Students team up for New Orleans Entrepreneur Week

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Jack and Jake's Local and Organic Market is a new business that plans to bring locally grown food to customers in underserved neighborhoods within three days of harvest, but to achieve that goal, the company first needs a top-notch distribution system.

That's where a team of MBA students from Tulane, Loyola and UNO comes in.

"They're helping us not just with the warehouse but with the overall distribution network as well," says John Burns, founder of Jack and Jake's. "They've done a couple of months worth of work in literally just a few days. It's amazing the amount of help they've already provided us with."



Freeman students Xavier Cabo, Ruth Yomtoubian, Ashton Prat and Jon Atkinson teamed up with students from Loyola and UNO to provide consulting services to local startups as part of New Orleans Entrepreneur Week.

The Jack and Jake's project is part of New Orleans Entrepreneur Week, an annual event organized by the Idea Village that brings teams of MBA students from the nation's leading business schools to New Orleans to work on consulting projects for

local entrepreneurs. This year marks the first time that MBA students from Tulane, Loyola and UNO are participating.

“It’s an invaluable experience in both directions,” says Emily Mitchell, director of technical assistance at the Idea Village. “The entrepreneurs get an incredible amount of free consulting time from the best and the brightest, and the MBAs get to test their skills on real clients with real working challenges.”

Five MBA students from the Freeman School--Jon Atkinson, Xavier Cabo, Chonchol Gupta, Ashton Prat and Ruth Yomtoubian--along with students from Loyola and UNO teamed up to form two consulting groups. One team is working with Burns to optimize Jack and Jake’s food distribution system while another is working to identify additional revenue streams for Sustainable Environmental Enterprises, which specializes in providing solar power for low- and moderate-income households.

“It’s really nice to be able to bring students from all over New Orleans together to work on this project,” says Chonchol Gupta (MBA ’10), part of the team working with Jack and Jake’s. “It’s been a good learning experience for us, and it’s been really nice to see the three universities come together to try to help a company that will do well for our community.”

New Orleans Entrepreneur Week wraps on Friday, March 27, when the MBA teams deliver their final presentations and hand off their deliverables to the clients.

For more information about New Orleans Entrepreneur Week, visit http://www.noew.org.