Overview

In the fall semester of 2017, I was selected to be on a team to represent SDSU’s Center for International Business Education & Research (CIBER). The objective of CIBER at SDSU is to encourage academic excellence and to further students’ business education through the participation in several international business case competitions. I had the privilege of attending the International Business Case Competition at San Diego State University in October 2017 and the CUIBE Case Competition at Northeastern University in November 2017.

Preparation

To prepare for the competitions, it was imperative that we practice going through the entire process that we would experience during the entire weekend of each competition. This process consists of receiving a case, analyzing the case, and creating a recommendation and formal presentation. Throughout the semester, the members of our team met with our supervisor and other faculties associated with SDSU’s Fowler College of Business to practice going through this process and receive any feedback that would help us prepare for a real competition. At the beginning of each week, our team would receive a case, generally one that was used in a previous competition, which we would utilize to go throughout the entire process. We would plan to meet multiple times during the week to collaborate, analyze the case, and put together a complete business recommendation and presentation by Friday morning. At our Friday meeting each week, we practiced a formal delivery of our presentation to our supervisor, the dean of the Fowler College of Business, and various other faculty within the college, who would act as the judges and provide feedback on our recommendation and presentation.

This method of preparation was successful because our team was able to practice collaborating and working together through the process that we would be experiencing during a competition. It was helpful to work through a variety of different cases and practice a formal presentation every week, and by the end of the semester, we were all very comfortable delivering a presentation in front of a panel of judges.

Our supervisor and faculty provided very helpful feedback, and each week, the process seemed to go more smoothly as we learned how to streamline the entire process. The time we spent in preparation for the case competitions showed me how important it is to fully prepare and practice for any formal presentation or event.
Competition

Both the SDSU Case Competition and the CUIBE Competition at Northeastern University had a very similar process and schedule. The weekend of each competition was filled with nervous energy, excitement, and motivation. Each university held an opening ceremony and dinner on Thursday evening where faculty would welcome the competing teams, explain the process of the competition and the schedule, and distribute the case to all participating members. Once all the competing teams received the case and competition materials, the teams were released to go back to our hotel rooms to start working. We were given 24 hours to read and analyze the case, form a business plan or recommendation, and submit our presentation to the judges.

The competition felt much different than the many weeks we had spent practicing because the time constraint meant that our team had to be very strategic with our time management and the way we planned out each segment of our process. First, each member of our team would read the case separately. Then, we would all meet and discuss the case and brainstorm ideas for our recommendation. We encouraged each other to challenge the ideas that we came up with in order to create a recommendation that was strong and could not be easily refuted by the judges.

Laying out the framework for our recommendation required extensive research. Each member of our group was assigned a different topic or area to analyze and collect data for. After we each spent a couple hours researching, our group would meet back up again to discuss and analyze our recommendation, the evidence we would use to support it, and begin working on the presentation.

The final presentations were expected to be very professional and concise. We began by laying out the backbone and organization of the presentation, which would include the titles of the slides and the written content. Then we would go through each slide, select a layout for the slide that would easily depict the point of the slide, and incorporate any graphs or visuals that would support the information we were discussing.

The first round of presentations was scheduled to begin on Saturday morning. Each team was given a room assignment, and only one team from each room was selected to advance to the final round of presentations. At both the SDSU competition and the Northeastern University competition, our team did a phenomenal job delivering our presentation to the judges. We were comfortable
with the information we were discussing, professional in our delivery, and successfully answered the judges questions.

**Reflection**

Although we did not place in either of the competitions, my involvement in SDSU’s CIBER team was an invaluable experience that I will carry with me long after I graduate. I learned not only how to analyze an international business case, but also work with a team to develop a comprehensive recommendation and deliver a formal presentation to a panel of judges. My involvement in SDSU’s CIBER team has given me extensive experience in written and verbal communication, developing a formal recommendation and presentation, and collaborating effectively with a team to solve a problem, all skills I will be able to utilize in any professional career.