Letter from the Dean

Fall 2015 is the start of another exciting year in the Richards College of Business, and we are ready for it! Our mission clearly defines who we are and sets the stage for what we do: We are in the business of transforming lives through education, engagement, and experiences!

The exceptional faculty in the Richards College and our many partners provide educational opportunities second to none! We provide a range of opportunities including a selection of majors, minors, and certificate programs; undergraduate and graduate research; in-class, on-line, and hybrid courses; and lectures, guest speakers, and business visits – all with the highest and most prestigious business accreditation possible, AACSB International.

We believe that it is important for our students to graduate with a degree plus at least one additional meaningful educational experience. Therefore we work with our local and global partners to offer several opportunities including internships, certifications, double majors, double degree programs, international student competitions, study abroad programs, and international student exchanges. The Southwire Sustainable Business Honors Program is truly amazing! The first group of students started two years ago and have recently begun their internships with Southwire’s divisional presidents (yes, presidents) this fall. The second cohort of students will work on employee wellness and engagement projects this year, and a new group of highly qualified and motivated students are eager to start their program.

We actively engage with our communities, and our partners believe in and support our efforts to prepare the leaders of tomorrow. Our partners have invested in new student scholarships, endowed faculty positions, facilities upgrades, program development, and more!

Inside this issue of the Richards Review, you will read about many of our Spring 2015 activities and events. (Check out our website for all upcoming activities.) Please join us as we prepare for a very busy fall semester! And be sure to like us on Facebook and join us on LinkedIn. The Richards College of Business is making great things happen!

Go West. Go Business.

Faye S. McIntyre, Ph.D.
Dean and Sewell Chair of Private Enterprise
Alumnus David Johnson Bequeathes Endowment to UWG

by Amy K. Lavender

Cane Bay Partners founder David Johnson attended the University of West Georgia at a very formative time in his life, and his experience at the Richards College of Business was so important to him that he wanted to give something back.

And he has, again and again.

His most recent donation will ensure that his legacy will reverberate through generations to come at UWG. David has dedicated a significant legacy gift to the David A. Johnson Professor of Predictive Analytics endowment that he created in 2011 within the economics department at the Richards College of Business.

“The University of West Georgia has made such a tremendously positive impact on my life,” David said. “I was fortunate enough to receive scholarships that allowed me to attend college. I vowed to repay them and more so that other students would have the same opportunities that I had.”

David’s donation to the Applied Econometrics and Analytics Fund will allow students to receive an education in one of the most advanced programs in the nation, one of only two programs that offer SAS Certification for undergraduates. SAS software has a multitude of applications from data entry and forecasting to financial modelling and time series analysis and is used by almost every Fortune 500 company. This donation will ensure that the SAS program will have a dedicated professor for years to come.

David’s donation is about more than just building a top program in the nation though – it is about making sure that others have the ability to have a transformational experience at UWG.

“I have visited and attended a number of other universities, but there is something special about UWG,” David said. “I was immediately able to get involved on campus, being selected as an honors program Freshman Student of the Year and becoming involved with Kappa Sigma. And I remained involved – elected as Student Government Association Senator, selected as Greek Man of the Year, and homecoming king. I do not believe I would have been able to get as involved and have had such a wonderful experience at any other school.”

David had great success founding Cane Bay Partners, a management consulting company, but through his legacy gift he can ensure that students will have an excellent college experience and will create successful entrepreneurs, as well.

“David’s wonderful gift will have a transformative impact on students in the years to come,” former Vice President for University Advancement and Executive Director of the UWG Foundation Dr. Bill Estes said. “Gifts, like this one, help fuel the University of West Georgia’s drive to be the best comprehensive university in the nation, sought after as the best place to work, learn, and succeed.”

Legacy gifts can be made in a variety of ways, from contributions by wills, bequests, insurance policies, gifts of property, appreciated assets, or charitable trusts. All of these gifts represent a powerful and meaningful way for individuals to create a philanthropic legacy for their family, community, and UWG.

At UWG, the McIntosh Circle recognizes donors who have included a charitable gift to the University of West Georgia Foundation, Inc., in their estate plans. Each year, it is the generous spirit of alumni and friends like David that make the work of the University of West Georgia possible.

David A. Johnson Professor of Predictive Analytics is:

Dr. William “Joey” Smith, Economics Department Chair
The economics department in UWG's Richards College of Business is one of only two institutions in the nation that offer Statistical Analytic Software (SAS) certification to undergraduate students. SAS is a software program used by almost every Fortune 500 Company.

Business, financial, and economic institutions, academia, and even the federal government use SAS. The software provides a multitude of applications from data entry, forecasting, and financial modeling to time series analysis. Students graduating from UWG with their bachelor's degrees can now bring valuable knowledge of SAS directly to the workforce with this certificate program.

"We have alumni who have had great success coming out of this program, and the program is only in its third year," said Dr. William "Joey" Smith, chair of the economics department. "Some go on to work for major firms, while others go on to high-level advanced degree programs."

The SAS Certification program is intense, but fairly short. It consists of two statistics classes, a business forecasting class, and an econometrics class that aids students in working on two semester-long projects, which are presented at the end of the program in a culmination event: the SAS Analytics Summit, which brings in business leaders from around the region and is a valuable networking experience.

Graduates of the program have one of those business leaders to thank for the SAS Certification that serves them so well, alumnus David Johnson. David Johnson, founder of Cane Bay Partners, provided a generous gift in 2011 that established the David A. Johnson Applied Econometrics and Analytics Fund. This endowment provided the financial resources to begin offering courses in econometrics and business analytics using SAS.

David makes it a priority to attend every SAS Analytics Summit, where he can meet and discuss the program with the students and give them professional advice. He also serves on panels and speaks at the event.

"I think that it is important for this program to continue to grow and to be even more successful than it already is," David Johnson said. "This is a leading program among universities in the United States, and others are following our lead. We need to continue to innovate and make it stronger for the benefit of the students."

Thanks to David's generous gifts, the next class of students will present their final projects during the SAS Analytics Summit.

"I love to see the projects that solve real-world problems using their analytics training and tools, like SAS," David said. "These students are getting the best training in the nation and great job offers when they graduate. Their success is a testament to the quality of the program."

And students who graduate from the program are indeed finding success. One of Dr. Smith's former students just graduated seventh in his class from the most prestigious MBA program in Spain at IE University and is now working in market analytics for a major European firm. Other students stay in the South and work for major financial institutions in Charlotte or Atlanta.

Blake Johnson, another graduate of the program, is currently working on his graduate degree at UWG, but he credits the certification program for helping him land his dream job.

"I will be studying inflation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics," Blake Johnson said. "I'm really excited about it, and it's kind of a dream job if you're an economist. In the interview, the first thing that they asked about was my SAS certification. I think the certification is a necessity for economics, but great for anyone."

Blake will be responsible for finding the Producer Price Index (PPI) for this region for the federal government. The PPI examines the costs of wholesale products and how that relates to the costs businesses incur when selling products to the general public. He will also look at import and export costs.

"It is a key economic indicator, and it can show us how costs are trending," he said. "They can be very useful for economists to study the numbers as a whole, for all goods, and even for individual businesses to study the impact of these costs on their individual industries."

Success stories like Blake's are exactly what make David Johnson so excited about the program. And thanks to his donation, the future is very bright for students in the SAS program.
Southwire Donates $40,000 Scholarship Gift to the Southwire Sustainable Business Honors Program

by Joy Esiemokhai

With college education becoming more essential to a promising career, scholarships are becoming an even more important source of funding. In a commitment that is sure to go a long way in alleviating the financial burden of two incoming University of West Georgia students, the Carrollton, Georgia-based wire manufacturer Southwire recently pledged a $40,000 gift that will fund two four-year scholarships.

The scholarship fund, which will be known as the Southwire Sustainable Business Honors Program (SSBHP) Scholarship Fund, will benefit two incoming UWG freshmen in the Richards College of Business. The scholarship will be awarded in the amount of $5,000 annually per student for up to four years. The two recipients will be selected based on stringent academic and extracurricular criteria, evidence of leadership potential and a dedication to community service. Recipients must also maintain a minimum GPA of 3.5 and remain enrolled in the SSBH Program for the duration of their studies at UWG.

According to the Dean of the Richards College of Business and Sewell Chair of Private Enterprise, Dr. Faye McIntyre, the new gift “will be very helpful in our recruitment of top students. Southwire’s commitment to the success of the program has been tremendous. CEO Stu Thorn has dedicated both time and funding to provide students with the unique opportunities the Southwire Sustainable Business Honors program offers.”

Melanie Hildebrandt, the Director of the Southwire Sustainable Business Honors Program, echoed this sentiment.

“This gift allows us to attract top students to the University of West Georgia and will not only impact the success of our students, but also our community, as these students learn how to conduct business with a collaborative and sustainable mindset,” she said. “We appreciate the support of the Southwire Company and admire their holistic view of sustainability as they partner with us to offer a unique learning experience.”

SSBHP was founded in 2013 with a $1.1 million gift from Southwire, a donation that remains the largest in Richards College of Business history. The program allows a small group of select students, known as cohorts, to pursue and earn both bachelor’s and master’s degrees in business administration within four years.

Students in the program are required to enroll in honors courses and undertake both academic and extra-curricular lessons. Students also participate in activities that focus on sustainable business practices and corporate, personal, social, ethical, and environmental responsibility. Throughout the program, students actively engage with members of Southwire’s management and leadership teams through internships, special projects, and community service activities.

For more information on the scholarships and the Southwire Sustainable Business Honors Program, visit the program’s website at westga.edu/ssbhp

Students actively engage with members of Southwire’s management and leadership teams through internships, special projects, and community service activities.
Ken Willis Encourages Students to Build Bridges

by Amy Lavender

UWG welcomed Ken Willis as spring semester's speaker in the BB&T Lecture in Free Enterprise Series, hosted by the Richards College of Business. A crowd of students, faculty, and community members packed the Townsend Center to learn how they can “Bridge the Gap” of diversity and become bridge builders in their community and workplaces.

“Bridges connect people; they connect ideas, cultures, and differences,” Willis said. “Bridges transform.”

Willis emphasized that by creating a culture of collaboration and empowerment from the bottom up – by building bridges – businesses grow and prosper.

“Successful people, with the right support structure, attract other successful folks,” he said.

The goal in encouraging new ideas, collaboration and proactive problem solving within a business, Willis said, is to draw a diverse talent pool. He advised getting started by either becoming a bridge builder or encouraging bridge builders within your company.

According to Willis, bridge builders have the ability to reach out to their co-workers, understand their concerns, value their differences, find a common goal and synergize to find a solution that is beneficial to everyone.

“If you build an organization with a few of these bridge-building people and expose them to training along the way, whether the organization is large or small, you’re going to attract and you’re going to sustain a diverse talent group.”

Willis advises including in your mission statement that you strive for a balanced workforce. However, he urges people to take the next step.

“It’s not enough to go recruit a balanced workforce, what counts is the extent to which you execute the inclusion part. That is when you really maximize the effect of retaining a diverse workforce.”

A veteran of more than 35 years with Quaker/PepsiCo and entrepreneurial ventures, Willis has driven growth turnarounds in virtually every organization he’s led by rethinking existing business models, building top-tier teams and vigilantly focusing on execution.

Willis’ notable accomplishments have included contributing to growing Quaker/PepsiCo’s revenues by the billions; conceiving and implementing several major strategic redesigns that influenced corporate-wide Go-To-Market change and substantial profit growth; as well as the recruitment, mentoring and development of well over 50 former subordinates who have or are leading major divisions and organizations today – many of whom include minorities. He is also founder and president of Anewda Consulting.

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Fall 2015 Events

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BB&T LECTURES IN FREE ENTERPRISE PRESENTS:

Johnny “Cupcakes” Earle

Apparel Designer & Businessweek’s #1 Entrepreneur Under 25

Monday, October 19, 2015
University of West Georgia, Townsend Center for the Performing Arts

Lecture 7 p.m.
Free admission, limited seating available.
Tickets available at the Townsend Center box office or by calling 678-839-4722 beginning October 7.
A recent $25,000 donation from Walmart is supporting a new program to reach out to high school and middle school educators hosted by the Center for Economic Education (CEE) – a cooperative venture of the Richards College of Business and the College of Education at the University of West Georgia (UWG).

The workshops held throughout Georgia allow teachers to learn more about a new virtual tool called “Econmentor.” The Econmentor website will assist teachers and offer them access to instructional materials, like AP economics course outlines, study tools, and learning games – like the Stock Market Game – to engage students.

“The Center for Economic Education at the University of West Georgia is so grateful to the Walmart Foundation for the grant they provided,” said Dr. Leland Gustafson, former director of the CEE. “This grant is providing the funds to share with Georgia public and private school teachers an online test bank and review of economics questions, which will provide a free and convenient way to review their understanding of economic concepts.”

The first workshop of the series was attended by five award-winning educators who teach general economics. The teachers were very excited about the opportunity to learn more about the Econmentor website and its applications.

“Econmentor is the brainchild of Dr. Bashu Dutt, professor of economics at UWG,” said Economics Department Chair Joey Smith. “The Walmart grant has provided Dr. Dutt the opportunity to work with some of the most talented K-12 teachers in the state, to develop workshops, and to further refine Econmentor into a tool that will enhance Georgia K-12 students’ ability to practice, learn, and master economic concepts important in state learning standards and in life.”

Through the donation, the workshop and program access will be offered at no cost to educators throughout the area and will target rural and underserved populations. Through these workshops, educators will learn new skills and gain a new understanding of economics that CEE hopes will result in an increase in test scores.

“Walmart is excited to continue supporting the university and offering the areas we serve an opportunity to benefit from this unique educational platform,” said Glen Wilkins, director of public affairs and government relations at Walmart. “Our company remains committed to advancing educational programs designed to reach underserved students and teachers who want to make a positive impact in their communities.”

CEE’s goal is to help instructors teach economics to students in public and independent schools in Georgia. The center is one of 12 in Georgia and is focused on helping schools prepare students for their economic roles as workers, consumers, and citizens. CEE uses a variety of workshops and maintains contact with public and private schools in the west Georgia area. The center also holds an Annual Federal Reserve day, where Federal Reserve bank officers visit the UWG campus for a day and speak to classes and civic clubs.

This donation is just another example of how UWG colleges are working together to further students’ education, as well as the excellent partnership that the university has with local economic leaders like Walmart.

Walmart serves as the partner of the annual Women’s Empowerment Panel, now in its second year; Jason May, the assistant general manager at Walmart.com eCommerce Fulfillment, serves on the Richards College Advisory Board; and Jermaine Jackson, talent development manager - supply chain, e-Commerce Logistics - West Business Unit, has been an integral part of the ENACTUS program’s success.

The contribution to the UWG Foundation was made possible through the Walmart Foundation’s Georgia's State Giving Program. Through this program, the Walmart Foundation supports organizations that create opportunities so people can live better. The Walmart Foundation SGP strives to award grants that have a long-lasting, positive impact on communities across the U.S. In the last fiscal year, Walmart and the Walmart Foundation gave more than $54 million in cash and in-kind contributions throughout the state of Georgia.

Econmentor:
econmentor.com
CEE:
westga.edu/UWGEconEd
Student Competes Nationally to Fund Business Venture

by Amy K. Lavender

Sometimes, it can take years to get a small business off the ground, but University of West Georgia student and local entrepreneur William Cross has put himself on the fast track to success. He’s already got his product on select shelves and is seeking funding to expand his business while he’s getting his degree in business management. And as if that wasn’t enough, his product also has the potential to change thousands of lives across the United States.

William is a diabetic, and his product is specifically targeted to help other diabetics with a common condition called Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy, more commonly known simply as neuropathy or DPN. In diabetics, neuropathy – or nerve pain – is caused by the degeneration of nerves, which is in turn caused by the presence of excess sugar in the blood stream.

“Nerve damage is the main cause of all complications for diabetics,” William said. “There are 29 million people in the U.S. with diabetes, and 20 million of them suffer from DPN. Because of DPN, there are 146,000 limb amputations each year in the U.S. alone, and 50,000 deaths as a result of kidney failure.”

William is no stranger to these facts. In fact, he’s intimately familiar with them, having suffered from DPN himself for a number of years.

“I had neuropathy, and it was bad enough that I had a handicap tag because it hurt just to walk,” William recalled. “I tried some prescriptions, and they just had horrible side effects: weight gain, constant dizziness, brain fog. So I started researching and trying stuff on myself.”

William had found some ingredients that helped him that were listed under the Generally Recognized As Safe (GRAS) category by the FDA. So gradually, over the course of four years, William developed a dietary supplement that addressed his pain by addressing the actual cause of the nerve damage.

“This isn’t just a pain pill,” William said. “It treats the root cause of the problem, which is the transfer of too much sugar into the blood stream and not enough calcium and salt. My product allows for salt and calcium to transfer into the blood stream at the same rate as the sugar.”

Once William had the formula right, it was time to find funding – which is where the TYE University competition comes in. On April 18, William represented UWG and his company, VascoCorp, placed second in the state-wide competition that welcomes Georgia university students to propose their business plans and compete for start-up funds. Just before this competition, William had been in Nebraska, where his product, NeuropAWAY, placed fourth in the world in that student-based competition.

However, at the end of spring semester he competed on a global scale with some of the most promising entrepreneurs in the world representing his Carrollton-based business. “This is like the Super Bowl of business plan competitions,” William said. “It’s based on whether your business is a real business as well as its feasibility and the likelihood of your product to make it to market. I think we have a real chance to win since my product is already on the market.”

He admits he may have a leg up, but that doesn’t mean he couldn’t use the funds to improve his business.

“If I win, the grand prize is $75,000. I can use that to hold my own clinical trials so that doctors can write NeuropAWAY as a prescription, and I could buy a $35,000 capsule-filling machine that would allow me to make 500 bottles an hour. Right now, I can only fill about 10 to 15 bottles an hour.”

William isn’t the only one who has faith in his abilities and his product. UWG’s Rick Sigman, a business consultant with the Small Business Development Center, says he knows William is going places.

“William has worked very hard and has several follow-up products to bring to market. I have no doubt he will be a successful business owner,” he said.

William is currently working toward his Bachelor of Business Administration at UWG’s Richards College of Business. Afterwards, he plans to obtain his master’s before fully launching his business.

“I plan on staying at UWG and getting my MBA here because they have a really great program,” William said.

In the meantime, he is working away, filling capsules and getting ready to make his first big shipment to 16 independently owned pharmacies in the Atlanta area.

“I’ve got 16 pharmacies signed up for displays,” William said. “I’m literally waiting on the market. Plus, we’re getting picked up by Food Depot, so that will be 35 more cases. That capsule machine would come in real handy.”

To find out more about William’s product, go to www.neuropaway.com. To learn how you can help him with his business venture, call the Small Business Development Center at 678-839-5082.

Update:

William placed high in the rankings in the competition. These experiences and opportunities are the catalyst to continue his entrepreneurial path.
Don’t settle for business as usual.

GO WEST. UWG’s Richards College of Business offers top-ranked programs, expert faculty, professional internship and networking opportunities, and flexibility to help you find your path to success. Richards College of Business graduates go on to become CEOs, CFOs, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders. What will you do when you GO BUSINESS?