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Haworth College of Business News



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- Transportation Management
- Visual Communication Design

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- Transportation Management
- Visual Communication Design

Do you know a student applying to colleges? Share this video and our admissions flyer—help them discover what it means to be a Business Bronco.

Students interested in learning more about opportunities in the college of business can [schedule a customized visit](#) or contact Scott VanAvery atscott.d.vanavery@wmich.edu or (269) 387-5057 for information. Go Broncos!

SUCCESS WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS

For April Clobes, MBA'09 and newly appointed CEO of the MSU Federal Credit Union, dealing with ambiguity is essential to success, but "everyone now is so used to being able to look up how to do something, that we are losing the ability to think creatively to solve a problem."

MEET APRIL CLOBES





Two WMU teams of finance students were among 12 semifinalists at a national stock pitch competition.

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The importance of WMU's food marketing program to industry is spotlighted in a national magazine.

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Once again, the Sales Education Foundation has identified WMU as a leader among sales programs nationwide.

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Success Without Instructions



For April Clobes, MBA '09 and newly appointed CEO of the MSU Federal Credit Union, an important quality for success is solving problems without instructions.

“This is a challenge as the way we learn has changed. Today, you can watch a YouTube video on how to do just about anything. But, there often isn't a video on how to launch a new product, organize a community event or create a team,” says Clobes who took over as CEO of the East Lansing credit union this year. “Everyone now is so used to being able to look up how to do something, that we are losing the ability to think creatively to solve a problem.”

Clobes says her ability to address ambiguous business situations is an important skill in her new role as CEO of the world's largest university-based credit union, which has an asset size of over \$2.8 billion, 197,000 members worldwide and more than 642 employees.

Clobes joined the credit union as a marketing specialist in 1996 and by 2001 became manager of the e-commerce area, which she created. “The CEO didn't sit with me and tell me how to create the department or what the day-to-day tasks should be. I was given the direction of ‘create an e-commerce department and online presence for the credit union,’” says Clobes. “I was able to determine what that would look like. I made mistakes along the way, but I think that helped me to learn how to make better decisions going forward.”

Clobes, who already had a bachelor's and master's degree from Michigan State University, earned her WMU MBA in 2009. She was then promoted to an executive vice president responsible for the supervision and management of four divisional vice presidents. In November 2011, she became the chief operating officer responsible for more of the credit union's day-to-day operations. In March, she became the credit union's fifth CEO.

Clobes says her time at WMU exposed her to broad business disciplines and helped her develop skills for working with teams. “In business you are often working on cross-functional teams with people who have different backgrounds, areas of expertise and personalities. You need to be able to function well within a group to be successful.”



“When K.C. passed away (in a bike accident in 2011), I thought that the world just lost an incredible human being who had such passion for life, learning, teaching and his students,” says Clobes. “Future students wouldn’t have the opportunity that I had to learn from him.”

“I remember asking K.C. (O’Shaughnessy) to be removed from a group project because I didn’t feel the project would be successful due to certain group dynamics. I even promised to do extra work than what was required of the group,” adds Clobes. “Of course, he didn’t let me out of the group or the project,” an important step in Clobes’ developing approach to leading teams.

So what challenges do she and her team at the credit union face? Clobes says the continued low-interest-rate environment and the rising rates that are coming in the future will be a challenge to financial institutions and that the ever growing number of regulations and compliance requirements continues to challenge the industry. “Often, resources are spent for compliance instead of innovation for products and services.”

She adds that one of biggest challenges for business is human resources. “The workforce is changing, and we need to find new ways to recruit, engage and retain talent. We need to better prepare for more frequent turnover and to find ways to retain employees for succession planning.”

Preparing for challenges and changing needs requires creativity and a broad knowledge of many areas, Clobes advises students and professionals. “Explore, learn how the different disciplines intersect. Apply differences to creatively solve problems.”

Finance Students Pitch Stocks At International Competition



More than 1,500 finance students, faculty and executives converged on Detroit this spring for the ENGAGE 2015 International Investment Education Symposium. Among them, two teams of WMU students led by Dr. Matt Ross, assistant professor of finance, ready to participate in the stock pitch competition portion of the conference.

Renowned financial leaders shared their outlooks on the economy, stocks, venture capital, alternative investments and international markets. Featured CEOs, presidents, CIOs and economists from some of the most prominent firms in the industry shared their expertise as moderators and panel members to the conference as well as judges for the competitions.

“As WMU’s first showing at ENGAGE, we expected a great learning experience,” says Ross. “Both teams did this and more by using the competition to apply their years of finance education.”

The three-round stock pitch competition started with 27 schools entering video stock pitches that were judged by Mainstay Capital employees, who selected 12 semi-finalist teams to compete at the conference. Among the 12 were both WMU teams.

- WMU Team 1 pitched Ubiquiti Networks stocks and included William Balsamo, Lapeer, Michigan, and Adriano Augusto Deabreu, Chatham-Kent, Ontario, Canada.
- WMU Team 2 pitched Starbucks stock and included Jacob Adams, Davisburg, Michigan and Eric Reynolds, Delton, Michigan

For the semi-final round, teams presented to a panel of judges during the conference.

“The experience brought my education full circle,” says Deabreu. “WMU does a great job ensuring that its students learn the fundamentals of finance, and being able to apply them in a real life scenario during the competition was wonderful.”

Echoing the learning component of the competition, Ross adds that the teams harnessed resources within the college to prepare for the competition. “They really took the initiative to leverage the amazing resources of the new Greenleaf Trust Trading Room, WMU’s video recording studio, and faculty support to deliver top quality stock pitches. Go Broncos!”

Adams says his participation solidified important concepts from his WMU education. “There are two major things that have clicked for me since the symposium,” says Adams. “One, you must take your point and give it to your audience in the most effective way, and you can’t do that with a cookie cutter template. And two, I learned about the importance of fundamentals in analysis.”

The 12 schools (and their stock pitches) in the semifinal round were:

- Bowling Green State University – Chicago, Bridge, and Iron
- DePaul University – Celgene
- HEC Montreal – Canadian National Railway

- HEC Montreal – Magna International
- James Madison University – United Rentals
- Michigan State University – Patterson-UTI Energy, Inc.
- Roger Williams University – Intercontinental Exchange, Inc.
- Truman State University – Halliburton
- University of Toledo – UnitedHealth Group
- **Western Michigan University Team 1 – Ubiquiti Networks**
- **Western Michigan University Team 2 – Starbucks**
- Xavier University – Gilead Sciences

WMU sales program nationally recognized for excellence

BY ALYSSA GAPSKE

MAY 7, 2015 | WMU NEWS

KALAMAZOO—The Western Michigan University sales and business marketing program has once again been identified by the Sales Education Foundation as a top sales program among universities.

This is the ninth consecutive year that WMU's sales program has been recognized by the foundation for preparing students for careers in professional selling and helping elevate the sales profession. With 280 students and more than 1,500 alumni, the program is one of the largest in the country.

Consistent with the average reported by the Sales Education Foundation, more than 90 percent of WMU sales and business marketing graduates find full-time careers in their field within six months of graduation. The WMU sales program is regularly lauded for its achievements in a number of areas.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **Student competition successes**—Teams from WMU have placed in the top 10 at national sales competitions more than 17 times, and recently placed third at the 2015 National Collegiate Sales Competition with one student finishing second overall.
- **Harold Zeigler Interactive Sales Lab**—The program includes role-plays in the state-of-the-art Harold Zeigler Interactive Sales Lab.
- **Sales and Business Marketing Association**—The association is one of the largest and most active student organizations in the college with more than 125 members. The SBMA engages with industry by hosting an employer at each weekly meeting.
- **Study abroad**—Sales students are one of the largest groups at WMU to study abroad, gaining a global perspective on business.
- **National recognition**—The program is listed as No. 1 on the list of Top U.S. Sales Schools by study.com.

"We are very proud of the continued recognition of our sales and business marketing program being named one of the best in the country according to the Sales Education Foundation," says **Dr. Steve Newell**, professor of marketing and a member of the sales faculty. "Our excellent reputation is achieved through our most rigorous curriculum, excellent facilities, top faculty, and some of the best and highly motivated students in the country. We will continue to work hard to maintain our status as the best sales and marketing program in the country."

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