Innovating Energy
The West’s Largest Clean Energy Business Plan
Competition for University Students

100+ Contestants • 30+ Universities • 10+ States
FLoW's Mission

First Look West (FLoW) is a business plan competition with an important mission: to support entrepreneurial talent within American universities, and accelerate the movement of leading edge technologies from the academic lab into the marketplace.

We are a partnership organization working with colleges and universities throughout the western US, and managed by the California Institute of Technology in partnership with the University of Southern California, UC Berkeley, and UCLA.

FLoW is the Western Region of the National Clean Energy Business Plan Competition (NCEBPC), a $2 million initiative launched by the DOE Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) under Startup America, the White House campaign to inspire and promote entrepreneurship. The objective is to build a new generation of energy leaders, a strong workforce, and an overall green economy.

Our territory covers Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon and Washington as well as American Samoa and Guam. It embraces a broad diversity of academic talent and business acumen.

Our First Year, 2011 - 2012

Our high quality teams offered ideas from new battery materials for portable electronic devices to net-positive energy home kits, hydroponic farms and telephone apps for tracking energy use in the home.

- 83 applicants from 34 universities across 12 states
- Over 70 industry expert mentors with technical, finance, legal, strategic, marketing expertise
- Over 40 judges from Mohr Davidow, Khosla Ventures, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, among other VCs

The Second Year, 2012 - 2013

FLoW officially launches in September 2012 and ends with the Regional Finals and Awards Celebration in May 2013.

We invite you to get involved as mentors, judges and sponsors and see game-changing ideas early. Share your experience with some of the best and brightest of the young innovators interested in starting their own companies and help them shape the future of clean energy.
The Competition

Students and university researchers tackling big problems in clean energy compete for the $100,000 Western Region first prize through three rounds of judging. The winning teams from six regions across the country then participate in the DOE’s National Competition in Washington D.C.

What Teams Win

» First Prize of $100,000, and cash prizes for second and third place
» Pitch time with Vinod Khosla, Founder of Khosla Ventures
» Connection with the best mentors in clean energy, investors and seasoned entrepreneurs
» Legal startup support
» Meeting top cleantech VCs, angel investors, as well as private and corporate venture investors who can help.
» Exclusive places in the UC Davis Green Technology Entrepreneurship Academy (GTEA) and the Cleantech Open (CTO)
» Access to facilities and programs provided by the Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator

2012 Winners

Regional Competition: Stanford Nitrogen Group, a team developing energy from waste water treatment, won the $100,000 first prize. Greenbotics, with a promising business in solar panel cleaning robots, and Xite Solar, developing thin-film solar cells with 20% higher efficiency, took second and third place.

The National Competition: Stanford Nitrogen Group joined the five other regional winners and competed for the National Competition prize in Washington D.C. where final awards were made at a White House Ceremony on June 13, 2012.

Entrepreneurship shouldn’t be about extrapolating the past, but rather inventing the future. Startups shouldn’t let the word of the ‘experts’ or conventional ‘wisdom’ constrain them from imagining new possibilities.

-Andrew Chung
Partner, Khosla Ventures
FLOW Judge and Keynote Speaker
FLoW leverages its proximity to the strong entrepreneurship community of Southern California, and the large cluster of SoCal cleantech companies to build the FLoW competition throughout the Western Region.

For more information contact the FLoW Office:
Stephanie C. Yanchinski, Executive Director, California Institute of Technology, 1200 California Blvd. East, M/C 132-80, Pasadena 91125.
Tel: 626-395-1968, Email: stephanie.yanchinski@caltech.edu.