THREE MU COLLEGE OF
Human Environmental Sciences students have won a national financial services competition, earning top honors at an event in which the college participated for the first time.

Personal Financial Planning Program seniors Lauren Bauer, Austin Lewis and Megan Reinkemeyer will split a $5,000 scholarship for winning the fourth annual Industry Issues Competition held by the Society for Financial Service Professionals (FSP) last January in Phoenix, Ariz. The FSP, a national organization of credentialed financial service professionals, narrowed the entrants down to three finalists before selecting the MU team as the winner based on the group’s oral presentation in Arizona.

“It felt great, because we put a lot of time into our presentation,” says Lewis, of Eureka, Mo. “We were definitely proud that all our work paid off.”

M U fielded a team for the first time at FSP’s 2015 competition at the urging of Michael Guillemette, assistant professor in the Department of Personal Financial Planning (PFP). Students learn about some of the many areas in which they can apply their personal financial planning education—working for mutual fund companies, insurance companies as well as for banks, to name a few—by talking to practitioners in the field, Guillemette believes.

Indeed, Bauer and Reinkemeyer both cite the amount of information they gathered about possible careers in the field as a key benefit of the competition. The competition itself added to their education along those lines, since it required each team to research, analyze and report on three professional career paths in the financial services industry. MU’s team examined careers as pension and third-party administrators, estate planning attorneys and mutual fund wholesalers.

Along with information about the field, the FSP contest provided valuable experience in public speaking and feedback, add Reinkemeyer and Bauer, both of Jefferson City.

“Personal financial planning is a relationship business,” Bauer says. “So it’s so great to get that experience in college.”

It’s a type of experience that PFP chair Robert Weagley hopes will become increasingly common among the department’s students. PFP administrators have stepped up their efforts to encourage students to participate in national contests so they can benefit from the leadership and training experience that inevitably follows, Weagley says. He points out that competition conferences also are likely to offer more tangible career benefits.

“Most of the students who go to these conferences have an opportunity for internships or jobs,” Weagley notes. “It’s a great opportunity for them.”

Nationally Competitive Personal Financial Planning Students Win National Competition

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- Lauren Bauer

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State Rep. STEPHEN WEBBER, a Democrat representing a portion of Columbia, also is a CDL graduate. First elected to serve as a state representative in November 2008, Webber began his fourth term in the Missouri House earlier this year.

Webber demonstrated his leadership potential and commitment to public service early on, earning his spot on the Boy Scout Troop 707 Eagle Honor Roll in 2001. Having enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves while attending Saint Louis University, Webber served two tours in Iraq. He received a bachelor’s degree in economics in 2006, and a law degree from the University of Missouri in 2013.