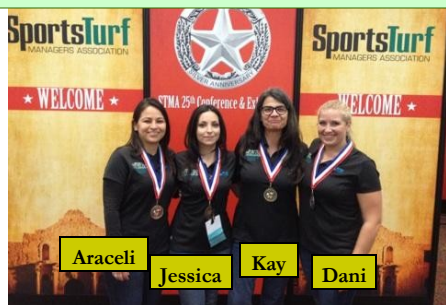


Turf Teams Stampede the Competition in San Antonio, Texas



Araceli Jessica Kay Dani



Chaz and Brian



Freddy Gabe Cody

The Tenth Annual Student Challenge took place in San Antonio, Texas at the Sports Turf Managers Association's 25th Annual Conference and Exhibition. The conference was held January 21-25, 2014. Mt. SAC enrolled seven students on two teams into the competition. For the third consecutive year we have featured a co-ed group of students. I am proud to report that both teams had outstanding finishes. Team 202 finished as National Champions and team 209 finished tied for third with Kirkwood Community College in Iowa in the Two Year College category. The second place team was also from Kirkwood Community College. Team 202 members are **Kay Hoevel, Freddy Gonzalez, Dani Booth and Jessica Weber**. Team 209 members are **Cody Chavez, Gabe Mendoza and Araceli Reza**. The team coaches are Horticulture Professors **Brian Scott**, and **Chaz Perea** (who is also the Landscape Manager for the Los Angeles Dodgers).

The Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) Student Challenge consists of several parts. Included in the test are Turfgrass Identification, Selection and Morphology, Soil Management, Soil Fertility, Water Management, Drainage, Turfgrass Mathematics, Pest Identification and Management, Sports Field Management (both turf and non-turf areas), and essay questions pertaining to real life sports

turf management scenarios.

This year there were 31 teams from across the country, 10 of which were in the two year college category.

A few interesting facts about our test scores this year are:

Mt. SAC team 202 had the **highest score in every category of the test amongst all of the two year teams**. On the short answer

placed 2nd as a 4 year team! In 2014 Mt. SAC's total score of 136 points set a record high score for 2 year teams over the past 3 years. As a final note, Mt. SAC's 1st place team scored higher on the identification section of the test than 94% of all other teams.

Great job Mt. SAC!

Due to the generosity of Hunter Industries (thanks Lynda Wightman!) and the SAFE Foundation,

As I stated last year, I believe this consistency is a testimony to the quality of students that come through our program every year, and their commitment to excellence. It is also due to the commitment of the coaches in the preparation process. I would specifically like to recognize Chaz Perea. He spends countless hours helping the students with study materials and strategies every year.

The 2014 Mt. Sac Turf Team would like to thank the following sponsors for making it possible for them to compete this year: **West Coast Turf, Mt. SAC Associated Students and the Greater L.A. Basin STMA**. The donations of these organizations funded the team's trip this year. We truly could not have done it without their support. Thank you all!

Dani Booth Wins Top Scholarship Honors

This year Danielle 'Dani' Booth was awarded the Dr. Fred Grau Scholarship. This is awarded to the top recipient from a two-year program, which is named in honor of Dr. Fred Grau, the first turfgrass extension specialist in the United States. Dani was presented the scholarship at the annual award dinner on Friday night at the conference. She will receive \$2,000 to use toward her education. Congratulations Dani!



L to R: Freddy Gonzalez, Jessica Weber, Gabe Mendoza, Dani Booth, Chaz Perea, Araceli Reza, Brian Scott, Kay Hoevel, Cody Chavez

portion of the test, Mt. SAC had the third highest score of all two and four year teams. Their score was 25, compared to scores 25.5 (Purdue) and 26 (Virginia Tech). Also, Mt. SAC's 1st place team scored higher on the Short Answer section than the 1st Place 4 year team and higher than 90% of all 4 year teams. The test keeps getting tougher and the bar keeps getting set higher. In 2012 a score of 136 (our first place team's score) would have bested the 4 year team's highest score and in 2013 a score of 136 would have

the first place finish comes with \$4,000 for the turf program to use for program enhancement. To date, our teams have won \$16,000 that has been utilized for sports turf equipment and lab facilities.

Mt. SAC Turf Teams continue to be more consistent than any other school in placing teams in the top three places year in and year out. Since 2007, we have had four first place finishes, two second place finishes and four third place finishes.