

2010 Advisor Program – Competitor Conduct Agreement

Economic Fuel: The Humboldt County Student Business Challenge

The advisor program is designed to link Economic Fuel teams with business professionals that share a common interest and have skills, contacts and insight to help a team with their business plan. Our vision is to give Economic Fuel competitors an opportunity to learn from professionals who are successful in Humboldt County, while offering the business community the chance to interact with enthusiastic student entrepreneurs from Humboldt State University and College of the Redwoods. A list of community advisors who have agreed to volunteer their time to work with Economic Fuel competitors can be found on our website at <http://www.economicfuel.org/advisors.html>.

We encourage you to ...USE AN ADVISOR!!!

Please keep these things in mind when you embark on your advisor experience:

- The role of an advisor is to serve as a mentor, answer specific questions, and give input and advice on aspects of a business plan. An advisor is not someone to consult for business ideas.
- Students should remember that advisors are business professionals with full time careers. It is important to contact advisors early in the competition, as advisors will need advance notice to schedule time to meet with student teams.
- Teams are expected to show up for a meeting with a focused objective and a set of fairly specific questions.
- Once an appointment is scheduled competitors are expected to provide advisors with 24 hour notice in the case of cancellation. By failing to appear for a scheduled appointment with a community volunteer, you may be taking that advisor away from time he or she could be spending with a paying customer.

It is extremely important that competitors are respectful of every advisor's time as their support of this competition is crucial to its success! New in 2010, advisors will have the opportunity to provide feedback to the judges regarding their meetings with competitors.

Utilizing the resources of the North Coast SBDC

The North Coast Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is proud to continue its support of the Economic Fuel competition. Since the founding of Economic Fuel the SBDC has offered professional business counseling and workshops to competitors, both in the competition phase and in the business launch process. The staff and counselors look forward to working with this year's participants and to help them get their businesses launched.

In order to receive the greatest benefit from SBDC services please bear in mind a few things. The SBDC primary mission is to serve entrepreneurs who are already actively engaged in a business and those who are seriously committed to starting their own business. Economic Fuel is grateful to the SBDC for allowing us to use their services for this competition.

Creating an effective business plan is not a linear process and takes considerable time and effort. Because it is a process, the earlier you include the SBDC in that effort the better it will be for all concerned. **If you are going to use SBDC services, it is recommended that you make your first appointment with the SBDC no later than the week following the registration deadline.** It is further recommended that you establish and maintain a relationship with your SBDC counselor to provide depth and continuity to your planning process.

Competitors are discouraged from calling SBDC at the last moment before plans are due. There may not be time to schedule an appointment and there won't be enough time to integrate suggestions into your plan.

Therefore, your final appointment with your SBDC counselor should be scheduled for a date 1-2 weeks prior to the March 22nd business plan due date, in order to fully consider and incorporate their recommendations into your final plan.

Remember that as Economic Fuel competitors, it is your ultimate responsibility to make sure that your business plan entry meets the Eligibility Criteria, Official Rules and Entry Guidelines, and includes all the Required Components of Submitted Business Plans. It is not your advisor's nor your SBDC counselor's responsibility to make these determinations.