The US India Chamber of Commerce DFW (USICOC) hosted its annual Spirit of Innovation Competition finals at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, December 4, 2014 at the Texas Instruments, Forest Lane Auditorium. In its second year, the Spirit of Innovation Competition brought together students from local universities including Southern Methodist University (SMU), the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA), the University of Texas of Dallas (UTD) and the University of North Texas (UNT) and gave them the opportunity to showcase their innovative business ideas to industry experts, professors and venture capitalists. The competition embodied the spirit of the USICOC to encourage technology innovation and entrepreneurship and support professional and business development throughout the Dallas Fort Worth Metroplex.

This year, the Spirit of Innovation Competition had 29 creative submissions that were reviewed and evaluated by an esteemed panel of judges. Ideas were assessed based on feasibility, originality and background research. Eight finalists were selected to present their concepts to the judging panel live at Texas Instruments. Finalists were given 7 minutes to present their innovative ideas and 3 minutes to respond to questions from judges. After the presentations concluded, judges deliberated and arrived at their decision.

The first place winner was Shanti Thiyagaraja from the University of North Texas. She won $5000 for Smart Phone Monitoring of Second Heart Sound Split. The second place winners were Edward Allegra, Jack Reynolds, and Michel Quimbra from SMU for Biolum- an innovative asthma diagnostic tool. The second place team will share $2000. The third place winner was a team from the University of Texas at Arlington for their Reconfigurable Continuous-Culture Bioreactor. The third place winners, Amol Vengurlekar, Ruoshi Zhang and Luan Nguyen, will share $1000.

The USICOC's Spirit of Innovation Competition was well-attended. Guests included representatives from local area corporations, angel investors, educational institutions and representatives from Congressmen Mark Veasey’s office and Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson’s office. The event was co-sponsored by a number of local corporations and community partners including AGC Networks (formerly known as Aegis Communications), Chalak-Mitra Life, SMU Lyle School of Engineering, Texas Instruments and FunAsia.

The US India Chamber of Commerce (formerly Greater Dallas Indo-American Chamber of Commerce) is a non-profit 501(c) (6) organization created by successful Americans of Indian origin, wanting to further encourage and facilitate trade between the United States and India. In addition to international trade, the USICOC promotes commerce in local markets, helping member companies network and grow their businesses, sell to mainstream America as well as other Indian Businesses and do business with local, state and federal government agencies. To learn more about the USICOC, visit www.usicoc.org.