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MBA Students Sharpen Business Skills for Case Competition

Rivalry among Southeastern Conference teams extends beyond athletics with second annual MBA event

APRIL 13, 2014 BY SHARON MORRIS



From left, William Dunphe, Anastasia Verenita, Steven Murphy, Julian Sanchez, and Dr. Samantha Fairclough, Faculty Advisor.

OXFORD, Miss. – A team of four **University of Mississippi MBA** students faced off with teams from other Southeastern Conference schools during the second annual SEC MBA Case Competition.

Steven Murphy, of Charleston, S.C.; Anastasia Varenita, originally from Chishinau, Moldova, but who grew up in Jackson; Julian Sanchez, from the New York borough of Queens; and Will Dunphe, of Picayune, represented Ole Miss. The competition took place April 3-5 at the University of Alabama, with all 14 SEC

universities taking part. Though the University of Florida walked away with the top prize, each student who participated learned something to help them succeed in the future.

The student teams were given a current, real-world problem facing the banking industry. Each team analyzed the information, developed a strategy for addressing the problem and made oral presentations to a panel of judges.

“This competition provides two of the most important ingredients that help our students to learn and to be successful,” said Ken Cyree, dean of the **UM School of Business Administration**. “The two things are the ability to get into a case and analyze it, and then the competition itself.

“The competition requires a broad-based analysis, so you are applying many business skills to solve problems, and you are doing it quickly. So, it’s not just a finance or a marketing niche; it’s more of an overall view. The competition allows students to compare themselves to others, which helps raise their game and sharpen their skills.”

UM students prepared by working closely with the team’s faculty adviser, Samantha Fairclough, UM professor of management in business administration. The students also participated in the 2014 Speaker’s Edge event, a transformative public speaking competition for Ole Miss MBA students, who spend a week-and-a-half working with world-class communication coaches to learn the skills of high-impact public speaking. The program culminated in a two-day competition, where students give three different presentations in front of a panel of judges, composed of industry business leaders.

The 14 teams were divided into four divisions Friday (April 4) before the Saturday competition. The Saturday morning sessions included divisional rounds that were judged by a three-member panel consisting of leaders and experts from Regions, the sponsoring company.

The four divisional winners advanced to a final round Saturday afternoon.

“This is a live, strategic competition where the students have less than 24 hours to solve a business problem and develop a plan,” said Brian Gray, associate dean of Alabama’s Manderson Graduate School of Business. “We want to keep it as real as possible for the students and in line with what they will actually experience in their careers.”

The winning team received \$10,000, second place took \$6,000, third place got \$3,000 and fourth place received \$1,000. Additional awards were presented to individuals in each division for categories such as best Q&A and best presentation.

Regions, the SEC’s banking partner, was the competition sponsor. Regions also presented the case for analysis and provided company leaders and experts to serve as competition judges.

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Civil Engineering Professor Receives Most-Cited Paper Award

OXFORD, Miss. – Peer recognition is a rewarding experience for anyone, but University of Mississippi researcher Amir Mehrara Molan was elated when an article he co-authored recently received the Most Cited Paper Award at the 102nd Transportation Research Board meeting in the nation’s capital. The International Journal of Transportation Science and Technology presented the civil engineering

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OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy’s new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying “thank you.” “It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to

The first competition was held at the University of Missouri in 2013, and the University of South Carolina is scheduled to host the 2015 event.



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