Taking Flight – June 2018

Georgia Southern University

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I gave a talk recently on “fiduciary responsibility” in the context of organizational management and leadership. Essentially, a fiduciary responsibility is an obligation to act on behalf of and in the best interest of another. Directors and executives have a fiduciary responsibility to act in the best interests of their organizations; that is true for both for-profit and not-for-profits. Many licensed professionals are also expected to act in the best interests of their clients. Across all contexts, though, a fiduciary responsibility is a high standard that requires discipline, a long-term focus and the sort of clear judgment required to make hard decisions on behalf of another.

To illustrate the principle for my audience, I used the example of my own position and my responsibilities to the College of Business and to Georgia Southern. As a university, we don’t have stockholders or customers, at least in the traditional sense. So, we are fundamentally different from businesses and other organizations. Yet, we do manage significant resources, and we do function as a large organization. We make investments, we take risks, and we strive to increase the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of our efforts. The question then is this, as we do these things, what is the standard for judging the results? Asked differently, on whose behalf are we acting, and who is deriving the most benefit from our actions and efforts?

I answer that question this way. We owe a fiduciary obligation to our alumni. They hold our degrees, and their link to Georgia Southern is inextricable; they will always be alumni, and so, they will always have a vested interest in the quality, impact and reputations of our graduates, faculty, programs and degrees. If we do what we do well, then our degrees will increase in value every day in perpetuity. Given that focus and obligation, we can never take short cuts and never game the system. We can never risk our long-term reputation for any short-term gain. At the same time, we can never forgo a risk simply because it is inconvenient, and we can never make the easy choice when the harder one offers greater long-term value to our degrees and better serves the long-term interests of our degree holders. If we keep that as our clear standard, then everyone will benefit. We’ll “do right” by our students because we’ll provide them with a state-of-the-art education. We’ll do right by our people, by challenging them, by providing them with the tools they need to succeed, and by enabling them to compete at the highest level. We’ll do right by our State and region by producing a good product and attracting greater investment.

Our obligation and our promise are to increase the value of those degrees every single day. And so, when you read this newsletter, think in those terms. We’re a great place, but we want to be even greater still. And there is no limit on how high we can fly if we work hard, stay positive and continue to focus on doing the right things.

Alumni Spotlight – Morrell McCaskill

Morrell McCaskill (FINC, 2007) began his career in Savannah at Wachovia Bank, then Wells Fargo Bank, as a licensed financial specialist and then a regional private banker. In 2014, Morrell moved to Synovus Securities as a financial consultant and was there for four years. Now, he serves as market president at Queensborough National Bank & Trust Company in Statesboro. Morrell’s responsibilities have always included holding investment licenses and giving advice in one form or another around market investments and their place in personal financial planning. As market president, his role extends to all aspects of banking with a special focus on wealth planning and commercial lending.

Morrell’s career challenges began almost immediately since his career started just before the market crash of 2008–2009 and was followed by the great recession. He quickly had to learn to “think outside of the box” to meet his clients’ goals. Throughout the economic recovery, learning how to “think outside of the box” gave Morrell the perspective that has allowed him to offer broader and more meaningful guidance in all aspects of his clients’
Since he believes community banks are the backbone of every community, Morrell says the best part of his job is being part of fueling growth of the small businesses in his community, which, in turn, serve as the nation’s economic expansion foundations. He especially enjoys getting to know and helping the people who risk their livelihoods and financial stability every day. Morrell loves being able to use his expertise to assist all members of his community to achieve their financial dreams. In the future, he plans to remain in the financial industry to help as many people as he can.

Though he had not originally intended to become a banker, the further Morrell progressed through the finance program, the greater his interest in banking grew. While at Georgia Southern, Morrell’s favorite classes were bank management, enterprise risk management and estate planning. Bill Wells, Ph.D., associate professor of finance, and Ed Sibbald, MIA, retired BB&T Distinguished Chair in Banking and senior lecturer of finance, were two of his favorite professors because they placed him and a few of the finance majors into pilot-type courses designed to provide “real world” feel and application. Morrell uses what he learned from Wells and Sibbald and his finance courses almost daily. In addition, he was a member of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity, through which he learned the importance of philanthropy in a community (and just how fun it can be). Morrell also discovered the importance of supporting a successful and growing athletic program. He is extremely proud and often boasts of all of this and much more about the Georgia Southern experience.

In his spare time, Morrell and his wife Juli enjoy the outdoors and almost all activities associated with it. Whether it is hunting on the family farm, fishing at their local lake, playing golf, gem mining in the mountains, or attending Georgia Southern football games, as long as it is something outdoors, Morrell and Juli enjoy it.

MBA Alumni Highlighted on Poets&Quants

On poetsandquants.com, College of Business MBA alum, Brian Joiner (2018), was featured in the “Best & Brightest” feature as part of the 2018 Best Online MBAs. Poets&Quants recently ranked the Georgia Southern Online MBA in the top 20 online MBA programs. To compile the inaugural Best & Brightest online MBAs, each school was asked to select two nominees from the forthcoming graduating class based on “strong academic performance, critical and consistent contributions, striking personal narratives, and innate potential.” Basically, each school was asked, “Which students were so fundamental to your online program that you can’t imagine the class without them?”

**Brian Joiner**  
Georgia Southern University

“Conscientious, self-motivated, eager learner. If I’m not growing, I’m dying.”  

**Age:** 34  
**Hometown:** Warner Robins, GA  
**Fun fact about yourself:** I was my junior college’s 3-Point Shooting Champion.  
**Undergraduate School and Degree:** BBA in Accounting from Georgia Southern University and now MBA from Georgia Southern University. Double Eagle!  
**Where are you currently working?** Synovus, AVP of Commercial Banking
What achievement are you most proud of in your professional career? I received my company’s annual Customer Covenant Award in 2014, and this is special to me because it’s a reflection of how both clients and peers perceive you and the dedication you put into your craft on a daily basis.

Why did you choose this school’s online MBA program? I wanted a reputable online program that would fit into my busy professional schedule, and the school I chose was important to me because Georgia Southern University was my alma mater.

What was your favorite part of being in an online MBA program? The thing I liked the most was the flexibility an online program offers. If I had a project deadline or upcoming exam, I always knew well ahead of time and could plan accordingly around my work schedule. There were plenty of late nights and early mornings finishing papers or taking a test at my leisure.

What was the most surprising thing about an online learning environment? The relationships built with my teammates was most surprising to me and another thing I absolutely loved about the program. We formed small teams that we remained in throughout the entire program and those individuals have become true friends of mine. The camaraderie built through enduring the challenging assignments allowed for real camaraderie and team building, which I wasn’t expecting considering we never met face-to-face.

How did your online experience compare with your in-the-classroom experience as an undergraduate student? With over 10 years lapsed between my undergraduate and graduate studies, there was an obvious difference in technological capabilities. My group members lived miles away from each other in multiple states. Thanks to the online platform and online video chats, it was easy to work on projects together as a highly effective team.

What is your best piece of advice to an applicant for thriving in an online MBA program? The program is as much about team dynamics and leadership as it is about lessons learned from the books. Step up, take a leadership role, and put everything you have into the program. You’ll get out as much as you put in.

How has your online education helped you in your current job? The broad base of knowledge the MBA covers in under two years is incredible. From fascinating organizational behavior studies to understanding business on a global scale, it feels like a lifetime of enlightenment that I’ll take with me both on the job and in life. The MBA has afforded me a distinction among my peers, while providing me with invaluable managerial skills I can apply in my banking career.

If you had to do it all over again, would you? Why? Certainly. This program has enriched my life in many ways. It’s both a personal and professional achievement that I’m proud of and I’ll look back fondly upon for many years to come.

What is your ultimate long-term professional goal? The program has furthered my interest in managerial strategy, and, ultimately, I’d love to work my way into an executive management position in banking where I’m responsible for the overall strategy of the company. To have a successful career, I can feel satisfied by and enjoy the fruits of my career-long efforts.

To view the feature online, visit https://poetsandquants.com/2018/06/06/2018-best-online-mbas-brian-joiner-georgia-southern-university/. Stay tuned for the July Taking Flight newsletter for the another alumnus featured by P&Q.

Georgia Southern Human Resource Management Student Chapter Earns International Award

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) has awarded a 2017–2018 Superior Merit Award designation to the Georgia Southern University SHRM student chapter for providing superior growth and development opportunities to its student chapter members.

The SHRM student chapter merit award program, which began in 1972, was created to encourage student chapters to require ongoing excellence in the following areas: student chapter requirements, chapter operations, chapter programming and professional development of members, support of the human resource profession and
SHRM engagement.

“As we move together forward, young professionals like these being honored at distinguished student chapters play a vital role in SHRM’s success,” said SHRM President Johnny C. Taylor Jr., SHRM-SCP. “I’m especially honored to thank this year’s award winners because they offer excellent evidence that SHRM’s future is indeed in good hands.”

SHRM 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 one of which ran from April 1, 2017, to March 31, 2018.

During the award cycle, the Georgia Southern student chapter was involved in human resource (HR) activities that included the local SHRM chapter and mentorships with HR professionals who attended bi-weekly meetings to discuss employee-management topics such as résumé building, interview skills and career development, as well as industry trends. College of Business alumni also joined to offer real-world advice on post-college transitions.

The chapter’s increased outreach boosted student participation by more than 20 percent from the previous year.

“Our SHRM student chapter worked hard this year, and it’s great to see those efforts acknowledged with this award from the Society for Human Resource Management,” stated Assistant Professor of Management and SHRM faculty co-advisor David Sikora, Ph.D. “Over the past decade, our chapter has consistently done great work in increasing the awareness of the HR field among our students and in helping students better understand what it takes to build a successful HR career. This Superior Merit award continues the Georgia Southern chapter’s recognition as one of the top student chapters in the United States.”

For more information, contact David Sikora at dsikora@georgiasouthern.edu or co-advisor Steve Charlier, Ph.D., associate professor of management, at scharlier@georgiasouthern.edu.

The Society for Human Resource Management is the world’s largest HR professional society, representing 285,000 members in more than 165 countries. For nearly seven decades, the Society has been the leading provider of resources serving the needs of HR professionals and advancing the practice of human resource management. SHRM has more than 575 affiliated chapters within the United States and subsidiary offices in China, India and United Arab Emirates. For more information visit shrm.org.

AICPA Recognizes College of Business Alums with Elijah Watt Sells Award

The American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) announced the winners of the 2017 Elijah Watt Sells Award. The 2017 award was presented to 58 CPA candidates, two of whom who are Georgia Southern University College of Business alumni, who obtained a cumulative average score above 95.50 across all four sections of the CPA Exam, passed all four sections of the examination on their first attempt and completed testing in 2017. A total of 95,858 individuals sat for the Examination in 2017.

“The CPA Exam protects the public interest by ensuring, along with education and experience requirements, that only qualified individuals are able to become licensed as Certified Public Accountants,” said Mike Decker, Association of International Certified Professional Accountants vice president of examinations. “Passing the Exam is a career milestone. And the extraordinary performance of this year’s Sells Award winners is truly an impressive accomplishment.”

The two alumni receiving this prestigious award this year are Christopher Groll (FINC, ’16) employed by KPMG in Atlanta, Georgia, and Linette Rousseau (MAcc, ’16) employed with University of Wisconsin, Madison.

“The School of Accountancy has set as a core principle to support the highest level of professional credentialing for our students,” states Tim Pearson, Ph.D., director of the Georgia Southern University School of Accountancy. “Our CPA exam pass rate continues to exceed the national average, and we have some very strong students perform exceptionally well on the exam.”
The Elijah Watt Sells Award program was established by the AICPA in 1923 to recognize outstanding performance on the CPA Exam. Sells, one of the first CPAs in the U.S., was active in the establishment of the AICPA and played a key role advancing professional education within the profession.

About AICPA

AICPA is the world’s largest member association representing the CPA profession, with more than 431,000 members in 137 countries and territories, and a history of serving the public interest since 1887. AICPA members represent many areas of practice, including business and industry, public practice, government, education and consulting. The AICPA sets ethical standards for its members and U.S. auditing standards for private companies, nonprofit organizations, federal, state and local governments. It develops and grades the Uniform CPA Examination, offers specialized credentials, builds the pipeline of future talent and drives professional competency development to advance the vitality, relevance and quality of the profession.

The AICPA maintains offices in New York, Washington, D.C., Durham, NC, and Ewing, NJ.

About the Association of International Certified Professional Accountants

The Association of International Certified Professional Accountants (the Association) is the most influential body of professional accountants, combining the strengths of the AICPA and the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) to power opportunity, trust and prosperity for people, businesses and economies worldwide. It represents 667,000 members and students across 184 counties and territories in public and management accounting and advocates for the public interest and business sustainability on current and emerging issues. With broad reach, rigor and resources, the Association advances the reputation, employability and quality of CPAs, CGMAs and accounting and finance professionals globally.
On Thursday, June 7, Dean’s Advisory Board members Cedric and Jacqueline Henry, along with Bill and Kimberly McLeod, hosted an alumni event for College of Business and other Georgia Southern alumni in the D.C./Virginia area on the rooftop of the Millennium Corporation offices. During the event, Dean Allen Amason presented Major General Leslie C. Smith with the AACSB Influential Leader Award given to MG Smith earlier in the year.
Economics Professor Visits Czechia

Richard McGrath, Ph.D., professor of economics, visited the faculty of economics at University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, Czechia, (formerly Czech Republic) for two weeks in May 2018 with financial support from the USB Faculty of Economics and the Georgia Southern Office of International Education. His was the return visit in an economics department faculty exchange that brought George Alina from the University of South Bohemia to the Armstrong and Statesboro campuses for two weeks in January 2018.

He gave two research talks, presenting “Response Bias in Event Surveys: Evidence from Minor League Baseball” co-authored by Michael Toma, Ph.D., director of the Center for Business Analytics and Economic Research (CBAER), and David Hoover, to the Department of Transport Management, Marketing and Logistics at the University of Pardubice on May 11, 2018, and to the faculty of Economics at the University of South Bohemia on May 16, 2018.

McGrath is an outside researcher on a University of South Bohemia internal research grant, under which he and colleagues have submitted for publication two papers on transportation infrastructure in Czechia and presented a paper at the Annual Meeting of the Academy of Economics and Finance in February 2018. He is also working on response bias research in tourism customer satisfaction with marketing research faculty from multiple institutions in Czechia.

As part of the faculty exchange, McGrath also gave a classroom lecture to marketing research students on Facebook and Cambridge Analytica and classroom lectures to business and economics students on fiscal and monetary policy in the United States and on Economic Data Sources in the United States. McGrath also taught environmental economics in the International Business program at Aalto University in Mikkeli, Finland, from June 11–29, 2018. In that program, all courses are taught in English, each course is taught intensively for three weeks, and students take one class during each three-week period.

Logistics Students Awarded Scholarships

Two senior logistics students, Jacob Cornett and Alex Simon, have been awarded scholarships from Delta Nu Alpha, Nashville Chapter 135, for $1,000 each. Delta Nu Alpha’s primary emphasis is on education, financial assistance and mentoring for students. It provides excellent continuing education opportunities for the work force and vigilance in communicating changes in regulations. Congratulations, Jacob and Alex!
Faculty/Staff News

Constantin Ogloblin, Ph.D., associate professor of economics, John H. Brown, Ph.D., associate professor of economics, John T. King, Ph.D., associate professor of economics, and William B. Levernier, Ph.D., professor of economics, wrote the textbook *Microeconomics for Business* for Affordable Learning Georgia (ALG). This web-based open textbook and course for Microeconomics for Business was created under a Round Eight ALG Textbook Transformation Grant. To learn more, visit https://oer.galileo.usg.edu/business-textbooks/6.

Jackie Eastman’s, Ph.D., professor of marketing, manuscript “The Impact of Cause-Related Marketing on Millennials’ Produce Attitudes and Purchase Intentions” co-authored with Bryant Smalley and Jacob Warren, Savannah MBA alumni, has been accepted to the *Journal of Promotion Management*. This research was started as part of a project in Eastman’s MKTG 7431 Strategic Marketing course and was supported with a 2017 College of Business Summer Research Grant. Congrats, Jackie, Bryant and Jacob!

Jerry Burke, Ph.D., chair, Department of Logistics and Supply Chain Management, is quoted in the *Intermodal Insights* (May/June 2018) article “Build Awareness of Intermodal to Attract Job Candidates” stating, “At Georgia Southern, students are better prepared when they study principles that are vital to the industry and experience learning in the field via internships, co-ops or other industry academic events.” To read the article in its entirety, visit http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/iiai_20180506/index.php#/24.

Xinfang Wang’s, Ph.D., associate professor of quantitative analysis, paper “Health Service Design with Conjoint Optimization” has been accepted by *Journal of the Operational Research Society*. Congrats, Xinfang!
STEP INTO THE SPOTLIGHT
LOOKING FOR ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT CANDIDATES

Do you know a fellow Eagle Executive - College of Business alum - we should know more about? Or, are you the Eagle Executive we should highlight in Taking Flight?

If so, please send us the name of the alum and email address so we can get in touch about being the Alumni Spotlight in a future Taking Flight newsletter.

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Did spouse attend Georgia Southern?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No  If yes, Degree/Year __________________

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Year ______  Degree ______  Major ______

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We look forward to hearing from you soon!