Pharma MBA students win prestigious biotech & healthcare case competition

Judges highlight Rutgers Business School team’s “compelling analytics and sharp strategic thinking”

A team of Pharmaceutical MBA students won the 8th annual Kellogg Biotech & Healthcare Case Competition on January 22 beating 11 other top business schools including Harvard, Tepper, Berkeley, Kellogg, and the London Business School.

The winning Rutgers Business School (RBS) team consisted of Brandon Saks, Dejan Milentijevic, Jennifer McGann, Michael Sarshad and Laryssa Wozniak.

The team was given one week to forecast a newly launched pharmaceutical compound and spent 18-hour days working together to come up with an executive-level presentation. Judged by executives from Abbott Laboratories, who sponsored the competition, the Rutgers team gave a “flawless presentation” according to the judges to win the competition unanimously.

“Our team really gelled together the last 24 hours,” said Wozniak. “We had the idea in our heads but it really started to come to life,” she said, adding that the Rutgers team outworked the other schools by rehearsing what they were going to say right up to 10 minutes before their presentation.

The team also credited their success to their diverse backgrounds, each having pharmaceutical industry experience, and conferring with Rutgers alumni in the biotech industry. “This win shows that Rutgers Business School belongs among the top business schools,” said Saks. “It was an unbelievable experience to see the respect we earned from the biotech and healthcare companies and the other business schools.”

Through the leadership of Professor Mahmud Hassan, Director of the Pharmaceutical Management MBA Program, the support of the Blanche and Irwin Lerner Center for the Study of Pharmaceutical Management Issues managed by Ingrid Castillo, and strong industry partnerships with Bristol-Myers Squibb, Eisai, Johnson & Johnson, Merck, Novartis, Roche and Schering-Plough (now part of Merck), Rutgers has been offering cutting-edge research and training in pharmaceutical management for over 10 years.

From left to right “Team Rust” from Rutgers Business School: Jennifer McGann, Michael Sarshad, Brandon Saks, Dejan Milentijevic, and Laryssa Wozniak.
“One of the things that makes the pharmaceutical management program so special is how active our students and alumni are with student clubs, alumni clubs, to stay connected,” said Hassan.

The Rutgers Pharmaceutical MBA team won $5,000 for a presentation that featured “compelling analytics and sharp strategic thinking,” according to a statement from the Abbott judges.

Second place went to a team from Haas School of Business, UC Berkeley, and third place went to a team from Kellogg. Two teams received an honorable mention: Harvard and Notre Dame.

In total, 46 teams from around the world applied to participate in the case competition, of which, 12 teams were invited to Evanston, Illinois for the event:

* Rutgers Business School - Newark and New Brunswick
* Harvard Business School
* John Hopkins University, Cary Business School
* London Business School
* INSEAD, France
* Carnegie Mellon University, Tepper School of Business
* The University of Notre Dame
* Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth
* UC Berkeley, Haas School of Business
* Darden School of Business, University of Virginia
* Northwestern University, Kellogg Graduate School of Management (two teams competed)

Pharmaceutical MBA program in heart of bio-pharma corridor

Rutgers Business School has turned a geographic advantage into a top MBA in Pharmaceutical Management. The greater New Jersey area is in the heart of the bio-pharma corridor -- nowhere else will you find a greater concentration of pharmaceutical companies. Through a partnership with several pharmaceutical companies, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Eisai, Johnson & Johnson, Merck, Novartis, Rutgers offers a cutting-edge MBA in Pharmaceutical Management.

The program's need is clear. Over the last decade, some of the most exciting advances in healthcare have been the result of pharmaceutical research and development. These life-enhancing discoveries have fueled amazing growth in this multi-billion dollar global industry, creating a new demand for talented, motivated individuals with a special knowledge of the healthcare and pharmaceutical industry.

Designed to answer this need, the Rutgers MBA in Pharmaceutical Management is a unique gateway to one of America's most respected and socially beneficial industries. Close to the many top pharmaceutical companies and hospitals located in New Jersey, New York City, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., an MBA in pharmaceutical management from Rutgers provides excellent job opportunities with the best corporations in the northeast.

The hard-earned victory by Brandon, Dejan, Jennifer, Michael and Laryssa, showcases Rutgers Business School as a leading business school in pharmaceutical management. For more information, visit: business.rutgers.edu/pharmaMBA.