



UT senior Dominique Jones of Sylvania makes a presentation to Paul Hoffman from 3M during UT's Third Annual Invitational Sales Competition. He won his division and later finished in the top five of the Pi Sigma Epsilon regional competition. He will compete in Pi Sigma Epsilon's national event in Miami this April.

Hot commodity: Schmidt sales school at UT is one of country's best

Practically from the moment they march in their caps and gowns, college graduates worry about turning their educations into jobs.

This spring, Dominique Jones, a senior in the Edward H. Schmidt School of Professional Sales in The University of Toledo's College of Business and Innovation, still has to worry about exams. He'll probably have a few term papers due, as well.

When he strides up the aisle of Savage Arena in his graduation finery this May, however, Jones will move his tassel knowing he has already secured a full-time position as a business-to-business liaison at Goodyear.

Jones made several valuable contacts during the College of Business and Innovation's annual job fair last fall. Approximately 100 companies were represented, and he had ongoing discussions with many recruiters.

"It was kind of crazy, actually," Jones said. "I was in talks with a couple different companies and there were counter offers before I settled on Goodyear."

He begins his position in July at a starting salary of more than \$55,000.

According to Dr. Ellen Bolman Pullins, director of the Schmidt school, Jones' success is common.

An informal poll of Schmidt graduates found that about 50 percent of connections with businesses through job fairs, sales competitions and internal projects results in job offers.

Businesses, she said, aggressively recruit UT students because the program has a reputation for excellence. UT is one of just two universities in the nation with an accredited school exclusively devoted to sales that offers three undergraduate designations and a master's degree concentration. The Schmidt school also earned a status of "robust," the highest rating, in a survey conducted by DePaul University's Center for Sales Leadership.

"We're one of few schools that provide a full-blown major; not many universities offer that, though there's a huge demand," Pullins said. "We're also one of few colleges that recognize the need for master's level degrees. When our students engage in our program, they know nearly all will have offers by the time they graduate."

Pullins attributes the school's success to dedicated faculty members who are "passionate about what we teach and truly believe we can make a difference for our students."

Many, she added, have "carried the bag" by working within the profession. Business connections thrive within the Schmidt school, with partners serving on its advisory board, assisting in developing curriculum, participating in mock interviews and offering experiential learning experiences.

"We have our ears to the marketplace so we're in tune with business needs," Pullins said. "We bring our partners into the classroom regularly and offer many networking events so our students and businesses can connect. By having that synergistic contact, we're constantly evolving and staying a step ahead."

Students like Jones are walking billboards for the program's effectiveness. All Schmidt school students must complete internships, and many, like Jones, compete at regional and national sales competitions.

"Our students are our best collateral," Pullins said. "We'll place a student in an internship and the business will come back and say, 'Do you have more Joes or

more Susies?' because they see how great Joe or Susie is. We've had several cases when customers of former students come to us and say, 'Joe is amazing; do you have someone like him I can hire?'"

“

Businesses aggressively recruit UT students because the program has a reputation for excellence.

”

Jones can look forward to both graduation and a bustling new career, once the weather warms.

"I owe my success to the Schmidt school," he said. "My professors are always there for me and pushing me to excel. It's an amazing training ground. Not many schools in the country have the resources and connections to have such an impact." ✕