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Young women feel left out of investment jobs. Here's what a group is doing about it

By Susan Tompor (excerpt)
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Vijita Kamath, 22, is well aware that women don't see a lot of female role models among the ranks of portfolio managers, investment managers and, yes, even college professors when it comes to the world of finance.

"It's a very male dominated space," said Kamath, a University of Michigan senior and president of Michigan Interactive Investments, an undergraduate investment club at the Stephen M. Ross School of Business. ...

... The annual event, presented by the David Kudla Foundation, features a student stock pitch competition with teams of two to six members. The winning team is picked based on the quality of the idea, analysis and presentation. Teams that advance to the final round have but 15 minutes to make their pitch.

More than 50 teams are expected to enter the competition. The winning team receives \$5,000. The second place prize is \$2,000 and third place is \$1,000.

About 700 or more students from across North America and the financial professionals are expected to attend.

Elizabeth Bonvouloir, a co-director of the ENGAGE investment conference, said students benefit from being able to interact with an incredible caliber of c-suite executives from across the country. ...

... This year's ENGAGE event at U-M will highlight even more women speakers and leaders in the industry. ...

... "Total power women in finance," said Jacqueline Kenny, 20, a junior at the UM Ross School of Business and a co-director of the conference. ...

... Kudla, who is passionate about the role ENGAGE plays in helping students land jobs in the investment field, said he's pleased that the student-led group is taking on the challenge of workforce diversity, which "needs attention in our industry."

Kudla also wants to encourage participation in the student conference at the high school level. The group rate for a high school is \$195, but

Kudla is sponsoring the first 25 high schools that wish to register. High school students cannot compete in the stock pitch competition, but are welcome to watch the presentations.

"Solving that problem starts with attracting a more diverse group of students to this field at the college level," Kudla said.

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