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March 2018

HAWORTH COLLEGE OF BUSINESS



[SALES LAB NAMING GIFT](#)

Alumnus **Robert Kaiser**, owner and chief executive officer of Gallagher-Kaiser Corporation, has given a generous **naming gift** to fund the renovation and expansion of the sales lab in the Haworth College of Business.

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[BECOMING AGILE](#)

When alumna **Amanda Kurth** realized that being a functional expert was not enough to be successful, she came to the Haworth College of Business to complete her MBA. She talks about the importance of continuing education, agility and keeping an open mind.

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[MINDFULNESS IN BUSINESS](#)

Angela Marturano, B.B.A.'06, discusses mindfulness in business on Alumni Unscripted, a blog brought to you by the Haworth College of Business Young Alumni Advisory Board.

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[SALES STUDENTS WIN GOLD](#)

A team of sales and business marketing students placed **first overall** at the University of Toledo Invitational Sales Competition, with one student placing first in individual standings and another placing second.

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WMICH.EDU/BUSINESS

Business college receives naming gift for sales, negotiation and leadership lab

contact: Stacey Markin

March 13, 2018 | WMU News

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Western Michigan University's Haworth College of Business has received a major naming gift from alumnus **Robert Kaiser**, owner and chief executive officer of Gallagher-Kaiser Corporation, based in Troy. The gift funds the renovation and expansion of the college's sales lab facility.

The **Robert S. Kaiser Sales, Negotiation and Leadership Lab** will serve the growing number of students in the sales and business marketing major. At the program's inception, there were 49 majors. Now, 18 years later, enrollment has topped 320 students, necessitating a lab expansion to accommodate the major's growth.

The gift will upgrade the current lab to a state-of-the-art space. Improvements will include:

- Doubling the square footage.
- Renovating existing meeting spaces and role-playing facilities and adding two role-play rooms and a board room.



Kaiser

- Creating a new façade.
- Replacing all furnishings.
- Implementing new technology.
 - A cloud-based video learning system, accessible from anywhere, worldwide.
 - Enhanced ability to pinpoint areas for student improvement with detailed notes embedded in videos of role-plays.
 - Opportunity for greater collaboration via new software.
 - Student accounts with archival footage of role-plays.
 - Ability for students to share footage with prospective hiring managers.

"Over the years, I have been fortunate to be in a position to give back to many organizations and to make contributions that result in impactful change," says Kaiser. "Perhaps one of the greatest opportunities is the chance to give back to where it all started. It's an honor to help advance the education of my fellow Broncos—the next generation of business leaders."

The new lab is transformational for sales and business marketing students. In addition, the facility will now be an ideal setting for seminars and possibly a regional sales competition.

"The Robert S. Kaiser Sales, Negotiation and Leadership Lab with its state-of-the-art technology, along with instruction from our excellent faculty, provides students with a powerful educational experience that will bring even more of the best companies to WMU's Haworth College of Business to recruit our graduates," says **Dr. Steve Newell**, professor of marketing. "This renovation and expansion also helps to secure our reputation as the best sales program in the country."

The lab is an invaluable tool for delivering the renowned experiential curriculum of the sales and business marketing program, which has been recognized by the Sales Education Foundation as one of the premier programs in the country and is ranked No. 1 in the nation by [Study.com](https://www.study.com).

"Thanks to the vision and generosity of Robert Kaiser, our students are able to hone their talents in a laboratory facility designed to help them excel," says **Dr. Satish Deshpande**, dean of the Haworth College of Business. "We look forward to seeing our program flourish with the Robert S. Kaiser Sales, Negotiation and Leadership Lab as a vital part of the sales and business marketing program."

Kaiser

Robert Kaiser is the owner and CEO of Gallagher-Kaiser Corporation, the world's premiere automotive paint shop supplier. The company maintains multiple manufacturing facilities in Detroit, with a corporate headquarters in Troy.

After graduating from WMU with a degree in industrial marketing in 1978, Kaiser went on to work in the family business. In 1984, he began competitive offshore powerboat racing and became a national and world champion. After 14 years on the world circuit, he retired from the sport and was inducted into the hall of fame.

Under Kaiser's leadership, Gallagher-Kaiser has become a world leader in engineering, procurement and construction. The company further expanded its capabilities when Kaiser purchased Universal Piping Industries in 2010. Today, Gallagher-Kaiser builds General Motors' most technologically advanced paint shops around the world. The company has won four consecutive General Motors Supplier of the Year Awards.

In addition to his success in expanding his companies, Kaiser's business interests have extended beyond the automotive industry. With extensive real estate holdings of top properties throughout North America, Kaiser has proven to be a dynamic force in the world of business.

WMU Sales and business marketing program

With a 100 percent post-graduation success rate, the sales program is more in demand than ever. Accomplishments include:

- Russ Berrie National Sales Challenge—Students have finished first or second three times in the last five years.
- National Collegiate Sales Competition: WMU has finished in the top 10 nine of the last 12 years, including seven top-five finishes. WMU has the highest percentage of top-10 finishes of any of the 70-plus universities who have competed during the same time frame.
- University of Toledo Invitational Sales Competition—WMU placed first as a university. Individually, WMU students placed first in the first-year and sophomore division and second in the junior division in 2018.
- International Collegiate Sales Competition, Sales Management Case Division—WMU students took fifth overall in 2016, the University's first year of competing in this event.
- State Farm Sales and Marketing Competition—In 2012 and 2013, WMU had the top individual student and finished second overall as a university. In 2014, WMU was the university champion. In 2015 and 2016, WMU students took third in marketing presentation and second in sales. To date, students have won more than \$35,000 in scholarships at this competition.

Learn more about WMU's sales and business marketing program at wmich.edu/marketing/academics/sbm.

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

Amanda Kurth on Finding Success through Agility and Humility

Name: Amanda Kurth

Class Year: MBA'12

Employer: Heraeus Medical Components

Title: Vice President, Global Procurement

Years in this position: 1.5



Getting started

I entered the workforce as a procurement intern at an automotive manufacturer. Though it was just before the recession, the timing proved to be advantageous for me as I quickly gained valuable experience in a fast-paced, lean environment. With an undergraduate degree in international trade and foreign languages, work with multinational companies was a natural fit. A keen interest in strategic procurement and manufacturing was unexpected but led me to a variety of progressive roles in procurement in the automotive and consumer products industries. Intense drive and learning agility earned me recognition in each of these positions and ultimately led to my current leadership role in the medical industry.

Connecting academic concepts with practical application at the Haworth College of Business

I've learned that being a functional expert is not enough to be successful. I completed my MBA at Western Michigan University while working full-time and starting a family. The flexibility of the program, including online options and extended campuses, allowed me to accomplish this. The coursework created a bridge to connect academic concepts with practical application. Understanding how each business function operates and the strategies which drive them is critical. The MBA program focused on many of these areas.

I love case studies as a learning tool. In the global marketing course, we evaluated a case study every week, thus making it my favorite course. The case studies described how various companies handled marketing strategies or issues in different parts of the world. The global scope was appealing to me and it helped to reinforce a very important lesson—global business cannot take a “one-size fits all” approach. Business people must be savvy and humble enough to recognize what we don't know and when to cater to unique regional or local needs.

On becoming agile and tackling challenges

Agility is the biggest challenge in today's business world. There are many great ideas and lots of talk about dedication to innovation, but innovation goes beyond having a great idea. It requires the ability to execute and to adjust in an agile manner. In my experience, companies sometimes inhibit their ability to foster innovation by becoming too entrenched in internal politics and inefficient processes.

The hardest lesson I've had to learn as a business professional is to not take conflict personally. We become so invested in our work and goals that it becomes difficult to not interpret complex business challenges as personal criticism. When I started looking at conflict from my colleagues' points of view and stopped internalizing it, I became much better at fostering cross-functional relationships, which in turn made me more effective in accomplishing my goals.

On the joy of making an impact

The business unit I work for partners with medical device companies to deliver high-value solutions to improve patient lives worldwide. I can't think of anything more satisfying or exciting than knowing that my daily work contributes to making a positive impact on someone's life.

As a leader, I take pride in the impact I have on the growth and development of my team. Throughout my career journey, I promised myself that when I reached a leadership position, I would empower my team to make decisions. Allowing trustworthy professionals to make decisions drives a greater sense of ownership, better decision making and richer development opportunities. I find that it is essential for a good leader to be authentic, humble and to have an adaptable communication style in order to remain open-minded and approachable.

Over the past year and a half, I've had the privilege of leading my team through the beginning of a major transformation. While there is a long road ahead, I am proud of the progress we have made and the impact this process will have on the careers of my team members.

Business travel and keeping roots in Kalamazoo

My career has taken me to places I never imagined I would visit. While business travel often means an intensely packed schedule and a lot of personal time sacrificed, the opportunity to see the world and connect with other cultures is one that I am very grateful for and has been truly eye opening.

I am proud to call the Kalamazoo community home. Though my career has, and probably will continue to take me to other areas, Kalamazoo will always be special to me. It is the place where I built my family and my career. My childhood was spent elsewhere but this is where I grew up. My time at Western Michigan University was a big part of this.

WMU sales students win team gold and individual honors

contact: Stacey Markin

March 15, 2018 | WMU News

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—A team of two Western Michigan University sales and business marketing students placed first overall at the University of Toledo Invitational Sales Competition, with one student placing first in individual standings and the other placing second.

First-year student **Ryan Demas** of Naperville, Illinois, and junior **Stacy Zoeller**, of Portage, represented WMU. They were tasked with selling 3M VHB pressure sensitive adhesive tape to a washing machine manufacturer, role-playing for 15 minutes per round with groups representing different stakeholders. Demas earned a first-place finish in the first-year and sophomore division. Zoeller took second in the junior division and was a mere one-one hundredth of a point from first place.



Bruno, Zoeller and Demas

Students were coached by a student coach, senior **Marissa Bruno** of Park Ridge, Illinois, and **Dr. Kelley O'Reilly**, associate professor of marketing. The students met three times per week for two-hour sessions for five weeks, doing research, practicing role-plays and getting feedback on their presentation skills.

"The competition was an amazing experience," says Demas. "Since this is my first year at Western, I am still learning how to sell and how to enter a meeting. To get this sort of one-on-one sales coaching as a first-year student was incredible. I am glad I could repay my great coaches Dr. O'Reilly and Marissa by bringing home a trophy."

The competition is unique in that it focuses on beginning sales students or students interested in sales as a major. More than 35 universities participated in the competition.

"The competition helped me learn more about myself and my sales style," says Zoeller. "It was exciting to see our hard work pay off in the role-plays. With all of our practice, I felt prepared for whatever would happen during the competition."

O'Reilly is proud of the team and individual standings, an improvement over last year's performance.

“The competition was a chance to showcase the deep talent of the sales and business marketing program,” says O’Reilly. “That talent was highlighted in Ryan and Stacy, but also in the strong guidance that Marissa displayed as a student coach. Stacy and Ryan put so much effort into their preparation that after their first role-play in the competition, they said it felt ‘easy.’ This speaks to their level of talent and work ethic, since both are just beginning to explore sales. I could not be prouder. Watching Ryan, Stacy and Marissa shine under the pressure of competition, was an amazing experience.”

Student coach and seasoned competitor Bruno frames the experience as one of the best of her academic career. “Coaching this team has been one of the most rewarding experiences I have had at WMU,” she says. “Being able to be there every step of the way and watch Ryan and Stacy not only compete but win was incredible—the pride I felt in them was one of the best feelings in the world.”

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