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Taking Flight - February 2017

Message From the Dean

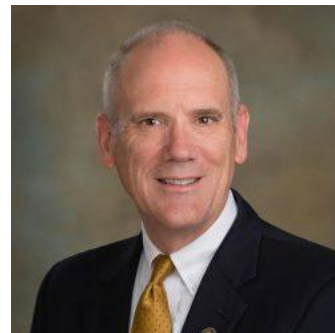
The great Vince Lombardi once said, "Winning is a habit; unfortunately, so is losing." Of course, Coach Lombardi won more than most, and he won a lot more than he lost. That's why the Super Bowl trophy is called the Lombardi Trophy.

Like most Georgians, I stood there, frozen in my own frustration, as the New England Patriots defeated our Atlanta Falcons, coming back from a 25-point deficit to win Super Bowl 51 and take home the coveted Lombardi Trophy. As much as it pains me, though, I have to admit that the Patriots proved Lombardi's point; winning is a habit, and, when pressured, the Patriots reverted to habit. They calmly went about their business, trusting in their training and confident in their abilities. In many ways, what they did epitomizes the message we work to instill in our students every day.

We want them prepared and confident, ready to engage any problem, trained to apply state-of-the-art principles and practices, and to adapt as necessary to get results. We want them to see that in us and see it in one another, and we want to build a culture of confidence and of high expectations. By preparing well, instilling the right attitude, and modeling a quiet tenacity of purpose, we want our students to face any challenge with anticipation and with the expectation of a good outcome.

So, as you read this newsletter, look for evidence of this "can do" attitude, and look at the results our students and faculty are producing. Under the direction of Kathleen Gruben, Ph.D., a group of our students won the National Retail Federation's Student Challenge. You'll notice that our programs, especially our online graduate programs, continue to be recognized, and ranked, by *U.S. News & World Report*. We have students who are making their marks through internships at companies like BMW, and alumni who are in leading positions at innovative firms like PureCars.

As Vince Lombardi said, "Winning is a habit..." Well, here at the Georgia Southern College of Business, we're working hard, developing good habits, and looking forward to great things.



Alumni Spotlight: Matthew Whaley

Matthew Whaley (Econ, '12) is chair of the Young Alumni Board for the College of Business. While at Georgia Southern, Matthew served as vice chair of the Students of Information Technology, a member of the Economics Club and a member of the Association for Information Systems. When not at the library, you could find him cheering on the Eagles at football, basketball and baseball games.

Following graduation, he joined TEKSystems as an IT consultant in Atlanta. At TEKSystems, Matthew worked with clients such as Georgia Pacific and its subsidiary Koch Business Solutions until hired by Newell Rubbermaid (NWL) as an application developer to support and deliver custom business solutions and applications that support the global sales and service teams with Salesforce.com. He currently works as a salesforce lead developer for PureCars, a company that partners with Google to provide a full suite of digital advertising solutions for the automotive industry. In his new role, Matthew is able to think critically and creatively by working with different business leaders within his company to see how Salesforce.com can be used to streamline their processes.

Matthew's greatest accomplishment is graduating from the College of Business and being asked to serve as chair of the College of Business Young Alumni Board. Through this position, he has the opportunity to give back to the University that gave so much to him as a student. He is also excited to be working with fellow alumni to shape the Young Alumni Board, leaving a lasting impact on students for generations to come. Matthew also serves as a youth counselor for middle to high school students at Mt. Carmel United Methodist Church in Norcross. Although he currently lives in Atlanta, Matthew hopes to one day settle down in the Savannah/Statesboro area.



Retail Students Compete in New York City, Bringing Home the Top Prize

A team of Georgia Southern students received first place for the 2017 Student Challenge (<https://nrf.com/career-center/scholarships/student-challenge/how-apply-the-student-challenge>), a business case competition for National Retail Federation (<https://nrf.com/>) (NRF) Student Association members to demonstrate their creativity and business acumen to retail executives, sponsored by KPMG (<https://home.kpmg.com/us/en/home.html>). The finalists attended the NRF Foundation GALA in New York City, where the top team was announced on January 15.

Jeffrey Licciardello, senior public relations major with a marketing minor, Kelsey Wertz, senior marketing and logistics major, William (Keller) Campbell, junior marketing and logistics major, and Alexis Montañó, junior marketing major with a management minor, worked together on the competition to create a 20-page pitch presentation, a mock website and a 90-second pitch video to convince STORY (<http://thisisstory.com/our-story/>) CEO and Founder, Rachel Shechtman, to bring their story to life through one of three themes: Travel, Sensory, or Made in America. The proposal was created to provide an experience for the customer through selected merchandise, marketing approach, social media campaigns and curated events.

Kathleen Gruben, Ph.D., faculty advisor to the team, associate professor of marketing and director of the Center for Retail Studies at Georgia Southern, worked with the students every step of the way, including accompanying them to the GALA, where the winner was announced.



William (Keller) Campbell, Kathleen Gruben, KPMG Consultant Ali Wampler, Kelsey Wertz, Alexis Montañó and Jeffrey Licciardello walk the red carpet at the NRF Foundation GALA in New York City.

"The team of four was a dream team," said Gruben. "They met every two weeks from the first week in May to the first week of classes. Then, they worked together twice a week until the original submission. Throughout the process, the team took all criticism as positive and adapted accordingly. They addressed every minute criticism the judges gave. They were bound and determined they would win."

Georgia Southern's team was one of three teams to make it to the final round along with the University of North Texas and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

"Being on stage was absolutely nerve wracking," said Licciardello. "Throughout the conference, we really got along with the other teams, so I knew I would be excited no matter who won – deep down in my gut I was anxious to hear the results. The competition was tough and the other teams had concepts that had their strong points. However, when Mark Larson from KPMG said the words 'Georgia Southern,' I was absolutely blown away by emotions and pride."

"This project has been our baby since May," added Wertz. "We worked extremely hard on it, always editing, revising and bringing new ideas to the table to make it better. Standing on stage and hearing our names called was so rewarding and gave proof that all of our hard work has paid off."

Each student will receive a \$5,000 scholarship along with having had the opportunity to present in front of nearly 780 retail CEOs and senior executives, industry insiders, celebrities and students and faculty from 80 other universities.

"Being able to show all of those celebrities and retail executives that the University from Statesboro could not only compete, but win, made working tirelessly throughout summer, fall semester and Christmas Break completely worth it," said Licciardello. "I've never been more proud to be an Eagle."

"To sit in a huge auditorium with hundreds of attendees, unexpectedly hearing the Georgia Southern fight song, followed by "my" team entering the stage was overwhelming," added Gruben. "Tears rolled down my cheeks. They made a flawless presentation."

Georgia Southern Online Business Programs Recognized for Excellence in Latest *U.S. News & World Report*

The Georgia Southern College of Business graduate programs have been recognized for excellence by *U.S. News & World Report* for the best online programs among colleges and universities for 2017.

Three of the College's online graduate programs were ranked in the top 50 of their respected ranking list, to include the online Masters of Business Administration (MBA) program and the online graduate business programs (non-MBA), which includes the online master of accounting (WebMAcc) program and the Master of Science in applied economics (MSAE).

The online MBA at Georgia Southern, tied with five other universities, ranked 36th out of nearly 200 ranked programs on the 2017 Best Online MBA Programs list. Additionally, online graduate business programs (non-MBA), WebMAcc and MSAE, came in at 45th out of more than 100 schools included in the list.

U.S. News publishes numerical ranks for only the top three-fourths of each ranking category, and selects factors to assess each program in the categories of student engagement, admissions selectivity, peer reputation, faculty credentials and training, and student services and technology.



Deans of the College



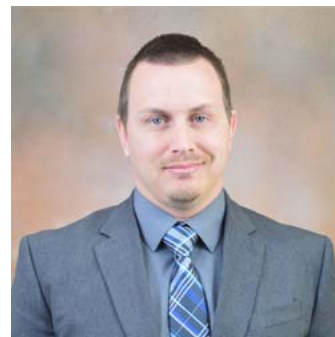
Recently, we moved the pictures of our past deans from the Dean's Conference Room to be showcased outside of the Dean's Suite for everyone to see, along with Dean Amason's new portrait. This is part of our ongoing effort to build a culture of excellence and aspiration, by celebrating our successes and the traditions of our past. Thanks to Lori Grice for the portraits. And, a tip of the hat to our former deans, Drs. Paul LaGrone, Ori James, Carl Gooding, and Ron Shiffler!

Finance Student Passes Chartered Financial Analyst Level I Exam

Joe Cleland, a senior finance major, graduating in May 2017, recently passed the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Level I Exam and is set to take Level II of the CFA exam. The CFA exam is the finance certification equivalent to the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) exam and is recognized around the world as one of the top financial certifications, providing candidates with advanced investment analysis and real-world portfolio management skills needed to succeed in the rapidly changing financial markets. Currently, Joe is starting to prepare for the Level II exam.

For the Level I exam, Joe studied about 400 hours in four months. He plans to do the same with the Level II exam, which he will take in June. Joe credits his success on the Level I exam to Rongrong Zhang, Ph.D., associate professor of finance. Zhang, a CFA Charterholder, provided insight and clarity into some of the more advanced topics on the exam, not typically covered in the scope of a four-year finance degree. "She explained the core concepts and calculations of advanced topics such as Equity H Model pricing, bond pricing with linear interpolation

and commodity forward yield curves,” stated Joe. After graduation, Joe will attend The University of Georgia in the fall to earn his masters of financial planning, with hopes of working in asset management as a financial analyst. The pass rate of the CFA Level I Exam among professionals is 43 percent. Congrats, Joe, and good luck on the Level II Exam. To learn more about the CFA® Program, visit <https://www.cfainstitute.org/pages/index.aspx> (<https://www.cfainstitute.org/pages/index.aspx>).



Student Ambassador Successes at BMW

Rachel Yarbrough, a sophomore logistics student, is currently participating in the BMW co-op program in Greenville, South Carolina. Within two weeks of the start of the co-op program, Rachel was overseeing several projects. One project she is working on is consolidating work and limiting the use of forklifts in a particular area of the BMW plant. Rachel has experienced an OSHA audit and is working with associates, those handling the parts that go on the vehicles, on an ergonomic work station to avoid future injuries. “My mentor and manager have been a great support team,” states Rachel. Rachel’s co-op with BMW has been extended for another two semesters.



February BIG Café

BIG Café is a monthly networking event held by the Business Innovation Group (BIG) on the second Wednesday of each month. This month’s event was on February 8, located in downtown Statesboro at City Campus. Local entrepreneurs gathered to help one another solve business problems. As two local entrepreneurs presented, attendees enjoyed a complimentary cup of coffee provided by Cool Beanz and donuts provided by the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority (DSDA) as they gave invaluable feedback to the two presenters.

The two presenters for February’s BIG Café were Todd Bridges with New York Life, and Susan and Brooks Adams from Total Wellness Georgia. Each presented with hopes of receiving feedback from the attendees to help solve business problems. Todd asked, “How do I get involved and grow my business in the Statesboro/Bulloch County community?”

Currently, Todd is a member of the Statesboro/Bulloch County Chamber of Commerce, and as of January 1, he joined the new Innovation Incubator at City Campus for the purpose of getting involved in the community to grow his business. It was suggested that he provide educational seminars, utilizing the classroom at City Campus, in conjunction with his wife’s CPA business during tax season since that is when most people may have financial questions. Another local business owner suggested building relationships that include excellent customer service beyond simply sending a birthday card every year. By doing so, the relationships with his customers would be much more than most insurance agents and would allow word of mouth to help him grow his business.

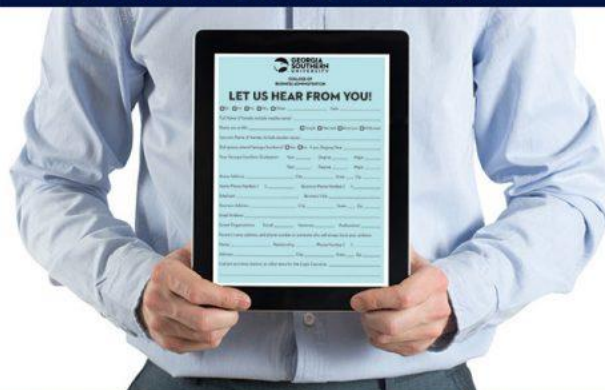
Susan and Brooks Adams explained their business, Total Wellness Georgia. Susan and Brooks are a vendor for Melaleuca, which produces products to reduce toxins in your life through household products and to increase overall health. Educating the community on overall total wellness, the Adamses partner with other wellness-oriented businesses to ensure people are making healthy lifestyle decisions. It was suggested that the husband/wife team develop an elevator pitch to better explain what their business is, develop a website and take to social media to help grow their business. Currently, Total Wellness Georgia is sponsoring awareness events in Statesboro/Bulloch County to bring local, healthier lifestyle habits to the area through experts who live locally. For more information, visit [HealthyCommunityStatesboro.EventBrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/healthy-community-sponsored-by-total-wellness-tickets-31688061846) (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/healthy-community-sponsored-by-total-wellness-tickets-31688061846>).

BIG Café was a huge success thanks to everyone who attended and gave invaluable feedback. Also, special thanks to Todd Bridges and Susan and Brooks Adams for presenting and to our sponsors, David Hoyle of Cool Beanz, and Elena McLendon, DSDA. If you would like to present your business obstacle(s) at BIG Café, please contact Andi Wilson at amwilson@GeorgiaSouthern.edu (<mailto:amwilson@GeorgiaSouthern.edu>) or (912)478-0872. Attend the next BIG Café if you would like to network, drink coffee and help one another thrive. Also, attend five times and you receive a free BIG Café coffee mug!



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OF WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YOU



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We look forward to hearing from you soon!

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Last updated: 2/28/2017

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