

## Student ventures compete for global title Austin company qcue could be ahead of the game

By Kathy Adams

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When alternative soul and hip-hop group Gnarlz Barkley appeared on the 2006 Austin City Limits Music Festival lineup in July 2006, ticket sellers couldn't have predicted that the duo's debut album would go platinum by August.

As a result, scalpers made a hefty profit when demand for tickets to the September festival skyrocketed because of the group's elevated popularity. On the other hand, the event promoters saw none of the extra benefit.

That's the type of problem a group of current and former University of Texas students are aiming to solve with their new venture, Qcue. The company's software helps event promoters, sports teams and other first-line ticket sellers better price their tickets based on fluctuating market factors, such as demand, availability and timing, said Qcue President Barry Kahn, who earned his doctorate in economics from UT last year. The "dynamic pricing tool" prevents scalpers from reaping all the benefit when ticket prices go up, Kahn said.

"For someone who's taking on the financial risk of putting on an event, doing all the work putting things together, for them to see scalpers, people who don't add value to the industry, making more money than them or even making close to the same amount of money on their events, it kills them," Kahn said.

Kahn said Qcue allows promoters "to potentially capture this upside while simultaneously mitigating the risk of the downside."

Kahn's company is one of 38 student ventures from around the world vying this week for the title of Global Moot Corp champion. The Moot Corp Competition pits student-originated ventures against one another for a title and \$100,000 in cash and services to kick-start their business.

But even more appealing to the competing teams is the chance to pitch their ideas to top venture capitalists judging the competition, which runs through Saturday on the UT campus.

Kahn's company is ahead of the game. Its software, which Qcue modeled after the stock market's pricing system, has swept the UT and Rice University business plan competitions, winning \$327,000 in cash and services plus a year at the Austin Technology Incubator. As a result, potential clients and investors are already beginning to call, said Kahn, one of three company managers.

"It provides us exposure to press, to the media, to clients, to investors that really other companies in our position can't get," Kahn said. "I'm able to get in front of a room and pitch to VCs that if I had called them up otherwise they wouldn't answer the phone."

Moot Corp Director Rob Adams, an experienced investor who advises the Texas teams, said Qcue is hoping to continue the legacy of Texas Moot Corp winners that have successfully raised venture capital. Past successes include Phurnace Software and Bigfoot Networks.

For more information, visit [www.mootcorp.org](http://www.mootcorp.org). Source: [www.mootcorp.org](http://www.mootcorp.org).