University of Michigan’s Pioneering Student-Led Venture Capital Fund Celebrates Ten Years of Investment and Innovation

First and Only of its Kind, the Wolverine Venture Fund Continues to Make Strategic Investments and Provide Students with a Unique Action-Based Learning Opportunity

Ann Arbor, Mich. – October 13, 2008 – Charting a course for many of today’s student-led venture capital funds, the Wolverine Venture Fund (WVF) marks an important milestone – ten years of providing a unique learning experience for University of Michigan Ross School of Business students. Part of the University’s Samuel Zell & Robert H. Lurie Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies /Center for Venture Capital & Private Equity Finance, the Wolverine Venture Fund was created in 1998. It was the country’s first student led venture fund and has served as a model for other university programs over the years. Since its inception, the Wolverine Venture Fund has invested in more than 18 companies in a wide range of innovative industries such as information technology, life sciences and alternative energy.

The Fund currently has active investments in 12 firms and boasts a rich portfolio of growing companies across emerging industries. Students undertake rigorous due diligence in support of the Fund’s investment decisions. Thirty-five students from the Zell Lurie Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies at the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business manage the fund, which is supported by Tom Kinnear, the Fund’s Managing Director and a nine member advisory board of professional venture capitalists and entrepreneurs. The Fund typically provides $50,000-$200,000 in funding, in syndicate with angel investors and in partnership with other venture capital firms nationwide.

In conjunction with the Fund’s ten year milestone, the $3.5 million Wolverine Venture Fund has recently made multiple investments in large and growing sectors such as healthcare, high technology and clean technology. Since the beginning of the ’07-’08 academic year, the WVF invested in the following companies:

- Accord Biomaterials, Inc, a Michigan-based medical materials company for implants
- Direct Flow Medical, a California-based stentless aortic heart device maker
- Environmental Operating Solutions (EOS), a Massachusetts-based clean tech start up that creates agriculturally-derived products to remove the pollutant nitrogen from wastewater.
- IntelePeer California-based VoIP managed service provider
- Mobius Microsystems, a California and Michigan-based fabless semiconductor company
- Nanocerox, a Michigan-based nanostructured material developer
- Quantum Learning Technologies, a Michigan-based online educational community.
- Lycera, a Michigan-based company developing therapeutics for diseases of the immune system.
- NanoBio, a Michigan-based company focused on developing and commercializing dermatological products.

“The Wolverine Venture Fund continues to be a signature program of the Zell Lurie Institute and has become an integral part of preparing our students with real-world experience to instill a sound business sense and a keen eye for analyzing opportunities and real risk,” said Kinnear. “The Fund fuels entrepreneurial enterprises across the nation, contributing to the world-class program that our students have come to expect.”

A History of Success
Over the course of the last ten years the Wolverine Venture Fund has seen significant wins among its portfolio. In addition to witnessing two of its startups launch products and turn a profit, a major highlight was the 2004 initial public offering of IntraLase Corp., developer of ultra-fast lasers used in LASIK vision correction surgery. This marked the first of Wolverine Venture Fund’s portfolio companies to go public.

"My participation in the Wolverine Venture Fund has been the highlight of my experience at the Ross School of Business," said student Munish Gandhi, MBA 2007. “The WVF has helped me develop judgment by analyzing deals in a rigorous and structured manner and making decisions that result in real investments.”

The Wolverine Venture Fund takes the business development process to the next level by making early stage and follow-on investments in emerging companies nationwide. Created to provide MBA students with an enriched, action-based learning experience, the Wolverine Venture Fund has also proven to be an essential asset for startups in need of funding during critical times in the business development process. The fund has also been an important investment partner to larger, professional funds providing not only financial resources but a wide range of business skills through the funds student board.

About the Samuel Zell & Robert H. Lurie Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies / Center for Venture Capital & Private Equity Finance
The Institute and its Center for Venture Capital and Private Equity Finance bring together a potent mix of knowledge, experience and opportunities from the front lines of entrepreneurship and alternative investments. The student learning experience is further enhanced through internships, entrepreneurial clubs and organization and events that serve to provide viable networks and engage the business community. The School’s two student-led investment funds, with over $3M in management, immerse students in the business assessment and investment process. Members of the Advisory Board include Samuel Zell, Chairman of Equity Group Investments; Michael Hallman, former COO of Microsoft Corporation; and Eugene Applebaum, Founder of Arbor Drugs, Inc. For more information, visit the Institute at www.zli.bus.umich.edu.

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