

# DIVISION DISCLOSURES

Volume 2, Issue 1, Fall Semester 2018

## *A Message from* Dr. Nancy Lankton

Chair of the Division of Accountancy and Legal Environment



### **Experiential Learning is an Asset to Students**

The Division of Accountancy and Legal Environment is committed to engaging students with the profession and community by offering a variety of experiential learning opportunities. This issue of Division Disclosures contains several articles describing the exciting work our students are doing for a wide range of companies and organizations. Students in accounting analytics investigated State revenue and spending data, while students in governmental accounting recalculated pension payments for the Police Department. This type of real-life learning would not be possible without the tremendous effort of the faculty, professionals and community members!



## *Graduates*

### **BBA in Accounting**

Barlow, Kristen  
Bragg, Tate  
Brumfield, Jennifer  
Compton, Madison  
Freeman, Jennifer  
Hill, Brandi  
Lawrence, Sarah  
Michalski, Joshua  
Pack Ellis, Christen  
Perry, Savannah  
Roberts, Johnathon  
Rohrbach, Rachel  
Rucker, Cole  
Walker, Jacob

### **MS in Accountancy**

Huang, Qing  
Song, Yuanzhou  
Templeton, Kendrick  
Ye, Beijing  
Zhang, Yaqing

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## *Student Awards*

### **IMA Sponsored CMA Scholarships**

Brandi Hill, Qing Huang, Savannah Perry, and Kendrick Templeton

### **CPA Exam Prep Scholarships**

Adam Campbell and  
Chris-ten Pack

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## Accounting Analytics Class Investigates Revenue and Spending Data



Students in the Accounting Analytics course taught by Dr. Susan Lanham presented investigative findings to the WV State Auditor's Office based on a project analyzing West Virginia State revenue and spending data. The students obtained the data online via West Virginia's 2018 transparency initiative. Given the abundance and variety of publicly available data, they were given considerable freedom in the selection of their dataset and in the identification of 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. Recommendations were also made to WWSAO regarding needs for further analyses and/or what out-comes needed to be tracked and how to track them.

## Governmental and NFP Students Complete Community Projects

**Dr. Marie Archambault's ACC 512 (Govt NFP Accounting) class completed two community-based projects.** The entire 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 was assigned some fire retirees to determine the correct pension payment. Based on a court action, previously computed pension amounts were not correct.

All students also completed the required service learning project in this course. Each student spent 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.

### *Student Teams Prepare Forecast for Block and Brick Company*

MS in Accounting students from ACC 617: Advanced Controllorship, participated in an experiential learning project this Fall with Peerless Block & Brick Company. Headquartered in St. Albans, West Virginia, Peerless Block & Brick is a leading manufacturer and distributor of top-quality masonry products in West Virginia and beyond. The students prepared a rolling sales forecast for the company's Rosetta product, a new, more natural-looking hardscape product made of cast concrete. The class formed four teams, and each team explored a new market area coming up with assumptions and formulas to convert West Virginia sales into sales estimates for the new markets.

The class met with the CFO, CEO, and the Director of Sales and Marketing in the beginning of the project to ask initial questions about the product and the company, and then again at the end of the project to present their assumptions and findings about the forecasts. All four teams participated in the College's BERS (Business Economics Research Symposium) event, and one team won first place in the contest!



# Beta Alpha Psi Events

## Thursday Meetings

- Fall Interest Meeting (8/30): Panel: Anna Neil-Huntington Federal Bank, Barry Burgess-Somerville & Co., Evan Shamblin-Suttle & Stalnaker, Michael Misiti-Fyffe Jones, Jacob Alton-Dixon Hughes Goodman
- Brown Edwards (9/6): Faye McQuinn, Tyler Cornell, and Craig Daniels: Networking
- Meet the Professionals (9/12): Arnett Carbis Toothman, Brown Edwards, City National Bank, Dixon Hughes Goodman, Ernst & Young, FDIC, Fyffe Jones, Gray, Griffith, & Mays, Hayflich, Northwestern Mutual, Service Wire, Somerville & Co., Suttle & Stalnaker, Woomer, Nistendirk, & Associates, WV Society of CPAs, and the WV State Auditor's Office
- Arnett Carbis Toothman (9/20): Stephanie Davis, Casey Klages, Alex Campbell, and Dakota Kelley: Tax versus Audit
- Visit the Firms (9/28): Fyffe Jones, Hess Stewart Campbell, Hayflich, and Somerville & Co., Northwest-ern Mutual
- Dixon Hughes Goodman (10/4): James Sutherland: Technology in the Workplace
- Somerville & Co. (10/11): Barry Burgess: Motivation
- Suttle & Stalnaker (10/18): Thomas Norton: The Transition from Student Life to Professional Life
- Ernst & Young (10/25): Nathan Copley and Leah Woodworth: Big 4 Accounting Firms
- Gray, Griffith, & Mays (11/1): Ashley Donohew: Working as a Young Professional
- Hess, Stewart, and Campbell (11/8): Tomi Weber, Ren Perry, and Jason Kelley: Comparing and Contrasting Audit and Small/ Emerging Business/Tax
- Fyffe Jones (11/16): Tyler Gatrell : Business Valuation
- Fall Banquet (11/29): Dean Avinandan, Honorary Speaker

## BAP Participants

- **2018-2019 Officers:**  
Adam Campbell, Kaitlin Frances, Stephen Gaal, Tyler Moles, Casey Snodgrass, Phillip Taylor, and Kasun Wijayagurusinghe
- **Fall Inductees:**  
Narongsak Bhuthathorn, Boram Kim, Baylee Spears, and Amanda Spry
- **Fall Pledges:**  
David Accord, Adam Bailes, Alex Bock, Zac Boggess, Caleb Boggs, Angelica DiMarzio, Logan Harless, Lin Luo, Alex Monday, Brandon Myers, Phillip Sears, Joshua Shapiro, Aija Shi, Laura Shinn, Luke Skeens, Minjie Wang, Grace Webb, Nathan Webb, and Jessica White



Student interest night

## Featured Alumni



### Alex S. Gawthrop, MBA, CPA

Alex Gawthrop is a partner at Somerville & Company, PLLC. He became a licensed CPA in April 2013. Alex obtained his BBA in Accounting from Marshall in 2010, and his MBA from Morehead State in 2014. Alex serves as the President of the Accounting Education Foundation, which focuses on improving accounting education in the state of WV. He has also served as a board member of Big

Brothers Big Sisters of the Tri-State, and as the chairman of their annual Christmas tree sale. Alex is also currently on the board of the local Huntington Chapter of the WVSCPA's.

We asked Alex some questions about his job and advice he would give to our students. Here are his responses:

#### Q: What do you like best about your job?

A: My favorite part is being able to help clients solve the problems they face. I also enjoy that since all our clients and companies are different, we get to do work on something different almost every day.

#### Q: What is your biggest surprise/advice for graduates?

A: The biggest surprise was finding out what being busy truly meant and trying to find the balance between work and life. My advice to graduates would be to be genuine in every endeavor. Also keep an open mind when approaching the different situations that you encounter. Be sure to get involved in your industry and your community.

Marshall has a great 3+2 program that makes meeting the 150-hour requirement fairly easy. My advice would be to stay with it, don't try to get a job and go to school at the same time if you can avoid it. I'd also warn against deciding to go back later and try to get the hours. Once you're out of school and work and life happens, it gets much more difficult to return to the classroom (but it's not impossible!). As for the CPA exam, I recommend starting to study for it as soon as you can, whether that's right after graduation or even before. The sooner you start and take the exam the easier time you'll have studying. The longer you stay out of school, the harder it is to remember how to study properly. Also, be sure to select study materials that work for you, if you learn best when in a classroom take a live study program, if you learn best studying on your own, then take a self-study. Choosing the right material will have a big impact on your success.

#### Q: How did Marshall help prepare you for your current career?

A: Marshall gave me the foundation I needed to succeed. It provided an excellent education in a great learning environment. It also provided networking and social opportunities through organizations such as Beta Alpha Psi and others. This helped build up the skills necessary to work with the diverse groups of people/personalities that you encounter in the business world.

## Congratulations on Passing the CPA Exam!

Anthony Cornell (MS 2016)

Shawna Bartram (BBA 2016, MS 2017)

## BAP Students Expand Their Horizons



This past summer, three BAP members, Kaitlin Frances, Casey Snodgrass, Savannah Perry, and Instructor Amanda Thompson-Abbott attended the BAP Annual Meeting in Washington DC. At the meeting, they participated in the Beta Alpha Psi International Day of Literacy where over 1,800 volunteers helped pro-mote the importance of literacy to elementary, middle, and high school students. They read to students, played games with them, and passed out books and backpacks full of school supplies.

While at the conference, Accounting senior Savannah Perry participated in "Project Run With It". This involved working with a team of BAP members from other universities to analyze a real-world problem for an organization and come up with a solution to fix the problem. They presented their solution in front of the organization's leaders, as well as several professionals and BAP members.





## Legal Environment Minor

The Division now offers a minor in Legal Environment. Understanding the legal environment in which businesses operate is a critical factor in any effective economic development strategy. Dr. Casey Baker who was instrumental in developing the minor explains “This is especially true for Marshall students because West Virginia frequently ranks low in surveys of state legal environment perceptions”. The minor consists of 12 credit hours of LE classes. Students taking the minor will be exposed to legal issues related to commercial paper, securities, real and personal property, hospitals, Medicaid and Medicare, and the laws involving the creation, maintenance, and expansion of small businesses.

## Continuing Legal Education

**Dr. Casey Baker**, assistant professor in Legal Environment worked with the Center for Continuing Education (CCE) to coordinate the Lewis College of Business’s first continuing education program. It was a full-day program held on June 8, 2018, providing Continuing Legal Environment credits for legal professionals in West Virginia, Kentucky, and Ohio. The program featured Drs. Casey Baker, Susan Lanham, Ray Keener, Margie Phillips, and Ralph McKinney, all from the Lewis College of Business. Topics included consumer collections, damages valuation, probate practice, needle exchange pro-grams, biases in decision-making, and ethics.

## Faculty Research Accomplishments

The faculty of the Lewis College of Business engage in innovative and interdisciplinary scholarship that fosters impact and makes LCOB the standard-bearer of excellence in business education. Here is a sample of recent research accomplishments of our Division’s faculty:

- A research paper titled “Marijuana’s Continuing Illegality and Investors’ Securities Fraud Problem: The Doctrines of Unclean Hands and In Pari Delicto” authored by **Dr. Casey Baker**, Assistant Professor of Business Law, got accepted for publication in the Journal of Business, Entrepreneurship & The Law (Pepperdine University). In August 2018.
- **Dr. Marie Archambault**, Associate Professor of Accounting, and **Dr. Jeff Archambault**, Associate Dean and Professor of Accounting, presented two papers in the Academy of Business Research Conference in October 2018 at San Antonio, Texas. They are: “Changes in Business Core and Accounting Course Requirements: AACSB Influences” (along with Dr. Jean Price, Associate Dean and Associate Professor of Accounting); and “An Analysis of the Sale of Contracts by the Athletics After the 1914 Season”.
- **Dr. Parporn Akathaporn**, Instructor in Accounting, and **Dr. Nancy Lankton**, Chair and Professor of Accounting, prepared a presentation titled “Earnings Quality and Board of Director Characteristics: Evidence from Thailand” for the 60th Annual Conference of the Western Social Science Association at San Antonio, Texas in April 2018.
- **Dr. Ray Keener**, Associate Professor of Legal Environment, presented two papers at the South-eastern Academy of Legal Studies in Business Annual Meeting held in Chattanooga, Tennessee in October, 2018. The papers are: “A Landlord’s Duty to Timely Return Security Deposits” and “An Analysis of the Pitfalls of Estate Practice and Some Warnings Regarding How to Avoid Them”.
- Instructor **Amanda Thompson-Abbott** presented a teaching case called “Best Seat in the House” at the North American Case Research Association (NACRA) 2018 Annual Conference in Orlando Florida during October 2018.



## Engagement with the Huntington Chapter of the WV Society of CPAs

### Student Night

The Huntington Chapter of the WV Society of Certified Public Accountants awarded four scholarships to our Accounting students: Nicholas Lawson (\$1,000), Tyler Moles (\$750), Savannah Perry (\$500), and Kasun Wijayagurusinghe (\$500). These were announced at the Annual Student Night on October 3, attended by over 70 students, professionals, and faculty. Chris DeWeese, Vice President of WVSCPA, and Alex Peach, President of the Huntington Chapter, were the honorary speakers. We are very thankful to the Chapter and its members for their generosity.

### Professional Mentoring

The Huntington Chapter and other professionals from Huntington and Charleston embarked on a student-professional mentoring program this fall. Students taking ACC 198: Accounting Professionalism were paired with a professional to learn more about accounting careers and discuss experiences and goals. Some professionals had students participate in mock interviews, rehearse elevator pitches, and take office tours. One professional even took the time to walk a student through the steps in an audit. We appreciate all the time and effort these professionals took with our students to bring them an experience that inspired many! We also thank Anna Neil, Comptroller at Huntington Federal Bank, for helping start this program.

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## Advisory Board **MEETING**

**This year's meeting was held on November 16, 2018 in Corbly Hall.** Topics of discussion included undergraduate and graduate curriculum changes, international student employment, and written communication skills. Dean Avinandan Mukherjee opened the meeting with a presentation about the new building and other transformative changes in the College. The meeting also featured a workshop by Dr. Susan Lanham on Data Analytics in which she taught the Board members how to create a Dashboard. Thanks to all our Advisory Board Members for their time and effort in making the Division the best it can be!

### Advisory Board Members

Barry Burgess, Rachel Burdette, Todd Campbell, Shayna Chapman, Valerie Ellis, Drema Foster, David Hill, Tatiana Hiliatsevich, Michael Misiti, Rick Montgomery, Anna Neil, Melissa Price, Akia Rice, Patrick Smith, JR Yost, Tina Bryson, Jay Porter, and James Ware.





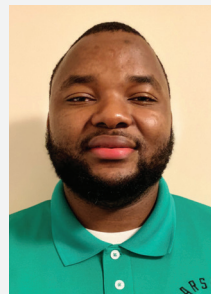
## Visit the Firms

On September 28, approximately 50 Accounting students visited Huntington Accounting firms during the annual Visit the Firms event. They were able to visit one firm of their choice in the morning and another one in the afternoon. The students gathered and left from Big Sandy arena. Each firm had a different approach to the visits. All gave office tours and talked about their firm's culture and expectations. One firm had "pit stops" in different offices where a partner or staff member presented a certain topic. Another firm played Accounting trivia games. One firm had made special cookies for the students with the firm's name on them!

There was plenty of time at each firm for students to ask questions and network with partners, staff, and other employees. Lunch was served between visits. Each firm got a chance to speak during this time to introduce themselves and highlight some of their unique aspects. This event takes place each Fall alternating between Huntington and Charleston. Firms participating this year included Fyffe Jones, Hess Stewart Campbell, Hayflich, and Somerville & Co., and Northwestern Mutual. Thanks to everyone for a fun and informative day!

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## Meet Our GRADUATE ASSISTANT



**Kenneth Emeni**, one of our graduate assistants this academic year is an international student from Delta State, Nigeria. He graduated with a 3.8 GPA in Accounting from Novena University in Nigeria in 2014. Kenneth traveled here in 2017 to begin his master's program in Human Resource Management. Since Kenneth has enrolled in Marshall University, he has maintained a 4.0 GPA within his master's program. Kenneth has worked in various departments at Marshall University such as the Disabilities Office, the Upward Bound Summer Institute, and at the Student Center here on campus. He is a member of the Pan African Student Association and the Society of the Human Resource Management. When Kenneth graduates, he plans to relocate to find a job within his area of study. We thank Kenneth for all he does!

# DIVISION OF ACCOUNTANCY AND LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

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