

NEWS RELEASE



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Laurier MBA team takes first place in international case competition

WATERLOO – A team of MBA students from Wilfrid Laurier University took home \$20,000 this past weekend after winning the Aspen Institute’s 2011 Business & Society International MBA Case Competition for an innovative study that incorporated corporate profitability, as well as environmental, social and ethical issues.

Laurier was among 25 leading business schools from around the world – and one of two Canadian universities – competing for a share of a \$40,000 prize pool. The Laurier team of Priyanka Sundaram, James Munro, Robert Colorafi and Adam Melnik was awarded top prize for a presentation outlining “A Bright American Future” for a Chinese-based renewable energy company.

“This is an outstanding achievement for Laurier,” said Barry Colbert, director of the CMA Centre for Business & Sustainability at Laurier’s School of Business & Economics and faculty advisor to the Laurier teams. “It distinguishes our students as critical and integrative thinkers, capable of leading us in addressing the sustainability challenges facing humanity.”

The case competition – produced by the Yale School of Management – asked students to take on the role of consultants advising Trina Solar, a China-based solar panel company, on expanding its presence in the United States.

In the first stage, students had one weekend to analyze and respond to the case study. On-campus competitions determined the first-place campus winners, whose work was reviewed by academic judges in stage two. Five finalist teams competed in New York last weekend.

Colbert said the Laurier team did a conventional business analysis, and also recommended differentiating the company based on its sustainability performance and greening of operations. In addition, they suggested an open learning partnership with a non-governmental organization critical of some players in the industry.

The other finalist teams included Villanova University in the United States, the ESADE Business School in Spain, Baylor University in the U.S. and the Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Administración in Venezuela.

“We are so pleased to celebrate not only this year’s finalist teams, but all students who enthusiastically engaged in this year’s program,” said Nancy McGaw, director of the Aspen Institute’s Center for Business Education. “It’s critical that MBA students – the next generation of business leadership – see just how essential a deep understanding of environmental, social, and ethical issues is to corporate profitability in the 21st century.”

For more information about the competition please visit www.aspencasecompetition.org.