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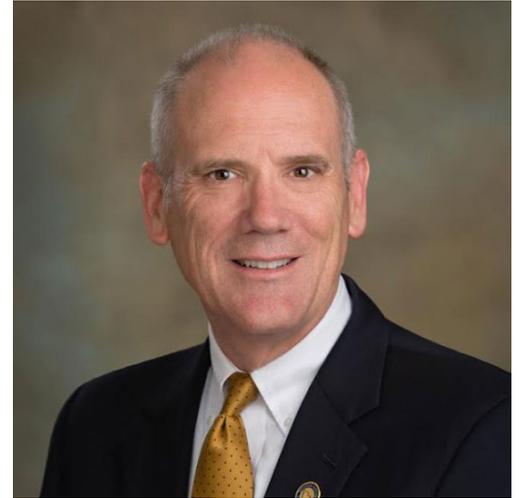
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Taking Flight – April 2022

Message from the Dean

I had dinner recently with an alumnus and a long-time friend and supporter of the Parker College. He owns and runs a highly successful business, a business that is growing both organically and through acquisition. He's in an attractive industry and one in which the fundamentals point to a strong future with all of the various forces that drive demand and opportunity increasing. That's a good thing for him, for his leadership team, and for his many employees as well as for all the customers who need the services of his company. But it's also a good thing for his current and future competitors, many of whom will be attracted by the opportunity and who will, themselves, invest in the resources and capabilities that will enable them to compete against him.



As we talked about his business and plans for growth and about the importance of efficiency and reliability, as well as the imperatives of responsiveness, customer service, and a culture of ownership and problem solving, I thought how similar his world is to mine and about what a great metaphor his experience is for those of us in business education. Yes, the demand for a business degree is enormous. Talk of a demographic cliff aside, good business schools are still seeing their enrollments grow. Moreover, we are seeing sharply increasing demand for our graduates. In case you haven't heard, there is a war for talent, and good graduates are snapped up quickly and eagerly. But all this opportunity fuels competition. New programs, online delivery, renovated facilities, stackable credentials, and accelerated curricula are just some of the new resources and capabilities that our competitors are throwing at our increasingly demanding market. So, there is great opportunity, yes, but there is also significant and intensifying competition and, because of that competition, there will be winners and there will be losers. The winners will anticipate better, move faster, provide better service along with better outcomes for the students and the employers that hire them. The winners will create value over and above their investment in new capacity and capability. They will provide a positive return on the dollars invested by providing increasing numbers of the sorts of talented, well-equipped, and professionally ready graduates the market is craving. They'll provide a positive return by enabling the sort of innovative and flexible experts that can create solutions to important problems and give their constituents competitive advantage. They'll provide a positive return by being faster, more flexible, more efficient, more innovative, and more responsive than those around them.

As I said, this friend's business, while very different from ours, is still very similar in some fundamental ways. The most important of those is that we both intend to win. We don't shrink from the competition; instead, we welcome it. As iron sharpens iron, the competition actually makes us better. It shows us where the opportunities are, focuses us on the things that are most important, and keeps us leaning forward, looking for solutions and for opportunities, and focused on the creation of value for all of our constituents. Given that, the Parker College does more than just teach and research topics related to business, we live it, and we model it. And we do it all, each and every day, because we want to provide an excellent return on the investment that's been made in us.

Alumni Spotlight: Richard Rappa

Though currently Richard Rappa (MGMT, 1987) is a field sales leader for Farmers Insurance, he spent his time after graduating from Georgia Southern working in many jobs and doing many things he is not sure he would have in hindsight. For a while, Richard was a senior vice president of a wholesale mortgage lender. This position ended with the housing crash in 2008. So, at the age of 44, he re-invented himself, moved into the insurance arena, and now holds FINRA licenses 6,63,26 and 51—his proudest professional accomplishment to date.

In spite of the challenges, Richard really enjoys his responsibilities as a field sales leader at Farmers. He recruits, trains, and works with independent contractor agents to grow their agencies. As the first line of contact with the corporation, Richard is a business, human resource, leasing, signage, branding, and marketing consultant. He is also the “point of blame,” cheerleader, marriage consultant, and psychologist. Richard spends his week talking to agent candidates, which allows him to learn about people with differing backgrounds. From these conversations, Richard has discovered that most people have the same aspirations and dreams. They want to enjoy what they do and spend their time doing what they enjoy both during and outside of work while, at the same time, spending time with family and friends.



Richard says his time at Georgia Southern flew by. He credits the relatively small class sizes with allowing him to get to know the professors and other students. This environment was as responsible for growing up (if he has, that is) as it was to provide a formal education.

Richard fondly remembers Lloyd Dosier’s, professor emeritus of management, human resource management classes and how Dosier engaged his students by talking about football or basketball team colors! Richard’s two years with the Eagle Battalion ROTC program also gave him the ability to focus on the future with purpose.

In the future, Richard hopes to spend more time helping the less fortunate with food pantries and handyman services. For now, he spends his spare time losing golf balls and spending time with his proudest personal accomplishments, sons Rich and Ryan and stepdaughters Brooke and Heather.

Logistics and Supply Chain Students Rise to the Challenge

by Jerry Burke, Ph.D.

For the fourth year in row, Georgia Southern’s Parker College students ascended to the finalist round of the Intermodal Association of North America (IANA) 2022 Academic Challenge including top finishes in 2019 and 2020. This year, the Parker College team, consisting of supply chain management majors Kenlaysia Brown, Kaitlyn Drittler, and Makeda Rashidi and advised by Jerry Burke, Ph.D., professor of logistics and supply chain management, was one of three finalist teams in the challenge. The 2022 case study was based on a contributing factor to the on-going supply chain crisis, namely chassis shortages. A chassis is a skeletal trailer typically attached to a truck to transport shipping containers to and from marine and rail terminals. To prepare for the competition, each team had to break down the case, analyze several capacity solutions, and then present a slide deck explaining the team’s approach to the challenge with a recommended course of action. A panel of industry experts from various links of intermodal supply chains served as judges for the competition.



Kenlaysia, Katie, and Makeda summarized the IANA Challenge as “the most rewarding experience throughout our college careers” and added they “learned not only what it takes to be strong leaders, but also what it takes to build a strong team.” The team found great joy in hearing “that, as an all-girl team, other women at the competition were inspired by our performance.”

In addition to competing against teams from other top supply chain programs, students met with industry professionals including the IANA CEO, Joni Casey and Clarence Gooden, former president of CSX Corporation. Gooden provided students insights on his 47+ years of experience working in the supply chain industry.

The Parker College team and the University of Maryland team were edged out of the top place spot by a strong team from the University of North Texas. Other programs represented in the competition included Auburn University, University of Arkansas, University of North Florida, University of Wisconsin-Superior, SUNY-Maritime and California State Maritime Academy.

Congratulations to Kenlaysia, Katie, and Makeda for their strong finish!

Finance Association Welcomes E*Trade Speakers

In a continuation of its Spring 2022 Guest Speaker Series, the Finance Association hosted Kaelen Kiefer (FIN, 2020) and Derek James of E*Trade by Morgan Stanley on Wednesday, March 2. Kaelen is a customer service representative and has been with the company for about 1.5 years. She, of course, works with customers daily but also trains newly hired employees and has worked in various other roles within the company including fraud and tax. Assistant Vice President Derek James has worked for E*Trade since 2016. He hires new employees and focuses on their learning and development within the company. Prior to joining E*Trade, Derek worked in the automotive industry and in elementary education. He holds undergraduate degrees in software engineering and political science from Colorado State University-Pueblo.



Kaelen and Derek began their presentation talking about their career paths at E*Trade. They also gave a brief overview of E*Trade and its role in the financial system. E*Trade has always been a pioneer in the self-direct retail investment market and the first company to place an electronic trade. Both Kaelen and Derek spoke about the outstanding opportunities for learning, growth, and career development within the E*Trade and Morgan Stanley family stating that employees are allowed, and even encouraged, to explore new roles within the company. The company supports new employees in obtaining necessary licensing (SIE, Series 7, and Series 63). In addition, Kaelen talked about the interview process, and the new hire culture at E*Trade as well as the excellent training for new employees. Both Kaelen and Derek noted that the sky really is the limit with respect to career objectives and goals. They wrapped up their time with the students in attendance by answering a variety of questions. For example, how has E*Trade dealt with challenges related to new revenue generation after the introduction of zero commission trades and the merger with Morgan Stanley, among others.

E*Trade Financial Corporation is a financial services company that offers an electronic trading platform to trade financial assets including common stocks, preferred stocks, futures contracts, exchange-traded funds, options, mutual funds, and fixed income investments. The company was founded in 1982 and acquired by Morgan Stanley in 2020. To learn more, visit www.etrade.com and for information related to career opportunities, visit <https://www.morganstanley.com/people>.

Parker College Celebrates the Life and Works of Ruth Bader Ginsburg

“I Believe Week” is an inaugural week-long event created through interdisciplinary collaboration between multiple Georgia Southern partners. This event highlights the struggles, the strengths, and the successes of women, trans women, and non-binary people who have paved a path for survivors of discrimination and oppression in the modern workplace.

Thanks to the efforts of Stephanie Sipe, J.D., professor legal studies and Parker College of Business Faculty Fellow for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, along with the members of the Parker College Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, and the Parker College student chapter of NABA, the College hosted a Celebration of the Life and Works of former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on April 7, 2022, as part of “I Believe Week.” This event showcased two films “The Notorious RBG,” a documentary, and a biopic, “On the Basis of Sex,” shown on loops in two classrooms. The timing of the event allowed an extra special opportunity to also celebrate the “hot off the press” Senate confirmation of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson as the 116th Justice of the United States Supreme Court.



Participants, including students, faculty, staff, and special guest Lt. Gen. Les Smith, W.E. Carter Chair of Leadership and Business Administration, were able to tour a poster gallery highlighting the extraordinary life and contributions of Justice Ginsburg and to enjoy games, prizes, and refreshments.

Lt. Gen. Smith Speaks to SIA and FA

by Axel Grossmann and Alissa Lee

The Southern Investment Association and the Finance Association held a combined Guest Speaker Event on Wednesday, March 9, 2022. Lt. General (U.S. Army, Retired) Leslie Smith (ACCT, 1985) holds the W.E. Carter Chair of Leadership in the Parker College of Business. General Smith spent 38 years in the U.S. Army and concluded his career as the 66th Inspector General in September 2021. He earned master's degrees from Central Michigan University and the National Defense University. In addition, General Smith serves on the board of directors of LMI and USD Group, LLC.

With nearly four decades of leadership, General Smith has a unique background on which to draw to share his experience and insights on leadership with students. To kick-off the event, he briefly detailed his background and career to-date as well as his transition to civilian work. He mentioned his great experience as a student at Georgia Southern and some of the milestones and important lessons learned during his career in the U.S. Army. During his very engaging presentation on leadership development, he constantly interacted with the students via questions and discussions. He emphasized that opportunities come at each place you go and that what one gets out of every experience is what one puts into it. Further, he highlighted the importance of trust in the professional world. Smith related this point to his own experience in the military, where soldiers expect leaders to get it right. Further, he noted that one must be a servant and step-up and do the things that need doing first before expecting them from others. General Smith continued to stress the significance of being humble and ethical and developing and maintaining strong relationships. He advised the students to build relationships by helping others and to always shake someone's hand. The students left the presentation very impressed after seeing a highly decorated and successful Georgia Southern University alumnus giving back to our community!

To learn more about Lt. General Smith and the W.E. Carter Chair of Leadership in the Parker College of Business, visit <https://news.georgiasouthern.edu/2021/11/10/lt-gen-smith-named-carter-chair-of-leadership-at-georgia-southern/>.



Pi Sigma Epsilon Competes at National Convention

Pi Sigma Epsilon (PSE), the nation's only professional business fraternity for men and women in the fields of sales, marketing, and management, held its annual convention from March 22–26, 2022. In the first in-person convention since 2019, students from chapters across the country travelled to Minneapolis, MN, to compete in events such as competition—the Pro-Am Sell-a-Thon®, PSE's National Speakers, and the Mutual of Omaha Interview Competition.

PSE is proud to announce that Parker College PSE student chapter member Courtney Simon earned second place honors in the Mutual of Omaha Interview Competition. For the Mutual of Omaha Interview Competition, competitors assume the role of a senior in college interviewing for the Sales Trainee Program at Mutual of Omaha. The interviews are conducted by a sales representative or sales manager from Mutual of Omaha. Competitors are judged on criteria based on what was learned from the provided interview guide and in each pre-training session. Although the first round was conducted via Zoom, finalists travelled to Minneapolis for the final rounds. Congratulations, Courtney!



Faculty/Staff News

Justin Evans, J.D., associate professor legal studies, has been appointed a staff editor for the *American Business Law Journal*. Congratulations, Justin!

Richard McGrath, Ph.D., professor of economics, has been in much demand recently. FOX 28 and WSAV 3 have both interviewed about the reasons for the recent increases in gas prices and the effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on them. To see the interviews, go to fox28media.com/news/local/how-russias-invasion-of-ukraine-could-impact-gas-prices-in-the-us; fox28media.com/news/local/aaa-reports-georgia-gas-prices-hit-all-time-high; and www.wsav.com/news/local-news/savannah/rise-in-diesel-costs-have-regional-economic-effect-professor-says/. Keep up the good work, Rick!

Gloria Stuart, MAcc, CPA, senior lecturer of accounting, recently won one of Georgia Southern's annual community engagement and collaboration awards. Well done, Gloria!

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