovative Technology” category. Over the course of the year he reinvented his project and expanded his team to include business students. Through the redevelopment of the Robotic Feeding Arm his team launched a new project called Mr. Meds. Mr. Meds is a robot that manually distributes medication to patients in hospitals, thus avoiding the common and dangerous human error. They travelled to Florida and competed in the Cornell Cup USA, sponsored by Intel. Mr. Meds was among the Cornell Cup winners in addition to WPI, Portland State, and Penn State.
DifferenceMaker $35K Idea Challenge

The 2nd Annual DifferenceMaker Idea Challenge grew significantly in just one year. The goal of the Idea Challenge is to provide a competitive forum where students from all majors can demonstrate their ability to develop a sustainable solution (product, service, for-profit or non-profit venture) to a real-world problem or opportunity. Students are recruited through a variety of on-campus and online avenues, including classroom visits, social media, campus media, and north/south kick-off events. 72 applications were submitted from 198 students this year. These students represented all six academic colleges and 32 academic departments.

All teams are asked to develop an Idea Plan (2-3 page project proposal paper), a 3-minute rocket pitch, and a project poster. A series of five interactive workshops from February to March, and two days of rocket pitch coaching sessions are offered to assist these students in developing their project concepts and refining their pitches. Student teams pitch their ideas to two panels of judges, one at the Preliminary Pitch-off Event and the other at The Annual Idea Challenge. The judges consist of UMass Lowell Alumni and supporters. All teams that develop and submit the required deliverables are invited to participate in the Preliminary Pitch-off which took place on April 4th (42 teams participated). The top 13 teams went on to compete in the final Idea Challenge on April 15th where $35,000 in funding was awarded to those 13 teams and 1 fan favorite team for a total of 14 funded DifferenceMaker teams.

Idea Challenge Awards

A total of $35,000 in prizes was awarded to 14 student teams. The awards were presented in six different categories including:

- **UMass Lowell Campus-wide DifferenceMaker**-A team who is a great representation of the UMass Lowell community. Winning teams of this award are dedicated throughout the entire DifferenceMaker Program process by attending workshop events, coaching sessions, and other related events. These teams pitch a viable idea with a social responsibility ethos towards the university, community or world.
- **Significant Social Impact**-A team whose idea has a major social impact in various ways. Whether it is education, poverty, hunger, or another important problem, these teams find solutions and act upon them for the greater good.
- **Sustainable Environment**-A team who demonstrates dedication towards helping preserve the environment through new technologies or businesses.
- **Innovative Technology**-A team who pitches an interesting technology, whether it be a new technology or an innovative variation of a preexisting technology.
- **First to Market**-A team who shows that their project, idea or business will enter the marketplace before any other teams will.

![Erik Christiansen placed first in the "Innovative Technology" category for his Ottonmous device. This was a $4,000 award.](image)
The award money is provided through the generous support of our own University alumni and other university supporters. A complete list of award winning teams is listed below under 2014 Idea Challenge Finalists.

Once funds are awarded to each team at the Idea Challenge, the DifferenceMaker staff meets with each team to identify the next steps in the implementation of their proposed solutions. They are instructed on how to construct a project plan and budget for the usage of their winning funds. Each team is also provided with card access to DifferenceMaker Central for working space, and is introduced to potential mentors to facilitate the development of each team concept. With help from DifferenceMaker, these student teams move through each stage in the DifferenceMaker process until business launch is achieved.

![Image of judges listening attentively](image.jpg)

*Alumni judges listen attentively to student pitches at the 2014 Idea Challenge*
2014 Idea Challenge Winners

Campus-Wide DifferenceMaker

Support Our Students (SOS)
A glass-roots campus program designed to prevent college student hunger (food insecurity) and address the issue surrounding the stigma associated with receiving assistance.

- Teresa Shroll  Community Social Psychology  Master
- Sadie Prickett  Community Social Psychology  Master
- Mary Taurus  Community Social Psychology  Master
- Xavier Guay  Computer Science  2015
- Anna Henson  Marketing  2017

Significant Social Impact

BioBubbler
A non-profit program aimed to implement a simple and low cost water filtration system in Haiti.

- Rachel Paquette  Biology  2014
- Nawal Khan  Business  2015

2nd Place - $2,000

NerdOnyx
An e-learning web platform offering visual tutorials and applications to users interested in topics related to engineering.

- Ryan Hart  Electrical Engineering  2014
- Shiv Sharma  Electrical Engineering  PhD
- Kyle Vigeant  Electrical Engineering  2014
- Timothy Pflanz  Electrical Engineering  2014
- Anupama Purohit  Business  Master
- Kyle Homan  Electrical Engineering  PhD
- Albert Andino  Electrical Engineering  2014

Sustainable Environment

TermaGreen
A heat recovery solution the enables the opportunity to create electricity from current heat sources.

- Alexander Martinez-Forte  Business  2017
- Gregory Bohenko  Economics  2014
- Aaron Stafford  Business  2014
**Innovative Technology**

**OTTOnomous Technology**
An innovative device that maximizes efficiency and reduces emissions by maximizing the volumetric efficiency of car engines.

- Erik Christiansen   Mechanical Engineering   2014
- Vicktor Maldonado   Accounting/Global Business 2014
- Jeremy Dorson       Electrical Engineering    2014

**First to Market**

**Fresh Beets**
A food truck and music venue in Lowell that unites three discrete areas (food, music, and education) into one vehicle of change.

- Savannah Marshall   Music Business           Master

**Treehouse**
A web and phone application that connects friends with plans and events.

- James Abdallah      Business                 2014

**ZHUUM**
A mobile application that allows customers to view restaurant menus and order products directly from their mobile devices.

- Chuan Hong Lau      Business                 Master
- Wai Yuen Tang       Electrical Engineering/Physics 2012
- Darin Eidens        Business                 Master
- Dan Coughlin        Electrical Engineering/MBA Master

In addition to these prizes, 5 teams were awarded a $1,000 **Honorable Mention** prize and 1 team won the $1,000 **Fan Favorite** award (for a complete list of all winning teams, please visit the 2014 Final Awards section of our website www.differencemaker.uml).
## 2012 – 2014 DifferenceMaker Activity Activity Statistics

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DifferenceMaker Program Outcomes

DifferenceMaker Program outcomes have already aligned with its goals. One of the primary goals for DifferenceMaker is to create a community and awareness of innovation and entrepreneurship across the entire university. Another important goal is to assist and support UMass Lowell students in developing sustainable ideas and solutions to real-world problems.

Creating a Community and Awareness of Innovation and Entrepreneurship across the University

DifferenceMaker increased student involvement from 3,000+ student contacts to 5,000+ student contacts in just one year. The DifferenceMaker team visited classrooms across campus, making 43 visits to over 1,182 students. The Francis School of Engineering, The Manning School of Business (MSB), The Graduate School of Education, and The College of Health Sciences were among several of the colleges that were visited. There were six major university DifferenceMaker events on campus this year involving 1,500+ students. The signature event was the Idea Challenge where 13 teams competed for $35,000 in prizes donated by alumni. There were 72 applications submitted up from 45 last year and nearly 200 student participants, up from 112.

MSB and The College of Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (FAHSS) followed the DifferenceMaker model by creating new pitch contests within their departments. MSB sponsored a DCU Innovation Contest with Digital Federal Credit Union and FAHSS sponsored a Creative Venture Competition with Alumni Glenn Morgan.

UMass Lowell’s medical device incubator (M2D2) recruited Lowell High School students into a medical device course to teach them about the industry and entrepreneurship. The students were invited to DifferenceMaker workshops and to pitch their idea at the college level in the Preliminary Pitch-off.

During this second year, we found that our faculty, alumni, business and community members are supportive and willing to assist our students. Alumni judged student ventures, faculty worked across disciplines to ensure student teams made progress, and local businesses worked with student teams by providing them with ideas for real world problems.

Team Sustainability

Winning teams from 2013 have sustained, thrived, and redeveloped themselves.

1.) Nonspec, the 2013 Campus-wide DifferenceMaker team is a great example of what our students are capable of if given the correct resources and support. Since winning the $5,000 award in 2013, Nonspec was able to:
   • Make the list for Top 10 College Entrepreneurs of the Year by Entrepreneur Magazine
• Win $1,000 from the International Association of Plastics Distributors Application Design contest in Florida
• Be recognized by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers as one of the ten best in their 2014 Innovation Showcase
• Win $25,000 and first place at The Association for Manufacturing Excellence Awards
• Be awarded the Moo Grand Prix Small Business award ($12,000)
• Receive The National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance E-Team Stage 1 Grant ($5,000)
• Win first place at the ASME IShow in Washington D.C. ($25,000)
• Receive $2,500 in crowd funding donations from UMass Lowell’s Hawk Hatch
• Receive the NCIIA E2 Grant ($20,000)
• Win first place at the Merrimack Valley Sandbox Summit Pitch ($3,000)
• Submit a patent for their technology

2.) **Grab-a-Bite**, a smartphone application that directs students to local food establishments merged with another business group making it more viable as a business venture.

3.) **The Robotic Feeding Arm** has redeveloped into a team called **Mr. Meds**, now consisting of both engineering and business majors.

4.) A partnership is being formed between **Lowell Sprouts**, 2013 Idea Challenge winner and **SOS**, 2014 Idea Challenge winner. Both teams are directed toward food insecurity and education, therefore, Lowell Sprouts can provide SOS with fresh grown food to distribute to UMass Lowell students who attend their events or are hungry.

5.) **Bright Future Generation** is planning another trip to Rwanda soon in order to help the children of that nation.

6.) **Nonspec, Fresh Beets** and **@That** have been accepted to Hawk Hatch for crowd funding support.

In its second year, DifferenceMaker has proved to be a vital resource for these entrepreneurial and creative problem solving students.

Overall, DifferenceMaker advanced four specific skills sets for the 5,000+ students who participated this year. Faculty and administrators who analyzed DifferenceMaker students under the guidance of Charlotte Mandell, Vice Provost, and the Vision Grant rubric, reported that students displayed integrative learning, global learning, problem solving skills, and creative thinking. This coming year DifferenceMaker will examine these specific student outcomes in more detail.
Thank You

Thank you to all of the DifferenceMaker judges for making this program a great success.

Idea Challenge Judges-April 15, 2014

- Mr. Mark V. Forziati, Retired Senior VP and Partner, Tudor Investments Corp.
- Ms. Amy J. Hoey, Executive VP & Chief Operating Officer, Lowell General Hospital
- Ms. Patricia M. Keefe, VP Fixed Income Group Administrator, Loomis Sayles + Co., LP
- Mr. L. Donald LaTorre, President, L+ G Management Consultants Inc.
- Dr. Michael J. Morin, CEO, Supportive Therapeutics, LLC
- Mr. John V. Pulichino, Chairman & CEO, Group III International Ltd.
- Mr. James F. Regan, President & CEO, Digital Federal Credit Union
- Mr. Jack M. Wilson, President Emeritus UMass System, University of Massachusetts Lowell

Preliminary Pitch-off Judges-April 4, 2014

- Mr. Bryce Anderson, Owner/Principal, Coffey Design & Build, Co.
- Mr. David M. Basile, Senior VP Wealth Management/Investments, Janney Montgomery Scott
- Mr. Louis D. Beaudette, President, Admix Inc.
- Mr. John E. Cadigan, Angel Investor, Principal, JE Cadigan, LLC
- Mr. Michael Callahan, Medical Devices, Harvard Business School, Biotechnology
- Mr. Jonathan G. Geanakos, Executive VP Acquisitions & Capital, Monday Properties
- Mr. Steven R. Geyster, VP of Business Development, Estech
- Mr. Ethan Jacks, Managing Partner, Mediabridge Capital Advisors
- Ms. Wendy A. LaBate, Sr. VP Operations North East, Genesis HealthCare
- Mr. Joseph Lane, President, Ingens Medical, LLC
- Mr. Lewis Leathersich, Support Engineer, Microfluidics Corporation
- Mrs. Michelle A. Massaro, Attorney, Law Offices of Pamela Tremain
- Mr. James F. Regan, President & CEO, Digital Federal Credit Union
- Mr. Michael G. Rider, VP of Engineering & Operations, Coravin, LLC
- Mr. Glenn P. Morgan, Partner, Skyworld Interactive
- Dr. Michael J. Morin, CEO, Supportive Therapeutics, LLC
- Mr. Brian Rist, President & CEO, Storm Smart Industries Inc.
- Mr. Bill Rizos, President, BRGroup
- Mr. Raymond L. Southworth Jr., Owner/President/CFO, Netria Corporation
- Ms. Susan E. Stemporzewski, Principal Research Scientist, Tyco Adhesives
- Mr. Andrew J. Sutherland, Founder, Applied BioMath
- Mr. Christopher White, Treasurer, 600 lb Gorilla
- Mr. George Yfantopulos, Founder, President & CEO, The Beacon Group
- Mr. Anthony A. Zona, CEO, Pixtronix
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