BUSINESS STUDENTS COMPETE FOR PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION AWARD

By Evaline Echols, Ph.D

On Tuesday, April 24, business faculty and students met in Jones Lecture Hall to listen to three outstanding group presentations. These student groups were chosen from three classes: Business Policy, Business Communications, and International Business to compete for the third Professional Presentation Award presented by the Department of Business. This award carries with it a $500 cash award to the winning team.

The judges for the competition were Mr. Bob Hardin, a member of the Business Advisory Council and former Vice President for Whirlpool; Dr. Michael Laney and Dr. Patty Silverman from the Department of Communications; and Josh Jolley, a business alumnus and employee at Lee in Business and Finance.

Students in the winning team included Lanre Elujoba, Olumide Agedo, Funmilayo Ajibodu, and Adebola Falabi from the International Business class taught by Dr. Hermilo Jasso. Their presentation was titled “Proposal to Start a New Business Venture—Lighthouse Technology Company.”

Other student teams included Josh Marotti and Oksana Radionova from Dr. Dewayne Thompson’s Business Policy class and Jordan Larsen, Paul Krispin, Rodney Chatman, Hannah Corder, and Charity Bond from the Business Communications class taught by Dr. Evaline Echols.

With full support of our chair, Dr. Dewayne Thompson, and other business faculty members, along with positive comments from other business students, we plan to continue these presentations next Spring 2013.
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

In my last newsletter I mentioned that a lot of good things were happening in the Department; this continues to be true! Since I last wrote to you, we remodeled one of the classrooms to raise the ceiling to improve viewing, installed two Stock Ticker Displays, installed glass doors to the room, and gave the room a general face lift. Renovation in another room allows Policy students and other classes too, to record their presentations with immediate playback capability for critique purposes. This should be complete within a week or two. For the first time, the Department hosted the regional meeting for our accrediting association, Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs. The conference saw a record-setting attendance of about 130 representing colleges and universities from the Southeast Region. A number of curricular changes are now complete. New emphases are available in the business administration major: international business, finance, financial services, management information systems, accounting, and management. Our Computer Information Systems major was completely overhauled into two tracks; one track contains an operations focus and the other a system development focus. Many of you ask about our offering an MBA. We finally are close! Our plan is to launch an MBA in fall 2013; pending approval from Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

We can now greet Hermilo Jasso, Guy DeLoach, and Shane Griffith as doctor! We are delighted that these three men completed doctoral degrees in the last twelve months. This raises our doctoral coverage in the Department to 70%. More classes are taught by doctoral-qualified faculty now than ever in the history of the Department; additionally, two new faculty members joined us. Dr. Randy Miedaner came in August 2011 and teaches accounting courses and Business Finance. Dr. David Smartt started in January 2012 and teaches management courses and Business Ethics. Dr. Miedaner comes to us from a successful law practice in Atlanta, Georgia where his clients included the founding families of Coca-Cola. Dr. Smartt concluded just shy of 30 years in the Army where he achieved the rank of Colonel and served as Commandant of the Army Chaplaincy School.

Income tax preparation for lower income families continues to be an important service provided the community. Last year these accounting students, under the leadership of Mr. Della Franco, completed 516 returns resulting in over $700,000 returned to taxpayers. This year we are on tap to exceed that number and currently 560 returns and just under $715,000 in refunds completed so far. Experiential learning in corporations and NGOs continues to be a focus for the Department. The Cambodia Project, I introduced this to you in the last newsletter, continues to gain momentum. Students continue developing business plans which help to break the cycle of poverty for some in Takam Village, Cambodia. If you haven’t already seen People For Care and Learning’s (PCL) project, Build a City, please do that now and “like” it on Facebook. Student involvement continues as students assisted in organizing a symposium on March 30-31 entitled “Breaking the Cycle of Poverty: 2012.” This was held on campus in cooperation with PCL.

As you can see, we’ve been up to a lot! Please come visit your alma mater. The faculty and I would love for you to visit us Lee Day and Homecoming. If you do not receive my periodic emails regarding events and news around campus and job opportunities, please email me and I’ll add you to the listserv. My email is dthompson@leeuniversity.edu. I look forward to hearing from you.

Dewayne Thompson, D.B.A.
Chair, Department of Business
BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS
-KEVIN FUERST

By Evaline Echols, Ph.D.

Kevin Fuerst, founder and president of Fuerst Financial Group, a Registered Investment Advisory firm in Chattanooga, Tennessee, joined the Business Advisory Council in 2006. He is a seasoned professional with experience in “simplifying the complex.” Kevin focuses on the creation of estate, investment, and legacy strategies that work for his clients and their heirs. He offers personalized, in-depth evaluation to meet the goals and needs of clients while taking the mystery out of investing, managing risk, estate and retirement planning. His firm establishes long and trusted relationships with clients and is strengthened by strategic partnerships with national professionals.

The firm’s securities and advisory services are offered through National Planning Corporation (BPC), member of FINRASIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser. Financial planning and consulting services offered through Fuerst Financial Group (FFG) and NPC are separate and unrelated companies.

In the words of Kevin, “Being a member of the Business Advisory Council has helped me realize the overwhelming experiences available to students in the Department of Business. At times I ask myself, ‘How can we as members of the Business Advisory Council help parents and prospective students understand the opportunities that are offered in the Department of Business—not just academically but spiritually? And as the founder and president of a small business, how can I help students understand that the backbone of America is small businesses.’”

Dr. Dewayne Thompson, chair of the Department of Business, had this to say about Mr. Fuerst: “Mr. Fuerst’s involvement in the Business Advisory Council demonstrates his interest in investing in Lee University students. His faithful attendance and participation in the Council help the faculty understand today’s challenges for students entering the job market generally and more specifically those entering the financial services industry.”

Kevin is married to Susie and they have two children—Andi and Steven. His wife and both children are graduates of Lee University.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL

By Evaline Echols, Ph.D.

The Business Advisory Council of the Department of Business held its annual meeting March 23-24 on campus. This is the 26th year of the Council, whose purpose is to advise the department on issues such as curriculum, strategic planning, and program development.

The Council is composed mostly of senior-level managers or business owners from various industries; however, some members represent universities and consulting firms.

Members of the Business Advisory Council include, front row from left, Mava Wilson, Hermilo Jasso, Chad Carter, Tonya Mazzolini, Kyle Christensen, Leecey David, Todd Chambley, Rodney Bryant, Glenda Weinert and Bob Harden; second row, Evaline Echols, Alan Burns, Louis Raji, Mike Sharp, Tim Spire, and Dean Osner; third row, Hal Dixon, Mike Harden, Barry Ray, Dewayne Thompson, and Kim Casteel; back row, Bill Jabber, Shane Griffith, Mike Seago, David Smartt, Guy DeLoach, Ron Dorris, Hugh Hale, Paul Stumb, Alan Smith, Randy Miedaner, and John McIntosh. Members not pictured but present for the Friday session: Craig Sarine and Dave Gregory.
FACULTY HIGHLIGHT
-HERMILIO JASSO

Twenty-five years ago, Hermilo Jasso left his position as a financial consultant and financial securities analyst with Merrill Lynch in Dallas, Texas, to join the faculty in the Department of Business. As an alumnus of Lee University, where he graduated in 1983 with a degree in Business, he continued his education at Laredo State University and earned an MBA in International Trade. After taking classes at Middle Tennessee State University and Universidad de la Empresa in Paraguay, he was awarded a Ph.D. in Business Administration with a concentration in Economics in 2011.

As a tenured faculty member and assistant professor of Business since 1992, he has taught a variety of courses including Economics, Marketing, International Business, International Marketing, Investments, and Introduction to Business. In the words of one of his students, Phillip Wallace: “This complex, yet simple economist is very informative and passionate about any given topic. He is always equipped with different methods of clarifying what seems to be formidable to understand without losing his target. Dr. Jasso challenges the mind of every individual to think critically about his or her future from a personal and economic standpoint. He breaches all barriers of communication being able to connect with students on a one-to-one basis during lectures.” Phillip goes on to say, “Some may think it is an unfortunate situation to find oneself in a dual position of taking care of both parents and children, but this only illustrates what a true Christlike man of God would do as it is expected for us to honor our mother and father for it is the first commandment of promise. Not only does he care for his family, but he also cares for students.”

Dr. Jasso has received numerous awards, some of which include the Melon Foundation Fellowship in 2006 where he attended the Asian Energy Challenge and Implications for OECD (Asia, the United States, and Europe) in Salzburg, Austria. In 2002 he was awarded “The Janet Rahamut Faculty Award” at Lee University in recognition of his service to students. In 2005 he was selected by the Appalachian Colleges Association to participate in the Faculty Development Seminar in China.

In addition to his excellent teaching, Dr. Jasso has been involved in research. For example, in 2011 he presented research at the World Business and Social Science Research Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, on “The Social and Economic Impact of Illegal Immigrants.” On five occasions, from 2007 to 2011, he presented papers in Uruguay on pertinent topics such as “Globalization and its Positive Impacts” and “The Operations of the International Monetary Fund and the USA Federal Reserve Banking System.”

Dr. Jasso has traveled extensively to countries such as Italy, China, Thailand, Austria, Ghana, Russia, Ukraine, and most of South America as part of his faculty development. As a result of his travels, he helped create and establish the study abroad programs for the Department of Business in Chile, Italy, Russia, Uruguay, and Paraguay.

As he is nearing the end of his 25th year in the Department of Business, Dr. Jasso says, “It is hard for me to believe that 25 years of my life have been associated with Lee. It seems like yesterday when I walked into my first class. Today I still feel the same excitement, thrill, and joy that I experienced in 1987. I usually tell my students to try to find out what call God has for their lives, and I thank God because He has helped me find my calling. Teaching is my life, and I thank God every day for giving me the opportunity to exercise my call in this institution where my coworkers have become my family.”

Dr. Jasso is married to Jessica and they have five children: three from his deceased wife, Lorraine—Hermilo Jasso III, Xavier, Yarisa, and two from his present marriage—Sofia and Zoe. Two of his children have graduated from Lee. Hermilo Jasso III is presently working for Murk Pharmaceutical Corporation as a Senior Lean Six Sigma Coordinator at the Wilson, North Carolina Plant. His second son, Xavier, has been accepted in a master’s program in English Literature at Belmont University starting this fall 2012.
ACBSP UPDATE

By McKenzie Hungate

The Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) is an accreditation council that seeks top of the line business programs, awards teaching excellence, and pushes their accredited programs to new heights. ACBSP’s mission statement states it “promotes continuous improvement and recognizes excellence in the accreditation of business education programs around the world.” Lee University has been accredited by ACBSP for four years.

ACBSP requires a quality assurance report of each accredited program every two years. Since this is Lee University’s fourth year of accreditation, this report was our second quality assurance report. At the end of February, Dr. Thompson and Dr. Griffith, with the help of some students from the Business Department like Hannah Craig, completed the report to be reviewed by ACBSP Headquarters. According to Dr. Thompson, he likes the quality assurance reports because it gives him more confidence that the Council is focused rigorously applying its guidelines and criteria. It makes him feel better that the organization is “bent on continuous improvement” and making sure that each program is taking the right steps towards excellence.

This past summer (Summer 2011), ACBSP elected Dr. Thompson as President of Southeastern Council of Business Schools and Programs. In this role, Dr. Thompson represents all ACBSP business programs in the Southeast. One of his duties was to host the regional conference for Region 3 (September 22-24). Held in Chattanooga at the Sheraton Read House, Dr. Thompson invited Dr. Paul Conn as the keynote speaker, along with performances by Voices of Lee. This resulted in the largest attendance Region 3 has ever had for the conference.

One thing Dr. Thompson was able to bring to the table for this conference that had never been done before was a student presentation. In the past, the conference has been comprised of mainly educators, administrators, and outside speakers. Lee University was the only school to organize its students to present at the conference, and it was a huge hit. Everyone was very impressed with the students; and according to Dr. Thompson, people “wanted to kidnap our students.” The students that participated were Rebecca Watson, Kayleigh Carlson, and Lauren Thompson.

In February, Dr. Thompson went to the regional Presidents meeting in Kansas City and proposed the idea of students presenting at the National Conference in Baltimore, MD. This idea was accepted, and students from Lee will be traveling to Baltimore in June to present at the ACBSP National Conference.

The Lee University Business Department is very excited about its accreditation by ACBSP and looks forward to continuing and growing this relationship in the future.

PHI BETA LAMBA RETURNS

Dr. Shane Griffith

The Lee University Chapter of Phi Beta Lambda (PBL) is active once again. The Department of Business decided to replace Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) with PBL as its official academic club beginning in January 2012. Student interest is high, and the chapter already has approximately 35 members.

Four officers were appointed for this semester by the chapter’s faculty sponsors. Zac Mobley, a senior from Jessup, Georgia will serve as president. The vice-president is Nate Byram, a sophomore from Jacksonville, Florida. Hannah Hazelwood is a junior from Knoxville, Tennessee and will serve as the secretary. he treasurer is senior Elizabeth Sjoquist from Highland, Indiana.

PBL hosted Weston Wamp as a guest speaker on April 10 as its first official activity. Mr. Wamp is a young and successful entrepreneur who is currently seeking election for the U.S. House of Representatives in the Tennessee 3rd District. He was recently named as one of Chattanooga’s “30 under 30” by Chattanooga Cityscape Magazine. The subject of his discussion will be the national debt and his experience as a business owner.

We look forward to meeting many of our PBL alumni at Homecoming in November!
ACCOUNTING GALA
By Kate O’Brian

The Centenary Room was home this year, on September 25, to the sixth annual Accounting Department Gala. Over hors d’oeuvres, accounting majors of the junior and senior level took advantage of the opportunity to hobnob with local professionals who are seeking prepared and competent soon to be graduates. The gala has grown in size and prominence every year as new employers vie for the opportunity to represent their firms at the event. The gala has become a priority for students who want to get their names to employers and various firms in the local business environment. In its first year the gala included twelve employers and twelve students and has now grown to 65 students and 36 employers—affording students plenty, to say the least, of options in seeking career advice and potential contacts.

“It gives students an opportunity to break out of their comfort zones and talk to people” stated Mr. Della Franco, the mind behind the Gala. Various area businesses, as well as independent firms, attended, the gala to speak to students about what is expected of young job seekers. Della Franco emphasizes, the gala is an environment where a varied, well rounded knowledge of the accounting world is presented. Many students are offered internships or even entry-level positions as a result of speaking with present employers and learning to garner experience in communicating with various levels of authority in the professional realm.

Just a few of the corporations represented included big players such as Blue Cross Blue Shield and Life Care, as well as independent firms such as Bishop and Erindale and Ernst and Young based out of Chattanooga. Several students received offers this year from prominent local firms. Kayla Keyt, a graduating Accounting major was placed with Henderson Hutchinson and McAlugh; Jesse Morgan, another senior was hired on by Hazlett Louis and Bieter, while Rob Malone was given a position by HH and M.

“You reveal experience in the field as a top priority when you’re up at 9am on a Saturday doing complimentary tax returns...” says Della Franco, emphasizing the necessity for some level of experience before students enter the realm of competitive job application. Whether it be the tax return program provided for free to locals by Lee finance majors or a professional internship, students afford themselves a head start when they garner some form of active knowledge of the field in which they aspire to specialize.

The Accounting Department has done a stellar job in affording learning opportunities such as the tax return program affording students to the ability to present themselves as competent and prepared, soon to be employees, to prospective employers, at the reputable annual Accounting Gala.

VITA PROGRAM
By Matthew Diaz

VITA is a program that Lee University has been doing for five years under the leadership of accounting professor, Mr. Greg Della Franco. VITA stands for volunteers in tax assistance. This program is offered by the IRS and certifies volunteers to help members in the community who have an income of less then $50,000 with their tax return.

Lee business students are able to use the skills they acquired in the classroom and apply their knowledge in real life situations. This program is beneficial for the students at Lee because they get to put their critical skills into action. Students receive a Basic Exam certification from the IRS that they may add to their resumes; they may also login twenty hours of community service into the Leonard center.

The community gets an opportunity to receive first class tax services rather than having to go to H&R Block or Liberty where they are required to pay. As an example, last year a lady came into the VITA program and did her tax return and received a refund of $150. Rather than having to pay $100 to H&R Block or some other firm, she was able to take home all her hard earned money. At the end of tax season, the service generated $720,000 of individual tax refunds. Mr. Della Franco says, “Since this VITA program started, we see many clients returning year after year to take advantage of this service. “

This service is open to anyone regardless of location; however, most clients are local residents. This means money generated by refunds stays here in Bradley County.

Because of service projects like these here at Lee, our school was one of three universities in the nation to receive a Community Service Award from President Obama. Students here at Lee are getting the chance to help out the community while in return the community helps the students put their knowledge to the test in real life situations.
DELTA MU DELTA UPDATE

By Mava Wilson, PhD

The Lambda Pi chapter of Delta Mu Delta recently inducted sixteen new members into the honor society. Department of Business faculty along with the current officers and new inductees gathered in the Centenary Room for an evening that started with a dinner buffet catered by Impressions Catering. Dr. David Smartt spoke on “Power through Knowledge,” Delta Mu Delta’s motto and shared on the importance of knowledge, networking, and excellence. Dr. Smartt was inducted into Delta Mu Delta in 2007 as a doctoral student.

Lanre Elujoba, president, along with the other officers (Mide Adedo, VP, Lara Akinboye, Secretary, Oyinade Taylor, Treasurer, Michael Murphy, PR, Alicia Carithers, Historian, and Jesse Morgan, Chaplain) and Dr. Mava Wilson, advisor, conducted the induction ceremony. In addition to the students, Dr. Hermilo Jasso and Dr. Guy DeLoach were inducted as honorary members. At the conclusion of the evening, Delta Mu Delta members affirmed new officers for 2012-2013: Jared Markum, President, Timothy Diamond, VP, Daniel Koukol, PR, and Kelsey Eggenschwiler, Secretary/Treasurer.

The new members for 2011-2012 are: Katelyn Dennis, Timothy Diamond, Kelsey Eggenschwiler, Adeboa Falabi, Ryan Glass, Mercedes Goss, Hannah Hazelwood, Drew Henderson, Sarah Juday, Daniel Koukol, Deborah Kroboth, Jared Markum, Joshua Marotti, Justin Mathews, Blaine Vasquez, Corey Watkins. Thanks to the student volunteer servers for the dinner banquet Kacie Baugus, Betsy Feazel, Ashley Lee, and Tiana White.

CURRICULAR CHANGES IN INFORMATION SYSTEMS

By Christian McMillan

This year the Computer Information Systems faculty members in the Department of Business have been working hard to enhance the curriculum. Several changes have taken place, including a name change. The program is now called Information Systems (IS). The curriculum has experienced significant changes by adding emphases and courses. Faculty conducted a study with industry experts and IT People to establish a direction needed for keeping the curriculum up to date and relevant to students. This is one of the reasons for the new emphases. In addition, the Model Curriculum and Guideline for Undergraduate Degree Programs and Information Systems was used in the establishment of the curricular changes.

The systems development emphasis will provide a foundational basis for entry-level positions like programming. The systems operations emphasis will provide a basic entry foundation for positions in help desk, systems administration, network services and other area. We also are adding five new courses to enrich the program. These include web application development, mobile web application development, business intelligence, IT collaborative environment and IT security and risk management.

As the students go through some of these courses, there will be certification requirements tied to the program such as A+ certification, Security+ certification, and project management certifications that will greatly enhance students’ entry into the information systems field. A new opportunity for students is a practicum in which students will be working five hours a week with the Lee University IT Department. This will include real work, not hypothetical cases. First semester students in information systems would be shadowing the IT team. All students will be required to reach specific levels of knowledge the first semester, and the second semester will become more like an internship with IS&T. This will give the students a lot more focus in the information systems field and enhance their marketability.

Final Thoughts: “The curriculum is now more relevant for future jobs,” Dr. Jaber added, “and we are making sure we are giving the students the course work that is needed in the industry.” With this new curriculum, the students will leave with a foundational education along with practical experience and certifications in multiple areas within Information Systems.
CROSS CULTURAL TRIPS
By McKenzie Hungate

Argentina/ Uruguay

The Argentina/ Uruguay cross-cultural experience has been on Lee University’s list for 10 years with some gaps in-between. On the first week of this trip the students will be taking classes at a local university in Uruguay from 8-12 AM. In the afternoons, the students will be visiting and learning from local companies. On the second week of the trip, they will be touring Argentina visiting Government sites and offices. According to Dr. Jasso, this trip is special and different because the students will have the opportunity to sit in classes with local students and learn alongside of them as well as earn seven hours college credit. Even though this trip has no slots open, it is still a great trip to keep on your radar for the future.

Italy/ Greece Trip

While in Greece, students will be studying at the University of Athens, and in Italy studies will be held in the University of Rome with the possibility of attending the European School of Economics as well. While in these countries, there will be a lot of sightseeing. For example, students will not only visit the burial sights of St. Peter and St. Paul, they will have an audience with the Pope. This is an amazing experience with not only a business background but also a historical and religious aspect attached.

The Italy/Greece trip is a chance to visit world-class universities taught by world-class professors along with visiting historical sights that most people only see in history books. There is the slight possibility that the trip will not pass through Greece due to political and economic turmoil, but it is not off the list yet. There are still many slots open for this trip; and if any students need convincing, talking to Mr. Della Franco for just 10 minutes and hearing his passion for this trip will cause any on-the-fence student to sign up.

Haiti

The trip to Haiti on May 6-17, 2012 is part of Lee University’s mission project as Haiti is the focus for Lee University missions 2011-2012. The students are working towards getting donated laptops or money to purchase netbooks, so every student can take a laptop to leave with somebody in Haiti. This is the first year Lee University’s mission project trip has partnered with the Department of Business, and Dr. Wilson is hoping this relationship can continue in the future. The first part of the trip, the students will be staying on a Church of God compound and working in La Saline Church. The next place the students will visit is Restavek, which is an organization that educates and helps young people who were taken into a slave-like situation to help them out of their circumstances and better themselves.

There will also be other service projects the students will be involved in; and because of all the service work the students will do, each student will receive 20 hours of service credit. Although this is a very service and mission-minded trip, there will still be some sightseeing. Dr. Wilson has visited twice before in Haiti as her parents were missionaries in the country for 23 years. Haiti provides a great opportunity for students who want to do a service-minded trip and get out of the country, as well as earn seven hours college credit.
ADVANTAGES TO PURSUING AN MBA DEGREE

By Betsi Feazel

Pursuing a Master of Business Administration degree (MBA) is an important decision, which requires countless hours of work, commitment, and sacrifice. Despite these challenges, thousands of people every year make the choice to pursue their MBA because they know it will pave the road to many future rewards, not only in their professional lives but in their personal lives as well. For those pursuing a career in the business world, an MBA is invaluable. This degree enhances knowledge of the intricacies of business. The academic preparation and internships that are required in the program provide firsthand knowledge and experience regarding important business strategy, the internal workings of running a business successfully, and how to improve and grow a business. Another benefit is a deeper understanding of concepts such as economics, marketing, and accounting. Individuals who pursue an MBA are demonstrating a commitment to a greater knowledge of business principles and are therefore better equipped to succeed in the business environment.

There is a high demand for people who are skilled in business concepts. Therefore, MBA graduates will be more attractive to prospective employers. This degree also plays a major role in career advancement and often provides an advantage when a company is promoting or hiring. Whether one is attempting to move up in a current career or starting over in a new profession, this degree will prove to be a great advantage (http://www.unhmba.org/the-value-of-an-mba).

Another key benefit of an MBA degree is the opportunity for networking. Many friendships and connections are made during the many long hours of class lecture and studying, and these connections are a resource that can be taken advantage of throughout a career. These are the people who will be the most likely to go on to hold high-level, positions in companies around the world, and having professional colleagues to interact with can be a great benefit long after a degree is received (The Value Of An MBA).

An especially attractive part of getting an MBA is the potential for greater pay. According to Geoff Gloeckler of Finance.Yahoo.com, “On average, MBAs from the top 45 B-schools will make around $2.5 million in base pay and bonuses over the course of a 20-year career.” These numbers don’t take into account the benefit of company stock options that those in management positions often receive, and can account for an even higher income. It has also been shown that those with an MBA will experience, on average, a 75 percent pay increase over the next 20 years (Gloeckler, 2010).

Skills in written and oral communication, teamwork, leadership, managerial skills, analytical skills, and people skills are just some of the other benefits acquired when receiving an MBA. Not only do these qualities make a better employee, they also make a better person. These are the skills that make someone with this degree so valuable to employers, because they know that this person has done the work to better him or herself not only academically but also personally.

There are many reasons to get an MBA degree, and they should all be carefully considered before making a decision. It will be challenging and will take time and commitment, but there are many important life and business skills that will be gained. Employers look for someone who has an MBA, because they know that these people will be willing to do the work it takes to take the company into a successful and thriving future.
WHY PURSUE A BUSINESS DEGREE?
By Kate O’Brien

Why is a business degree pertinent in this economy? “Because at some point, with few exceptions, anyone ever employed will work for someone at some point,” states Dr. Guy DeLoach of the Department of Business. I sat down with one of Lee’s most experienced and hands-on business professors to discuss why a business degree is still so strongly utilized today, even more so than ten, twenty, even thirty years ago. According to Dr. DeLoach, a business degree affords the ability and knowledge to further a wide range of careers. Our society has evolved into a global economy. Therefore, in order to be productive and successful, individuals need to know how to utilize talents and capabilities within an organizational context. A business degree offers students this awareness so they might thrive in a variety of environments.

One of the inherent advantages of a business degree is its well-rounded nature. It offers the general awareness of need for management skills as well as the detailed data needed for soon to be job seekers to learn and grow in preparedness for the workforce. A business degree allows students to look for opportunities just about anywhere. The possibilities range from corporate work, to independent entrepreneurship, to church employment, to non-profit.

While a business degree offers a well-rounded skill set in all facets of the business arena, it can also afford a specialized emphasis, which offers a competitive edge in the current economic climate where many employers are looking for workers who can do a specific set of tasks and do it well the first time. “We as a department have evolved to support a changing global and technology-based economy,” states Dr. DeLoach. “The Business Department has adapted to support the demands of the ever-changing needs of a dynamic economy, especially one as global as it has grown to be today.”

Economically, the business degree is highly likely to provide a steady income to even the newcomer. New graduates in the financial emphasis are currently making an average of $56,000 dollars a year with general business and management only a small step below. And opportunities are numerous, with local branches looking to Lee specifically for business graduates; a few examples include TVA, Volkswagen, Whirlpool, Merck, and Olin Chemical. In order to prepare and be competitive in these opportunities, preparation is key -- preparation specifically in internships. “Be aggressive,” says DeLoach “call your friends, call your friend’s friends. Utilize connections.” Because using everything at your disposal is a necessity in the business environment.

In other words, utilize an ever-relevant and powerful skill set in order to lead and manage in not only an efficient, but Christ-like way.
BUSINESS ALUMNI UPDATE

By Evaline Echols, PhD

Eric C. McConnell, CFP®
Eric McConnell graduated from Lee University in 2004 with a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration. Having completed an internship at Merrill Lynch in Chattanooga, Tennessee while enrolled at Lee, he accepted a position as a Paraplanner at Johnston, Stuart & Associates, a financial advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc. shortly after finishing his degree. Eric relocated to Atlanta, Georgia in 2006 where he accepted a position at FSC Securities Corporation, a registered broker/dealer and investment advisory firm. Having filled a number of roles within the organization, he was named Regional Vice-President of Supervision for the Northeast Region in 2009. In this capacity, Eric supervises 42 branch managers and approximately 268 financial advisors in a nine-state area, and is responsible for the monitoring and implementation of compliance policies and procedures within this territory. Eric completed the Executive Program for Financial Planning Certification (with distinction) from the University of Georgia Terry College of Business in 2009 and earned the CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® designation in 2010. Eric currently resides in Dunwoody, Georgia.

Christy McDonald
Christy McDonald, an accounting major, graduated from Lee in 2003. On November 1, 2011 Christy was awarded the 2011 Excellence in Accounting and Finance Award by the American Society of Women Accountants. Christy received the Outstanding Regional Director Award for her demonstrated excellence in chapter communications, national committee participation, and conference attendance. As Associate Director of Executive Placement at The Kemp Group, Christy is the Regional Director for the Charlotte, Greenville and Raleigh chapters in North Carolina. She serves as the Charlotte New Chapter Mentoring Chair and also serves on the Raleigh New Chapter Mentoring and the National Membership committees. In the words of Monika P. Miles, CPA, and ASWA President, “We thank her for her outstanding work to advance the mission of ASWA.”

Mauricio Peraza
Mauricio Peraza graduated from Lee with an accounting major in 2011. Before graduation he was recruited by Ernst & Young, one of the top four accounting firms in the country. He passed the CPA exam two months after graduation and currently works as a staff member for Ernst & Young. In the words of Mauricio, “Being part of a firm like Ernst & Young has allowed me to work with Fortune 500 companies and to serve in several types of industries such as insurance, energy, and transportation. I believe the help and guidance that I received from my business professors at Lee University helped prepare me for the challenges of working at a very prestigious accounting firm.”

Cait Kooistra
In July 2011 Cait Kooistra graduated from Lee with a major in Business Administration and a minor in Political Science. Three days after graduation she moved to China as a volunteer for a Harvard-based non-profit organization which focuses on education in developing countries. Cait is currently living in Southeast China teaching English in a Middle School. In her words, “I have been living here for eight months and have enjoyed learning more about Chinese culture, history, and language. It has been a life-changing experience so far.”
BUSINESS ALUMNI UPDATE CONTINUATION

By Evaline Echols, PhD

Kayla Keyt
Kayla Keyt graduated in December 2011 after what she referred to as “three and a half incredible yet challenging years” with a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting. She has passed three out of four parts of the CPA exam and expects to have her licensure by early summer 2012. She is currently employed at Henderson, Hutcherson, and McCullough PLLC in downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee.

While attending Lee, Kayla worked as an intern with Chris Conine, Vice President for Business and Finance at Lee University. Chris Conine had this to say about Kayla: “Kayla served as my intern for two years and proved to be capable, competent, and effective. She helped me restructure tax-exempt private placement bonds, draft endowment policies, negotiate multi-million dollar contracts, conduct due diligence, research tax issues, interview potential CPA firms, work on Lee’s audit, and many other assignments. In every instance, Kayla did a remarkable job, had a great attitude, performed her duties in a timely and efficient manner, and never ceased to exceed my highest expectations. She truly raised my level of performance and the performance of those around her.”

James Haeman

James Haeman earned a B.S. in Business Administration and Computer Information Systems from Lee University in 2008. During his third and fourth year, James was employed by the Department of Justice as an Information Technology Intern in Chattanooga, Tennessee. After graduating from Lee, he was hired full time at the Department of Justice. He is currently stationed in Laredo, Texas as a Legal Administrative Specialist where he supports attorneys and agents to fully utilize computer information systems to enhance and better prepare each case for trial. In June 2012 James will graduate with a Master of Management Information Sciences from Texas A&M International University.

Rachelle Cleaver

Rachelle Cleaver graduated in 2008 with a double major in Computer Information Systems and Business Administration. She is currently working at Restoration Services, Inc. in Oak Ridge, Tennessee as a Cyber Security Coordinator and System Administrator. She is supporting all aspects of Cyber Security compliance, including the following: implements Cyber Security controls to ensure confidentiality, availability and integrity of systems, networks and applications in accordance with contract requirements, NIST guidance, industry best practices, and DOE/RSI policy. Her responsibilities also include analyzing, interpreting and evaluating cyber security threats, risks and vulnerabilities;

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

By Evaline Echols, PhD

As a part of our experiential learning in the Department of Business, I would like to thank a group of students in one of my business communication classes for their involvement in this issue of THE BOTTOM LINE. The research of “How to Write A Newsletter” and most of the articles were written by students who interviewed faculty members, wrote the articles, were involved in the editing and finally the proofreading processes—then presented their research to the entire class towards the end of the semester.

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