Cereal campaign entered in marketing competition

By Carol Lewis
Lantern staff writer

"Fourteen members of The Ohio State University chapter of the Advertising Federation will wrap up seven months of planning when they present their marketing campaign for a new Kelloggs cereal Thursday.

They will present their campaign at the American Advertising Federation's 1989 National Student Advertising Competition in Charleston, W.Va.

The annual competition is coordinated by AAF Education Services. Each AAF district holds the competition among schools in its area.

Karen Seielstad, director of AAF Education Services, said the purpose of the competition is to push advertising education.

"STUDENTS BENEFIT from the experience of utilizing a scenario as close to reality as possible," she said.

OSU's five-person presentation team will compete in the 5th District against 12 other schools from Ohio, Kentucky and West Virginia. The winner in the district competition will proceed to the national competition in Washington, D.C., in June.

John Pribble III, a senior from Columbus majoring in advertising and director of the team, said the 5th District is considered one of the toughest because it has the highest number of schools competing.

The sponsor of this year's competition, the Kelloggs Company, provided a case study of a potential new cereal code-named Alpha.

The case study offered generic information about the product and a brief outline of the ready-to-eat cereal market.

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THE OSU team then developed a comprehensive marketing plan for the new cereal. The team researched the competition and made recommendations for a product name, packaging, distribution, pricing, advertising, and media selection and scheduling.

The AdFed team's marketing program will be judged on a plan book, a 20-minute presentation and a 10-minute question and answer session.

Scoring is based on how accurately the team has defined the marketing problem and supported its conclusions and whether the program will achieve its marketing objectives.

The four judges for the NSAC are professionals employed in various areas of advertising.

Linda Lazier-Smith, faculty advisor for AdFed, said the competition rules limited her assistance to the students.

"THEY COULD run ideas by me for reactions and I could help them to refocus, but I couldn't say, 'here's an ad, here's a headline," she said.

The competition rules also forbid assistance from advertising professionals.

The students involved in the project do not receive class credit, but most say they are doing it for the experience and, if they win, the recognition.

"This is a chance to use all we've learned at OSU, but it takes it 10 steps further," Pribble said. He estimated the group has worked more than 5,000 total hours on the project since October.

The students pay all costs incurred during the project, including transportation and lodging in Charleston.

ADFD MEMBERS raised money to pay for production and materials by selling candy, holding a bowling tournament and doing odd-job promotions for local advertising agencies.