WITC students take home 33 awards at national conference

It was a successful trip for Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College students and faculty who participated in the Business Professionals of America 2015 National Leadership Conference.

Twelve WITC students claimed top awards at the conference located in Anaheim, Calif. in early May. Scott Elza, accounting instructor at WITC-Rice Lake and a BPA chapter advisor, received national recognition as the 2015 Advisor of the Year award. In addition, Wisconsin retained the Professional Cup for BPA Cares Award category for the 4th year in a row.

Thousands of students from across the country gathered to compete in the conference and showcase their business skills through competitions, workshops, leadership development and more. The students competed in areas such as interview skills, medical office procedures, administrative support, banking and finance, small business management, personal financial management, marketing and human resources concepts, accounting, parliamentary procedures, and digital publishing.

“When a student’s name is called for either a competition or a service award, the look on their face is priceless,” Elza said. “I have heard more than once, ‘I am grateful that you didn’t quit pushing me to join this organization and participate in the leadership conferences.”

With members in 23 states, BPA has a total of 43,000 members nationally. The mission of BPA is to contribute to the preparation of a world-class workforce through advancement of leadership, citizenship, academic and technological skills.

“Business Professionals of America gives students the chance to demonstrate to their peers and themselves that they indeed have the ability to use the skills we have taught them and apply those skills in the competitions and get rewarded with recognition,” said Elza. “The confidence that is gained is not something we can teach in the classroom, it has to be lived through some sort of real-life experience, and BPA is an avenue to gain this confidence.”

Students that received “Top Ten” placings at the BPA conference were (organized by campus):

**WITC-Rice Lake**

Advanced Accounting, 8th place: Ken Rady

Advanced Accounting, 9th place: Caitlin Ploszay

Personal Finance Concepts, 2nd place: Larry French
Personal Finance Concepts, 4th place: Ken Rady
Managerial Accounting, 3rd place: Ken Rady
Financial Math and Analysis Concepts, 4th place: Ken Rady
Banking and Finance, 4th place: Ken Rady
Ambassador Torch Award: Larry French, Ken Rady and Caitlin Ploszay

**BPA Cares Awards, WITC-Rice Lake:**

Quality Chapter Award – Certificate Award
Environmental Awareness – National Award (1st place)
Marketing and Public Relations – Certificate Award (2nd place)
Special Olympics – National Award (1st place)

**WITC-Ashland**

Administrative Support Team, 3rd place: Lari Joy Hoffman, Karissa Hanson, Frances Pratt, Sheila Wilcox
Administrative Support Concepts, 6th place: Lari Joy Hoffman
Administrative Support Concepts, 7th place: Frances Pratt
Banking and Finance, 10th place: Frances Pratt
Business Meeting Management Concepts, 3rd place: Lari Joy Hoffman
Interview Skills, 6th place: Frances Pratt
Management, Marketing and HR Concepts, 3rd place: Lari Joy Hoffman
Medical Office Procedures, 1st place: Lari Joy Hoffman
Parliamentary Procedures Concepts, 8th place: Frances Pratt
Personal Financial Management Concepts, 8th place: Lari Joy Hoffman
Ambassador Torch Award: Karissa Hanson, Sheila Wilcox and Cindy Zakovec

**New Richmond**

Banking and Finance, 2nd place: Sarah Reas
Digital Publishing, 1st place: Miranda Gale
Personal Financial Management Concepts, 5th place: Sarah Reas
Small Business Management Team, 2nd place: Sarah Reas, Cathy Mianecki, Jonathan Howell
Ranked fourth best two-year college in the nation by Washington Monthly magazine, WITC serves the educational and career needs of more than 25,000 residents of Northwestern Wisconsin each year. With multiple campuses, WITC offers career-focused associate degree programs, technical diplomas, short-term certificates, customized business training, and a wide array of courses for personal or career enrichment. WITC is a member of Wisconsin Technical College System and is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. For more information, call 800.243.WITC or visit witc.edu. WITC is an Equal Opportunity/Access/Affirmative Action/Veterans/Disability Employer and Educator.

###