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Taking Flight – March 2019

Message From the Dean

Lucille Ball once offered this paradoxical thought, “If you want something done, ask a busy person to do it. The more things you do, the more you can do.” While a bit counterintuitive, her point is well taken and more often true than not. The people who get things done and make things happen are also the people who are busy doing a lot of things. These folks don’t have time to complain, nor do they have the luxury to wait. They understand that opportunities are perishable and that plans are perfected in action. Busy people often keep multiple balls in the air; while they’re waiting on one thing, they will use that time to focus on another. Over time then, busy people develop a mindset and a skillset that enables them to move a little faster, to adapt a little quicker and to accomplish a little more.



I thought about this principle as I sat to write this letter and as I reflected on the past two or three months. We’re a busy place, a place that is simply abuzz with activity and energy. You’ll read below about some of things we’ve been doing, but I’ll highlight a few of them here. We’ve had student teams participating and doing very well, I might add, in a variety of professional competitions. Our students made great showings at places like the CFA Institute Research Challenge, the University of Toledo Invitational Sales Competition and the ASCM-Deloitte Case Competition. Over the same period, we hosted our Parker Regional Sales Competition, along with a number of programs like our Eagle Sales Showcase Boot Camp, our Logistics Roundtable and our Parker Finance Connection, all of which are designed to connect our students to professionals in the industry. Our Business Innovation Group sponsored the annual 3DS (3 Day Start Up) event, an intense, hands-on, practicum on innovation and entrepreneurship.

Meanwhile, and amidst all of this activity, the day-to-day life of the College has continued apace. We’ve held classes, recruited students, prepared for the upcoming graduation and hired new faculty for the coming year. We’ve begun designing a new program in business analytics as well as a program in FinTech, both of which we hope to launch soon. We’ve moved our Graduate Programs Office from Statesboro to Savannah, and we’ve moved forward with some anticipated innovations in our MBA Program. And, on top of all of that, we hosted Mr. Greg Parker, members of his family, the management team of The Parker Companies, and about 300 friends, faculty and staff of the University, at a wonderful naming celebration for the Parker College of Business. The year is certainly off to a great, and a busy, start. And so, I return to that original thought; if you want to get things done, then look to those who are busy doing a lot of things. I believe the Parker College epitomizes that ideal. And that’s exactly the mindset and the skillset we are developing in our students.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rusty Williams'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a white background.

Alumni Spotlight – Rusty Williams

Rusty Williams (ECON, 2005) started his career as a leadership consultant at the international headquarters of Delta Chi, where his duties included recruiting, consulting and advising university leaders, alumni and undergraduates. Currently, Rusty serves as senior director of talent solutions at Vaco, a boutique-level service firm specializing in the areas of executive search, consulting, permanent placement and strategic staffing. Headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee, Vaco is an international firm with 40 locations around the world that recently received the SIA 2019 Best Staffing Firms to Work for Award. The firm concentrates its efforts on finding candidates with expertise in accounting, finance, technology and healthcare information technology. Rusty is able to work with some of the best, brightest and most talented professionals in the industry, which allows him to form meaningful relationships with candidates, consultants, clients, colleagues and his local community that enable him and his colleagues to provide the top talents his clients require. In the future, Rusty plans to become a recognized leader and talent solutions expert with a strong track record of delivering top talent to his clients.

Since Rusty considers his business degree the best gift he could have ever given himself, it is no wonder that he has fond memories of his time at Georgia Southern. In fact, Rusty states, "My passion and love for Georgia Southern are as strong today as the first day I walked on campus." He credits the faculty of the Parker College of Business with doing a first-class job of preparing him for his career by teaching him to work with others to achieve a common goal, manage his time appropriately to meet deadlines and work in an ever-changing economy. His favorite class was the regional economic development capstone course taught by Donna Fisher, Ph.D., former associate professor of economics. In that class, he and a small group of classmates partnered with the Georgia Ports Authority to locate properties suitable for future expansion in the Lowcountry that met pre-determined parameters.



In addition to his time spent in class, Rusty found time to join several clubs and to serve in numerous leadership positions including Delta Chi Fraternity (founding father and charter member, vice president, treasurer and associate member counselor), Camp Eagle (participant and two-time leader), Student Government Association (senator, College of Business), Christian Campus Fellowship (leadership counselor) and Southern Ambassadors (ambassador). He was also inducted into the Omicron Delta Kappa Economics Honor Society, Omicron Delta Epsilon Honor Society, Delta Epsilon Iota Honor Society and the Order of Omega. His favorite memories, however, are of spending time with his friends and tailgating and attending Eagles football games.

In his spare time, Rusty enjoys spending time at Lake Sinclair with his wife, Kelly, and their two daughters. Each fall, they return to the 'Boro to cheer on the Eagles.

Naming Celebration for Georgia Southern's Parker College of Business Recognizes Growth of Business Programs

In recognition of the new partnership between Georgia Southern University and entrepreneur and philanthropist Greg Parker, the University hosted a naming celebration Friday, March 8, for the newly named Parker College of Business. Community members and business leaders joined University students and officials to formally usher in a new chapter of academic excellence and student opportunities in the University's growing business programs.

"The essence of opportunity is will. One has to be willing to help others like Mr. Parker," said logistics/intermodal transportation major and Parker Scholar Mohammad Abdallah. "The impact of Mr. Parker's generous donation will not only give us an opportunity, but it will allow us to enhance research studies, student feedback and network capabilities."



In November, the Georgia Southern University Foundation, Inc. announced the \$5 million gift from Parker, the founder and CEO of The Parker Companies in Savannah. It is the single largest gift in University history.

"Today's graduates from the Parker College of Business will be tomorrow's CEOs, CFOs and COOs," said Parker. "By supporting the College of Business at Georgia Southern University, I'm investing in the health and vitality of the regional business community. I'm investing in the power of education. I'm investing in the future."

The new funding establishes the Parker Business Scholars Program, Parker Business Scholarship Fund and Parker Faculty Support Fund, allowing Georgia Southern students to excel in the areas of professional development and scholarship. In addition, faculty research remains at the forefront of the College's dedication to

current trends in business and teaching.

The Parker Business Scholarship Program (PBSP) provides personalized professional development and educational enrichment opportunities to a select group of students in the Parker College of Business. Implementation of the PBSP will begin in Fall 2019 and include specialized coursework, unique professional development opportunities and other experiential learning activities. The Parker Companies, along with the dean of the College, will have direct involvement with the PBSP students.

The Parker Business Scholarship Fund enables recruitment and retention of greater numbers of the best and brightest students and will attract students with the potential for competitive offers from other universities, making the Parker College of Business a destination of first choice for students across the state and region.

The Parker Faculty Support Fund supports faculty members and their research. Research is essential to the academic reputation of the College, to the scholarly currency and prestige of the faculty, and to the overall value proposition of the College as a leading academic institution.

About Parker's

Parker's is strategically redefining America's convenience store industry, offering customers high-quality products, freshly prepared food and superior customer service at 56 retail stores throughout southeast Georgia and South Carolina. Headquartered in Savannah, Parker's has a commitment to exceeding customer expectations and has repeatedly been recognized as one of the nation's leading convenience store companies. Food service is a specialty, featuring Parker's Kitchen favorites like hand-breaded Southern Fried Chicken Tenders, tender bone-in chicken, made-from-scratch mac 'n' cheese, a breakfast bar and daily specials. The company's popular PumpPal loyalty program, which includes more than 150,000 members, has saved Parker's customers more than \$10 million to date.

Parker's also gives back to every community where stores are located through the Fueling the Community Program, which donates a portion of the profit of every gallon of gas sold on the first Wednesday of the month to area schools. In addition, the company endows the Parker's Emergency and Trauma Center at Memorial Hospital in Savannah, and spearheads an Anti-Litter Campaign in Savannah. For more information about Parker's, visit Parkersav.com.

Parker Business Student Selected as Board of Regents Academic Day Representative



Edward Legaspi, who received the Academic Recognition Day Award, is joined by Georgia Southern President Shelley Nickel (left) and his mother Elinor (right).

Photo courtesy of Georgia Southern University's Facebook

Georgia Southern University student Edward Legaspi was recently recognized by the University System of Georgia (USG) Board of Regents and the Georgia General Assembly for receiving the Academic Recognition Day Award.

Legaspi, who is a senior double majoring in accounting and information systems, was nominated by the Parker College of Business for representing the highest scholastic ideals of Georgia Southern. The award is considered one of the greatest academic honors a USG student can achieve.

“To be recognized by my college, the president and the university is probably the highest honor I’ve ever received,” said Legaspi. “I am thankful for my professors and friends in my college because I do not believe I would be anywhere near where I am today without them.”

Legaspi earned 30 hours of advanced placement credit work prior to enrolling at Georgia Southern, including calculus I, calculus II and chemistry.

“I found the AP courses to be much more rigorous than my other high school courses,” he said. “They really allowed me to get used to the pace of college courses. Each day in class you’re always learning something new and having that prior experience definitely made a difference. Also, it was because of all these hours I was able to pursue my double major and still graduate on time.”

During his college career, he has served as an information systems tutor, the executive vice president and president of the Eagle SAP® Users Group, which focuses on information systems, and as a member of the University Conduct Board.

In addition, Legaspi was named to the President’s List, participated in the BB&T Leaders Program, and placed third in the Microsoft Office Specialist National Championship. He also completed an internship with AFLAC in Columbus, Georgia, where he gained hands-on experience using SAP® Solutions.

“Edward Legaspi is a standout student, but, more than that, he is a thoughtful classmate,” stated Brit McKay, Ph.D., professor of accounting. “He was generous with his help and in a technical subject, always more than willing to help a classmate, contribute to discussion and advance the overall knowledge of the group.”

Legaspi, who will graduate in May, has accepted a consulting position at one of the Big Four in Atlanta.

“My time at Georgia Southern has definitely helped me prepare for my career,” he said. “My courses gave me experience in a number of different software and technologies being used in business today. Through my extra-curricular activities, I was able to meet and network with a lot of current and former students, building invaluable connections.”

Last year, Clare Fox, a double major in accounting and modern languages (Spanish), was nominated by the College and recognized by the USG BOR and Georgia General Assembly.

Denver Transportation Club Honors Burke with 2019 Educator of the Year Award

by Madeleine Haney, senior Logistics and Intermodal Transportation student

In early February, Jerry Burke, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Logistics & Supply Chain Management, accompanied six undergraduate students competing in the Operation Stimulus Student Case Competition hosted by the Denver Transportation Club in Denver, Colorado. The team from Georgia Southern presented applied research to address solutions to a case study involving a solar panel manufacturer's global supply chain challenges in the face of various regulatory environments including looming import tariffs on key system components.

The Operation Stimulus event also provided students with other experiential learning such as a site visit to a John Deere parts depot, panel discussions, professional development networking events and a keynote speech from Chris Spear, president and CEO of the American Trucking Association. During the awards luncheon, student nominations for Educator of the Year were announced. Student comments supporting Dr. Burke's nomination included,

"Dr. Burke has given me the opportunity to learn from a real-life, hands-on perspective. He has challenged me and pushed me academically but has always been there to answer questions and give support when needed. I have learned so much from him in only two months that I have known him. I'm very lucky to have been given the opportunity to learn from and work closely with Dr. Burke." – Shelby Bates, junior, logistics & intermodal transportation with a minor in business analytics.

"Through Dr. Burke's Case Study class, I have been able to apply everything that I have learned in my seven semesters at G[eorgia Southern] to real-world scenarios. I am very thankful for everything Dr. Burke has done for this class, and for me." – Tate Robinson, senior double major, logistics & intermodal transportation and marketing

"Dr. Burke encourages us to work through our challenges in practice cases while providing constructive criticism to help us do the best we can do and to apply what we've learned. He motivates ... student[s] to apply themselves and to learn in the process." – Alecia Breen, junior double major, operations management and logistics & intermodal transportation

"Throughout college, I felt like I was learning concepts without understanding their applications. Dr. Burke provided me with amazing experiences that allowed me to apply what I've been taught as well as research new concepts. He believes in our abilities and pushes us to do our best work so that we can be proud of ourselves and our work." – William Harris, senior, logistics & intermodal transportation

"I have had the chance for the past year and a half to collaborate with Dr. Burke. He has constantly listened to my concerns and given me advice as to how to best put things in perspective. He works hard to provide educational and professional development opportunities to many students in logistics and operations. Without him I would not be the student and professional I am today." – Madeleine Haney, senior double major, logistics & intermodal transportation and marketing.

With these student endorsements, Dr. Jerry Burke was selected as Educator of the Year from among more than 20 faculty advisors from competing schools.



Georgia Southern Parker College of Business Sales Students Compete Nationally, Place Among the Best

Mya Carter and Cole Sammons, students in the Parker College of Business at Georgia Southern University, competed among the nation's best undergraduates during the University of Toledo Invitational Sales Competition (UTISC) — the only national sales competition dedicated to non-senior students.

Carter, a sophomore sales student, placed seventh in the semifinals, while Sammons, a junior sales student, placed fourth among 32 juniors competing. As a team, the duo placed fourth out of 36 teams represented at the competition.

The UTISC allows students to develop their skills and network outside the shadow of seniors while universities are able to demonstrate the strength of their sales programs. Sponsored by 3M™, the students participated in a role-play scenario to sell one of the company's leading-edge products, 3M™ Foil Tape.



l-r: Cole Sammons, Jim Randall, DBA, and Mya Carter

"I learned that you can add your personality into your presentation to help build relationships with the customer," said Carter, who was a first-time competitor. "The Citrix recruiter called me a natural, and I was offered internships from Citrix, Goodyear and International Paper."

Sales competitions benefit students by providing networking opportunities with new firms and recruiters, sharpening their selling skills, and building their résumé.

"The opportunity to compete at the UTISC expanded my network and gave me an advantage over other sales students to work on my sales skills before entering the field," said Sammons.

This is the fourth year the College has sent two undergraduates to the UTISC.

The Center for Sales Excellence (CSE) at Georgia Southern University, established in 2007, supports and promotes students pursuing careers in sales. Through the CSE, students gain experience with sales role play in dedicated labs and go on to compete at the national level. The CSE also works to bring students together with companies in the industry who are looking to hire new talent.

At the event, sales leaders and recruiters act as judges and coaches as students take on the role of salespersons and are judged by how well they present themselves to buyers. Students gain experience in both interview and role-play situations. In addition to the sales competition, students participated in coaching/interviewing sessions and a career fair. The Toledo Zoo provided entertainment.

This competition has been going for six years. It is the only competition specifically intended for sophomores and juniors. Mya Carter, a sophomore, competed in that category and was one of 12 who made it to the semifinals. She placed seventh in the Semifinals. Cole Sammons, a junior, competed in that category and made it to the finals. He placed fourth out of 32 juniors who competed in the competition. As a team, scores were computed and Georgia Southern placed fourth out of 36 college teams. It was a very successful trip for Georgia Southern.

Georgia Southern Students to Represent University at First-Ever Georgia Inventure Prize

An app designed to “gamify” running by encouraging virtual running competitions among friends was the idea selected to move on to the inaugural Georgia Inventure Prize Competition by panelists at the Georgia Southern University Business Innovation Group’s (BIG) annual 3 Day Startup (3DS).

The app, called “Ghost Runner,” was designed by four students in the Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Computing and three College of Arts and Humanities students. The idea was deemed by panelists made up of the University’s Intellectual Property Committee to be the one that made the most progress during the three days teams had to prepare their ideas.

“Ghost Runner seemed scalable,” said panelist and Georgia Southern Professor of History and Director of Digital Humanities, Robert Batchelor, Ph.D. “I really liked the idea that it solved a problem of messy apps for this concept currently on the market, and it was something that small businesses, running tournaments, etc., could rely upon as an app solution to marketing.”

The winning team includes computer science majors Marcus Joachim, Wyatt Landers and Jacob Poston; graphic design majors Zee Doehling and Thomas Martin; mechanical engineering major Shadrach Stark; and international studies major Michael McFarland.

The students will work with BIG to prepare for the inaugural Georgia Inventure Prize Competition. Each college and university in the state was invited to send one team to Atlanta to compete April 3–4. The top five finalists will present via live GPB broadcast and streaming, with up to \$50,000 in cash prizes and in-kind professional services.

3DS is a world-renowned program that brings together individuals from various backgrounds in a learning-by-doing environment to give students the tools needed to start successful companies. Students talk about ideas and form teams on a Friday and work on bringing those ideas to life by the following Sunday. On Monday, the competition culminates with a “Shark Tank” style pitch competition in which students pitch their ideas to panelists who judge and select the most viable idea.

In addition to “Ghost Runner,” five other teams pitched ideas during this year’s 3DS including ideas on aquaponics, a speeding device, bags made from textile waste, peer-to-peer lending and roommate matching.

Audience members also got a chance to vote for their favorite, giving the People’s Choice award to Olam Aquaponics. Led by biology major Cameron Milton, the team started with a large farm operation that provided food grown by aquaponics. The team made a pivot to set up and maintain aquaponic systems for assisted-living communities and schools.

“I definitely plan on continuing this project with the businesses that I’m in contact with, and I hope my team joins me in the next step,” said Milton.

The event was organized by the Square One student organization. The Square One leadership team includes Marin Coleman, president; David Vaughn, vice president; Josh Curtis, treasurer; and Tinia Holmes, secretary.

“The students took charge this year and did a wonderful job finding sponsors and mentors to help support the event, which helps ensure the event runs smoothly,” said club advisor, Suzanne Hallman. “After managing the event for five years, it’s nice to have a group of students who can run with it.”



Ghost Runner app team members after winning 3DS pitch.

On Tuesday, February 26, the Center for Sales Excellence, housed within the Parker College of Business, hosted the third annual Eagle Sales Showcase Boot Camp in the Performing Arts Center ballroom. The event brings marketing/sales students together with industry professionals to hone their interviewing skills prior to the Eagle Expo, the University's largest career fair held each semester.

Much like speed networking, students speak with different industry representatives for 20 minutes each, reviewing questions industry professionals have identified as those that students often struggle answering during interviews. One such question discussed was tell about a time when you gave up something to get something better.

Among the companies lending their expertise were Aerotek, Briggs Equipment, C.H. Robinson, Enterprise, HERC Rentals, Insight Global, JEAR Logistics, Mutual of Omaha, National Distributing Company, Nolan Transportation, OTR and Tom James.

"Participating in the Georgia Southern Eagle Sales Showcase Boot Camp provided the unique opportunity to engage with potential future talent," stated Annie Borders, HR specialist for C.H. Robinson. "People are the core of C.H. Robinson's success."



Clay Turner, partner and regional recruiter with Tom James, works with sales students on preparing answers for interview questions.

Logistics Roundtable

The Logistics Roundtable, sponsored by the Georgia Southern Logistics Association student organization, was held on Tuesday, February 26, prior to the Eagle Expo career fair on Wednesday, February 27. The event provides students interested in logistics and supply chain management an opportunity to have discussions with industry professionals and to network. This year more than 40 professionals from third-party logistics firms, manufacturers, warehousing companies, distributors, motor carriers and major retailers attended with more than 100 students taking advantage of the event.

"The Logistics Roundtable offer[s] great exposure to professionals in many industries and endless opportunities to network with alumni, managers, and even executive leadership," stated Shane Walsh, a senior logistics and intermodal transportation student. "The best part is the interview invitations that will lead to offers."



Parker Finance Connection

Following the Eagle Expo career fair on Wednesday, February 27, the Finance Department hosted its annual Parker Finance Connection. During this event, students and finance and economics professionals networked. Many students attending were looking for internship opportunities and to follow up with those recruiters they met with earlier at the career fair. The Parker Finance Connection saw about 60 students and 14 company

representatives in attendance.

Marcus Brown, a senior finance major, attended the networking event in the hopes of gaining more insight into the finance industry. “I want to learn more about the recruiters’ experiences and ask them what they would do differently today if they could go back to their 22-year old self[ves],” stated Brown. He was looking for available job and/or internship opportunities. Other students hoped to find out more about the day-to-day duties of the employers who were in attendance and explore the industry more, with the hopes of turning internships into full-time job offers.

To get involved in future Parker Finance Connection events, contact Don Cox, Ph.D., at drcox@georgiasouthern.edu.



First Annual Parker Regional Sales Competition

The Parker Regional Sales Competition (PRSC), held on February 28, is a collegiate sales competition hosted by the Center for Sales Excellence at Georgia Southern University. The competition is a developmental event, providing sales students the opportunity to demonstrate their selling skills through simulated sales role play.

The objective of the PRSC is to provide regional collegiate sales teams an opportunity to prepare and compete in a competitive setting before participating in other national sales competitions. This year’s competitors included students from Augusta University’s Hull College of Business, Georgia College’s J. Whitney Bunting College of Business, University of South Carolina – Beaufort’s Department of Business Administration, University of North Florida’s Coggin College of Business and Georgia Southern University’s Parker College of Business. The top four sales students received prizes, with first place taking home a Tom James tailor-made suit with a value of \$1,000.



“The [Parker Regional] Sales Competition was an exciting experience, and I learned a lot from the judges’ feedback. I also enjoyed networking with recruiters and students from other schools,” stated Maddie Keen, a junior sales student and third runner up in the first annual sales competition.

Lawrence Cooper from the University of North Florida won the competition with Jon Williams, a Georgia Southern student named the first runner up, and Sarah White from Georgia College & State University named second runner up.

The PRSC event benefits both students and sales professionals as students have the opportunity to gain individual feedback from industry experts and network with sponsoring companies; and company representatives are able to observe students engage in real-life sales role plays and recruit them for current or future sales openings or internships. The sales competition was held in conjunction with the University’s Eagle Expo career fair.

To get involved, please contact Linda G. Mullen, Ph.D., at lgmullen@georgiasouthern.edu.

Logistics Team Competes in Regional Case Competition

Madeleine Haney and Alecia Breen competed in the ASCM-Deloitte, formerly the APICS, Case Competition in February in Atlanta.

To prepare for the competition, Haney and Breen analyzed the case involving a supply chain technology company that was integrating a new vision graphics card into its line of products. The solution to this particular case was to search for a way to reduce shipping and handling costs. The logistics students offered a solution that consisted of creating a supplier scorecard, narrowing down the number of suppliers currently being used and selecting the suppliers that best met demand. Part of their solution included reducing the holding time of inventory, which allowed the use of ocean carriers and ground shipping as opposed to express shipping, a method used by the company originally. In total, the duo saved more than \$145,000 annually. In doing so, the student team was one of 500 teams to submit a presentation for this competition and was one of eight schools to move on to the regional round.

The regional finals required student teams to create a presentation on ways a toy manufacturer could reduce transportation costs from a key supplier by implementing milk runs, reducing inventory holding times between workstations and reducing defects by having quality inspections after each process a toy went through in the factory. Haney and Breen competed against graduate students from engineering programs and supply chain management programs, along with other undergraduate students from well-known universities in the Southeast region.

“We held our own,” stated Breen. “Both rounds of the ASCM Case Competition were valuable experiential learning opportunities for us to apply what we have learned in the Parker College of Business to real-world issues in supply chains and to create a professional presentation to show our ideas to industry leaders.”



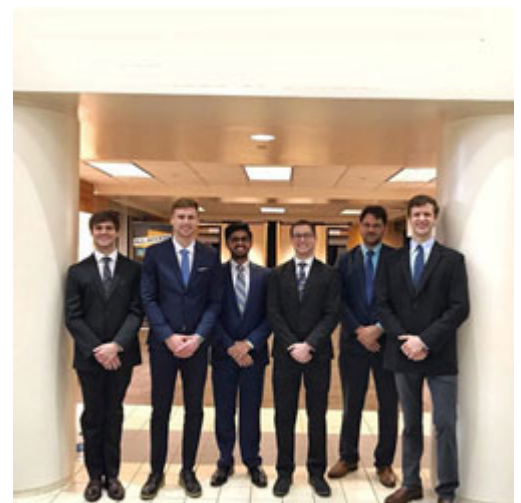
Parker College Team Competes in Investment Competition

Members of the Southern Investment Association (SIA) from the Parker College of Business at Georgia Southern University competed in the regional CFA Institute Research Challenge at Kennesaw State University on March 2, 2019.

The SIA team consisted of finance majors Joshua Crews, Emil Laursen, William Van Sant, Joel Varghese and Frank Winborne, all finance majors. They competed against 16 teams from some of the biggest universities in the South.

The Southern Classic is an annual global competition showcasing finance and economics students by providing hands-on mentoring and training in financial analysis. Students from each school worked as a team to research and evaluate a publicly traded company and presented their analyses to a panel of industry professionals.

“Through the CFA Research Challenge, I was able to gain knowledge and experience in financial analysis, equity research report writing, and presentation skills,” stated Varghese. “Working as a part of this project helped me grow in confidence and skill in my finance major, and I am very grateful to have been a part of this experience.”



SIA members, along with Axel Grossmann, Ph.D., professor of finance, at the competition.

Hospitality Students Visit Georgia Coast to See Industry Operations

Stan Subolski, Ph.D., and Charles Marvil, Ph.D., both lecturers of hospitality management, took a group of hospitality students to Sea Island on March 10–11. Vijay Singh, managing director of Sea Island, hosted the students and faculty advisors at the Inn at Sea Island and provided a tour of the Lodge at Sea Island on Sunday night followed by a cocktail reception and buffet in the Men's Lounge.

On Monday, the group visited The Cloister and had a complete front of the house (FOH) and back of the house (BOH) tour conducted by the Director of Human Resources Suzanne Tilghman. Following the tour, lunch was with the Executive Committee of Sea Island, and the students were able to sit/eat and discuss hospitality issues with some of the most talented leaders in the hospitality/tourism industry. After lunch, the students visited the King and Prince Seafood company in Brunswick. Many do not know of King and Prince (K&P) Seafood; however, chances are good that many have eaten their products. K&P produces seafood for some of the largest restaurant companies in the world. The day our students visited, K&P was processing shrimp for Panda Express. The company also processes and packages seafood for Captain D's, Popeyes and many others. The students experienced a behind-the-scenes tour that required confidentiality waivers and protective gear dress. Pictures were prohibited on the plant floor, but the machinery and processes blew the students' minds. K&P processes one million pounds of shrimp each month for Panda Express alone. Following the tour, students sat down with the K&P leadership team to discuss the operations of the plant.

"Overall, [this was] a great trip, and one we will repeat each semester," stated Marvil. "One of the major benefits of this trip is the networking that the students are able to accomplish. Sitting at lunch with the food and beverage director of Sea Island can have powerful results. One of our students, Noah Brantley, has secured a summer internship with Sea Island that will hopefully lead to a full-time management role in the future."



Finance Association Hosts Managing Partner of Hedge Fund

Philip Zhang of Luna Capital visited the Georgia Southern University Finance Association on Wednesday, February 20, as part of the Finance Association Guest Speaker Series. He is one of two founders and managing partners of the hedge fund. Prior to launching Luna Capital, Zhang spent nearly two decades managing retirement funds and consulting in supply chain finance. For various clients, his strategies resulted in the creation of more than \$1 billion in enterprise market value. Zhang has an MBA from the University of Tennessee – Knoxville.

During his presentation, Zhang provided an overview of the fund's creation and management. He outlined current money management trends and the overall hedge fund landscape as it exists today. Zhang also discussed their primary research findings as well as the fund's benchmark and overall performance. Additionally, he reviewed their overall investment strategy of long positions in the S&P 500 Index, several high-tech equities, as well as the sale of put options on specific stocks. Zhang answered numerous questions from students regarding stock

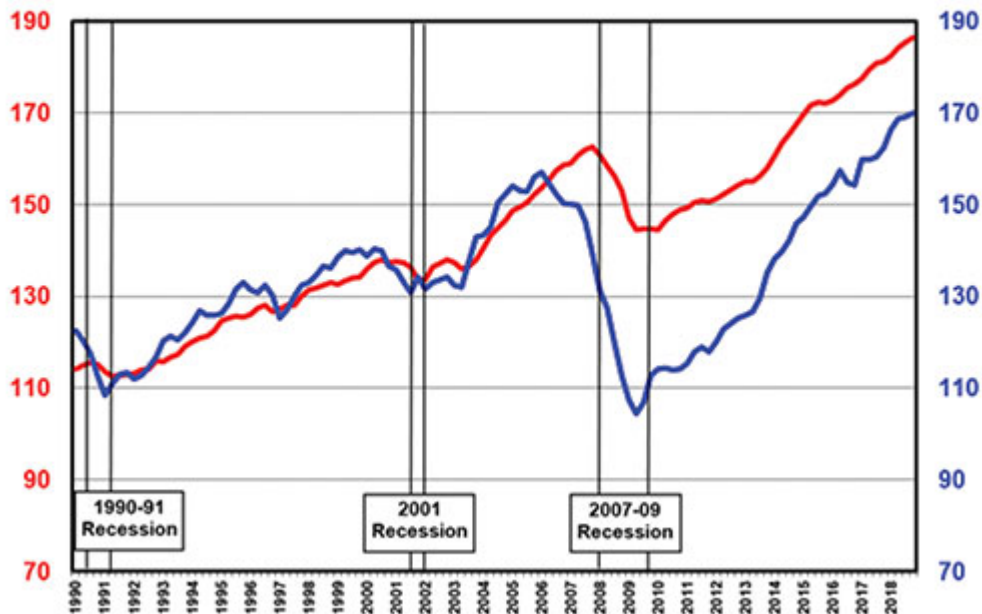
selection and fund operations as the event concluded.

Luna Capital focuses its investments in highly-liquid U.S. public equity markets and selected high-tech stocks. Luna Capital would be best suited to investors seeking overseas asset allocation and retirement fund management. The hedge fund is registered in the Cayman Islands. Special thanks go to Rongrong Zhang, Ph.D., associate professor of finance, for inviting Philip Zhang to campus.



Georgia Southern's Q4 2018 Economic Monitor Shows Across-the-Board Gains in all Economic Indicators Monitored

Savannah Metro Business Index Leading and Coincident Series



Georgia Southern University's latest "Economic Monitor," which analyzes Q4 2018 data and identifies trends affecting the regional economy, reports that Savannah's metro economy closed out 2018 with across-the-board gains in all eight key economic indicators monitored. Port activity, consumer spending and electricity sales provided the most lift to the index, with improving consumer expectations, overall employment and tourism playing supporting roles.

"Overall, the regional economy appears to have shaken off the weakness of the third quarter and returned closer to trend growth recorded in the past few years," stated Michael Toma, Ph.D., Fuller E. Callaway Professor of Economics and director of the Center for Business Analytics and Economic Research (CBAER).

During the fourth quarter, the Savannah metro economy expanded at a rate of 0.8 percent, or 3.2 percent annualized, which is an increase from the previous quarter. While the third-quarter data was mixed with growing signs of weakness, the trend has reversed in several key economic variables, including total employment, retail sales and electricity sales. Port activity increased 8.4 percent from the third quarter, showing a 7 percent increase from comparable data from one year ago. Retail sales jumped 11 percent and are up 13 percent over last year. Electricity sales increased 4 percent, and consumer confidence in the south Atlantic states was up for the second consecutive quarter, shedding some of the volatility that has marked its recent behavior.

In general, the Savannah metro economy appears to have strengthened substantially during the final quarter of 2018. While the eight key indicators of economic activity in the Savannah metro region all improved, modest employment gains and the uptick in the unemployment rate warrant continued close monitoring of regional economic data in the near term. With this shift, improving regional economic conditions throughout much of 2019 is anticipated.

Highlights from the latest Economic Monitor include

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Total employment in Savannah's three-county metro area was 179,200, an increase of 400 jobs. For the second consecutive quarter, total employment barely equaled previous-year data. It is expected that total employment will resume a modest upward trend in early 2019.

The regional service sector recovered half the jobs shed in the previous quarter, rising by about 600 workers; however, business and professional services lost about 700 jobs, bringing the two-quarter loss to almost 2,000 jobs. Education and health gained 400 jobs each, as did state and local government. Hospitality and leisure gained 100 jobs to land at roughly 26,000 workers. The goods-producing side of the economy remained steady at 25,300 jobs, while manufacturing provided jobs for 17,700 workers and construction maintained 7,700 workers.

HOUSING MARKET

The housing marketing indicators reversed course from Q3 2018, recording improved numbers. In the regional housing market, seasonally adjusted building permit issuance for single-family homes soared 33 percent, rising to the highest quarterly total since mid-2007. Building permits issued for single-family homes increased to 562, rising from 420 units in the third quarter. The average valuation per single-family unit lagged a bit, declining 3 percent to \$220,000 from \$228,000.

LABOR MARKET

With the stabilization of both weekly wages and length of workweek, the labor market showed improvement. There was an 11 percent decline in the number of initial claims for unemployment insurance (UI) from 508 to 454 in the fourth quarter. The low unemployment rate, along with relatively few new UI claims, suggests that workers can expect an upward trend in wages. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate ticked up modestly from 3.3 percent in the previous quarter to 3.5 percent.

ECONOMIC INDEX/FORECASTING INDEX

The business forecasting index turned up, registering growth of 0.5 percent, or 2.2 percent annualized, after nearly flatlining the previous quarter.

The "Economic Monitor" presents quarterly economic trends and short-term economic forecasts for Savannah's Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The quarterly report measures the heartbeat of the local economy, based on the analysis of economic data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, the City of Savannah, Georgia Power and the three counties in the MSA — Chatham, Bryan and Effingham.

The report is available for free by email. To subscribe, email mtoma@georgiasouthern.edu.

CBAER, a part of the Business Innovation Group (BIG) in Georgia Southern's Parker College of Business, meets the applied research needs of Savannah's business and community organizations. Areas of concentrated research include regional economic forecasting, economic impact analysis, economic development and business expansion, tourism development, survey-based research and specialty reports on topics of state, regional and local interest.

To view the report, [click here](#).

Faculty/Staff News

The first Parker College Research Seminar was held on Friday, March 1. Christopher Brunt, Ph.D., professor of economics, presented, "An Examination of the Effects of the Medicaid Expansion on the Use of Preventive Services Among the Previously Insured," and Rongrong Zhang, Ph.D., professor of finance, presented, "Trade Credit and Suppliers/Customers Innovation."

Reid Burke, advisor, has been selected to represent Georgia Southern University in the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) Outstanding Advisor in a Primary Role category. Those nominated for this award exhibit strong interpersonal skills; evidence of student success rate; a caring, helpful attitude toward advisees, faculty and staff; mastery of institutional regulations, policies and procedures; and participation in and support of advisor development programs; among several other criteria. Congrats, Reid, and best of luck!

Jackie Eastman's, Ph.D., professor of marketing, manuscript, "The Impact of Retailers' Sustainability and Price on Consumers' Responses in Different Cultural Contexts," coauthored with Mertcan Tascioglu, Dora Bock, Karl Manrodt, and David Shepherd was accepted by *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*. This research came from Tascioglu's dissertation while at Georgia Southern. Congrats!

Arda Yenipazarli, Ph.D., associate professor of operations management, had his article, "Incentives for Environmental Research and Development: Consumer Preferences, Competitive Pressure and Emissions Taxation" published in the *European Journal of Operational Research*. Congratulations, Arda!

Jason Beck, Ph.D., associate professor of economics, was featured in *WalletHub's* recent survey about credit card debt. To read the article in its entirety, visit <https://wallethub.com/blog/credit-card-debt-survey/49637/#expert=jason-beck>.

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