Local talent score big in PR awards

3 Singaporeans among 5 finalists in Asia-Pacific award for best PR student

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NAY-SAYERS who believe that there is a lack of talent in Singapore were proven wrong recently when three Singaporeans were among the five finalists in the running for this year’s “Asia Pacific PR Student of the Year” at the Asia Pacific PR Awards 2006.

Singapore Management University (SMU) undergraduate Tabatha Mei Yan Maitland eventually came in the runners-up spot, with a campaign that offered flexibility and mobility that was focussed on engaging her target audience.

Fellow SMU student Joel Fu Jijin and National University of Singapore’s Muhammad Riesal bin Mohd Idries also emerged as finalists.

This new award was launched by the winner of this year’s “Network of the Year Award”, Weber Shandwick.

“The purpose of the newly introduced category was to highlight the best student talent that the region has to offer. In the PR industry, attracting and retaining the right people is proving to be one of our greatest challenges. Weber Shandwick wanted to take a leadership role in promoting the industry to smart young talents around the region,” said Mr Andrew Pirie, president, Asia Pacific Weber Shandwick.

Contestants from the Asia Pacific region had to create a PR campaign for an imaginary brand called “Go”.

A stringent selection process narrowed down the list of contestants and the short-listed students had to present their campaign to a judging panel at a Weber Shandwick office.

The students had to be on top of their game as they were surprised with a mock crisis involving the brand during the presentation and were given 10 minutes to prepare their crisis management strategies.

University of Western Australia student Melanie Perkins emerged as the winner.

She received US$5,000 in cash and a paid internship with Weber Shandwick.

For her efforts, Tabatha Mei Yan Maitland received a US $1,000 cash prize and a paid internship with Weber Shandwick.

The annual Asia Pacific PR Awards honours the region’s best public relations practitioners.