



College of Business Quarterly Newsletter
May 2008 - Volume 12.2

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USF's chapter of the American Marketing Association walked away with one of the "Sweet16" awards as an "Outstanding Collegiate Chapter" given away at the AMA collegiate conference held April 3-5 in New Orleans. More than 122 colleges took part in the annual competition that evaluated chapters' planned activities and events against annual reports to see how well the students planned and implemented their marketing ideas.

The chapter also took an honorable mention award in the website competition and was recognized as a \$1,000 grant recipient for their marketing efforts on behalf of the Spring, a non-profit organization that helps women and children who live in abusive situations by providing them with clothing, food and shelter. Students created a marketing campaign for the Spring's thrift store, which not only provides clothing and other items to women and children fleeing violent situations, but also sells donated clothing to provide revenue for Florida's busiest domestic violence shelter.



USF chapter members at the AMA conference

A team of 15 students represented USF at the competition including AMA officers Angie High, president; Mike Gymrek, Executive VP; Tyler Freriks, VP of Fundraising; Stephanie Smith, VP of Community Service; Darren Nussel, VP of Professional Development; Preston Callison, VP of Communications; and Krystal Cintron, VP of Finance. Several AMA members interested in future leadership positions with the

student organization also attended the competition including David Lynes, Jonathan Rushnak, Brittany Evans, Linda Zahora, Brittany Marchetti, Lisa Casillo, Mike Zinsmeister, and Michelle Rioux. Co- advisors for the team were marketing professors Victoria Panzer and Jill Solomon.



The team's advisors, marketing professors Victoria Panzer and Jill Solomon, said the AMA collegiate conference is designed to provide the ultimate marketing experience for students, providing opportunities for students to showcase their marketing prowess, as well as learning experiences and networking sessions. Nearly 1,400 collegians attended the conference, which included sessions with more than a dozen "landmark practitioners" from the field serving as speakers and representatives from companies such as ESPN, Miami Heat, Wal-Mart, Enterprise, and Northwestern Mutual Financial Network.

Having attended the conference for two years, High believes that the conference is a valuable learning opportunity. "Students always come away with vital information and learn important marketing and communications skills," High said. She credited speakers, such as motivational speaker Kevin Snyder who energized the crowd with lessons learned from his experiences as a contestant on "The Price Is Right," for inspiring students to succeed. "They talked to us about how they got to where they are now and what it takes to accomplish our goals and stay on top," High said, enthusiastically recalling a few of the keynote remarks.

Panzer believes such competitions and conferences do more than simply recognize student effort. "The energy the whole weekend was electric and inspiring," Panzer said. "The conference generated excitement and commitment on the part of USF students and many of the other 1,300 students I had the opportunity to talk with during the three days."