

FALL 2016

insight

TAKING THE LEAD

Accounting alum heads international firm



INTEGRATIVE THINKING | EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING | GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING

OAKLAND
UNIVERSITY™

School of Business Administration



inside this issue

- Overcoming barriers
- Making connections
- Life changing gifts

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A Message from Dean Michael A. Mazzeo

This issue of Insight demonstrates how smart, dedicated business professionals make our world a better place. From our professors to our students, alumni and friends, people from the Oakland business school are making a difference.



Recent reports point out that in the United States, one out of five adults has a disability. While much work has been done to remove social barriers, there's still more to do when it comes to employment. OU business professor Dr. Karen Markel is leading research to improve employment opportunities for adults with disabilities (page 1).

You'll also read about how Professor Emeritus Sid Mittra continues to influence and inspire Oakland business students through an endowed scholarship for Economics majors (page 4).

Recent graduates who participated in the inaugural year of Oakland's Student Managed Investment Fund (SMIF) powered by The Kresge Foundation are excited to report how their experience managing \$2 million helped them launch their careers. This issue features Brad Garrigues FIN '16 who began his professional position at Kresge after graduating this spring (page 2).

Generous gifts created unique opportunities. The Patti Finnegan Sharf Study Abroad scholarship helped undergraduate Oakland business students travel to Ireland and Hungary (page 6), while the Frank Cardimen International Initiatives Fund supported MBA students in their travel to Spain, Italy and Switzerland. A gift from an anonymous donor made it possible for students from the SMIF take part in a global finance conference in New York (page 6).

All this enhances the Oakland b-school reputation within and beyond the region. Large and small organizations around the world are taking note. Read the story on page 12 for more.

As always, you can catch up on all the Oakland b-school news at oakland.edu/business or by connecting with us on social media.

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OVERCOMING BARRIERS

Professor's research delves into identifying issues, improving job outlook for those with disabilities

Karen Markel understands that for adults with disabilities, finding their niche in the workplace is often tricky – and she's actively seeking answers to help this population of job seekers.

"My goal is to help businesses see that it's possible to create environments where people with disabilities can succeed at securing and keeping jobs," says Markel, Ph.D., an associate professor in the School of Business Administration (SBA) and chair of its Department of Management and Marketing.

Markel has been leading OU research on understanding the unique employment barriers for those with disabilities.

In the U.S., one out of five adults has a disability. Since the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, many social barriers have been reduced or removed for those with disabilities. But when it comes to employment, there's a lot more work to be done.

SOBERING STATISTICS

According to a recent report by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 17.5% of those with a disability were employed in 2015, while 65% of those without disabilities were. In addition, 32% of workers with a disability were employed part time, compared with 18% for those without a disability.

Primarily teaching human resources courses at OU, Markel's research offers clarity about HR practices that can make a difference. She parleys her research findings into the classroom.

"It's important to discuss what's contributing to limiting employment opportunities for those with disabilities," Markel says. "Something can occur before someone can even

secure an interview, such as difficulty with online job applications, where the technology may be inaccessible. Providing paper applications is one example of a simple, low-cost solution."

Accommodations typically don't cost much, according to a study done by the Job Accommodation Network, a service of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. Employers reported

there was no cost involved in most accommodations (58%); any cost incurred was typically no more than \$500.

"When employers realize a few small, doable changes are positive for the entire workplace, it opens up new possibilities," Markel says.

A barrier to employment can be physical, such as a doorway too narrow for a wheelchair. But there can also be attitudinal barriers, for instance, fear of hiring those with disabilities not as well understood, such as developmental disabilities. While serving on OU's Autism Council, Markel developed an interest in researching employment issues for those with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), a neurodevelopmental disability marked by varying degrees of social, communication and behavioral challenges.

ADVOCATE FOR PROGRESS

Markel began work last March on a comparative case study, "Business Models of Organizations Designed to Improve the Employment Outcomes of People with Disabilities." She's gathering and analyzing data from a groundbreaking OU business venture employing those with ASD:

- Using qualitative data, Markel is examining OU's Extraordinary Ventures Michigan (EVM), which began in 2014 as a collaborative effort between three nonprofit organizations: Oakland University/Smiles for Children, Autism Alliance of Michigan and the Judson Center. Markel's research encompasses learning how the collaborators establish and staff competitive microbusinesses designed around employment and community engagement for people with ASD. Paid and trained, employees are mentored by students within OU's SBA and faculty autism

experts. Housed within business accelerator OU INC, the first microbusiness (a mammography gown laundry service for an area hospital) branched off to two other microbusinesses. Markel will publish information on this venture in conjunction with the Oakland business school's Management and Marketing Department colleagues Jae Kang and Lizbeth Barclay.



Dr. Karen Markel is leading research to understand the unique employment barriers for those with disabilities.

- Markel is conducting a multi-case study of EVM and two other organizations designed to address the unemployment of people with disabilities. She's gathering qualitative and quantitative research to compare the purposes and missions of the organizations, their structures, cultures, stakeholder engagement (particularly of organizational boards and parents or guardians) and general operations.
- Statistics indicate that 90% of those with ASD are unemployed or underemployed, and Markel realized business management literature lacks data on workplace recruitment and management of those with ASD. Markel and MBA candidate Brittany Elia teamed up to write an article summarizing the literature available on employment of those with ASD and to offer recommendations on how to support them in the workplace.

With October being National Disability Employment Awareness Month, emphasis will be placed on celebrating the contributions of American workers with disabilities – and educating the public about disability employment issues.

When the awareness month ends, Markel will still be working to increase understanding.

"Workers with disabilities tend to be exceedingly loyal to their employers because they're grateful for the chances they're given," Markel says. "Loyalty has a positive impact on work productivity and turnover." ■

By Mary Gunderson-Switzer



Rob Manilla, Chief Investment Officer, Kresge, OU Finance alum, and Finance graduate Brad Garrigues at The Kresge Foundation in Troy.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Student Managed Investment Fund experience leads to professional position

The investment management skills Brad Garrigues FIN '16 developed after a full year working with Oakland University's new \$2 million Student Managed Investment Fund (SMIF) not only gave him real-world investing experience, it also helped him land a professional position with The Kresge Foundation.

Finding and cultivating the best talent were twin goals of The Kresge Foundation when it partnered with OU last fall to power the SMIF. In addition to giving OU business students hands-on portfolio investment experience, Kresge Chief Investment Officer and OU Finance alum Rob Manilla hoped the program would help develop a pipeline of local, talented financial minds prepared for employment opportunities at the foundation and with other employers in southeast Michigan.

Garrigues was one of the first students to take part in the new program. He was drawn to the class in part because of Kresge's participation, which opened his eyes to the broad range of organizations that rely upon sound investment strategies for growth. "Many of those organizations are close to home and to OU," he says. "I realized you don't have to go to New York or Chicago to get this experience."

He immediately found satisfaction in identifying different elements that add up to portfolio growth. He returned as senior portfolio analyst in the Winter semester, building on his experiences and mentoring the new student analysts.

"There are a ton of factors involved (in building a successful portfolio)," Garrigues says. "That's what I like about analyzing stocks. There are so many

different methods for evaluating stocks, and it's changing all the time."

SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

Students in the SMIF relied on a community of experts to guide them through the complexities of evaluating and growing their portfolio.

OU Finance Professor Ranadeb Chaudhuri, Ph.D., leads the course and provides insight into security analysis techniques and investment approaches used by professional investors. Chaudhuri describes the pace of the course as "exciting, exhilarating and exhausting," adding that the "students fully immersed themselves in learning the intricacies of portfolio management."

Guidance from the SMIF's Advisory Board further connects students to the real world. Experts from top-level finance and investment companies serve as a sounding board to review, challenge and fine tune the students' portfolio recommendations. Advisory board members also supplement the class curriculum as guest lecturers and share their personal experiences in the asset management profession.

None of it could happen without Kresge's financial support, which enabled the fund and curriculum designed to teach business students the essentials of portfolio management, stock selection and portfolio evaluation.

PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, the SMIF students took part in the Quinpiac GAME Conference in New York, where they heard first-hand from some of the country's top financial investment minds. (See story next page.)

Returning to OU, Garrigues and his classmates realized just how much the University's trading floor and data analysis lab mirrors facilities at the nation's leading investment banks and brokerages. The lab offers a real-time stock ticker as well as two large-screen plasma displays that provide a continuous flow of stock information. It also includes 10 dual-screen computers featuring Bloomberg Professional access for market data analysis.

FROM EDUCATION TO EXPERIENCE

The intense experience paid off when Kresge leaders took notice of Garrigues' skills and offered him a full-time investment analyst position to begin after he graduated.

"Brad was selected out of a candidate pool of 260 applicants including finalists from across the country," says Manilla. "Our opportunity to see him during the Student Investment Fund presentations was a wonderful chance to assess his skills in real time. He was knowledgeable, confident and well prepared. We are excited to have him join us."

In his new role, Garrigues will be contributing his talents to growing the foundation's \$3.6 billion endowment, which enables the foundation to provide the grant and social investment resources necessary for Kresge to further its mission of expanding opportunities in America's cities.

"It's great to work for a company so involved in Detroit, in the arts and in culture," says Garrigues. "It feels good to be part of an organization that has such a reputation for helping others." ■

By Liz Lent

IN THE GAME

Gift helps students attend global asset management conference in New York

From the trading floor in Elliott Hall to Wall Street in New York City, business students in the Oakland's Managing Investment Funds course are getting a first-hand look at the real world of investment management.

A key part of this FIN 480 course is managing Oakland's \$2 million student managed investment fund (SMIF), powered by The Kresge Foundation. Managing the SMIF is integrated into the course that teaches students the essentials of portfolio management, stock selection and portfolio evaluation.

Thanks to a generous donor who financed the class' participation in the Quinnpic Global Asset Management Education (GAME) conference held in New York this spring, students met professionals in the nation's financial center.

The annual conference gathers renowned finance experts, professionals, academics and students from around the country to discuss pressing issues facing investment professionals and share best practices in investment management. Key note panel discussions covered global markets, corporate governance, global economy investment strategy and a Federal Reserve perspective. The forum concluded with panels discussing career opportunities in the financial services industry.

The students found the insight expanded their view of asset management careers, while the conference agenda allotted time each day for networking.

"The Quinnpic GAME forum allowed us to hear



Students in FIN 480 met with professionals in New York City and attended the Quinnpic Global Asset Management Education (GAME) conference. Photo provided by student Hannah Tucker.

first-hand what, as students, we should be conscious of — from global markets to corporate governance to perspectives of women in the industry — as we pursue careers in the business field," says Leah Slazinski, FIN '16, team financial advisor, Merrill Lynch.

Jennifer Krumholz Act. Sci. '16, client service associate, Oppenheimer and Co., summed up the value of the conference for all the students. "The opportunity to take part to sessions at the forum combined with the experience we are gaining by managing a portfolio gives all of us who are participating a leg up over any other students trying to start a career in the financial world."

That's exactly what the donor who financed the trip hoped to accomplish.

The anonymous donor is passionate about helping students take their experience managing real money in real-world situations one step further, explains Michael A. Mazzeo, Ph.D., dean, Oakland's business school. "He wanted to ensure Oakland business students had opportunities to travel, have meaningful experiences, and meet professionals from top financial firms. The Quinnpic GAME conference was a perfect match." ■

By Susan Thwing



PREPARED FOR SUCCESS

The professional-level experience recent Oakland business graduates gained from the Student Managed Investment Fund helped them successfully launch their professional careers. Graduates who took the course in Fall 2015 and Winter 2016 now hold professional positions such as Finance Manager, Operational Risk Analyst and Alternative Investment Analyst in organizations such as CIG Capital Advisors, Faurecia, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, Flagstar Bank, Hewlett Packard Enterprises, Meritor and Merrill Lynch.

In addition to attending the GAME conference, students visited other New York landmarks.

RETIRED PROFESSOR CONTINUES TO INSPIRE STUDENTS WITH SCHOLARSHIP



Through decades of hard work and determination, Professor Emeritus Sid Mittra, Ph.D., CFP, built a career as an acclaimed educator, author and businessman. The fact that he only had \$8 in his pocket when he left his home in India to start a new life in the United States in 1957 is just a small part of the story.

After earning his Ph.D. from the University of Florida, Mittra's early career included consultant to the U.S. Agency for International Development in Venezuela and the United Nations, where he served in Bangkok, Thailand. In 1966 he moved to Michigan where he joined the faculty of Oakland University's Department of Economics.

In addition to his academic career, Mittra developed into a recognized financial planning expert who authored more than 100 articles and papers in publications across the globe. One of his texts, *Practicing Financial Planning for Professionals and CFP Aspirants®*, now in its 12th edition, "has become an institution," according to Harold Evensky, former Chairman, CFP Board.

STRIVING TO IMPROVE

As a professor, teaching economics and finance was his job, but his personal mission was inspiring his students to be the best they could be. To do that, he reached out to them in ways that would challenge them to think deeply.

That dedication led Mittra to start his own business as a financial planning consultant "because I wanted to become a better communicator," he says. His evaluations as a professor then, he recalls, were average. He wanted to learn how to engage his students to get them to listen and understand, not just memorize. Starting a business where he would speak one-on-one to people was a way for him to learn by doing. Soon after, "my evaluations jumped to the top," Mittra says, and he found he could motivate his students in ways he never had before.

"With the blessings of my department chair, the dean and the president, in every class I set aside 10 minutes at the end to talk about life," he says. He shared stories from his life as well as from the lives of historical figures, citing, for example, the hundreds of failures Thomas Edison faced before inventing the light bulb.

"Through these stories, I tried to communicate that whatever difficulties you're encountering, they're nothing compared to what others faced and still succeeded," Mittra says. "I felt many students would enroll in my class just for those ten minutes."

The appreciation his students showed underscored Mittra's commitment to not just "transfer knowledge but rather to inspire every single student to accomplish something they didn't think they could achieve." Over the years, he heard back from graduates who said they, too, had been on the brink of failure, but came back to earn the doctorates, start their own companies, or rise through the ranks of their organizations thanks to Mittra's lessons.

GIVING BACK TO SAY THANK YOU

Boarding that plane to America was the first step in Mittra's journey to a lifetime of helping others. A philanthropist who has long supported causes in America and India, Mittra established an endowed scholarship for Oakland business students majoring in Economics.

Though he and his late wife, Bani, had contributed to an annual scholarship, they wanted to ensure future generations of hard-working Economic students at Oakland would have the critical financial support necessary to meet their potential. They ensured that legacy with an endowed scholarship, created during Oakland's All University Fund Drive.

The scholarship is one of the many ways Mittra demonstrates his gratitude to the country that became his home. "It all comes down to the fact that I was 27 years old and had nothing but a dream, and \$8 in my pocket," he says. "It was the generosity and continuous support of the American people that made my dream come true and got me to where I am today."

With the Sid and Bani Mittra Economics Scholarship, Mittra continues to help Oakland University students find their path to success and fulfillment. ■

By Liz Lent

SID MITTRA

A distinguished career

- Emeritus Professor of Finance at Oakland University
- Founder and former partner of financial consulting firm Mittra and Associates
- Former board member International Board of Standards and Practices of Certified Financial Planners (now CFP Board)
- Frequent presenter at the World Conference of the International Association for Financial Planning
- Author of more than 100 technical articles and 12 books on finance and economics, published the country's top publishing houses including Random House, Prentice Hall, Harcourt Brace, Harper & Row, and Dow Jones-Irwin
- Authored the longest-running financial planning columns in *The Oakland Press* and *Eccentric* newspapers, hosted regional television show called "Your Money"

Dr. Mittra in his Oakland office (top) and on the set of "Your Money" (bottom).



DEVELOPING A LEADER

Sum of experiences adds up to career success for newly minted alum

In the best business deals the more you invest, the better the reward. From day one, Phillip Johnson, FIN '16, invested heavily in his Oakland University School of Business Administration opportunities. That effort paid off with the launch of a promising new career at Meritor, one of the world's leading automotive suppliers.

Johnson joins Meritor through its Emerging Leader Development program, a three-year, on-the-job training experience created for "top-notch, ambitious college graduates." That description matches Johnson perfectly and underscores the way he approached his education at Oakland, where he was active in student organizations and took advantage of everything from academic competitions to study abroad programs.

LEARNING BY DOING

Much of Johnson's approach was born from the supportive environment he found at Oakland's business school. It felt, Johnson says, like he was part of "a small community" led by professors and administrators who motivated students through opportunity.

"The amount of resources that the Oakland business school invested in us was really unparalleled," Johnson says. "You can't go to another university and get the same attention from your professors or have the chance to get involved in as many student organizations as you do at OU. Here, you control your experience."

Those resources included scholarship support, including the Frances C. Amos and the Marvin L. Katke awards, which allowed Johnson to focus on his coursework and other academic experiences.

Throughout his years at Oakland, Johnson took part in the university's broad range of student organizations and served as the Student Activities Funding Board Chair for a year.

Beyond the classroom, Johnson also explored international travel opportunities, including a donor-supported expedition to Europe in the winter of 2016, during which he and a group of classmates traveled to Hungary and Ireland to see first-hand how multinational corporations operate.

The experience, Johnson says, "opened up my way of thinking." Today, he says, "one of my goals is to work overseas at some point."

LIFE-CHANGING RETURN ON INVESTMENT

By taking advantage of as many opportunities as possible, Johnson believes he has a lot more to show for his education than just a diploma. "From the student organizations, I not only learned about other areas of business within and beyond my major, I also learned what it would be like when I graduated and worked with others."

Those experiences allowed Johnson to explore the many facets of a business education and career before finding his niche. He came to Oakland as an Economics major, but soon found himself drawn to Finance — another benefit of his participation in student organizations. "They allowed me to learn about other areas, and that's how I found finance as a passion. Before I jumped into it as a major, I got a chance to explore it."

It was a passion that took hold. "Oakland's business school cultivated my love of finance," he says. "I liked being able to look at financial statements and see the health of a company, the way a doctor would check the vitals of a patient. Business shapes the world."



Phillip Johnson held an internship at Faurecia in 2014.

Working with peers, professors and industry professionals at OU made an indelible impression on Johnson. "The most important thing was the relationships I made with people," he says. "The experiences I had were very diverse and in-depth. I was able to work in teams in different fields and establish lifelong relationships."

Oakland's supportive environment allowed him to learn from mistakes and build on newly gained skills. "I'm most proud of that growth," he says. "The best thing about Oakland's business school is the culture. There is a special place here for everyone to get involved, learn, grow and have amazing experiences." ■

A WEALTH OF OPPORTUNITIES

Phillip Johnson, FIN '16 financial analyst, Meritor

EMERGING LEADER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Three one-year rotations that progress in challenge and responsibility providing a broad range of business and operational experiences.

DEGREE

BS Finance, Oakland University, cum laude, 2016

INTERNSHIPS/EXPERIENCE

Program Controlling Intern, Ford Global at Faurecia; Tax Accounting Intern, Rehmann; Financial Analyst, Weber Automotive

SCHOLARSHIPS

Frances C. Amos Scholarship
Marvin L. Katke Scholarship
Patti Finnegan Sharf Study Abroad Scholarship

AWARDS/HONORS

Alfred G. Wilson Award
Beta Gamma Sigma
Outstanding Officer of the Year for Student Activity Funding Board Chair
International Collegiate Business Strategy Competition, California, first place best overall performance;
first place business documentation
Reinventing Michigan Competition, third place

UNIVERSITY/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Student Managed Investment Fund, powered by The Kresge Foundation
Business Scholars
International Travel: Ireland/Hungary
Global Business Brigades



GLOBAL EXPOSURE

Business students share travel adventures with study abroad donor

Over winter break, 26 Oakland University business students traveled to Europe for a front row seat to the global marketplace. They shared their experiences, adventures and appreciation for the opportunity with Patti Finnegan Sharf, whose Study Abroad Scholarship helped offset the expense of the trip for several of them.

"It was an eye-opening, horizon-broadening experience," says Joy Jiang, Ph.D., who led the group along with Jennifer Cordon Thor, J.D. Under the guidance of these global business experts, students from two business classes visited Dublin, Ireland, and Budapest, Hungary, over the course of 10 days.

"The trip increased my appreciation and respect for other cultures," says Dave Bork ECN '16. "It helped me appreciate the human experience from new perspectives and showed me how we are all connected. Different and the same."

"It's so important to be able to put yourself in others' positions and see where they're coming from to make solid connections and form good relations," says Tori Latcha, MKT '16. "We're learning to expand our understanding of the world and how other cultures handle business decisions. Before this trip, I'd never left the country. I'm excited to branch out in the world."

Fostering this appreciation and understanding across cultures is one of the many reasons Finnegan Sharf created the scholarship to support international travel for Oakland University students.

"I am delighted to have been a part of an experience that will be with these students for the rest of their lives," she says.

At a post-trip dinner with Finnegan Sharf, the students told of how Dublin business professionals from the U.S. Embassy, Dell Ireland and Teeling

Whiskey Distillery welcomed them, and shared business and cultural insights.

Budapest offered astounding architecture around every corner. Students also met with Ogilvy & Mather, toured Audi and visited the world-famous Széchenyi Thermal Baths. The trip concluded with an emotional and breathtaking dinner cruise along the Danube River.

"The overall goal is to give our students an international experience while exposing them to different concepts and theories that have an impact on how business is done in those two countries and Europe in general," says Thor. "Having a global experience on your résumé helps in obtaining a professional job in the future."

In addition to learning about global business operations, the group put their leadership, communication and problem-solving skills into practice.

"In times of chaos, we had a unique team of scholars to lean on; we encouraged each other when needed," says James Cook, HRM '16. "We learned to enhance our communication skills through strong group dynamics, and in the end made life-long friends."

Above all else, the students realize and appreciate the opportunity to experience new cultures.

"I would encourage anyone interested in study abroad to absolutely do it," says Randy Broadwell, MIS '17. "There are scholarships available to help with the cost, and you will make friends and memories that will last a lifetime."

"This course was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I owe it to the university, our professors and the donors who made it all possible," says Phillip Johnson, FIN '16. ■

Story and photos by Rachel Oakley MKT/Studio Art '16



Business students thank Patti Finnegan Sharf for her support.



In addition to business meetings, students experienced the sights of each country, like Glendalough Monastery in Wicklow, Ireland (middle).

Students in both classes visited Dell's Dublin campus (right).



MAKING CONNECTIONS

Professional development program connects students and employers

Successfully transitioning from college student to polished professional takes practice. By integrating professional and career development skills into the business curriculum, that's exactly what Oakland University's **ACHIEVE** program delivers for undergraduate business students.

But that's not all it does. Thanks to the active role business professionals from the community play in **ACHIEVE** as mentors, coaches and volunteers at mock interviews, networking sessions and other events, students gain knowledge from a wealth of valuable sources. Those real-world skills are critical in helping them launch their careers.

DEVELOPING PROFESSIONALS

For Erica Shantz, Management major, that connection between classroom and real world became crystal clear when a job offer materialized after an **ACHIEVE** networking workshop. It was there that Shantz met Matthew Karrantja CAS '97, vice president of sales for LHP Engineering Solutions.

A longtime **ACHIEVE** volunteer and speaker, Karrantja seeks to instill an understanding of how important networking and communication are in today's business world. "Erica got it," he says. "She stole the show. She was fantastic."

Shantz's ability to speak with determination and clarity at that session led to an interview with LHP Engineering recruiters. An offer soon followed. Now Shantz is Sales and Recruitment Coordinator for LHP.

The LHP hiring team agreed Shantz's skill set and attitude set her apart. "She's like a draft pick," says Karrantja, which means that LHP is investing heavily in her future at the firm, with her supervisor already discussing a new, more advanced role for her after she graduates.

For Shantz, her position at LHP Engineering is providing her a one-of-a-kind growth experience. "I'm learning a lot," she says. "I've gained more skills and learned how

to have a big backbone in an industry like this. It's given me much better communication skills and sales experience. I keep learning, and I'm very thankful for this opportunity."

DISCOVERING TALENT

This serendipitous connection between student and employer would not have happened without **ACHIEVE**. Both Shantz and Karrantja are enthusiastic about this mandatory, three-course program, which helps professionally prepare Oakland business students for the business world after graduation.

"**ACHIEVE** was a great experience. It gave me the confidence to go into a room and present myself properly," Shantz says.

"Most people don't realize how important it is to network. Most jobs are based on networking. I try to convey that message to students, that this might be one of the most important classes you take in college," says Karrantja, who also runs a nonprofit dedicated to helping the unemployed find new positions.

Beyond the class, Karrantja encourages students to include him and his partner and all of the other professionals they meet through OU in what should be their own growing network of contacts.

As much as **ACHIEVE** does for students, it also provides an outstanding resource for regional businesses, helping them discover talent and potential employees.



Matthew Karrantja CAS '97 (right) helped Management student Erica Shantz launch her career after meeting her at an **ACHIEVE** networking event.

A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

A required professional and career development program integrated into the undergraduate curriculum, **ACHIEVE** helps Oakland business students transition from college students to highly marketable professionals. Named a best practice by AACSB-International, the three courses guide students through discovery methods and on-campus experiences where they prepare, practice and perform in professional situations. oakland.edu/achieve

"**ACHIEVE** gives students the opportunity to properly prepare for the business world and helps employers find students who are ready for a job in the real world," adds Shantz.

It all ties back to Karrantja's belief that what matters most in a potential employee is "attitude and aptitude," not necessarily experience.

That certainly has been the case with Shantz, according to Karrantja. "She has exceeded our expectations and is making the most of her opportunity." ■

By Liz Lent

ACHIEVE A CONNECTION

Consider how you can help tomorrow's business professionals prepare for their careers by volunteering with Oakland's **ACHIEVE** program. Here, business professionals are encouraged to interact directly with undergraduate business students by participating in mock interviews, networking skills workshops and other events. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. Contact Sherri Kerby at kerby@oakland.edu to find out how you can get involved.



MARKETING ALUM PROPELS FAMILY BUSINESS TO NEW SUCCESS

For Oakland graduates, their diploma is a launching pad for a successful career

Just ask Andrew Androff, MKT '02, named one of Oakland County's Elite 40 Under 40 in 2016, who says, "my time spent at OU helped lay a tremendous foundation for my success in business. I continue to apply marketing principles learned inside Elliott Hall to every campaign I develop."

Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson started the 40 Under 40 program in 2012 to honor young, dynamic leaders who live or work in Oakland County. Androff fits the bill. He is the co-owner and director of marketing for Professional Movers.com, an award-winning residential and office moving company headquartered in southeast Michigan.

SUCCESS IS A LIFELONG PROCESS

"I grew up exposed to the business at a young age; my family started a moving business as a freight and delivery company. The company operated out of our house, so as a kid I got to help clean trucks and earn an allowance," Androff explains. "But the real lessons were learned watching my dad negotiate truck purchases or listening to my older siblings professionally work with customers to solve problems."

During college, Androff worked for a production company representing Chrysler on the auto show circuit.

"I was spending my college semesters in Oakland University's business program while traveling four to five days a month working. It was my first experience seeing how marketing concepts taught inside the classroom were applied by global brands in the real world," he says.

Soon after graduation, Androff approached his family to form a branch of the company focusing

on residential and business moving. He used his experience to form a unique niche for Professional Movers.com, where under his leadership, targeted campaigns have resulted in a 20 percent increase in overall sales and sustained growth.

DISRUPTING THE INDUSTRY

"At the time, moving was an antiquated industry. The way customers were finding a moving company was changing. Gone were the days of pulling out a Yellow Book and paging through it to find a mover. We saw an opportunity to positively disrupt the moving industry," he explains.

The company purchased the domain ProfessionalMovers.com. The result: 70 percent of new business generated came from online visitors.

CUSTOMER, COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Androff's Detroit Moving Incentives campaign, the first and only of its kind, supports his company-wide goal of helping pioneer Detroit's renaissance. Through the campaign, Professional Movers.com offers discounts and value-added moving services to people and businesses relocating to Detroit.

"The program resulted in a 17 percent increase in revenue and enabled Professional Movers.com to hire new team members, purchase new moving trucks, invest in new technology and open a location inside the Chrysler House in Downtown Detroit to better serve customers," he says. "The last five years in Detroit have been electric."

Professional Movers.com also supported Flint during its water crisis.

"We partnered with local mothers to collect water for Flint. We turned our Walled Lake warehouse into an official collection facility. In the end, we collected and delivered 22 pallets totaling over 49,000 pounds of water to the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan," he says.



Andrew Androff, Marketing '02, was named one of Oakland County's Elite 40 Under 40.

TRUE TO HIS SCHOOL

Androff credits much of his success to OU.

"Some of my favorite things we did in class were to work on case studies of actual real-world examples of business problems or marketing campaigns. The case studies evoked our problem-solving skills and let us creatively work together to come up with solutions," Androff explains.

In 2014 Professional Movers.com became the official mover of Oakland University, assisting the facilities team with on-campus relocations.

"As alumni, this was an incredibly proud moment to see our moving trucks on campus . . . One of the most memorable moments was when our team moved the 49-bell practice carillon in preparation of the new Elliott Tower," he says.

The 40 Under 40 recognition was icing on the cake.

"The recognition was definitely an incredible career highlight. It feels great to know that the positive work we are doing in the moving industry and in our community is meaningful and has purpose," he says. ■

By Susan Thwing



ProfessionalMovers.com often assists the OU facilities team with on-campus relocations.

DOUBLE ALUM LAUNCHES NON PROFIT

Big heart, business education give graduate the tools to make a difference



Nicholas Kristock, MBA '14, HRM '13, is making a career out of helping others. After spending two years playing professional soccer and working for several nonprofits in Australia, Kristock returned to Michigan to serve his hometown community.

His most recent endeavor is Fleece and Thank You, a nonprofit organization based in Metropolitan Detroit with the mission of leaving a cozy and colorful fleece blanket on the hospital bed of every sick child beginning an extended stay treatment. He incorporated the organization in October 2015, within five days of coming home.

Then, during the week of Christmas, more than 1,000 sick children in 17 hospitals across Michigan received the gift of a fleece blanket from Fleece and Thank You to keep them warm over the holidays.

"I'm particularly interested in Detroit," says Kristock. "It's growing; it's exciting. With that will come a lot of great things, but also there's going to be a lot of causes that will need people who are excited to be there and be ready to pioneer."

A HISTORY OF HELPING

This isn't Kristock's first foray into nonprofits.

As an OU Presidential Scholar, Kristock took advantage of this elite scholarship that covers four years of tuition to do what he loves most: help others.

As an undergraduate, he founded Gigs-for-Good, which powered mission trips for high-school students from 2012-15. After that he launched Reach, a nonprofit service with the goal of using technology to connect volunteers with the community service options that fit their schedule, location and interests.

While in Australia, he worked as a wish granter for Make-A-Wish; a family room specialist for Ronald McDonald House; and service manager for Orange Sky Laundry, Australia's first mobile laundry service for the homeless.

"I believe a non-profit works for the good of the public, so I don't see it as my nonprofit, I see it as the world's nonprofit that I am putting in effort for," says Kristock. "I believe in giving to give."

DREAM COME TRUE

While completing his undergraduate degree, Kristock worked for Oakland's Disability Support Services (DSS) Center as a peer transition consultant.

"My work mentoring OU students with some form of autism really got me interested in working with nonprofits," he says. "I loved my four years in the DSS."

ABOUT FLEECE AND THANK YOU

- Individuals or groups make blanket(s)
- They can then film a 5-15 second message or write a note of inspiration and support
- The blanket and message is sent to Fleece and Thank You; if local, Fleece and Thank You will arrange to pick up
- The blanket is tagged/coded with the message, then delivered to a hospital for a child starting treatment
- Recipients have the option to record a response for their blanket buddy

Learn more at fleeceandthankyou.org.

That interest combined with his Oakland business education gave him the skills and knowledge he needed. Kristock says his Oakland professors made a strong impact on him, especially his most influential mentor, Professor Liz Barclay.

"Her classes revolved around how others-oriented leadership really is. You can't do it on your own," he says.

The entrepreneurship courses helped kickstart Kristock's evolution into a nonprofit entrepreneur. "I learned the power of action in Oakland's entrepreneurship classes," says Kristock. "My Oakland business degree gave me the nuts and bolts to make my dream come true." ■

By Rachel Oakley

MEET NICHOLAS KRISTOCK

Founder, Fleece and Thank You, 2015-Present

OUAA Outstanding Young Alumni Award and Young Alumni 10 Within 10 Awards, 2016

Captain, Logan Lightning Football Club, 2014-15, Brisbane, Australia

Training and Development Intern, Quicken Loans, 2012-13

NCAA Division Senior Class Award for men's soccer, 2013

First athlete to receive Oakland's Human Relations Award, 2013

Named Student Leader of the Year, Oakland's Center for Student Activities, 2013



PREPARED TO LEAD

Changing industry landscape, desire to help others inspires pursuit of Executive MBA



As director of pharmacy at McLaren Oakland Hospital, Sharelle Brown, MBA '15, was already an experienced healthcare professional when she decided to pursue her Executive MBA.

The seismic shifts in the healthcare industry combined with Brown's increasing managerial and leadership responsibilities since earning her Doctor of Pharmacy in 2003 led her to Oakland's Executive MBA with a concentration in Healthcare Leadership.

"I'm a clinical pharmacist, but I needed to get stronger on the business side," says Brown. "Healthcare is becoming a big business, and you have to have that skill and acumen."

The opportunity to earn an Executive MBA that built on her strengths as an administrator and supported her career goals was pivotal in Brown's selection of Oakland's Executive MBA. The program's flexibility was also a plus. Oakland's fully-inclusive, 21-month cohort program meets on alternating weekends, a schedule conducive to the lifestyle of busy executives like Brown.

"It is a very comprehensive program," Brown says. "The curriculum is structured in a way that you get useful knowledge you can use right away. There is a lot of networking. The professors are great. The fields they teach are the fields they work in."

All those elements came together to broaden Brown's leadership skills. They contribute to her success in a high-pressure position where, every day, the lives of hundreds of patients depend on her and her staff of 55 to ensure they receive the right medication at the right time.

That's no small charge on its own, but as director of pharmacy, Brown is also in charge of ensuring integration of services, overseeing her department's multi-million dollar operating budget, developing policy and procedure, negotiating conferences and promoting staff development.

"The 'lean learning' aspect of the program and Six Sigma taught me how to organize and look at things from different angles," Brown says. "Especially at this stage in my career, it's very applicable to my experience."

For Brown, Oakland's Executive MBA program enabled her to refine the skills she learned over the course of her 25-year career in pharmacy. Her previous roles included director of pharmacy at Doctors' Hospital of Michigan in Pontiac and clinical pharmacy coordinator at Beaumont Hospital, Troy.

Throughout her career, she has focused on one goal: helping others.

That remains her driving force, one that extends beyond her patients to her employees and colleagues. Her work with faculty and peers through Oakland's Executive MBA program enhanced Brown's commitment to mentoring, a talent that assisted her in leading a staff that is recognized for professional excellence. This underscores how the lessons learned by one strong leader can resonate within an entire department.

Reflecting on her OU experience, Brown sees a program that rewards hard work.

Brown has seen her effort pay off in success. In the final analysis, Brown says, "Oakland's Executive MBA program delivered even more than I expected." ■

By Liz Lent

ABOUT THE EXECUTIVE MBA

The Executive MBA at Oakland University is a premier graduate business program designed exclusively for experienced professionals. Offered in a cohort structure, the fully inclusive 21-month program meets Friday afternoons and Saturdays on alternate weekends to support the lifestyle of busy professionals. Students in Oakland's Executive MBA program are often mid-career executives preparing for senior management or senior executives looking to enhance their skills. Learn more at oakland.edu/emba



Sharelle Brown, director of pharmacy at McLaren Oakland Hospital, found Oakland's Executive MBA program broadened her leadership skills.

ACCOUNTING ALUM TAKES HELM AT INTERNATIONAL FIRM

Going the extra mile is the hallmark of Rob Dutkiewicz's service philosophy. It's that philosophy combined with his education, experience and work ethic that led this 1988 Oakland Accounting alum to be named president of Clayton & McKervery, a global tax and accounting firm, earlier this year.

On the heels of that announcement, the Association for Corporate Growth honored him as one of five national recipients of the ACG Meritorious Service Award, which it bestows on members who have provided distinguished volunteer service and leadership.

"Oakland University did an exceptional job of helping me prepare for my career. Not just in the academic sense, but in the life balance aspect as well," Dutkiewicz says.

For him, that balance includes actively supporting the Oakland University School of Business Administration and its students.

"His involvement is valuable and appreciated," says Mohinder Parkash, chair of the Accounting and Finance Department at OU's business school.

"As chair of the Accounting and Finance Advisory Board for many years, Rob has been tremendously supportive of the school and its students," Parkash adds. "He has worked diligently to help expand our curriculum to meet industry needs."

An active member of the OU Accounting and Finance Advisory Board for nearly 15 years, Dutkiewicz regularly meets with professors, administrators and students to

discuss industry trends, academic courses and other programs in the business school. In 2016 he joined the b-school's Board of Visitors. With his family, he endowed an annual scholarship for Oakland Accounting students.

"It's rewarding to stay involved and give back, helping our next generation of leaders achieve and get started in their careers," he says.

Clayton & McKervery recruiters visit Elliott Hall, home of OU's business school, frequently during the academic year to meet students and talk about accounting careers. The firm employs a half-dozen alumni currently, including two members of the management team.

"OU's business school is where I came from, and we look to the University to provide the type of ambitious and prepared men and women our firm needs to continue to grow and remain a best-in-class accounting firm," he says.

FAR REACHING INVOLVEMENT

In addition to his involvement at OU, Dutkiewicz has served as the president of Association for Corporate Growth Detroit and as vice president of programs for the chapter. During his tenure, he helped develop a strategic plan to grow membership and increase brand awareness. He also played a key role in the organization's public policy initiative, including visiting representatives in Washington, D.C., and in his district, and forming the chapter's public policy committee. In addition, he served on the organization's NextGen and Women's Forum committees.



"Staying involved in this way is key to success — both as a personal reward and in a career path," he says. For students pursuing careers in accounting, the world is wide open.

"Students today are entering a profession that has all kinds of opportunities and all indicators point to accounting as a growing field," he says. "I tell students to continue their education after graduation and evolve with it, not just the technical aspects, but by networking, building relationships and enjoying this dynamic career choice."

"I am a proud alum and fortunate to have received my education from Oakland University," he says. "Without my OU degree, I wouldn't be where I am today. My Oakland education prepared me so that I hit the ground running." ■

By Susan Thwing



Many Oakland alums work at Clayton & McKervery, including (left to right) Robert Dutkiewicz, ACC '88, president; David Van Damme, ACC '09, manager; Robbie Vrooman, MACC '12, ACC '11, staff accountant; and Tarah Ablett, ACC '06, senior accountant.

ABOUT ROB DUTKIEWICZ

EDUCATION

Oakland University, Accounting, 1988; Walsh College, Master of Taxation, 1996

CAREER

He joined Clayton & McKervery in 1988 and became president in 2016. He leads a sizable team devoted to providing proactive and specialized knowledge on the domestic and international tax and accounting issues impacting foreign-owned companies. He's made it a priority to understand the needs and priorities of business owners, both in the U.S. and abroad. As such, he works in close collaboration with domestic and European chambers of commerce, business associations and economic developers dedicated to supporting business growth.

BOARDS AND MEMBERSHIPS

Oakland University, Financial and Accounting Advisory Board; Association for Corporate Growth; British-American Business Council; Cornerstone Health and Technology High School; Detroit Chamber of Commerce; German-American Chamber of Commerce; Leonardo International.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION ENHANCES SCHOOL REPUTATION

The Oakland business school continues to build its reputation within and beyond the region. The experienced and highly regarded faculty, relevant programming and successful alumni all combine to raise the awareness of the Oakland business school. Large and small organizations around the world are taking note.

"Third-party recognition reinforces the high quality education OU business students gain from expert faculty and top-notch curriculum. Our program integrates theory, research and experience with solid academic preparation and practical skills that help our students launch successful careers," says Michael A. Mazzeo, dean and professor of Finance at Oakland's School of Business Administration. "While ratings and recognition do not tell the whole story, they do help further enhance the value of a business degree from Oakland University."



CEO MAGAZINE RECOGNIZES MBA, EXECUTIVE MBA PROGRAMS

CEO Magazine's 2016 MBA rankings name Oakland University's MBA and Executive MBA programs among the

best for students. Oakland is one of just two Michigan universities to appear on the North America MBA list and the only one in Michigan on the Global EMBA list.

The *CEO Magazine* listing examines the nuts and bolts of an MBA: the learning environment, class sizes, tuition fees, faculty, delivery methods, international diversity, gender make-up and more. The objective is to identify schools that combine exceptional quality with great ROI.

VALUE COLLEGES LISTS PROJECT MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM AMONG TOP 50

ValueColleges included Oakland University's Project Management Certificate program on its list of "The Top 50 Best Value Project Management Certificate Programs of 2016." This recognition places Oakland among other leading institutions on the list such as Cal Tech, UC Berkeley and Stanford.



Noting that project managers are a commodity in the Detroit region, Value Colleges calls Oakland's Project Management Certificate program, "an affordable way to get in on the action." Value Colleges also observes that the Oakland University School of Business Administration's AACSB-International accreditation in both business and accounting is "especially notable and a rare distinction."

The PMP is offered through Oakland's Professional and Continuing Education Program in collaboration with the OU b-school.



Dr. Gene Fliedner leads OU's PMP Certificate program.

BEST VALUE COLLEGE FOR BUSINESS MAJORS FOR 2016 BY Payscale

Oakland University is once again ranked as one of the "Best Value Colleges for Business Majors" for both its annual return on investment and 20-year return on investment in Payscale's 2016 College ROI Report. The University is ranked among the top in Michigan for Business Majors in both categories.

With an annual rate of return of 9.4 percent, Oakland University business graduates receive among the highest rate of return on their investment of educational dollars at a Michigan university.

NAMED AMONG TOP COLLEGES FOR ECONOMICS MAJORS

San Francisco-based Zippia named Oakland University as one of the top colleges in Michigan for Economics majors. The company, which provides career information tools for professionals across industries, created an "Economics Quality Index" to rank which programs offer the best career opportunities for Economics majors. Oakland's number three spot in the state is based on graduation rates, cost and career results for recent graduates.



CAREER OUTCOMES

This is in addition to last year's recognition by *The Princeton Review* and *U.S. News & World Report*. More importantly, business school alumni continue to succeed in meaningful careers after they graduate.

On average more than 80 percent of Oakland business graduates are employed before they even graduate, with 97% remaining in Michigan. More than 93 percent of business graduates are professionally employed within six months of graduation. ■

IN THE NEWS



Scholars celebrate their victory.

STUDENTS SCORE VICTORY IN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

A team of three Oakland University Business Scholars took first place for best overall performance in the 52nd International Collegiate Business Strategy Competition (ICBSC) at California State University in Anaheim. The

ICBSC allows students to experience what it is like to run a manufacturing company in head-to-head competition, as well as network with business executives and students from around the world. Accounting/Management major Olivia DeMarco; MIS major Andrew Hutcheson; Marketing major Paul Mets; and coach Professor Joy Jiang represented Oakland at the competition.



Kimberly Deyak ACC '14, MAcc '15, Assurance Staff, Plante Moran

ACCOUNTING ALUM EARNS NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Kimberly Deyak ACC '14, MAcc '15, obtained a cumulative average score above 95.50 across all four sections of the CPA Exam on her first attempt. Her performance earned her the Elijah Watt Sells Award.

The CPA Exam is known as one of the most difficult professional credential exams. The average passing rate is one of the lowest in any professional qualification test. A total of 93,742 individuals sat for the Examination in 2015, with 75 candidates meeting the criteria to receive the Elijah Watt Sells Award. Deyak is one of five winners from Michigan.

MBA STUDENTS TRAVEL TO EUROPE

OU's MBA trip offered a first-hand look at doing business in the European Union and how Brexit could affect it. Students met with business leaders, economists and officers at international organizations in Spain, Italy and Switzerland. In Spain, Oakland MBA students visited the U.S. Consulate, churches, cultural sites, and several businesses including IBM where the students learned about its business strategy, culture and how they innovate to be sustainable. In Italy they met with Borg Warner and in Switzerland visits included Deloitte.



MBA students at Basilica La Sagrada Familia in Barcelona.



Summer camp activities covered many facets of business.

SUMMER CAMP FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

From the campus of Oakland University to Comerica and Krispy Kreme, high school students explored the many facets of business during two week long summer camps. Hands-on demonstrations, field trips, expert speakers engaged students in entrepreneurship, connectivity, investment management, international business, including Brexit, and so much more. On campus, students visited OU INC and Meadow Brook Hall. They took part in virtual reality demos and played auction games.

OU'S AMA HONORED

The AMA won three Exemplary Collegiate Chapter Performance Awards at the 38th Annual International Collegiate Conference of the AMA. The chapter was recognized for: Outstanding Chapter Planning, Outstanding Fundraising, and Outstanding Membership. In addition, the chapter racked up accolades at the 2016 Student Activities and Leadership Awards night. AMA was received awards for Most Active Organization and Outstanding Educational Program for an Event. AMA at OU President Alvin Pitris received Outstanding Student Organization President and Student Leader of the Year awards, while David Banet was recognized with Outstanding Officer of a Student Organization award.



Professor Mohan Pisharodi, AMA co-adviser, with members of the OU AMA chapter.

COLLEGIATE DECA BRINGS HOME NATIONAL AWARDS

The Oakland University chapter of Collegiate DECA competed in the Collegiate DECA International Career Development Conference in Washington D.C. Five OU DECA students competed against the world's best in Retail Management; Event Planning; Hospitality and Tourism; and Food Service. Marketing major Anthony Piazza brought home three honors, including first place in the world for Retail Management. The Marketing major duo of Stephanie Pini and Austen Pratt won two medals: top finalist in the Event Planning category and fifth place overall in the world.



AWARDING SCHOLARSHIPS

More than 150 students, faculty, alumni and accounting firm guests attended the 33rd Annual Accounting and Finance banquet earlier this month where more than \$39,000 in scholarships was awarded. Stephen J. Moore, supervisory special agent, criminal investigation, IRS, served as the keynote speaker at the event.

FALL 2016
insight



**MBA and Global Executive MBA
2016 Rankings**

GLOBAL EXPOSURE
**Donor helps students study
business abroad**

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