



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
of the **CAYMAN ISLANDS**

PO Box 702
Grand Cayman
KY1-1107
CAYMAN ISLANDS

(P) 345-623-8224
(F) 345-949-6781

www.ucci.edu.ky
info@ucci.edu.ky

UCCI STUDENTS STEP UP TO CFA CHALLENGE IN DALLAS

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Christoph Barnett, CFA, and board member of the Chartered Financial Analysts Society Cayman Islands, accompanied faculty mentor, Ginnie Gardiner, PhD, and her five students to Dallas last weekend where the University College of the Cayman Islands CFA Student Research Challenge team competed against regional teams from Escuela Superior de Economía y Negocios, El Salvador, Barna Business School, Dominican Republic, and Universidad Francisco Marroquin, Guatemala.

Undergraduate students Rafael Blake Elias, Alina Soto, Tessa Emma Ryan, Darron Porter and Vesna Domladis were selected in August to begin five months of intensive investigation of a company chosen for the regional contest. The students, with the help of their finance professor, Gardiner, and their designated industry mentor, Georgina Loxton, spent many hours each week since September researching Rent-A-Center, Inc. which culminated in a written report and formal presentation to a panel of judges and an audience in a state-of-the-art case room at Southern Methodist University on Saturday, February 15.

Given the poise and professionalism of the UCCI students, the mentors and judges were surprised to learn that they were the youngest team ever to compete. All other teams were comprised of MBA candidates and seasoned professionals in the field. The team from Barna won the competition but in an informal annual judging of the presenters, the judges and mentors agreed that Rafael's performance was as good as they had ever seen.

The academic mentors were empaneled in the auditorium to answer questions about the economies of their regions. Gardiner gave a brief history of the Cayman Islands as an off shore finance center which has moved into the mature phase of its life cycle.

The students and their professor are profoundly grateful for the copious support from the CFA Society Cayman Islands and its members who met with the students informally and attended their trial presentations before leaving for Dallas. They are particularly grateful for all the work that Georgina Loxton, CFA and Monique Frederick, CFA and Christoph Barnett, CFA provided throughout these many months and in the organization prior to the contest.

About the CFA Institute Research Challenge

The CFA Institute Research Challenge gathers students, investment industry professionals, publicly traded companies, and corporate sponsors together locally, regionally, and globally for an annual competition. In order to promote best practices in equity research and company analysis, students research, analyze, and report on a company as if they are practicing analysts. Local CFA member societies and other affiliated groups host local level competitions of the Research Challenge in conjunction with the participating universities. The universities assemble teams of three to five business and finance students who work directly with a company in researching and preparing a company analysis. The team's final presentations are locally evaluated by high-profile panels of heads of research, portfolio managers, and chief investment officers from the world's top firms. The local champions advance to regional competitions in the Americas, Asia Pacific, and Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) and then to the Global Final. Additional information on the Research Challenge is available on the CFA Institute website, www.cfainstitute.org/researchchallenge.

About CFA Institute

CFA Institute is the global association of investment professionals that sets the standard for professional excellence and credentials. The organization is a champion for ethical behavior in investment markets and a respected source of knowledge in the global financial community. The end goal: to create an environment where investors' interests come first, markets function at their best, and economies grow. CFA Institute has more than 113,000 members in 140 countries and territories, including 102,000 CFA charterholders, and 137 member societies. For more information, visit www.cfainstitute.org.



[Photo: From L-R, Christoph Barnett, Vesna Domladis, Rafael Blake Elias, Darron Porter, Tessa E. Ryan, Ginnie Gardiner, Alina Soto]