



Western Michigan University
ScholarWorks at WMU

Haworth College of Business News

Haworth College of Business

2-2018

Haworth College of Business News (02/2018)

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 (02/2018)" (2018). *Haworth College of Business News*. 84.

https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/business_news/84

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.



February 2018

HAWORTH COLLEGE OF BUSINESS



STUDENTS SELECTED FOR PRESTIGIOUS PROGRAM

Abrahan Garcia, of Holland, and **Alex Gutierrez-Spencer**, of Monroe, are two of only 50 recipients of this year's American Advertising Federation invitation to participate in the organization's Most Promising Multicultural Students Program. This is the third consecutive year that WMU students have been chosen to participate in the prestigious program.

[READ MORE](#)



WINNER'S CIRCLE

A 12-year veteran of PNC, **David Flickinger, B.B.A.'09, MBA'12**, received the bank's highest employee honor—the annual Performance Award. Flickinger currently serves as vice president and service strategy leader at the Kalamazoo location.

[READ MORE](#)



PROS AND CONS OF FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES

Facebook's global head of automotive strategy met with management students in **Dr. Doug Lepisto's** class to discuss the pros and cons of working in ambiguous environments that allow employees to set their own expectations and work at their own pace.

[READ MORE](#)



FINANCIAL REALITY

#Adulting isn't easy. So, finance faculty teamed up with Arbor Financial Credit Union to educate area high school students in an important adult skill—financial decision making. The interactive event was held in the college.

[READ MORE](#)



Time to celebrate
your good news!

CALL FOR CLASS NOTES

Share your accomplishments and news with your fellow alumni. Send us details about promotions, awards, honors, appointments, marriages, births, adoptions, and retirements, and your class note will be included in the 2018 Haworth College of Business magazine.

SUBMIT YOUR CLASS NOTE

- Interested in blogging about your experience and sharing it with other young alumni? Consider writing for Alumni Unscripted, a blog for recent alumni from the Haworth College of Business Young Alumni Advisory Board. [Contact the board and let them know!](#)
- [Previous Editions](#)



Editor: Cindy Wagner
cindy.wagner@wmich.edu
(269) 387-5928



WMICH.EDU/BUSINESS

National organization recognizes WMU advertising and promotion students

contact: Alyssa Benson
January 30, 2018 | WMU News

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Two Western Michigan University advertising and promotion students were selected by the American Advertising Federation to participate in the organization's Most Promising Multicultural Students Program for 2018. This is the third consecutive year that WMU students have been chosen to participate in the prestigious program.



Garcia, left, and Gutierrez-Spencer, right

Abrahan Garcia, of Holland, and **Alex Gutierrez-Spencer**, of Monroe, are two of only 50 recipients of the annual award for the nation's top multicultural college seniors with exceptional academic and professional achievements. The students will be honored at a ceremony during the program **Monday through Thursday, Feb. 12-15**, in New York City, and will have the chance to learn more about the advertising industry through networking, interviewing and industry immersion opportunities.

Garcia and Gutierrez-Spencer were both nominated for the program by **Dr. Karen Lancendorfer**, associate professor of marketing and director of the WMU advertising and promotion program.

"I am so proud that Alex and Abrahan received national recognition this year," says Lancendorfer. "What has allowed them to achieve success is their ability to understand multiple viewpoints and find innovative solutions and the best outcomes for any project."

Both students credit their business professors and the Haworth College of Business for preparing them for the program and future professional endeavors.

"WMU prepared me for this type of program through its helpful resources, such as the Zhang Career Center. These resources do an exceptional job at preparing students for the professional world," says Garcia. "The Most Promising Multicultural Students Program is designed to strengthen diversity and inclusion in advertising by connecting industry with the nation's top multicultural students and I know I'm prepared to stand out among my peers."

Gutierrez-Spencer agrees that the college has prepared him well to represent WMU at the program. "I am very grateful and excited to represent WMU as an American Advertising Federation Most Promising Multicultural Student," he says. "WMU has provided me with

countless opportunities to improve my professionalism as well as my personal skills. Representing WMU is something I will do not only as a part of this program, but also for the rest of my life."

American Advertising Federation

The American Advertising Federation, the nation's oldest national advertising trade association and the only association representing all facets of the advertising industry, is headquartered in Washington, D.C. The AAF's membership is comprised of nearly 100 blue-chip corporate members consisting of the nation's leading advertisers, advertising agencies and media companies; a national network of nearly 200 local federations, representing 40,000 advertising professionals, located in ad communities across the country; and more than 200 AAF college chapters, with more than 6,500 student members. The AAF operates a host of programs and initiatives including the Advertising Hall of Fame, the American Advertising Awards, the National Student Advertising Competition, the Mosaic Center on Multiculturalism and summer advertising camps for high school students in Chicago, New York City and Washington, D.C.

About WMU advertising and promotion program

The advertising and promotion major at WMU attracts creative, strategically minded students and provides them with an interactive education that ensures they will have the skills and knowledge necessary for success. Advertising and promotion faculty bring years of practical experience to the classroom and maintain close ties with industry through applied research and consulting. WMU students excel in national student advertising competitions, including the American Advertising Federation National Student Advertising Competition and EdVenture Partners National Case Study Competition where students regularly take top-10 national honors.

For more information about the program, visit wmich.edu/academics/undergraduate/advertising or contact Dr. Karen Lancendorfer at (269) 387-5996 or karen.lancendorfer@wmich.edu.

For more news, arts and events, visit wmich.edu/news.

PNC employee and WMU alum honored for exemplary performance

PNC's highest employee honor is the annual Performance Award. And this year, Bronco **David Flickinger, B.B.A.'09, MBA'12**, is standing in the winner's circle with his colleagues, being heralded for providing unparalleled customer service and satisfaction, maintaining a high-energy work ethic, demonstrating leadership and teamwork, contributing to company growth, and showing commitment to community.

Flickinger, who has been with PNC for 12 years, currently serves as vice president and service strategy leader at the Kalamazoo location.

His focus on both customer service and developing talent are two areas where he has made a major impact within the PNC organization. Spending several years as a consultant in the Care Center, he worked the phones to aid customers or led large teams of people who were working in that capacity. He progressed rapidly through the Care Center ranks, going from consultant to team leader to group leader to division leader in just five years.



In addition to his stellar customer and employee experience scores, Flickinger gets great results through his focus on talent infusion. He has developed a strong relationship with the college's Zhang Career Center, giving PNC a talent pipeline and internship framework that the organization's campus recruiting team is using as a model for other geographic locations and lines of business.

"We deeply value the relationship with David and his team," says Geralyn Heystek, director of the Zhang Career Center. "PNC is present at many of our events, connecting with potential talent for the organization and providing us with valuable feedback on how we can evolve our offerings to help better prepare students for roles at PNC. David and his team have a vision when it comes to developing talent, and I know that is just one of many reasons that he is being honored."

Flickinger also works to promote PNC in the Kalamazoo community at large.

When Flickinger moved from the front lines to the Care Center's strategy and project management team in 2015, he assessed the role against his own experiences and abilities, identified gaps that could hinder him from delivering for PNC and the customer, and got to work closing them by reading books and asking the experts. He took the initiative to create a tailored leadership program for the Care Center that helps leaders understand what motivates each person they lead every day and the paths employees have for professional aspirations. He quickly built

relationships with the decision analytics and research team to understand how to improve the customer experience and helped develop the test/control framework that now exists to understand business potential on a broader scale.

“I have been fortunate to have great leadership modeled to me every day at PNC, so it is easy to pick up the torch and pass it on,” says Flickinger. “My mentors at PNC are all deeply rooted in our organization’s values. With such great examples to look up to, it is easy to see why I was excited for leadership opportunities. I take our values personally and strive to live them each day.”

PNC Performance Award

Established in 1992, the PNC Performance Award is earned by approximately eight employees each year. There are just 219 recipients of the award, which is PNC’s most prestigious employee recognition. The company has grown from 10,000 employees to 52,000 during that time frame, making the award even more elite.

Finding confidence and success in ambiguous environments

You’re awake and prepared for the week ahead. But instead of getting ready for the day and rushing to work to be at your desk at 8:01 a.m., you have the flexibility to decide what your morning looks like. You also have this flexibility in the afternoon, evening and, well, anytime. You belong to an organization that allows you to set your own expectations and work at your own pace.

Many people are drawn to this type of culture found at tech companies such as Facebook. While it may appeal to someone on the outside looking in, is this type of ambiguous work environment right for everyone? And if you’re working in an organization with this type of culture, how do you find the best way to be successful when you have more questions than answers?

Dr. Doug Lepisto, assistant professor of management, is teaching his students to be successful within ambiguous environments with the assurance that they’ll be able to confidently and successfully fit into any organizational culture they land in, post-graduation and beyond.

“It’s important for students to learn that there is not always going to be a step-by-step guide on how to complete a project or assignment,” says Lepisto. “It’s a real skill to be able to move forward in new and uncertain situations. I want to give students insight into what that skill looks like, giving



Zaremba and Lepisto discuss organizational culture

them tools for adapting and identifying a situation where they may not have specific direction as to how to proceed.”

Lepisto recently brought an expert to his organizational behavior class to give students more insight into adapting to ambiguous environments. “I wanted my students to get tactical ideas and close the gaps between theories we learn in class and what they look like in practical application,” Lepisto says.

The expert, Thomais Zaremba, is the global head of automotive strategy for Facebook and was happy to share her insights into leadership, how to succeed when the path forward is uncertain, organizational cultures and professional success. Here are some of her tips for students approaching their first careers and those who may take on roles where the position is self-directed with little guidance.

On finding your career path

Prior to working at Facebook, Zaremba spent 19 years at Ford, a job that took her straight from graduate school to where she is today. At Ford, she worked in a variety of positions, often switching roles every 12 to 18 months, something she says was invigorating and helped her learn about her passions within the organization and how she was developing as a professional. “It matters a great deal what you’re doing now. Where you end up doesn’t matter as much as who you’re becoming. You’re developing your own autonomy. Make purposeful decisions with your life. You’re in control. It took me awhile to learn that.”

On adapting to a company’s culture in a new role

“Seek to understand before seeking to be understood,” Zaremba says. Often, people want to rush into a company and prove themselves, but this may lead to missing out on cues that can help pinpoint a company’s culture, which can lead to better relationships and success in the organization. “Study the organization and its dynamics,” she says. “Purposefully find the areas where you can add value. Invest this time in yourself to study and come to the job in a much more informed way.” This approach helped Zaremba learn about Ford’s culture and leadership and helped her accomplish tasks and projects more efficiently.

On confidently finding your purpose in an ambiguous culture

When Zaremba left Ford to take on her current role at Facebook, she quickly learned that her job was to figure out her job, which meant she was in charge of setting her tasks and expectations with little outside influence. Zaremba’s advice to someone in a similar position? “You have to figure it out and just do it,” she says. “Never stop posing questions to yourself. Always ask yourself, ‘and then what, and then what?’ Be entrepreneurial in your thinking.”

On learning to take risks

At work, people are often afraid of making mistakes or being wrong. Zaremba reminded students that it’s okay to be wrong, as long as you can learn from it. “Take your objectives, your data and

find out which direction you want to drive a project—then go,” she says. “You will receive feedback, test again, learn and iterate. This is important to learn coming out of school and into the workforce. You learn how to be wrong and then move on.” And the key to finding the confidence to be wrong once in awhile? “Resilience.” Zaremba emphasized that it’s okay to take risks, and when you get stuck on a project, continue to push forward even if that might be scary in the moment.

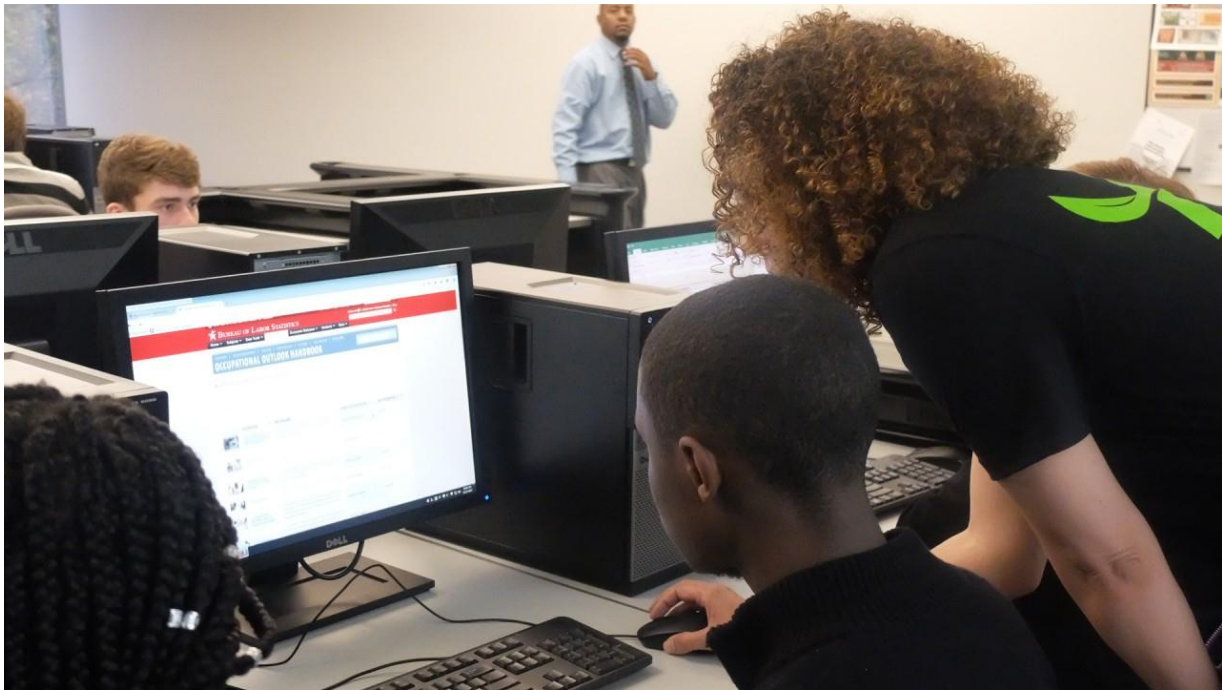
On uncertainty leading into confidence

Zaremba reminded students that it’s normal to feel apprehensive and nervous in new situations and during projects with a lack of direction but that the feeling doesn’t last forever. “Everyone feels that uncertainty and lack of confidence,” she says. “But then that switch flips, and your leadership style reveals itself. You realize you’re no longer trying to prove yourself, instead you are moving forward with confidence.”

Get comfortable being uncomfortable

During discussion and after class had concluded, students were buzzing with confidence that they too could adapt and find their success in any culture. And Lepisto was equally excited about Zaremba’s advice. “She really drove home the idea that people grow into the identity of being leaders,” he says. “How that growth takes place, how you become strong in your identity and the opportunities and responsibilities that come with being that person are all important things that students will learn about themselves throughout their careers if they can get comfortable being uncomfortable.”

WMU hosts high school students at financial reality fair







#Adulting isn't easy. That's a lesson that nearly 100 juniors and seniors from Kalamazoo Public Schools and Schoolcraft Community Schools learned as they attended a financial reality fair at WMU.

WMU's Department of Finance and Commercial Law and Arbor Financial Credit Union partnered to educate the students from Kalamazoo Central High School, Loy Norrix High School and Schoolcraft High School in financial decision making at the interactive event.

Students started with a session in career planning, where they identified their career goals and likely career paths. Then, Dr. Matthew Ross, assistant professor of finance, facilitated a session using the Cash & Careers tool. Cash & Careers is a Microsoft Excel model designed to help students forecast the long-term financial impact of investment in their own human capital.

"There are many misconceptions around the costs of college and the overall financial outcome it will have on a person's lifestyle over time," says Ross. "The Cash & Careers program helps students better understand the benefit investing in college can have on their financial and professional futures."

After the initial sessions, students visited 11 booths where they engaged with finance professionals from Arbor Financial Credit Union to make decisions on housing, transportation, clothes, furniture, food and other expenses, keeping in mind their annual income and other

budgetary items such as student loan payments and savings. The end of the fair included a debriefing session with a financial counselor on each student's budget success and experience at the event overall.

"I really enjoyed the collaboration between WMU and Arbor Financial Credit Union to bring such a wonderful, hands-on, learning experience to area high school students," says Judy Swafford, community relations manager at Arbor. "You could see a lot of 'ah ha' moments while the students were at the reality fair, making choices based on needs versus wants in order to stay within their means."

The event was a success according to teachers who participated alongside their pupils. "Students learned a lot about careers, budgeting, expenses and choices for discretionary income and how to plan for the amount of money their chosen career will provide," says Lori Pelton, a teacher at Schoolcraft High School. "It is nice to have an experiential learning opportunity with professionals to guide our students, and our students enjoyed seeing WMU's Haworth College of Business and getting to interact with WMU students and faculty."

Beth Soisson, a teacher at Loy Norrix High School agrees. "Managing your own money is often a skill that does not get much attention in K-12 education. WMU hosted this event, through which they provided exposure for students to this necessary skill as well as an added benefit of exposure to a college campus. This exposure to college is necessary to nurture our college-going culture at Kalamazoo Public Schools. We appreciate Arbor Financial Credit Union's commitment to this event and all who were involved at WMU."

The event is envisioned as an annual offering, which will impact new students each year. "We are excited to bring students the resources they need to make these important decisions," says Ross. "The fair is designed to guide students through different phases of life and the choices that will impact their financial futures."

Michelle Claybaugh, a teacher at Kalamazoo Central High School, looks forward to next year's event and appreciated that the sessions were "interactive and real." And the proof of its success is in the student reactions. Claybaugh shares a comment from one of her students: "I thought this was going to be a boring field trip, but it was really fun. It was the most valuable field trip I have had."