

AAF Members Take on the NSAC



by Ashley Baptiste

In a competition of almost two thousand college students nationwide, nine Manhattan College students registered for the National Student Advertising Competition (NSAC). These students are members of the American Advertising Federation (AAF), a national organization of school chapters and working professionals in the advertising industry.

NSAC allows students to experience the professional world of advertising by allowing them to develop a campaign for a real world client, which is Meta Quest 2 this year. Each team will research and prepare a campaign pitch that will be presented to a panel of judges in the spring semester. After students compete at the district level, they have the opportunity to advance to the semi-finals and then eventually the final rounds. Alyssa Nealon, Ashley Baptiste, Christopher Bagdonas and Viet Vo will be the four presenters at this year's competition.

The AAF normally dedicates each semester to hands-on projects, resume workshops, and guest speaker events, but this year each member decided to take on a new challenge. Advised by Dr. Rebecca Kern,

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who directs the advertising concentration, the group began preparing in the early months of the Fall 2021 semester. Junior Alyssa Nealon, president of the AAF chapter, shared her excitement about the competition.

“I am very excited about the NSAC because I am really proud of our team’s work. We come from a lot of different majors, and together we have been able to come up with some really great ideas,” Nealon said. “It is also the first time in a few years that Manhattan College has been to the NSAC, so I am really excited to represent our school.”

The team started preparing for the competition last fall, meeting virtually and in-person as well as during winter and spring breaks. With only nine members on the team, delegating and executing tasks was an initial concern. Christopher Bagdonas is the Secretary of AAF and is a junior communication major with a concentration in Sports Media Production and a minor in Economics. He expressed his positive outlook on the situation.

“One advantage I definitely see is truly being able to hone everyone’s skills for this project. Having a large group might be helpful in some ways, but there would probably not be much work and assignments to give to each person,” Bagdonas wrote. “Here, we have people who are strong in research, strong in graphic/creative design, strong with mathematics, writing, and a host of other skills. We are able to maximize everyone’s abilities and work together effectively.”

The district presentations are set for the end of April, followed by the semi-finals and the finals. Awards and prizes are given to the top three finalists. First place is awarded 3,500 dollars, second place is awarded 2,500 dollars, and third place is awarded



2,000 dollars. There are also other awards given based on presentations and plan books.

AAF has played an essential part in allowing members to experience working in the advertising industry and encourages new members to join every semester. Alyssa shared her experiences as president of the club and how it has shaped her thus far.

“The club has prepared me for my future in so many ways. Being president has been my first major leadership position, and I have learned so much through the process. It has also helped to improve my organizational, communication, and time management skills,” Nealon said. “I have been able to connect with great people in

the field of advertising and work on projects that resemble what I want to do in the future!”

While AAF is a club for communication majors and minors, anyone is able to join as long as they are an active member of the nationwide AAF organization and have paid their membership dues. If interested in joining, check out AAF’s Instagram account @aafmc. To learn more about the NSAC process, visit www.aaf.org. ★