Student Racks Up More Funds for Business Venture at National Competition

by Amy K. Lavender

Once again, William Cross is making a name for himself in the business world after bringing home another prize from a national business plan competition. This time, William earned third place out of 170 teams and a total of $40,000 in prize money from Baylor University’s New Venture Competition.

The fourth annual Baylor New Venture Competition was a two-day, dual round business plan competition and speed pitch competition promoting entrepreneurship and small business development. At such events, students are sponsored by their home universities and present a business plan for their product to a panel of judges. The competitions provide students with feedback on their products and business plans as well as the opportunity to network and win prizes to help fund their ventures.

Representing the University of West Georgia, William earned $15,000 from Baylor University for placing third as well as $25,000 for winning the Able Award. William will invest the prize money in his company VasoCorp, which produces NeuropAWAY. NeuropAWAY is a dietary supplement formulated to reduce neuropathy, or nerve pain, in diabetic patients.

William is currently pursuing his bachelor’s in business administration at UWG’s Richards College of Business. He works with the University of Georgia Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the University of West Georgia to shape and develop his company and his product.

UWG’s Rick Sigman, a business consultant at the SBDC, says a good support system is vital to business success, and he’s glad to be a part of that support system for William.

“It’s been great to see William grow,” Rick said. “He has a great support network: his family, his friends, the faculty, and staff here at UWG.”

Rick says business plan competitions held across the United States, six of which William has attended, are also a great place to make connections and establish relationships with mentors and investors. William has made several connections at these competitions. He has successfully obtained an angel investment of $70,000, which enabled him to mechanize production of his product and increase output several times over. As a result, he is now filling orders for several Atlanta-area pharmacies.

“He’s accomplished so much because he’s been able to work well with his network,” Rick said. “He’s hardworking and people see that and want to be a part of his project.”

William has two more competitions lined up this year at Rice University and Georgia State University. He has been accepted into the Georgia State competition and is still trying to qualify for the Rice University competition.
SAS Summit Yields Lively, Informative Discussions
by Amy K. Lavender

Many of us know the age of “smart homes” is just around the corner. However, some of that technology is already here – in our office buildings, homes, cars, and the palm of our hand. We know that information is sent from these devices to some invisible place in “the cloud,” but then what happens to it? Well, someone has to analyze it.

According to Kenneth C. Shiver, chief economist for Southern Company and this year’s keynote speaker at the University of West Georgia’s SAS Analytics Summit, that’s where things get tricky – not in collecting the data but rather how to analyze it.

“All these issues come up because you have to have people to analyze all this data that comes pouring in,” Kenneth said, “and it takes people looking at all these numbers to translate that into information your company can use to make changes and adjustments.”

Kenneth also told attendees to the event that while the amount of data could seem overwhelming and sometimes even superfluous, it allows companies to tailor their services to their individual customers when used properly.

“So the data volume is huge, and it can be analyzed in many different ways, but quality is key,” he advised. “Ask yourself, ‘Is it right?’ Are we looking at the right data?” You don’t want the answer you think you have to start falling apart after only a few questions.”

Those who attended the SAS summit had a wealth of knowledge and experience at their fingertips, not only in Kenneth – who has more than 20 years experience in the planning and analysis functions of Southern Company – but also in the five panelists and closing speaker André de Waal.

The panel discussion was very popular with the audience as it covered a topic near but not necessarily dear to us all – credit. Laureano Gomez with Epsilon; Amanda Hand with Aspirent Consulting; David Johnson with Cane Bay Partners VI, LLLP; Lloyd Lay with Cardlytics, Inc.; and Peter Oburu with Equifax highlighted what data is collected by credit reporting agencies and how it is used by those agencies to determine credit scores.

“We had a very lively interaction between the panelists and the audience once the topic of credit ratings was broached,” said moderator Dr. Joey Smith, UWG chair and professor of economics. “Everyone was highly engaged and interested in how their behavior affects their individual credit ratings, which affects everyone’s ability to buy a car, buy a home, and even get a job.”

André de Waal’s topic was also a hit, focusing on the current presidential race. The SAS Institute’s de Wall spoke on using SAS text mining to analyze the unstructured data from recent presidential debates.

In addition to the information provided by these experts in their fields, the summit also featured student presentations, student research, and multiple networking opportunities for students and professionals alike.

“This was our fourth SAS summit, and it was our best one so far,” said Dr. Smith. “Discussions throughout the day covered a broad range of SAS subjects. Of course, it was also wonderful to see our students present their research and have an opportunity to showcase their skills to potential employers. In just six hours, we covered a lot of ground and shared a lot of information with students, faculty, staff, business leaders, and community members, and we look forward to doing it all over again next year.”

UWG Students Win National Social Science Association
by Kendall Poltzer

A group of University of West Georgia students from Dr. Beheruz N. Sethna’s marketing class recently earned the top prize in the country for undergraduate research at the National Technology and Social Science Conference from the National Social Science Association. The honored team included students Deia Dennis, Matthew Hukin, and MaryLeith Turner. Deia Dennis travelled to Las Vegas in March to represent the group and present their research. Their project was entitled “Bring Chipotle to Carrollton,” which earned their group the top prize.

Also participating in the conference were UWG students Ian Voegtlin, Samantha Fraime, Nicholas DiBattista, and Garrett Adams, who won the runner-up award for their own project, “Analysis of the University of West Georgia’s Population Regarding the Clothing Company.”

Dr. Sethna said he is very proud of both teams who participated in the contest noting, “Their research is first class and is clearly deserving of the national recognition they earned.”

Dr. Sethna was also proud that the students were so dedicated in his 8 a.m. research class, which he called “very demanding.”

This is the fifth time in 13 years that students representing UWG have won the top prize at the national conference, which is attended by students all over the United States. The National Technology and Social Science Conference is held each spring in Las Vegas.
Three University of West Georgia students recently raised $2,000 and donated the money to the West Georgia Technical College Foundation, earmarked for student scholarships.

Jonathan Bell (Bowdon), Tiffany Ramroop (Loganville), and Emily Phillippi (Tallapoosa) are all members of the Southwire Sustainable Business Honors Program at UWG’s Richards College of Business.

One of the tenets of the program involves giving back to the community, and the three students chose West Georgia Tech students as recipients of their efforts.

The Southwire Sustainable Business Honors program consists of a select group of business majors attending UWG. Only a few high-achieving students are selected to be a part of the accelerated program, which allows students to earn a bachelor’s in business administration in economics, finance, management, marketing, or real estate, plus a master of business administration and a certificate in sustainability, in only four years.

The students also spend 30 hours per week working alongside Southwire employees, which gives them hands-on experience as they earn their degrees.

“We can’t thank these students enough for offering such a generous donation to the WGTC Foundation,” West Georgia Technical College President Steve G. Daniel said. “This is just one more example of the collaborative effort between the University of West Georgia, West Georgia Technical College, and our community partners such as Southwire, as we all strive to make our communities better. I would like for Jonathan, Tiffany, and Emily to know how much we appreciate them for their thoughtful and meaningful contribution, which will benefit students in need.”

The funds will be used to help West Georgia Tech students offset financial burdens that might hinder their ability to go to college, according to West Georgia Tech Vice President of Institutional Advancement Kim Learnard.

“We are so grateful for the generosity that Jonathan, Tiffany and Emily have shown,” Kim said. “The funds will have a major impact in the lives of local residents who are struggling to make ends meet as they attend WGTC. I am so thankful that they have a vision for how valuable an education can be, but also for how difficult it can be for those who are struggling financially. The WGTC Foundation is committed to doing all that we can to help our students overcome those obstacles. We could not do it without the contributions from our communities such as the generous and unexpected one that we received from these students.”

Jonathan, Tiffany, and Emily raised the funds by contacting various civic clubs and organizations throughout the area as part of their Giving Back project, one of the five projects they will complete over the course of their program that align with Southwire’s five tenets: Giving Back, Growing Green, Living Well, Building Worth, and Doing Right.

“Emily, Johnny and Tiffany make a great team,” said Southwire Human Resources Director and co-director of the SSBH Program Mandy Baeumel. “In their first year, SSBH students are challenged with a way to give back to their local communities. Because so many students could lack the financial assistance needed to attend college, these young adults decided to give back in a way that would allow individuals to attend West Georgia Technical College with a little less burden than would have otherwise existed. I am incredibly proud of them for their efforts in raising funds to help other students in need, and I know their efforts will go far.”

Jonathan said that although the project demanded a lot of time and effort, it was more than worth it when he personally delivered the check to Kim.

“We could not have raised the money without significant buy-in from local community leaders and organizations,” Jonathan said. “This community is a caring community that wants to help others in any way that they can, and we were fortunate enough to be able to tap into some of those resources. I can’t think of a better recipient of these funds than the West Georgia Technical College Foundation.”

To learn more about the Southwire Sustainable Business Honors Program, go online at www.westga.edu/business/ssbh.php or contact the Richards College of Business at 678-839-6487.
Richards College of Business

Go West. Go Business.

65% Female
35% Male

12 Business Student Organizations

1967 College Founded
1984 AACSB Accreditation Received
1998 Accounting AACSB Accreditation

2119 Undergraduate Students Enrolled
218 Graduate Students Enrolled
$741,092 Scholarships Awarded to Business Students

SAS ANALYTICS SUMMIT
WOMEN EMPOWERING WOMEN
McCALMAN EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE
EXECUTIVE IN RESIDENCE
EMPLOYER SHOWCASE
BB&T LECTURES IN FREE ENTERPRISE
UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES
Accounting · Economics · Finance · Management · MIS · Marketing
Real Estate · International Economic Affairs

GRADUATE DEGREES
MBA (three locations and online) · MPacc

SOUTHWIRE SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS HONORS PROGRAM
The only one of its kind in the United States, the program allows students to earn bachelor’s and master’s degrees in four years while interacting with senior executives of North America’s largest manufacturer of wire and cable.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES
In the past five years Richards College students have been able to choose from a variety of study abroad programs.

CENTERS
BB&T Center for Ethics & Free Enterprise
Center for Business & Economic Research
Center for Economic Education
Small Business Development Center
Student Success Center

ENGAGED FACULTY
During the past five years, Richards College faculty generated over 700 intellectual contributions, 306 of which are peer reviewed journal articles.

UNIVERSITY of West Georgia · Richards College of Business

Online MBA Ranked #21 - PRINCETON REVIEW
Online MBA Ranked #55 - U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

MBA Ranking Tier One - CEO MAGAZINE
BB&T Continues to Support UWG Free Enterprise Initiatives

by Taylor Bryant and Bonnie Butcher

On May 6, the local branch of BB&T Corp. renewed its commitment to the University of West Georgia Center for Ethics and Free Enterprise and the BB&T Lectures in Free Enterprise Series with the presentation of a $100,000 check to the Richards College of Business to support these educational endeavors.

Senior Vice President for Corporate Banking Tammy Hughes said her bank is proud to support UWG’s initiatives.

“The key point of our mission statement is to make our community a better place,” said Tammy. “We truly believe that the University of West Georgia helps to make our community a better place. So we’re happy to support them.”

The Center for Ethics and Free Enterprise generates faculty and student research and new business courses. In addition, the lecture series focuses on core values and ethical foundations of free enterprise and issues facing business management and policy makers. Two speakers a year are invited to UWG’s campus to provide a talk on these topics. Events are free and open to students and the general public.

Richards College of Business Dean and Sewell Chair of Private Enterprise Dr. Faye McIntyre said the center and the series would not be possible without BB&T.

“Richards College of Business is in the business of transforming lives through education, engagement, and experiences, and the BB&T donation helps us accomplish all three components of that mission,” she said. “It helps us educate our students by providing them with information they wouldn’t otherwise have access to; it engages them with the business community so they can talk with community business leaders before and after the event in addition to hearing the speaker; and it provides an experience that a lot of college students don’t have access to.”

UWG President Dr. Kyle Marrero said he was impressed with the caliber of speakers the lecture series has brought to campus.

“The level of speakers has been a who’s who in business and industry and creates an active learning environment and experiential learning opportunity for our students beyond the classroom to understand what it will take to succeed in the marketplace today,” he said. “It’s a great partnership because it not only embodies BB&T’s mission but also our mission to be the best comprehensive university in North America, sought after as the best place to work, learn, and succeed. So their partnership helps us create that environment.”

Fall 2016 Events

8/31 Executive in Residence
9/16 Women Empowering Women: Owning Your Voice
9/30 Faculty Research Lunch (Management)
10/7 Board of Advisors Meeting
10/22 UWG Homecoming
11/1 Economic Forecast Breakfast
11/18 Faculty Research Lunch (Marketing)
Richards College of Business Hosts BB&T Lecture Featuring Stu Thorn

by Taylor Kilgore

Former President and CEO of Southwire Stu Thorn spoke to a full house on February 8 on “How to Change the World Without Changing a Thing: Leveraging Capitalism to Create Shared Value,” as the most recent guest speaker in the BB&T Lectures in Free Enterprise Series held at the University of West Georgia’s Townsend Center for the Performing Arts. The focus of his talk was capitalism and how it has improved the world we live in today by incorporating the idea of shared value. In many ways, Stu has implemented this idea into the local community through Southwire Company with exponential success.

“Capitalism has been out there for centuries and even millennia, and it is working amazingly well,” Stu said. “It is a very simple idea that has a hugely powerful effect. Rather than looking for the next shiny new object as a way to improve the world, there is a great opportunity to take the capitalistic system and improve the world in very dramatic ways, some of which may look like philanthropy.”

Stu explained the benefits of “shared value” in his talk, sharing the success of 12 For Life – a program that helps at-risk high school students stay in school while maintaining a job. This program is a win-win for local schools in the community, who graduate more students, and Southwire, which has a highly trained talent pool from which to hire new employees.

“Shared value uses the capitalistic system to encourage businesses to act in their self interest in a way that is also in the self interest of society,” Stu explained. “Companies make wildly more money doing this because they have more output than input, and they help society improve simultaneously. We help educators solve social problems while Southwire makes more money.”

Southwire implemented the 12 for Life program into their factory seven years ago, and it has yielded stellar results.

“We only hire people with high school degrees,” Stu explained, “but Carroll County had one of the highest dropout rates in the state. Southwire invested $5 million in a factory here, which we staffed at 100 percent with kids that the school system said were about to drop out of high school.”

As a result, Carroll County is graduating more students, and Southwire has a new group of highly trained individuals ready to hire when they leave high school.

Stu and Southwire have continued to expand this model, leading to the creation of Southwire Engineering Academy for students in high school who aspire to study engineering. In this program, students work with Southwire engineers to solve problems within the factory. In addition, Southwire has worked with West Georgia Technical College to achieve their goal of helping local citizens with their trades. UWG was given $1.1 million to establish the Southwire Sustainable Business Honors Program – a rigorous program that allows students to earn their bachelor’s and master’s degrees in four years. Students work with UWG faculty and Southwire employees to implement a long-term curriculum and focus on Southwire’s tenets of building worth, growing green, employee stewardship, community relationship, and ethics. The students also gain an internship opportunity within the Southwire Company.

“When you are thinking about the evils of capitalism, think about the 12 for Life kids, the engineering kids, the technical school, and your fellow peers,” Stu said. “Keep in mind it is all because of capitalism. By doing business in a way of shared value, think of how much more powerful it is because then the ideology becomes scalable.”

Stu was the first non-family member to become CEO of Southwire Company. He served as such for 16 years, during which the company experienced a 300 percent revenue growth to $5.6 billion and pioneered new technologies that helped shape the wire industry. The Copper Club named Stu its “Copper Man of the Year” in 2014, the copper industry’s highest honor.

UWG Accounting Club Builds Networks with PrintPack

by Taylor Kilgore

The University of West Georgia Accounting Club visited PrintPack in Villa Rica to learn the inner workings of a large corporation. Students learned how the accounting department contributes to the overall success of the company. PrintPack is one of the largest packaging companies around the world. The company specializes in packaging for products such as potato chips, coffee, granola bars, pet food, gardening supplies, and even medical supplies. Many of the companies work closely with PrintPack to bring consumers the most innovative products on the market today.

“I really enjoyed the tour today,” said Natasha Wright, UWG Accounting Club president. “It gave us an opportunity to see the company and what they do. We really got a chance to meet their staff and the accounting department. Also, we learned what the process looks like and what actually having a job like that could mean, and it gave us a chance to network.”

Students were given the opportunity to tour the plant in Villa Rica in addition to forming networks with the PrintPack accounting department. These relationships allow students to learn from professionals working in their field of study and how to apply their newfound knowledge to their own future career.

“It’s good to get these students out of the classroom and into the real world to see what they will experience when they graduate,” said Michael Hopper, UWG Accounting Club sponsor.