An eye-opening experience

SMU students brave illness to win second prize in a business case challenge, reports CHARMIAN KOK

The team’s intensive training from May to August prior to the competition included simulations of the real competition itself. “The simulations were very important because it allowed us to see how we performed under stress or when physically tired with little sleep,” explained Ginarella.

The team was also new to the geography of Thailand and the strengths or weaknesses of the country’s 76 provinces. Such information was vital to the team’s case regarding the expansion of Body Glove in Thailand.

It was their thorough research, attention to detail and pure hard work that allowed them to turn a seeming disadvantage to a competitive edge. They were the only team which highlighted the exact number of stores to open in each province, in the exact order, and why. The depth and detail of their recommendations, as well as their engaging presentation, won them praises from judges as well as fellow teammates.

Besides taking home a second prize trophy, SMU’s team also came away with a wealth of real world knowledge and experience that cannot be taught and vocational skills that can only be learnt on the ground. This on-the-job experience also served to remind us to not stop learning and not to stop wanting to learn more.”

For Kairen, this eye-opening experience showed the importance of a willingness to risk failure, “I learned that it was necessary to be brave and to have the courage to put your ideas up there and have it judged and criticised by other people even if it’s only then that you really learn. We shouldn’t be afraid to make mistakes.”

Summing up the experience, Kairen said: “During the competition, we were introduced to teams everyone knew and colleges that everyone has heard of like UC Berkeley. We really wanted to find out how we compare to these big-name schools, being a relatively smaller business school in Asia and that we did fairly well in the competition was really redeeming. At least we proved to ourselves and those who supported us that we could compete and win as well.”