Abigail R. Cohen, a senior biomedical engineering student, has had a lot of good things happen in the past several months. She is part of a team that won a $30,000 prize in this year’s Olin Cup and was recently chosen to join the 2013 Class of Entrepreneurial Fellows by Pipeline.

Kansas City-based Pipeline is a community of Midwest entrepreneurs designed to build high-growth companies, empower entrepreneurs and build the region’s economy. Each year, about a dozen entrepreneurs from Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska are selected to join Pipeline for a yearlong business development program designed to speed the growth of their companies. Participants attend four three-day modules a year.

Cohen is the only woman and the only undergraduate student selected for the 2013 class. “From my initial contact with Pipeline, the experience has been amazing,” Cohen says. “The energy from the organization is overwhelming in a good way, from the members to the leaders to the people planning the events. Everyone is so excited to help us entrepreneurs. It’s been wonderful because we’re always looking to reach out to people and get some advice. It’s going to be a great network, but it’s also a great group of people.”

Cohen is part of a student-led team that founded Sparo Labs, which stems from an award-winning project to develop a low-cost spirometer, a device that measures lung function. The team has spent about a year and a half developing the product and a prototype that conquers the historical issues of high cost and difficulty of use. Most spirometers cost between $1,000-$2,000, making them unaffordable for hospitals and clinics in the developing world. However, the device the student team designed costs about $8. The low cost could allow health-care providers in developing countries to purchase the spirometers, which are specially designed for accuracy and durability despite their price.

Other team members include Andrew Brimer, also a senior majoring in mechanical engineering, Jonathan Koo and Chris Cassidy, both Olin Business School students.

Cohen says being chosen for Pipeline was unexpected because Sparo Labs is in its early stages. “But we’re at a stage where we are ready to take in as much information as we can,” she says. “We want to network around the country and connect with as many people as we can. It’s going to be an exciting year.”

Cohen and Brimer originally developed the device with other students from the university’s Engineers Without Borders/Engineering World Health (EWB/EWH) student group. Now, Sparo Labs is preparing a product for clinical trials and FDA approval that empowers patients to quantitatively track and proactively manage asthma, cystic fibrosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder and other respiratory diseases via seamless integration with smartphones, tablets and computers — ultimately implementing low-cost diagnostic and monitoring spirometry worldwide. The team has filed for a patent.

Cohen is part of a student-led team that founded Sparo Labs, which stems from an award-winning project to develop a low-cost spirometer, a device that measures lung function. The team has spent about a year and a half developing the product and a prototype that conquers the historical issues of high cost and difficulty of use. Most spirometers cost between $1,000-$2,000, making them unaffordable for hospitals and clinics in the developing world. However, the device the student team designed costs about $8. The low cost could allow health-care providers in developing countries to purchase the spirometers, which are specially designed for accuracy and durability despite their price.

Other team members include Andrew Brimer, also a senior majoring in mechanical engineering, Jonathan Koo and Chris Cassidy, both Olin Business School students.

Cohen says being chosen for Pipeline was unexpected because Sparo Labs is in its early stages. “But we’re at a stage where we are ready to take in as much information as we can,” she says. “We want to network around the country and connect with as many people as we can. It’s going to be an exciting year.”

Cohen and Brimer originally developed the device with other students from the university’s Engineers Without Borders/Engineering World Health (EWB/EWH) student group. Now, Sparo Labs is preparing a product for clinical trials and FDA approval that empowers patients to quantitatively track and proactively manage asthma, cystic fibrosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder and other respiratory diseases via seamless integration with smartphones, tablets and computers — ultimately implementing low-cost diagnostic and monitoring spirometry worldwide. The team has filed for a patent.