Freeman team wins 2011 NAWMBA Case Competition

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A team of Freeman School MBAs won first place and a prize of $5,000 at the National Association of Women MBAs Strategy Case Competition. The final round of the contest took place on March 23 in Newark, N.J., at the corporate headquarters of PSEG, which sponsored this year's competition.



Caroline Dorsa, left, executive vice president and CFO of PSEG, awards the grand prize of $5,000 to Freeman School MBAs Sofia Zarate, Hakima Taoufiq, Dana Omar Mahmoud and Catherine LaCorte.

In winning the national competition, the Freeman School MBAs—Catherine LaCorte, Dana Omar Mahmoud, Hakima Taoufiq and Sofia Zarate—beat out teams from 16 other business schools, including finalists Boston University, George Washington, Hofstra, Simmons College and Texas A&M.

"I think the most rewarding thing about participating was the opportunity for us to showcase the skills the MBA program has equipped us with in strategy, financial modeling and even communications and presentation skills," says Taoufiq. "It was also a great opportunity to network with fellow MBAs and PSEG executives."

The competition is sponsored by a different company each year, and the case is always about a real-world strategy issue faced by the sponsoring company. Company executives also play an active role in hosting the student teams. This year's competition featured a keynote address by Caroline Dorsa, executive vice president and CFO of PSEG, and Ralph Izzo, the company's chairman and CEO, attended the luncheon and dined with participants.

"After results were announced, we asked one of the PSEG executives who attended all the presentation what made our proposal stand out," Taoufiq says. "She said, 'All six proposals were excellent, but yours felt as if you had been in the industry for 10 years.' Hearing that from a PSEG executive was to us one more piece of proof that we had made the right choice by selecting the Freeman MBA."