

## Four Ocean Springs students 'amazing' in winning state economics competition



The Ocean Springs High School Economics Challenge Team (left to right): Adam Gautier, Kevin Kovacevich, Joseph Whitley and Morgan Stoddard -- recently captured the Mississippi Economics Challenge state championship with the highest score ever posted in the 10 years of the event. *(Courtesy Photo/Angela Sanders)*



By [Warren Kulo | GulfLive.com](http://WarrenKulo.com)

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OCEAN SPRINGS, Mississippi -- Question: Assume that hot dogs and hamburgers are substitutes. If the price of hamburger increased, the demand curve for hot dogs would:

- A. shift to the right and the cross elasticity would be positive.
- B. shift to the right and the cross elasticity would be negative.
- C. remain unaffected (this would result in a movement along the demand curve for hot dogs) and the cross elasticity would remain unaffected also.

- D. shift to the left and the cross elasticity would be positive.
- E. shift to the left and the cross elasticity would be negative.

If you don't know the answer, don't feel bad. We didn't, either. But four students from Ocean Springs High School did -- and a lot more -- as they captured the 2013 Mississippi Economics Challenge state championship, held Tuesday at Millsaps College in Jackson and sponsored by the Mississippi Council on Economic Education.

The Ocean Springs team -- Kevin Kovacevich, Morgan Stoddard, Joseph Whitley and Adam Gautier -- outdistanced a field of nine other teams in the "Adam Smith" division, which is comprised of students in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate or honors economics.

Madison Central High School finished a distant second as the OSHS team posted the highest cumulative score in the 10-year history of the Economics Challenge.

"I can't begin to tell you how proud I am," said Ocean Springs economics teacher Angela Sanders. "I sat there amazed at how much they knew and how poised they were.

"To think that in August they knew none of this and had worked that hard that they could discuss economics with professors from Millsaps -- it just blew my mind."

Teams qualified for the state championship round through an online preliminary round. Ocean Springs will now advance to the National Semifinals next Tuesday, where 33 states will be represented. The top four teams there will receive all-expenses paid trips to New York to compete for the national title.

Each member of the Ocean Springs team received a \$750 scholarship and will receive an additional \$1,000 should they ultimately win the national competition.

In addition, Kovacevich was named the Economics Student of the Year for Mississippi, earning an additional \$500 in scholarship money.

Sanders said the competition is made up of three tests, plus a project. Kovacevich earned the Student of the Year honors by virtue of having the highest scores on the three tests.

For the team's project, they were given a situation in which the state allowed parents to receive vouchers for charter or private schools and the team had to determine what the economic impact on the state would be.

They gave a five-minute presentation on their project to a panel of Economics professors from Millsaps, who then grilled the team members on their conclusions.

Ocean Springs' previous highest finish was second in the 2011 competition. Kovacevich is the lone senior on this year's team, which bodes well for Ocean Springs' chances of repeating in 2014.

Sanders said there wasn't much in the way of independent study required of the team members outside the classroom. Most of what they've learned, she said, was through their normal Economics study in school. All four are in the International Baccalaureate program.

"I've been teaching a long time and I'm not easily impressed," Sanders said, "but these kids were just amazing."

By the way, the answer to the question at the top of this story is "A."