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News Release



Florida SBDC at the University of Central Florida

February 18, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hosted by:



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Small Business Institute® National Honors Won by UCF Students in Florida SBDC at UCF Program

Student Teams Awarded Top Prizes in SBI® Project of the Year Competition

Orlando, FL – The Small Business Institute® (SBI®), the premier professional association of small business / entrepreneurship educators and researchers involved in student analysis projects, recently announced that two (2) student teams from the University of Central Florida's College of Business Administration (UCF CBA) were winners of its annual Project of the Year (POY) competition, taking first prize in the 2015 'Graduate Specialized' division and third place in the 2015 'Graduate Comprehensive' division, respectively.

In competition with MBA teams from across the country, the UCF CBA team of students Taylor Ashley, Destin Wells, and Mary Hannah Hardcastle produced a first-place consulting project in the "Graduate Specialized" category for a local company, JK2 Holmes Construction and Scenic. And the team of Katherine Etcheverry, Brett McClellan and Lewis Naylor delivered a third-place winning project in the 'Graduate Comprehensive' category for Orlando-based AirTech of Central Florida. Both teams had studied under the guidance of then UCF CBA SBI® Program Director Dr. Lloyd Fernald, Professor Emeritus at the UCF College of Business Administration, in a management class at the UCF CBA.

The Florida SBDC at UCF (FSBDC) sponsors the Small Business Institute® in Central Florida. The FSBDC, in conjunction with the UCF College of Business Administration, manages the SBI® program locally. It recruits and evaluates FSBDC clients for the program, lends FSBDC certified business analysts as SBI® case supervisors and provides a range of guidance and support. The FSBDC is part of the UCF Office of Research & Commercialization (UCF ORC).

"Congratulations to our UCF students who won this prestigious recognition," said Dr. Tom O'Neal, associate vice president of the UCF ORC. "The SBI® program is a valuable tool for introducing UCF students to the world of business consulting while simultaneously providing another avenue for the FSBDC at UCF and UCF itself to support small businesses in Central Florida. It demonstrates UCF's commitment to our community and to growing our region's entrepreneurial ecosystem, and to the economic development that comes from that ecosystem."

In the SBI®'s 2015 Project of the Year 'Graduate Specialized' competition, the UCF student team worked with JK2 Holmes Construction and Scenic which is in the business of providing customized fabrications for themed environments. The Scenic Division is a relatively new enterprise for JK2, having evolved from their ability to serve the theme park industry by solving construction and building challenges with creative and customized solutions. Working closely with JK2's President Paul Holmes and Vice President Julie Holmes, the student team's consulting engagement and assignment was

focused on developing a full blown marketing plan for the scenic division, assist in broadening their supply/support base to encourage growth opportunities by developing a positive growth plan, and to develop techniques that support a price strategy.

The student team that took the third place award for the SBI®'s 2015 Project of the Year 'Graduate Comprehensive' competition worked with Janine Brunkala, President of AirTech of Central Florida, Inc. As the name suggests, AirTech is a leading [provider of air conditioning, heating and plumbing services to the Central Florida area](#). The student team's consulting engagement and assignment concentrated on developing key strategies for implementation of a formalized marketing process and budget to drive growth.

The SBI® Program is offered as a full-semester credit course through the CBA's Management Department. During the semester, the student teams oversaw and implemented extensive research and analysis to determine industry best practices; met regularly to understand company processes and procedures; and performed wide-ranging analysis of business and industry strategies and performance. As a result of their efforts, the students were able to provide a comprehensive analysis and set of recommendations.

"Our hats are off to each of these worthy UCF College of Business Administration students," said Dr. Paul Jarley, dean of the UCF CBA. "I am pleased that their efforts have been recognized for their excellence. I also want to applaud the FSBDC at UCF and its SBI® program for its emphasis on experiential learning and its applications when working with local businesses. It demonstrates not only our support of our business community but also to preparing our students with hands-on experience that will make them successful in a today's job market."

"We thank our Small Business Institute® team from UCF," said Julie Holmes, leader of JK2 Holmes Construction and Scenic. "With their assistance, we have articulated a marketing and growth strategy and have begun implementing it across both divisions of our company. In so doing, we have become more strategically focused and are targeting growth initiatives that fit our vision and meet the unique and artistic demands of our clients. Winning first place in the SBI® competition is a well-deserved recognition of the excellent work and important contribution our UCF team made to our business. It is also another example of the strong support provided by the Florida SBDC at UCF and the tremendous value they bring to the local small business community. Every small business owner should take advantage of this program."

SBI® is a nation-wide program that provides high-quality business assistance to companies in need while providing an extraordinary opportunity for university students to learn through field case studies. Each project is led and conducted by a group of students under the supervision of an SBI® Director or faculty member. The experience is often cited by students as being one of the most rewarding of their academic careers. In today's collegiate environment there is a strong emphasis on experiential learning, and the SBI® has been at the forefront of this movement for over thirty years.

At the UCF College of Business Administration, SBI® is a graduate-level elective course. Students enrolled in the class provide management consulting services to local small businesses. Each student team has direct contact with the client and produces a professional case report. The report is the ultimate product of the program and is tailored to each business. Case study reports have included market research, marketing plans, competitive analysis, advertising strategy, customer surveys, strategic plans, financial analysis, human resource manuals and business plans.

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About the FSBDC at UCF

With its main office in the National Entrepreneur Center located at the Fashion Square Mall in Orlando, the Florida SBDC at the University of Central Florida (FSBDC at UCF) is part of the UCF Office of Research & Commercialization and the

Florida SBDC Network (FSBDC Network). THE FSBDC at UCF provides business seminars and no-cost, one-on-one business consultation to emerging and established businesses. The FSBDC at UCF serves an eight-county area that includes Brevard, Flagler, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia counties and maintains 10 service centers across Central Florida.

In 2013, the FSBDC at UCF served more than 7,200 entrepreneurs and small business owners through consulting and training, resulting in 7,507 Central Florida jobs created, retained or saved; \$1.0 billion in sales growth; \$51.5 million in capital formation; \$87.7 million in government contract awards; and 129 new businesses started.

About the FSBDC Network

The FSBDC at UCF is a member of the Florida SBDC Network, a statewide service network funded in part through cooperative agreements with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Defense Logistics Agency, State of Florida and other private and public partners. The Florida SBDC Network is hosted by the University of West Florida and is nationally accredited by the Association of SBDCs. All opinions, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA.

For over 35 years, the FSBDC Network has nourished a statewide partnership between higher education and economic development organizations, dedicated to providing emerging and established business owners with management and technical assistance, enabling overall growth and increased profitability for the businesses and economic prosperity for the state. The FSBDC Network is a statewide service system of 41 centers with 60 outreach locations, including the FSBDC at UCF.

In 2013, the Florida SBDCs served over 34,000 entrepreneurs and small business owners through consulting and training, resulting in 39,536 jobs created, retained and saved; \$5.5 billion in sales growth; \$197.3 million in capital accessed; \$602.2 million in government contract awards; and 685 new businesses started. And, for every \$1 of Florida public and private sector investment in FSBDC programming, \$35 was returned to the state in tax revenue

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