Freeman hosts 16th Finance Case Competition

April 23, 2012

Student teams from Tulane University and six other schools put their valuation and financial analysis skills to the test at the 16th annual Rolanette and Berdon Lawrence Finance Case Competition. The competition, an annual presentation of Tulane's A. B. Freeman School of Business, took place on Friday (April 20) in Goldring/Woldenberg Hall II.



Berdon and Rolanette Lawrence, left, and Freeman School Dean Ira Solomon, right, present this year's first-place award to the team from Rice University.

In addition to Tulane, this year's event featured teams from Emory, Rice, University of South Carolina, Vanderbilt, Washington University in St. Louis and University of Texas at Dallas.

When all was said and done, Rice University took home first-place honors and the grand prize of $7,000 at the competition, Washington University won second place and a prize of $5,000, and Tulane earned third place and $3,000.

"With five hours to work on something like this, I thought all the teams did a fantastic job," said competition judge Casey Herman, assurance partner and U.S. assurance leader for the Utilities & Power Generation Sector at

PricewaterhouseCoopers. “The analyses and slide materials they put together in such a short time frame were just terrific. Really, the difference between the first-place team and the rest of the field wasn’t that great, so the level of analysis was very impressive.”

In addition to Herman, this year’s panel of judges included Chris Conoscenti, an executive director in the Oil & Gas Investment Banking Group with J.P. Morgan Securities, and Claire Liu, assistant treasurer for corporate finance at LyondellBasell Industries. Bill Reese, professor of practice in finance, served as faculty coordinator.

The Finance Case Competition began in 1997 and has been sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence since 1998. Berdon Lawrence (BBA ’64, MBA ’65) is the founder of Hollywood Marine and former chairman of Kirby Corp., a Houston-based operator of inland tank barges. Kirby purchased Hollywood Marine in 1999. Lawrence is also a member of the Business School Council and a former member of the Board of Tulane.



The Freeman School’s team took home third place and a $3,000 prize at this year’s case competition.

“Over the years I found that having a finance degree from Tulane was critical to my understanding of how to grow my company,” Lawrence said at Friday evening’s awards ceremony. “That finance education allowed me to build the company, and if I hadn’t had it, I don’t think I could have done it, so this is a way for me to show appreciation and give something back to my alma mater.”

Freeman School Dean Ira Solomon, who presided over the ceremony, praised Lawrence and the entire Lawrence family for their long association with Tulane University.

“We like to recognize individuals who have longstanding connections to our institution, and in that sense the Lawrence family is an exemplar,” Solomon said. “While Berdon’s connection doesn’t go back quite as far as the school’s founding, the Lawrence family has been connected to the Freeman School for a remarkable 50 years, with multiple generations attending educational programs here. That’s really something to celebrate, so we’re delighted to have their names attached to this wonderful educational program.”