UWG Sweeps Competition at 21st International Economic Convention

UWG Student Team Wins Multiple Awards at International Competition

CARROLLTON, Ga. – The University of West Georgia Richards College of Business student team had a spectacular showing at the 21st International Economic Convention in Mumbai, India, winning first place in all six team categories including “Best Overall,” “Most Innovative Solution,” “Best Q&A,” “Best Coordination Among Team Members,” “Best Paper” and “Best Presentation.”

“As dean, I am extremely proud of our students' success,” said Dr. Faye S. McIntyre, dean of the Richards College of Business and Sewell Chair of Private Enterprise. “Winning so many awards at this international competition demonstrates their hard work and dedication to excellence. They truly are world class!”

The theme of the 21st International Economic Convention, organized each year by Hyderabad (Sind) National Collegiate Board in Mumbai, was “Top Emerging Economies.” The participating teams, consisting of four to six students and representing universities and institutions from across the globe, are assigned a topic relevant to the overall theme. This year, UWG was assigned to present on the topic of China as an emerging economy. Each team writes a 35-page research paper and gives a 25-minute presentation to a panel of three independent judges. The presentations are followed by an extensive question and answer session in which they must defend their arguments.

Dr. John Upson, UWG professor of management, led the UWG student team, which included Timothy Aldridge, Osayame Gaius-Obaseki, Scott Craig and Emily Newborn. The students, who participate on the team as a completely extracurricular activity, worked on the presentation while also completing 15 to 19 credit hours in majors including computer science, management, marketing and management information systems.

“I'm extremely proud of this year's team,” said Upson. “These students possess all the fine qualities that we are trying to promote here at UWG, especially the willingness to take on challenges and embrace uncertainty. It was especially rewarding to discuss emerging economies while being in an emerging economy.”

In addition to the team awards, Gaius-Obaseki was named “Best Team Speaker” and “Best Overall Contributor to the Conference.” “The schools we competed against brought out the best in us,” said Gaius-Obaseki. “We devoted ourselves to representing our institution in the very best manner.”

Aldridge also won “Best Team Contribution.” “It was incredible to see the team collaborate and to remain dedicated until that goal was achieved,” said Aldridge.
For the team, the win was exciting, but the overall experience will last a lifetime. “With open arms and open hearts we were welcomed,” said Newborn. “There is not a scrapbook thick enough to enclose all the exceptional life-changing memories.”

“The competition was always friendly, but always fierce,” said Craig.

This is the third time that UWG has travelled to India to compete in the International Economic Convention, hosted this year by Smt.M.M.K. College of Commerce and Economics. Although the convention is always held in India, the host location is rotated through multiple schools that are members of the HSNC Board. In UWG’s first year of competing, the team won individual awards, and in the second year, UWG was the third place team overall.

"Dr. John Upson has done a tremendous job working with students to help UWG achieve international recognition,” said Dr. Michael Hester, dean of the Honors College and Trans-disciplinary Programs. “This marks the third consecutive year UWG has competed at the International Economic Convention. Every year UWG has managed to win awards and in just our third year participating, Dr. Upson and his team of students swept the competition. It's just another example that when you Go West, you can accomplish anything."

In order to be selected to the team, UWG students must provide a short research presentation to a selection committee. This year’s team was chosen in spring 2013 and immediately began researching over the summer. During the fall, the team completed the research paper and developed the presentation.

“This is another example of the quality of education at the Richards College of Business where investments in student engagement and dedicated faculty deliver outstanding results,” said Dr. Douglas Turner, associate dean of the Richards College of Business and professor of management.

“Dr. John Upson has been leading the UWG team in this competition for three years and should be commended for his commitment to our students and their success,” said McIntyre. “This is above and beyond his normal teaching duties and is a perfect example of how the Richards College faculty mentor, not just teach, our students.”

Photo: UWG student team photographed at the competition with all awards as well as a plush Wolfie, UWG’s mascot, for good luck. From left to right: Osayame Gaius-Obaseki, Timothy Aldridge, Emily Newborn and Scott Craig.

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Founded in Carrollton, Ga., in 1906, UWG also offers classes at its Newnan and Douglasville centers and online. For more information, please visit westga.edu.