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Upon receiving the news that I was one of the top five finalists in the Asia Pacific Student of the Year Award sponsored by Weber Shandwick, I was completely lost for words. It was such an honor to be able to represent my university, National University of Singapore. At that point, I was so glad that I had taken the opportunity to apply all of the knowledge that I had learnt in college and throughout my internship at a public relations company during my summer vacation.

The visit to Weber Shandwick's office in Hong Kong was a good learning experience in itself; a real eye-opener to see how a large, established public relations agency operates. The sheer number of working cubicles in the office made me think. Before the visit to the office, it had not occurred to me that a large public relations agency would have so many people. The Hong Kong staff were very friendly and hospitable.

It was also a great pleasure to meet with Mr. Andrew Pirie, Weber Shandwick's President Asia Pacific, and Ms. Jill Mortensen, Managing Director, Weber Shandwick in Hong Kong.

Later that evening we attended the award ceremony where many glamorous people gathered, dressed in their best. The atmosphere was a mix of anticipation for the award announcements to come, and joy where old colleagues and contacts were meeting again. The food that was served was delicious, the company at the dinner table superb.

During the ceremony, I was exposed to a number of excellent award campaigns that were nominated as finalists. Knowing the amount of time it took me to put my entry together, I have to say that the time, effort and passion reflected in their work was very commendable.

The Asia Pacific PR Student of the Year Award has not only opened my eyes to the greater public relations industry, but it has also provided me with the opportunity to make new friends with the other finalists. It is always fun meeting new people from different countries; Emily (Leung – from Hong Kong) and Melanie (Perkins – from Australia) were particularly interesting as they shared about their countries and culture.

I also got to meet Katrina Foxe, Marketing Services Manager, Asia Pacific, and finalists' coordinator for the trip to Hong Kong. I would like to thank her for being kind, patient, efficient and very helpful during our stay in Hong Kong. We enjoyed conversing with her because she was warm and approachable. She also shared with us a bit of her working experience when she started out in the public relations industry. During the dinner I also managed to strike up a good conversation with Ms. Wei Hsiang, Managing Director at Weber Shandwick's Taiwan office. She is an experienced public relations practitioner and provided some really good career advice.

As they say, time flies when you're having fun, especially in the midst of good company. Before we parted our ways the next day, we exchanged email and MSN messenger addresses. I hope that we will continue to keep in touch with each other.

It's no secret; this award has certainly made me more determined and inspired to continue to pursue a career in the public relations industry.