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December 2019 Newsletter

Haworth College of Business

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Haworth College of Business, "December 2019 Newsletter" (2019). *Haworth College of Business News*. 111.

https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/business_news/111

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December 2019 Newsletter

DECEMBER 2019 NEWSLETTER



NABA promotes diversity, professional development

Western Michigan University's recently renewed chapter of the National Association of Black Accountants provides valuable experiential learning opportunities, academic support, and a safe space for all students.

[Read about NABA.](#)



Business student named Wuerffel Trophy recipient

A December 2019 graduate and Master of Science in Accountancy student, Jon Wassink, has been named recipient of the Wuerffel Trophy, presented by the Chick-fil-A Foundation. In addition, Wassink has received numerous accolades this fall, including being named one of 12 National Football Foundation National Scholar-Athletes.

[Read about the honors.](#)



Sales and business marketing students clinch victories

Sales and business marketing students Trevor Bageris and Gabe Pelak competed in the national E. & J. Gallo Winery Collegiate Sales Competition. The duo clinched first place overall, while also claiming second place in the event's marketing case presentation. Additionally, Bageris took second place in the sales role-play portion of the event.

[Read about the competition.](#)



Students claim second place in HR Games

Two teams of human resource management students competed in the HR Games, an annual competition sponsored by the Michigan Society for Human Resource Management, with one team claiming second place.

[Read about the competition.](#)



Human resource management student earns competitive scholarship

Haworth College of Business student Holly Harmon recently won a competitive Junior Achievement \$2,500 scholarship from the Society for Human Resource Management.

[Read about the scholarship.](#)



Sustaining success

Renee Robinson-Seelye, B.B.A.'10, is using her marketing degree from Western Michigan University to take her family business, Jake's Country Meats, in a new direction.

[Read her story.](#)



Top 10 reasons to give

There are a number of reasons to make your year-end gift to the Haworth College of Business and impact students. Here are our top 10.

[Make an impact.](#)

National Association of Black Accountants



THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Bridging the opportunity gap for black professionals in accounting, finance and related business professions—that is the goal of the National Association of Black Accountants. And WMU's recently renewed NABA student chapter is doing just that by providing valuable experiential learning opportunities, academic support, and a safe space for all students.

This fall, 19 members attended NABA's Regional Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, participating in professional development sessions, mock interviews, a career expo and interviews for internships and full-time opportunities.

“The NABA regional conference was one of the best experiences I have had through the Haworth College of Business,” says senior Andrew Miller. “The thing that stood out to me the most was how the organization truly practices its beliefs. ‘Lifting as we climb’ is not just a catchy phrase to draw people in. I have never felt so immediately welcomed by a professional organization. Every person at this conference was approachable. Every person was there to add value to themselves and everyone around them. There was no sense of competition or elitism. The concept of diversity was truly embraced. I never felt out of place.”

Of the 19 students who attended, nine have received internship and full-time offers of employment from firms they connected with at the conference.

WMU NABA

“Imagine having a table with individuals who all have diverse mindsets and skill sets, that is what exists within our chapter here at Western,” says senior and NABA Treasurer Christopher Bailey. “Having this within our registered student organization reminds me that there is no issue that we can’t tackle together, and it creates a family. We are there for each other throughout the entire journey.”

That journey is critical. “The opportunity gap is real,” says Bailey. “I am personally committed to advocating for diversity and inclusion in the accounting field. Studies have shown that the percentage of African Americans in the accounting field has steadily declined throughout the past few years. With this in mind, having an active NABA chapter and providing our members with opportunities is one of the most effective ways, from an on-campus standpoint, to help bridge the gap within our profession.”

The NABA chapter offers not only professional development and experiential learning opportunities but support in the form of tutoring and social interaction as well. “I have benefited academically from NABA through the study sessions with members who take the same classes together,” says junior and NABA Secretary Kayce-Ann White. “The connections I have made at NABA meetings through different social events increased my self-esteem and confidence level.”

The organization’s benefits are a big part of why Dr. Ola Smith, chair of the Department of Accountancy, wanted to renew interest in having NABA as a registered student organization. “For me, NABA is critical to promoting accountancy and finance to a new generation of African American students and to retaining talented students in our discipline.” Smith was herself a member of NABA as a student and professional and had also heard from many WMU alumni about the benefits the organization provided in the past.

One of the alumni that Smith was in contact with was co-founder of the original NABA WMU student chapter, Kevin Carter, B.B.A.’89. “In 1987, Michael Westbrook and I were aware of other student chapters at Michigan universities as well as the professional chapter of NABA in Detroit,” says Carter. “The Detroit professional chapter members visited other campuses where NABA student members were benefitting from the association and networking opportunities. Michael and I decided that WMU African American students were being unrepresented and decided to do something about it. With the support of Dr. James (Jamie) Patrick Forrest, associate professor of accountancy, President Diether Haenicke, and the Detroit professional chapter of NABA, we were able to establish a charter on WMU’s campus.”

The chapter established in 1987 started with 20 students from each area of the Haworth College of Business. Student conventions, visiting professionals, and other events helped members gain internships and full-time offers. "It warms my heart and makes me proud that this organization still lives on today at WMU and is doing great things," says Carter.

Smith and senior Spencer Robertson, president of today's NABA, had a vision for the organization as one that would encourage and challenge students in the best possible ways. "We are currently in the growth stage," says Robertson. "I see our organization being chartered as an official chapter under the Detroit chapter of NABA in the near future. Getting the chapter back up and running has come with its fair share of challenges; however, the rewards are worth it. I give credit to my fellow executive board members, our faculty advisor Dr. Smith and Jamie Long, administrative assistant in the Department of Accountancy. Without their help and support, we wouldn't have been able to achieve a successful fall semester and get ready for the conference. I also would like to give credit to every single one of our members. They are the ones who contribute to the newfound success of our organization. Our members are the backbone of the organization, and we must continue to meet their needs to ensure that the organization remains relevant."

Students are excited for what the future holds. "NABA is open to everyone. I understand the name can be deceiving, but it is truly about diversity," says Miller. "The opportunities presented are incredible, and the relationships have the potential to run so much deeper than casual connections. I encourage students and alumni to get involved."

Scholarships

Several WMU NABA members received scholarships at the regional conference, with WMU students claiming the largest proportion of total scholarships. The funds will help defray educational expenses, and all recipients found the awards both humbling and exciting.

- Spencer Robertson, president of NABA: \$1,000 scholarship from the NABA Regional Conference
- Kayce-Ann White, secretary of NABA: \$1,000 scholarship from Walgreens
- Christopher Bailey, treasurer of NABA: \$1,000 scholarship from Ernst & Young

"Receiving a scholarship will enable me to continue my education and help me achieve my goals and aspirations," says Robertson. "I view this scholarship as a great investment not only in me but also in our NABA chapter. As a result of receiving this scholarship, I can continue to put my best foot forward in ensuring that the needs of our members are being met."



Football December 10, 2019

Wassink Named Wuerffel Trophy Recipient

- **OFFICIAL RELEASE**

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. – Western Michigan senior quarterback ***Jon Wassink*** has been named the recipient of the Wuerffel Trophy, presented by the Chick-fil-A® Foundation, according to an announcement by the organization Tuesday.

The Wuerffel Trophy, known as college football's premier award for community service, is presented annually to the Football Bowl Subdivision player who best combines exemplary community service with athletic and academic achievement. Named after 1996 Heisman Trophy winning quarterback Danny Wuerffel from the University of Florida, the Wuerffel Trophy has honored over 1,200 nominees since its inception in 2005.

Wassink, a native of Grand Rapids, Mich., joins **Tim Hiller** (2009) as Western Michigan recipients of the Wuerffel Trophy. WMU joins Oklahoma as the only two programs in the country to have multiple winners. The Broncos are also the only Mid-American Conference program to have a Wuerffel Trophy recipient.

Wassink has received numerous accolades this fall, including being named one of 12 National Football Foundation National Scholar-Athletes, presented by Fidelity Investments. The honor makes him a finalist for the William V. Campbell Trophy® Presented by Mazda. Wassink has also been tabbed one of 10 finalists for the Senior CLASS Award and has received a Mid-American Conference Male Scholar Athlete of the Week award.

On the field this fall, Wassink has completed 222 of 371 passes for 2,904 yards and 19 touchdowns against seven interceptions. In the latest NCAA rankings, Wassink stands 28th in total passing yards, 33rd in yards per completion (13.1) and total offensive yards per game (266.4) and 39th in passing yards per game (242.0).

A two-time CoSIDA Academic All-District choice, Academic All-Mid-American Conference Football Team honoree and MAC Distinguished Scholar-Athlete, Wassink was also named the Western Michigan Football John Gill Scholar-Athlete in 2017. He has been named to the Western Michigan University Dean's List every semester on campus, achieving at least a 3.50 grade-point average on a scale of 4.00 each semester.

Wassink graduated from Western Michigan in December of 2018 with a degree in accountancy and is pursuing a master's degree in accountancy. He completed his undergraduate degree with a 3.95 grade-point average.

Off the field, Wassink is part of the Bronco Buddies program at the Tree of Life, a school that provides a Christ-centered education to all children regardless of socioeconomic status. He has been a four-year member of the program, taking part in its once-a-month activities on Sundays. Events include trips to go swimming, bowling or visit the zoo. During the spring of 2016, Wassink traveled to the Dominican Republic and helped build a basketball court for a village of 100 people. He also helped repair fences for a community bridge used by villagers daily and gained perspective and purpose through his work.

"We are excited to announce that Jon is this year's recipient of the Wuerffel Trophy and are thrilled about him joining our family of past winners," said Wuerffel. "What he has done serving others off the field, along with his work in the classroom and on the playing field, represents what the Wuerffel Trophy is all about. Also, I'd like to say the same about our other two finalists, Isaiah Sanders of the U.S. Air Force Academy and Derrick Brown of Auburn University. The amount of community service that these young men have done is just incredible. Hats off to these amazing student athletes."

Wuerffel Trophy winners are chosen by a national selection committee that includes college football television and print media, industry notables, former head coaches and prior Wuerffel Trophy recipients.

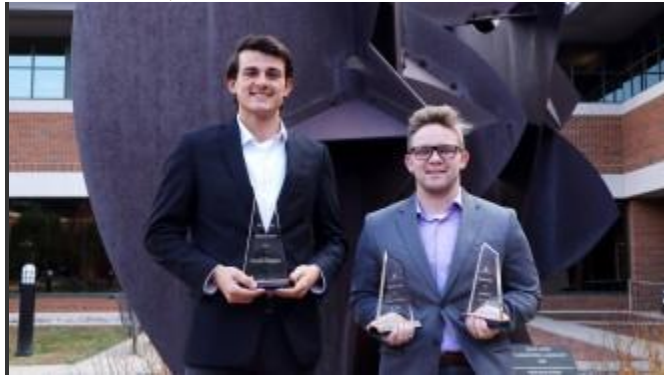
Wassink will attend Thursday's "The Home Depot College Football Awards Red Carpet Show" on ESPNU and ESPN3 and be interviewed with other award winners and finalists as they approach "The Home Depot College Football Awards Show," the Chick-fil-A College Football Hall of Fame and Chick-fil-A Fan Experience in downtown Atlanta.

The 2019 Wuerffel Trophy will be presented at the 51st Annual All Sports Association Awards Banquet on February 7 in Fort Walton Beach.

#LetsRide

Business students clinch victories at sales competition

Contact: Molly Goaley
November 6, 2019



WMU business students Gabe Pelak, left, and Trevor Bageris, right

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Western Michigan University business students **Trevor Bageris** and **Gabe Pelak** traveled to the University of Missouri Robert J. Trulaske, Sr. College of Business Oct. 24-25 to compete in the [E. & J. Gallo Winery Collegiate Sales Competition](#). The students clinched first place overall, while also claiming second place in the event's marketing case presentation. Additionally, Bageris took second place in the sales role-play portion of the event.

The competition is an annual program hosted at Mizzou and sponsored by California-based E. & J. Gallo Winery. College teams from around the country—consisting of two full-time undergraduate students and one faculty coach—are invited to participate. Training materials are provided to assist students, and faculty coaches are responsible for helping students prepare for each segment.

The team award is presented to the two students from the university with the highest combined scores from the marketing case presentation and sales role-play competition.

"On short notice, the team took what they learn every day in WMU's sales and business marketing program and put it to work," says **Dr. Jim Eckert**, Robert S. Kaiser professor of sales and faculty coach to the team. "It turned out to be a winning approach. All the credit goes to Trevor and Gabe who volunteered to compete and made it happen. We are fortunate to have students like them in the program."

Bageris of Fowlerville and Pelak of Mattawan were invited to join the competition by E. & J. Gallo just two weeks prior to the event. "Since we were a last-minute team, we had a limited amount of time to practice," says Bageris. "We completed almost 20 hours of preparation in about three days."

"We bounced ideas off our professors and past competitors to come up with a winning plan," adds Pelak. "It felt great to win. It's just more affirmation that what we're being taught through the WMU sales and business marketing program is effective."

"Coming into Western as a senior transfer student, it was amazing to see the progress I was able to make in the sales program," says Bageris. "It feels great that what we learn in our sales classes truly generates results."

WMU SALES AND BUSINESS MARKETING

WMU's [sales and business marketing program](#) is frequently lauded for its achievements in career placement, experiential learning, student competitions and more. Ninety-nine percent of students find full-time careers or are continuing their education within three months of graduation, and 96% of these graduates are engaged in a job related to their degree. Program highlights include:

- **Student competition success**—Students from WMU consistently finish at or near the top at a number of sales competitions including: the National Collegiate Sales Competition, the National Sales Challenge, the State Farm Sales and Marketing Competition, and the Quicken Loans National Sales Competition.
- **[Robert S. Kaiser Sales, Negotiation and Leadership Lab](#)**—Students role-play and demonstrate their skills and expertise in the state-of-the-art Robert S. Kaiser Sales, Negotiation and Leadership Lab. The lab includes enhanced ability to pinpoint areas for student improvement with detailed notes embedded in videos of the exercises. Students also have the opportunity to share footage with prospective hiring managers.
- **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 group regularly hosts top employers, giving students an opportunity to engage with industry professionals.
- **Study abroad**—Sales students gain a global perspective on business as one of the largest cohorts at WMU to study abroad.
- **National recognition**—The program has been identified by the Sales Education Foundation as a top national program that both prepares students for careers in professional selling and helps elevate the sales profession.

Students claim second place in HR Games competition

Contact: Molly Goaley
October 21, 2019

- KALAMAZOO, Mich.— Two teams of human resource management students from Western Michigan University’s Haworth College of Business competed in the HR Games, an annual competition sponsored by the Michigan Society for Human Resource Management, with one team claiming second place.
- The games took place during the society’s [2019 conference and exhibition](#), which was held October 9-11 at DeVos Place in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Competing against undergraduate and graduate-level teams from Central Michigan, Ferris State, Eastern Michigan and Grand Valley State universities, WMU undergraduate students answered human resource-related questions over multiple rounds in the Jeopardy-style game format. The competition is intended to help students prepare for the human resources profession, engage with local practitioners, network with industry leaders and learn from keynote speakers. It is also designed to prepare students for the SHRM-certified professional exam.
- “I am so proud of the work these students have put into preparing for the HR Games,” says **Dr. Christina Stamper**, professor of management. “Starting last January, they have dedicated themselves to deeply diving into human resource management certification material, learning about best practices, policies, laws and terminology. To walk away with a second place finish was a phenomenal accomplishment.”

THE TEAMS



- Team members Holly Harmon, Raven Lackey, Sarah Hamilton, Kaylen Glenfield and Christina Raeff stand with the second place award.

- **Sarah Hamilton, Holly Harmon and Christina Raeff** comprised the second-place team. **Kaylen Glenfield and Raven Lackey** also competed in the games. The students spent months studying human resource-related material and practicing their quick answer skills in preparation for the competition.
- “The team worked immensely hard over the last year, and it’s very satisfying to know that all of our months of studying, preparation and hard work paid off,” says Hamilton, who served as team captain. “Now that the competition is done, we have expanded our human resource knowledge and abilities in numerous areas. As a result, I feel confident preparing for the SHRM-CP exam, entering the HR profession and using what we’ve learned to better the organizations we join in the future.”
- “I am delighted about the second place finish,” adds Raeff. “It was very rewarding to see the return on our summer preparation and study sessions. I was thrilled that we could represent not only the Haworth College of Business and the WMU chapter of SHRM, but also the human resource management major within the college.”

ABOUT THE SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- The [Society for Human Resource Management](#) is the world's largest human resource professional society, representing 285,000 members in more than 165 countries. For nearly seven decades, the organization has been the leading provider of resources serving the needs of human resource professionals and advancing the

practice of human resource management. The Society for Human Resource Management has more than 575 affiliated chapters within the United States and subsidiary offices in China, India and United Arab Emirates. The WMU chapter, known as the [Society for Excellence in Human Resources](#), strives to enhance the potential of its members by providing them with the tools necessary to excel in human resource management and other fields in the business world.

Human resource management student wins competitive scholarship

Contact: Riley Lukomski
November 6, 2019



WMU business student Holly Harmon

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—**Holly Harmon**, a student at Western Michigan University's Haworth College of Business, recently won a competitive Junior Achievement \$2,500 scholarship from the Society of Human Resource Management. The merit-based scholarship is intended to help students realize that the education they are getting today will help them have a bright future tomorrow.

Harmon of Saline, Michigan, was selected for the scholarship based on her accomplishments, scholastic ability and leadership potential. Judges were impressed with her application, stating she is an ideal candidate for the award. Some of Harmon's accomplishments and leadership positions include:

- Serving as vice president of professional development for the Society for Excellence in Human Resources, WMU's chapter of SHRM.
- Participating in the Harvard Business School Summer Venture in Management Program.
- Being selected for the Forbes Under 30 Scholars program.
- Completing two internships with the Washtenaw County Road Commission.
- Working as a resident assistant for WMU's Residence Life and Housing Services.

- Earning second place, as part of a team, in the state HR Games hosted by the Michigan Society for Human Resource Management.
- Volunteering at WMU's Zhang Career Center and the Saline District Library.

"This scholarship provides me with support to continue to develop as a human resource management professional without the pressure of financial debt sitting squarely on my shoulders," Harmon says. "I am grateful to the SHRM for seeing my potential and choosing to support my studies. Being recognized by this nationally-recognized organization that empowers professionals in HR is extremely important to me. In addition, I am excited to bring attention to the Haworth College of Business's exceptional HR program."

ABOUT THE SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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Sustaining Success

RENEE ROBINSON-SEELYE, B.B.A.'10



When most people go to the local deli and see turkey on sale for 99 cents per pound, they're excited to have found what they think is a great deal. Renee Robinson-Seelye, B.B.A.'10, marketing manager for her family's business, Jake's Country Meats, sees the world a little differently. When she sees the sale for turkey, she immediately starts asking questions and knows it's important that consumers do the same.

"Consumers should ask themselves, why is the turkey on sale? Did the farmer receive a poor price for the animal? Did the farmer experience a lower death loss which drove down their cost, allowing for a lower price? Maybe the cost of the feed for the animal went down. What does a turkey eat anyway? How is the food for the turkey made?" she asks. "Now consider finding a reliable source from the industry who can answer those questions for you."

At a time when the meat market was shifting to a culture that incentivizes quantity over quality, Jake's Country Meats was determined to stay true to their core values of sustainability, quality and humane treatment of the animals they raise. When other small farms were either closing their doors or drastically changing the way they did business, Jake's Country Meats went in the opposite direction.

Projections were looking positive for the business when they partnered with an upscale grocery store in the early 2000s. Unfortunately, as the meat industry evolved, it became more and more expensive to produce at the quality that Jake's Country Meats prides itself on. With costs increasing and prices for their product remaining stagnant, the company once again faced a crossroads. They wanted to retain their identity as a sustainable meat producer, but there was seemingly no simple way to keep their place in the market.

A new direction

Enter Renee Robinson-Seelye. During the business's difficult transition, Robinson-Seelye was an undergraduate student at Western Michigan University. She always had an entrepreneurial spirit, but was unclear about which path to pursue during her earlier years at WMU. After taking some enlightening marketing classes, she had an epiphany. "During my studies, I occasionally discussed with my parents some things I was learning and realized how applicable this information was to our lives back home," she says. "I then decided to earn my degree in marketing and devote my career fully to the family business."



When Robinson-Seelye graduated and began working, both she and her family members decided to take the company's marketing approach in a different direction. With the growing interest among consumers involving sustainable food practices, Jake's Country Meats realized they had a great story to tell.

Using word-of-mouth marketing, traditional marketing and digital marketing, the company decided to start telling their story to anyone who would listen. This involved cold calling stores and restaurants, encouraging retail owners to spread the word to their favorite chefs, revamping their website, and creating a much more visible social media presence. After a solid network of industry partners was established, Robinson-Seelye knew the company could focus on a more ambitious avenue.

"From then on, I focused on putting all of our current marketing techniques into a bigger picture—to reach the goal for the business to purchase and market 100% of the animals

raised at the best price to sustain the farm. After five years, Jake's Country Meats met that goal by marketing to various outlets through farmers' markets, restaurants, stores, distributors and buyers' groups," Robinson-Seelye says. "We learned through our past partnerships that it is best to have a diverse marketing model while including a variety of pricing structures and distribution channels. Diversity, pricing, quality and service are key. People are everything."

Resources to lean on

Robinson-Seelye attributes much of her success to her time at WMU. She says she works through problems every day that she can relate back to the courses she had as a Business Bronco. She even admits to still using the textbook from her senior-level marketing class for establishing pricing structures.

Robinson-Seelye says she was a successful student because she didn't let her failures define her, and implores other to adopt a similar approach. "If I could offer any student advice, it would be to lean on a support system that encourages you to succeed. If you don't have one already, create or seek one within the university. The Haworth College of Business has many great resources for students to lean on."

TOP TEN REASONS TO GIVE

There are a number of ways you can help us elevate WMU and the student experience, and **making a gift** is one of them. Together we can ensure that our current and future Broncos will never go at it alone, and with your help, we know they'll be unstoppable.

Giving impacts every student and every area of campus. It helps provide the experiences, curriculum, and spaces so that our students can graduate, get jobs they love, and make a difference in their communities and all over the world. There are a number of reasons why Broncos give to WMU, here is our Top Ten.

Why give?

1. **Tuition and State Funds Don't Cut It**

Only about 26% of WMU's operating budget comes from the state, down from 70% in 1979, meaning the fiscal responsibility to obtain a degree has shifted dramatically to students and their families. Alumni and donor giving helps keep the doors to public higher education open to hard-working, sometimes low-income students. Funding secures top tier technology and exceptional faculty, in addition to financial support for students, which is key to educating the next generation.

2. **Investing in Students is an Investment in the Future**

Students at WMU are working their way toward becoming the next generation of health care providers, teachers, engineers, business professionals, artists, and more. Giving helps provide the experiences, curriculum, and spaces so that when our students graduate, they get jobs they love, and make a difference in their communities and all around the world.

3. **Make Higher Education Attainable for Every Student**

WMU is home to many students who may otherwise not be able to go to college. From first generation students, to students exiting the foster care system, to undocumented young adults, scholarship support makes a degree possible for many of our students. A gift to WMU helps students of all backgrounds access higher education.

4. **Support What You're Passionate About**

WMU offers 265 programs, ranging from Accountancy to Occupational Therapy, Art Education to Sports Management, which means you can support advancements in whatever field you're passionate about. There are more than 2,000 programs and places across campus where you can designate your gift. Find your Fun(d)!

5. **WMU is Good for the Economy**

At \$1.6 billion, WMU's economic impact is greater than Michigan's entire \$1.4 billion budget line for all state universities. And for every one of the \$104 million the state invests in WMU, the University returns \$15.40 in economic vitality to the Calhoun, Kalamazoo and Van Buren county region. In addition, students contribute 235,000 hours to volunteer service and other off-campus community engagement activities each year. (Fiscal Year 2016-17)

6. **Elevate the Value of a WMU Degree**

Alumni giving is a key factor when publications such as U.S. News & World Report calculate national rankings for higher education institutions. When WMU alumni give back to WMU, it helps increase our rank and reputation, thereby elevating the value of a WMU degree on a regional and national level.

7. **You Can Double or Triple Your Impact**

Many employers offer gift matching programs, which means you can double, sometimes triple, the amount of your gift. Check with your human resources department to see if your employer matches philanthropic donations and [learn more here](#).

8. **You Can Help Build on Our Success**

Private support from donors, and more importantly, alumni donors, is considered an indication of success. Aside from publications that rank colleges and universities based on alumni giving rates, private donations are also a signal to corporations and foundations that award grants and other large gifts. When our alumni and friends give back to WMU, they are telling the world we are worthy community support.

9. **It's a Tradition**

Philanthropy is an important piece of the puzzle for all institutions of higher education, and can be traced back hundreds of years. Education is vital for a society to succeed, which is why today, more than ever, we need our alumni and friends to help us close the gap so that any student who wishes to advance their life, career, and/or community, has the opportunity to do so at WMU.

10. **It's Easy!**

Because rankings can be influenced by the percentage of alumni who give back, not how much they give, a gift in any amount can be a game changer for our University. Simply visit WMUalumni.org/Give to make your gift and we'll send you a receipt for your 100% tax-deductible gift.

MAKE A GIFT

Still want to learn more about why alumni give back? Check out our Giving Impact stories [here](#).