



Western Michigan University
ScholarWorks at WMU

Haworth College of Business News

Haworth College of Business

5-2015

Haworth College of Business News (05/2015)

Haworth College of Business

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/business_news



Part of the Business Commons, and the Higher Education Commons

WMU ScholarWorks Citation

Haworth College of Business, "Haworth College of Business News (05/2015)" (2015). *Haworth College of Business News*. 42.

https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/business_news/42

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by the Haworth College of Business at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Haworth College of Business News by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.



Haworth College of Business News



The streak of winning teams representing WMU's sales programs continued this year when **Ted Kirk** of Walled Lake and **Steve Kobliska** of West Bloomfield captured third place out of 67 teams competing in a prestigious national sales competition; Kirk finished second overall. "Once again this year, we were able to show we are an elite national program," says Dr. Jim Eckert, associate professor of marketing.

[Read more about the competition and the team.](#)



TRAILBLAZERS

Brianna Amat, a food and consumer package goods marketing student, has been named Trailblazer of the Year. Trailblazers is the college's new recognition program honoring students who are leaders on campus and in the community.

[Meet the 2014-15 Trailblazers](#)



PROTECTING DATA

CPA Shane O'Donnell, B.B.A.'02, took his career from financial auditing to earning his CPA to improving cybersecurity for clients of The Mako Group where he is principal and chief audit executive.

[Meet Shane O'Donnell](#)



Student wins \$5,000 Whirlpool Award at Michigan's GreenLight Business Model Competition.

[READ MORE](#)



The WMU ISM program has teamed up with the regional APICS chapter to offer supply chain lunch workshops.

[READ MORE](#)



Make your mark on the new WMU Alumni Center by adding your own or a loved one's name to the building.

[READ MORE](#)

[WMICH.EDU/BUSINESS](#)
Faculty Research

[Calendar of Events](#)

[Previous Editions](#)




WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Editor: Cindy Wagner

cindy.wagner@wmich.edu

(269) 387-5928

Haworth College of Business
Western Michigan University

WMU sales students take third at national sales competition

BY MARK SCHWERIN

APRIL 22, 2015 | WMU NEWS



From left: Kirk, Eckert and Kobliska

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—A team of sales students from Western Michigan University has captured third place out of 67 teams competing in a prestigious national sales competition, with one WMU student finishing second overall.

This marks the eighth top-10 finish and the sixth top-five finish in the 11 years WMU students have competed in the National Collegiate Sales Competition. The annual competition is hosted by Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Georgia, and is widely regarded as the nation's largest and most competitive university sales competition.

Ted Kirk of Walled Lake, a senior graduating in May, was awarded \$1,500 for coming in second on the individual level out of 134 students. Fellow WMU senior **Steve Kobliska** of West Bloomfield, who also is graduating in May, finished in the top 25.

ABOUT THE COMPETITION

The event consists of a tournament where students compete to move on to the next round. Kobliska made it to the quarterfinals and finished as one of the top 24 students. Kirk moved all the way to the final four before finishing second. The students were coached by **Dr. James Eckert**, associate professor of marketing.

"The National Collegiate Sales Competition is a great way for the Sales and Business Marketing Program to go toe to toe with the other top university sales programs and see how we stack up," Eckert says. "Once again this year, we were able to show we are an elite national program."

Each round has a different scenario so the students must be highly prepared and adaptive to move successfully through the rounds. Judges are industry professionals and sales faculty.

PRACTICE AND MORE PRACTICE

Since mid-January, Kirk and Kobliska have been meeting twice a week with Eckert, oftentimes more, for practice, Eckert says. They also have put countless hours in on their own.

"Ted and Steve could not have represented what selling the WMU way is all about any better," Eckert says. "They were adaptive, relationship focused and smartly persistent. Throw in calm under fire and actually fun to be with and it was no surprise they did so well."

Shane O'Donnell, B.B.A.'02: Staying Ahead of the Bad Guys



For CPA Shane O'Donnell, B.B.A.'02, "staying ahead of the bad guys," is the primary focus for the team he leads as chief audit executive and principal of The Mako Group, an information security firm specializing in audits, risk assessment, network testing and regulatory compliance.

"With our company focused on managing risks related to cybersecurity and other areas, helping our clients stay secure is a challenge," says O'Donnell. "The environment changes on a minute-to-minute basis, and we need to be ready to help our clients at a moment's notice. Helping them and seeing them satisfied with our work is very rewarding and makes it all worth it."

Armed with a degree in finance, O'Donnell started his career at an automotive supplier in metro Detroit in 2002. "I worked for a CPA who took me aside one day and told me

that I should pursue my own CPA because I had the skills needed for a great future.”

And that is what he did. After passing the CPA exam, O’Donnell took a position in financial auditing with PricewaterhouseCoopers. While there, he was assigned some duties in the IT audit area, gaining experience as both a CPA and an IT security auditor. Four years later, he accepted a position at Ally Financial in its regulatory compliance department where he developed and tested key financial and IT controls.

Eighteen months after being promoted to manager of financial controls at Ally, “an opportunity presented itself at The Mako Group that I simply could not pass up,” says O’Donnell. Now he leads the audit and risk practice by managing the audit staff, developing methodologies to assist clients with their needs, and creating future business development opportunities. “I landed the position through a combination of my experience and networking opportunities,” says O’Donnell.

While working diligently to improve cybersecurity, he puts to use many of the skills he learned at the Haworth College of Business, noting that the faculty and coursework provide tools he uses every day.

“While he was one of the toughest, Dr. Christopher Korth [professor of finance] was my favorite professor. I still use materials from his class on a regular basis. Professor Korth also had a wealth of knowledge from his career and his board of directors experience that he could share in class. This knowledge has helped me greatly as I speak with boards and audit committees multiple times in a given week,” says O’Donnell. “Also, while it’s still something I work on improving, public speaking and concisely communicating a thought is something I do routinely. I took a great business communications class while in the college of business that taught me many of these skills.”

In addition to protecting corporate data, O’Donnell is a busy father of two small children and husband of Andrea (Borg) O’Donnell, B.A. ’03, whom he met in Waldo Library. “The government documents section of Waldo was my favorite place to study. It’s also where I met my wife.”