

Tulane team tops in national accounting competition

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Business students (from left) Michael Kreisman, Sara Scott, Andrew Landsiedel, Sarah Lawhorne and Neil Barot took home the \$10,000 grand prize at the PwC Challenge, a national accounting case competition. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Neither snow nor rain nor Lundi Gras could stop a team of Tulane University students from winning first place in the PwC Challenge, a national accounting case competition sponsored by PricewaterhouseCoopers.

In winning this year's competition, [A. B. Freeman School of Business](#) team members Neil Barot, Michael Kreisman, Andrew Landsiedel, Sarah Lawhorne and Sara Scott beat out more than 450 teams from 52 colleges and universities across the U.S. to take home the \$10,000 grand prize.

"We put so much time and effort into making this happen, it was great to see that hard work pay off," said Barot. "I still can't believe it actually happened."

It almost didn't happen. Less than 24 hours before the team was scheduled to fly to Washington, D.C., to deliver its presentation to judges, PwC canceled the finals due to the threat of a severe winter storm. The final round was quickly reconceived as a virtual competition, but organizers unwittingly scheduled the team's conference call with judges for Feb. 8 — Lundi Gras, a university holiday.

Despite the distractions, Christine Smith, professor of practice in accounting and faculty adviser to the team, said the students handled their questions like seasoned pros.

"They totally rocked," said Smith. "The depth and breadth of their content was just remarkable, and the professionalism with which they delivered it was just fantastic. I was 99.99 percent sure we were going to win. They did that incredible a job."

"To win a national competition is a great accomplishment, but to win a national competition sponsored by one of the largest, most prestigious professional services firms in the world is bigger by an order of magnitude," added Ira Solomon, business school dean. "I'm proud to have remarkable students like Neil, Michael, Andrew, Sarah and Sara represent Freeman, and I congratulate them on the outstanding results of their dedication and hard work."

Mark Miester is a senior editor in the A. B. Freeman School of Business.

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