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Speaker's Edge Competition Helps Hone Presentation Skills

Annual event challenges students to prepare, think and state their case before judges

JANUARY 24, 2014 BY MISTY COWHERD



Speaker's Edge graduate level winner, Phillip Clothiaux

OXFORD, Miss. – In today's world, college graduates entering the workforce with well-developed speaking skills have a huge advantage. University of Mississippi students recently got an opportunity to hone their public speaking skills and vie for a championship during the 11th annual Speaker's Edge Competition.

The program culminated in a two-day competition, where students present three different presentations before a panel of judges

loaded with industry business leaders.

The program is open to graduate accountancy students enrolled in Accountancy 503, MBA students enrolled in MBA 603 and undergraduates in engineering, journalism and the Center for Manufacturing Excellence enrolled in Speech 105. In these courses, students spend a week-and-a-half working with communication coaches, who provide early preparation and a point person to answer questions and guide the students through the process.

Graduate student winners included Phillip Clothiaux, of Rogersville, Mo., who was named overall Speaker's Edge champion; Julian Sanchez and Victoria Ragland, both of Jonesboro, Ark., who were first-place winners in the ethical dilemma and marketplace pitch categories, respectively; and Chris Conley, of Bradenton, Fla., who took first place in the informative category.

The overall winner from the undergraduate CME program was Mary Catherine Domino, a sophomore from Yorba Linda, Calif., who also took first place in all three categories.

Each overall winner received a Speaker's Edge scholarship. John Currence of City Grocery Restaurant Group and John Cassimus of Jinsei Sushi donated gift cards for the winners. Also receiving gift cards were the winners of the Best First Impression Video, the Peer Coaching Award and the Most Improved Speaker.

"The great thing about Speakers Edge is that it everyone involved with the class works to build up each other's public speaking confidence," said Clothiaux, a master's student in accountancy. "This class forces everyone to leave their comfort zone and really put themselves out there, which is definitely scary, but it helps foster camaraderie among all participates. This is was an experience that I will always value and treasure."

"We applaud our students for growing and transforming," said Ashley Jones, UM director of MBA/MHA administration. "We also thank the coaches and judges. Students who were fearful of public speaking were able to overcome and ease their fear. Students who were comfortable speaking beforehand now can give a stronger delivery.

Rick Duke, UM director of economic development and executive director of Insight Park, was among more than 60 industry business leaders on task to judge the competition.

"Public speaking is typically an anxiety-filled experience, even for those who frequently speak before groups of people," Duke said. "The university students who participated in last week's competition were not only well-prepared but seemed very much at ease in front of the judges.

"They were exceptionally bright and speak highly of the caliber of future employees for Mississippi and other companies around the globe."

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Campus Briefs

Donations Sought for 25th Annual Books and Bears Program

OXFORD, Miss. – The University of Mississippi is asking the community to help spread a little joy this holiday season by donating to the 25th annual Books and Bears program. Donations such as toys, books, dolls, bicycles and other children's play items are being accepted through Dec. 14. All donations will be collected and sorted

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Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship Aims to Build Leaders

OXFORD, Miss. – Twenty-five inaugural recipients of the Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship – a program hosted by the University of Mississippi School of Education in partnership with the Mississippi Association of Coaches and the Mississippi High School Activities Association – are expected to increase their impact on student-athletes and their communities. The coaching fellowship

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Ole Miss In the News

Clarion-Ledger: New Essay Collection Tells the Story of Meredith's Enrollment

Essays celebrate 60th anniversary of James Meredith's enrollment at University of Mississippi By Lauren Rhoades Oct. 1 marks the 60th anniversary of James Meredith's 1962 enrollment at the University of Mississippi as the school's first African-American student.

Joann Edwards, director of forensics at the university's Lott Leadership Institute, credits the academic and professional partners – the "dreamers and doers" – as well as the sponsors for the success of the program. "They are the ones who simply want to make our students better and more prepared to meet the high intensity communication demands of their profession," Edwards said.

"I was proud to have this group of students representing our university. Their ability, spirit and work ethic were a joy to witness. And the judges were energetic, engaged and their contribution to the students' education is, quite literally, invaluable."

The event was co-sponsored by the university's schools of Business Administration, Accountancy, and Journalism and New Media, the UM Lott Leadership Institute, Regions Bank, FedEx, Chick-fil-A, City Grocery Restaurant Group, L-3 Communications Sustainment Solutions, Renasant Bank, Matt Thornton, Tom Troxler and Joseph Woods.

For more information about the Speaker's Edge program, go to <http://speakersedge.olemiss.edu/about/>.

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"James Meredith: Breaking the Barrier," a collection of essays edited by UM professor of journalism Kathleen Wickham, honors this historic milestone with

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