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Kalamazoo Nature Center leader next up in Keystone series

by Stacey Markin

May 10, 2013 | WMU News



Rose

KALAMAZOO—The president and CEO of the Kalamazoo Nature Center will share his insights on the business paradigm shift for nature centers as Western Michigan University continues its 2012-13 Keystone Community Bank Breakfast Speaker Series this month.

Willard "Bill" Rose will speak at 8 a.m. Friday, May 31, in the Dean's Conference Room of Schneider Hall, delivering a presentation titled "The New Business Paradigm for Nature Centers."

The event is free and open to the public and begins with breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Reservations are required and can be made by calling (269) 387-6059 or emailing kayla.j.hunt@wmich.edu. Free parking is available in the nearby Fetzer Center lot.

Bill Rose

Rose, who has been president and CEO of the nature center since 1988, is responsible for an annual budget of more than \$2.4 million and leads more than 40 staff members. He has led the Nature Center through three growth campaigns that have totaled more than \$15 million.

In addition to his duties at the nature center, Rose provides management and programmatic consulting services to nature centers throughout the United States.

Rose earned his doctoral degree in plant ecology from Michigan State University and started his career as a research specialist and plant ecologist at the Nature Conservancy in Michigan, where he also served as regional director of stewardship for the southeast region.

Rose serves as secretary and treasurer for the Southwest Michigan Sustainable Business Forum. In addition, he is a member of the board for Discover Kalamazoo. He recently completed seven years of service on the National Board of the Association of Nature Center Administrators where he served as Treasurer. In the past, Rose has served on the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Interpretation Advisory Committee and the Michigan State Parks Strategic Planning Committee on Interpretation.

Rose is the recipient of the 2010 Nature Center Leadership Award from the Association of Nature Center Administrators.

The Kalamazoo Nature Center is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to inspire people to care for the environment by providing experiences that lead them to understand their connection to the natural world.

About the series

The Keystone Community Bank Breakfast Speaker Series provides an opportunity for the local community to hear top business leaders and WMU faculty, alumni and friends of the Haworth College of Business discuss current topics of interest.

This season's final Keystone Community Bank Breakfast Speaker presentation will take place June 28 with a talk by **Dr. Sharon Carlson**, WMU director of archives and regional history.

Highlighting Diversity in the Workplace



Tasked with creating a forum on diversity in business, Caroline Ray and Alaina Parker, employer relations coordinators at the Haworth College of Business career center, developed the Women in Leadership Spotlight, a roundtable luncheon aimed to jump-start the dialogue of diversity successes and challenges in a business environment.

At the event, mentors from Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Fifth Third Bank, C.H. Robinson and Walmart, premier partners of the career center that sponsor career education programs and events, divided into four rotational groups, where conversation was organic and honest about the topic of women in leadership roles.

“We developed focus questions about achievement, the perceptions of women in the workplace, common obstacles and work-life balance, but we really wanted the students and mentors to branch out from those specific questions,” says Parker. “It was critical to the success of the event that participants were able to talk about topics that are important and relevant to them without being prompted.”

While the inaugural event had only female attendees, Parker says they are looking for ways to ensure both men and women will be in attendance in the future. “Men have an important voice on the topic of diversity in the workplace. We are encouraging male students and professionals to attend future Women in Leadership Spotlights because they will bring valuable thoughts and perspectives to the open discussion—perspectives that were missing at the first run of this event.”

Eugenia Cunningham, business student and participant in the first spotlight, also stresses the significance of having the event be attended by faculty, industry professionals and students. “It is important to have a diverse group of people present when discussing increasing the awareness of the challenges others face in the workplace and making sure that work environments are welcoming and equal for all,” says Cunningham.

The career center also aims to expand their spotlight series in the near future to be inclusive of a larger, more culturally diverse audience that focuses on other diversity-related issues in the world of work.

“Talking candidly about these topics can create an awareness and platform that can be used to strategically overcome inequalities and hurdles in our professions,” says Ray. “The communities we live in are becoming more diverse, and it is important that our work environments reflect the populations of our surrounding neighborhoods—that they also have a foundational culture that respects, embraces and integrates diversity and inclusion initiatives.”

The subject of women in leadership and business roles was so successful that the development of a student organization focused on women in business and industry is being considered to further the discussion between students, faculty, staff and partners of the college.

“Employer representatives and student participants shared that the event was insightful, authentic and very significant to their development as women in pursuit of success and growth in both their personal and professional lives,” says Ray. “We are working to keep the conversation going.”

For information about future spotlights and diversity awareness activities, please contact the career center at (269)387-2711.

WMU student among 10 nationwide to win coveted scholarship



by Stacey Markin
April 12, 2013 | WMU News

Downs

KALAMAZOO—A Western Michigan University business student is among 10 students from across the country selected to receive a prestigious nationwide business scholarship awarded by the Richter Foundation and the Institute for Supply Management's Richter Scholarship Fund.

Hanna Downs, of Novi, Mich., is WMU's sixth scholarship recipient in the past ten years, placing WMU fourth in the nation for the total number of students honored with Richter Scholarships in the past 10 years. The Richter scholarship provides tuition assistance of up to \$5,000 and pairs the recipient with established executives and a former Richter Scholar who will serve as mentors. A number of other benefits are included in the award as well.

Now in its 10th year, the Richter Scholarship Program is the largest nationally recognized scholarship program for supply chain management students. It identifies future supply chain management leaders and helps fast-track these students into the field. The 2013 Richter Scholars will be honored at an April 27 dinner at the ISM Annual International Supply Management Conference in Grapevine, Texas.

'A great honor'

"Winning this scholarship is such a great honor, and I am so grateful for this opportunity," says Downs. "I'm excited to represent Western Michigan University at the conference. It is going to be a great opportunity for me to expand my professional network and mentor base. My professors here at Western have provided me with the knowledge, skills and training I need to make a good impression at the conference and show why Western is such an outstanding institution."

Downs is entering her senior year at WMU, where she is majoring in both integrated supply management and food and consumer package goods marketing, offered through the Haworth College of Business. She currently serves as an integrated supply management student mentor where she aids students in applying to the program and developing their portfolios of professional activities. She also promotes the ISM curriculum and study abroad with the program's students.

Downs spent a semester at Hogeschool Utrecht in the Netherlands, igniting a passion for study abroad and international business. While in the Netherlands, she was selected to be a part of a five-member leadership team that led 45 multicultural students in developing and presenting an export market entry strategic plan for De Wiltfang, an integrated Dutch gardening retailer.

Downs has completed two sales and marketing internships at Eastern Michigan University, where she has exceeded her goals for business recruitment for the Eagle Discount Card Program and increased home game attendance at sporting events.

Downs serves as vice president of membership in the student chapter of APICS—the Association for Operations Management—and vice president of social events for the Food Marketing Association. She has also been a recipient of additional merit-based scholarships.

"Hanna blew everybody's socks off," says Nancy Richter, president of the Richter Foundation.

"She was quite impressive academically, and her extracurricular activities and leadership on campus were impressive," says Sandra Lukasik, executive director of the R. Gene Richter Scholarship Program. "She was very well spoken, very prepared for her interviews and exhibited characteristics that display a solid commitment to the field. She came with the highest recommendations, and it is quite easy to see that she will be a future leader within the field."

For more information about the Integrated Supply Management Program, visit wmich.edu/supplychain.

For more information about the R. Gene Richter Scholarship Program, visit richerfoundation.org.

Students earn top honors in regional competition

by Cindy Wagner
May 1, 2013 | WMU News



The winning team members (seated) with their capstone course classmates

KALAMAZOO—A team of five Western Michigan University students **earned the Overall Champion award and won Best Project honors** at the second annual Midwest Student Information Systems Project and Case Competition hosted by Ball State University.

Nine teams from five universities vied for top honors in three categories—project, project presentation and case competition. The WMU team earned the top spot for its project and second place for its presentation, earning the group the Overall Champion award, beating out the Purdue University team, which placed second.

During the three-day competition, teams presented their projects, participated in the case competition and attended networking events. The WMU team developed a management dashboard with an expert system component that included business, global and sustainability intelligence subsystems as part of the computer information systems capstone course.

“The project that we brought to the competition had vastly more finesse and sophistication than those of other teams, which makes me really proud to be a student of WMU,” says Charles Blaine.

The team also responded to a case study that asked students to make recommendations to an investment firm about loaning \$750,000 to a daycare that wanted to expand to a fourth location.

“Included in the case were several ‘mines’ as they called them ... laptops had been stolen; they didn't have reliable Internet; and they were experiencing high turnover of employees,” says student Michelle Swadling. “We gave recommendations for improving the business as well as the financial OK to invest in the daycare.”

According to **Dr. Andrew Targowski**, faculty advisor for the group, the students used their time effectively, testing the dashboard repeatedly and practicing their presentation multiple times.

“We spent a lot of time perfecting the project,” says student Samuel Fox. “There was a lot of time discussing how something should work, look and behave, which made the final result that much more rewarding. The project has a piece of everyone in it.”

Members of the WMU team

- **Charles Blaine**, a computer information systems major from Richland, Mich.
- **Samuel Fox**, a computer information systems major from Okemos, Mich.
- **Joseph Hawkins**, a computer information systems major from Jackson, Mich.
- **Eric Potts**, an integrated supply management major from Dewitt, Mich.
- **Michelle Swadling**, an electronic business design major from Onondaga, Mich.

In addition to the WMU and Purdue, teams represented Ball State University, University of Toledo and Ohio University.

PITCH Competitors Make Their Case

Classrooms humming with energy, new business ideas, creativity—and that special brand of passion that only a prospective entrepreneur can bring to a burgeoning venture.

That was the scene this spring in the Haworth College of Business as the college hosted PITCH: A WMU Business Pitch Competition, a University-wide event, organized by the Department of Management and sponsored by Educational Community Credit Union, where students from any discipline could test their ideas, presentation skills and their effectiveness in making a case for funding their businesses.

The competition drew 32 teams, the maximum capacity for the event for this first year, and students were judged in progressive rounds by faculty, administrators and business community members, including many local business owners.

The field was narrowed to eight finalists for the final round of competition where Nate Norman, a sales and business marketing major from Portage, Mich., captured the top prize of \$1,200 with his business idea for Fish Ninja Labs, a business providing aquarium solutions for the everyday aquarium enthusiast through automated monitoring and maintenance.

Second place and a prize of \$700 went to Erik Chmelar, an MBA student from Midland, Mich., who presented TPimPAWster, a spinning cylindrical cat toy that keeps cats occupied and out of mischief. Chmelar also captured the \$200 prize for most entertaining pitch, which was awarded by audience votes.

Third place and a prize of \$400 went to a team of graduate students comprised of John Fry, a graduate student in educational leadership from Boyne City, Mich.; Ashley Agler, a graduate student in earth science from Watervliet, Mich.; Pawel Majkowski, an MBA student from Ann Arbor, Mich.; and Ryan McNally, an MBA student from Portage, Mich., for Tech Guardian, an app that disables a teen driver’s ability to text or make non-emergency calls while driving.

Encouraged to use the prize money as an investment in their businesses, the students are doing just that and are looking for opportunities to refine their ideas and gain more feedback and investors. All three winning teams have competed or plan to compete in Start Garden, a funding initiative for startups, based in Grand Rapids.

The growing emphasis on entrepreneurship in the Haworth College of Business is a vital part of the business curriculum. “There is an entrepreneurial fire that the students at WMU have,” says Dr. Robert Landeros, chair of the Department of Management and acting director of the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. “Our students are creative, innovative and strategic. With more than 40 percent of Haworth College of Business students expressing a plan to own a business during their careers, the Department of Management has expanded its course offerings in entrepreneurship. Dr. John Mueller and Dr. Laurel Ofstein joined the faculty in 2012 to further entrepreneurship education, spearheading new courses and initiatives. Dr. Mueller’s work on PITCH is a great example of building further opportunities for our students to pursue their entrepreneurial ideas.”

Reflections on the competition

- ***“It was an honor to win first prize at PITCH. It was a great eye opener to the incredible network and support system within southwest Michigan for entrepreneurs. The panel of judges that WMU assembled was outstanding, and I was honored to network with all of them. Dr. Mueller did a great job organizing the event. I would expect to see it grow even larger in the future.” – Nate Norman, sales and business marketing major, first place winner***
- ***“ECCU is pleased to have been a part of PITCH by sponsoring the event. As a judge, I was impressed with both the quality of the presentations and the enthusiasm that the students had for their unique business ideas. I was rooting for them all.” – Christine Camp, vice president for marketing, ECCU, and competition judge***
- ***“The energy the Pitch Competition created for entrepreneurship was palpable, and that entrepreneurial energy has continued beyond the competition. It is obvious that many students are not just thinking about being entrepreneurs but are already traveling the entrepreneurial path—it was very exciting to see.” – Dr. Kay Palan, dean, Haworth College of Business***
- ***“To have judges from across campus during the first round was something special. It showed the campus-wide support for the competition and entrepreneurial activity at Western. Then, to have judges on the second day come from the local business community shows the support in southwest Michigan. We look forward to getting more students around WMU excited about and involved with the event going forward.” – Dr. John Mueller, assistant professor of management and faculty organizer of PITCH***
- ***“The pitch competition was well-organized and effective at bringing together the WMU entrepreneurial community. What I enjoyed most about PITCH was***

talking to other students about their business ideas, interests and goals.” – Erik Chmelar, MBA student, second place and most entertaining pitch winner

- *"The WMU PITCH competition gave our team the validation and motivation to pursue our ideas. We are currently applying to Start Garden in Grand Rapids and constantly scouting out investment opportunities across the United States. It was an honor to present our idea before our peers and an excellent panel of judges." – Pawel Majkowski, MBA student, third place winner*
- *"The pitch competition was a great venue in which some of the best WMU students could present their innovative new product ideas. As a judge, it became apparent very quickly that having a good idea was not enough; a successful entrepreneur needs to be able to sell the idea in order for it to be a success. The fact that the winner was a sales and business marketing major seems to validate this insight." – Dr. Steve Newell, professor of marketing, faculty judge*
- *"PITCH was a wonderful opportunity for WMU students to show off their creative problem solving skills along with understanding the future financial needs of the project. I was expecting great presentations, but was blown away at the level at which these students prepared and performed. John Mueller has clearly found an event to build on into the future." – Ryan Jankovic, vice president of strategic development, Tekna*
- *"The WMU Pitch competition was great! It allowed us to gain invaluable feedback from the judges on our idea. The competition helped us to fully round out our business plan as we move forward and approach venture capitalists. If anyone has a business idea, I would highly recommend participating in the event." – John Fry, graduate student, educational leadership, third place winner*
- *"The pitch competition gave our team the ability to prepare for future endeavors. Working together gave us a competitive edge to place as second runner up. We plan to use our prize funding to continue to grow our budding tech company. Our group has a strong desire to become a Kalamazoo-staple company one day by continuing to run with our ideas until we find the right venture capitalist/angel investor to back up these goals. Kalamazoo is our home; we want to make it our world headquarters someday." Ashley Agler, graduate student in earth science, third place winner*
- *"I am so proud of our students who participated in the PITCH competition. Many of them had never had to pitch an idea to a potential investor before, so it forced them to think about how to succinctly represent the ideas they are passionate about in a way others could quickly understand. It was great to see so many faculty judges from across the University participating in the event. I think it shows the level of interest in entrepreneurship not only within the business college but across campus. We hope to continue to build on this*

interest with additional collaborations in the years to come.” – Dr. Laurel Ofstein, assistant professor of management, faculty judge

- *"The PITCH event was a wonderful experience! It was inspiring to hear the students' ideas and to see them go through this process. This kind of experience is essential for the development of the students and their ideas. I look forward to many more PITCH events in the future." – Keith Hall, director, Keith Hall Summer Drum Intensive; adjunct jazz drum set instructor for WMU, faculty judge*

Get a feel for WMU's first business pitch competition by viewing the pitches of the finalists at wmich.edu/management/pitch.

Business student wins one of six Adcraft scholarships

by Mark Schwerin

April 29, 2013 | WMU News



Rokicki

KALAMAZOO—A Western Michigan University advertising student is one of just six students statewide to win 2013 scholarships from the Adcraft Club of Detroit's Adcraft Foundation.

Sara Rokicki of Gurnee, Ill., a senior majoring in advertising and promotion, received a \$2,000 scholarship.

She and fellow winners, along with their faculty advisors, will be honored at a luncheon reception Tuesday, April 30, in Birmingham, Mich. She will also be featured in *The Adcrafter* magazine, along with her fellow honorees.

Rokicki has distinguished herself in a number of ways as a WMU student. She served as creative director for the American Advertising Federation's National Student Advertising Competition case challenge, in which WMU advertising and promotion students compete annually. She is an active member of WMU's Ad Club and the Haworth College of Business Student Leadership Advisory Board. She is a member of Delta Sigma Pi, a professional business fraternity and served as vice president of marketing in 2012. She is a graphic design intern in WMU's Office of University Relations. Rokicki will intern with Burson-Marsteller in Chicago this summer and will graduate in December.

"I feel so privileged and honored to have received this scholarship," says Rokicki. "I was nominated by my advertising and promotion professor, **Dr. JoAnn Atkin**. The nomination from her for this scholarship means so much."

'A natural choice'

The Adcraft Club of Detroit is the nation's largest advertising club. Its foundation annually awards cash grants to advertising and marketing students from Michigan universities. Students are nominated by faculty members and must submit an application and transcript, along with an essay demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of the advertising business.

"Sara was a natural choice for this scholarship," Atkin says. "Sara is one of our best students. She is high-achieving, both academically and in her leadership roles in student organizations. Her skills are outstanding. Her attitude is always positive and can-do. She never shies away from a challenge. And she is always looking for ways to improve, both personally and professionally."

Dan Brown, B.B.A.'11—Social Networking Pays Off



Dan Brown, B.B.A.'11, knew that landing his first post-college job, as a digital trafficker at McCann Erickson, formerly Goodby, Silverstein and Partners, would take a modern strategy, and he urges current students and graduates to embrace the changing job search process and to treat each individual they meet as a valuable part of their growing network.

While studying advertising and promotion, Brown was a member of WMU Ad Club, attending events and making connections, including with advertising professional and bronco alum, Ryan Ghiardi, B.B.A.'99, who had made a presentation at the club. After having a conversation at the event, they became connections on the social networking site LinkedIn. Several months later, diploma in hand and searching for his future career, Brown began looking on LinkedIn, checking for new job postings daily.

"While reading my news feed, I saw that the same advertising professional posted an opportunity," says Brown. "I immediately wrote him a note expressing my interest in the position."

That note turned into an interview and the interview turned into a full time position at the agency. Brown notes that it was the power of networking that helped him find and land the position. "School, work, social events—these are places that are key in gaining several connections that can later turn into employment opportunities," says Brown. "I have found LinkedIn to be even more valuable after starting my first job, gaining connections within the industry from internal co-workers to various vendors."

As the digital trafficker, Brown organizes inventories and delivers creative assets, specifically for General Motors, to a media contracting company. He works closely with internal account managers, producers and analysts, gathering necessary information for the advertising material. He is the last person to see the finished product and ensure that the information is correct and that all links are working properly before Chevrolet's national online advertising goes live.

Brown says that his capstone course at the college prepared him well for his current position. "The capstone class, integrated marketing communications campaigns, provided me with hands-on experience and assignments that are modeled after every day work at an advertising agency," he says. "This class helped me learn to explore all options to find more than one solution to the marketing goal."

Brown enjoys visiting his alma mater and the WMU Ad Club to provide students with insight into agency experience and digital campaigns. He believes it is his responsibility to give back to the college and club that helped him get to where he is today.

"I could not have done it without the support of the Haworth College of Business, the amazing professors and the alumni who supported me throughout my college experience," says Brown.

Interested in turning a "cold call" into a "warm call?" John Hill, higher education evangelist at LinkedIn outlined many of the techniques that Dan used to land his job during his presentation at the last IT Forum, hosted by the Haworth College of Business. [John Hill, WMU Presentation](#)

U.S. Magistrate Judge Visits Business Broncos

The legal environment course gives business students essential knowledge of the legal and



regulatory environment within the context of business. At the end of the semester, the class was visited by Magistrate Judge Charles E. Binder, a 1971 graduate of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Lee Honors College, to give the students current and relevant examples of the concepts and principles explored in class. Carrick Craig, deputy general counsel at WMU and legal environment instructor, says it is not only crucial to learn the key elements on the legal environment in class but also to hear real-

life examples from guest speakers, an element he tries to include every semester.

"Judge Binder was able to give students current and relevant examples of the concepts and principles studied in class," says Craig. "Such exposure increases and expands the students' knowledge base of business-related cases."

After giving students background on his education and experience in the legal system, Judge Binder provided students with business-related case studies with a focus on electronically stored material, a major factor in most legal cases within businesses today.

“Knowing about ESM and its implications is important because the world is becoming more and more digital,” says Craig. “Just as if you would shred a piece of paper to hide something— deleting ESM contents can be problematic in legal cases.”

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