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Hornet Construction Management team
takes second at nationals

Sacramento State’s Construction Management students captured second place in last week’s National Mechanical Contractors Association of America (MCAA) student competition in Orlando, Fla. A single point separated the top two finishers, and this year’s competition was the closest on record for the four finalists.

The Sac State seven who presented in Orlando are Cameron Harrison, Chris Fitzgerald, Dave Mitchell, Justin Larsen, Pam Ames, Steve Farshchi and Tyler Norris.

Sac State’s team took second place and was awarded $2,500 toward the MCAA student chapter. “Several mechanical contractors said that our students had the best presentation and performed exceptionally well for the Q&A sessions,” said Professor Mikael Anderson, professional engineer and coordinator of the Construction Management Program in the Department of Civil Engineering. “Our students worked very hard in producing a top-four proposal.”

Of the 42 MCAA chapters across the country that attempted this year’s national project, only 27 submitted proposals. The project was the renovation and seismic retrofit (base isolation system) of a four-story historic library (built in 1917) converted to the Asian Art Museum in downtown San Francisco. The mechanical system was plan spec and the plumbing system was design build. The students spent every weekend and many weeknights from Oct. 15 to Dec. 15 preparing their winning proposal. The site logistics in downtown San Francisco were especially challenging, but the students rose to the top in this area dealing with the local jurisdiction requirements and proposing a very feasible plan. Second place among 27 universities is a significant achievement for the Sacramento State MCAA student chapter.

Special thanks are due to Scott Strawbridge, Bill Whitney, and contractor members of the Northern California MCA chapter for their support of the Sac State student chapter over the past five years in helping the team achieve this great accomplishment, Anderson said. “Not only has NorCal MCA provided generous financial support and professional development through conferences/meetings for the students,” he added, “but they have also provided constructive feedback during our
presentation dry runs leading up to this stage. I look forward to further fostering this relationship in the coming years.”

During their time in Orlando, Sac State’s students met with thousands of mechanical contractors from around the country, attended educational workshops and heard speakers such as former Defense Secretary Robert Gates, former Dallas Cowboys head coach Jimmy Johnson, and CBS News’ Bob Schieffer. The students also were able to network with many local and national contractors at the events, including a trade show to display Sac State’s accomplishments.

“The relationship our CM program has established between our students, faculty and industry has reached such levels,” said Emir Jose Macari, dean of the College of Engineering and Computer Science, “that it has put Sacramento State and our college alongside the best of the best programs in the United States. I am very proud and thankful for the great mentorship, sponsorship, and friendship we have with our region’s construction industry.”

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