

Business students create scholarship in honor of faculty mentor

Before graduating last April, four students in Oakland University's School of Business Administration came together to create a scholarship honoring a professor who left an indelible mark on their college experience.

The students – Phillip Johnson, Victoria Latcha, David Sullivan and Alvin Pitris – established the Joy Jiang Annual Scholarship, which is named for the OU management professor who went above and beyond in helping them pursue their academic and career aspirations.

Dr. Jiang served as faculty adviser for the School of Business Administration Scholars Program, which sent a team of OU students – including Sullivan and Johnson – to the 2015 International Business Strategy Competition at California State University-Anaheim. The event featured 36 student teams who were tasked with managing a virtual company, making strategic and operational decisions. OU's team took first place for Best Overall Performance and for Best Documents.



With Professor Jiang, OU business students toured Dell headquarters in Dublin, Ireland during a 2016 study abroad experience. Phillip Johnson is first from left, Victoria Latcha is sixth from left, Professor Jiang is tenth from left and Alvin Pitris is sixth from right.

“Even though it was only our first year competing, Professor Jiang was confident we would do well,” said Sullivan. “She let us try various strategies and learn through experience, allowing the students to discover what decisions made a company succeed.”

Over the 2016 winter recess, Dr. Jiang traveled with a group of 26 business students – Latcha, Pitris and Johnson among them – to Dublin, Ireland and Budapest, Hungary for a first-hand look at the dynamics of international business. The students visited Dell's Dublin headquarters, along with Audi headquarters, the U.S. Embassy, and Parliament in Budapest.

It was Latcha's first time traveling abroad. “It's so important to be able to put yourself in others' positions and see where they're coming from to make solid connections,” said Latcha, who credits Dr. Jiang with sparking her interest in seeing the world and learning about other cultures. “Dr. Jiang is an inspiration in the way that she's very well-traveled and knows about so many different countries and cultures.”



Professor Jiang, first from right, celebrates with OU business students at the 2015 International Business Strategy Competition at California State University-Anaheim. OU won for Best Overall Performance and Best Documents. Phillip Johnson is second from left and David Sullivan is second from right.

Calling it a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, Johnson added that the trip deepened his appreciation for new people and places.

with the people and appreciating the different ways they do things.”

He added, “Professor Jiang always encouraged us to work hard, dream big and have fun, which really helped us make the most of our time under her teaching.”

Each of the four students felt that creating a scholarship was a fitting way to honor Dr. Jiang and inspire others to enrich the lives of future students. Pitris put it this way, “I wanted to show my gratitude in a way that could help a future student have a similar experience as my own. Paying it forward is something I believe in, and I hope this scholarship encourages others to do the same.”

The Joy Jiang Annual Scholarship is open to juniors and seniors majoring in management. To apply, visit the [web page](#).

Learn more about Oakland’s School of Business Administration at oakland.edu/business.



OU business students inside Dell headquarters in Dublin, Ireland. Phillip Johnson is first from left, Victoria Latcha is third from right, Alvin Pitris is second from right and Professor Jiang is first from right.