November 2018 Newsletter

Haworth College of Business
Robert S. Kaiser Sales, Negotiation and Leadership Lab Grand Opening

The Haworth College of Business celebrated the grand opening of the Robert S. Kaiser Sales, Negotiation and Leadership Lab on Friday Nov. 2. A major gift by alumnus Robert Kaiser, B.B.A.’78, transformed the lab, giving students the opportunity to participate in realistic selling scenarios.

View the photo album.

ISM students take first place at national competition

Integrated supply management students placed first at this year's General Motors/Wayne State University Supply Chain Case Competition. This is the second year in a row that WMU students have placed at this international competition.

Read more about the competition win.
Finance students receive scholarships

Greenleaf Trust awarded 10 WMU finance and personal financial planning students scholarships. This is the 19th year of the scholarship program.

Read more about the Greenleaf Trust Scholarship.

Sales team takes first in regional competition

A team of WMU sales and business marketing students placed first overall at the Thomson Reuters Sales Competition. Three students also placed in the final round.

Read more about the competition win.

Food marketing students receive prestigious scholarships

Katherine Anderson, Erica Hejl and John Schneidenbach received $17,000 total in scholarships from the National Grocers Association Foundation.
Marketing students help local airport transform their website

Students in Dr. Scott Cowley's advanced digital marketing course worked with the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport to perform a digital makeover. The students analyzed the needs of the airport and provided suggestions to revamp the website.

Read more about the project.

Accountancy professor tapped for state board

Dr. Ola Smith, professor of accountancy and chair of the accountancy department, has been elected vice chair of the Michigan State Board of Accountancy. The board is responsible for the certification, licensure and regulation of certified public accountants and public accounting firms.

Read more about Dr. Smith.

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Newsletter Archive
ISM students win first place at international case competition

CONTACT: STACEY MARKIN
NOVEMBER 6, 2018 | WMU NEWS

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—A team of Western Michigan University integrated supply management students finished first place at the General Motors/Wayne State University Supply Chain Case Competition held Oct. 4 to 6 in Detroit. This is the second year in a row that a WMU team has placed in this annual event that draws students from more than 20 top supply chain management programs around the world.

This year’s competition focused on sourcing parts for seats in the 2019 Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra, which are set to launch at the end of 2018. The team was tasked with simulating components purchasing, shipping those components to an assembly plant and finally shipping the finished product to General Motors facilities to be installed in vehicles. Students were given five weeks to solve the given challenges and prepare their presentation. During the final round of the competition, the remaining groups were given four hours to solve a surprise problem—a cybersecurity breach.

"This is a highly competitive case competition," says Dr. Zac Williams, director of the Center for Integrated Supply Management and associate professor of marketing. "Our students did a wonderful job looking at a very real and complex supply chain situation, understanding the issues, conducting sound analysis and walking the executive judges through their solutions. The integrated supply management faculty are all very proud of the students' hard work and success."

THE WINNING TEAM
Integrated supply management students (left to right) John Hayward, Vernon Crump Jr., Jake Malone and Meriah Putnam

The team leveraged integrated supply management coursework and individual experience from internships in the supply chain field to create a solution that addressed real issues companies face today. They brought a creative solution to a multifaceted supply chain problem that General Motors encountered only a year ago, by recognizing each individual's strengths, and allowing each team member to flourish.

- **Junior Jake Malone** of Rockford used knowledge from his materials co-op at Eaton Corporation to analyze how steel tariffs are currently impacting General Motors.

- **Senior Meriah Putnam** of Lapeer used her experience as an outbound logistics intern for General Motors to make decisions on logistics for seat assembly and shipping.

- **Junior Vernon Crump Jr.** of Inkster focused on risk mitigation, bringing in real-world issues such as political instability, market threat from competitors and the risks associated with global sourcing.

- **Junior John Hayward** of Portage focused on purchasing from suppliers and creative logistics solutions.

“Our team worked very hard,” says Hayward. “We put in more than 100 hours of work on this case. Our resulting win showed the world that Western Michigan University students have grit. We want the chance to be great, we want to impact the world and we are willing to work hard to get there.”

**ABOUT THE ISM PROGRAM**

WMU's integrated supply management program has been recognized nationally by several organizations for its leadership in preparing students for careers in supply chain management. The program is consistently ranked on Gartner's list of Top 10 U.S. Supply Chain Undergraduate Programs. The integrated supply management curriculum emphasizes supply chain logistics, information technology, continuous improvement and engineering and requires students to acquire actual business experience through internships and classroom projects.

**COMPETITION PARTICIPANTS**

- Bowling Green State University
- Chang Gung University (Taiwan)
- Colorado State University
- Florida State University
- Fundação Getúlio Vargas (Brazil)
- Grand Valley State University
- Hangzhou Dianzi University (China)
- Indiana University, Indianapolis
- Kansas State University
- Miami University
- Michigan State University
- The Ohio State University
- Pennsylvania State University
- Tecnológico de Monterrey (Mexico)
- Texas Tech University
- University of North Dakota
- University of North Texas
- University of Northern Iowa
- University of Toledo
- University of Wyoming
- Wayne State University
- Weber State University
- Western Michigan University
- West Virginia University
Opening doors in finance

What started as a hope to increase diversity in the field of financial planning has turned into an opportunity for students at Western Michigan University to experience a scholarship that will make a difference in pursuing their education.

The Greenleaf Trust Scholarship at the Haworth College of Business awards ten scholarships annually to business students studying finance or personal financial planning. The scholarship is open to all students in both majors but is geared toward students in underrepresented ethnic groups.

Over the 19 years that Greenleaf has provided the opportunity, 65 students have received the scholarships.

“When William Johnston, owner and founder of Greenleaf Trust, started the company 20 years ago, he wanted to build a diverse workforce but was discouraged to find out there was a small amount of students from underrepresented minorities graduating from WMU with a finance degree,” says Kim Dudley, human resources specialist at Greenleaf Trust. “He decided he wanted to find a way to change that and has been able to do so through the Greenleaf Trust Scholarship.”

Students receiving the scholarship must maintain a 2.5 GPA, and as long as they continue to meet the criteria, they are able to receive the $12,400 scholarship every year until they graduate, or for up to four years.
“We are so grateful to Greenleaf Trust for continuing to offer this opportunity for our finance and personal financial planning students,” says Dr. Jim DeMello, chair of the WMU Department of Finance and Commercial Law. “We have so many talented finance and personal financial planning students, and have been able to attract even more diversity to the program by offering the scholarship.”

The scholarship also gives students the chance to focus on their academics and develop their skills in the field.

“Receiving the Greenleaf Trust scholarship has alleviated a big financial burden I was facing when I decided to transfer to WMU, says Gerardo Ramos, an accountancy and finance student. “Without having to worry about how I will pay for my education allowed me to focus solely on my academics. Being selected for this scholarship also helped build my confidence that I can succeed at WMU even though I am the first person in my family to attend college.”

Through the scholarship, Greenleaf Trust also provides opportunities for up to three students to intern at the company. Scholars primarily in their junior or senior year have the opportunity to intern for the company for a year, rotating through four divisions: personal trust/wealth management, operations, research and retirement planning. Interns regularly meet with a mentor in each division to get feedback and coaching.

“The Greenleaf Trust scholarship has paved a way for me to become more connected to my career,” says Deja Pryor, a WMU finance student. “Not only has the scholarship assisted me with my college financial needs, but it has also helped me to build my professional skills, practice networking and get hands-on experience in the finance industry. I fell in love with my major all over again being in this program. I am so grateful to be a part of the Greenleaf Trust scholar and intern family.”

**2018 Greenleaf Trust Scholarship Recipients**

- Christopher Bailey
- Natalya Henderson
- Daniel Lopez
- Natacha Pierre
- Deja Pryor
- Marisol Quiroz
KALAMAZOO, Mich.—An 11-member team of Western Michigan University students placed first overall in a regional Thomson Reuters Sales Competition in October, besting teams from Michigan State University, University of Toledo and Central Michigan University.

Three of the students were also included in the top five finalists in the individual round. Students Stacy Zoeller, Adam Lesniak and Gabe Pelak, finished first, fourth and fifth place, respectively, at the competition held Oct. 12 in Ann Arbor.

Participants were asked to assume the role of inside sale representatives for Thomson Reuters and follow-up with a potential client interested in WebBuilder CS, a custom website service. In progressive rounds of competition, students had to develop creative and compelling sales
messages, all delivered via phone or video, which ultimately led finalists to a call with the final decision maker.

"Our students were determined to perform well at the Thomson Reuters Sales Competition," says Mary Nielsen, instructor of marketing and team coach. "The students spent many hours preparing in the Robert S. Kaiser Sales, Negotiation and Leadership Lab and went into this competition as a true team. The Thomson Reuters' employees were spectacularly welcoming and helpful to all of the competitors. I am so proud of our students who earned the top spot through dedication, preparation and determination."

The competition allowed students to test their skills against top students from neighboring schools. Junior Cooper Frost helped recruit this year’s team, outlined a practice schedule and provided support for all team members as they prepared for the competition.

"I knew preparation would be the key to our success," says Frost. "WMU's win this year excites me. Our students are competitive against those from other top sales programs."

Zoeller, who placed first in the individual round of competition, notes, "One thing I took away from this competition is the value of expecting the unexpected. During the semi-final round, we were thrown a curve ball, speaking to someone different than we had planned. Due to running multiple sales scenarios for this competition, I was able to stay calm and focused."

Teamwork carried the day, according to Zoeller. "I valued that all our team members practiced together," she says. "We also had students of varying experience levels on the team, which allowed some students who are interested in sales but not as seasoned to participate alongside students who have competed before. We are all committed to each other's success, which is what makes the sales program special."

THE WMU TEAM

- Rachel Andres, junior, from White Lake
- Trevor Bageris, junior, from Milford
- Ryan Demas, sophomore, from Naperville, Illinois
- Cooper Frost, junior, from Charlotte
- Chad Hettinger, senior, from Vicksburg
- Nicholas Hammond, sophomore, from Woodhaven
Adam Lesniak, sophomore, from Waterford

Gabe Pelak, junior, from Mattawan

Camden McDonald, sophomore, from Hudsonville

Andrew Theehs, first-year, from Algonquin, Illinois

Stacy Zoeller, senior, from Portage

To learn more about the sales program, visit the Department of Marketing online.

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit WMU News online.

Three WMU students receive prestigious national scholarships

CONTACT: STACEY MARKIN
OCTOBER 19, 2018 | WMU NEWS
KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Three Western Michigan University students—more than at any other institution—have received prestigious scholarships from the National Grocers Association Foundation.

Overall, 17 students in the supermarket industry from across the country received $73,000 in scholarship funds from the association for the 2018-19 academic year.

“We are extremely proud of the students being recognized by the National Grocers Association for their contributions to the food industry and WMU,” says Bob Samples, instructor of marketing. “This year, of the 17 scholarships awarded nationally, only WMU had more than one student recognized. We are thrilled that so many of our students have received this outstanding honor.”

MEET THE RECIPIENTS
Katherine Anderson was awarded the $4,000 Asparagus Club Scholarship. Anderson is a senior studying food and consumer package goods marketing with a minor in business analytics. She serves on the marketing committee for the Food Marketing Association and is a member of the National Grocers Association student case team.

“I decided to pursue the food and consumer package goods marketing program after working at a grocery store throughout high school,” Anderson says. “I wanted to learn more about the industry. After joining the National Grocers Association case team, I learned that they offer scholarships and decided to apply. I was very excited to be chosen from such a large pool of qualified applicants, and I’m honored to represent WMU.”

Erika Hejl received the $3,000 FMS Legacy Scholarship. Hejl is a senior studying food and consumer package goods marketing and business analytics. She serves as the Food Marketing Association president, is involved with the Business Association of Mentors and is a member of Alpha Lambda Delta. She has accepted a full-time position with the J.M. Smucker Co. upon graduation.

“I find the food industry both exciting and challenging because it is constantly changing,” Hejl says. “Participating in the National Grocers Association case competition inspired me to apply for this scholarship. I know there were many qualified applicants, so I am very honored to have been chosen. I am thankful for this program.”

John Schneidenbach was awarded the $10,000 Thomas K. Zaucha Asparagus Club Scholarship. Schneidenbach is a senior studying food and consumer package goods marketing. He has served as an executive committee member for the Food Marketing Association and remains an active member. He worked at a local grocery store for more than six years, which inspired him to pursue a career in the food industry. This is the second year in a row that Schneidenbach has been awarded a scholarship from the National Grocers Association.

“I am honored to once again be representing Western Michigan University and the food and consumer package goods marketing program on a national scale,” he says. “I am proud to see my hard work pay off. Being a recipient means a lot to me. The scholarship will pay for the rest of my time at WMU, lifting a huge financial burden from my shoulders.”

Learn more about the food and consumer package goods marketing program.

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit WMU News online.
WMU marketing students help Kalamazoo airport with digital makeover

When Dr. Scott Cowley, assistant professor of marketing, was planning to fly out of the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport, he saw a problem—their website was outdated, loaded with unnecessary information, and he could see that it had been hacked. “The airport is the first experience some people have with Kalamazoo, and the website didn’t make a good first impression,” says Cowley. “I love this airport from the experience perspective—it’s a great airport, but the website made me think ‘you are going to hate this.’ ”

Cowley likes to involve students in his advanced digital marketing course with experiential projects that are meaningful and impactful, so he knew he had a golden opportunity on his hands. Helping the airport with its digital presence would not only benefit the organization and Western Michigan University students, but would also make a positive impact on the Kalamazoo community.
When Cowley contacted the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport, he found that a website revamp was already on their agenda, but the airport staff were unsure of where to start. “When we began to really focus on our website, all we knew was that it needed to be upgraded,” says Eric Bjorkman, assistant director of operations and maintenance. “It looked like a page out of the ‘90s. We also knew the organization of the tabs and the presentation of the pages needed to be addressed.” The airport administration staff was hoping the students would provide fresh ideas that could be used as they moved forward with the website redesign.

**STEP ONE: COLLECT AND ANALYZE DATA**

The first thing the Western Michigan University team recommended was for the airport to begin collecting website analytics data. Analytics is critical in digital marketing, and at the time, the airport had no way of knowing how their website was being used or by whom. With a free installation of Google Analytics, students were able to see who was visiting the website, where website traffic was coming from, and how visitors use the site. The class broke into teams to process the data and conduct additional market research like video user testing.

Some of the information uncovered through the students’ analyses was surprising to both Cowley and the airport staff. For example, students found that half of the website visitors are viewing the site on a mobile device, even though no mobile version was offered at the time, and that 90 percent of website users only look at two pages. These and other findings helped the teams solidify what was important to focus on for the redesign. Additionally, for the administration team, the need for an upgrade was validated when the class discovered the website was visited more frequently than anyone expected, even with the outdated appearance.

**STEP TWO: PACKAGE RECOMMENDATIONS**

At the end of the project, the teams visited the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport to present their recommendations. Bjorkman was pleased with the results of the project. “I think our expectations were exceeded when all was said and done. We were very impressed, not only with the professionalism of the class presentations, but also with the ideas that were brought to the table. This class really helped give us a legitimate direction to move forward with redesigning our website,” he says. “Without their help, this process would have lasted a lot longer, and we probably would not have been able to come up with the best end product.”

**MOVING FORWARD**
The airport staff referenced the ideas and research provided by students as they moved forward with the website reconstruction. The airport contracted a website developer to help with the redesign, and many of the students’ recommendations were incorporated into the new site.

The project not only benefited the airport and the Kalamazoo community, but the students found the experience to be valuable as well. “This project is an amazing example of the kinds of hands-on projects we do in the Haworth College of Business that are so beneficial to our education,” says Rachel Quesnelle, marketing student at Western Michigan University. “A book can tell you what goes into this kind of project, but nothing compares to actually doing the work.” The skills learned in this class carry through to any marketing career, and the experience provides the groundwork for any digital marketing projects the students may encounter in their careers.

Professor elected vice chair of state board

CONTACT: SAMANTHA HOOKER
OCTOBER 10, 2018 | WMU NEWS

Dr. Ola Smith
KALAMAZOO, Mich.—A Western Michigan University professor has been named to one of the highest oversight posts in the field of accountancy.

Dr. Ola Smith, chair, Department of Accountancy, has been elected vice chair of the Michigan State Board of Accountancy.

The board is responsible for the certification, licensure and regulation of certified public accountants and public accounting firms. The CPA is the most significant licensure for accountants in the United States.

"I volunteer for the State of Michigan Board of Accountancy because I want to support the accounting profession and protect the CPA brand," says Smith. "The CPA is critical to protecting the public by providing sound financial reporting and ethical financial activities. The efforts I engage in with the board also inform my teaching, research and interactions with students who will become the next generation of accountants."

Smith also serves as a member of the board for the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. AICPA is a national organization responsible for setting the ethical standards for the accountancy profession as well as developing and grading the Uniform CPA Examination.

Smith joined the faculty of WMU’s Department of Accountancy in 2000. Her research and teaching focus is on managerial accounting, performance measurement, and accounting for government and nonprofit organizations. Smith was named the department of accountancy chairperson in 2016. Previously, she worked for Ameritech Corp., Deloitte, Barrow, Aldridge & Co., and the Internal Revenue Service. Smith is also the 2013 recipient of a service award from the Diversity Section of the American Accounting Association.

She has previously been honored with the Platinum Award from the WMU Division of Multicultural Affairs and the WMU Research Development Award.

Smith holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Detroit, a master of business administration in finance from Mercy College of Detroit and a doctoral degree in accounting from Michigan State University. She also holds a CPA license.