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**Baker College's Jackson campus to host  
iChallengeU state championship July 28**

*High school students connect with business partners to solve real business problems through teamwork; winners receive two-year college scholarships*

JACKSON, Mich. - Baker College's Jackson campus will host the first iChallengeU state championship Friday, July 28. The five high school student teams advanced from regional competitions in Jackson and Holland.

"iChallengeU is an excellent learning opportunity to get high school kids involved in real-world problem solving activities," said Steve Simpson, Ed.D., Baker College of Jackson president. "These students design incredible viable solutions to actual problems impacting our world."

Simpson said that the primary benefit to the students is the valuable experience of the competition. Baker College, sponsor of the state competition, has added an additional incentive for teams to strive for the first-place award. Each member of the winning team will receive a two-year scholarship to any of Baker College's campuses across the state or Baker College Online.

The regional contests were two-week programs where students, teachers and community leaders worked together to solve real problems experienced by local companies and organizations. On the final day, each team proposed its solution in a 10-minute presentation.

At the state competition, the five teams will again present their solutions to a panel of judges who will rate each team on the following elements: targeted response to

the challenge, originality, feasibility/ease of implementation, knowledge of business/organization and presentation.

The student teams are named for their sponsoring business partners. Those in the state competition will present solutions for Lenawee County Education Foundation (LCEF), Adrian; the John and Mary Dahlem Environmental Education Center, Jackson; Orbitform, Jackson; Continental Dairy Facilities, Coopersville; and Grand Haven Township Fire/Rescue Department, Grand Haven. **(The challenges addressed and team members are identified below this release.)**

Robert Tebo, Michigan Works! Southeast director – regional business fellowship and one of the organizers of iChallengeU events, is continually amazed by the performance of the students.

“Going in, these are kids don’t know each other or the problem they are asked to solve,” he said. “Yet, two weeks later, they are poised and ready with solution presentations that are brilliant. The students perform a cost analysis, answer questions and pitch a 10-minute business plan. It is a jaw-dropping experience for seasoned business people.”

For more information about iChallengeU or Baker College business programs, contact Dan Smith in the admissions office at [daniel.smith@baker.edu](mailto:daniel.smith@baker.edu) or 517.788.7800, or visit [www.baker.edu](http://www.baker.edu).

The largest private college in Michigan, Baker College is a not-for-profit higher education institution accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Founded in 1911, Baker College grants doctoral, master’s, bachelor’s and associate degrees, as well as certificates in diverse academic fields including applied technology, business, education, engineering, health science, information technology and social science. Baker College has on-ground campuses throughout Michigan and offers online programs that can be completed 100 percent online without ever visiting a campus. In 2016, the Online Learning Consortium recognized Baker College Online with the OLC Quality Scorecard Exemplary Endorsement, the highest ranking for online higher education programs. For information, visit [www.baker.edu](http://www.baker.edu) or follow Baker College on Twitter, @bakercollege, or on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/bakercollege](http://www.facebook.com/bakercollege).

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**2017 State iChallengeU challenges and competitors:**

**Team LCEF:** *Regarding opioid abuse: How do we get prescription drugs back where they belong?* Team members David Calvo, Kennedy Price and Harley Sholl from Hudson Area Schools; Kate Flynn from Madison High School; Ryanna Merilla from Onsted Community Schools; Alexia Ferguson from Adrian Public Schools; and teacher leader Kelly McNicol, Lenawee County Community in-Schools substance abuse prevention specialist.

**Team Dahlem:** *How do we increase knowledge of the Dahlem Center and make it an appealing destination?* Team members are Elizabeth Penhallegon from Grass Lake Community Schools; Alyssa Lindemen from Addison Community Schools; Analiese Huffman from Jackson Public Schools; and Emma Coberley from Onsted Community Schools. Sammy Niehaus from East Jackson Community Schools is the teacher leader.

**Team Orbitform:** *How can Orbitform double the number of scheduled appointments at The ASSEMBLY Show, a trade show in the Chicago area?* Team members are Trevor Blankenship from Northwest Community Schools; Brennan Miller from Jackson Public Schools; Morgan Steinhauer from Grass Lake Community Schools; and Tristen Willis from Michigan Center Schools. Their teacher leader is Amy Janz from Grass Lake Community Schools.

**Team Continental Dairy:** *How can we create a sustainable talent pipeline for the agricultural industry?* Team members are Taylor DeWildt, Trent Fritsma, Bryce Hanenburg and Amiya Twork, Coopersville High School; and Valerie VandenBosch, Allendale High School. Their coaches are Steve Courcy, Coopersville Public Schools, and Alissa Vidro, Allendale Public Schools,

**Team GH Township:** *What ambulance service model will provide the best care for our community?* Team members are Kate Criswell, Elizabeth Egerer, Carlos Rappleye and Chloe Weigel, Grand Haven High School, and William Easterly, Samuel Negen and

Emily Sievertsen, Spring Lake High School. Their coaches are Rachel Kooiker, Spring Lake Public Schools, and Nate Keppler, Grand Haven Public Schools.