NEWS RELEASE
March 6, 2015

Francesca Di Marco
Director of Communications and Public Affairs, NASPAA
dimarco@naspaa.org
202.628.8965 x 106

NASDAQ Announces West Region Team Winner of Inaugural Student Simulation Competition

If their strategy were scaled and implemented in regions across the country, it would save the U.S. $582 billion dollars annually in 2040.

Washington, D.C. – Last weekend, students competed across the U.S. at five regional sites, for NASPAA’s Student Simulation Competition. The teams were asked to provide a locally led “bottom up” approach to health care reform.

Nationally, 45 teams—representing 93 participating schools—explored more than 4,400 different health care futures. Each health care future compared the team’s policy to a business-as-usual base run that predicts what would happen if no changes are made in the current health care system.

The West region team winner for the 2015 NASPAA Student Simulation Competition hosted at the University of Southern California Sol Price School of Public Policy included graduate students at the following institutions:

- Pardee RAND Graduate School, Benjamin Batorsky
- California State University Los Angeles, Alexander Harwood
- University of Colorado Denver, Johanna Jamison
- University of Southern California, Kharaam Sharifpour

If their strategy were scaled and implemented in regions across the country, it would save the U.S. $582 billion dollars annually in 2040. The cumulative savings would be approximately $7.7 trillion U.S. dollars between 2015 and 2040. In addition, the team’s solution yielded $312 billion U.S. dollars in increased productivity in 2040 in the economy due to fewer sick days taken. All of this took place while the population became healthier: death rates dropped by 20.2 percent, emergency room visits dropped by 19.3 percent and high risk behaviors such as obesity, smoking and drug abuse dropped by 48 percent at the end of the simulation in 2040.

“The winning team was not the one who scored the highest SuperScore from the simulator. They were selected because they tried to understand what was going on when they simulate their policy packages, why, and how to address pitfalls. They were thoughtful, reflective, and cooperative in their thinking. Judges appreciated these efforts in understanding their choices and consequences. On top of that, their presentation exactly showed their thinking process,” said Yushim Kim, site judge and associate professor at the School of Public Affairs at the Arizona State University (ASU).
According to Laurel McFarland, NASPAA Executive Director, “This competition demonstrates the tremendous learning opportunities gained by using simulations to immerse students in situations where they are able to immediately see the complexities and systemic aspects of public policy and management challenges,” said McFarland.

The simulator was developed by the Rippel Foundation as part of their collaborative initiative called ReThink Health, founded in 2007 by a group of the nation’s most influential change-makers in health, economics, politics, business and energy. The simulator is a state-of-the-art policy planning tool based on extensive research and widespread engagement with communities to help them foster catalytic leadership and test innovative ideas for bridging and redesigning their health and health care systems. The ReThink Health Model has been used to support ambitious health reform efforts in cities such as Atlanta, Cincinnati, Pueblo, Colorado and several other locations throughout the U.S.

NASPAA, the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration, is the global standard in public service education with a twofold mission to ensure excellence in education and training for public service and to promote the ideal of public service. It is the membership organization of graduate education programs in public policy, public affairs, public administration, and public and nonprofit management. NASPAA is also the recognized accreditor of master's degree programs in these fields. Its nearly 300 members are located across the U.S. and in 14 countries around the globe.

###