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#### February 2020 Newsletter

Haworth College of Business

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### February 2020 Newsletter

#### FEBRUARY 2020 NEWSLETTER



#### WMU most victorious university in national competition's history

Two sales students competed in the State Farm Marketing and Sales Competition at the University of Central Missouri during the fall semester, with one taking top honors in the customer service role-play category. This victory brings WMU's student winnings to over \$40,000 in the past eight years of competition, making it the most successful university in the event's history.

Read about the victory.



#### Students claim top spot in national digital marketing competition

A team of Business Broncos placed first in a digital marketing case competition and also claimed a category award for Best Research in the inaugural Purdue Northwest Digital Marketing Competition.

Read about the competition.



#### Undergraduates present research at international conference

Undergraduate students Blake Tindol and Brandon Buxton recently got the rare experience of presenting research at the Conference on Health IT and Analytics in Washington, D.C. The students presented research they collaborated on with Dr. Utkarsh Shrivastava, assistant professor of business information systems.

Read about the projects.



#### Frank Gambino: More than 36 years of teaching, industry connections and impact

As passionate as ever about the food and consumer package goods marketing program, Dr. Frank Gambino looks forward to his retirement transition and passing the baton to the strong team who will lead the program in the future.

Read about his impact.



#### Helping students and alumni become stars in their industries

From hosting students at his company to providing case studies for supply chain courses, William Crane, B.B.A.'06, radiates Bronco pride in all he does.

Read about his volunteer connection.



**Lean Six Sigma certification offered** 

Tom Kelly, instructor of supply chain, shares his experience on the benefits of Lean Six Sigma certification courses, which the Haworth College of Business will begin offering in the spring. Read about the certification.

# Latest sales win makes WMU most victorious university in national competition's history

Contact: Samantha Hooker

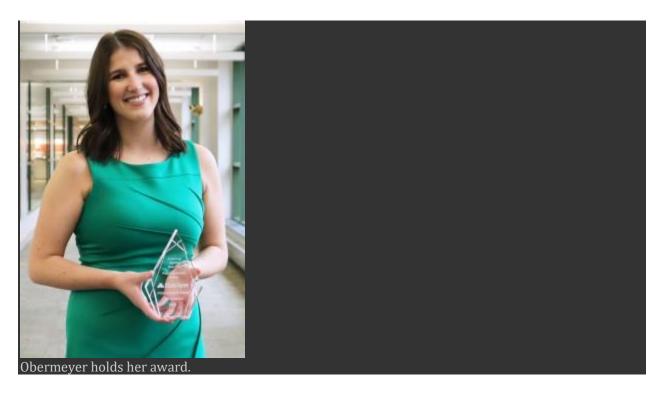
January 15, 2020



KALAMAZOO—A team of two Western Michigan University sales students competed in the **State Farm Marketing and Sales Competition** at the University of Central Missouri, during the fall semester, with one student taking top honors in the customer service role-play category. This victory brings WMU's student winnings to over \$40,000 in the past eight years of competition, making it the most successful university in the event's history.

**Ryan Demas** and **Sarah Obermeyer** competed in three different rounds of competition, including:

- A marketing presentation answering the question, "How might a State Farm agent educate and promote a futuristic vision of mobile telematics technology while ensuring customer data privacy?"
- A sales role-play, focused on how a State Farm agent could develop a relationship
  with a new client from an internet lead. The role-play began with an appointmentsetting phone call where the agent's objective was to get the prospect into their
  office to review options.
- A customer service role-play based on the scenario of a current customer coming to their agent's office to pay their six-month auto insurance premium in full. The goal was for the agent to start a conversation about renters insurance while processing the transaction.



Obermeyer clinched the win in the customer service role-play portion of the competition. She focused on building rapport with the client while processing their auto insurance payment. Obermeyer credits her success with asking key questions that uncovered the true risk the client was facing without renters insurance.

"I found success in the role-plays because I practiced with many different people who had varied approaches in playing the client in my practice sessions, which helped me keep my role-play conversational, even if the client did something unexpected" says Obermeyer. "Placing first was an honor and incredibly rewarding. I was able to be a member of an amazing team and I was also the first competitor from WMU to place in the customer service role-play."

**Dr. Kelley O'Reilly**, associate professor of marketing, coached Demas and Obermeyer for the competition, providing feedback and support as they refined their ideas and techniques.

"In the years we have competed, WMU has hit the podium as a winner in every year but one," says O'Reilly. "This feat has earned the student competitors \$40,000 in scholarship money and made WMU the most successful university to compete in the event's history." O'Reilly credits consistent, steady and focused preparation for six to eight hours per week in the months leading up to the event as an important part of their success.

Learn more about the sales major online.

# WMU students claim top spot in national digital marketing competition

Contact: Samantha Hooker

January 7, 2020



KALAMAZOO, Mich.— A team of students from Western Michigan University's Haworth College of Business placed first in a digital marketing case competition and also claimed a category award for Best Research. The event featured more than 50 teams from colleges nationwide and was hosted by Purdue University Northwest.

WMU's student team was composed of senior **Lexi Payne**, junior **Liz Volante** and senior **Parker Hurley**, all <u>digital marketing and eCommerce</u> majors. **Dr. Scott Cowley**, assistant professor of marketing, coached the team to victory.

The inaugural Purdue Northwest Digital Marketing Competition gave students the opportunity to create a digital marketing campaign for Harbour Trust Investment Management Company. Participating teams received the case details in August outlining

the campaign challenge—creating a digital-first strategy that would result in \$1 million of new revenue for the company.

"For most of us, the investment management industry was completely foreign, so the team had about two months to dig into regulatory constraints and investor behaviors and trends, all in the context of the client's unique circumstances," explains Cowley. "The biggest challenge was compressing all of that into an eight-minute pitch video to get to finals."

The team's pitch cemented its place as one of five teams invited to the final round of the competition.

"We recommended the company update their website, advertise on social platforms and use a referral campaign, along with creating new digital content, such as blogs, articles and a newsletter," says Hurley. "I'm glad that our recommendations led to a win, which will help bring more recognition to the digital marketing and eCommerce major at Western, because it truly is a fantastic program."



After landing in the finals, WMU's team members pitched their idea directly to the senior leadership of Harbour Trust. Cowley's students appreciated the real-world experience.

"This competition helped prepare me for life after college by allowing me to learn the ins and outs of a comprehensive digital strategy," says Payne. "No matter what I am working on, I will always be able to apply the methodology and way of thinking."

Cowley is optimistic that this is just the beginning for his students.

"WMU is one of the only schools in the country offering a digital marketing undergraduate degree. This is our third appearance in the finals of a national competition this year alone and the first national win for our students.," he says.

He praises the students' dedication and application of solid marketing fundamentals as the key to their success, adding, "They took everything we teach in our core digital marketing

classes and adapted, organized and prioritized those strategies to align with the client's objective at every step."

Volante valued the networking experience that the competition provided, and the project also validated her choice of major.

"I was able to meet professionals in fields I'm interested in pursuing after graduation. Many of the judges said we were always welcome at their companies, which is great to hear," she says. "Being able to work on a project similar to one I might do after graduation gave me insights on what my career would look like, and I feel assured that I am on the right path."

## Students present research at international conference

Contact: Stacey Markin January 10, 2020

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Undergraduate students **Blake Tindol** and **Brandon Buxton** recently got the rare experience of presenting research at the Conference on Health IT and Analytics in Washington, D.C. The annual research summit gathers prominent scholars from more than 40 research institutes, as well as leading policy makers and practitioners. Tindol and Buxton presented research they collaborated on with **Dr. Utkarsh Shrivastava**, assistant professor of business information systems.

"Both Blake and Brandon started working with me on separate projects at the beginning of the summer of 2019," says Shrivastava. "They were self-motivated and more than willing to explore their ideas through academic research. Their hard work paid off at the conference where their presentations were very well received. In a conference typically frequented by graduate students from Ivy League schools, the understanding and training of our undergraduate students impressed everyone. Experiences like this play an important role in instilling confidence in our students and shaping their careers."

Making sure that students have every career-building experience possible is what drives Dr. Mike Tarn, chair of the Department of Business Information Systems. "Scientific discovery is at the core of learning, and a global platform like CHITA provides a forum for ideas that lead to future innovations. As a department, we do our best to connect students' interests with our faculty expertise to nurture nascent ideas. With the support of our dean, we make sure that students do not miss out on any opportunity for professional advancement for any reason. We are fortunate to have faculty members with a diverse range of research interests who are more than happy to support students in their initiatives."

The students' travel to the conference was completely subsidized by donors to the dean's discretionary fund and the Department of Business Information Systems.

#### THE PROJECTS



Tindol's presentation was titled, "The dynamics of real-time online information and disease progression: Understanding spatial heterogeneity in the relationship."

The presentation focused on predicting the re-emergence of infectious diseases such as salmonella and chlamydia and the logistical challenges for state authorities in curbing their spread. Tindol and Shrivastava argue that a combination of real-time surveillance of infectious diseases as well as monitoring online searches related to these diseases is important when determining if an epidemic is imminent. Outbreak of an infectious disease creates panic in the community and is accompanied by a sudden increase in the online interest in the disease and its symptoms. Prior studies have found a strong relationship between web searches and disease outbreak but not all aspects of the relationship have been investigated yet.

The research studied the relationship between online searches about a disease and its outbreak, investigating whether this relationship could be influenced by regional factors such as Medicare costs and coverage. The study analyzed weekly online search dynamics for five infectious diseases over a period of three years across all 50 states.

The team controlled for several factors, including weather, demographics and travel, and used hierarchical functional data models to test for a relationship between a disease's

progression and its online searches. They found that regions where Medicare costs are higher have a stronger association between online research about a disease and its progression. Using the proposed modeling framework, a 22% improvement in the prediction of a disease outbreak can be achieved. The findings suggest potential for developing a multifaceted system for real-time surveillance of disease outbreak in United States is advisable.

"The ability to speak with some of the leading thinkers in the health and information technology field was a phenomenal experience," says Tindol. "The other researchers and professors gave insightful feedback on my research, which inspired me to pursue more research and possibly consider a Ph.D. I hope to be able present additional research before graduating. I appreciate that WMU funded this trip, which has meant a great deal to my professional development."



Buxton's presentation was titled, "Hospital workflow and patient care implications of medical device and EMR integration."

The manual transcription of patients' vital signs often delays entry of critical information to electronic medical record systems. This documentation delay within inpatient settings results in a lack of recent information on patient condition, decreased ability for providers to make clinical decisions and an increased risk of data error.

To alleviate these concerns, hospitals are adopting device interface systems which digitally integrate medical devices and EMRs. Prior studies have found that this type of system integration can potentially reduce the time spent on manual entry of information in the EMR and support other value-added activities in the hospital. However, these studies

suffered from intervention bias. In this study, a natural experiment setting was used to understand how the implementation of a device interface system impacted hospital workflows and patient care in a regional hospital.

The investigation focuses on two areas. First, the research team examined if the new system influenced documentation delays and whether the impact was similar for different employee roles. Second, the team studied the effect of interface system implementation on downstream patient care activities. The team analyzed data on documentation delays across more than 5,000 patients and 330,000 documentation events for one week before and after system implementation and found that the average documentation delay decreased by 18 minutes and alerts regarding critical patient condition were delivered an average of 30 minutes faster. The findings from this research will inform hospitals of the benefits and the requirements for successful integration of medical devices and EMR systems, as well as the impact on activities dependent on accurate and timely vital signs documentation.

"Exposure to an academic research environment, gaining familiarity with current research, and making connections with researchers from institutions throughout the world were some of the key benefits from this experience," says Buxton. "Representing WMU at this event was a great honor. We were the only undergraduate students at the conference, which was noted by many attendees, including in the final session, where WMU was recognized for having young and passionate researchers."

# Frank Gambino: More than 36 years of teaching, industry connections and impact



DR. FRANK GAMBINO

Dr. Frank Gambino, professor of marketing, is the unquestioned heart and soul of the <u>food</u> and <u>consumer package goods marketing</u> program. With a 36-year tenure, his commitment to the program, its students and the food marketing industry is unparalleled. As passionate as ever about the program, Gambino looks forward to his retirement transition over the next two years and passing the baton to the strong team who will lead the program in the future.

But for a faculty member, the lessons never end.

Gambino shares his insights on what he values most, the program's milestones and his love for WMU.

#### Building the food and consumer package goods marketing program



Relevance—it is what the program has strived for since its inception. "We have always ensured that the course content being delivered in the classroom is relevant to industry," says Gambino. "In our program staying relevant is having faculty members who are current in their research, actively engaged with industry, and listening to business leaders in order to give our students the best possible opportunities for career success. We also provide a number of settings where our students practice applying their skills—case competitions, role-plays, question-and-answer sessions with current professionals, research, conferences, community service, professional certification, an industry tour of Great Lakes businesses, marketing-focused study abroad trips to Thailand, Germany, the Dominican Republic, and more."

The program, which celebrated its sixtieth anniversary in 2019, continues its strong relationships with the business community. The program's advisory board has more than 40 members, representing leading companies in the food and consumer package goods spaces. These business partners work with faculty on curriculum development, research, community and alumni outreach, support for the annual Food Marketing Conference and other endeavors.

"Beyond the relationships with industry, most students would agree there is a sense of family and belonging that is promoted by all our faculty," says Gambino. "That takes time and effort, but the outcome is lifelong friendships with classmates, faculty and staff."

Gambino's favorite part of working with students

"I love watching the growth and development of my students from when they first step onto campus, maybe a little tentative, to their emergence as young professionals focused on a career upon graduation," he says. "It is an amazing transformation that takes place in a relatively short time span. After graduation, I enjoy staying in touch with alumni and watching as their careers and lives develop. It is truly one of the most gratifying benefits of being a professor."

#### Evolution and growth of the WMU Food Marketing Conference



This year the conference marks its 55th anniversary. Started in 1965 as a way to thank industry for support of the program, it was known as Industry Appreciation Day and was held in a classroom on campus. The event evolved over the years, and in 1977 was renamed the Food Management Conference. The program was moved to the Haworth College of Business in 1989 and housed in the Department of Marketing. In 1992, the conference was renamed the Food Marketing Conference.

"My first involvement with the conference was as a student in 1974, then as an alumnus supporter until I joined the faculty in 1984, so my ties to the conference go back 46 years," Gambino says. "In the early days, attendance might have been 60 people, and today we have more than 800 participants who attend the conference from all sectors of the industry. In 1994, the conference really began to take on national prominence. That year we outgrew the Fetzer Center with a program that featured the CEOs of Kmart, Meijer, IRI, the National Grocers Association and the editor of Progressive Grocer Magazine."

The conference eventually moved to the Radisson Plaza, in downtown Kalamazoo in 2004, and to the current location at the DeVos Place in downtown Grand Rapids, due to growth.

"Today the most frequently mentioned reasons industry partners give for supporting the conference are access to future leadership talent in our students, the high-caliber content provided, and the excellent networking opportunities among trading partners," says Gambino.

#### Don't forget the fun

Spend a few minutes in Gambino's presence, and his ability to incorporate fun into learning and life is evident. "One of the things I have always tried to do is to make learning fun," he says. "A few years back, I found an electronic game board software that allows me to challenge students on classroom content in a game show format. Students have always

remarked how this helped them learn and prepare for quizzes and exams. I also liked seeing the competitiveness that the gamification of the content can bring out."

#### A rewarding career



A love for the Kalamazoo community underscores a career that has been rewarding on multiple levels for Gambino. "I love the connection between Kalamazoo and WMU."

As a faculty member, he notes the student-centered nature of Western attracts colleagues that put the student first and invest in discovery and student development. "Behind all these stellar programs are passionate and dedicated faculty and staff, and they really are the fabric of Western pride," he notes.

Generations of students have benefitted from Gambino's efforts to build the food and consumer package goods marketing program to one of the most highly regarded in the country. Alumni have pursued careers, they have been promoted, and they have lived their dreams. And that's Gambino's biggest reward.

#### What's next?

"We have so many great things happening," Gambino remarks. "We launched an Emerging Leaders Executive Development program which has been well received, Bob Samples, faculty specialist, is leading our efforts in this area. Our Food Industry Research and Education Center will be directed by Dr. Marcel Zondag, associate professor of marketing, beginning this semester. We also have plans for a Food Industry Innovation Center that Dr. Ann Veeck, professor of marketing, is spearheading, and we currently are in talks to build a packaging innovation center that would house national and international packaging archives. In addition, we soon expect to announce a new relationship that will bring virtual reality store design and shelf management capabilities to our program.

As for me personally, this is such an exciting time to be able to see so many great things coming together. We have a great group of faculty, staff and student leaders in place, and a

solid succession plan to ensure that the WMU food and consumer package goods marketing program remains No. 1 in the country for the foreseeable future."

## William Crane: Helping students and alumni become stars in their industries

WILLIAM CRANE, B.B.A.'06



William Crane, B.B.A.'06, radiates Bronco pride and expertise in everything he does. Graduating from the Haworth College of Business with a degree in integrated supply management, his alumni volunteer connection with the college began shortly after, when he joined the Integrated Supply Management Executive Council. Throughout the past 13 years, Crane has contributed his expertise to the council and students alike by helping faculty keep the program cutting-edge and students explore all the avenues that exist for supply chain professionals. He hosts students at his company, provides case studies for supply chain courses, recruits students, guest lectures on best practices and collaborates on faculty research.

Crane's supply chain journey has taken him from leading organizations to founding his own business, <a href="IndustryStar">IndustryStar</a>, an on-demand supply chain services and software technology company, based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. With an entrepreneurial team passionate about partnering with forward thinking leaders, IndustryStar helps bring innovative and disruptive products to market that will have a positive impact on the world.

And now, student entrepreneurs in <u>Starting Gate</u>, WMU's student business accelerator, are benefiting from Crane's expertise as well. Crane has donated \$7,600 worth of his company's services and software to the aspiring entrepreneurs in order to get them ready to launch their products.

Students are provided with a menu of IndustryStar's offerings for both early-stage companies and those ready to begin manufacturing. The options include everything from cloud collaborative bill of material software, to customized supplier research, to regulatory certification support, to onsite plant assessments and more.

The services and software are meant to help the student companies gain "supply chain muscle" to enable them to get their products to market faster.

"We are very fortunate to receive this gift from William Crane and IndustryStar," says Lara Hobson, director of Starting Gate. "Students will benefit from the knowledge William and his team have in the development and launch of all-new products. This valuable early-stage venture support helps students move from the prototype stage to volume manufacturing much sooner."

Megan Gesler, Conor Mulhearn and Anthony Mastro, all industrial and entrepreneurial engineering majors, are the first students who will be working with Crane's team. Their company, Gel Sleeves, is dedicated to restoring confidence in both the elderly and those on blood thinners who are often at risk of serious bruising as they go about everyday life. The product design incorporates gel pockets into a soft cotton and Lycra material sleeve, strategically placed over high-impact areas. Gel Sleeves prevent bruising before it happens.

"We are looking forward to connecting with IndustryStar's Solutions team to help build a plan for producing our product," Gesler says. "This includes researching suppliers, costs, lead time, risk level and more for the sleeve."

Now that Gel Sleeves has its minimum viable product, its team will work closely with IndustryStar throughout the course of spring semester to scale the business. "We are excited to move production out of my dining room to a validated supplier that can help us produce an item with consistent quality," says Gesler.

And these students will be learning from the best. IndustryStar's client roster includes Honda, ThermoFisher Scientific, BAE Systems, Armstrong, Wenger, Plenty, May Mobility, Xenith and many more.

"William's fingerprints are on many of the most exciting recent and upcoming new product launches," says Dr. Sime Curkovic, professor of management. "His company has created a series of innovative offerings and technologies that enable companies to dramatically reduce the cost, time and risk of bringing new products to market. William's unique blend of practical, real-world experience mixed with cutting-edge innovation has allowed him to partner with companies to bring inventive and sustainable products to market faster."

For Crane, his involvement with WMU is a way for him to pay forward his experience and give back.

"The IndustryStar team and I are thrilled about our expanding partnership to support WMU's Starting Gate," says Crane. "There are world-changing new product ideas being dreamed up by amazing startups, small- and medium-size businesses, and corporate innovators in Michigan that we hope to accelerate toward production in the future. This includes entrepreneurs among WMU student and alumni communities."

Crane's thought leadership in the supply chain field results in his being tapped to share his perspective regularly. Further, his deep commitment to the supply chain craft can be found in his podcast and blog.

Check out some of his recent expert pieces

How Leading Companies Accelerate New Product Launches

Supply Management's Role in New Product Innovation

<u>Is Outsourcing Supply Chain Your Answer to Regain Control?</u>

Podcast: Supply Chain Innovation with William Crane

VISIT THE INDUSTRYSTAR BLOG

## WMU Lean Six Sigma Certification: Flexible and Differentiated Courses



Tom Kelly, instructor of supply chain at Western Michigan University, shares his experience on the benefits of Lean Six Sigma certification courses, which the Haworth College of Business will begin offering in spring. He has 30 years of experience in purchasing leadership positions with companies such as Dexter Company, Amcor, Conn-Selmer, Whirlpool and Parker Hannifin.

#### For those who do not know what Lean Six Sigma is, can you describe it?

Lean Six Sigma is a methodology that focuses on improving the performance of an organization by systematically removing waste and reducing variation throughout the organization's process. It also provides a framework for overall organizational culture change.

Lean Six Sigma changes the mindset of an organization's employees and managers, shifting perspective to growth, continuous improvement and process optimization that meets or exceeds the customer's needs.

### What does Lean Six Sigma certification do for business professionals and their organizations?

Individuals with certification are knowledgeable in different approaches to generate value and meet customer needs. They know how to optimize business processes and enhance staff involvement. Six Sigma certification makes a professional stand out from the competition.

A study by the Noble Institute of Quality Certification suggests that within the first three to seven years of certification, an individual could see an increase in salary of as much as 30% over a peer who does not have certification.

### What is your own experience with Lean Six Sigma—in terms of teaching lean concepts and your own success with applying the methodology?

Prior to joining WMU, I spent more than 30 years in the private sector. During that time, I had the good fortune of working for companies that were industry leaders in their fields. In every case, these companies were in the process of rolling out or had already launched Lean Six Sigma methodology. This methodology was key in helping make these organization No. 1 in their markets.

#### How does having certified Six Sigma professionals in your organization transform it?

In order to successfully implement Lean Six Sigma, a combination of tools from both lean manufacturing and Six Sigma must be used. Some of these tools include kaizen, value-stream mapping, line balancing, and visual management. Having team members in an organization who can understand and implement these tools allows companies to improve their processes and the quality of their products. In turn, these companies are able to produce more products with less error and higher value. Customer satisfaction thereby increases, which will lead to an increase in customer loyalty.

#### What is WMU's track record with teaching lean concepts?

Although this specific program is a new offering at WMU, the concepts and tools of Lean Six Sigma have been taught to our integrated supply management students since the mid-1990s. Our instructors are academics and practitioners. Lean concepts represent a key component in our supply chain program which has consistently been ranked in the top 10 in the country by Gartner. This program will be delivered with the same type of expertise and quality.

#### Who is the ideal candidate for Lean Six Sigma certification?

What makes our program unique is that it does not focus on a particular type of candidate skill set. Many current Lean Six Sigma programs primarily focus on the analytical elements of business and individuals who possess this skill set. WMU views Lean Six Sigma as a tool

kit that can benefit all functions within business. Our focus is to match tools to the candidates and their organizations' needs.

#### How will the WMU training sessions be structured?

WMU's program offers a number of different certification options. We offer the traditional white, yellow, green and black belt levels. We also currently offer a certification in the field of marketing.

Our courses are designed to be modular in nature. The modular design permits candidates to tailor the certification process to their schedules and build on previous certifications. Individuals who have previous exposure or certification to Lean Six Sigma will also be reviewed and considered for the next level of certification.

Because of this modular approach, we offer numerous opportunities throughout the calendar year to get one or all of the certifications.

#### How is WMU's program different than other programs?

Our program offers a number of differences over other certification programs on the market:

- The emphasis of the certifications is on the elements used in Lean Six Sigma and how these are applied. Individuals will concentrate on interpretation of information and identification of solutions for improvement.
- Our application of the tools is not just on the manufacturing process, but all
  processes used in business. Our goal is for participants to be able to successfully
  apply Lean Six Sigma to customer service or human resources as well as production.
- The modular configuration allows individuals to develop at their own pace and minimizes having to pay for content that is already familiar.
- We offer training at multiple locations as well as potential onsite options, which gives individuals substantial flexibility.
- Our instructors have a combination of private sector and academic experience.

**REGISTER NOW**