

Herd Connections 2019: Enhancing Knowledge, Transforming Business

Volume 1

Student Experiential Learning Projects

**Marshall University
Lewis College of Business
Brad D. Smith Schools of Business**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

An Introduction from Dean “Avi” Mukherjee	2	Bringing Sustainability and Energy Efficiency to Jim’s Steak and Spaghetti House.....	12
A Message from Robert B. Simpson	3	Accounting Analytics Class Investigates Revenue and Spending Data	13
Our Experiential Learning Projects Add Value.	4	Re-Calculating Retirement Benefits.....	13
Student Experiential Learning Projects.....	5	The Economic Impact of the Charleston Civic Center.....	14
Improving Goodwill’s Sustainability by Going Paperless	5	A New Business Line for Kanawha Scales and Systems.....	14
La Famiglia Market Analysis.....	5	Identifying Target Markets for Lesage Water	15
Rebranding the River & Rail.....	6	Marshall University Surplus Yard Sale	15
A Business Plan for the Community Research & Teaching Experiences Agency	6	Amazon Intrapreneurship Projects.....	16
Hiring Procedures for the Huntington Police Department	7	Greenbrier Valley Theater Financial Analysis	16
Filling Active Duty Positions at the Huntington Police Department	8	Creating Flowcharts for Cabell Huntington Hospital.....	17
MIS Alumni Tracking System.....	8	Employment Opportunities for Individuals Completing Recovery Programs.....	17
Improving the Rotary Club Website	8	Next-Phase Amazon Projects.....	18
Sales Forecast for Peerless Block and Brick Company.....	9	Helping Handyman David Rose.....	18
Wayne County Economic Development Strategic Plan.....	9		
West Virginia Bridge Design Build STEM Project	10		
Lincoln Primary Care Center Waste and Water Reduction	10		
Pilkington Packaging Overhaul.....	11		
Comprehensive Marketing Strategy for Proctorville Hardware and Feed Store.....	11		
Brand Awareness for Crossfit Barboursville ...	12		

Herd Connections 2019 is published by Dr. Nancy Lankton,
Associate Dean for Accreditation and Strategic Initiatives;
and Glen Midkiff, Director of Stakeholder Engagement.

AN INTRODUCTION FROM DR. AVI MUKHERJEE DEAN, LEWIS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS



I am tremendously proud of the rich tradition of providing practical, experience-based business education that our college has upheld since its founding in 1969. Our business programs prepare our students to become leaders with a design thinking skillset necessary to meet the emerging challenges in West Virginia and around the globe.

Located in the Huntington-Ashland Metropolitan Area with a population of 356,474, Marshall University offers unique opportunities for our students to engage with Tri-State Area (WV-OH-KY) companies and communities. For example, through experiential learning opportunities, over 350 students have completed consulting projects for local and national companies, entrepreneurial ventures and not-for-profit organizations. Our students' learning experiences have benefited the business community and provided the perfect opportunity for our students to begin putting their education into action.

Central to the success of our students and over 12,000+ Brad D. Smith Schools of Business alumni, has been 50 years of leadership and experience-based knowledge that our business faculty bring into the classroom. As thought leaders in their industry, the knowledge and research contributions of our faculty continue to drive change both at the university and across the globe.

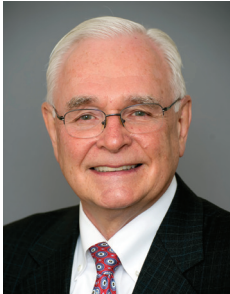
I would like to cordially invite all of you who are interested in expanding your business or enriching your careers to explore our Brad D. Smith Schools of Business further either online or through a visit to campus.

Sincerely,

Avinandan Mukherjee

Dean
Lewis College of Business
Brad D. Smith Schools of Business

A MESSAGE FROM ROBERT B. SIMPSON DIRECTOR, BB&T CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP



The mission of the Lewis College of Business is to “prepare students to become successful business professionals advancing economic development throughout West Virginia and beyond.” Students are best prepared to do this when robust learning experiences outside the classroom complement their formal classroom education. These experiences can affect economic development when they involve consulting projects for businesses and other organizations.

Students who complete BERS consulting projects apply their analytical and critical thinking skills to actual challenges faced by organizations and engage with the people running those organizations to communicate their recommends. This process helps students understand how organizations work and helps them develop interpersonal and communications skills. Students find these projects to be both challenging and invigorating – and feel better prepared to become entry-level business professionals.

The Lewis College of Business collaborates with the BB&T Center for Leadership to host the Business and Economics Research Symposium (BERS) each semester. The symposiums encourage student consulting and research projects, which progress through preliminary competitive judging to a final stage in which students with the most qualified projects display their projects to the business community. Through these highly engaging and interactive sessions, students are able to explain their projects and findings, answer questions, and receive feedback from a variety of business professionals in a formal setting. The winners are announced at the Awards Dinner ceremony. The first symposium was in held in Spring 2018 at the Clay Center in Charleston. The second event was held in Huntington in Fall 2018 at the Brad D. Smith Foundation Hall, and the third even was in Spring 2019 at the Charleston Civic Center as part of the Lewis College of Business 50th Gala Celebration.

Spring 2018 BERS Award Recipients



352

STUDENTS

37

FACULTY

44

ORGANIZATIONS



“

Experiential learning gives our students the ability to see that business school is not about getting A's and B's. It is about learning and applying skills that help real businesses solve real problems for real customers.

DR. BEN ENG, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF MARKETING

STUDENT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROJECTS



Improving Goodwill's Sustainability by Going Paperless

BERS Competition Outstanding Research Project Award

Green Management (MGT 446) Class Project

Students: Ashley Flora, Samantha Warner, Paije Madison, and Molly Hellyer

Faculty Advisor: Margie Phillips

The Goodwill Industries of KYOWVA Area, Inc. has 11 retail stores throughout West Virginia and Kentucky. Expanding since 1970, its presence is located in five counties in West Virginia and four counties in Kentucky. This project involved improving Goodwill's sustainability by going paperless. Students developed a green plan for Goodwill Industries of KYOWVA that will positively influence the company and the environment by decreasing deforestation and increasing conservation. Overall, the student recommendations would reduce Goodwill's carbon footprint on the environment. The plan includes going paperless in all departments of the organization by implementing paperless offices and digital receipts. Taking into account the size of the human resources office and the organization's current technology, the students' green plan was easily achievable. They estimated that adding new technology and online services would cost approximately \$4,329.

La Famiglia Express Market Analysis

Strategic Marketing (MKT 465) Class Project

BERS Competition

Students: Sarah Harmon, Hannah Conrad, Noah Wells, Brittney Hanshaw, Kayla Hurst,

Tanner Kisor, Hannah Villars, and Kasidi Legg

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Liz Alexander

La Famiglia, a well-known Italian food restaurant, is set to extend their current business into the Memorial Student Center by the Fall of 2019 with La Famiglia Express. To optimize the success of the La Famiglia brand, the students conducted research on the company's new target market. They created a competitive analysis, identified a social media strategy, and performed various surveys. The data from the surveys provided insight on the specific items the target market is interested in, the prices they are willing to pay, and how often they visit the Memorial Student Center. With this information, the company can create a menu with items and prices that their target market will be receptive to, and can plan promotions and staffing around the busier times of day. The restaurant may also be able to implement a meal swipe and flex points system, which is a different strategy from its original restaurant that could result in more customers.

Rebranding the River & Rail Bakery

Advanced Marketing Management (MKT 682) Class Project

BERS Competition Consulting Project Winner

Student(s): Brenda Gordon, Christopher Leonard, and Brianna Harrison

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Ben Eng

Kim Baker owned and operated River & Rail, a local cafe and bakery in Huntington, West Virginia. The shop was facing decreased foot traffic, a small marketing budget, and an unknown route for growth. The owner was trying to decide whether to relocate to a new development in downtown Huntington, redesign and rebrand its current location, or devote more resources to the catering side of the business. This project's objective was to find ways to generate more revenue using a \$1,000 maximum advertising budget. To investigate this issue, the student team conducted qualitative and quantitative research through semi-structured interviews with the owner and customers. The main research findings indicated that River & Rail should post more dining and catering pictures to its website, optimize website layout and hyperlinks, change its name, and add a single seating option.

A Business Plan for the Community Research & Teaching Experiences Agency

BERS Competition

Students: Charles Arthur and Anthony Alexander

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Erik Bushey

The Community Research & Teaching Experiences (CORTEX) Agency is a new organization at Marshall University that is determined and emboldened to embrace the public good. It strives to solve problems within the community through both quantitative and qualitative research. The agency has a philosophy of collaboration, commitment, and community. Charles and Anthony wanted to offer the agency professional and highly researched best practices to empower its organizational transformation. They prepared a logic model and a SWOT analysis, by which they developed a business plan consisting of the target audience, growth strategy, and competitive advantages. The consulting report and strategic plan developed by the students was designed to help the agency prepare for the necessary changes it must undergo to become a vigorous, transformative agency in the community.



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The support and insight that we at La Famiglia gained from working with your Marketing capstone class was more than instrumental in helping us shape and plan our business model. The ability to work directly with the student body helped us plan a product offering tailored to the unique preferences and demands of the average son or daughter of Marshall.

JORDAN HAGY, CO-OWNER, LA FAMIGLIA

STUDENT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROJECTS

Hiring Procedures for the Huntington Police Department

BERS Competition

Students: Langley Sonnenberg and Alex O'Donnell

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Richard Agesa

Amid increased costs and decreased revenues, the Huntington Police Department needs to maintain police presence in Huntington. The main objective of this project was to determine optimal hiring procedures for the department that minimizes costs and maximizes efficiency. More specifically, the goal for Langley and Alex was to determine whether it was best to hire more police officers or to increase overtime work for existing officers. Their research found that higher-ranked police officers often work more overtime hours than do lower-ranked officers. They also found that only certain types of officers use some overtime categories. In future work, the students are going to create a theoretical model to explain these overtime discrepancies.



“

Dr. Agesa and his students have done a meticulous and inspiring job of combing through the mountain of data that we provided. The students were inquisitive and eager to learn how the administration of the Huntington Police Department works, so they could recommend ways to improve our financial efficiency.

CAPTAIN DAN UNDERWOOD, HUNTINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Working with the Huntington Police Department and Dr. Agesa has helped me apply what I'm learning inside the classroom, to the outside world, in hopes of affecting real change.

LANGLEY SONNENBERG, ECONOMICS MAJOR



Filling Active Duty Positions at the Huntington Police Department

Undergraduate Research Summer Scholar Award Program

Student: Langley Sonnenberg

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Richard Agesa

Langley continues to work with the police department. It is going through budgetary changes, including increased funding approved by City Hall to hire more officers, which has led to different hiring decisions. The department now has the funds to hire more officers, but there are not enough qualified applicants applying for the positions. This ongoing project examines the optimality of hiring civilians to perform the department's desk-based tasks so that the trained officers currently filling these roles can move in to active duty. Langley is investigating whether the department could effectively increase its active officers by reassigning the fully trained officers. This study is important because the hiring problems experienced by the Huntington Police Department are symptomatic of a nation-wide hiring crisis within the police force. The testing required to become an officer is rigorous and many potential applicants are unqualified for the job. The dangers of police work are numerous as well and serve as a deterrent for qualified applicants who can find employment doing safer work with larger salaries and better hours. This analysis also extends beyond the police force to a wider spectrum of jobs that have similar deterrents to qualified applicants, such as fire departments. The most important benefit from this study will be a tailored report recommending optimal hiring and staffing policy decisions for the Huntington Police Department.

MIS Alumni Tracking System

BERS Competition

Students: Tanner Kisor and Philip Taylor

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Rick Weible

This project entailed improving the system interface for the MIS Society. Dr. Rick Weible, a representative of the Society, suggested that the system should be easy to use and, more importantly, be easily accessible by alumni for entering and updating contact information. Previous students designed the current system and it has not been widely used. The system's interface and internal design are confusing and alumni are unable to access their information. Tanner and Philip's project will promote economic development in West Virginia and provide networking opportunities for students. The project offers a simple way for the MIS Society to manage and inspect its data about graduates.

Improving the Rotary Club Website

BERS Competition

Students: Alex McDonald and Andrew Edwards

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Rick Weible

Established in 1915, the Rotary Club of Huntington is part of Rotary District 7550. The Rotary Club had an extremely outdated website with blank pages, random text, and duplicate information. Users had difficulty using the site. This project entailed updating the look and functionality of the website including adding multiple payment options for events and dues collections. Alex and Andrew believed that their project would help the Rotary Club collect dues payments from its members, advertise events, and help the organization keep in contact with members.

STUDENT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROJECTS

Sales Forecast for Peerless Block and Brick Company

Advanced Controllershship (ACC 617) Class Project

BERS Competition Consulting Project Award- Kaylee Stengel and Haley Phillips

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Nancy Lankton

Peerless Block and Brick Company, founded in 1905, has its headquarters in the Peerless Industrial Park located in Saint Albans, West Virginia. Peerless was deciding whether to expand its market for a hardscape product line of landscaping pavers called Rosetta. Rosetta Hardscapes is an engineered system with consistent block dimensions and remarkable durability. Four groups of students prepared two-year sales forecasts for potential markets in Tennessee, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. Each group prepared the forecast by incorporating information about relevant economic factors, competitors, and state specific demographic indicators. The company can use the students' research and forecasting results to assess future sales of the products, reduce potential risks, and make informed business decisions to better allocate company resources. Members of the company including Steve Doty, CEO, Dustin Lanning, CFO, and Craig Tuemler, Director of Sales and Marketing, visited the class to provide information about the business and to listen to the final presentations.

“

It is one thing to sit in a classroom and go through a textbook or lecture to learn how to create things like sales forecasts. To actually do the research, create the forecasts, and explain your conclusion to an actual company, who might utilize your work is, an entirely different level of learning. Getting to collaborate with Peerless Block and Brick was very beneficial and a great experience overall.

KAYLEE STENGEL, BBA ACCOUNTING 2018, MS ACCOUNTING 2019



Wayne County Economic Development Strategic Plan

BERS Competition Economic Impact Award

Students: Zachary Radcliffe, Andrew Christian Thomson, and Nan Wang

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Erik Bushey

This student project was with the Center for Business and Economic Research at Marshall University. Along with Tricia Ball, the Director of Marketing, students worked on a strategic plan for the Wayne County Economic Development Authority. They conducted research and found that the median age of Wayne County residents is 43 years and that number is continuing to increase. Younger people in the state, especially youth, are leaving the county at the first opportunity because of the lack of opportunities. Wayne County is in dire need of an economic boost, and the students believed that the county's ability to access the Internet would be the quickest and most effective way to do this. It would encourage big businesses to locate in Wayne. Bigger businesses that come to Wayne could have a huge impact on jobs and income. In addition, competitor prices would be significantly lower with more options. The students also concluded that education would take the longest time to have an economic impact but would have the greatest long-term success at keeping graduates in the state.

West Virginia Bridge Design Build STEM Project

BERS Competition

Students: Jessilynn Hill, Brianna Collins, Michael Farley, and Katley Thaxton

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Erik Bushey

The students in this project worked with the Division of Highways (DOH) and Appalachian Transportation Institute (ATI) to find ways to attract students to STEM-related jobs. ATI was founded in 1998 and is a division of the Marshall University Research Corporation. ATI is dedicated to creating innovative and sustainable solutions to transportation-related challenges, especially those facing rural areas, to promote the economic competitiveness of West Virginia and the surrounding region. Its mission is dedicated to applied transportation-related research, technology solutions, and workforce development. The students learned that ATI and the DOH need College graduates with civil engineering backgrounds to fill positions for bridge and road inspectors. Their research findings indicate that by not filling these STEM positions, there will be more bridge inspection failures resulting in higher costs for the state. The students projected participation in the agency's Build a Bridge Contest. They also found that social media might be key to interacting with the younger generation and creating awareness about STEM-related jobs and careers.



Lincoln Primary Care Center Waste and Water Reduction

BERS Competition

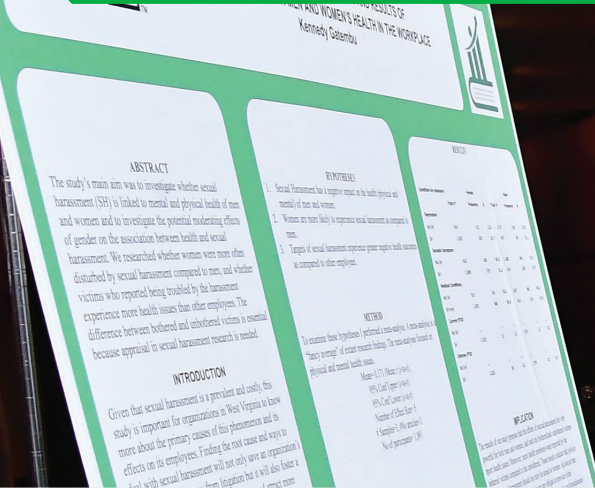
Students: Damontay Alexander, Charles Coleman, and Blake Cooper

Faculty Advisor: Margie Philips

Lincoln Primary Care Center is a rural healthcare facility in Hamlin, West Virginia that provides basic healthcare and urgent care to the people of Lincoln County. The facility accumulates a lot of waste because it is open seven days a week. This project involved helping Lincoln Primary Care Center reduce waste and water consumption. The students suggested creating and enforcing policies and equipment to reduce unnecessary waste in the facility. They also suggested that the Center install dual-flush toilets and automated faucets. They determined that the water savings in the long term would pay for installing the new equipment. In addition, they recommended implementing recycling practices with bins and dumpsters to help reduce the facility's physical waste. Lincoln Primary Care Center will become eco-friendlier and save money at the same time by following these simple but efficient recommendations.



STUDENT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROJECTS



Pilkington Packaging Overhaul

BERS Competition

Green Management (MGT 446) Class Project

Students: Preston Humphreys, Mariah Jackson, Logan Fugate, and Ryan Lilly

Faculty Advisor: Margie Phillips

This project involved studying the environmental efficiency of Pilkington Auto Glass. The students found that while the company, as a whole, was very environmentally efficient, it was still using wood crates instead of more environmentally friendly metal products. With a short transition period from wood crates to metal racking, the students estimated that Pilkington Auto Glass could decrease its yearly cost for packaging. The students found that the cost of the metal racking has a payback period of roughly 1.2 years over the wooden system that the company currently utilizes. Even with a 10% loss annually on their adjusted inventory of new metal racks, the company could still save approximately \$3,835,000 annually. This change would not only affect the company's bottom line, but it would also decrease the company's carbon footprint by reducing the amount of material going to landfills.



Comprehensive Marketing Strategy for Proctorville Hardware and Feed Store

BERS Competition

Advanced Marketing Management (MKT 682) Class Project

Students: Osama Alzahrani, Matilda Derby, and Keyamo Onoge

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Ben Eng

Carrie Cheek and her husband Rob Callaway owned the Proctorville Hardware and Feed store. The couple initially bought the hardware store inventory from Moore's hardware. They paid about \$40,000 in cash to buy the inventory from the old hardware store. With no previous experience in the hardware retail business they began to run the hardware store in October 2016. They started with selling hardware only and later expanded to sell Purina horse feed and other local feeds for cattle and dogs. The couple was looking for various ways to promote their business and increase the customer base. The students conducted a SWOT analysis and analyzed the product mix to find various recommendations for increasing sales and keeping the company viable.



Brand Awareness for Crossfit Barboursville

BERS Competition

Strategic Marketing (MKT 465) Class Project

Students: Tyler Brandstetter, Troy Scott, Raul Moreno, Derek Whiteside, Jake Lemmerman, Christopher Moody, and Maggie Houchin

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Liz Alexander

Crossfit is a branded fitness regimen created by Greg Glassman. It is both a physical exercise philosophy and a competitive fitness sport, incorporating high-intensity interval training and other daily exercises. The main objective of this project was to increase brand awareness and generate leads for CrossFit Barboursville through digital advertising campaigns that promote healthy lifestyles, company offerings, and free three-day trials. The students believed that increasing consumer spending on products and services like Crossfit helps the local economy.

Through advertising, CrossFit Barboursville could increase its current membership from 75 to 100 customers. The gym would need to employ more individuals to accommodate the increase in members, thereby boosting the local employment rate, and increasing business traffic to the Barboursville area. Additionally, the students concluded that more business would increase taxes paid to the local economy that would help improve schools and increase funding for police and fire departments.

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Experiential learning opportunities formed an intensely beneficial learning environment for me at Marshall University and in the College of Business. I experienced real-life scenarios regarding entrepreneurial endeavors and issues, and found ways to solve problems and review results.

TYLER BRANDSTETTER, BBA ENTREPRENEURSHIP 2019, RCBI ENTREPRENEUR SERVICES

Bringing Sustainability and Energy Efficiency to Jim's Steak and Spaghetti House

BERS Competition

Green Management (MGT 446) Class Project

Students: Alex Salava, Morgan Griffith, Nathan Burgess, and Connor Loudin

Faculty Advisor: Margie Phillips

Jim's Steak and Spaghetti House in Huntington was founded in 1938. Its last major remodel and expansion was in 1962. Founded by Jim Tweel, his daughter, Jimmie Tweel Carder, is the current manager. Jim's Spaghetti is one of Huntington's staple restaurants and is best known for spaghetti, fish sandwich, and homemade pie. This project involved promoting financial savings and environmental sustainability at Jim's Steak and Spaghetti House. The students prepared a detailed list of alternative building materials, furnishings, goods and supplies, and best practices. They categorized the list into materials with a return on investment of less than two years, materials with minimal or no financial cost but considerable environmental impact, and alternate products and materials for replacing broken or damaged equipment. Jim's Steak and Spaghetti House can use this research to assist in finding immediate savings through small investments in fixtures and furnishings, reducing on site environmental risks, and making informed purchasing decisions.

STUDENT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROJECTS



Accounting Analytics Class Investigates Revenue and Spending Data

Accounting Analytics (ACC 480) Class Project
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Susan Lanham

Students in the Accounting Analytics course taught by Dr. Susan Lanham analyzed West Virginia State revenue and spending data obtained online via West Virginia's 2018 transparency initiative. Given the abundance and variety of publicly available data, the students were allowed to choose their dataset and identify questions that the data could help answer. Each student group of five submitted a formal written report and presented the results of their analyses to two representatives from the West Virginia State Auditor's office, Mr. Marty Wright, General Counsel over the Fraud Unit, and Mr. Tim Butler, Senior Fraud Examiner. The presentations and written report included sophisticated analyses and data visualization techniques learned throughout the semester. The students also made recommendations for further analyses and tracking of data, and for improvements to the State's website.

“

It is difficult for some students to see themselves in certain professional roles. Engaging with outside professionals and listening to their experiences really makes the students appreciate the fact that they too can do something great. The lessons students learn from these types of experiences will stick with them for the duration of their professional careers.

DR. SUSAN LANHAM, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ACCOUNTING

Re-Calculating Retirement Benefits

Governmental and Not-for-Profit Accounting (ACC 512) Class Project
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Marie Archambault

Students in this class helped the City of Huntington with a project to re-compute all police and fire employee/retiree defined benefit pension payments. Each student in the class determined the correct pension payment for a portion of the fire retirees. Based on a court action, previously computed pension amounts were not correct. All students also completed the required service-learning project in this course by spending a minimum of 15 hours providing accounting services to a local government or non-profit entity. Students were assigned to the American Foundation for the Blind, Appalachian Studies Association, City of Huntington, Developmental Therapy Center, MU Foundation, Mountain State Centers for Independent Living, and United Way of the River Cities. While most students assisted with routine bookkeeping tasks, one student developed a financial document retention policy, another student assisted with the year-end closing process and preparation for the audit, and yet another completed a financial statement review.



The Economic Impact of the Charleston Civic Center

Economics Independent Study

Students: Jaclyn Monroe and Noah Dye

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Richard Agesa

This project focuses on determining how activities and projects hosted by the Charleston Civic Center impact the economic well-being of the Charleston area and larger Kanawha County region. This ongoing project will exemplify the importance of the center to the economic performance of the region. The main research objective is to determine how much additional revenue each dollar spent on the center will generate. The students explain that their ongoing project focuses on the money multiplier effect, and how money spent at the Charleston Civic Center has an amplifying effect on the surrounding economy.

A New Business Line for Kanawha Scales and Systems

Independent Study Project

Students: Ellen Castro, Amanda Nelson, Rickie Carter, and Corey Tornes

Faculty Advisors: Olen York and Dr. Uyi Lawani

This project involved a market analysis for Kanawha Scales & Systems, a local company based in Poca, West Virginia. The main challenge was to determine whether the company should develop a new business line in the retail (point-of-sale) scales area. The company President James A. Bradbury, COO Jim Freeman, and the other sales and executives at Kanawha, wanted the students to research local, regional, and national markets, and utilize data in making informed recommendations for the company's business strategy. The students performed a SWOT analysis and developed a questionnaire to gain information about retail scale usage from competitor companies. As part of the final project, the students recommended a very conservative approach in an hour-long presentation to the Kanawha sales team and executives.



STUDENT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROJECTS

Identifying Target Markets for Lesage Water

Advanced Marketing Management (MGT 682) Class Project
Instructor: Dr. Ben Eng

In the 1980's and 1990's Green Acres Regional Center was a vibrant well-known non-profit organization located in Lesage, West Virginia that provided therapy and safe, scenic living quarters to community members with special needs. In the late 1990's Green Acres faced reduced funding and revenues. However, due to a miraculous discovery of a well containing the highest quality drinking water in the world, executives changed the company's focus to producing bottled spring water. Lesage supplies all West Virginia state offices and the local Toyota factory with water. In the Spring of 2018, the company considered entering the retail market with Lesage Water. The student project consisted of identifying potential target markets in the retail market, determining the viability of those markets, and developing a marketing plan to attract the markets if viable. Through a series of interviews, each student developed a marketing plan for Lesage Water. The students recommended targeting niche markets including consumers interested in craft products, local products, and/or socially responsible products. Since the project, the company has begun testing small-scale sales of the water at the Wild Ramp – a local cooperative market in the West End of Huntington.

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The student's that participated in the experiential learning project were actively engaged and brought a level of energy and enthusiasm that was refreshing to our team. Their excitement was so contagious we feel like it is us who can't let them down on the success of this project.

TRAVIS BAILEY, DIRECTOR PHYSICAL PLANT, MARSHALL UNIVERSITY



Marshall University Surplus Yard Sale

Advanced Marketing Management (MKT 682) Class Project
Instructor: Dr. Ben Eng

Employees at the Marshall University Physical Plant wanted to revise its operational and promotional strategy for the University's Surplus Yard Sale. The students in MKT 682 created and presented an innovative strategy to move the current surplus system online. The new system would be more operationally, financially, and environmentally efficient for the University's departments to reallocate and/or donate their old office and classroom furniture. The students also developed a promotional and rebranding strategy to help departments in the University learn more about the system. The Physical Plant accepted the plan and it is implementing the system with the help of another University class.



Amazon Intrapreneurship Projects

The Start-Up Experience (ENT 350) Class Projects

Instructor: Olen York

Amazon.com, Inc., is a multinational company that specializes e-commerce, cloud computing, digital streaming and artificial intelligence. In Fall 2017, eight students choose from five projects proposed by Amazon-HTS team leaders and managers. The five projects were entrepreneurial-centered challenges that aligned Amazon-HTS interests with course objectives in creativity, innovation, and iteration. The projects included determining how to market Amazon-HTS externally, utilize internal protocols for advancing new business unit initiatives, launch a new business unit, and improve communication and employee efficiency across five specific metrics. Leaders at Amazon-HTS familiarized students with the company's principles and corporate innovation philosophy at the beginning of the project. Each of the projects required the students to collaborate with one another and with key Amazon-HTS personnel to identify information, data for evaluation purposes, and to make critical project decisions. In Fall 2018, another group of students worked with Amazon-HTS in a similar fashion as in Fall 2017, but with a different set of projects.



Greenbrier Valley Theater Financial Analysis

Kathy Eddy New Horizon Fund Scholars

Students: Amanda Spry, Jessica White, Kara Songer, Brandi Hinkle, and Brandon Myers

Faculty Advisors: Amanda Thompson-Abbott and Robert Simpson

The Greenbrier Valley Theater (GVT), is located in Lewisburg, WV. Its mission is to create live, professional theater in West Virginia to enlighten and enrich life in the region. As with nearly all community-based nonprofits, the theater was concerned with financial viability. Kathy Eddy New Horizons Fund scholars engaged in a project to determine how much the theater should charge for seats and how many seats it would have to sell for the production called "Nunsense" to break even. The students also determined what changes in seat ticket pricing would be required if grant revenues were lower than expected. Board members Gayle Mason, who also serves as treasurer, and Twana Smight, hosted the group.



STUDENT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROJECTS

Creating Flowcharts for Cabell Huntington Hospital

Accounting Information Systems (ACC 341) Class Project
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Charles Stivason

This project is an ongoing collaboration with Cabell Huntington Hospital and the Division of Accountancy and Legal Environment to analyze the hospital's internal control system. During Spring 2019, the students in Accounting Information Systems received the narrative procedure documents for several of the hospital's business processes. As part of the course unit on business processes, the students used these narratives to create flowcharts. Flowcharts can help organizations identify process strengths and weaknesses and can become a useful tool for future system reviews and audits. This project extended student learning from the usual textbook examples to real life examples that often have added complexities. It provided them the opportunity to gain practical experience in a skill that is important for accountants.



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We challenge the students to find a project they are very passionate about that will benefit either our external or internal customers. While this can be challenging for them at the beginning, it is beneficial in the long run because they understand what they will be getting into post-graduation. Whether or not they decide to pursue a career at Amazon, this experience gives them the opportunity to exercise what they have learned in the classroom while working in an environment that will give them an intrapreneurial experience.

JUSTIN LAZARO, CS GROUP MANAGER, AMAZON.COM

Employment Opportunities for Individuals Completing Recovery Programs

Introduction to Entrepreneurship (MGT 360) Class Project
Faculty Advisor: Olen York

Management students interacted with various individuals from Recovery Point and Lifehouse, two substance abuse recovery centers in Huntington, as well as Amy Saunders at the Marshall University Center of Excellence for Recovery. The students identified opportunities, developed solutions, and pitched these solutions to Saunders and recovery center personnel to assist in employing individuals who have completed substance abuse programs. Individuals completing recovery programs often have difficulty obtaining employment for a variety of reasons (e.g., stigma of past abuse, statistics on recidivism, usually connected criminal record, the lack of housing, transportation, etc). The students used various techniques from design thinking and the basis of business model development (via a canvas) to develop a problem-solution fit.



Next-Phase Amazon Projects

Strategic Entrepreneurship (ENT 467) Class Projects
Instructor: Olen York

A next-phase opportunity in cooperation with Amazon-HTS personnel allowed students from Fall 2017 to further explore and apply methods, techniques, and philosophies learned from their previous experiences. During Spring 2018, the students developed a public interface that invites Amazon Prime members to submit ideas, suggestions, and other thoughts for consideration and possible integration into the Amazon business model. Drawing inspiration from public interfaces such as Reddit, Kickstarter, and Lego's Idea Lab, the students constructed an interactive minimum viable product prototype. The students performed field tests of the application and participated in pitch sessions that mimic the internal pitch mechanism utilized by Amazon.

Helping Handyman David Rose

New Venture Dynamics (MGT 461) Class Project
Faculty Advisor: Olen York

Student groups acted as business consultants for handyman David Rose, who had recently encountered difficulty in launching a business. Over the course of several weeks, students discussed Mr. Rose's goals, desires, and means. The students then crafted a plan for navigating new ventures including obtaining appropriate licensures for operating as a handyman, choosing a business entity and filing appropriate business entity formation documents, developing a marketing strategy, developing pricing and promotion as a means for differentiation, and creating ideas for revenue generation beyond lawn and landscaping services. Students presented their recommendations in to Mr. Rose, who evaluated the various recommendations for consideration.



**A mind that is stretched by a new experience
can never go back to its old dimensions.**

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.



Marshall University
Lewis College of Business
Brad D. Smith Schools of Business

One John Marshall Drive
Huntington, WV 25755
lcob@marshall.edu | marshall.edu

