

Fisher School of Accounting students traveled to Washington DC to compete in PwC's Tax National Finals



"The Feisty Five" team members left to right: Jose Castro, Allyson Barbanell, Austin Friedman, Christine Leonard and Matt Kuruzovich

"The Feisty Five," a team consisting of FSOA students Austin Friedman, Matt Kuruzovich, Christine Leonard, Allyson Barbanell and Jose Castro, was one of four National Finalist teams selected in the PwC 2013 Case Competition. The team was awarded \$10,000 and a trip to Washington DC in January to compete in the Tax National Finals competition where they presented their case to PwC US Partner Leadership.

The Feisty Five began their journey as one of five UF teams competing at the local level. Winning first place and \$1000, they moved on to compete at the national level where four teams were selected from among all of the local University winners.

PwC Tax Challenge is a nationwide campus competition giving students the opportunity to work with their peers as well as PwC Professionals, to model real-world decision making by working on issues facing today's business and government leaders. This year, more than 5,000 students from over 85 colleges and universities will learn about high-level tax and accounting policy issues while competing for cash prizes at the local and national levels. Students from the Fisher School of Accounting have participated in the PwC Challenge (formerly the xTREME Games) since 2002, the first year of the competition.

A student's perspective...

By Austin Friedman

When Allyson and I wrote our names down on the "interested participants" list for PwC's Challenge we knew we had a difficult, but fun, journey ahead and that we had to find a team—quickly. By the end of the introductory meeting, our impromptu team selection seemed to solidify and Matt, Jose, Allyson, Christi and I—the "Feisty Five"—met that same day to begin planning our grand strategy. The next two weeks saw creating, practicing, evaluating and bonding on almost a daily basis as our team prepared for



the preliminary round of presentations here at UF. October 21st was game day; we would present to the PwC partners, associates and UF faculty and that same night would attend a dinner with the other teams. The restaurant's back room was filled with students patiently waiting to hear who won and culminated in many hoorays from the Feisty Five after it was announced that we had won first place. We proudly picked up our prizes, shook everyone's



hand and went home with smiles on our faces thinking it had ended there. To our surprise and delight, a few weeks later, we found out we were wrong. We were chosen as one of the top 5 teams in the nation and were headed to Washington, D.C. in January to participate in the national competition. The trip was unlike anything we'd ever experienced. In addition to the presentation itself, the weekend consisted of teambuilding activities, a strengths finder exercise,

interviews, tours of D.C., social events, nice meals and, most rewarding of all, networking with top tax partners and managers from across the United States who were at our curiosity's disposal. We left D.C. with new connections, unforgettable memories and the knowledge that we had just accomplished something we didn't even consider a possibility one month prior. I, as well as the entire Feisty Five, would encourage anyone considering participating in PwC's xTax Challenge to do so, it is a worthwhile experience. Go Gators!