

Taking Flight

January 2015

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Taking Flight – January 2015 Edition

Message from the Dean

As part of our e-newsletter series, I want to periodically focus on some specific programs and initiatives within the College. This month, I'd like to talk about international education. Over the past 2- 3 decades, international education programs have grown steadily, such that in 2012-2013 nearly 300,000 students from U.S. universities did some type of study abroad for academic credit. While that number seems large, it is only about 1.5% of the total enrollment in all U.S. universities. In Georgia, we were a little above the national average, with nearly 8,700 students, about 1.6% of the total, earning academic credit through study abroad.



International education of this sort has its critics. Some see it as little more than academic tourism. Others criticize the cost and argue the resources could be invested better elsewhere. While these arguments have some merit, I remain a staunch believer that pushing students into the world is a legitimate part of our role and responsibility. Business is a global phenomenon, and it is best understood from a global perspective. How do political forces in Moscow affect gas prices in Atlanta? How does consumer behavior in Paris or Munich affect the purchasing power of the dollar? How does construction in Shanghai affect volume at the port of Savannah? These questions reflect the interdependence of the global economic system. Developing a deep understanding of that interdependence and the opportunities that flow from it gives our students a real advantage in the marketplace.

So, I support international education and programs tailored to the needs, schedules, and interests of our students. As a result, we will launch our first College sponsored study abroad program this summer, with the class focusing on international finance. It will involve several weeks of in-class instruction wrapped around a 10-day visit to a partner university in Rennes, France. The purpose is twofold. First, we want to expose these students to the European Union, to let them see the infrastructure, people and culture of an EU country, to let them meet some European students and educators, and to let them conduct some transactions in Euros. It will be a small part of their total education, but it will be a significant one. Second, we want to learn how best to structure and deliver these types of programs, so that we can do more of them in the future. At some point, I would love to see 10% of our College of Business students earning credit towards their degrees through studying abroad. We're a long way from that, but even the longest journey begins with a single step.

Handwritten signature of the Dean.

Alumni Spotlight – Jenny Gentry

Jenny Gentry, a 1981 graduate with a BBS in General Business, currently serves as the market president with Wells Fargo Bank Savannah, where she directly manages the business banking segment and aligns the overall vision and strategy for delivering financial services to the market. At Wells Fargo, Ms. Gentry enjoys helping clients achieve their financial goals. It's a rewarding experience for her to see an entrepreneur start a new business and



watch the business grow. Also serving as a Board member and past Chairman of the Savannah Chamber of Commerce, Ms. Gentry believes the Chamber is a very strong organization comprised of local business leaders that work hard to support the business community. She states, “[The Chamber has] many networking opportunities during the year, allowing business owners to connect to other businesses and prospective clients.” Later this week, she will be heading to Atlanta with the Savannah Chamber to attend Savannah-Chatham Day at the Capitol.

In 2014, Ms. Gentry had the opportunity to lead the Savannah-area United Way campaign with an established stretch goal of \$8,888,888, the largest goal set to date for a United Way campaign in Savannah. She employed an exceptional group of community volunteers during the campaign and was able to help raise \$8,905,815. Ms. Gentry says, “It makes me feel blessed to call Savannah home!”

Ms. Gentry has experienced her fair share of challenges through the years. As a financial services professional during the past 10 years, she has seen the highs and the lows in the economy, to include a personal challenge of surviving cancer after being diagnosed in December 2011. She now considers herself a survivor of both the recession and cancer.

Ms. Gentry says attending Georgia Southern was an investment she chose to make in herself which helped her develop skills that are still valuable to her today. While attending Georgia Southern, she made contacts that continue to help her open doors that benefit her personally and professionally. During her four years at college, Ms. Gentry was active in the Kappa Delta sorority, where she served as president. Many of her sorority sisters have become lifelong friends.

Ms. Gentry enjoys spending time with friends, sharing a glass of wine over dinner, exercising at the YMCA as a stress reliever, and participating in one of the many races held in the Savannah-area. Looking to the future, she plans to continue to lead the area's largest and best financial institution. Upon retirement, she wants to travel the world and learn to play the guitar and piano. Words of wisdom from Ms. Gentry, “Had I known [in my 20s and 30s] what I know now, I would have taken better care of myself and worked harder to maintain a balance between work and home. It's a cliché, but life is short so fill it up with as many days as you can with good health and laughter!”

Augusta Eagle Executive Exchange – Connecting the Eagle Executive Network

The Augusta Eagle Executive Exchange was held on Thursday, January 15 at 5:30 PM at Savannah Rapids Pavilion. The event was a huge success, thanks to our sponsor Georgia Bank & Trust, and we look forward to hosting more Eagle Executive Exchanges around the state throughout the year. Upcoming Eagle Executive Exchange events will be Thursday, March 26 at Spanky's in Pooler and Thursday, June 4 in Macon. To view more pictures from the Augusta event, go to bit.ly/AugustaEEE. For more information, please go to coba.GeorgiaSouthern.edu/eexchange.



College of Business Online Graduate Programs Ranked in Top 25 by U.S. News & World Report

Recently, the College of Business was ranked by U.S. News & World Report for the Best MBA Program for Online Students (#18) and Best Online Graduate Business Programs (Excluding MBA) (#21).

According to U.S. News & World Report, the 2015 Best Online MBA Programs and Best Online Graduate Business Programs (Excluding MBA) are the best online master's degree programs in business based upon admissions selectivity, reputation for excellence among peer institutions, and academic and career support services offered to students. Fewer than 200 schools were included in this year's Best Online MBA Programs ranking; thus, placing greater weight on reputation and admissions selectivity. And, fewer than 120 schools ranked among the Best Online Graduate Business Programs (Excluding MBA).



"We are gratified by the recognition and believe it reflects the hard work and dedication of our faculty, staff, and students," stated Allen C. Amason, dean of the Georgia Southern College of Business. "We believe it also reflects the quality of our programs, the value of our degrees, and our commitment to providing a great education and a strong return to our stakeholders."

MBAA Kick-off & Spring Schedule

On January 21, 2015, the MBA Association (MBAA) kicked off the spring semester with a presentation from Young Entrepreneurs Across America. In its second year, the MBAA remains involved with professional development, fundraising, and community involvement. The MBAA continues its partnership with One More Time, the Georgia Southern University Recycling Initiative, and educating the student body about recycling. In February, the organization will host "Professionally Captured," a fundraising event offering reduced priced professional head shots, at the STEM Career Fair and during the Eagle Expo Career Fair. Also during the month of February, the MBAA will work with Career Services to prepare for the Eagle Expo Career Fair on February 25, 2015. If you would like to speak to the MBAA during the spring semester, please contact Devon Jameson, president, at dj00916@georgiasouthern.edu.



12th Annual Distinguished Forensic Accounting Lecturer

The School of Accountancy will host the 12th Annual Distinguished Forensic Accounting Lecturer, James D. Durham, First Assistant United States Attorney, Southern District of Georgia on Thursday, February 5, 2015 at 5:00 PM at the Georgia Southern Performing Arts Center (PAC). Mr. Durham's presentation is entitled, "The Fingerprints of Fraud."



In his presentation, Mr. Durham discusses his professional experiences prosecuting (and defending) white collar criminals, as well as the evidence necessary to answer the most common questions in a criminal fraud case, "Who knew what, and when did they know it?" Using examples of some of the largest fraud cases ever prosecuted in Georgia, Mr. Durham also offers insight into why fraud prosecutors need forensic auditors to build a case.

His presentation is free and open to the public. Professionals will be provided with a certificate for 1 hour of continuing professional education (CPE).

Congrats to Accounting Alumni, Phil Moore!

Phil Moore (BBA, Accounting, '82), managing partner of Atlanta-based professional services firm Porter Keadle Moore, was recently recognized as one of the Top 10 Accountants in Georgia by the National Academy of Public Accounting Professionals.

Mr. Moore volunteers his time to Georgia Southern and the College of Business in the following ways:

- chairs the School of Accountancy Advisory Board
- serves on the University Foundation
- serves on the Athletic Foundation
- chaired the group that raised the millions of dollars required to build the Smith Football Operations Center at the stadium
- annually provides multiple scholarships to Georgia Southern students
- financially supports the Georgia Southern Beta Alpha Psi honor society
- travels to campus several times a year to mentor accounting students

To read more about the Top 10 Accountants in Georgia for 2014, go to <http://www.napapweb.org/georgia.html>.



Statesboro's Cowboy: Former Georgia Southern star J.J. Wilcox making plays for Dallas defense

by Donald Heath of Savannah Morning News

"Everything is good. Everything is positive."

That's J.J. Wilcox's answer to the first question during our phone conversation from the Dallas Cowboys' training complex this week.

How could everything not be positive? Wilcox is 23 years old, filled with enthusiasm and playing a key role in the Cowboys' success as their starting safety.

Wilcox and his teammates will get a big test in the NFC semifinals against the Green Bay Packers on Sunday.

The former Georgia Southern star says he's ready, and may the best team win — just the attitude you'd expect from a guy who has come a long way in two years.

"Last year was a roller coaster ride, but I've learned it's not how you start, it's how you respond," Wilcox said.



The Cairo, Ga., native played safety for one season at Southern, but impressed the Dallas organization enough to spend a third-round draft pick on him in 2013 in the NFL draft.

Wilcox has progressed slowly. Before his first regular-season game, his mother died after suffering from lupus.

On the field, Wilcox eventually broke into the Cowboys' starting lineup, but he lost a month of playing time after spraining his MCL.

Dallas finished 2013 with its third straight 8-8 season and failed to make the playoffs. Critics lumped blame on a porous defense. The unit still comes under attack but showed resiliency last Sunday after allowing only three points in the second half against the Detroit Lions in the first round of the playoffs.

The Cowboys surrendered 251.9 passing yards a game, ranking 26th in the 32-team league. But the high numbers might be a product of opponents trying to play catch-up against the team's high-powered offense.

Wilcox has been a bright spot lately, leading the Cowboys with seven tackles against the Lions. His 74 tackles this season ranked fourth on the team. He has three interceptions.

"Last season, a lot of people were saying they should draft a safety with the first-round pick," Wilcox said. "But the organization pulled me to the side and said you're our guy.

"The defense doesn't get a lot of credit because we have a lot of no-names (on the defense). But we have people who know their roles and are willing to sacrifice to get the job done."

Soft Spot for Southern

Georgia Southern football fans might remember Wilcox jumping a pass route to record an interception and seal an Eagle 49-35 quarterfinal playoff win against Old Dominion in 2012. He was a first-team All-Southern Conference performer as a senior in a voting of league coaches and earned All-America honors from the College Sports Journal.

In three of Wilcox's four years, Southern advanced to the semifinals of the Football Championship Subdivision playoffs. He was the 80th selection overall in the NFL draft, the highest ever for a Georgia Southern player.

"I love Georgia Southern. It's deeper than football," Wilcox said. "The whole city (of Statesboro) and university taught me a lot. It made me a better man. If it wasn't for Georgia Southern, I wouldn't be where I am."

Wilcox said he'll return to Statesboro to work on his bachelor's degree in business administration after this season.

But first things first.

After a short skid when the Cowboys lost three of five games, Dallas has won five in a row — including its first playoff victory since the 2009 postseason — and is considered by many as a threat to advance to the Super Bowl.

Dallas is 8-0 on the road this season.

Wilcox doesn't want to talk Super Bowl or about anything past Sunday. He knows his team's play can go up and down like the weather.

The Cowboys lost to Washington and Philadelphia at home, but avenged the losses with wins on the road.

The Eagles toppled Dallas 33-10 on Thanksgiving. Seventeen days later in Philadelphia, it was a different story and the Cowboys won 38-27.

"I learned you can't look ahead in this league. Everyone is good, and if you're not ready they can beat you," Wilcox said. "Philadelphia spoiled our Thanksgiving, but we knew what we had to do and corrected ourselves."

College of Business Faculty Gives Finance Advice for the New Year

For anyone who is interested in being smarter financially during the New Year, Associate Professor of Finance Axel Grossmann, Ph.D., offers a few tips to reach your goals.

Budget. "Record all sources of income and stick to your budget. Create a list of monthly expenses and break them into necessary expenses and unnecessary expenses. Also, leave 10-20 percent for savings."

Avoid. "Avoid too many credit cards and make it a habit to pay them off at the end of the month. If you won't be able to pay them off at the end of the month, avoid them altogether."

Save. "Create an emergency fund—I suggest three to six months of necessary expenses. Use your savings for only important financial goals."



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