



**University of California, Irvine Graduate Student Team Wins
NAIOP SoCal Orange County Real Estate Challenge**



Team UCI: Ash Agarwal, Ben Zdeba, Cameron Eaton, Kevin Bommarito and Ian Rosenberg

Orange County, CA (April 18, 2024) – Congratulations to the graduate student team from the University of California, Irvine Paul Merage School of Business Center for Real Estate on its win at the third annual NAIOP SoCal Orange County Real Estate Challenge. The annual competition features graduate student teams from the Chapman University Argyros College of Business & Economics and UCI in a real estate battle for the Orange Cup.

The event, held April 17 at the Chapman University campus, brought together the students in a head-to-head competition to determine the highest and best use for a unique parcel of land in Southern California. To claim victory, the winning team accumulated the most points during written and oral presentations to a judging panel of local commercial real estate industry leaders and a live audience.

For 2024, the competition site was the U.S. General Services Administration’s Chet Holifield Federal Building in Laguna Niguel. The 92-acre property is comprised of two land components improved with over one million square feet of space in the iconic pyramid-shaped Ziggurat building as well as a services support building, fleet, and service yard areas, two guard houses, and 4,777 parking spaces.

UCI’s winning presentation, Pereira Place, honored Ziggurat architect William Pereira. Their presentation encompassed for-sale residential, multifamily and artist lofts, self-storage, retail, restaurants, commercial space, and entertainment uses, all designed to create housing for a younger demographic as well as provide more destination entertainment in the city.

UCI’s graduate student team included Ash Agarwal, Kevin Bommarito, Cameron Eaton, Ian Rosenberg, and Benjamin Zdeba. The Chapman team was comprised of Noah Alvarado, Grace Cavanaugh, Dylan Holt, Boris Malykin, and Kai Osaka.

The evening event also featured remarks by honorary industry captains for each university. UCI’s honorary captain was alumnus Christopher Tipre, Principal, Trammel Crow along with Chapman University honorary captain and alumnus Michael Chukwueke, Principal, BentallGreenOak. Both honorary captains shared how valuable their years were at their respective academic institutions and also cited the work of NAIOP SoCal in helping to elevate their careers.

“NAIOP SoCal is honored to recognize the contributions of both UCI and Chapman to the real estate community. We know how hard both student teams work toward their presentations, dedicating weeks to research and industry outreach. That commitment is evident in their final submissions. It is exciting to see how this event demonstrates the creativity and capacity of the next generation of commercial real estate industry leaders,” said David Salisbury, NAIOP SoCal OC Real Estate Challenge Co-Chair.

About NAIOP SoCal: NAIOP SoCal, the Commercial Real Estate Development Association, comprises approximately 1,200 members serving Southern California. NAIOP SoCal is the leading organization in Southern California for developers, owners and related professionals in office, industrial, retail, and mixed-use real estate. NAIOP SoCal advances responsible commercial real estate development and ownership and advocates for effective public

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