



MEDIA RELEASE

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SIFE Okanagan exits nationals with more hardware than any other team in the nation

(PENTICTON, BC) - The competition was fierce, the presentations nearly flawless, and after two intense days at the SIFE National challenge in Calgary, Okanagan College is bringing home seven national awards – more than any of the other 53 teams in attendance.

Okanagan College's Green Team won first place in the country after presenting to a panel of industry experts on a variety of community-minded sustainable projects that included partnerships with the Kelowna and Vernon Chamber of Commerce and Glenmore Elementary. The efforts of Kelowna's Sattu Dhaliwal, Kevin Slater and Braydon Ouellet and Vernon team members Graham Moir and Megan Annand solidified the reputation of the fledgling team from Okanagan College as one of Canada's top performing business institutions.

Green Team captain Sattu Dhaliwal said the win is a direct reflection of the support Okanagan College business students receive from their school and their communities.

"What we were able to demonstrate at this competition is that we stand up for our communities," explained Dhaliwal. "We take every opportunity to create change and put our social entrepreneurship education into action.

"Last year when we made it to the finals, the advisors from Ryerson didn't even know who Okanagan College was. Just one year later we are national champions in the Green Challenge. What is really important about this win is the impact our volunteer work has had in our communities because an award is nice but knowing that our team helped make this community more sustainable is very powerful."

The Green Team win was just the first of a series of successes for the College.

In Financial Literacy, Okanagan College earned second place behind Ryerson University – the overall winners of the National competition. Projects executed by the team included mentorship of Young Entrepreneurs, consultation to Therapy Vineyards and credit management and educational program delivery to Bridges Youth Mentorship in Kelowna. Team members were from Kelowna: Travis Fleming, Jennifer Stefansson, Jeff Tassone, Raymond Ong and Vernon - Shawn Miller.

Okanagan College also won the Campbell's Soup Can Hunger project, which charged Canada's SIFE teams with collectively raising 100,000 pounds of food for local Food Banks. Okanagan College collected in excess of 36,000 pounds of food in Penticton, Kelowna and Vernon – more than a third of the national goal. As a result of the national win, executives from Campbell's Soup will visit Okanagan College later this year to meet with students and administrators about the success of the initiative.

Third-year Kelowna business student Matthew Cosar earned the David Henderson Bursary for Entrepreneurial Leadership in recognition of his strong team leadership.

Okanagan College faculty were also singled out with awards. Faculty Advisors Sheilagh Seaton (Penticton) and Garth Maguire (Vernon) earned the John Dobson Ace Fellow awards for 2010. Garth is a founding advisor to SIFE Okanagan and is credited with building the success of the Vernon campus's SIFE team. In 2009-10 SIFE Okanagan expanded to the Penticton campus and was led by instructor Sheilagh Seaton.

At the final awards ceremony Okanagan College received an unexpected but highly coveted award for the Most Supportive Campus Administration. Okanagan College received a standing ovation as President Jim Hamilton, Board Chair Lance Kayfish, Dean Jayne Brooks and Chair David Northcott took the stage to receive the award – evidence of SIFE Okanagan's network of support from the institution.

“It was a huge thrill to support our SIFE team at nationals,” said Kayfish. “The fact that our students either set the standard or performed on par with the very best in the nation is a huge source of pride. Still, perhaps the most impressive part of the SIFE competition was hearing what our students are doing to make a difference in the Okanagan and beyond. Our SIFE students are truly changing lives and communities.”

SIFE Okanagan's national presentation team advanced through a challenging first round of the competition and entered the semi-finals as the top-ranked team from their pool, finishing ahead of teams from the University of British Columbia, St. Lawrence College and Mount Saint Vincent University. After an outstanding semi-final presentation, the team of Brittany Sjoblom (Vernon), and Kelowna's Melissa Veregin, Deepak Garcha, Matt Cosar, and Aman Sandhu finished in the top 10 in the country.

“Being a part of the SIFE national competition was an incredibly valuable experience,” said Penticton Faculty Advisor Sheilagh Seaton. “As a start-up team, our campus's SIFE students are learning a great deal from their colleagues in Kelowna and Vernon. On Thursday we will host the Young Entrepreneurship luncheon, which is one of SIFE Penticton's first projects. It is inspiring to see what is possible and to implement some of these great projects in Penticton.”

SIFE Okanagan has been operating in Kelowna for five years, Vernon for two years and transitioned into Penticton for the first time this year. With a mission of bringing positive change to the Okanagan Valley, the students develop projects that utilize their unique skills such as entrepreneurship, financial literacy, credit management, marketing solutions, sustainability and ethics.

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EDS: Please find attached two photos: an image of the Green Team winners (l to r): Braydon Ouellet, Kevin Slater, Graham Moir, Sattu Dhaliwal and Megan Annand and a photo of faculty winners Sheilagh Seaton (Penticton) with Garth Maguire (Vernon).

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