

Win an Entrepreneurship Competition and Make the World Better

DISA TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

It started on the annual University of Wyoming MBA trip to the Wind River Mountains. Greyson Buckingham and John Lee hiked, pitched tents and learned leadership. They soon realized they wanted to start a company, and they could make a powerful team.

They placed second in the Ellbogen \$30K Entrepreneurship Competition and won the Casper Start-Up Challenge in 2017. They formed Disa LLC in 2018. That meant a spot in the Wyoming Technology Business Center incubator in Casper, including a year's rent, seed money, business counseling and coaching.

Buckingham, from Kelly, Wyo., is Disa's CEO and president. He received his J.D. and MBA in energy management in 2017 from UW. Lee is Disa's vice president of operations. He's from Dubois, Wyo., earning his B.A. in marketing and minor in math from UW in 2015 and his MBA with an energy management focus in 2016.

Buckingham says his dual graduate degree at UW has served him well. "Without having gone to law school, I wouldn't have been able to properly identify countless potential legal issues. Now I know what to look for when structuring a company, hiring employees and formulating contracts." On the business side, he and Lee consider issues dealing with process efficiencies, supply chain management, purchasing decisions, financing and budgeting. The MBA prepared them both to face those challenges.

Buckingham explains that "Disa" is short for disassociation, which deals with "the separation of composite material into its discrete subfractions." Disa's technology is capable of removing numerous targeted geologic materials from soils and sands.

"Doing so early on can result in significant cost savings in later processing steps when compared with conventional processing methods."

The first iteration of this technology was developed several years ago for a gold project in Nevada, but it was not successfully commercialized. When the pair learned about it, they believed it was something they could pursue.

They began work with a test skid that could process 750 pounds of material per hour. Then they built a commercial-scale unit that processes 20 tons per hour. Lee says, "The goal is to have units suitable for mining and reclamation purposes that can process 100 tons per hour and deploy units in several different industries."

Lee notes this sounded easy in theory. They had to overcome challenges in fabrication and field testing and realized that vendors had other projects to think about in addition to Disa.

Both men credit the support of their MBA professors and staff who've continued to be a resource as the business moves forward with testing and marketing. They credit others in Casper and around the state who've been instrumental in locating materials and sites where their technology can be tested.

Lee is excited to develop this technology business in Wyoming and believes its focus on responsible material isolation for mining, processing, reclamation and emergencies "could change the world."

"The plan is to stay in Casper forever," Buckingham says. "Wyoming is perfectly situated to help foster the proliferation of this technology across the globe."