

Business honours for KPU

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From left: Stephan Schablinski, judge and representative of the Singapore Economic Development Board, KPU accounting students Vishal Mohan and Gabby Gill, KPU business instructor Carlos Calao, and KPU entrepreneurial leadership student Jason Faria.— Image Credit: Photo Submitted

A team of business students from Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) won Honorable Mention at the annual APEX Biz-IT Global Case Challenge in Singapore.

Students Gabby Gill, Jason Faria and Vishal Mohan represented the only Canadian university in the global challenge's six-team final.

The KPU delegation ranked fourth out of the 25 teams – representing universities on three continents – that competed. Hosted by Singapore Management University (SMU), APEX has first launched in 2009, and KPU has been sending a delegation since 2010.

“I was so excited with the performance of our team,” said Mohan, a fourth-year accounting student. “I would recommend the experience to anyone, and encourage them to challenge themselves and compete in a case competition. It is one of the most realistic environments for students to be in. You get a good sense of what a real world consultant goes through.”

“The whole process was an unforgettable one, starting with the support from our coaches down to the co-ordination from SMU and their organizing committee,” added Faria, who is in KPU's entrepreneurial leadership program. “Reaching the grand finals really validated all the hard work and weekends that we all put in, and hopefully our experience allows other students and faculty to see the benefit of becoming involved in other similarly offered programs.”

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Each year, KPU's School of Business has recruited students with the academic prowess and presentation skills required to succeed in a case competition. KPU students then begin weekly training sessions as early as the start of the fall semester, when they analyze business cases and make presentations to faculty. For at least five hours a week, outside of class time, students prepare for APEX.

According to Robert Wood, KPU business instructor, that figure more than doubles in the two to three weeks prior to the competition.

"Success in these competitions is a combination of the quality of the business solution presented to the panel of judges, and the students' professionalism in the presentation itself. Although there are no specific guidelines on the scoring, it is generally accepted that it is a 30 per cent presentation and 70 per cent analysis split," explained Wood, who has accompanied KPU teams to Singapore on several occasions.

"Student performance under competitive pressure is a clear marker of program quality. The KPU team, the only Canadian university team to advance to the final round, demonstrated their capabilities against 24 other university teams from Asia, Europe, the U.S.A. and Canada," said Wayne Tebb, Dean of KPU's School of Business.

KPU has had a history of success competing in the international competition. In 2012, the university placed first, with team member Natasha Campbell winning best speaker.

The APEX Biz-IT challenge, hosted by the School of Information Systems at SMU, emphasizes how information technology can be used in innovative ways to meet strategic business challenges. This year, students worked on a case with global reach: developing a sustainable green solution for an Asian Pacific logistics company.