3-2017

Haworth College of Business News (03/2017)

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ANNUAL CONFERENCE SET

WMU’s acclaimed Food Marketing Conference is expected to draw nearly 900 industry executives to DeVos Place in Grand Rapids for a conference on March 21 and 22. Registration is ongoing.

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INNOVATION FELLOW NAMED

Advertising student Jill Puckett is among 224 students nationally and internationally named University Innovation Fellows, a global program run by Stanford University.

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EXPLORING CAREER CHOICES

Advertising students recently visited Chicago for a two-day career event. Students visited DBB and Edelman, spent time with alumni, and visited the Chicago Advertising Federation career fair.

VIEW THE PHOTO ALBUM
WMU’s Food Marketing Conference to draw nearly 900 industry leaders

by Jenna Giragosian
March 6, 2017 | WMU News

KALAMAZOO, Mich.–Western Michigan University’s acclaimed Food Marketing Conference unfolds Tuesday and Wednesday, March 21 and 22, and is expected to draw nearly 900 industry executives to DeVos Place in Grand Rapids.

The two-day conference will feature presentations on current trends in the food and consumer package goods industries and will explore this year’s conference theme, "Leading with Change." The conference will also include networking breaks and breakout sessions. Registration is ongoing at foodmarketingconference.com.

Again this year, the conference will feature an impressive speaker lineup and hot topic presentations including the popular executive forum, "A Retail Lens on the Food Industry," as well as a special presentation by comedian Steve Rizzo titled “Get Your SHIFT Together.”

Conference presentations
The lineup features sessions from industry leaders covering such topics as staying relevant in ever-changing markets, overcoming uncertainty and responding to retail trends.

- Two early-bird concurrent sessions will kick off the conference. Early attendees can choose from “What’s next?” by Jordan Rost, vice president of consumer insights for Nielsion, and “When Aldi and Lidi go Head-to-Head” by Bill Bishop, chief architect of Brick Meets Click and industry expert, and Bill Bolton, former CEO of Jewel Foods and industry consultant.
- Michael Sansolo, retail food consultant, will offer a diverse, in-depth and unique view of the changing nature of today’s shoppers, employees and competition, and an exploration of the wide-ranging impact of economic issues. Sansolo’s session, “The Struggle for Relevance,” will examine what companies must do to remain relevant in this fast-changing world based on a new study from the Coca-Cola Retailing Research Council.
- Val Oswalt, president, North America sales, Mondelez International, will speak about “Leading through Transformation.” This session will focus on how companies and organizations can help foster a culture that allows colleagues to not only survive change but also to flourish during times of uncertainty. Oswalt leads all direct-store delivery, as well as retail and customer headquarter activities for Mondelez’s snacks and confectionery businesses.
- Kevin Hartman, head of analytics at Google, partners with major advertisers, creative agencies and media companies to develop digital solutions that build businesses and brands. Hartman’s session, “The Shopper of the Future: How to Reach Them, Engage Their Interests and Measure It All,” will explore recent trends in shopper behavior and how winning players have responded in the market and cast a keen eye toward the future of the retail landscape.
- Jayne Homco, president, Kroger Co., Michigan Division, started the past year having achieved a remarkable 50 consecutive quarters of positive identical supermarket sales growth unlike any other retailer. This tremendous success can be attributed to the company’s “people first” approach of focusing on their associates and customers. Homco will share Kroger’s passion for people, results and food in her presentation titled “We Are in the People Business ... We Sell Groceries on the Side.”

For a complete list of speakers, agenda and registration information, visit foodmarketingconference.com.

WMU Food Marketing Conference

In its 52nd year, the WMU Food Marketing Conference brings leading industry experts from around the country to West Michigan to share their knowledge and latest developments in the industry. The conference is a nonprofit event that supports scholarships and programs for unique educational experiences for WMU food marketing students.
Stanford names two WMU students as University Innovation Fellows

by Mark Schwerin
March 1, 2017 | WMU News

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Two Western Michigan University students are among 224 nationally and internationally named University Innovation Fellows, a global program run by Stanford University that empowers student leaders to increase campus engagement with innovation, entrepreneurship, creativity and design thinking.

Jill Puckett, a student majoring in advertising and promotion, with minors in general business and gender and women's studies, is from Marshall, while Nathan LaWarre, a student majoring in electrical engineering with a minor in environmental studies and sustainability, is from Saranac. They have just completed training to join the program.
Empowering students

Students chosen for the program, which is run by Stanford University's Hasso Plattner Institute of Design, represent 58 higher education institutions in seven countries. The program empowers students to become agents of change at their schools. Fellows work to ensure that their peers gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to compete in the economy of the future and make a positive impact on the world.

Fellows advocate for lasting institutional change and create opportunities for students to engage with innovation, entrepreneurship, design thinking and creativity. They design innovation spaces, start entrepreneurship organizations, host experiential learning events and work with faculty to develop new courses.

Puckett hopes to better connect students from different areas in interdisciplinary projects and research.

"I believe that to truly foster innovation and entrepreneurship on campus, we need to have students from all areas working and learning together," Puckett says. "So far, working with Nathan and other students through the Innovation Club, I have learned so much from students outside my major. Because of this experience, I think differently, with more creativity, because I see things from a different perspective."

LaWarre also credits the Innovation Club and other opportunities for entrepreneurship on the WMU campus, including Starting Gate, student project labs at the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, WMU’s entrepreneurship minor and student research grants.

"I am looking forward to the road ahead of me," LaWarre says. "Learning doesn't stop at the ending of our UIF training. Hopefully, we will be able to make an impact on WMU's campus and fuel the entrepreneurial spirit."

LaWarre

LaWarre, an active member of the Sunseeker solar race car team at WMU, works as a tutor at Kalamazoo high schools and as an intern with an architectural engineering firm. He hopes to one day work in the renewable energy field, researching and creating more efficient sources of energy.

Puckett

Puckett works as an office assistant in WMU’s Office of the Vice President for Research. Starting this summer, she will take on the
marketing capabilities and strategies intern position at Amway in Grand Rapids. After graduating in spring 2018, she plans to move on to grad school and earn a master's degree in market research before starting her career.

**University Innovation Fellows program**

With the addition of this year's fellows, the University Innovation Fellows program has trained 1,000 students at 185 schools since its creation. Fellows are sponsored by faculty and administrators as individuals or teams of students and selected through an application process twice annually. Following acceptance into the program, schools fund the students to go through six weeks of online training and travel to the annual University Innovation Fellows Silicon Valley Meetup. Throughout the year, they take part in events and conferences and have opportunities to learn from each other, Stanford mentors, and leaders in academia and industry.

"During their training, fellows learn how to analyze their campus innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems and understand the needs of stakeholders with the goal of uncovering opportunities to enrich the education opportunities for peers," says Leticia Britos Cavagnaro, program co-director.

For more information, visit universityinnovationfellows.org. To learn more about WMU's fellows, visit universityinnovation.org/wiki/Western_Michigan_University_Student_Priorities.

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