

## Participant Spotlight

Nikos Athanasoulas, CFA

Winning team member, 2016-2017

### **1. When did you first hear about the CFA Institute Research Challenge and what made you want to participate?**

I first learned about the Research Challenge during my 3<sup>rd</sup> year of finance studies. At that time, I had already decided to pursue the CFA charter after completing my studies, and as a result, the Challenge immediately caught my attention. Furthermore, the Research Challenge presented a unique opportunity for me to participate in a real-world investment research competition as well as practice, and enhance both my soft and hard skills, while engaging with industry professionals and like-minded peers.

### **2. What did you gain from your participation in the Research Challenge?**

Participating in the Research Challenge was a transformative experience that enriched both my academic and professional development. It provided me with the chance to apply what I had learned in my studies to a real professional project, allowing me to gain a better understanding of equity analysis and investment decision-making intricacies. Additionally, it boosted my soft skills, as the Challenge simulated a professional environment requiring teamwork, communication, and effective time management. Lastly, it offered me the opportunity to meet and discuss with industry professionals with years of experience, effectively building my confidence as an aspiring finance professional.

### **3. What made you want to become a CFA charterholder?**

The decision to pursue the CFA charter was driven by my desire to distinguish myself as a finance professional. Subsequently, the CFA Program's reputation among finance professionals made it an essential step in my career. The Program's comprehensive and in-depth curriculum, with a focus on the highest standards of ethics, aligned perfectly with my commitment to remain at the forefront of industry trends and best practices.

### **4. How has the CFA charter benefited your career so far?**

The CFA charter has significantly influenced my career, providing me with opportunities that I would not have had otherwise. Firstly, the CFA designation has propelled my career and given me a competitive advantage when seeking advancements and opportunities in finance. Furthermore, it has enhanced my credibility among employers, clients, and peers, showcasing my expertise in investment analysis. Lastly, the CFA charter has enabled me to connect with seasoned professionals and build valuable connections within the industry.

### **5. Do you have any tips for success in the competition for this season's teams?**

In my opinion, the most important thing is to start early and allocate time wisely, as the timeline is quite tight, and time management is crucial for thorough analysis and a comprehensive report. Furthermore, I would suggest emphasizing open communication within the team, seeking feedback from faculty advisors and mentors, as well as practicing presentation skills. Overall, it is crucial to bear in mind that this competition should be a fun learning experience for everyone.