NEWS RELEASE
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NASPAA Names the Winner of its 2016 Global Student Simulation Competition
Georgia State University Andrew Young School of Policy hosts the Runner-Up team
as a team hosted by Maastricht University takes the Top Spot

Washington, D.C. – On Saturday, February 27, 375 graduate students competed around the world at eight regional sites for NASPAA’s Second Annual Student Simulation Competition on Global Climate Change. Each team had to create a comprehensive policy solution that by the year 2100 limited global warming to 2.0 degrees Celsius, to protect the earth from the catastrophic impacts of global warming.

The student competitors, who first met on the morning of the competition, displayed exemplary insights and sophisticated critical thinking on a global challenge. These graduate students, many without an extensive background in climate change or environmental affairs, developed highly nuanced and intelligently phased policy proposals. The winning team and runner up teams crafted not only technically desirable, but also feasible approaches—and as the judges noted, this was a tough combination to achieve on such a complex issue as climate change. Teams of up to 21 graduate students representing many different universities were tasked with creating an implementable plan. The global winning team competed at the regional site held at United Nations University – MERIT/ Maastricht Graduate School of Governance in the Netherlands. The first runner up team competed at the Georgia State University Andrew Young School of Policy Studies and consisted of the following students:

- Christabel Ghansah, Georgia State University
- Evan Williams, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
- Samuel Johnson, University of Georgia
- Crystal Lean, Florida International University
- Kelsey Martin, Kennesaw State University
- Usayd Casewit, Georgia Tech
- Aaron Lichkay, Georgia State University
- Afroze Charania, Georgia State University
- Alan Tipert, Georgia State University
- Kelly Parry, Georgia State University
- Karen Scott, University of Alabama at Birmingham
- Lorin Washington, The University of Texas at Arlington
- Jared Cory, Florida State University
- Qian Huang, University of Miami
- Kristen Smith, Louisiana State University
- Natavis Harris, Savannah State
- Dorian Mergler, University of South Florida
According to Laurel McFarland, NASPAA Executive Director, “This competition demonstrates the tremendous learning opportunities afforded by using simulations to immerse students in situations where they are able to immediately see the complexities and systemic aspects of public policy and management challenges. We were thrilled to see students engaging in the competition from all backgrounds and with varying levels of knowledge. This shows that the skillsets and competencies learned by public affairs and public policy students are universal in how they prepare students to tackle the largest problems facing our world.”

The competition featured participants from 135 universities. Their analysis relied on use of a sophisticated simulation developed by Climate Interactive called En-ROADS. En-ROADS is a powerful tool that focuses on how changes in global GDP, energy efficiency, R&D results, carbon price, fuel mix, and other factors change carbon emissions, energy access, and global temperature. The En-ROADS simulation is built using the Systems Dynamics method and emphasizes the dynamics of a transition to clean energy. In the past, this model has been used by many diverse groups ranging from university students to high-level policy makers, to deepen understanding of the causes of climate change and the array of possible measures to mitigate it.

NASPAA, the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration, is the global standard in public service education with a twofold mission to ensure excellence in education and training for public service and to promote the ideal of public service. It is the membership organization of graduate education programs in public policy, public affairs, public administration, and public and nonprofit management. NASPAA is also the recognized accreditor of master's degree programs in these fields. Its more than 300 members are located across the U.S. and in 21 countries around the globe.

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