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UM Wraps Up Annual Speaker's Edge Competition

Winners presented awards at ceremony delayed by inclement weather

FEBRUARY 11, 2018 BY STELLA CONNELL

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MBA students Corey Price (left), Ferderica Cobb and Jonathan Dowell swept the awards at the annual UM Speaker's Edge competition. Price took third place in the Ethical Dilemmas and Marketplace Pitch categories; Cobb grabbed first in Ethical Dilemmas and second in Marketplace Pitch, as well as the overall championship; and Dowell took second in Ethical Dilemmas and first in Marketplace Pitch. UM photo by Stella Connell

Jonathan Dowell, of Port Gibson, in second, and Corey Price, of Birmingham, Alabama, in third. In this category, participants presented their best solutions to workplace challenges where suggestions of sexual harassment, bribery, appropriation of intellectual property, plagiarism, per diem abuse and inappropriate office behavior were presented.

In the Marketplace Pitch completion, Dowell came in first, followed by Cobb and then Price. These presentations were persuasive arguments regarding technology, innovation productivity, leadership and strategy. Dowell's winning pitch advocated using battery technology to close the performance gap between renewable energy and fossil fuels.

Cobb's stellar performance in both categories earned her the title of overall winner for the competition, which includes a \$1,000 prize.

"Speaker's Edge was a great experience – receiving feedback from the coaches, moving from room to room, presenting our speeches to judges, competing with classmates – I enjoyed the intensity of it all," Cobb said. "The event challenged me in new ways, and I will take those skills with me into the professional world.

"Everyone's ideas were so interesting, and I knew there were strong presentations from my classmates. I did not expect to win. I was humbled, and it is a huge honor to be the 2018 winner."

This year's edition of Speaker's Edge kicked off Jan. 11, featuring 97 students from the UM School of Business Administration and [Patterson School of Accountancy](#). More than 50 judges from all over the Mid-South volunteered their time to help at the event.

"Speaker's Edge provides students an opportunity to develop the communication and presentation skills that are vital to success in business and other leadership settings," said Walter Davis, faculty adviser to the MBA program. "Students often point to the Speaker's Edge experience as a highlight of their MBA or Master of Accountancy program at Ole Miss."

Plans called for a new Team Pitch category at this year's event, but snow and ice across much of north Mississippi forced the cancellation of the final day of competition, including the Team Pitch presentations.

"It is disappointing that Mother Nature prevented us from the opportunity to review these presentations, but this something to look forward to in next year's competition," said Ashley McGee, director of the MBA program.

The Speaker's Edge competition was started by Ole Miss alumni in 2003. The event brings together industry professionals, retirees, working alumni and students, requiring students to adapt their message to different audiences.

OXFORD, Miss. – After a rare snow day pre-empted the final day of the 15th annual Speaker's Edge competition at the University of Mississippi, the [School of Business Administration](#) recently got participants back together to present awards and wrap up the event.

Nearly 100 students participated in this year's edition of [Speaker's Edge](#), which was dominated in the awards by three students from the on-campus [Master of Business Administration](#) program.

In the Ethical Dilemmas category, Ferderica Cobb, of Canton, took first place, followed by

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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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Young Alumna Gives Back to School of Accountancy

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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Reuters: Keep an Eye on the Money Supply

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

In preparation, participants spent a week-and-a-half working with volunteer communication coaches to discover the strengths and weaknesses of their own personal presentation style in front of multiple judges.

"One great thing about Speaker's Edge: When you see a student move through fear and become the confident speaker they will be for the rest of their lives," said Joan Andrews, a Speaker's Edge coach from the College of East Texas.

The annual event helps students find their own voice and grow more confident in their presentations, said JoAnn Edwards, speech instructor, director of forensics and special projects manager at the UM [Lott Leadership Institute](#).

"The outcomes are beyond valuable – they are vital," Edwards said. "The act of teaching, guiding and coaching that process is, for me and for all the coaches and judges who give of their time and talents, pure joy."

The Speaker's Edge competition is a critical program that helps Ole Miss students position themselves for success as they move into the professional world, said Ken Cyree, dean of the School of Business Administration.

"The competitive nature of the program allows our best student presenters and speakers to get even better while honing the skills of those students who are less confident in this environment," Cyree said. "We greatly appreciate the dedicated coaches, instructors and judges who are involved in making this an exceptional opportunity for our students."



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