

# Hong Kong and Montreal silvers cap winning season for students: Big plans for 2006

**B**uoyed by the international successes of 2005, Business School students are hoping for an even bigger case competition “season” in 2006.

“Our ambition is to establish ourselves as the best university in the world at case competitions by winning three of the six we’re entering this year,” explains Brendon Potter, the Business School’s Director of Student Development, who oversees the programme and coaches many of the teams.

In order, the competitions include Copenhagen, Montreal, Seattle, Sydney, Bangkok, and Hong Kong. Sponsors on board this year include Macquarie Bank and Zeus Management Group, which have each committed \$15,000.

The Business School’s impressive record last year included a repeat win in Seattle (the Global Business Challenge which led the last issue of Network), second place in Hong Kong and third in Sydney. In 2004, teams from the School won in Singapore and Seattle and came second in Sydney.

Already 2006 is off to a strong start, with the team coming second at the Montreal competition in March.

At Montreal the Auckland team proposed a new strategy for non-government organisation the Rainforest Action Network. The judges praised the clarity of the team’s presentation, their focus on the big picture and commitment to implementation even if it meant abandoning an existing campaign because it didn’t fit the strategic direction.

Eleven universities from North America, Asia and Europe competed in Montreal, including the University of California at Berkeley, Quebec’s McGill University, the Copenhagen Business School, Peking University, Singapore Management University and Thailand’s Thammasat University - the eventual winners.

The team of Paul Dou, Rachael Germann, Tessa Gould and Mark Russell spent five Sundays ahead of the competition analysing and practising cases with coach Peter Smith, and presenting them to a panel of three industry practitioners.

Last year concluded with the silver in the final of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Citigroup International Case Competition, against a field of nineteen international universities.



*Brendon Potter, Sunny Gu, Mark Russell, Patrick Cheong, Manu Sharma at the Citigroup International Case Competition in Hong Kong*



*FRONT – L to R Andrew Clements, Peter Smith (coach), Geoffrey Cumming  
BACK – L to R Rachael Germann, Paul Dou, Tessa Gould, Mark Russell  
winners of the McGill Management International Case Competition in Montreal*

The Hong Kong team consisted of Sunny Gu, Mark Russell, Patrick Cheong and Manu Sharma.

The lessons the students took from the competition were typical of the entire case competition programme’s benefits.

“The competition was a really unique and eye-opening experience – theory meeting reality and a chance to see how the real business world operates – what works and what doesn’t,” explains Sunny. “To be able to meet students from some of the top universities in the world and some of the top executives of the business world was both a daunting and humbling experience.”

The subject of the case study for the final was Hong Kong International

Airport.

A day before the final, students made a special site visit, which included a two-hour “airside” meeting with the Airport’s CEO and an exclusive tarmac visit, getting close and personal with jumbo jets and other aircraft.

The next day, teams were given a 30-page document as well as 30 pages of financial data. They then had 30 hours to prepare their initial presentation and present it to the Chief Strategic Officer of the Airport, a Corporate Executive for Citigroup and a professor from host university HKUST. Following the first round the finalists were announced and were given extra information. ■