

Hill School aims to host the best JDC West

BY BRUCE JOHNSTONE, LEADER-POST DECEMBER 20, 2013

Having won the JDC West Business Competition two years ago, the Paul J. Hill School of Business at the University of Regina is setting its sights on hosting the best event in the nine-year history of JDC West next month.

"That is our hope," said Emily McNair, co-chair of the 2014 competition (Jan. 17-19), which pits 650 students from 12 western Canadian business schools in 10 business-case competitions. "And we truly believe that everything we've put into it so far has already (taken) it to a higher level than in the past." While that might sound boastful, as the old saying goes, it ain't bragging if you can do it.

In fact, the Hill School won the right to host the 2014 competition in 2012, the same year it won JDC West for the first time. It was the icing on the cake after finishing second three times and third once in the previous four competitions. Andrew Gaudes, dean of the Hill School since August 2012, said the U of R has earned its stripes as a top-flight competitor in JDC West. "Over the last seven years, (U of R had) 41 topthree finishes in (10 business-case competition) categories and, in five of the last seven competitions, we've been one of the top three business schools ... We're no shrinking violets when it comes to competition." Gaudes said this year's edition of the JDC West competition has also "raised the bar" in several ways.

In past years, jury panels that adjudicated the 10 JDC business-case competitions had an academic representative from the host business school's faculty. "This year, instead of (using) any faculty member from any of the schools in the competition, we're actually recruiting our academic jurists from Eastern Canada. We're drawing them from the Ivey Business School (at the University of Western Ontario in London)."

McNair pointed to the debates competition as "one of the cool things" that's being done for the first time. "For our debates competition, we're actually hosting the semi-finals and finals in the Legislative (Assembly)," McNair said. "That's never been done before." Victoria Johnson, co-chair of the 2014 JDC West, said hosting the 650 competitors required booking almost all the guest rooms at the Delta

Regina, as well as conference rooms. "That's what the competition takes," Johnson said. "We need that much space to house everyone and run the competitions." Including the 14 committee vice-presidents on the 33-member organizing committee, about 200 volunteers are needed to organize the weekend competition. About 300 former U of R alumni, who were JDC West participants, will be welcomed back at the 2014 event.

"I think the University of Victoria (which is hosting the 10th annual JDC West in 2015) will have some big shoes to fill," McNair added. bjohnstone@leaderpost.com

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