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Office of University
Communications

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Team Competes Against More than 500 From Across the Nation and Globe

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—In an online program that simulates management of a global company, a team of business students from Gardner-Webb University climbed to first place, achieving three top-10 rankings for three weeks in a row. The students in Dr. Christine Sutton’s Business Strategy course competed against 546 teams from 35 colleges and universities in America and around the world.

Through the GLO-BUS program, teams of students use strategic management principles to run fictional companies that are racing for global market leadership in two product categories: wearable video cameras and sophisticated camera-equipped copter drones. The companies compete in a global market arena, selling to buyers in four geographic regions—Europe-Africa, North America, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America.

The Gardner-Webb students named their company “Da Best Drones.” They are:

- Heitor Duarte, of Rutherfordton, North Carolina, a senior accounting major with computer information systems minor
- Jazzmyne Pipkins, of Florence, South Carolina, a senior accounting major
- Luke Splawn, of Gastonia, North Carolina, a senior business administration major
- Tobie Tate, of Gastonia, a senior business administration major



Dr. Christine Sutton

The team earned a score of 108.5 to obtain first place over Upper Iowa University, Spring Hill College, and Northeastern State University. For their first successful ranking, they achieved an overall score of 107.0—tying for the ninth best. The next week, Da Best Drones tied for fifth best overall score, sharing the spot with six other teams, two from Clemson University. Their score was better than teams from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Upper Iowa University, Tecnologico de Monterrey, the University of Auckland and others.

A second team from Gardner-Webb, the Foto Fanatics, students in Jessica Herndon’s class, finished the most recent week in a tie for 19th best overall. The members are:

- Jamie Mekus, of Monroe, North Carolina, a senior business administration major
- Louis McKee, of Columbus, North Carolina, a senior healthcare management major
- Sarah Yoder, of Stony Point, North Carolina, a senior healthcare management major

Sutton uses the GLO-BUS program in her Business Strategy course, because the simulation software provides all the data students need to manage an international company. “They choose a strategic direction and make decisions about marketing, R&D, sales, pricing, paying employees—about 30 different areas,” she described. “It allows a more realistic experience of running a business. They are able to see how their decisions play out in the marketplace.”

Pipkins said the members of Da Best Drones have learned the importance of teamwork when making decisions for their company. Duarte added that it’s also critical to make sure every decision aligns with the business strategy. “It does not matter if we charge the lowest price or the highest price in the market, as long as our decisions are coherent with the overall strategy, we can be successful,” he said. “When competing with the other groups in our class, it has been a major key to our success to constantly watch the decisions they are making and how those decisions affect their business performance and then benchmark against our company.”

Tate pointed out that their strategy has focused on exceeding the investor expectation for return on equity and stock price. Splawn noted that business managers have to be flexible. “Whatever decisions you made one week, won’t work the next,” he shared. “You have to be able to change your approach week by week.”

Duarte summed up the experience, “GLO-BUS is the closest tool I have worked with that brings real world business scenarios to college students, who have been introduced to business theory and concepts, but not the practice.”

[Learn more about the Godbold School of Business.](#)



The co-managers of “Da Best Drones,” from left, are Jazzmyne Pipkins, Lucas Splawn, Tobie Tate and Heitor Duarte.

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university. Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.