

Gardner-Webb University

Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive

Gardner-Webb Publications

4-16-2012

Gardner-Webb SIFE Team Wins Regional Competition, Advances to Nationals

Office of University Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive>

Gardner-Webb SIFE Team Wins Regional Competition, Advances to Nationals

 webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/gardner-webb-sife-team-wins-regional-competition-advances-to-nationals/

Office of University Communications

April 16, 2012

Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) teaches students to be socially responsible business leaders

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.— The Gardner-Webb University SIFE team (Students in Free Enterprise) are regional champions after their recent performance at the Charlotte regional competition. The victory qualifies Gardner-Webb to compete in the National SIFE Competition in Kansas City, Mo., in May.

The GWU students who competed were: Jennifer Hindman, president; Josh Angel, vice president; Cameron Puckett; Brittany Blackwelder; Chris Musco; Anthony Singleton; and Rob Thawley.

SIFE's ultimate purpose is to prepare students for socially responsible business leadership, but as Hindman said, the club is about far more than just business.

“I think the title Students in Free Enterprise sometimes throws people off,” said the junior international business and Spanish double-major from Cary, N.C. It sounds like we're just a club for business majors. But that's really not true. We're a service-oriented club, and our focus is on helping people in our community.”

According to Hindman, SIFE challenges its students to design projects that focus on people, planet and profit. “We try to help educate people here in our region, to help sustain the planet, and since there is a business component to the club, we try to earn a profit. But we also want others to profit from the projects we're doing.”

At the regional conference, the GWU SIFE team gave presentations before a panel of regional business executives about four initiatives they completed this academic year:

- A chili luncheon and social for clients of the Life Enrichment Center, an adult daycare and health service in Shelby, N.C.
- The Gardner-Webb B.E.S.T. program (Bringing Executives and Students Together), a creative entrepreneurial experience for local high school students
- A project to support Union Elementary School's audio library and globalization curriculum
- A workshop on financial literacy for Gardner-Webb freshmen

In recent years, Gardner-Webb's SIFE team has also partnered with Adopt A Highway and the Broad River Greenway for environmental initiatives. They even sent members to Costa Rica to deliver donated uniforms and school supplies to students who otherwise could not afford education, and to teach their mothers to make profits through craftwork.

The key, Hindman says, is to find real and pressing needs, and develop projects to meet them. "We didn't just design flashy projects so that we'd look good in competition. We did our projects because we really do have a need for them. I think that made us different from some of the other schools at the competition," said Hindman.

Blackwelder, a senior marketing major from Huntersville, N.C., said, "We got a lot of positive feedback from the judges, so that made me proud of our SIFE team and what we've accomplished."

Angel, a junior business administration major from Asheville, found the competition experience to be particularly worthwhile. "It's tough getting up there in front of executives, people who have been there and done it. But it really helps. They were asking hard, detailed questions, and it gave me a feel for what someone like that will ask me when I've graduated and I'm working for them," he said.

"I was extremely proud of the students for their performance in the regional competition," said Oscar Zamora, a GWU professor of business and the SIFE team advisor. "They worked hard in their preparation, made an excellent presentation, and answered the judges' questions well. Most of all, I was proud of the way the students represented Gardner-Webb University; they were professional, respectful, and polite, and exhibited the Christian values of Gardner-Webb."

SIFE is an international non-profit organization that works with leaders in business and higher education to mobilize students to make a difference in their communities. More than 1,600 SIFE teams are active in 39 countries, logging more than 5,700,000 student volunteer hours each year. More information is available at sife.org.

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University blends a liberal arts core curriculum with more than 55 specialized major and minor programs, a comprehensive academic experience grounded in a Christian environment of service, leadership and intellectual freedom.