

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY® COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

SPRING 2021

# STOCKnotes



*photo provided by Joshua Moore*





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- Find Future Employees
- Increase Productivity
- Improve Employee-Retention Rate
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*Steven Hollingsworth, Intern*  
Chamber of Commerce



*Jake Anthony, Intern*  
North Carolina Joint Underwriting Association



*Callie Collins, Intern*  
Syneos Health

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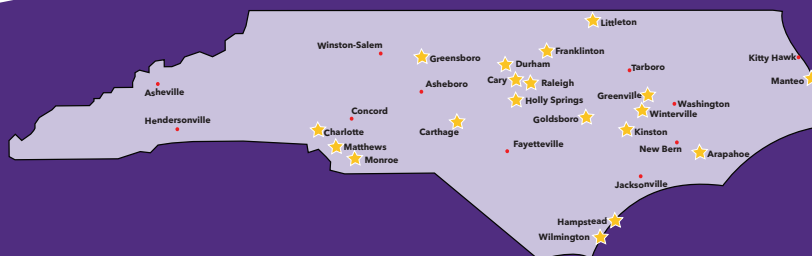


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Starred locations of COB Student Interns



*business.ecu.edu/careers*





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## Looking forward: spotlighting spring '21 COB graduates

On May 7, ECU College of Business graduates closed out a challenging phase of their collegiate career and participated in commencement exercises, albeit modified, that celebrated their accomplishments and encouraged them to embrace what lies next.

Five hundred and sixty-three undergraduates and 111 graduate students attained a goal that was established years ago, and that would not be derailed by the pandemic. Despite changes on and off campus, the May 7 graduates and the COB adapted to an online COVID-19 environment thanks to a commitment to online course delivery started 20 years ago. The 674 students leaned on the support of faculty and staff who brought real-world experiences with unmatched learning opportunities.

The pineapple is the hospitality industry's symbol. Found in ports and waterway areas, they were used hundreds of years ago for homeowners to welcome and invite guests into their homes. In one of her spring '21 graduation photos, Hope Cooper holds a pineapple. She recently used the symbol in a presentation she made to the School of Hospitality Leadership's recent meeting of advisory board members.

Hope Cooper's welcoming personality and passion for the industry have made her an unofficial ambassador for SHL the past couple of years. She even serves as a tour guide for an SHL virtual tour created during the COVID-19 shutdown.

A pirate through and through, Cooper put that same passion for the school toward her college experiences. She was recently named the 2020-21 Outstanding Senior for SHL, as voted on by SHL faculty. She also graduated Summa

Cum Laude with a 4.0 GPA. She was heavily involved in her sorority and numerous honors societies, and she was a two-time recipient of the Marriott Scholarship.

"Graduating is more than a celebration of my academic achievements," said Cooper. "It is the fruition of my childhood dream coming true. I have been raised in purple and gold since I was little."

Cooper is not done with the College of Business, however. She plans to stay at ECU and pursue her MBA.

Brady Hillhouse's name will be etched in the history of the College of Business. He is the first COB graduate to receive a Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship degree from the College. The new degree is designed to provide students with a strong foundation in the entrepreneurial skillset and mindset needed to develop and launch a new venture.

We'd love to take credit for helping Hillhouse start that foundation, but we can't. He came to ECU as a freshman and business owner. He sold that business later in his freshman



*Hope Cooper: "I am so thankful for all the memories I have made and the ones that are yet to come!"*



year. However, Hillhouse took full advantage of everything the College of Business and ECU provided. His resume rivals any 10-year professional currently working in their industry of choice. Dr. Mike Harris, director of the Miller School of Entrepreneurship, says Hillhouse has set the bar high for future degree seekers. His legacy at the College of Business will be an inspiration for future leaders.

And the advice he has for those behind him? Hillhouse says, "Find your passions and be proud of them. Always look to improve yourself and learn new things; the rest will fall into place."

At a young age, Nikki Jute knew she wanted to be a veterinarian. So, what did the Laurinburg, North Carolina native do? She applied to ECU, of course.

Obviously, the latter sentence requires another 'why' to be asked. And, the answer would be the College of Business. At an early age, Jute understood that the skills and know-how to successfully operate her future practice could be found at ECU. She joined the College of Business as a freshman, focused on marketing, and soaked in the leadership curriculum and industry knowledge found within the College and its faculty.

"I wanted to have that business background so I could properly run and operate (my practice)," said Jute. "I really enjoyed the marketing aspect (of what I learned)."

On May 7, Jute graduated with a 4.0 (and that's with taking an additional 39 prerequisite hours on top of her 120-degree hours), and she'll be on her way to join North Carolina State's veterinary program.

Keyshorn Smith graduated with a degree in Finance. His current plans are twofold: intern with TowneBank in Greenville and start his MBA.

When Smith puts Greenville in his rearview mirror, he will leave a lasting impression. While at ECU, he was involved in the Student Financial Wellness and Literacy Committee, Honors College financial literacy group, Beta Gamma Sigma, Gamma Iota Sigma and Sigma Alpha Lambda.

He also won numerous scholarships and influenced many. Recently, Smith was awarded the Zeke Sigler COB Outstanding Peer Mentor Award. The award recognizes Smith's contributions to the program and how we went above and beyond expectations as a Peer Mentor. Zeke



*Keyshorn Smith: "The first step is over but there are many more to climb!"*

Sigler was a College of Business peer mentor who excelled at every level in serving his classmates. He served as a mentor from 2014-2016 and graduated with his BSBA in 2015 and MSA in 2016.

"I've met so many brilliant minds here at ECU, but this award allowed me to see that I can be a leader, that God is doing big things in your life," said Smith.

After speaking with Smith, you understand right away that his mentoring didn't begin when he came to ECU. He grew up in a town that where there was a lot of violence. Smith knew there were other opportunities for young black men to pursue. He started a book club where other young black men would discuss what they read and look at opportunities available to them, whether it be attending college, entertainment or achieving a dream.

"In my hometown, young black men didn't see a lot of other young black men going to college or pursuing a career," said Smith. "As one of the few black men in my STEM high school and my freshmen honors class here at ECU, I wanted to make sure that those young men see great things ahead of them and know that they can do it, as well."

At the College of Business, we're known for building leaders. And, thanks to the Honors College for recognizing Smith's contributions and leadership qualities, Smith joins the ranks of many who will go on to do great things.

Veinsteina, who hails from Riga, Latvia, is an ECU tennis player and an MBA graduate. She also received her undergraduate degree from ECU. She found the culture in Greenville to be in line with who she is as a person. On top of getting two degrees at ECU, she found time to provide more than 600 hours in community service to Aces for Autism, Rise Against Hunger, local food banks, human societies and various hurricane relief efforts.

"The ECU/Greenville community has helped me in so many ways, and I love giving back and making the community a better place. I feel very confident and prepared for my future."

Of her time at ECU and her expectations moving forward, Veinsteina said, "What I've learned from ECU and the MBA program will allow me to pursue a health services management career anywhere in the world."



*Annija Veinsteina*





## '21 Pirate Entrepreneurship Challenge awards first place to cross-campus team

One of the Pirate Entrepreneurship Challenge's main goals is to inspire and encourage winning entrepreneurial collaboration across East Carolina University.

Consider that goal accomplished.

Dr. George Schilling, a third-year physical medicine and rehabilitation resident at Vidant Medical Center and ECU's Brody School of Medicine, and College of Business marketing major and sophomore Grant Smith took first place in the 2021 Pirate Entrepreneurship Challenge. The cross-campus team won \$15,000 in cash prizes and in-kind services for their winning idea, InHouse Call.

InHouse Call is an app that will provide a physician all hospital phone numbers needed to attend to a patient's care. Immediate access to this information could quickly expedite the health care services provided to the patient and save the hospital money by reducing hospital stays for the patient, increasing revenue-generating opportunities, and improving patient care by reducing the risk of errors and hospital complications.

Schilling reached out to Dave Mayo, the Pirate Challenge organizer, with the InHouse Call idea, and Mayo then introduced Schilling to Smith as a partner. Smith, who wanted to be involved in the Pirate Challenge, said, "I didn't have a specific idea that I wanted to roll with, but I said if anybody needs help with the business aspect of their idea, I'd love to help."

To get to the final pitch stage, Schilling and Smith have twice pitched their idea virtually since Oct. 2020. The Pirate Challenge finals, following ECU COVID-19 protocol, were held in person, April 8.

"It was nice to get up in front of people and do this in person," said Schilling.

Schilling and Smith are already thinking about InHouse Call's next steps. According to Schilling, InHouse Call is in the discussion phase with Vidant Medical Center to possibly launch a pilot program for the application.



Schilling and Smith pitch InHouse Call during 2021 Pirate Entrepreneurship Challenge.

"Dr. George Schilling and his creation of the InHouseCall app represent the innovative and collaborative essence that the Brody School of Medicine considers vital to its pursuit of new and resourceful ways to provide the very best care for patients," said Dr. Mark Stacy, dean of Brody and vice chancellor of the ECU Division of Health Sciences. "We are delighted that Dr. Schilling and his team earned this fantastic recognition that encourages students and residents to pursue ideas, products and services that make life better for others."

"Establishing an entrepreneurial ecosystem in eastern North Carolina has long been a tenet at the College of Business and the Miller School of Entrepreneurship," said Dr. Mike Harris, director, Miller School of Entrepreneurship. "An important part of the ecosystem begins here on ECU's campus. I hope this winning team encourages other entrepreneurial students to come forward with their ideas



and work with other like-minded Pirates to turn their ideas into potential realities.”

“It’s exciting to see entrepreneurship connect the east and west campuses,” said Harris.

### Additional awardees

In its fourth year, the Pirate Entrepreneurship Challenge is the signature pitch competition of ECU’s College of Business (COB) and its Miller School of Entrepreneurship. For this year’s competition, nearly \$150,000 in cash prizes and in-kind services were awarded to teams that placed in the competition.

Taking second place was Campus Connect, an application that allows local and national businesses to advertise to university students, faculty and other affiliates. The team is MBA student Jeffrey Jones of Raleigh, North Carolina and business senior Nicolette Matarazzo of Hillsborough, New Jersey. Their prize winnings were \$10,000 in cash and in-kind services.

“To interact with people and tell them about something that we created was pretty amazing,” said Matarazzo, who pitched a different version of Campus Connect during last year’s competition.

Jones, who met Matarazzo in the Miller School’s new venture course, said they clicked immediately. “We both loved the idea of Campus Connect, took what we had and made it into something brand new.”

Entrepreneurship senior Dillon Forstberg of West Hartford, Connecticut and senior business major Nicholas Stuke of Charlotte, North Carolina, took home \$5,000 in cash and in-kind services for Trax Golf. Their application helps amateur golfers track their golf balls utilizing GPS.

“We’ve been working really, really hard and chipping away at it,” said Forstberg. “It was exciting to get the outcome that we wanted.”

When it comes to their prize winnings, Stuke says Trax Golf will take it step by step. “We’ll get the website built first,

along with the app, then coding for the ball, and after that, we’ll go from there.”

Pirate Entrepreneurship Challenge sponsors also handed out their own awards of



Danny Scott, '84, a 2021 Pirate Entrepreneurship Challenge judge, questions one of the teams during a Q&A session (photo by Cliff Hollis).

the evening. Campus Connect won an additional \$10,000 in application development support from Dualboot partners. College of Health and Human Performance students Kenneth Roach and Quinton Jones won \$5,000 in digital support from Red Shark Digital. Their idea, Colorful Desires, is a one-stop online marketplace for businesses of color to showcase their products.

“So many hours were put in preparation for this competition,” said Roach, a senior from Charlotte, North Carolina. “I am most grateful for the connections with my mentors, Dana Newell and Shareen Berkowitz, who were a big help. I felt that my entrepreneurial mind matured a lot over the time that passed.”

Jone, a senior from Durham, said, “I’m thankful for the connections made and all of the positive feedback we have received in this journey.”

Fielding Miller (BSBA’ 84), CEO and co-founder of CAPTRUST, was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Miller School of Entrepreneurship. Last year, James Maynard (ECU’ 65) was the inaugural recipient of the award.

Judges for this year’s Pirate Entrepreneurship Challenge were:

- Grant Edwards (MSA’ 00) is a partner with TechCXO, which provides CEOs and entrepreneurs with fractional chief financial officers, CAO & controller services
- Steven Lipscombe (BSBA’ 20), along with his partner, won the second Pirate Entrepreneurship Challenge in 2019.
- Fielding Miller (BSBA’ 84) is the CEO and co-founder of CAPTRUST. His 2015 gift to the COB established the Miller School of Entrepreneurship.
- Danny Scott (BSBA’ 84) is the co-founder of the specialty food company All-N-Food, LLC. He also served on the ECU board of trustees for eight years.

### Sponsors who provided cash and in-kind support included:

- Accelerate Rural NC
- Anonymous gift
- Dualboot Partners
- Forrest Firm
- Greenville SEED
- Jenkins, Wilson, Taylor and Hunt
- Kellum and Campbell Accounting
- Nucleus Uptown
- Pitt County Development Commission
- Red Shark Digital
- RIoT
- Uptown Greenville

According to Miller School officials, the Pirate Challenge is one of the largest student entrepreneurship pitch competitions in the southeast United States. More than 300 student-led teams participated in the Pirate Challenge since the competition’s inception. Approximately \$300,000 in prizes have been awarded over the years.

Six teams competed in this year’s finals.





## GIVING BACK

*Recent alumni gifts to College of Business expected to have immediate impact*

Two recent gifts from College of Business alumni will improve the college's existing student success center and create a new faculty position. Steve Cunanan and his wife Ellen, both COB alumni, established the Cunanan Center for Professional Success, while alumna Clark Stallings and his wife, Lisa, created the Stallings International Scholar position.

According to Dean Paul Schwager, College of Business alumni gifts are increasingly important due to the effects of COVID-19 on students.

"Our students want both an education and a social experience while at ECU, and regrettably, they're only getting one of those," Schwager said. "So, what can we bring them that will mitigate their sense of loss but enhance their education and knowledge of and preparation for the world? That's what I'm hoping these new gifts will do."

Universities are even more reliant on donor gifts these days due to the coronavirus and its negative economic impact. Thankfully, ECU donors continue to be generous even during difficult times. For example, since the beginning of the pandemic in March, Pirates near and far raised more than \$207,000 for student emergency funds. Overall giving to the ECU Foundation was \$13.2 million as of Oct. 31, compared with \$8.5 million at the same time last year. In the COB, in particular, philanthropy is strong. For this year's Pirate Nation Gives, the largest gift of the day – \$1.8 million – went to the college's accounting department.

"It goes to show that together we can do so much for our students and our region. Every gift, small or large, can

have a huge impact," said Chris Dyba, vice chancellor for university advancement. "Steve Cunanan is a valued member of the ECU Foundation Board in addition to all that he and Ellen do for the university and its students. As with Clark and Lisa Stallings, we are so grateful for their involvement as well as their support," Dyba said.

### Revamping student success

Steve Cunanan '87 '91 will tell you the first act of his professional life centered on building a career and working in the for-profit space, a 30-year span that included leadership positions in Kindred Healthcare, Catalyst Rx and Johnson and Johnson. His second act is in the nonprofit sector as the CEO of the American Red Cross for the Kentucky region.

"I feel at this point in my life, it is extremely important to give back," Cunanan said. "That is why I have decided to work full time for a nonprofit and give back to ECU."



Recent College of Business graduate Marianne Moore landed internships and a future job thanks to the support of the College's Career Center. (Contributed photo)



He and Ellen '88 established the Cunanan Center for Professional Success, which will move the COB's current career center into a modern and accessible location conveniently located on the third floor of Bate Building on main campus. The center annually interacts with approximately 5,400 undergraduate and graduate students in various ways designed to improve career chances during college and after graduation.

Cunanan believes this gift is in line with the university's goal of serving the region and helping individuals better their situation, whether economic or personal.

"(Students) getting a job is really important to the university," he said. "It's important to the community, and it's important to the region."

In the Cunanan Center for Professional Success (CCPS), students and alumni will find a more comprehensive, unified approach to providing career and professional services. All CCPS staff will be in the new space instead of separate offices scattered across campus. Resume building, practice interviews, career and development workshops and internship opportunities will continue to be the focus. One new element will be stronger community engagement,

through which local industries and businesses can utilize the CCPS services to better their employees.

"Changes in higher education and the job market necessitate a new, creative approach to student engagement and career



*The Cunanans' gift will ensure future students will receive enhanced support via the Center. (Contributed photo)*

readiness," said Lee Brown, current director of the COB Career Center. "The addition of an industry engagement specialist will enhance and broaden the services we can provide for our students, alumni, faculty, staff and the community."

Graduate accounting student Marianne Moore was able to leverage the career center's services into two internship opportunities. Brown helped update her resume, and a Dixon Hughes Goodman representative that the center brought to campus gave her valuable interview practice.

"I can't tell you how many times I've leaned on the career center," Moore said. "Their open-door policy is something that my fellow students and I are grateful to have."

Now, the career center will be able to offer even more resources, thanks to the Cunanans.

## Recruiting the best faculty

Another gift came to the College of Business courtesy of timing. ECU COB alumnus Clark Stallings '89 and his wife, Lisa '91, are Pirates through and through. The Stallings live near campus, where they like to take walks. They and their

four children attended ECU games. Lisa is an advisor for Alpha Delta Pi sorority. And Stallings, an entrepreneur, hires many of his employees from ECU. When he retires, his dream job is to volunteer and lead campus tours.



*Alumnus Clark Stallings and his wife, Lisa, created the Stallings International Scholar position. (Photo by Cliff Hollis)*

The Stallings also stay connected to the COB by reading its biannual newsletter, Stocknotes. A recent edition inspired them to make a gift.

"I just love reading about other Pirates that are giving back in so many ways, and I just said, 'We need to step up, give back and support the College,'" Stallings said. The couple wanted their donation to help recruit and hire top faculty for the College of Business.

Their gift to the college's priority fund allowed Dean Schwager immediately to create the Stallings Distinguished International Scholar. The first scholar, Dr. Victor Mbarika, was hired in September as a professor in the Department of Management Information Systems. Born in Cameroon, Mbarika studies the intersection of information technology and humanity in telemedicine, distant learning, e-agriculture and e-democracy in the U.S. and abroad, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa. As a faculty member, Mbarika will expose students to international business strategies, skills and projects.

Stallings refers to his relationship with the COB as a journey. "I'm very proud and blessed to be a part of it. If Paul (Schwager) needs something, he knows that we're available," he said. "We're willing to roll up our sleeves and help where we can."





## COB alumni land at same company

Brandon James (BSBA '12) and Michael McGilvary (BSBA '11) are both from Clemmons, North Carolina. Both are College of Business (COB) graduates, and both are proud Pirates. Today McGilvary and James work for Marzano Capital Group, an investment firm that helps people plan for their short- and long-term financial goals. McGilvary and James tell us that two key lessons learned at the COB, teamwork and relationship building, play major roles in Marzano's success.

"This team approach is rare in our business," said McGilvary.

To the delight of the COB, both have decided to start giving of their time to the COB. Below is their story.

**Michael McGilvary:** In 2010, I had an opportunity to intern as a financial advisor at Marzano Capital Group my junior year at East Carolina and the COB. While there, I was able to get involved and learn a little bit about the industry.

I graduated in 2011 and moved to Charlotte, where I did some small business accounting work for about three years. I decided that I didn't like being tied to my desk and wanted to have more interactions with people and get back to a face-to-face job. So, I made the jump in 2014 and started as a financial advisor with a Charlotte-based firm. I made cold calls, knocked on doors and built my book of business. Then in 2016, Jon, the managing principal at Marzano, called me and said, "Hey, man, my dad's retiring and you interned with us. You're a financial advisor at another firm, I'd like to have a conversation with you," and luckily, I was able to make the jump.

**Brandon James:** I was at Appalachian State during my sophomore year, and I got a phone call from some people that I knew who wanted me to become a partner in their business. I then decided to leave school, jump into the business world and become a franchise owner of a large franchise across the country and the globe. When I did that, I promised myself and my parents that I would continue with school and finish my degree. I took about a semester off just to kind of learn how to run a business. I enrolled the following semester in online classes with ECU's COB since they were the leader in online delivery. I then took one to three classes every single semester and summer session from 2005 until 2012. In the meantime, I successfully had three franchises, got married and had my first child. For graduation, we all came down to Greenville. My one-and-a-half-year-old daughter was there. It was really cool.

That was the only time I stepped foot on campus at ECU.

The impact of continuing just to push forward, plow through and finish my degree was rewarding. I really appreciate my time at the COB, the classes, the instructors, and all that I learned while doing it virtually.

After over a decade in the franchise world, I sold my business and decided to enter the financial services industry with a large broker dealer. I have a passion for helping people and this career is so rewarding in that regard.



**What did you learn while at the COB? What are some of your best takeaways?**

**McGilvary:** Mock interviews. It was one of those things I could not stand doing, but it was one of the best things the College of Business did for me as I look back. We would have to conduct mock interviews with other students. The professors would put us on the spot and conduct an interview sometimes during class. It was tough because you had to think on your feet, but you must go through it and thinking on your feet is what we do on a day-to-day basis.

Even though I did not like doing it at that point, I look back now and realize it was a perfect way of helping prepare students for what will happen once they get out in the business world.

**James:** I would say the online component of my education. It's one thing when you're face to face, but when you're meeting with someone who may be in a different state



*Michael McGilvary*

and coordinating who is doing what, the takeaway of managing that time and those relationships helped me and continues to help me as I navigate the world that we're in today.

**What were some of your favorite memories at ECU and the COB?**

**McGilvary:** I was on ECU's varsity track team. During a track meet in Orlando at

the University of Central Florida, it felt good to be a Pirate because the team started to develop a comradeship. All year, we focused on acting more like a team. We all did very well at that track meet.

Being part of that team helped prepare me to work professionally in a team environment.

**James:** The business law class. Most people think it's a boring class to sit through. However, I like to know the ins and outs of how things are supposed to be and not supposed to be. I think that business law class was eye-opening regarding the real world and how things are supposed to operate.

**Why did you want to stay connected with the COB?**

**James:** It's just the desire to give back. As a former Boy Scout and Eagle Scout, I'm now a board member and work with the Eagle Scout alumni committee. I've given back to the next generation of scouts coming up. I want to do something similar with the COB. If students wonder what career path is for them, how can we shepherd these young Pirates trying to figure out the career path that will be rewarding to them?



*Brandon James*

**McGilvary:** I'm just trying to make sure that that next generation of Pirates is coming in fully prepared. The COB is doing that, but having some like-minded folks in the business world and having been in the finance world for several years, maybe we can offer some insight and just help give back a little bit.

**Why do you think it's important to stay connected with the COB?**

**James:** The importance of building professional relationships early is huge. I am a firm believer that it is absolutely who you know, not necessarily what you know. Now, what you know can help because you need to be educated, and you need to know what's happening. However, having those relationships and building friendships and professional relationships with people who may or may not be on the same career trajectory can accelerate your career. I'm here now because I met Mike through the chamber of commerce, and he said, "Hey, check out what it's like on the independent side." Sure enough, here I am, and I'm thrilled to be here.

**McGilvary:** As Brandon said, you never know that building your professional network is so important nowadays, especially in our current work environment.

You just never know what opportunities are around the corner.

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# Latvian native embraces local community

When Annija Veinsteina came to ECU from Riga, Latvia in August 2015, she most likely found Greenville's weather to be a bit different. She probably found it at 89 degrees, which is Greenville's average August temperature, a difference from Riga's average high of 74.

"It was like a super-hot day," said Veinsteina, a 2020 ECU International Graduate Student Award winner. "Coach Kirstin 'K' Burgess asked another freshman tennis player and me to walk through campus about a week after we got here. Though it was strange, it felt like home."

Veinsteina admits she didn't know much about ECU before arriving. Still, she did know she wanted to continue playing tennis and getting a higher education in the states, just like her older cousin, who is also a tennis player, had done.

"Obviously, I had to decide whether I was going to stay at home or continue playing tennis and get a good education," Veinsteina said. To help with the decision, she found an agent who subsequently found five U.S.-based universities for Veinsteina to research, which she did.

She decided to attend ECU, and five and a half years later, Veinsteina has a health services management undergraduate degree under her belt, and she's on her way to getting her MBA.

"Getting my ECU degrees and being a part of ECU Athletics has opened more doors than I expected," said Veinsteina.

## Get Out of Your Comfort Zone

Dr. Cal Christian, accounting chair with ECU's College of Business, got to know Veinsteina through the athletic department, where he serves as the faculty athletics representative for ECU. He also taught Veinsteina's international accounting graduate class. Christian encouraged her to embrace the benefits that ECU's MBA program provides.

"There was an opportunity to serve as a graduate assistant in the College of Business' career center, and I suggested she pursue it," said Christian. "I thought it was a good idea that she step out of her athletics comfort zone so she can interact more with the College of Business and its alumni and to learn more about the opportunities in the U.S."

"It (COB Career Center GA) was an important experience," said Veinsteina. "It showed me a different perspective because I grew up in athletics."



"What I've learned from ECU and the MBA program will allow me to pursue a health services management career anywhere in the world."

## Serving the community

The differences between Riga and Greenville are much more than the weather. It would be natural to assume Veinsteina was nervous when she first came to ECU. If she was, her open-mindedness prevailed.

"A lot of international students don't come here with an open mind," said Veinsteina. "They want Greenville to live up to their culture, but they don't appreciate the culture that is here."

Part of that culture is giving back to the community. Veinsteina says Riga is a very giving culture, but it can be mostly tied toward monetary support. While in Greenville and at ECU, she saw that serving people who needed help is part of the local culture. She jumped headfirst into that approach. During her time at ECU, Veinsteina has provided more than 600 hours in community service to Aces for Autism, Rise Against Hunger, local food banks and humane societies, and various hurricane relief efforts.

Veinsteina says it's not about the number of hours, but it is more about the joy, love and care she was able to give others.

"The ECU/Greenville community has helped me in so many ways, and I love giving back and making the community a better place. I feel very confident and prepared for my future."



# Faculty: Dr. Mandi Peterson

by Ken Buday, ECU News Services

Dr. Mandi Peterson looked at all the numbers and they added up to one thing – a career as a professor in accounting at East Carolina University.

Peterson grew up in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and graduated from nearby Old Dominion University with a bachelor's degree in accounting.

"Virginia Beach is a beach town that is home to lots of military," she said. "I spent a ton of time at the beach and near or in the water, so I would say it was a great place to grow up."

She later obtained her doctoral degree in accounting from Rutgers University in New Jersey and worked in private industry before turning her attention to teaching.

"I majored in accounting in college because it came naturally to me for the most part. The more accounting I learned, the more I enjoyed it," Peterson said. "Once I was out of college, I worked as an auditor for a large accounting firm, and I liked what I learned on the job. In my time with the firm, I found that my favorite part of my work was training newer associates. Ultimately, my aptitude for accounting and love of teaching led me to get my Ph.D. to become a professor."

She landed at ECU in the College of Business eight years ago and immediately had an impact on her students. One of those students, Taylor Chappell, started a scholarship to honor Peterson and Department of Accounting teaching instructor Jan Workman.

"She said she did that because of the impact we made on her as an undergraduate student here at ECU," Peterson said. "Having the scholarship named after me was a huge surprise, and it served as the most fulfilling moment of my career thus far. Having an impact on a student is the ultimate goal for most of us, and receiving feedback to that level about the impact we made was very special. I feel grateful and humbled that a student did that for us."

Peterson focuses her research and teaching on governmental accounting and auditing, looking at how governments spend the people's money. She's authored or co-authored a number of papers on the topic and has presented at various conferences.

"All of us are affected by the local government where we live and pay taxes, so I feel like these topics are relevant to many people," she said.

Peterson serves as the faculty advisor for the ECU chapter of Beta Gamma Sigma, a national academic honor society for business students.

"It has been fun to get to know the top business students while serving as the faculty advisor for Beta Gamma Sigma," she said. "It's great to see their accomplishments recognized and to be able to celebrate them with their families at the induction ceremony we hold each semester. It's exciting to see the

motivation and determination these students exhibit, and also the pride they have in their accomplishment."

She said teaching virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic has included video lectures and Webex meetings with students.

"While it is harder for students this way, it is also harder for professors," Peterson said. "When I am teaching face-to-face, I can read the room and see when students need to spend more time on a topic or need more help. Teaching online makes that much more challenging as gauging students' understanding over a computer screen is harder. I have to think outside the box for new ways to reach students to try to ensure they are understanding the material and keeping up."

However, teaching virtually had one particular perk for the mother of three young children, ages 2, 4 and 6.

"I was on a live review session on Webex with students when my 4-year-old showed up in my home office with a valentine he had made me," Peterson said. "That's definitely a change from what teaching used to look like – albeit a sweet one."

She looks forward to getting back to in-person teaching.

"I miss being in the classroom terribly, and I cannot wait to be back in person having face-to-face interactions with my students and colleagues," Peterson said.

After all, for Peterson, she gets joy out of seeing her students succeed.

"I love working with students and helping them learn new concepts," she said. "It's very fulfilling to see a student start to understand something they are struggling with because of my help."



*Peterson, the faculty advisor for ECU's chapter of Beta Gamma Sigma, looks over brochure information in her office.*



# BUILDING COALITIONS

by Crystal Baity, ECU News Services

## ECU business major wins International Undergraduate Student Award

Attending college 7,000 miles from his home in Qatar hasn't been as daunting as it initially seemed for East Carolina University junior Faisal Abouelhassan.

He already knew about ECU from his uncle, who graduated from the College of Business in the late 1980s, and his cousin, a 2016 alumna.



While Abouelhassan worried that he might not fit in as an international student in America, members of ECU's Office of Global Affairs kept in constant contact and made the process much easier. ECU and Greenville were exactly what he hoped for in a university and town.

"I became a member of a very close-knit community that appreciated me for my diversity," Abouelhassan said. "When I stepped foot into the ECU community and into our Pirate Nation, I knew that I was no stranger."

Abouelhassan has received ECU's International Undergraduate Student Award, which recognizes an outstanding international student who has demonstrated academic excellence and a commitment to making a positive contribution to ECU and/or the local community. It also provides a \$500 scholarship.

Abouelhassan is earning a degree in business administration with a concentration in finance and a minor in political science. He helped restart ECU's International Students Association, serving as treasurer and working with fellow board members to promote a better understanding of multiculturalism and help American students considering study abroad opportunities.

"More importantly, I have hoped to build campuswide coalitions with other organizations dedicated to pluralism," Abouelhassan said.

He is treasurer of ECU's Model United Nations Club and serves on the Arab Student Union, which promotes intercultural communication between Arab students of different nationalities and backgrounds and American students. This year, he was selected as an at-large representative for the Student Government Association, where he has joined the rules and judiciary committee. He seeks to be a voice for international students.

Abouelhassan came to ECU with conviction. "My parents emphasized that in order to succeed, I had to learn from everyone around me," he said. "I was fortunate enough to have been born in a multicultural family, and from a young age my parents had instilled in me the value of bridging two distinct cultures. I've learned how to navigate these cultural differences. I believe that this skill has helped me to collaborate with members of both the ECU and Greenville communities."

He volunteered with the Rise Against Hunger campaign in Greenville before ECU classes moved online because of the pandemic. Since then, he has been tutoring fourth and sixth graders who have been challenged by online learning in Qatar, a peninsular Arab country that borders Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf.

Following a rigorous, competitive process last fall, Abouelhassan was selected for Qatar's delegation to the 26th session of the Youth Assembly. He attended virtual roundtables and sessions with policymakers, researchers and young people from around the world. One outcome was a collaboration with Spain's delegation to develop a ride-sharing app to reduce daily carbon emissions produced by cars in Qatar, he said.

Dr. Hanna Kassab, teaching assistant professor in the Department of Political Science, has been an adviser for Abouelhassan, who took Kassab's comparative politics and international relations classes.

"Faisal is an intelligent and charismatic scholar of international security," Kassab said. "He produces excellent work."

In August, Abouelhassan was one of several ECU students who virtually attended the National Student Issues Convention sponsored by the American Political Science Association.

Eventually Abouelhassan plans to earn a law degree and work in international business and development.

But before that, he looks forward to returning to campus. One experience he won't forget is attending his first football game. "I still remember learning the rules while the teams were actually playing as an American friend was explaining them to me," Abouelhassan said.



# GameStop and the saga of short selling

by Thanh Ngo, finance professor

Let's assume an investor believes that the stock of firm A currently is overpriced relative to the firm's business prospects. An investor predicts the stock price subsequently will fall. They can make a bet on their conviction via a variety of financial products; one of which is a short sale.

## What are short sale and short squeeze?

In a short sale transaction, an investor borrows shares of firm A's stock through a trading account with a brokerage firm. The same investor immediately sells those borrowed shares on the market and receives the proceeds from the sale at the current "high" price.

If the stock price ultimately falls as predicted, the investor can buy back shares of firm A's stock on the market at the new lower price to repay their borrowed shares to the brokerage firm. The profit to the investor is the difference between the proceeds from the sale at the current "high" price and the cost to buy back the shares to repay the brokerage firms, net of some interest rate (referred to as call money rate) charged by the brokerage firm for this borrowing.

However, if the stock price is increasing, the investor is now faced with higher costs to buy back the shares to repay the borrowing. In theory, there is no limit to how high the stock price can rise. The investor ends up having to buy the shares back at higher prices or to add more "cash margin" or "collateral" in their brokerage account.

This is called a short squeeze.

## GameStop and the Saga of Short Selling

GameStop offers games and entertainment products in its over 5,000 retail stores and online. The company's business was struggling even before the COVID-19 pandemic struck due to competition from Amazon and other digital marketplaces.

Recognizing the declining business prospects of the company and predicting a decline in the stock price, several hedge funds, such as Point72 Asset Management, Andrew Left's Citron Capital and Melvin Capital, among others, short sold the stock, hoping that the stock price would ultimately fall and they could buy back the stock at cheaper price and pocket the difference. Such short sale transactions are nothing new. What is new this time is how individual investors banded together to combat these hedge fund short sellers.

When Ryan Cohen, the founder of Chewy.com, purchased a large number of GameStop shares in August 2020, analysts and investors took this as a sign that the company would incorporate more online commerce into its business model. The stock price started climbing, imposing short-squeeze risk on the hedge fund short sellers.

Then individual investors on the popular subreddit WallStreetBets, which boasts 6 million members as of Jan. 29, 2021, began paying attention to the huge amount of short sale positions on GameStop and thus the need by these short sellers to ultimately buy back the shares. The individual investors banded together to buy the stock. As a result of such massive buying pressure by members of WallStreetBets, the stock price surged more than 1,900% over the course of one month beginning in December 2020.

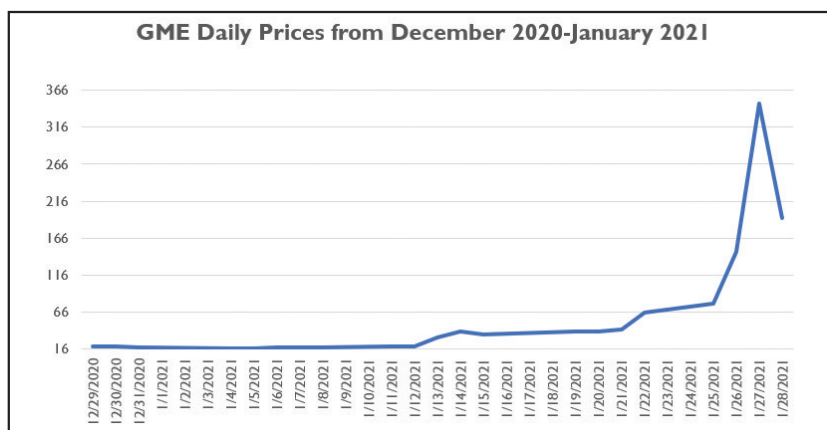
On Jan. 26, 2021, Melvin Capital closed out its short position in

GameStop. Citron took the same decision on the next day. On Jan. 27 and Jan. 28, 2021, brokerage firms including Fidelity, TD Ameritrade and Robinhood took steps to limit trading on GameStop, sparking the outcry by members of WallStreetBets and even some members of Congress about the unfair treatment of small investors. Shares of GameStop, however, extended an overnight rally in premarket trading Jan. 29, after Robinhood announced it would rescind its previous trading limit on the stock.

## What next?

The GameStop phenomenon shows how social media can influence investor investment decisions. The buying frenzy by investors on the bandwagon pushed the price way beyond the level that reasonably reflects the fundamentals (such as future earnings and assets) of GameStop's business. The current GameStop price reflects purely the supply and demand for the stock on the market, or namely by investor sentiment, rather than the fundamentals. Such price can only be maintained if the demand and sentiment can be maintained. However, investor sentiment can wear out, as observed during the tech bubble of 1999-2000.

Such media-driven price hikes might also motivate weak-performing firms to manipulate their stock prices by feeding false information into these trading forum members.





# SHL Alumnus has been working on the railroad

Eric Mason is a 20-plus-year hospitality veteran. He graduated with a degree in hospitality management from the COB's School of Hospitality Leadership. He's been active with SHL for more than 10 years as a member of SHL's Board of Advisors.

Based in Colorado, Mason recently was asked by the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad Governor Appointed Commission to step in and review the railroad's business. As part of the project, he specifically was asked how to optimize and enhance operations, personnel, products and services.



The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad originally was constructed in 1880 as part of the Rio Grande's narrow-gauge San Juan Extension. It served the silver mining district of the San Juan Mountains in southwestern Colorado. The inability to interchange cars with other railroads led the Rio Grande to begin converting its tracks to standard gauge in 1890. In 1970, the states of Colorado and New Mexico jointly purchased the most scenic portion of the track and line-side structures from Antonito, Colorado to Chama, New Mexico.

## Strategic planning

For the project, Mason has been interviewing every team member, numerous guests and the local business community. He's looking for themes from the organization to identify opportunities for improving the employee and guest/rider experience and provide thoughts of how services can be enhanced and expanded.

### Mason has outlined the following challenges:

- A focus on the railroad operating equipment and not guests or facilities
- Untrained teams
- Lack of organizational structure
- No strategy
- A tiny local talent pool
- Economically challenged locations

### Railroad concepts that are being considered include

- Creating a tourism stretch between the two origins Antonito and Chama. This stretch could include self-contained lodging/sleeping units, perhaps Stagecoach Wagon's that are pre-built and delivered
- Glamping-style tents or built-out sleeping train cars that have all the amenities needed for a comfortable stay
- Camping trip, fishing trips and rail bike rides
- Themed train rides that could include celebrity chef train rides to one of the dining facilities/locations
- Night rides, holiday rides and shortened rides



Mason also is actively looking at how to deploy Wi-Fi initially at the dining locations, increasing that across the entire line. The Wi-Fi addition could provide a needed amenity for guests and aid the operational team to maintain communication.

To help with authenticity, experienced expert artisans who know how to work with raw materials are being looked at to help the equipment operations team maintain and restore equipment between 1878 and 1920.

Lastly, Mason is in the initial phase of reintroducing an organizational design, which he will begin to implement in late October/early November. Team members will need to be trained for their positions, including how to be managers.

Mason's goal is to ensure the Railroad is viable and operational for another 100 years.



# Dr. Tim Madden: the next Indiana Jones?



Dr. Tim Madden is an assistant professor in the College of Business' Department of Management. He earned his Ph.D. in Management from the University of Tennessee. His research interests include qualitative research methods, management pedagogy, and strategy-making processes. He teaches at the graduate and undergraduate level in the COB, with a focus on

strategic management. He has published research in *Academy of Management Review*, *Organizational Research Methods*, *Journal of Management Education*, and *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. Madden joined ECU's Servire Society in 2019. Outside of ECU, Madden serves as the Communications Co-Coordinator for the Southern Management Association.

Proudly borrowing from the Proust Questionnaire, we asked Madden some questions so you can get to know him a little better.

## What was your first concert?

I was about ten and a friend of mine had an extra ticket to see Weird Al Yankovic at the (now demolished) Valley Forge Music Fair. It really filled in a lot of the plot holes in the film "UHF."

## What are the qualities you might like in a person?

Honesty and empathy cover just about all the bases. If you believe that someone is telling you the truth, you can work on anything together. If they can try, even in a small way, to put themselves in your shoes, things go so much more smoothly for everyone. Michael Sorenson's book, "I Hear You" has been one of the best empathy-building resources I've ever come across.

## If not a professor, what would you be?

This varies based on how much grading I have. Week to week, it's a toss-up between independently-wealthy philanthropist, pastry chef at the Ritz-Carlton on Maui, long-distance trucker, race car mechanic, or motivational speaker. My midlife crisis is going to hit like a ton of bricks.

## If you could go back in time and witness anything in history, where would you go?

The 1889 Paris World's Fair where the Eiffel Tower was completed. At the time, nobody would have believed that it would be nearly 100 more years before this now-iconic landmark would serve as the backdrop for Duran Duran's "View to a Kill" music video that accompanied the James Bond film of the same name.

## Who is your favorite hero in fiction?

Indiana Jones. Here's a guy with a Ph.D. who can hold down a full-time university job and still find time to travel the world. That kind of work-life balance is hard to achieve anymore.

## Who are your heroes in real life?

Personally, my mom. I absolutely would not be where I am today without her. Professionally, Adam Grant. I have a working theory that "Adam Grant" is a secretly a syndicate of a dozen different people all publishing under the same name, and they hired one person to be the face of the operation when someone has to do an interview. When you look at what he's accomplished before the age of 40, it's the only thing that makes sense. His career defies description.

## Who are your favorite writers?

For fun: John Elder Robison, Austin Kleon, Terry Pratchett; for work: Jane Dutton, Kim Cameron, Bob Sutton

## What is your favorite childhood memory?

Riding my bike around my hometown of Downingtown, Pennsylvania. The amount of freedom you have when you're 12 years old and have five bucks in your pocket is pretty incredible.

## What's your favorite ECU/College of Business memory?

Being a part of the installation ceremony for Chancellor Staton. I got to be the faculty representative for the University of Tennessee. We all lined up by order of the date of our alma mater's founding. At 1794, I was pretty close to the front of the line.

## What's the one thing people would find most surprising to learn about you?

I am one of two Dr. Maddens who teach strategic management in the ECU COB. This is not news to my colleagues, but often takes my students by surprise. On more than one syllabus day, someone has remarked, "I heard you were a woman."



## Yes, Virginia. Hospitality and tourism will survive

by Dr. Bob O'Halloran, director, School of Hospitality Leadership

It has been said of the hospitality industry that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to return to what it was before the pandemic. Some say it will return and improve, while others see a different future altogether. Our optimism is enhanced with the first distributions of the vaccine. Like our industry partners, the School of Hospitality Leadership (SHL) will progress and adapt to the hospitality and tourism industry's new operating models and higher education needs.

Where are we? How are we doing? Surviving is a challenge.

The hospitality industry is closely aligned with hospitality business education. The lodging and foodservice industries have been our strongest partners and recruiters. They provide us information that we can act on moving forward.

The American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA) tells us the lodging industry has lost more than 871,000 direct hotel jobs nationwide and more than 1.9 million direct hotel and related jobs six months into the pandemic. AHLA also tells us that 28,000 hotels have been closed due to low demand or foreclosure due to the pandemic.

On the foodservice side of the issue, National Restaurant Association (NRA) data from 2020 stated nearly 1 in 6 restaurants have closed permanently or long-term and almost 3 million employees are still out of work. The industry was on track to lose \$240 billion in sales by the end of 2020. Tom Bené, NRA president & CEO, stated that "for an industry built on service and hospitality, the last six months have challenged the core understanding of our business. Our survival for this comes down to the creativity and entrepreneurship of owners, operators and employees." Luna (2020) shared comments from Susan Robertson, president, and CEO of the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE). This pandemic has put meeting professionals under extreme pressure to adapt and completely reimagine programming and logistics for countless events. It's incredibly impressive to see the creativity and the transition to virtual meetings. Her second message is that contingency planning is going to be crucial in everything we do. We need backup plans for everything

because who knows what disruptive event is around the corner.

For those of us in hospitality management education, COVID-19 has meant less recruitment, less placement and interaction with lodging and restaurant companies and fewer available internships. Our alumni, along with many others, have been furloughed and or lost their positions permanently. It is hard to recruit students to hospitality business careers within this context.

However, the research stated above does provide us opportunities for our curriculum and the connectivity with our industry that is focused on technology, virtual platforms and more. Industry training and certificate courses are perhaps other channels for higher education to pursue.

Bené's statement goes to the core of what we in higher education need to understand. The survival of the hospitality industry will revolve around creativity and entrepreneurship. Our industry needs to think of our students as the next era of leadership tightly aligned with innovation. Besides teaching sound, hospitality business skills, we need to build leaders who think outside the box, innovative, and build creative and robust teams. Our faculty have adapted their courses, and our curriculum has changed with the times. AHLA (2020) research notes that 85% of those in the hospitality industry currently want to remain in our industry (AHLA Foundation, 2020). That is good news for hospitality business higher education.

Industry research shows that hospitality remains the worst-hit industry, month after month (AHLA Foundation, 2020). Noting specific trends, 4 out of 10 hotel employees are still not working, and consumer travel remains at an all-time low (AHLA Foundation, 2020). Many of the leading companies – e.g., Marriott – have furloughed and separated many new and longtime employees.

Conversely, the same research shares some encouraging news that includes bright spots such as:



Lower-level service hotels versus upper-class hotels are performing better. Lodging and lower-level service (limited service) properties are leading the way in terms of performance.

Interstate, Small Town and Suburban versus urban destinations and resorts. People traveling in the U.S. are typically choosing auto travel. Therefore, they are looking for accommodations near the interstate highways and the smaller markets versus the larger cities and destinations.

Resorts (smaller destinations versus larger). Some resort properties are performing better than their larger competitors, and these properties are most likely in secondary resort destinations. One can note that there is some movement in construction and renovation. The latter could be described as old beach or resort motels, smaller in terms of several rooms, outside entrance doors, limited common space, limited needed interaction with staff etc. One example, the Loggerhead Inn in North Carolina, illustrates their renovation during a pandemic. (<https://www.starnewsonline.com/story/news/2020/12/01/renovated-loggerhead-inn-reopen-surf-city/6460054002/>).

*Transient versus Group.* Travelers who are willing to get on the road are short stay and considered transient. Group business is still struggling and the concept of “virtual meetings” is in play.

*Weekends versus Weekdays (Leisure versus Business).* The majority of the lodging business is focused on the weekend and people getting away.

*Smaller versus larger cities.* Small cities appear to be leading the way in terms of destinations. Second- and third-tier cities and locations are seen as less crowded and therefore safer.

*Suburbs (regional) versus Central Business Districts/ Downtown.* The opportunity here is for the suburban cities and towns to attract visitors to their locations.

*Domestic versus International destinations.* Domestic travel is the focus, and international destinations are still a long way off for many.

*Drive to versus Fly to destinations (local, closer to home).* Do we remember staycations? Stay closer to home and drive to destinations near home. We, as Americans, often look past our attractions to travel. This ties directly to smaller locations/cities, resorts and short trip travel.

*Short haul versus long haul (small versus large airports).* If travelers can convince themselves to fly, smaller airports with access and services are more attractive than the large hubs.

*Parks and Beaches, wide-open spaces, outdoor tourism.* Travelers in pandemic time share discovered the outdoors. Locations with access to trails, walkways and scenic

beauty are increasingly attractive. Vacation management rental businesses, Airbnb and others are being sought out as channels

to provide accommodations for families. The access is individual, and the transactions with owners and managers are almost always primarily virtual.

### What will be the new normal?

Vaccines are now being shipped and administered, and there seems to be a light at the end of the current crisis tunnel. The question now being asked is, “What will be the new normal?” Higher education thinks of online learning options and solutions, virtual meetings, conferences, and trade shows and perhaps a return to old-style renovated lodging structures, i.e., the beach / small resort motels. The advancement of vacation management rental options and the continued entrance of lodging brands into this segment will be future options. On the food and beverage side, take out, delivery and outside dining are options for all levels of service. In some cases, small quick-service operations are thriving via drive-thru pickup and closed dining rooms. Upper-level service restaurants also have, in many cases, adapted to take out and or delivery options.

For meetings, conventions and special events, things may be different for a long time. For example, virtual sales appointments, virtual meetings, and perhaps virtual conferences will become part of the permanent mix of offerings and options. Our SHL Career Fair went virtual in Feb. 2021 via the Handshake platform. The challenge was to attract recruiters and students. Twenty-eight employers from six states and 100 students attended the event. Our message for companies focused on how we educate and prepare service management professionals in an economy dominated by the service industry. We continued our focus on hotels, restaurants, resorts, clubs, and meeting and event planning, but we expanded that focus to other industries that value service, including retail management, health care management, sports management and human resources. a golf ball on a tee

One segment that appears to be progressing is the club management segment. Private city, country and golf clubs have continued to hire employees. The National Golf Foundation reports that rounds played in the U.S. are up by 50 million year-over-year – a remarkable statistic that factored in spring 2020 shutdowns that canceled up to 20 million rounds (Tucker, 2020).



# Alumni Spotlight

## Dreaming early, setting goals



Laurinburg, North Carolina is a small town known for its big oak trees. It's an All-American city about an hour and a half from the state's metropolitan areas. It embraces the idea of hospitality with its historical homes and brick-laden main street buildings.

Years ago, Drs. Kurt and Valeriana Jute sat down in their Laurinburg home to watch "Dr. Doolittle" with their daughter Nikki. The story has its origins in

the 1920s, and it's about a physician who would much rather deal with (and talk with) animals than human patients.

"I was like 5 or 6 years old," said Nikki Jute. "I told my mom and dad that's exactly what I want to do."

Though the Jutes hoped their daughter would follow in their physician footsteps, they fully embraced their daughter's aspirations moving forward.

### What does one do?

After speaking with Jute, you get the immediate sense that her eye is constantly on the ball and her love for animals is unsurpassed. You also sense that she planned her predestination from the get-go.

She wanted to be a veterinarian.

"All through middle and high school, I joined the 4H and volunteered at human societies and little things in our small town," said Jute.

As her high school days came to a close, Nikki knew she wanted to go to a big school, and the only big North Carolina school she looked at was East Carolina University.

"(ECU) was the most welcoming and inviting place," Jute said. "Though I looked at other schools, I also knew from the beginning that I would be going to ECU."

### A means to an end

As Jute charted her course to becoming a veterinarian, she understood the skills and know-how to successfully operate her future practice could be found at ECU. She joined the College of Business as a freshman, focused on marketing and

soaked in the leadership curriculum and industry knowledge found within the College and with its faculty.

"I wanted to have that business background so I could properly run and operate (my own practice)," said Jute. "I really enjoyed the marketing aspect (of what I learned)."

Jute took full advantage of her time at ECU and the College of Business. While on her way to earning a 4.0 GPA, she volunteered at animal clinics and eventually landed a job at one. She also participated in various internship programs, where she got to work with different species of animals. All of this to confirm that veterinary school was exactly what she wanted to do with her future.

Let's not forget about the additional 39 prerequisite hours Jute needed to get into veterinary school, on top of the 120 hours required for her BSBA. All of which added essentially a year's worth of classes for her to complete.

### Nicely, indeed

Not only is she graduating with that aforementioned 4.0 GPA, but she was also accepted into North Carolina State's veterinary program.

Jute plans to complete her veterinary coursework in four years. She doesn't know when she'll open her practice, but it will most likely be in a town like Laurinburg.

"Where I come from, we have a lot of lower-income households that are looking for quality veterinary care, and often they can't afford it," said Nikki. "I'm hoping to give back to a community that's like my hometown."

The College of Business is known for building leaders, and Nikki Jute is proof positive.



Nikki Jute, far right, protecting a nest of sea turtles.



# Nationally ranked, again

The Miller School of Entrepreneurship in East Carolina University's College of Business (COB) made the Princeton Review and Entrepreneur magazine list of Top 50 Undergraduate Schools for Entrepreneurship.



The Miller School is the only endowed school of entrepreneurship in North Carolina and ranks No. 47, marking its second year in a row on the list.

"We didn't rest on our laurels after making last year's list," said Dr. Mike Harris, director, Miller School. "Our students and community have come to expect much from the Miller School. It's because of them, we strive to be innovative and a go-to resource for today's and tomorrow's business leaders."

"I am thrilled that ECU and the Miller School have been named to the Princeton Review Top 50 list for the second year in a row," said Fielding Miller, CEO of Raleigh's CAPTRUST, COB alumnus and ECU board of trustees member. "What Mike (Harris) and the team have accomplished in such a short span of time is truly remarkable. The Miller School has exceeded my expectations, and I could not be more pleased."

## Continuing to help regional transformation

Since 2015, the Miller School has implemented numerous programs that have served as a catalyst for regional transformation.

In September 2020, the Miller School's Crisp Small Business Resource Center launched the Accelerate Rural NC program. The rural business accelerator focused on helping small businesses gain access to global markets with innovative products. The accelerator's key components include e-commerce development, development of high-value offerings for niche markets, and export training.

The entrepreneurship degree program, now in its second year, has grown by 67%. It currently has 142 students, and Miller School officials say the program has exceeded forecast

expectations. Additionally, the Entrepreneurship Certificate includes students from 26 different majors across the campus.

The student entrepreneurship program, RISE29, was honored for its co-curricular innovation by the United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE) at its 2020 conference in New Orleans. The program also won the National Best Practices award at the 2020 Small Business Institute Conference. A strategic goal of RISE29 is to create a national model on how to use entrepreneurship as a catalyst for rural economic development.

COVID restrictions did not hinder the Miller School's annual activities. The Pirate Entrepreneurship Challenge, North Carolina's largest student-led entrepreneurship competition, went virtual earlier this year and continues to attract teams vying for \$100,000 in cash and in-kind prizes. The third Summer Innovation Academy also went virtual, grew in enrollment and hosted students from six states.

As part of its mission to help transform rural North Carolina, Miller School students completed 32 projects for community businesses. This support saw students accumulating almost 13,000 fieldwork hours last year alone.

"Our entrepreneurial student and local businesses can take advantage of the value the Miller School provides," Harris. "They'll have access to one of the few colleges and entrepreneurship programs in the nation with an endowed school, center and innovation hub."

Harris added the Miller School has helped launch 63 businesses over the past five years, which have raised almost \$3.5 million in investment capital.



Fielding Miller

Throughout the calendar year, the Miller School and the ECU chapter of the Collegiate Entrepreneurs Organization hosts hackathons, sponsors the annual Hult Prize competition and provides mentorship to students and other companies who need guidance with turning their ideas into realities.

"Eastern North Carolina will only thrive if we can create good jobs in the region," said Miller. "This program (Miller School) will be a great resource to develop our job creators of the future. Well done!"

# Honor Wall

With this Honor Wall, we want to recognize those who have made the College of Business the destination in North Carolina for future leaders.

To everyone who has given over the years, your College of Business thanks you!

## #EveryGiftMatters

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1M+	Fielding & Kimberly Miller	100K+	PNC	25K+	Edward Jones
1M+	North Carolina Association of Insurance Agents	100K+	Thelma Roberts Hall	25K+	Empire Brushes, Inc.
1M+	North Carolina Surplus Lines Association	100K+	The Winston-Salem Foundation	25K+	Betty C Brantley Estate
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100K+	Golden Corral Corporation	50K+	Kel & Parker Normann	25K+	PNC Bank
100K+	Charles D. Jamerson Jr.	50K+	PNC Bank	25K+	PepsiCo Foundation
100K+	Jim and Evelyn Kirkland	50K+	Danny & Connie Scott	25K+	Ryan & Shana Perry
100K+	James and Connie Maynard	50K+	W. Allen Separk	25K+	Ed & Mary Pupa
100K+	Charlie & Willa McGimsey	50K+	Damon Stafford	25K+	Irwin & Lucy Roberts
100K+	Anthony & Phoebe Patterson	50K+	Clark & Lisa Stallings	25K+	Douglas Schneider
100K+	Bob & Mary Plybon	50K+	Robbie Strickland	25K+	Lynn Schubert
100K+	RBC Bank	50K+	Edward Jones	25K+	Ronald & Denise Stumpo
		25K+	The Gourley Family Foundation, Inc.	25K+	Robert & Rebecca Taft
		25K+	Bob & Margaret Ward	25K+	James R. Talton Jr.
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		25K+	Connally & Svitlana Branch	25K+	John Whichard
		25K+	Burlington Industries	25K+	Will & Deborah Yarborough
		25K+	Capital Community Foundation Inc.	25K+	Louis Zincone
		25K+	Cliff Weil Inc.	10K+	Anonymous
		25K+	Neal & Karen Crawford		



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10K+	William & Virginia Alexander	10K+	Edward & Ann James	10K+	State Farm
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10K+	Gene & Helen Aman	10K+	Steve & Terry Jones	10K+	Carey Swann
10K+	American Society for Quality (ASQ)	10K+	Jeff & Lee Ann Joyner	10K+	Target
10K+	Anheuser-Busch	10K+	Max Joyner	10K+	William & Connie Taylor
10K+	Arthur Andersen & Co	10K+	Richard & Jena Kerns	10K+	The Ashland Inc. Foundation
10K+	Sabrina & Steve Bengel	10K+	Brenda Killingsworth	10K+	The H.O. West Foundation
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10K+	William Cobb	10K+	North Carolina Power	10K+	Robert Weber
10K+	Kevin & Christine Collins	10K+	North Carolina Real Estate Educational Foundation	10K+	Mark & Eileen Weitzel
10K+	Collins, Ward & Greene LLP	10K+	Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance	10K+	Brenda Wells
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10K+	Ellen & Cameron Dudley	10K+	Piedmont Chapter of The Risk and Insurance Management Society, Inc.	10K+	Henry & Nancy Williamson
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# Honor Wall

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5K+	Jan & Frederick Bohmuller	5K+	Richard & Elizabeth Gilliam	5K+	John Nichols
5K+	Bojangles' Restaurants, Inc.	5K+	Grant Thornton Foundation	5K+	Nichols Food Service Inc.
5K+	James & Jennifer Bolt	5K+	Greenville NC ALE House LLC	5K+	North Carolina Pork Council
5K+	Lee Bowman	5K+	Steve Grice	5K+	North Carolina State Board of
5K+	Boys & Girls Club of the Coastal	5K+	Barbara Gudoski		CPA Examiners
	Plain, INC.	5K+	Fred Hamblen	5K+	Margaret O'Hara & Larry Dzedzic
5K+	Angelena Brack & Matthew Harrell	5K+	Harris Supermarkets	5K+	Edwin & Sue Olsen
5K+	Robert & Amy Brinkley	5K+	Robert Hatch	5K+	Mino & Rebecca Osterkamp
5K+	Buck Supply Company	5K+	Donald & Barbara Hatch	5K+	Tomas Palmgren
5K+	Jerry & Bette Burgdofer	5K+	Diana Haytko	5K+	Robin Parker
5K+	Rocky & Ann Butler	5K+	Lenwood & Deanie Heath	5K+	Jay & Amy Parris
5K+	Thomas & Debra Cafferty	5K+	Corinne Manning Heath	5K+	Dari Payrow
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5K+	Richard Cook	5K+	John M. Howell	5K+	Guy Rogers
5K+	Charles Costanzo	5K+	Fred Hunneke	5K+	RSM US LLP
5K+	Stanley Cox	5K+	I.S.S.A. Foundation	5K+	Charles Sams
5K+	Cozart & Edwards, P.A.	5K+	IBM Global Business Services	5K+	Thomas & Angela Savitski
5K+	CPI of Eastern North Carolina	5K+	Sandra Jacobs	5K+	Robert Schellenberger
5K+	Crabworks, LLC	5K+	Wesley & Darlene Johnson	5K+	Dan & Debra Schisler
5K+	Lisa Crouse	5K+	Alexander Jukoski	5K+	Larry Seese
5K+	Crown Equipment Corporation	5K+	Kaufman Davis Business Svcs, Inc.	5K+	SEI Private Trust Company
5K+	Melissa Culbreth	5K+	Christopher Kavel	5K+	Kirk & Tamara Shaw
5K+	John Davis	5K+	Jeff Kearns	5K+	Judy Siguaw & Kevin Ferguson
5K+	Stephen Deaton	5K+	James Kleckley	5K+	Frederick Simon
5K+	Richard & Terry Doub	5K+	Walter Koch	5K+	Marvin Sloan
5K+	Steve & Carter Eagle	5K+	Langdon & Company	5K+	Smithfield
5K+	Norman Eaker	5K+	Gregory Lau	5K+	Sonoco Products Company
5K+	Eastern Carolina Chapter IMA	5K+	Kent Lawrence	5K+	Southern National Bank of NC
5K+	ECU Financial Management	5K+	Luther & Kathryn Leonard	5K+	Embarq
	Association	5K+	James Lewis	5K+	John Stauffer
5K+	Robert Edwards	5K+	Kirk & Dasha Little	5K+	Durwood M. Stephenson
5K+	Christopher & Barbara Edwards	5K+	Susan Lynch-Smith	5K+	William & Barbara Strickland
5K+	Debra Elmore - A.K. Consulting	5K+	Rachele Manansala	5K+	Anthony Taylor
5K+	Ernst & Young Foundation	5K+	Marathon Petroleum Co LP	5K+	The T. Rowe Price Program for
5K+	Todd & Elizabeth Ervin	5K+	MBM Corporation		Charitable Giving
5K+	Delorene Phthisic Charest	5K+	Ray & Sheila McCulloch	5K+	Jerry & Angela Thomas
5K+	Kenneth Evans	5K+	McGladrey and Pullen	5K+	Ricky & Kay Thompson
5K+	Scott Evans	5K+	McLane Company, Inc.	5K+	John & Carolyn Thompson
5K+	Farley Mizelle and Company	5K+	Nathan Milian	5K+	Joseph Tomkiewicz
5K+	Graham Felton	5K+	Mike & Brenda Mills	5K+	Albert Turner
5K+	First American Savings Bank	5K+	Jay Motsinger	5K+	ARAMARK
	Foundation	5K+	Nabisco Foods Group	5K+	Viaticus Inc.
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	Association		Group Inc.	5K+	Ward Property Brokers
5K+	David & Betty Jane Fisher	5K+	James & Christine Nance	5K+	Steven Warwick
5K+	Lisa Flanagan	5K+	Jonathan Nance	5K+	WaterStone



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# Honor Wall

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5K+	Wells Fargo Foundation	5K+	Whitener Capital Management Inc.	5K+	WSIA Education Foundation
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5K+	Richard Westbrook	5K+	Ronnie Wilkes		
5K+	Jim Westmoreland	5K+	Gary Williams		

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*Thank  
you!*

# In Closing

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I was really excited to see this issue's cover.

It's emblematic of what we do here at the College of Business. We have a leader in John Reisch welcoming future leader Marianne Moore into the COB family.

The photo shows that college life and ceremonies are slowly getting back to normal. Though limited, ECU had an augmented but in-person commencement ceremony. Even though the tradition shown in the photo did not take place on stage, I was glad that it did happen.

## Getting back to normal

This issue's stories show, once again, our students, faculty and staff continued to put their best forward as we closed out a year of being under the pandemic. All ensured that the COB continued to build leaders that will make a difference.

We got a lot done these past two terms, but with the easing of COVID-related restrictions, our future is starting to look more like we are back to normal. The annual Business Leadership Conference is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 13. It will be in person; the keynote speaker is Ken Bouyer, EY Americas Inclusiveness Recruiting Leader. Other in-person events include the Pirate Party on the Patio, the Scholarship Dinner, Pirate Entrepreneurship Challenge, COB convocation, Business Advisory Committee meeting networking dinners, etc.

I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the constant that's been with us since March 2020. Your support of the COB has not waned. This year's Pirate Nation Gives is the proof. Our goal was to grow our base of alumni donors. That goal was met head-on. We grew our donor base by close to 300%, and the COB won the Most Gifts Challenge with 267 individual donors.

Every day, I'm so proud to be a part of the COB family that gives back constantly.

I never thought I could appreciate more the starting of the Fall term. There will be energy on campus. Bates' hallways will bustle, and smiles from every COB faculty and staff will welcome each other back from the summer. Aug. 23 can't get here soon enough. I'm going to be sure I soak it all in. I will have a stronger appreciation for this rite of higher-education passage: the first day of class.

Also, I look forward to sharing with you how we have turned the corner. I hope you can join me as we get back to normal.

All the Best,

Paul Schwager, Ph.D.  
Dean & W. Howard Rooks Distinguished Professor



**THANK YOU  
FOR GIVING!**  
**#PIRATENATION<sup>TM</sup>GIVES**

*Pirate Nation Gives 2021 was an unforgettable day for our college, and we want to thank everyone who participated. Because of you, our college saw almost 300% more participation from last year and, the COB won many of the university's challenges, accompanied by bonus money. Funds raised will give COB students more opportunities to learn and grow, boosting their ability to add value to the business world. Your support is integral to their success, from scholarships to experiences that help mold and shape future business leaders. Thank you for a great Pirate Nation Gives 2021 and we look forward to an even better event in 2022.*



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