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RWU Students Capture Second Place in Student Advertising Competition

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BRISTOL, R.I. – Roger Williams University students have continued to mount a successful run in a competitive student advertising competition, netting a second-place win in this year’s contest and delivering on more than a decade of finishing in [first place](#) or one of the top three.

At the district round of the [National Student Advertising Competition](#) (NSAC), an interdisciplinary team of 20 students from Geraldo Matos’ Advertising Campaigns Practicum course competed against colleges and universities from Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island in the contest sponsored by the American Advertising Federation’s. The annual competition enlists a corporate sponsor, challenging students to solve a real-world case study and present a fully integrated advertising campaign and campaign budget. With Tinder as this year’s client, the teams were tasked with finding solutions to expand the social app’s user base and challenge the perception that it is more than a dating app.

“This was the best, most complete campaign my students have ever done,” said Matos, professor of marketing at the RWU Gabelli School of Business. “I was so impressed by their willingness to continue to not settle for an okay idea. I am there to guide them and I challenge them to push farther – I ask, what are you really trying to do here, and try to communicate the reward in taking risks and not the accepting safe path. In the end, we got our first 10 out of 10 from a judge and we’ve never gotten that from the judges.”

Over the course of the fall and spring semesters, the students conducted industry research, surveys and built their campaign, complete with a comprehensive plans book and innovative advertising ideas. The team presented their work at the April 24 regional competition in a 20-minute multimedia pitch and fielded a

question-and-answer session with a panel of advertising professionals.

What made their presentation stand out to the judges was a smart analysis of appealing to a broader public base, including marketing that spoke to a diversity of communities representing racial, gender and sexual identities, and their use of programmatic advertising and a TikTok stitch video.

In written comments, one judge said: “This was one slick presentation, the aesthetic was very clean and sleek, the creative ideas per channel were well thought out, the research and insights were very clever and the supporting materials were absolutely phenomenal...The folks in this group have a bright advertising career ahead of them!”

Mimicking the work of an advertising agency, the hands-on course experience aims to teach the students to collaborate as a team, conduct research, strategize ideas and work under deadline to develop an entire soup-to-nuts advertising campaign. In the role of CEO and head brand strategist for the RWU team, Tyler Marchioni worked with each student group focusing on the creative, media and brand activation, and brand strategy.

“I want to give a shout out to everyone on the team – we’ve all done an incredible job, whether it was the class leadership team stepping up or people taking on new challenges when we asked them to step up into different roles and expand on skills they’ve showed us throughout class. I’m extremely proud of how everyone has handled this semester and this whole year, because it’s been challenging,” said Marchioni, a senior marketing major with minors in business analytics and graphic design. “And a special shout out to Professor Matos for guiding us through this campaign and sharing his skills and knowledge. We wouldn’t be where we are without him. He’s helped us tremendously and I know he will stay in touch with us throughout our careers.”

Marchioni emphasized that having this hands-on experience of solving a real-world marketing issue is a valuable credential for the students' résumés. It already helped him land a job as an account executive with advertising firm Radancy in Waltham, and many other students from the team have secured jobs prior to graduation as well.

“This class has been everything for me for getting into any job. I have so much confidence going into my interviews and can demonstrate the skills I’ve developed in this class – I can really show that I know what I’m talking about and I can back that up with experience I’ve had and the work I’ve created,” Marchioni added. “Being able to have an opportunity like this has been incredible for me and for everybody in the class as well, because I know they’ve already been landing jobs. I know everybody is going to land a great job in next few months or going into grad school. No matter where their plans are, I think everyone has a bright future.”