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Chico State wins big in health services administration competition



Left to right, Arlene Bautista, Sydney Kuhn, Brooke Eisler and Erika Gutierrez compete in the Health Services Administration College Bowl last week in Southern California. (Lauren Murphy/Chico State Faculty)

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CHICO — Several students from the Chico State health services administration department competed in a college bowl competition last week, taking first and second prize.

Eight women competed, with the team consisting of six seniors and two juniors. The team presented with a case study format.

“In the past it was ‘Jeopardy’ style with multiple choice questions,” said Lauren Murphy, health services administration faculty member and lecturer. “This was the first year they did a case study. They were presented with the study three weeks ago. Students had to develop an innovative solution for the hospital at UC Irvine.”

Murphy said the competition went very well.

“The students were incredibly professional,” Murphy said. “I’m so proud of them. They took the knowledge they have been learning and applied it to real world scenarios. We got positive feedback on how Chico State was represented.”

Over the past seven years, Chico State has won six times, said Murphy.

“The students were very well prepared and showed up in professional attire,” she said. “They did a lot of practice and preparation in advance of the competition. They showed up every week and practiced for several hours.”

Health services administration faculty member Richard Narad and Murphy guided the students but the students did all of the hard work themselves.

The members of the first-place team were team captain Maribel Oviedo, Olivia Peirce, Katelyn Bouda and Jacqueline Mejia. The second-place team consisted of team captain Sydney Kuhn, Arlene Bautista, Brooke Eisler, and Erika Gutierrez.

Maribel Oviedo, health services administration student and team captain, is graduating in May. She enjoyed the competition and was proud of the team’s first place win.

“It went really well,” Oviedo said. “It was a great learning experience. We got to network with the American College of Healthcare executives in Southern California. Some executives acted as consulting groups for the case.”

Oviedo enjoyed networking with female health care leaders.

“They were inspiring,” she said. “Since health care is male dominated, it was nice to be surrounded by powerful and knowledgeable women. Everyone was enthusiastic and passionate. We had a lot to learn from each other. It was a very supportive environment.”

Oviedo said she enjoyed the entire experience.

“It was a great opportunity,” she said. “Rick and Lauren did a great job helping us. We got to collaborate with other students as well. Chico State has a great reputation. We took pride in that.”

Oviedo decided to major in health services administration after her sister got cancer.

“I was with her throughout the process,” she said. “As soon as we walked in the door, everyone in health care was amazing. They took the time to know everyone, not just the patients but their family members as well. The cancer was a hard diagnosis but it got me into health care.”

Health services administration major and graduating senior Brooke Eisler competed with the second-place team.

“It was stressful and nerve wracking getting ready for the competition,” Eisler said. “But the day of was rewarding. All of the teams had worked so hard. It felt uplifting to be around people working toward the same thing.”

Eisler found her niche with health care.

“I didn’t want to go to med school and be hands on with patients. I had interest in the admin side. I felt it was a perfect fit,” she said.

Eisler has been engaging in an internship at Safe Space Winter Shelter since January. She worked on policy and procedure, prepping for the cooling center in the summer and finding volunteers and churches. She said the case study was a bit scary.

She said overall the bowl was a great experience.

“It was great to be a part of and see the community come together for a statewide competition,” Eisler said. “It was an all female team and we spent so much time together and saw how people presented. We read each other’s body language so we could help each other out during the presentation.”

According to a press release, Chico State’s Health Services Administration College Bowl Team competes each spring against other undergraduate health administration programs in a competition hosted by the three California chapters of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

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