

could be done to mitigate them, we went to our advisory board."

From putting together an investment recommendation proposal, Timm gained perspective from both the investor and entrepreneur vantage point. He understands "what's vital for a business plan to be actionable."

LAWRENCE TECH'S SOLAR DECATHLON TEAM

The solar decathlon team at Lawrence Technological University is training for international competition, but not by running track or jumping hurdles. Instead, the students are honing their design, engineering, construction and management skills to build

and operate a solar-powered home that will be judged in 10 categories. The Southfield, MI, school is one of 20 U.S., Canadian and European universities selected by the U.S. Department of Energy to create a house for the solar village that will be erected on the National Mall in Washington, DC, this fall. During the 10-day event, the village will be a living laboratory for the public to visit and for the teams to compete in solar power contests. The home designs will be awarded points for maintaining temperature control and generating energy for all household needs.

Lawrence Tech students have taken a holistic approach to sustainable design and named their entry ALOe TERRA, meaning "to soothe the earth." Their intent is to make the home efficient and affordable without sacrificing modern convenience and aesthetic quality.

"We have allotted space for a living room, kitchen, bathroom, mechanical room with laundry, master bedroom with home office and a second bedroom," says Christina Span, a senior majoring in architecture. "It's only 800 square feet, but looks larger. We designed areas to have multiple functions and used materials that are super efficient."

Now under construction in a campus parking lot, the house is being built in three modules to facilitate dismantling and reassembly. Students have the summer to conduct tests and make refinements before loading the modules onto flat-bed trucks for the journey to Washington.

"In total, about 40 students — representing architecture, engineering, construction management, computer science and business management majors — are contributing to the effort," says Elliott Schmitt, a senior in mechanical engineering. "Working together with these various skill sets in a real-world environment is an experience that will serve us well in our future careers."

A decathlon is always a test of endurance, so the team will have to pace itself to get through all 10 contests successfully. "Our objective," says Schmitt, "is to make the home so efficient that even with the energy demands for appliances, hot water and lighting, there will be enough solar power left to run home office equipment and recharge an electric vehicle."

FRANKEL COMMERCIALIZATION FUND

SEED MONEY

The Ann-Arbor, MI-based investment fund, run by students in the Stephen M. Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan, provides pre-seed money to jump-start commercialization of ideas generated within the university community.

FRANKEL FELLOWS

Ross MBA students with depth of experience in one of the funding areas (health care or technology industries) and interest in entrepreneurship and early-stage company formation are selected for the teams.

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

Tom Porter, executive-in-residence at the school's Samuel Zell & Robert H. Lurie Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies, heads up the fund. Students receive additional mentoring from an advisory board of alumni and supporters, who have been successful in developing early-stage companies, markets and technologies.

ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING

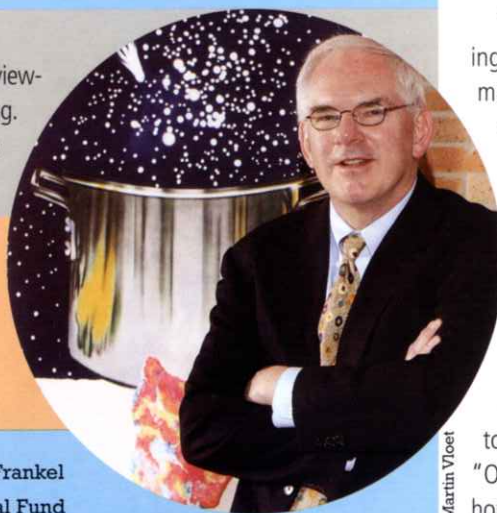
Applicants must have a U-M connection and benefit the university, if successful. At least one team member should be a U-M student, staff member, faculty or alum, or the proposal must make use of technology developed within the university.

FUNDING CYCLE

In the fall, Frankel Fund teams will start reviewing applications for the next round of funding. Submissions are due by Dec. 15, 2007, to be considered for investment by May 2008.

CONTACT

For more information, visit www.zli.bus.umich.edu/ffcf/ or send e-mail to ffquestions@umich.edu.



Tom Porter, director of the Frankel Commercial Fund

Photo by Martin Vloet