

BUSINESS

DEPARTMENT UPDATE

NEWS

U of M Crookston marketing students place in the top five at national competition

Written by the Business Department - November 21, 2023

University of Minnesota Crookston [marketing](#) students competed at the 2023 Sport Marketing Association Conference in Tampa-St. Petersburg, Florida and placed in the top five teams at the national competition. This is the fifth year that the University has sent a student team to compete at the conference and deepen their knowledge of the sports marketing field.

During the case study competition, U of M Crookston students Derrick Cupp, Madeleine "Maddi" Schneider, Tristan Morneault, and Tseten Gurung formulated a marketing plan for a new women's professional soccer league in the Tampa area. The plan was linked to the launch of the new United Soccer League (USL) Super League which is set to kick off in August 2024. By creating a new team in Tampa, the league aims to provide more opportunities for women to compete. The team's marketing plan sought to boost the launch of this new team.

"The students spent several days researching and preparing a presentation then competed against 21 other teams from all over the United States," explained Marketing Lecturer [Courtney Bergman](#), who accompanied students to the conference along with Associate Professor [Eddie Walker](#).

"This experience directly connects students with industry representatives, and, in addition, students tour professional sports facilities, attend presentations from industry experts, and participate in Q&A sessions," added Walker. "This year's Q&A session taught students how to network and find career opportunities."



U of M Crookston faculty Eddie Walker II and Courtney Bergman, along with students Tristan Morneault, Derrick Cupp, Tseten Gurung, and Madeleine "Maddi" Schneider in Tampa-St. Petersburg, FL.



Marketing students presenting at the 2023 Sport Marketing Association Conference in Tampa-St. Petersburg, Florida.

"Participating in the competition is hard work and requires students to apply the knowledge they have gained in the classroom to a real-world business problem," Bergman continued. "This year, students received the case assignment the Friday before the trip commenced and had to be ready to begin working on the problem when they met on Monday in Florida."

A key part of the student's marketing plan was to use guerilla marketing to canvas the Tampa Bay area to create awareness of the USL Super League and to introduce the team. Their marketing campaign also included developing a plan to create sponsorship opportunities, creating "A Kick for" social media campaign, as well as a fan loyalty program. Students spent two days preparing their plan and rehearsing their presentation before submitting their plan to the judging panel. The team were also able to present their plan to the president of the USL Super League.

"It's definitely a great experience for our students to apply what they're learning in the classroom," said Walker.

"This is a new experience, and, for students, they have to be on their game with presentation skills," Bergman added. "They gain confidence and it's great experiential learning, plus getting to travel is a new experience for some students."

Tseten Gurung, a U of M Crookston student from Nepal, shared that the competition provided her and her classmates a unique opportunity.

"The SBRnet case study competition provided a unique opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge learned in the classroom to real-world scenarios which helped me to foster a deeper understanding of the topics," stated Gurung. "A significant takeaway from the competition was the value of teamwork as members from diverse perspectives, skills, and backgrounds collaborated on problem-solving."

"This case study competition helped me meet new people and be part of a team of passionate and committed students who are eager to learn," added Morneault, a U of M Crookston junior from Dieppe, New Brunswick in Canada. "I am truly grateful for this opportunity that helped me grow as a student who wants to work in the sports industry. I was able to apply my skills and develop them through creativity and teamwork. I also want to thank professor Courtney Bergman and Dr. Eddie Walker II for supporting us during our trip and directing us in the right direction when needed."



U of M Crookston students and faculty visiting the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (NFL) practice facility and training camp.



"The SMA Conference Case Study Competition taught me how you use all the skills I learned in the classroom. It let me use all of the academic skills and knowledge in a practical real world setting. I was able to work in a group very similar to what I would do with a marketing team."

Derrick Cupp

During their time in Florida, U of M Crookston students were also able to attend a presentation delivered by the president of the Tampa Bay Lightning hockey team (NHL), and tour the team's facility. In addition, the team members attended a banquet held at the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (NFL) practice facility and training camp.

Story Contact: [Shawn Boyne](#) - boyne001@umn.edu - (218) 281-8180

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