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Press release

Graduation ceremony for the first students who have completed the Executive Program in Innovation & Business Creation at the TU München

"Taking advantage of challenging times for entrepreneurial and personal opportunities"

The first students to complete the one-year Executive Program in Innovation & Business Creation, celebrated their academic success on Friday, 20 November 2009. The Technische Universität München (TUM) offers this Program in cooperation with the Leipzig Graduate School of Management (HHL) and UnternehmerTUM, Center for Innovation and Business Creation. In a ceremony hosted by the TUM School of Management in the Audimax lecture hall at the Technische Universität München, eleven graduates were presented with their MBA certificates. Professor Christoph Kaserer, Dean of the Department and Academic Director of the Executive Program, congratulated the graduates on their successful completion of the course. He praised the excellent training and, in particular, the professional skills acquired in the field of innovation management and entrepreneurship that would give them the qualifications they need to assert themselves successfully in a dynamic job market and competitive environment.

The keynote speech from Dr. Günter von Au, CEO of Süd-Chemie AG, was entitled "Taking advantage of challenging times for entrepreneurial and personal opportunities" and was a very apt description of many graduates' motivations for embarking on the Executive Program in Innovation & Business Creation. On more than 70 days during the past academic year they gained new experiences and took advantage of the opportunity to promote their personal and entrepreneurial development: students from five continents with varying professional backgrounds were brought together in this Program with the aim of exchanging experiences and ideas, to learn together and from each other, and to advance their innovation and start-up projects.

More than 45 lecturers from the Technische Universität München, from national and international partner universities, as well as from renowned companies, taught the students business management in the current corporate world. In particular they

learnt how to recognize business opportunities and realize them successfully. Skills that are equally vital for business founders, entrepreneurs and corporate managers. An essential part of the Program was the project work in which students could apply their acquired knowledge to their own individual projects. Project supervisors from UnternehmerTUM provided systematic support and also ensured that the transfer of the project results helped boost successful innovations and business start-ups.

For instance, Michael Brachvogel, one of the first graduates and a senior employee of a car manufacturer, drew up a new concept for the efficient use of prototypes and test vehicles. In the project, in which he brought together colleagues from all the relevant departments, he used the latest techniques to identify potential savings and to restructure processes. As he said: "Through the Program I have become much more aware of how to respect the motives and needs of my colleagues and to consequently reach better, swifter results. Not least, the use of creative tools, such as the visualization of complex processes with Lego was invaluable for the success of the project. In the Program I got to know a number of these innovative techniques and learnt to use them. I am sure that this experience will help me face future challenges – and my colleagues and I also had a lot of fun during the project."

Jan Philipps, also a student in the academic year 2008/09 is just as enthusiastic about the Program and the results. As co-founder and manager of an IT service provider the Program enabled him to analyse extensively the business model for his own corporate enterprise. The focus was on the question of how to orientate long-term corporate strategy to growth and the scalability of offers – a considerable challenge in a highly specialized environment. "Particularly the in-depth discussions with fellow students gave me inspiration and motivation and paved the way for new expertise and insights. The Program not only prevented me from becoming completely immersed in daily business routine, but also inspired me to maintain a policy of facing up to awkward issues that must be solved if a company is to develop successfully with a proactive approach."

A highlight for the students was the 10-day visit to Lester Center for Entrepreneurship at the UC Berkeley in California. In one of the most internationally dynamic regions in the fields of economics and technology they were able to experience close-up the entrepreneurial spirit of Silicon Valley. During discussions with venture capitalists, company founders, entrepreneurship experts and representatives of well-known businesses they were given valuable advice for the development of their own projects.

The last year has presented the graduates of the Executive Program with a multitude of new impressions, insights and experiences. And, last but not least, these "pioneer students" have established vital, new contacts. In the future, the alumni association will enable them to maintain close contact with the network and benefit from regular get-togethers.