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VCU da Vinci Center Project Showed “Greatest Potential for Patient Benefit”

Anne Buckley
VCU Communications and Public Relations
(804) 828-6052
albuckley@vcu.edu

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The Virginia Commonwealth University da Vinci Center's prototype of a \$500 operating table for developing countries stood out in a recent competition in Boston, winning a top honor among 60 entrants that included participants from Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



The VCU da Vinci Center for Innovation in Product Design and Development's [portable operating table](#) for developing countries won in the category of “Greatest Potential for Patient Benefit” at the Center for Integration of Medicine and Innovative Technology Congress poster contest in Boston on Oct. 27 and 28.

“We are exceedingly proud of our students and the way they are representing



The Phase II da Vinci group, and Jennifer Farris, second from left, from the Phase I group, present the prototype for a \$500 operating table for developing countries, during da Vinci Day at VCU on April 15. The box in the foreground is the table in its shippable form. From left: Mike Garrett, Farris, Lauren O'Neill, Chris Johnson, Ann Quinn, Jennifer Kosh, Michael Morrison and

VCU at some very rigorous

competitions,” said Russell D. Jamison, Ph.D., dean of the VCU School of Engineering. “Our students take the real-world education they are getting here and stack it up against working professionals and students from some big-name institutions, and they make us proud every time.”

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For the [innovation poster contest](#), Lauren O'Neill won for "Operation Simple: A Low-Cost, Collapsible Surgical Table for Developing Countries." O'Neill was part of a team that worked on a prototype for the table last year in the da Vinci Center, which brings together students from VCU's schools of Engineering, Business and the Arts.

"Winning the award has inspired us and shows that what we're doing is real," said Skylar Roebuck, a senior computer engineering major and member of the Operation Simple team. "We had a good, cohesive team and everybody is still interested in the project. This award is self-validation."

As a result of winning in Boston, the team is now one of 10 semi-finalists in a second-round CIMIT competition for clinically relevant primary care solutions. They'll vie for a top prize of \$150,000 to support the continuation of the project.

The last stage of the project is the production of five tables to be provided as a gift to hospitals in Bangladesh and Honduras for field testing in spring 2010.

CIMIT is a nonprofit consortium of Boston-area teaching hospitals and engineering schools, CIMIT provides innovators with resources to explore, develop and implement novel technological solutions for today's most urgent healthcare problems.

Members of the consortium are Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston Medical Center, Boston University, Brigham and Women's Hospital, the Charles Stark Draper Laboratory, Children's Hospital Boston, Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts General Hospital, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Newton-Wellesley Hospital, Partners HealthCare and VA Boston Healthcare System.

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[Virginia Commonwealth University](#) | [Division of University Relations](#)
[Communications and Public Relations](#)

[Harrison House](#) | [816 West Franklin Street](#) | [P.O. Box 842036](#) | [Richmond, Virginia 23284-2036](#)

[Phone: \(804\) 828-1231](#) | [Fax: \(804\) 828-2018](#)

[E-mail: \[newscenter@vcu.edu\]\(mailto:newscenter@vcu.edu\)](#)