NEWS RELEASE
February 29, 2016

NASPAA Announces the 2016 Student Simulation Competition Winner

Washington, D.C. – On Saturday, February 27, 375 students competed around the world at eight regional sites for NASPAA's Second Annual Student Simulation Competitions. Teams of up to 21 people representing different universities were tasked with creating an implementable plan to limit global warming. The global winning team competed at the regional site held at United Nations University – MERIT/ Maastricht Graduate School of Governance in the Netherlands.

This team created a solution that by the year 2100 limited global warming to 1.9 degrees Celsius from above pre-industrial levels, which is the generally accepted safety-barrier to protect the earth from catastrophic impacts of global warming. The winning team's approach did not rely on a single "silver bullet" approach to solving the problem of global warming, but instead deployed a "silver buckshot" approach. They implemented an across-the-board carbon price (also known as a carbon tax) of $100 per ton of carbon emissions plus a coal tax of $5 per gigajoule and an oil tax of $7 per gigajoule. Renewables were subsidized at $10 per gigajoule as were emergent technologies. This group also included nuclear power as part of their solution with a strong subsidy for the nuclear industry. Their approach was built with a strong emphasis on energy efficiency in stationary structures (commercial buildings and homes) and mobile devices (autos and trucks). Finally, their solution also recognized the often forgotten role of land use, forestry, and agriculture greenhouse gases, and it proposed a policy to reduce these other gases, not created by the use of fossil fuels, by 50%.

An interesting element to this team's proposal was their comparative perspective. While all of the semi-finalist teams relied heavily on a carbon price, a form of carbon tax to achieve our global goals, only this team identified and analyzed data relating to an implemented carbon price. This team showed that some countries, primarily in Europe, who have aggressively embraced carbon-based taxes have experienced positive economic outcomes. That is, using a carbon price to drive carbon-based energy out of the economy hac the unanticipated effect of encouraging economic growth – due to sustainable innovations which created employment and increased economic activity.

Within this competition, 135 universities were represented on 20 different teams at eight regional sites and they explored hundreds of solutions to the current global warming problem. Their analysis relied on use of a sophisticated simulation developed by Climate Interactive called En-ROADS. En-ROADS is a powerful tool which focuses on how changes in global GDP, energy efficiency, R&D results, carbon price, fuel mix, and other factors change carbon emissions, energy access, and global temperature. The En-ROADS simulation is built using the Systems Dynamics method and emphasizes the dynamics of a transition to clean energy. In the past, this model has been used by diverse groups from university students to high level policy makers, proving it to be an excellent platform for concerned individuals to deepen their understanding of the causes of climate change and the array of possible measures to mitigate it.

The global winning team was selected from eight semi-finalist teams by a panel of three independent judges: David Andersen, Steve Cohen, and Steve Kaagan. One judge remarked that these students "will save the world." Judges also remarked that any semi-finalist team could have been considered as the final global winners because they all put forth very strong proposals. The winning team was composed of the following 18 people:

- Mohammad Alrefai, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies
- Shreya Bhattacharya, Central European University
- Marion Charpentier, Maastricht University
- Deepal Doshi, University of Bonn
- Lize Duminy, University of Bergen
- Mahmoud El-Refai, American University in Cairo
- Manuel Friedlein, Maastricht University
- Teodora Monica Fulga, Bucharest University of Economic Studies
- Nick Germanacos, Maastricht University
- Hugo Herrera, University of Palermo
- Audrey Hobbelen, Maastricht University
- Brendan Johannsen, Sciences Po
- Paul Langer, University of Speyer
- Jill LaPlante, Maastricht University
- Sarah Neehus, Maastricht University
- Hanh Nguyen, Central European University
- Ennio Valentino Picucci, Maastricht University
- Zhan Yi Debby Roxanne Wong, Sciences Po

Judging the competing teams at UNU-MERIT were Dorcas Mbuvi, Senior Researcher, University of Maastricht, and Valerie Graw, Senior Researcher, University of Bonn. The first-runner up team competed at Georgia State University Andrew Young School of Policy Students.

The student competitors, who first met on the morning of the competition, displayed exemplary insights and sophisticated critical thinking on a global challenge. These students, many without a background in climate change or environmental affairs, developed a highly nuanced and intelligently phased policy proposal that was not only desirable, but also feasible; a tough combination to achieve on such a complex issue as climate change.

According to Laurel McFarland, NASPAA Executive Director, "This competition demonstrates the tremendous learning opportunities afforded 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. We were thrilled to see students engaging in the competition from all backgrounds and with varying levels of knowledge. This shows that the skillsets and competencies learned by public affairs and public policy students are universal in how they prepare students to tackle the largest problems facing our world."

NASPAA is in tremendous debt to the simulation visionaries David Andersen and Rod MacDonald, both at the University at Albany, SUNY, Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy. We are also grateful to NASPAA's staff, especially Emily Reineke, Conference and Operations Director, who brought the competition into existence.

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 more than 300 members are located across the U.S. and in 21 countries around the globe.