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Sales students meet the challenge

KALAMAZOO—A two-person team from Western Michigan University placed second overall and one team member won the individual speed selling portion in this year's **National Sales Challenge** held by the Russ Berrie Institute for Professional Sales at William Paterson University in Wayne, N.J.

Greta Lorr, a junior from Jackson, Mich., and **Aleks Jogerst**, a senior from Vicksburg, Mich., continue a streak that demonstrates why WMU's Haworth College of Business is one of the country's leading **sales and business marketing programs**.

This is the third time this year that the WMU sales program has earned national recognition. The program was recognized as a top program nationally in October and Jogerst won the top spot at the State Farm Sales Competition 2012.

The National Sales Challenge brings together top sales students from across the country to meet and network with representatives from major corporations as they compete in two sales events—speed selling and sales call role-play. The combined scores for Lorr and Jogerst in the two events placed them second overall among 33 participating colleges and universities.

Lorr won the speed selling event in which students create a two-minute sales pitch about themselves and meet individually with executives as they highlight why the executives should hire them. She also placed fourth overall individually. Jogerst earned the third overall spot, placing fourth in speed selling and second in role-play.

“The most challenging part for me were the rehearsals the week before the competition. With the competition only one week away I fell into a slump, but with the support of our awesome faculty and fellow peers, when it came time to compete I was ready,” says Lorr.

In the sales call role-play event, students engage in a 15-minute sales call with a business executive who evaluates them in areas such as ability to gather information,

identify needs, present solutions and gain a commitment, as well as in their approach and overall communication effectiveness.

“The final involved an unexpected curve ball in which an upset office worker stormed into the sales room half-way into my sales presentation. I used the structure I learned in professional sales and advanced sales courses to deliver a quality sales call in 15 minutes,” says Jogerst.

Dr. James A. Eckert, WMU associate professor of marketing and advisor to the team, notes that the University has competed in the RBI National Sales Challenge since its inception in 2007. WMU’s team placed third in 2007, with Chelsea Biermacher taking first as an individual. Although the University didn’t place in 2008, its team racked up three trophies in 2009, placed second as a team in 2010 and in 2011 placed fifth overall.

The sales and business marketing major has an intense sales-focused curriculum and prepares graduates to start their careers in professional sales and business marketing. The sales and business marketing major at WMU is considered one of the best sales programs in the country and was recently named a “Top University Sales Program” by the Sales Education Foundation.

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