

The 2019 Pittsburgh AMA Collegiate Marketing Competition culminated Friday, April 5 at Point Park University. Messiah College, Robert Morris University and University of Mount Union teams earned first, second and third place respectively from a field of nine teams including those from Duquesne University, Point Park University, Slippery Rock University, and the University of Pittsburgh.

The case they competed on was New York Life. “This year’s case embraced challenges many companies seem to be facing on two fronts. First, how do they engage and recruit Gen Z into the workforce. The second, with unemployment levels so low, how do companies overcome the stigma of “sales” and “selling” as a dirty word when competing to hire college graduates. New York Life is actively engaged in answering these questions and was very excited to work with AMA and college students in the region to see and hear what they had to say on both of these fronts.”, said Dr. Jeananne Nicholls Professor Slippery Rock University, VP Collegiate Relations Pittsburgh AMA Chapter.

Tam Pham from New York Life partnered with Dr. Nicholls in preparing the case and judged the finalists. She said; “I was surprised by the ideas from the students. I honestly did not expect much from the competition because I knew how heavily regulated our industry are. There were several ideas from the students that I could use and those ideas would not create issues with compliance. I felt like I had several teams of marketing experts working hard to come up with several working plans. I highly recommend any businesses, especially small business owners, to work with Pittsburgh AMA. Besides the students’ hard work, Pittsburgh AMA also arranged several volunteers as judges who spent hours reading through marketing plans before the competition and spent a whole day judging and giving advice to students.”



AMA judges and some of Pittsburgh’s top marketing professionals including Paul Carbone Sales and Marketing Director UPMC Health Plan, Shawn Graham Founder Deep Varnish, Beth Vukmir Senior VP Group Marketing Manager PNC, Sadie Stresky Brand Strategist 321 Blink, Tim McLaughlin President 321 Blink, Chris Hays President Radiant Communications, Alisa James Director Brand Marketing MedExpress, Amy Vojtecky Hoffman Murtaugh, T Pham New York Life, Angela Churchill Director of Marketing Comcast Business and Lauren Norris Digital Marketing Consultant RevLocal and President of the Pittsburgh AMA Chapter. Not pictured Rujrutana Mandhachitara Penn State University.

Co-Chairs for the competition included Paige Beal Assistant Professor Point Park University and Dr. Debbie DeLong Associate Professor of Marketing Chatham University who said; “Students produced innovative insightful solutions for the client, New York Life, and received invaluable feedback on their work from our marketing professional judges. The competition is a great experience for everyone involved, especially since it realizes the American Marketing Association’s mission of fostering collaboration and excellence within the marketing profession. “

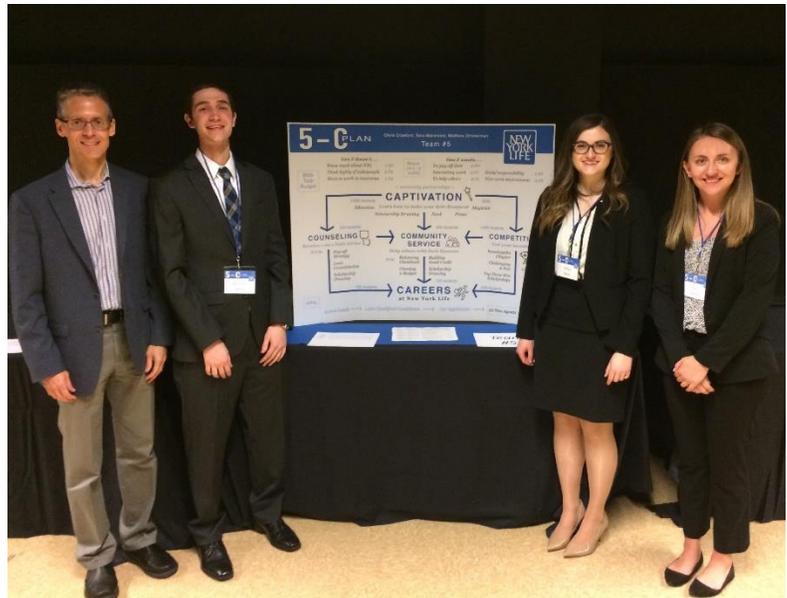
First place team advisor Dr. David Hagenbuch Professor of Marketing Messiah College shares his thoughts on the experience of bringing a team to the competition.

“AMA Pittsburgh’s Collegiate Marketing Plan Competition has been an outstanding experience for our students each of the three years we’ve participated. Competition often brings out the best in people. Unfortunately, though, there are few opportunities for college students to match their newly-learned professional skills against others. The Marketing Plan Competition, however, provides that exact kind of exciting challenge.

Like other years, after the two-hour morning Q & A session with judges, our team was exhausted but invigorated by the intense experience. The afternoon presentation before marketing professionals, faculty members, and peers also stretched the team in many positive ways. To hear our school’s name announced as the winner was an absolute thrill.”

As rewarding as it is to participate in the competition finale, the best part of the Marketing Plan Competition likely occurs earlier. Tremendous learning takes place during the semester, as the case forces students to sharpen their marketing IQs, think critically, plan creatively, and work collaboratively.

I only wish we lived closer to Pittsburgh! However, the three-hour drive and overnight stay are well worth it. I highly recommend AMA Pittsburgh’s Collegiate Marketing Plan Competition.”



Messiah College’s team placed first in the competition. Pictured left to right; Dr. David Hagenbuch, Matthew Zimmerman, Olivia Crawford, and Sara Mammano.



Second Place team from Robert Morris University



Angela Churchill Marketing Director Comcast Business offers feedback to the student teams in the competition.



Third place team from University of Mount Union includes Alyssa McHue, Madeline Fraley, and Walker Cooper.



Chris Hays President of Radiant Integrated Communications speaks with the teams about their New York Life marketing plans.