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# Columbia Entrepreneurs Battle It Out in Elevator Pitch Competition

DEC 03 2014 | BY MELANIE A. FARMER | PHOTO: BARBARA ALPER

Fast and furious, nearly 40 teams got just 60 seconds to pitch their new business ideas to a group of judges during the Columbia Engineering Fast Pitch competition. This year marked the largest draw for Fast Pitch to date; nearly 70 applications were submitted and close to 170 people attended the event.

First place went to biotech startup Angulus with their device to help patients combat Ventilator Associated Pneumonia (VAP) and other hospital-acquired conditions. Four new business ideas targeting the art and fashion industries, boating marketplace, theatrical production, and health diagnostics tied for second and third place, respectively.

Fast Pitch is the Engineering School's annual elevator pitch competition open to Columbia undergraduates, graduates, alumni, and faculty from all schools and institutes across campus. Winners of the competition, held Nov. 18 in Lerner Hall, received funding for their startup venture and also gained invaluable feedback from experienced judges. The first-place winner received a \$2,000 prize, second place, \$1,000, and third place, \$500.



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Of note this year, two participating teams that made it to the list of top 10 best pitches were comprised of undergraduate students in the School's **Res.Inc.** program, launched in the fall of 2012. Res.Inc. students are part of Columbia's Living and Learning Center, housed on campus, where they live and work together in a community focused on entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation.

Founded in 2014, the winning team behind Angulus includes Viktor Gamarnik, a Columbia Engineering graduate student; Frank Glaser, an MBA student at Columbia Business School; and Quang Nguyen, another MBA candidate at Columbia Business School. Their flagship device combats the problem of Ventilator Associated Pneumonia (VAP), a costly yet frequent occurrence in hospital intensive care units. In order to reduce the risk of VAP, ventilated patients must be elevated at between 30 to 45 degrees at all times. The company's device is a disposable inclinometer that affixes to the patient's sternum using an allergy-free adhesive, allowing real-time patient-angle measurement. The built-in alert system signals warnings both locally and at the central nursing station, letting ICU staff know when patients are improperly positioned and at increased risk of aspiration. Angulus is already hiring, and the team is in the process of launching pilot clinical studies on intubated patients in New York City-based medical ICUs.

Tied for second and third place were:

**Lung Flute**, a medical device that treats chronic lung congestion. The team proposed a new use of the device to help diagnose tuberculosis in low-income settings. (Columbia Engineering biomedical engineering major Jason Kang, with SEAS alumni)

**Sailo**, an online marketplace where users can charter boats directly from owners and also book captains (Columbia Business School alumni Delphine Braas and Adrian Gradinaru)

**Cote-Armour**, a New York-based clothing line and artist collective whose brand is built upon a collaboration of artists living and working together in the city (Columbia College student Shriya Samavai)

**Keysteria**, a theatrical production and entertainment company (Julia Korosteleva and Katia Tsvetkova, alumnae of the School of International and Public Affairs)

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