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UCF Student Team Named National Winner by Small Business Institute®

Orlando, FL- Three UCF College of Business Administration graduate students placed first in the Graduate Specialized Category of the 2010 Project of the Year National Competition sponsored by the Small Business Institute®. MBA students Tammra Baron, Rayan Kaissi and Lindsay Tompkins were named first place winners for their team's business consulting project.

For their project, the student team was assigned to Orlando-based American Home Companions, a home care provider company. American Home Companions President Jim Mark worked with the student team and assigned them to explore growth opportunities for the company. The team researched growth opportunities in the Home Care Provider industry including franchising, licensing and on-line referral services, as well as prepared a market analysis to identify what market to implement the growth opportunities by utilizing state census data. The students concluded their project by making recommendations taking into consideration the current market conditions and the financial position of the firm.

The three students along with the UCF's SBI® program instructor, Dr. Lloyd Fernald, attended the 34th Annual SBI Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, February 18 to February 20, where they were presented with their award. The purpose of SBI®'s Project of the Year competition is to recognize outstanding student work in consulting. The UCF student team's award was in the "Specialized" category which includes projects that provide an in-depth consulting analysis of one or two areas of the business.

"I congratulate our MBA students on receiving this honor. Not only have the students won here, but American Home Companions wins as well. They now have a well-developed market analysis that they can execute to grow their business," said Thomas L. Keon, dean UCF College of Business Administration. "This national award highlights the quality of students we have enrolled in our MBA program," he added.

The Small Business Development Center at UCF in conjunction with the UCF College of Business Administration manages the SBI® 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. SBI® is a graduate-level elective course within the UCF College of Business Administration. 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.



Left to Right: LEO Simpson, SBI Vice President of Research and Publications; UCF Students Lindsay Tompkins, Tammra Baron, Rayan Kaissi; and Dr. Lloyd Fernald, Professor Emeritus, UCF College of Business Administration

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With its main office in the Disney Entrepreneur Center in Downtown Orlando, the SBDC at UCF is part of the UCF College of Business Administration and the Florida Small Business Development Center Network, providing business seminars and free one-on-one business consultation to small business owners. The SBDC at UCF serves an eight-county area that includes Brevard, Flagler, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia counties and maintains six satellite service centers. In the last year, the SBDC at UCF helped entrepreneurs create or retain 1,627 jobs, win contract awards worth \$31.4 million, acquire \$14.8 million in capital formation, and increase sales by \$31.7 million. The SBDC at UCF is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

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