3-19-2009

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Competitive Edge

03.19.2009 | Business

On Feb. 25, four UD MBA students out-modeled, out-projected, out-analyzed and out-valuated their competition in the regional ACG Cup in Cincinnati, taking third place in UD's first foray into the competition.

The team, Denver audit manager Christine Quijote-Oakes; financial analyst Trena Thomas and finance manager John Pfander of information services company LexisNexis in Dayton; and Matt Towne, a recruiting manager with Dayton-based defense contractor MacAulay-Brown, had to analyze the opportunities facing a retail fashion company that had been approached by a capital investor interested in acquiring one of its two divisions.

In the first round Feb. 9, the team evaluated three strategies for the company: Selling, merging or staying with the current business model. After thoroughly analyzing each entity's financials, markets, assets and profitability, the team presented options and recommendations to the company's board, a panel of area business leaders active in the Cincinnati chapter of the competition's sponsor, ACG, the Association for Corporate Growth.

In the finals Feb. 25, the team played the role of investment bankers retained by a private equity firm to evaluate the acquisition of the fashion company, said Pfander, a team leader. They assessed whether the private equity firm should buy the fashion company, what price it should pay and how such a purchase would be funded. They also projected returns and advised the firm of a three-year exit strategy, Pfander said. Towne was the team's primary presenter.

Chris Bidwell, a part-time finance professor in the MBA program and director of the corporate client group at Citigroup Smith Barney in Dayton, coached the team. Five universities participated; Dayton, University of Cincinnati, Miami University, Xavier University and Northern Kentucky University.

The strong finish, which netted the team $2,000 in scholarship funding, was satisfying, Bidwell said. But almost as satisfying was a fact that was personal, not business:

"We beat Xavier."