



Student given award for green line

By Rachel Trampel-Daily Staff Writer | Sunday, January 11, 2009 10:07 PM CST

From small-town Ames to the big city of New York, Danielle Sponder, senior in apparel merchandising, design and production, found herself surrounded by some of the biggest names in the fashion world — the “people you only dream of meeting.”

She then became one of four students to receive the 2009 Geoffrey Beene National Scholarship on Wednesday, a scholarship worth \$25,000.

Sponder was flown to New York to present her case study about a sustainable clothing line to a board of directors after winning a \$5,000 scholarship from the YMA Fashion Scholarship Fund the previous year.

Sponder said it was one of her most nerve-wracking experiences to have Tim Gunn announce her as one of the scholarship winners at the scholarship dinner, held at the Marriott Marquis in New York City.

“It really felt like I was on a TV show or something,” Sponder said.

Three other winners were also announced. Sponder said before the announcement, they didn’t really know much about their competitor’s case studies, which all had to be centered on a sustainable line of clothing.

“You think yours is great but you don’t know what you’re competing against,” Sponder said.

Sponder had a unique approach over her competitors, though, as she was the only one out of the four to create a case study from a business standpoint.

“I was the only merchandiser to be a finalist,” Sponder said. “Everyone else created actual designs and made a clothing line. I was also the only finalist to not choose an organic clothing line, I chose a recycled clothing line.”

Sponder said the process began by making presentations to teachers on campus about case studies along with other students from Iowa State who had won the \$5,000 scholarship from YMA Fashion Fund in 2008. She was selected to go forward for Iowa State to compete for the Geoffrey Beene National

Scholarship of \$25,000.

Although meeting these big names in fashion seemed glamorous, Sponder said much of her semester was spent working hard on completing her case study.

“I spent more time on this case study than I did on any of my classes last semester,” Sponder said. “I was just doing anything I could to learn about sustainable clothing.”

Sponder said she put a lot of work into creating her 25-page case study through interviewing a wide variety of people and looking at all aspects of her sustainable clothing line.

“I looked at manufacturing, transportation, what types of materials are going to be used, how it’s going to be sold — I mean anything you can think of for your clothing line,” Sponder said.

The last step Sponder completed before she was announced a winner at the dinner banquet was to present to the board of directors.

“I refused to look at the names of the people [on the board of directors] before I went in there because I knew it would just make me nervous,” Sponder said.

Sponder’s involvement on campus and in her program has helped her get to the point she is today, including being the president of the fashion club MODA last year, being the director of photography and styling for Trend Magazine and a community advisor in Friley Hall.

“I guess I just enjoy being involved in the program, which is easy to do when it’s something you really care about,” Sponder said.

Along with receiving the scholarship, Sponder has also just recently been featured in the “First Ladies of Fashion” article in Trend as one of the most fashionable students on campus.

“For me that was a different experience because I am so used to running the photo shoots. I’m not used to having my picture taken,” Sponder said. “I’ve really learned that no matter how much I’ve told people how to pose and what looks right, that I have no idea what I’m doing myself.”

As for her future, Sponder said she would really like to end up in fashion marketing. As for now, she will stick with what she’s used to.

“I guess I don’t know where I want to end up, but I do want to try different things,” Sponder said. “[For now], school, Trend, and the fashion club — just another semester.”



Danielle Sponder, senior in apparel merchandising, design, and production, won a YMA FSF scholarship worth \$25,000. PHOTO: Benjamin Brahant/Iowa State Daily

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