each case situation is a lot different," says DeVivo whose family owns DATTCO Coach & Tour Group in Connecticut, servicer of all Megabus routes. "I could relate to a lot of the situations that were presented in the cases like succession, because I've had these discussions with my father. A case competition is really mock consulting, and being able to practice in front of judges is a great experience for when we do it in front of future employers."

The event, the first-ever international case competition focused exclusively on family business, drew sixteen teams from ten countries and further positioned UVM as a leader in the growing field of family business studies. Pramodita Sharma, professor in the School of Business Administration, who co-authored the book *Entrepreneurial Family Firms* and edits the journal *Family Business Review*, spearheaded the new competition. "We were thrilled with the quality of this event and the feedback we received. We plan to expand to twenty-four teams next year," she says.

The event, privately funded by thirty donors including major sponsors Chuck '76 and Robin Tauck '77, Stephen Ifshin '88, Cindy Lombardo, and Jim Keller '72, was designed to showcase exceptional case writing skills as well as case analysis and presentations. Rocki-Lee DeWitt, a seasoned case writer and professor of management in the School of Business Administration, reached out to some of the world's top case-writing and family-business experts for new scenarios.

"We chose cases that offered a comprehensive test of the students' understanding of commonly occurring family business issues," says DeWitt. "These included issues of cultural context and its influence on the range of available alternatives, multi-family situations, leadership and ownership succession, governance, as well as sibling conflict. A great case allows the possibility that the 'situation' may be seen in a number of different ways. That is why we have an academic, a business owner, and an advisor to family business on each panel."

Sanjay Sharma, dean of the UVM School of Business Administration, stresses that the experience of case competitions is invaluable for students. "By competing against the best schools from around the world in front of industry judges they will be more poised, confident, and worldly when they go on job interviews. It does a lot for their confidence," he says.

"They used to be just the little critters that marauded my picnic. But pick one up and look closely at it, or better yet, put it under a microscope, and you suddenly realize what gorgeous creatures they are." 

Elizabeth Farnsworth, illustrator and ecologist at the New England Wildflower Society. Farnsworth recently worked with UVM biologist Nicholas Gotelli and two fellow scientists to author *A Field Guide to the Ants of New England*, Yale University Press.