

In 2012 a philanthropist named Rick Sontag donated sufficient money to endow a business competition at the University of Nevada Reno. The Sontag Entrepreneurship Competition has become a well-regarded program and the winning team takes home \$50,000 cash. The prize money can be used only to support the actual launch of the businesses. Past winners Irrigo, Nevada Dynamics, and Instally have all gone on to participate in Summit VMS after the competition and we look forward to this year's winner.

We do not want to abuse your time and talent as a mentor or venture founder but this is a great program with serious student teams looking to start a real companies. They are currently looking for judges this year and if you have the time please feel free to sign up to participate. You can be part of the initial round of judging the 10-page business plans or you can volunteer to judge everything including the finalists pitch presentations. And for Summit VMS Venture Founders, this is a great way to start becoming mentors yourselves. You know better than anyone the challenges and processes to start and scale a company.

Judging Process for This Year: While judging will involve three phases, you can volunteer for Phase 1 only, Phases 1 & 2, or all three phases.

- Phase 1 - Select semi-finalists. Each judge will review and score up to 3 business plans using our reviewing software. Each plan is up to 10 pages in length, and it should take approximately 1-2 hours to review each plan. There will be a judges' reception to receive some training for the reviewing software, scheduled for January 5th, from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. Phase I judging will need to be completed no later than January 20th, 2017.
- Phase 2 – Select finalists. A subset of the Phase I judges will meet to determine which of the business plans that were selected in Phase I will be the five finalists. This meeting typically lasts up to 3 hours and is scheduled for January 26th, 2017 from 2:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m.
- Phase 3 – Select the Winner. The five finalists will have until the end of February to revise and improve their business plans. The finalists will be judged on their revised plans and their Pitch Presentations on March 11th, 2017, with the winner awarded the \$50,000 prize.

If you are interested in participating please register at ozmencenter.unr.edu/signup/ or contact Dick Bartholet at richardb@unr.edu if you have any questions.