Freeman hosts 19th Finance Case Competition

April 21, 2015

MBA teams Washington University in St. Louis, the University of North Carolina and Tulane University took home the top prizes at the A. B. Freeman School of Business' 19th annual Rolanette and Berdon Lawrence Finance Case Competition.



An MBA team from the Freeman School earned third-place honors in this year's competition. Pictured with sponsors Rolanette and Berdon Lawrence, center, are, left to right, Nguyen Hai Ho, Sophia Brown, David Dowty and Rodolfo San Martin.

The competition, which took place at the Freeman School on Friday (April 17), tests the valuation and financial analysis skills of students in a challenging, time-sensitive environment. Student teams are tasked with analyzing a real-world finance case and then presenting their recommendations to a panel of finance professional charged with selecting the top presentations.

Washington University took home this year's grand prize of $7,000, University of North Carolina earned second place and a prize of $5,000, and host Tulane University took home the third-place prize of $3,000. Also participating in this year's competition were Rice University, University of South Carolina, University of Texas – Dallas and Vanderbilt University.

“I’m more impressed every year by the caliber, consistency and excellence of the presentations,” said competition judge Casey Herman (BSM ’86). “As a partner at PwC, I hope a few of you are coming to work for us, because we need you. You guys were great.”

“It's tough to judge because you all are so talented and frequently the margins are very close,” added competition judge Joe Agular (A&S ’81, MBA ’88), partner with Johnson Rice & Co. in New Orleans. “Hopefully, you all learned something valuable and take something away from the experience.”

Also serving as a judge this year was Chris Conoscenti (MBA/JD ’01), managing director with Credit Suisse in Houston.

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., an operator of inland tank barges headquartered in Houston. Kirby purchased Hollywood Marine in 1999. Lawrence is also a former member of the Business School Council and a former member of the Board of Tulane.

“I owe a lot to my Tulane education,” Lawrence told attendees at the awards presentation. “I don’t think I could have built my company over the years had I not had a good business education here at the Freeman School, so this is a way for me to give something back.”

Lawrence left this year's participants with some words of advice.

“Two things: Work real hard and be honest,” he said. “If you do that, you’re going to be successful.”