

# Taking Flight

February 2015

Georgia Southern University

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## Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Taking Flight" (2015). *Taking Flight (College of Business Administration)*. 16.  
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# Taking Flight – February 2015 Edition

## Message from the Dean

What is the future of higher education and of business education in particular? Questions like these are ever so popular today and are often the cause of much hand-wringing and concern. Don't get me wrong; we must be sensitive to changes in the market, and we must adapt to emerging opportunities and challenges. At the same time, we should be confident in our identity and comfortable with our value proposition. And so, rather than focus on how higher education is changing, let me spend a minute reviewing some things that are likely to remain the same.



First, quality and rigor will continue to be at the heart of what we do. Technologies will come and go, just as delivery methods and platforms will change. But current, rigorous, and cutting edge content will always be fundamental to a high quality education. Second, our effectiveness will always be measured by the impact we have on others. Just as no one lights a candle, only to hide it under a basket, so, too, knowledge that is created but not shared is of no value. Finally, we will continue to emphasize human interaction as a distinctive means for adding value in business and business education. Engagement, collegiality, and collaboration are more than just buzzwords; they are the crux of what makes a Georgia Southern College of Business education distinctive and vital. Even if everything else about our practices and processes change, these things will not.

So, let's think often about the future and about how we should change in anticipation of it. But, let's also be clear about those things that should not change. We are the Georgia Southern University College of Business, and we will continue to focus on rigor and quality. We'll continue to leverage relationships among our faculty, alumni, and students and will continue to measure our success by our impact on others. It's what we do, and it's who we are.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. C. ...' followed by a long horizontal flourish. The signature is written in a cursive, professional style.

## **Viral Video Competition Advinup Wins 3 Day Startup**

This past weekend, February 20-22, the Georgia Southern University Business Innovation Group (BIG) hosted “3 Day Startup”, a weekend intensive business startup workshop for prospective entrepreneurs. Six teams pitched ideas for apps, ranging from a college book swap to helping to plan the perfect date.

This year’s winners were the young entrepreneurs behind Advinup, a reward-based viral video competition. Pictured are Advinup Co-Founders Brook Tesema (L) and Tyler Brown (R), joined by Evan Dennar (C), a 3 Day Startup panelist and sponsor from Company X in New York. Team members not pictured include John Nwosu, Philip Johnson, Chris Jones, Stephen Johnson, and Nnamdi Obodoechine.

The Advinup team will move on to the Fast Pitch competition in Savannah on March 5, in order to pitch their idea to prospective investors.



## **Savannah Eagle Executive Exchange**

Save the Date for the upcoming Savannah Eagle Executive Exchange – Connecting the Eagle Executive Network – for Thursday, March 26 at 5:30 pm at Spanky’s in Pooler. [Click here](#) to see the flyer.



## **Alumni Spotlight: Sean Knox**

Article by Lucy Adams, Savannah CEO

Though four generations of the Knox family have been in the pest control industry, Knox Pest Control started as a team of a father and two teenage sons door-knocking during the day and treating restaurants at night. Sean Knox and his brother, Justin, who now share the role of company president, learned the meaning of grit and determination in the early 1990s when they helped their dad get the business going. “It was humble beginnings when we restarted,” Sean says. “We had no clients and no employees. It was just us.”



Their great-grandfather, Forrest H. Knox, coined the company motto, "It is not who you get as a customer, it's who you keep as a customer," and this motto continues to be their standard of doing business today. Pest control is a relatively inexpensive service. Customer retention is key to success. Converting new customers to repeat customers and repeat customers to word-of-mouth marketers makes a big difference in growing a business. Adhering to their great-grandfather's philosophy pushes the firm forward. "Even when the economy slowed down, we grew by double digits," says Sean. Of approximately 18,000 pest management companies, Knox Pest Control ranks in the top 50 in terms of revenue in Pest Control Technology's (PCT) Top 100 list.

Sixteen offices in Georgia, Alabama, and Florida also extend services to Mississippi and South Carolina. More than 200 employees carry the company motto across the thresholds of residential, commercial, and industrial clients. "We have four offices right now that are managed by people who joined the company as technicians," says Sean. It testifies to the longevity and dedication of Knox Pest Control staff, all of whom are trained according to Georgia's rigorous standards regardless of the state in which they deliver services.

Many employees also possess specialty certifications in lawn treatment, wildlife control, and termite prevention and elimination. "We hold multiple certifications and continually provide in-depth training to make sure we're qualified to handle those customer needs," Sean says, referring to the array of municipal, school, medical, military, restaurant, housing, and food processing environments in which they operate.

Knox Pest Control has had a steep growth trajectory since its inception, with much of that growth occurring in the last seven years. Acquisitions have allowed them to welcome smaller companies under their umbrella and roll them into the Knox family business culture. In addition, organic growth due to reputation and customer word-of-mouth have significantly expanded Knox Pest Control's foot print and service offerings in the southeast.

"What we try to accomplish," explains Sean, "is to have the resources you would get with a national company and the hands-on of a regional, family-owned company." Having a director of compliance on staff ensures the quality control that big corporate customers require. Sean and Justin's open-door policy maintains lines of communication and an expectation that each customer is one they wish to keep. Knox Pest Control's flexibility with understanding the needs of each client and willingness to develop targeted plans, even meeting highly specific requests of individual customers, for each corporate account adds another layer of trust and dependability.

Membership in Copesan, a collective of mid-sized regional pest control businesses offering commercial entities nationwide coverage, enables Knox Pest Control to fulfill national accounts with facilities or storefronts in any of the five states they serve. Through Copesan, Knox Pest Control has cultivated strong working relationships with other family owned pest control agencies in other territories.

Sean and Justin look forward to expanding the lawn services division beyond the LaGrange, Columbus, and Auburn offices. A couple of acquisitions are also on the front burner for 2015. One of

the more exciting projects in the works, however, is the licensing, marketing and distribution of KnoxWare, software designed specifically for service businesses but not limited to pest control. It's always exciting when a company can take an innovation that increases its efficiency and make it available to other businesses that would profit. But that's how things are done by people who know their history and are standing on it to catapult them into the future.

For more information on Knox Pest Control, visit [knoxpest.com](http://knoxpest.com).

### **12th Annual Distinguished Forensic Accounting Lecturer, James D. Durham**

On February 5, the School of Accountancy hosted the 12th Annual Distinguished Forensic Accounting lecturer. This year's speaker, James D. Durham, First Assistant United States Attorney, Southern District of Georgia spoke about "The Fingerprints of Fraud." During Mr. Durham's 12 years with the U.S. Attorney's Office, he has prosecuted hundreds of defendants in cases involving healthcare fraud, corruption, racketeering, money laundering, and organized crime.



James Durham receives a thank you gift from accounting student, Taquesta Bush.

The Forensic Accounting Advisory Board also spent two days on campus, discussing the accomplishments of the Fraud and Forensic Accounting programs, the future of the Center for Forensic Studies in Accounting and curriculum, and fraud conferences. Six of the board members became "Professor for the Day" in various accounting classes. To conclude the two-day campus visit, February 6, board members wrapped up their meetings and ate lunch with accounting students.

Then, on February 17, Mr. Durham invited students from the fraud and forensic accounting and criminal justice programs to observe a criminal arraignment at the Statesboro Federal Courthouse. The purpose of the arraignment was to call an accused person before a criminal court to hear and answer the charge made against him/her. The students observed Wilson Smith, a Vidalia attorney, plead not guilty to charges of entering into settlement agreements without his clients' knowledge, forging their names to various documents to settle their cases, and then converting the fraudulently obtained settlement proceeds to his own personal use. He has been indicted by both state and federal grand juries and is currently under state arrest pending trial. The students were able to observe various officials of federal law enforcement agencies and the GBI. After the hearing, Mr. Durham met privately with the students to explain more aspects of the investigation and legal process.

## **Professionally Captured – February 11 STEM Career Fair & February 25 Eagle Expo Career Fair**

During the STEM Career Fair and the Eagle Expo Career Fair, the MBA Association offered professional head shots to the campus community at a discounted rate. This event, Professionally Captured, has been offered at career fairs over the past year and serves as a fundraising event for the student organization to allow its members to participate in other outside events that have some cost associated with them.



If you would be interested in speaking to the MBA Association or know someone who would benefit our graduate students, please contact Devon Jameson, president, at [dj00916@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:dj00916@georgiasouthern.edu).

## **Young Alumni Board Meeting**

On Saturday, February 21, the Young Alumni Board met in Atlanta at the offices of Warren Averett. Prior to meeting on Saturday, a group of Young Alumni Board members gathered on Friday evening and attended an Atlanta Hawks game. This event gave the board members a chance to get to know each other better, while enjoying the game.



During the weekend retreat, the Board received updates from Dean Amason, Danny Johnson of the Dean's Advisory Board, Terry Harvin with Athletics, and Dr. Kelley Chester on the importance of giving back, whether through time or money. After being served lunch by Safari Catering, a Georgia Southern alumnus owned business, the Young Alumni Board divided into five committees to plan the rest of the year. The committees are development, events, student support, marketing, and networking. The first student support committee event to come out of this meeting will be scheduled the week of March 23, in conjunction with the College of Business's 2nd Welcome Lunch for new BBA students on Friday, March 27. The Young Alumni Board members plan to hold a panel discussion with current students about being a young professional, be "Professors for a Day," and look to help serve lunch to the students during the Welcome Lunch.

## Eagle Executive Magazine

The Spring 2015 issue of the Eagle Executive magazine will be out in March. Look for it in your mailbox soon. To update your contact information through Eagle Connect, please go to [GeorgiaSouthern.edu/Alumni](http://GeorgiaSouthern.edu/Alumni).



## Save the Date – Business at the Ballpark

The 2nd Annual Business at the Ballpark will be held on Saturday, April 11 when the Eagles host the Mavericks of UT Arlington at J. I. Clements Stadium at 2 pm. Mark your calendar now to join the College of Business in April for an afternoon of fun.



## Georgia WebMBA Ranked by CEO Magazine

The Georgia WebMBA®, the consortium of which the Georgia Southern Online MBA is a part, has been ranked #10 by CEO Magazine in its Online MBA Rankings. This comes on the heels of the Georgia Southern Online MBA program being ranked #18 by U.S. News & World Report's Online Rankings.



# MBA

CEO Magazine's MBA rankings are based upon key indicators considered to be of interest and value to potential MBA students. Some of these indicators include international diversity, class size, student work experience, faculty-to-student ratio, and faculty qualifications (academic and professional).

The Georgia WebMBA®, in existence since 2001, is a consortium of six University System of Georgia institutions, offering a fully online, AACSB-accredited MBA program for the working professional. This MBA program is asynchronous and team-based, consists of 30 credit hours, and takes 5 semesters to complete. It is a lock-step cohort program, only requiring students to attend an orientation weekend prior to starting the program. Taught by some of the same faculty teaching in

the Georgia Southern MBA program, the focus of the program is to have students interact with the material, their classmates, and their professors in a variety of ways to offer a high tech, high touch experience that is relevant for working business professionals.

To learn more about the Georgia Southern Online MBA, please visit [GeorgiaSouthern.edu/mba](http://GeorgiaSouthern.edu/mba) or call 912.478.5767.

### **Finance Student Wins Best Paper Award**

Caitlin Tongco, an undergraduate student in finance, won the best undergraduate paper award at the Academy of Economics and Finance annual meeting held February 4–7 in Jacksonville, FL. Her paper, “Long-term U.S. cross-border security flows with developed and emerging market countries surrounding the global financial crisis,” is part of her honor’s thesis. Caitlin’s research, which was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Axel Grossmann, analyzes the impact of the global financial crisis on cross-border long-term security flows from and towards the U.S.



The paper provides evidence for a flight-to-safety with the start of the global financial crisis, with a significant, but short lived interruption due to the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers. Further, the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers has caused an abrupt drop in holdings of U.S. and foreign equity, which have not recovered. This suggests that the extraordinary event has caused a general increase in international investors’ risk aversion. Interestingly, the demand of foreign bonds (especially those from emerging countries) experienced a significant increase during the post-crisis period. The initial research proposal was presented by Caitlin Tongco at the College of Business Board Meeting in April. Caitlin will graduate in May 2015 with a BBA in Finance.



**SAVE  
THE  
DATE**

**22<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL  
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS  
GOLF TOURNAMENT**

**FRIDAY,  
MAY 15, 2015**  
**Forest Heights Country Club**

For more information,  
contact Lisa Williams at  
[lwms@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:lwms@georgiasouthern.edu)

Last updated: 5/25/2016

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