MFIN team takes top prize in portfolio management competition

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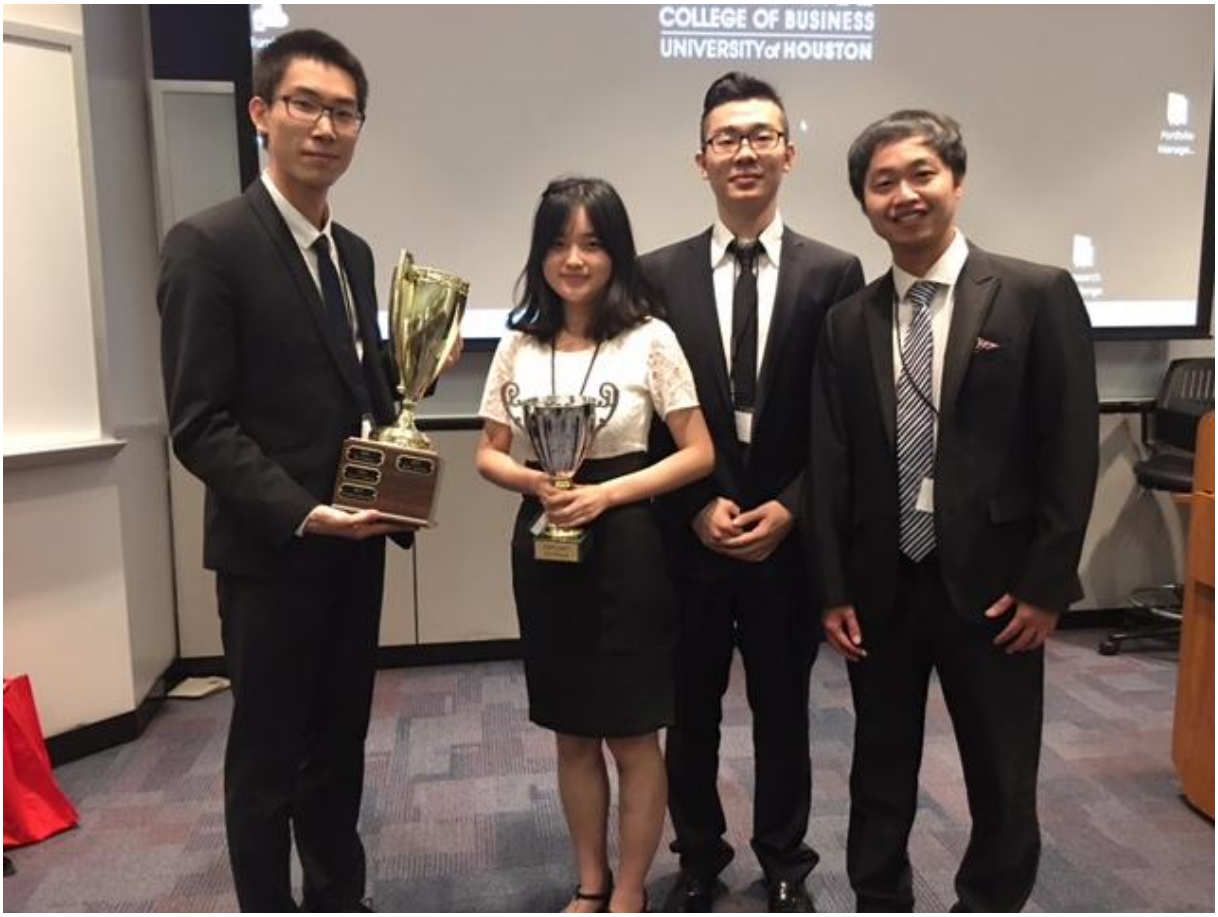

Freeman Master of Finance students Ji Qi, Zhifen Hao, Tong Li and Kaixing Liu, left to right, won first place in this year's TIPS Portfolio Managers Competition, which took place at the University of Houston on Feb. 25.

A team of Master of Finance students from Tulane University's A. B. Freeman School of Business won first place at the TIPS 2017 Student Portfolio Managers Competition, which took place on Saturday (Feb. 25) at the University of Houston.

The competition is part of the Texas Investment Portfolio Symposium (TIPS), an annual forum for students and faculty from universities in the region with investment management curricula. Structured like a "finals presentation" that investment firms make in order to compete for an institutional account, the competition gave participating teams 10 minutes to describe to judges their investment philosophy, decision-making process and investment style as well as review their long-term investment results.

Freeman MFIN students Zhifen Hao, Tong Lin, Kaixing Liu and Ji Qi earned the top prize with a presentation on the Darwin Fenner Student Managed Fund, which is part of an invitation-only honors seminar that gives students hands-on experience

managing investment portfolios. Students in the course seek long-term positive results and low risk by employing a methodology that includes incorporating scholarly research into their decision-making process and screening stocks based on extensive fundamental analysis. For the competition, Hao, Lin, Liu and Qi discussed the fund’s $1.7 million mid-cap portfolio, which has generated a compound annual rate of return that is 5.1 percent higher than the S&P 400 in the last three years.

“Zhifen, Tong, Kaixing and Ji did a great job explaining the Darwin Fenner Fund’s philosophy, methodology and performance to the judges,” said Sheri Tice, professor of finance and director of the fund. "After all the hard work they and [financial communications instructor] Dee Fuchs put into preparing for the competition, I couldn't be happier for them.”

“There are many schools with student-managed investment funds, but few can match the consistent outperformance of the Darwin Fenner Fund,” added Ira Solomon, Freeman School dean. “I'm thrilled that our team earned this well-deserved recognition for the outstanding job they and their classmates have done managing the fund’s investments.”

Other finalists in this year’s competition included Baylor University, which finished second, Texas State University, which finished third, Rice University and the University of North Texas.