

UConn MBAs Win Second Place in a New York Times Media Group Case Competition

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A group of four UConn MBA students: **Brian Rozental**, **Katharine Mongoven**, **Jennifer Gorman**, and **Keith Bessette** came out second and landed an award of \$1,500 in a two-round case competition sponsored by the New York Times Media Group, as part of the 2009 MBA Media & Entertainment Conference at Columbia University. The case, called "The Metropolis Planet and Diversity. Looking to Minority Populations for New Revenue Opportunities" used a fictitious newspaper, *The Metropolis Planet*, to identify issues in a failing industry looking to capture new market segments to bolster waning revenues. It required the participants to analyze all aspects of the business and social environment and generate new strategies and innovative ideas for attracting and monetizing minority audiences for the newspaper industry.



The UConn team entered the first round of the competition together with approximately fifty other teams over the winter recess with an idea based upon viral adoption of web 2.0 technology combined with citizen journalism. With minimal constraints, the team was able to leverage the collective creativity of the four to produce an idea that garnered selection into the top six finalists. The final six teams included the University of Connecticut, New York University, Cornell, Harvard, Northwestern, and Syracuse.

For the second round of the competition the UConn team was invited to present the details of their idea to a panel of eight senior executive judges and a host of employees from the New York Times. Arthur Sulzberg, the Chairman of the Board of the New York Times Company and the Publisher of the New York Times was also in attendance and insisted on introducing himself and meeting the dynamic UConn team upon the close of their presentation. At the conclusion of the competition, the University of Connecticut team proudly received second place beating Harvard, Northwestern and Cornell, and second only to New York University. The team credits their success to an incredible team dynamic fostered further by skilled guidance of faculty advisor **Nora Madjar** and the sponsorship of the Connecticut Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

"This is a huge accomplishment for our MBAs! I am particularly proud of the ability of this team to think "outside the box" and at the same time to suggest practical and readily implementable solutions. The students were especially good at incorporating feedback and integrating different perspectives. I believe that this was an excellent opportunity for them to practice the skills they acquire in the MBA program and demonstrate their solid knowledge base to tackle complex problems, as well as to build confidence and professional experience", noted their faculty advisor, Nora Madjar.