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Haworth College of Business

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[Read about the class.](#)



Business students take the wheel

Sunseeker, the registered student organization behind Western Michigan University's solar-powered racecar, has enlisted a team of business students to manage fundraising, marketing and budgeting for future races and car development.

[Read about the organization.](#)



Collaboration with esports arena enhances student experience

Digital marketing and sports marketing students offered their expertise to WMU's Esports Arena.

[Read about the collaboration.](#)



Student group recognized by leading human resource association

WMU's chapter of the Society for Excellence in Human Resources has been recognized by the Society for Human Resource Management for providing superior growth and development opportunities to its members.

[Read about the award.](#)



Student group earns recognition for superior efforts

WMU's Gamma Rho chapter of Beta Alpha Psi has once again earned Superior Status chapter recognition by the national honor organization for financial information students and professionals.

[Read about the recognition.](#)



Climbing for clean water

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[Read about the climb.](#)

Business class completes 3,700+ hours of service in one semester

Contact: [Erin Flynn](#)

July 9, 2019



Sam McGrath volunteered at Read and Write Kalamazoo. [Read her story.](#)

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

Students in **Dr. Timothy Palmer's** business ethics and sustainability class at Western Michigan University are answering that question by learning the social responsibility that comes with being a business leader.

"Most people have this image of business as being all about making a lot of money. That's 1960s business talk," says Palmer, a professor of strategic management and director of Haworth College of Business's [Center for Sustainable Business Practices](#). "My view is business is the most important institution on the planet. How do you use that institution to make society stronger and ensure the business makes a profit at the same time?"

The answer—for students in Palmer's class—is through service.



Lauren Bliss did social media marketing for Confections with Convictions. [Read her story.](#)

"It's really important to get students out into the community, to get them out of the business school," Palmer says.

Since becoming a requirement for upper level business students, ethics and sustainable business has grown to a mega-class of sorts. In **spring 2019** there were nearly 250 students enrolled, each tasked with completing 15 hours of community service in addition to their course work. They're paired with one of several community partners in southwest Michigan, like Cheff Therapeutic Riding Center, Communities in Schools and the YMCA.

"The benefit of a large class is the scale," says Palmer. "The call for experiential-based learning is growing, and if you only do it in smaller sections, you're going to leave out a lot of opportunity—especially at bigger schools."

Shawn Tenney, director of [service learning](#), says the volume of this class breaks the mold of traditional service learning [courses](#), and other universities are taking notice.



Nora Guensche had an impactful experience with Senior Services. [Read her story.](#)

"The value is how many students we can reach; how much bigger the impact is on the community."

The class also challenges students to take what they're learning from their community partners and apply it to their fields of study.

"This is a business class. When they're done with their 15 hours, students have to submit a reflection paper to me explaining something new that they learned relating to their

profession," Palmer says. "What did they learn about leadership or teamwork or communication? I want them to tie it back to their career."



Dylan Coleman helped a refugee family navigate life in Kalamazoo. [Read his story.](#)

In some cases, the experience can even be a gateway to a career.

"I have students who've gotten job offers from our community partners because they've done such a good job," Palmer says.

Both Palmer and Tenney hope to eventually compile the successes of this service-learning "mega class" and present the findings to colleagues in higher education looking to expand the reach of their own programs.

"This is something that definitely sets WMU business graduates apart from other students," says Palmer.

Business students take the wheel



Sunseeker, the registered student organization behind Western Michigan University's solar powered racecar, began in 1990. As the RSO races toward its 30th anniversary, it continues to evolve. Recognizing the need for a business team to handle the responsibilities of fundraising, marketing and budgeting for future races and car development, Sunseeker became a co-engineering and co-business RSO, with Dr. Melissa Intindola, assistant professor of management, serving as business advisor.

The business sub-team team consists of seven students who work closely with more than 30 mechanical, electrical, aerospace and computer engineering students who focus on engineering and operations. The RSO needs to operate like a small non-profit business in order for it to be successful and this is where the Haworth College of Business students shine.

Shifting into gear



“Business students are getting firsthand experience in running a small, entrepreneurial organization,” explains Intindola. “They are practicing marketing, sales, finance and management – essentially every business function along with soft skills like critical thinking, teamwork and communication.”

Junior Abby Macchiarolo serves as the director of business for the Sunseeker solar car project, overseeing all business aspects of the team. For her, building the business team from the ground up has been an exciting challenge. “I’ve learned how to work with others in ways I never had before,” says Macchiarolo. “Working in this kind of team environment necessitates a lot of cooperation, but we all have the same goal and that is to learn about new sustainable technology while immersing ourselves in real-world experiences.”

Having their day in the sun



WMU's solar car has raced in every American Solar Challenge since the team's formation. The ASC is a multi-day, cross-country race of more than 1,200 miles. The route varies each year and is designed to provide teams with an opportunity to demonstrate their solar cars' real-world driving conditions while testing the reliability of onboard systems.

Sunseeker has also participated in nearly every Formula Sun Grand Prix since the race began in 2000. This year, the race was held on the Formula 1 racetrack at the Circuit of Americas in Austin, Texas. The team came away with an impressive fifth place finish.

This fall, the team will begin work on a brand new car, which will make its debut in 2020. The team hopes to tackle the pinnacle of solar racing with their new car by participating in the World Solar Challenge for the first time. The WSC is held in Australia and travels through nearly 1,900 miles of Australian outback.

Collaboration with esports arena creates a winning experience for business students, gamers and fans



Making its way into the spotlight, Western Michigan University's [Esports Arena](#) aims to support the popularity of computer gaming with a state-of-the-art-facility that serves both the University and the Kalamazoo gaming community. The facility is one of the only esports arenas in Michigan to provide space for practice, tournament play and professional production in one location. To maximize both participant and audience experience in this ambitious endeavor, WMU worked with Haworth College of Business students in the digital marketing and sports marketing programs to offer their expertise to the project. Digital marketing students used consumer analytics and primary research to better align the arena's website with its target audiences and business model, while advanced sports marketing students worked on researching the relationship between the fan experience and esports.

"I think our marketing students and particularly the sports marketing students are excited that WMU is investing in the esports space because it is such a dynamically growing industry," says John Weitzel, faculty specialist in marketing. Working with members of the esports team, Weitzel's class shared data and industry information to better understand the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead for the program. "In class, we spend time working on the fan experience, and I think this has helped our students gain a lot of real-world knowledge," says Weitzel. "They are pioneers in developing a robust participant

experience for both spectators and fans, which is very applicable in esports.” Weitzel looks forward to partnering further with the arena as it grows its connection with fans at future events.

Digital marketing students, guided by Dr. Scott Cowley, assistant professor of marketing, first met with Elizabeth Turner, a customer experience expert from VMLY&R, who helped prepare the students for their initial client meeting with representatives at the arena, to better understand the different stakeholder perspectives on the arena opportunities, challenges, and core objectives.

“Dr. Cowley did an awesome job of providing our class with hands-on experiences and exposing us to real digital marketing practices,” says Olivia Nikkel, a senior digital marketing student. “I had no idea what to expect. Being a non-gamer, I was worried I wasn’t going to understand the atmosphere, but that wasn’t the case at all. The esports team was so passionate about the arena and the impact it could have on the community. We played Overwatch and Rocket League, asked questions and understood the gaming environment better. Being one of the only universities in Michigan to have an esports arena is something that deserves to be marketed.”

Digital marketing students used competitor and market research, along with website analytics and usability interviews with gamers, to understand the behavior and values of different gaming markets to which the arena hopes to appeal. Groups made recommendations for improving the website experience to align with these marketing personas and the arena’s goals. In the end, students were able to present their strategies to the esports arena’s marketing and website specialists, including website mockups with search engine optimization recommendations.

The partnerships were a win for all involved. “It was a pleasure to collaborate with Dr. Cowley’s digital marketing class and have many of our WMU esports marketing strategies confirmed by the research and the recommendations made in the class presentations,” says Lisa Knutson, manager of marketing and creative development for Auxiliary Enterprises. “I enjoyed working with the students because I do not have many opportunities to do so in my current role. We can be proud of the quality students we are sending out into the workforce. I look forward to working with Dr. Cowley in the future—he is an example of the great faculty we have here at WMU.” According to Cowley, the goal has always been to have students do work with impact. “It’s ideal when we have a client like the esports arena that has been so generous with its time, but is also fun for students to work with and learn from. I look forward to the next stage when we hope to see insights we generated integrated into the arena’s digital experience.”

Tavian Napier, coordinator of the arena, agrees the facility has the potential to be a campus hub that fosters student learning and collaboration. “The world of esports is ever growing, and one of the most important aspects of being an esports organization is marketing. As we learn and grow, we want to streamline information for our students and get more of them involved in the many facets of esports. Students and spectators will have a one-of-a-kind experience that will impact them for years to come.”

Student group once again recognized by leading human resource association

Contact: Molly Goaley
July 1, 2019



KALAMAZOO, Mich.—The **Western Michigan University Chapter of the Society for Excellence in Human Resources** has once again been recognized by the Society for Human Resource Management for providing superior growth and development opportunities to its members.

The society has awarded a Superior Merit Award to [WMU's SHRM student chapter](#) in recognition of the valuable experiences it provides students interested in the human resource profession. This is the ninth time in 11 years the society has recognized WMU's chapter.

THE MERIT PROGRAM

The Society for Human Resource Management student chapter merit award program, which began in 1972, was created to encourage student chapters to require ongoing excellence in the following areas: chapter operations, chapter programming and

professional development of members, support of the human resource profession, and society engagement.

"SHRM is committed to engaging the future leaders of the human resource profession—HR and business students. As we work to shape better workplaces—where employers and employees can thrive together—we are energized by the work our student chapters are doing to encourage students to choose human resources as a career path," says **Johnny C. Taylor, Jr.**, president and chief executive officer of SHRM. "Awarding this Superior Merit Award designation is just one small way for SHRM to recognize and celebrate the big steps the Western Michigan University student chapter has taken this past academic year."

Student chapters have the opportunity to earn an award based on the number of activities they complete during the merit award cycle, the most recent of which took place from April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019.

"The 2018-19 SEHR executive board officers were fantastic—their efforts have directly contributed to the significant growth of the organization both in members and in events," says **Dr. Christina Stamper**, professor of management and the WMU chapter advisor. "In addition to doubling the number of events held in the prior year, membership grew from 38 to 69 members. Because the events were so well-planned and considered the members' interests, participation grew significantly over the same time period. I am proud to have worked with the students to build momentum for the future."

Students involved in the Society for Excellence in Human Resources at WMU participate in professional, social and service events designed to enhance career readiness. Membership in the society helps students gain valuable professional development and networking opportunities with local human resource professionals, among other benefits.

ABOUT THE SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The [Society for Human Resource Management](#) is the foremost expert, convener and thought leader on issues impacting today's evolving workplaces. With more than 300,000 human resource and business executive members in 165 countries, SHRM impacts the lives of over 115 million employees and families globally.

Student group earns recognition for superior efforts

Contact: Stacey Markin
July 29, 2019

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Western Michigan University's Gamma Rho chapter of **Beta Alpha Psi** has once again been recognized for its dedication to professional and service activities, as well as projects that involved outreach to the campus and community. This is the 35th time the student organization has earned the Superior Status chapter recognition by the national honor organization for financial information students and professionals.

Beta Alpha Psi chapters are found on more than 300 college and university campuses, and more than 300,000 members have been initiated since its formation in 1919. The national organization recognizes outstanding academic achievements, provides self-development opportunities and encourages ethical, social and public responsibility among its members.

"Achieving Superior Status takes a great amount of dedication and effort, including completion of a significant number of professional and community service hours," says **Dawn Mason**, faculty specialist in accountancy and co-advisor of the chapter. "I am so proud of the students in the Gamma Rho chapter for their commitment to service and excellence."

The WMU chapter is active on campus, providing tutoring for accountancy students throughout the academic year. Members also host an annual Meet the Firms event, a career fair that allows accountancy and finance students to network with potential employers. In the community, they organize multiple volunteer dates with local organizations, including Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes, a local food bank that provides groceries to over 700 people a day, and Focus Kalamazoo, an organization devoted to providing sustainable volunteerism.

This year, the Gamma Rho chapter co-hosted the Beta Alpha Psi Regional meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio, which included professional development opportunities and a best practices competition in which WMU students placed first and third.

This August, the first place team will be competing at the Beta Alpha Psi national meeting in Chicago, where they will present the chapter's best practices for service and outreach.

Climbing for clean water

TIM JOHNSON, B.B.A.'18



Tim Johnson, B.B.A.'18, is a firm believer that creative ideas can tackle world problems. When he became acquainted with Lifewater International—an organization committed to ending the global water and sanitation crisis in Cambodia, Ethiopia and Uganda—he decided it was time to take his own problem-solving skills to new heights.

So, Johnson set an ambitious goal that would not only challenge him personally, it would transform the lives of many. He pledged to climb 19,341 feet to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro and raise \$6,000 for Lifewater, which would provide clean, safe and long-lasting water technology to a remote village in need.

“The global water crisis is one of those problems that seems almost untouchable,” Johnson says. “Lifewater, like many other clean water organizations, believes the crisis can be effectively solved and ended by the world’s resources today. That tangible benefit made this cause something I could get behind, and Lifewater the ideal organization to support. Not to mention, the goal of climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro at age 24 seemed like something cool to add to my experiences.”

Johnson, who majored in management at the Haworth College of Business and now holds a position as an analyst II at Bayer Healthcare, is passionate about corporate responsibility and social empowerment. He was especially drawn to Lifewater’s holistic approach to

solving the global water crisis, which involves tailoring a specific program to address the unique needs of each region it serves. The organization then works with local residents to train them in water access, sanitation and hygiene practices.

“Lifewater has developed a ‘Healthy Village’ certification, which establishes guidelines and metrics for these communities to meet, and confirms that they have met them,” Johnson says. “This certification helps ensure these communities are healthy and safe for a lifetime and beyond.”

By including people in the process, Johnson adds, women and children no longer face the dangerous burden of fetching water miles from home. Additionally, waterborne disease from unsafe sources is significantly decreased.

Peak performance

Johnson had no prior climbing experience before the Kilimanjaro trek, which took place in June. But supporting the cause, in addition to the challenge of preparing physically for the climb, is something he felt compelled to do.

“I’ve wanted to do this climb for five years,” he says. “Now that I have the career and money to fuel it, I wanted to take advantage of the opportunity.”

While advocating Lifewater’s mission and raising funds to support their work was a challenge in itself, getting in shape to make the 7-day climb to the highest peak in Africa was a completely different test.

“Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro is one of the toughest things I’ve ever done,” Johnson says. “But climbing the mountain was never the goal; clean water for hundreds of people was the goal. If I were given the opportunity to support Lifewater again and make personal efforts to do so, I would.”

Johnson surpassed his goal and raised \$6,215 for the organization. His accomplishment will support a clean water source for about 200 people in Ethiopia. Visit [Lifewater International](#) to learn more about their mission.