The Lavin VentureStart Competition, hosted by the Lavin Entrepreneurship Center and the Entrepreneur Society at SDSU, provides both undergraduate and graduate students with the unique opportunity to learn and experience the entrepreneurial process. During the Spring 2012 Semester, over 100 students attended the following three workshops to hear from speakers with expertise in entrepreneurship and learn more about the competition:

**Ideation and Trendspotting Workshop:** On February 13th, Bernhard Schroeder, Director of Lavin Center Programs led a workshop discussing the importance of spotting trends in the marketplace and utilizing those trends to create new products, services, and businesses.

**Creating a Business Plan Workshop:** Joel Gragg, SDSU alum and Principal at Huntington Capital, presented the keys to crafting a strong business plan at the March 21st workshop. Joel discussed the main business plan elements that venture capitalists look for when considering investment opportunities, based on his experience at Huntington Capital.

**Giving a Powerful Presentation Workshop:** On April 16th, Matt Reilly and Allison Heinrich of eBoost Consulting discussed how to deliver a powerful and engaging presentation. Matt and Allison demonstrated the importance of using clean, striking visuals and the elements of “storytelling” to be persuasive and forge an emotional connection with the audience.

After attending the three workshops, students were encouraged to draft and submit brief business plans based on their ideas. Five teams were selected to compete in the Spring 2012 Lavin VentureStart Competition.

- **Aspire Innovations** – A cognitive-enhancing energy shot.
- **Choco ART** – An artisanal chocolate and ice cream store.
- **Handzoff Solutions** – An innovative hand sanitizer dispenser.
- **Student Cloud** – A crowdsourcing platform for students and small businesses.
- **World Scholar House** – Conversation-based Language Program for Chinese Students

The finals of the Lavin VentureStart Competition took place on April 30th, 2012 in Scripps Cottage. Each team presented their business ideas for 10 minutes followed by a 10 minute question and answer session with the judging panel, consisting of three SDSU alumni entrepreneurs: Jaime Mautz, Founder and President of Pacific Ink, Duncan McLaren, Founder of Difference Labs, and Carl Pettersen, Co-founder of H2O Audio. The following teams were chosen as the VentureStart winners and won a total of $900 in cash prizes:

1st Place: Aspire Innovations  |  2nd Place: Student Cloud  |  3rd Place: Choco ART