

# Mac College offers grants to student entrepreneurs

## **The McPherson Sentinel**

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McPherson, Kan. —

All Kansas high school students will have the opportunity to receive a \$5,000 grant from McPherson College to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams. But these young entrepreneurs will need to hurry; there's less than a month before submissions are due on Jan. 25.

"We're putting our money where our heart is," said Kori Gregg, executive director of entrepreneurship at McPherson College, "encouraging the development of young entrepreneurs in Kansas, both in the commercial and social arenas."

On Nov. 14, the college announced its first-ever Jump Start Kansas competition. The challenge will award two grand-prize grants of \$5,000 to a Kansas high school student or team of students who present the best entrepreneurial idea: one in the area of commercial entrepreneurship and one for social entrepreneurship. The grants come with no stipulation that the high school students attend McPherson College. Students can enter by visiting <http://blogs.mcpherson.edu/entrepreneurship/jump-start-kansas>. The application process is easy: merely complete the online application and tell McPherson College in 750 words (or less) about the idea. An independent panel of entrepreneurs, community members and faculty will judge the entries and select five finalist in each category.

Those finalists will attend a pitch competition on Feb. 15 for their shot at the top prize of a \$5,000 grant to develop their idea, as well as a \$20,000 four-year scholarship to attend McPherson College. The other eight finalists will receive a \$4,000 scholarship to McPherson College. All told, the college's financial commitments total more than \$100,000.

"We consider it an investment," Gregg said. "The students who will take part in this competition are exactly the kind of students we're looking to continue their education as an entrepreneur at McPherson College."

The challenge is part of the college's "Freedom to Jump" entrepreneurship initiative, which was officially launched in November last year. As the program has developed, McPherson College has given micro-grants of up to \$500 to one out of every 10 students enrolled at McPherson College through the Horizon Fund.

Grant recipients have included Blake Jett and Samuel Tucker, who started MutePoint Apparel LLC, giving a portion of their T-shirt sales to charity; Zack Gaddis and Jared Stevenson, who started a nonprofit Christian music label called G1 Entertainment; and Kelsi Sowers, who designed the Horizon Fund logo as part of her new graphic design business.

For the last two years, the college has offered the Global Enterprise Challenge. In this competition, students come up with a sustainable solution to help those in a foreign country in just a few days – Haiti in 2010 and Panama in 2011. The winning teams receive scholarships and the opportunity to travel to the country and work on putting their ideas into effect. Also, this fall the college offered a minor in Transformative Entrepreneurship for the first time, allowing students to make entrepreneurship a part of their degree, regardless of their major area of study.