



### High school students compete in JA's 'Business Challenge'

John Burgeson, Staff Writer  
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1 of 9

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A team of seniors from Kolbe Cathedral High School compete in Junior Achievement of Western Connecticut's first High School Business Challenge at Fairfield University's Dolan School of Business Friday, Mar. 25, 2011. Pictured, from left, Jalen Medina, Juan Torres, Alexis Russell and Laura Garcia. Photo: Autumn Driscoll / Connecticut Post | Buy This Photo

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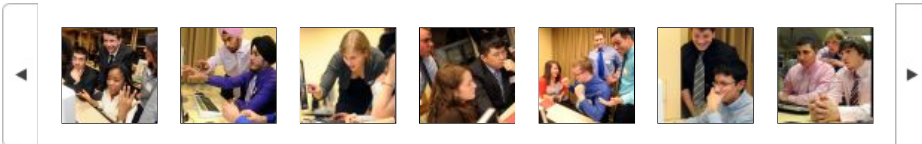
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 And the Winners Are... First Place:  
 Trumbull High School Kelsey Owen  
 Nicholas Talamelli Kyle Bostick Daniel  
 Bond Second Place: Fairfield Warde High  
 School Matt Ciarletto Shannon Duff  
 Aidan Scanlon Dylan Lindeberg Third  
 Place: Ansonia High School Annette  
 Konopka Wilson Fong Hailey Bourgeau  
 Alex Westine

FAIRFIELD -- About 50 students from 13 high schools found themselves locked in intense competition Friday for market share, profit margin, price points, inventory and customers.

No, they aren't business tycoons, at least not yet. But they were getting a taste of the real-life business world at the [High School Business Challenge](#) competition staged by Junior Achievement of Western Connecticut.

"Every step in your life brings you to where you're at today," said [Kent McClun](#) of Wells Fargo, one of several business executives who addressed the students. "And if you change one of those steps, you'll wind up in a different place. So look at everything you do as an opportunity to learn."

But they weren't there to hear speeches. They were

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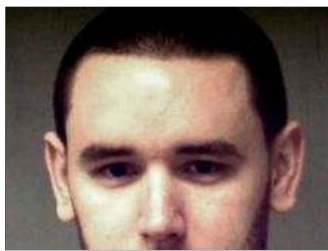
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there to run a simulated corporation that manufactures an imaginary device called a ZX-10 Holo-Generator. The object of the game was to be the high school team with the best-performing company. The teams, each assigned to a computer running the special "Titan" program, had to deal with such factors as business loans, taxes, inventories, product pricing, marketing, charitable giving, research and development, plant capacity and capital investment -- while attempting to avoid bankruptcy. Each team had four students, and there were two 45-minute sessions.

"Compared to the other schools, we were about average, I guess," said [Jenna Kavulich](#), a junior at Stratford's [Bunnell High School](#). "But we're proud of ourselves either way."

Tianna Martinez was part of Stratford High's team, the only all-girl team at the competition, staged at [Fairfield University's Dolan School of Business](#). "I think it's a great advantage being an all-girl team," she said. "Girls are smart -- we know what we're doing."

After the first of two sessions, the students took a break for a snack and a chance to take a critical look at their progress -- or the lack of it.

"We'll have a new strategy for the second session," said [Jessie Gitow](#), a junior at [Masuk High School](#) in Monroe. "We're thinking that if we start at a high price, and we increase our capital, then we'll be able to sell more at a lower price later on."

Just about all of the students, uncharacteristically for most, were dressed in what might be called business attire, the better to impress the dozen or so corporate executives on hand.



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"You might be applying for a job someday at one of our sponsoring corporations," [Bernadine Venditto](#), president of Junior Achievement of Western Connecticut said to the students.

Their business teachers said the experience was one that they will carry with them for some time to come.

"It's a great opportunity for them, and it gives them a taste of what decision-making is like in the real world," said [Holly Ruiz](#), a teacher at [Bethel High School](#).

"And it's great for them to be on a college campus, as well as the whole opportunity to dress up," said [Karen Filde](#), chairwoman of Bethel High's applied studies program.

Winning team members each received \$1,000 scholarships, and the second-place team members each received \$500 scholarships.

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