



NELSON RUSCHE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

# RUSCHE REVIEW

## » HIGHLIGHTS



**Recent Alumna Lands  
Dream Job at Amazon**



**Calbert Recognized as Beta  
Gamma Sigma Honoree**



**Business Students Travel  
to Hong Kong, China**



**Student Success Passport  
Program Scholarships**

## SFA'S SPORTS BUSINESS PROGRAM IS A LEADER IN TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION

SFA's sports business program housed within the AACSB-accredited Rusche College of Business is making a name for itself in higher education in Texas.

AACSB accreditation is the hallmark of excellence in business education, and less than 5 percent of the world's business schools have earned this recognition, according to the AACSB website. Dr. Jason Reese, sports business program director and advisor at SFA, explained how SFA's program is a leader in the field.

"Most programs like this around the country and Texas are in non-business or non-accredited business schools," Reese said. "In fact, SFA is the only public higher education institution in Texas that has a program like this at the undergraduate level in an AACSB-accredited college of business."

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved the program in 2015, and SFA's extensive alumni network of sports business professionals helped with creating the program and its content.



*SFA is the only public higher education institution in Texas that has a sports business program at the undergraduate level in an AACSB-accredited college of business. Dr. Jason Reese, sports business program director and advisor at SFA, has been a leader in establishing this program within the Rusche College of Business.*

"Courses were created with the input of current sport industry executives," Reese said. "We wanted to create a program that provides students with tangible skills that can help them in entry- and management-level sport industry careers."

SFA students who graduate from this

program obtain a Bachelor of Business Administration in sports business. The program utilizes an experiential-learning approach, meaning classes provide students with opportunities to work with real businesses in the industry to solve real-world problems.

Course content includes case studies to help students connect content to application. Students learn from scenarios and apply their understanding of the subject to help solve it.

The core courses taught in the program include: sports marketing, sports analytics, international sports business and sports economics. Students also are required to complete an internship, as well as select a track of interest. Students can choose from five tracks, including sales and management, athletic administration, mass communication, hospitality administration and outdoor recreation management.

For more information about SFA's sports business program, contact Reese at [reesejd1@sfasu.edu](mailto:reesejd1@sfasu.edu).

# SOCIETY FOR ADVANCEMENT OF MANAGEMENT STUDENTS RECEIVES AWARDS AT ANNUAL CASE COMPETITION

SFA graduate students in the Society for Advancement of Management placed first in the graduate division during the annual Council for Advancement and Support of Education competition held in Orlando, Florida. SFA's undergraduate team finished third in its division.

The first-place graduate team comprised Jennifer Nicely, Robyn Davis and Lauren Rose, who are all accounting majors enrolled in SFA's Master of Professional Accountancy program in the College of Business. Nicely also received Outstanding Regional SAM Student, as well as National Outstanding SAM Student.

"Our team comprised all accounting majors, which I feel the judges don't see often in competition," Nicely said. "Because of this, we had a strong analysis, as well as financial backing, which really supported our answer to the case. The judges were very impressed by this fact."

The third-place undergraduate team comprised four seniors: Corey Johnson, marketing major; Derek Orlando, management major; Juliana Romero, human resources management major; and Kimberli Scott, marketing major. Romero and Johnathan Kelly, senior management major, also received the Outstanding Regional SAM Student award.

"The SAM competition gave me an

extra experience at SFA, and now I feel a lot better about being able to participate in something and make a difference for an SFA organization," Scott said.

During the conference, schools from across the country competed for their competitive papers, abstracts or cases to be regionally and nationally recognized. The CASE competition requires chapters to send teams to compete and present a selected case and the team's recommended solution before judges.

"For SFA to have two teams able to attend and win an award in each category is outstanding. I'm very proud of our students," said Dr. Gina Harden, faculty advisor.

SFA also placed first in the large division for its SAM organization activity throughout the year. This award recognizes activities such as bimonthly meetings for members, field trips to local businesses, guest speakers, fundraising, and social and volunteer events.

SAM seeks to provide an opportunity for members to increase their management skills and expertise through participation programs and services designed to improve the professional quality of their knowledge, performance and leadership ability.



*Master of Professional Accountancy students from left, Jennifer Nicely, Lauren Rose and Robyn Davis, placed first in the Society for Advancement of Management Graduate CASE Competition in Orlando, Florida.*



*SFA undergraduates from left, Derek Orlando, management major; Juliana Romero, human resources management major; Kimberli Scott, marketing major; and Corey Johnson, marketing major; placed third at the Society for Advancement of Management's undergraduate CASE Competition.*

## MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Greetings from the Rusche College of Business! I hope everyone has been having a great summer and finding some time to enjoy all the season has to offer. As you will notice in this issue of Rusche Review, we have been very busy in the Rusche College of Business. Our students and faculty members continue to accomplish much, and we are proud of their dedication to excellence.

It's also an exciting time in the college during the summer as we participate in new student orientation. I thoroughly enjoy visiting with new Lumberjacks and their families. It's our first chance to engage our students in our mission, and we are making the most of this opportunity. Watching our

students enter the college as recent high school graduates and leave as young professionals is a special experience.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of the Rusche Review. Keep an eye out for college news and events throughout the year, as there is always something significant happening. This is especially true as, with the support of many generous alumni and friends, I hope in the near future we will be able to tell you more about upcoming renovations to the third and fourth floors of our building.

As always, thank you for your commitment to the Rusche College of Business. Your dedication to the success of our students is an essential component of so many of their accomplishments.

Best Regards, and Axe 'em, Jacks!

**Tim Bisping, Dean**



# SFA RUSCHE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ALUMNA LANDS DREAM JOB AT AMAZON

When opportunity came knocking on the door of Ana Romero, SFA Rusche College of Business alumna, she answered with a determined curiosity.

"My friend messaged me one day and said there was a position opening at Amazon and I should apply," Romero said. "I thought, 'I'll go for it. There's no harm in trying.' I had heard Amazon's interview process was brutal, so I didn't know what my odds were."

During the first round of interviews, Romero took preliminary exams to test her finance and sales skills. In round two, she underwent a phone interview then was flown to Amazon headquarters in Seattle for an in-person interview, which involved six back-to-back interviews with multiple people. That same evening, Amazon extended her an offer.

"I always wanted to do something big for the Rusche College of Business and one day become a distinguished SFA alumna," Romero said. "It makes me really proud and excited to know that among all Amazon's candidates they picked me, an SFA alum, and I get to represent everything the college has invested in me."

Romero said this is her dream job and that she has hopes to work at Amazon until retirement.

"Amazon has so many opportunities, and it is growing so much. It's going to be a constant challenge for me with new markets to explore and new things to learn," Romero said.

In early April, Romero relocated to Seattle to begin her new position as brand specialist in the lawn and garden category for Amazon.

"I help position my brand on the site, run deals and ensure their marketing is focused on the correct areas, while also working to improve sales and in-stock rates," Romero said. "I am the face of Amazon to my brand, and it is my goal to

obtain 100 percent customer satisfaction within the lawn and garden category."

Romero has been a go-getter from the beginning. She was an honors student at SFA and was active in the School of Honors. She participated in a study abroad trip to Italy, Germany and Switzerland, where she visited many well-known companies. Romero also was one of the first students to study abroad at Group Sup De Co Business School in La Rochelle, France.

During an internship with an apartment complex in Nacogdoches, Romero helped the complex expand and

market to tenants. She also interned with Kimberly Clark in Mexico City in the international commerce department. Additionally, she worked at SFA's Student Recreation Center's front desk and taught workout classes. After her 2016 graduation from SFA with a bachelor's degree in international business, Romero worked for Aon Hewitt, a human resource solutions company.

"I owe everything that I am professionally to the Rusche College of Business and so many people within it, including Dr. Grubbs, Dr. Lindsey, Ms. Henderson, Dr.

Culpepper, Ms. Wittliff and especially Dr. Thornley," Romero said. "The professors in every department invested so much in me and took the time to share their knowledge and become my mentors. I'm really thankful and blessed that I crossed paths with everyone in the college."

Romero also credits SFA's faculty members with helping teach her how to achieve success.

"Dr. Thornley gave me meaningful advice. He said, 'Don't be afraid to take the first contract job even if it's not your dream job. Don't be afraid to take the first step because eventually your dream job will come around,'" Romero said. "This was really hard for me to hear because I wanted my dream job right when I graduated. He changed my perspective, and he was so right."



*SFA Rusche College of Business alumna Ana Romero recently began working at Amazon as a brand specialist for the lawn and garden category. Romero, a 2016 international business graduate, said she owes her professional career to SFA's Rusche College of Business.*

## COLLEGE SEEKING BUSINESS PARTNERS FOR NEW EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Recent Alumni Business Advisory Council and Megan Sellers, coordinator of career success and corporate engagement for the college, are working to establish an Externship Program for Rusche College of Business students that will provide an experiential-learning experience as an alternative to an internship.

The RABAC Externship Program will establish and maintain a network of companies that will provide one-day externships to SFA business majors. The one-day program will allow students to complete multiple externships throughout the academic year.

"While our current partners include companies in our RABAC network, we hope to expand our partnership to include several

Nacogdoches area businesses," Sellers said. "We implore you, our dedicated alumni, to consider hosting such a program to help provide this unique learning experience to our students."

Sellers added the advantages of an externship include eliminating the expense of spending time away from home and allowing students who are undecided about their careers to test various positions within different companies.

Those interested in being becoming a host site for the RABAC Externship Program should contact Sellers at [sellersml@sfasu.edu](mailto:sellersml@sfasu.edu) or (936)468-2339.

## PHI BETA LAMBDA STUDENTS WIN TOP HONORS AT NATIONALS

Members of SFA's Phi Beta Lambda chapter in the Rusche College of Business placed among the top 10 in various competitions at the National Leadership Conference in Anaheim, California.

SFA student Mark McLean became the first PBL student from the university to place first in a competition when he won in cost accounting. He also placed fourth in microeconomics. Kristi Clifford placed eighth in information management. Also, Clifford and Daniel Walker received eighth place in human resource management.

Michael Kugler won 10th place in the programming concepts competition.

SFA's chapter also was among the 10 chapters that received diamond status for excellent service.

"SFA students worked hard to be able to compete in this important national event," said Dr. Laurie Rogers, visiting assistant professor and PBL advisor at SFA. "By competing and placing at nationals, the students promoted not only their own education and professional careers, but also the Rusche College of Business and SFA."



*Members of SFA's Phi Beta Lambda chapter placed among the top 10 in various competitions at the National Leadership Conference in Anaheim, California.*

**STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY  
RUSCHE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**



**Mattress Firm Commons**  
Serves as a meeting and lounge area for students, which was made possible through donations from an alumnus

**Student Success Passport Program**  
Helps students hone their professional skills outside the classroom and annually awards \$50,000 in scholarships to top scholars

**Mentorship Program**  
Matches students with business alumni for support, advice and insight

**Bachelor's degree in sports business**  
Provides a new degree program for sports-minded business students interested in working in a dynamic field

**Dr. Tim Bisping, dean**  
Promotes experiential learning to help launch students into successful careers where they can be leaders in their fields

Big or small, your gift to SFA's Rusche College of Business, combined with other donations, means more opportunities to enhance the way students Experience Business™.

In an effort to further our student-centered mission, the Rusche College of Business is raising funds for the installation of a digital touch-screen directory for the lobby.

To learn more about this interactive tool and how you can help make this endeavor a reality with your donation, visit [orion.sfasu.edu/fundraiser](http://orion.sfasu.edu/fundraiser).

**Every little bit helps. Every gift adds up. Donate now.**

## SFA BOARD OF REGENTS APPROVES PARTNERSHIP WITH FENWAY GROUP

Through a new partnership, SFA students will have the opportunity to gain tangible corporate experience and become the next generation of information technology talent while simultaneously completing their degrees.

During the SFA Board of Regents quarterly meeting in April, regents approved a partnership between SFA and Fenway Group, a company dedicated to training college students to become the next generation of IT talent. Employees of Fenway Group teach college students how to work in corporate America, which often leads to employment upon program completion and graduation.

Martin Santora, founder and president of Fenway Group, said the company has a 100-percent job-placement rate. He explained to regents that program completers are recruited to work with the company, a corporate client, or a public

or private entity within the graduate's area of study.

Dr. Steve Bullard, SFA provost and vice president for academic affairs, called the program a great opportunity for students and the university.

"Partnering with Fenway Group is a win, win, win," Bullard said. "At SFA, our goal is to provide students with transformative experiences. Students who work for Fenway Group will not simply work a job — their lives will be transformed."

Fenway Group serves as an alternative to corporate business-related offshoring, working to keep IT careers in America. Using a unique business model, Fenway Group partners with select universities to provide business services for major corporations that include managed services, talent pipeline and collaborative projects. Some of its clients include

Southwest Airlines, American Airlines and CenturyLink.

Students who participate in the program will work 20 hours a week, with SFA alumni serving as coaches and mentors to the team. The team will work daily with a corporate client, and the students will be paid \$10 to \$20 an hour, depending on the position.

"Fenway Group provides students real-world opportunities while giving constant guidance and mentorship, and we are looking forward to incorporating the group's expertise into our university culture," Bullard said. "This partnership will help our students attain the necessary first two years of experience for entry-level positions and begin establishing their careers before leaving SFA."

Fenway Group will have an on-campus office in the McGee Business Building, and the program will be open to all majors.



# SFA BUSINESS STUDENTS LEARN PROJECT MANAGEMENT ALONGSIDE INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

Throughout the spring semester, SFA students enrolled in a project management course in the Rusche College of Business engaged in a collaborative project with industry professionals.

Dr. Rajat Mishra, assistant professor in SFA's Department of Management, Marketing and International Business, tasked students with creating a project as if they were implementing their plans in real life. Projects ranged from building a food truck business and assisted-living home to revamping Ritchie Street Park in Nacogdoches.

Mishra divided the class into groups, which were then paired with an industry professional to serve as a mentor. The project mentors included AJ Dhakal, senior lead mechanical engineer at Schlumberger in Houston; Rob McCaughey, district sales manager for Southeast Texas at ArcBest; Eloy Fernandez, SFA alumnus and food cart business owner in Austin; and Dr. Randy Napier, senior industry consultant and professor at the University of Texas at Arlington.

Not only did the mentors provide SFA students with guidance throughout their project development, but they also conducted guest lectures during the semester.

"These professionals bring their experience and expertise into the classroom, which helps bridge the gap between academia and the real world," Mishra said. "Students learn

professionalism and the practical aspects of business by working alongside these professionals. Through discussion and trial and error, students learn how to adapt in business situations."

At the end of the semester, students presented their work to their mentors, classmates, and additional College of Business faculty and staff members.

Project Management 470 is open to all majors. Mishra explained the course acts as a capstone-like course that allows students to practice a variety of skills they learned

throughout their undergraduate career. Project mentors have interviewed several students and have offered them summer internships and full-time job opportunities.

Dr. Tim Bisping, dean of the Rusche College of Business, said Mishra's approach to teaching project management "provides extremely valuable experiences for our business students." He added the course is an "excellent example of the experiential-learning opportunities the college values, and it fits perfectly with our student-centered mission."



*Throughout the spring semester, SFA students enrolled in a project management course in the College of Business engaged in a collaborative project with industry professionals who served as mentors and provided guest lectures.*

## ONLINE BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION RANKED SIXTH IN TEXAS

CollegeChoice.net, an independent online publication dedicated to helping students find the right college, has ranked SFA as the sixth best university in Texas to offer an online Bachelor of Business Administration degree program.

"This ranking serves as confirmation of our commitment to excellence in business education," said Dr. Tim Bisping, dean of SFA's Rusche College of Business. "We have outstanding faculty members committed to providing our students with the absolute best in online education, and I am pleased to see our efforts being acknowledged by this ranking."

CollegeChoice based the rankings on freshmen poll results from a nationwide survey published by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles. In the survey, students rated academic reputation, financial aid offerings and overall cost of the school. The survey also reviewed graduate success rates on the post-college job market. Other factors that contributed to the rankings were data from U.S. News & World Report, the National Center for Education Statistics and PayScale.com.

SFA's online B.B.A. in general business, which is AACSB

accredited, allows students who have completed required courses to finish the final two years or more of a degree through web-based classes.

Dr. Susan Jennings, SFA's online B.B.A. coordinator, explained the online degree is the same degree that is offered in person.

"Some schools create a different online degree, but we want our students to have access to the same degree," Jennings said. "Also, we work to provide personal attention to our online students."

The general business major includes courses from various academic disciplines within SFA's Rusche College of Business. The program is designed for students who are limited by time and distance in their options for completing their degree.

"In developing and administering our online B.B.A. program, we have been intentional in working to ensure that the program fits well with the needs of those seeking to complete their degree online in order to achieve their own personal and academic goals," Bisping said. "This focus has been well-received and has resulted in a growing and robust program."

# BUSINESS STUDENTS TRAVEL TO HONG KONG AND SHENZHEN, CHINA

Have you ever seen a lumberjack use chopsticks?

SFA students in the Rusche College of Business traveled more than 8,000 miles to Hong Kong and Shenzhen, China, for an international study abroad experience through the university's Wall-to-Wall Business travel program.

For 11 days, 25 SFA students enrolled in MGT 470: Hong Kong Business and Culture: Where East Meets West, visited various companies, historical landmarks and dined like the locals.

Drs. Mikhail Kouliavtsev, chair of SFA's Department of Economics and Finance, and Matt Lindsey, associate professor in the Department of Management, Marketing and International Business, facilitated the trip.

"International experiences are very important for our students. Experiences like this often reshape the student's view of the world," Lindsey said.

The group visited many Hong Kong markets where capitalism is on full display such as the Sham Shum Po District Golden Computer Center and electronics markets, clothing markets and many street markets, including Stanley Market and the Temple Street Night Market.

Students also attended a presentation by Dr. Forrest Yang, a marketing professor at the City University of Hong Kong, who highlighted the importance of building relationships to conduct business, as well as the tax-free port and low-tax structure, which made Hong Kong a key business location for multiple companies.

"Going to Hong Kong made it clear the key to doing business in that region is understanding the culture. In our view of the world, laws shape how we do business. In China, the relationships you have with your business partners trump everything," Lindsey said. "We also realized our world is much larger than the region we grew up in and that it is possible to work internationally in a location like Hong Kong."

For many SFA students like Johnathan Liker, a senior management major from Center, this was their first time visiting a country outside the United States.

"What surprised me the most was being a foreigner and learning how to navigate in a different country," Liker said.

thought," said Braxton Berthot, general business major from Douglass. "To see the jewelers cleaning and cutting the stones to perfection so they could be sold was very cool."

In a backstage tour of the Cantonese Opera, students met with the owner and music director who promotes and preserves the ancient art.

The group also visited Victoria Peak, which has the highest property values in the world, rode the historic Star Ferry, ate a traditional Chinese dinner at the Jumbo floating restaurant in the Aberdeen Harbor, saw Giant Buddha and visited many temples.

"We were exposed to a more diverse culture than we typically would be in East Texas," Liker said. "Experiencing this diversity and interacting with a variety of people allowed me to understand how this experience could relate in an international business environment. Knowledge of cultural differences will allow me to establish a connection with a client while meeting organizational goals."

To help gain a firsthand example of a U.S. company adapting to a different market, the students visited Disney Hong Kong.

"It was interesting to see key attractions like the Haunted Mansion rebranded as the

Mystic Manor due to cultural issues about ghosts," Lindsey said. "Other than seeing squid jerky at concession stands and a variety of different foods, it was easy to forget we were in Hong Kong while at the park."

Another stop during the trip was Macau, a Special Administrative Region like Hong Kong. Here, students went to the top of the 1,109-foot Macau Tower.

"Macau is the Las Vegas of the Far East and caters to the very wealthy in China," Lindsey said. "It became obvious that even the top 1 percent of a country of 1.3 billion can provide a huge target market."

Outside Hong Kong, SFA students traveled to Tai O Fishing Village on the Lantau Island, where people live in stilt houses, and then to Shenzhen, China — one of China's largest cities.



*During their study abroad experience, SFA Rusche College of Business students attended a presentation by Dr. Forrest Yang, a marketing professor at the City University of Hong Kong, and also toured various international businesses.*

Likewise, Samuel Johnson, an SFA graduate student in the Master of Business Administration program, said this trip opened his eyes to new career opportunities.

"It was an eye-opening experience and made me look at my options," Johnson said. "I feel more comfortable with the idea of working abroad or venturing out to other places I didn't consider before."

Students toured the first microbrewery in Hong Kong, Young Master Microbrewery, and witnessed the production process and discussed product marketing. Additionally, students visited the Tse Sui Luen Jewelry factory, where they watched skilled craftsmen construct custom jewelry.

"I learned there was more behind-the-scenes work for a product than what I



## BUSINESS STUDENTS LEARN FROM INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS DURING ANNUAL COLLEGE TO CAREER CONFERENCE

In March, SFA students in the Rusche College of Business met and learned from industry professionals during the college's fourth annual College to Career Conference.

"The C2C Conference continues to be one of the highlights of our year," said Dr. Tim Bisping, dean of the Rusche College of Business. "This year, we were pleased to have several new employers involved with providing guidance to our students, as well as discussing career opportunities."

Throughout the event, speakers from across the state representing companies such as Kohls, Wells Fargo, Wintrust Commercial Finance, Commercial Bank of Texas, Pilgrim's Pride, Austin Bank and more spoke with students in various sessions and executive panel discussions.

"Our panel discussions were a huge highlight of

the conference," said Megan Sellers, coordinator for career success and corporate engagement and academic advisor in SFA's Rusche College of

Business. "Students had the opportunity to ask questions and receive professional advice from industry experts."

Sessions focused on various topics, including building one's brand, networking, personal strategic planning, entrepreneurship, first impressions and more. "There was a lot of information to soak up throughout the day, but one of the main takeaways was that these high-level CEOs, presidents, vice presidents and other executives were once in the students' shoes," Sellers said. "Many of them started at SFA, and this knowledge motivates students to pursue their dreams."

An invitation-only employer reception followed the conference. During the reception, SFA's top scholars in the College of Business visited with executives on a personal level.



*Business executives spoke with SFA students during the fourth annual College to Career Conference. During the "Are you 1 in 118?" panel session, executives discussed the importance of an active education, business experience, multitasking and more. Executives included Lou Ann Richardson, Wells Fargo; Stephanie Schubert, Hajoca; Mike Parham, Pepco Sales and Marketing; Dustin Beavers, Austin Bank; Heather Harris, Edward Jones; Austin Smith, Reynolds and Reynolds; and David Haltom, Doors Control Services.*

## SFA RUSCHE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ESTABLISHES MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

SFA's Rusche College of Business implemented a mentorship program this spring to provide students with an additional resource outside of the academic setting.

This program matches members of the Rusche College of Business Executive Advisory Board with an SFA student based on the student's goals, the mentor's industry specialty and location, and personalities. Mentors advise and guide students as they advance in college and help students launch their careers.

"In this program, students have direct access to the skills and knowledge of highly successful individuals," said Dr. Tim Bisping, dean of the Rusche College of Business. "The mentorship program provides for a low-risk environment in which students can ask questions about professional development."

Through this program, mentors and students schedule weekly

phone conversations and meet at least twice during the semester, which provides opportunities for students to receive insight and advice from successful alumni. Discussion topics range from communication skills and teamwork to office and interview etiquette.

One goal associated with this program is establishing a low-pressure environment where students can have open discussions about their questions, fears and personal development goals. This program is not an extended job interview.

Eleven students were involved in the pilot program, which lasted one semester. The college hopes to expand the pool of mentors to accommodate more students.

For more information, contact Angie Brazil, assistant to the dean, at [abrazil@sfasu.edu](mailto:abrazil@sfasu.edu), or visit the dean's office in the McGee Business Building on the SFA campus.

## ACCOUNTING STUDENTS OFFERED TAX-PREP SERVICES

During tax season, SFA students enrolled in the Schlieff School of Accountancy performed free tax-preparation services for community members at Goodwill in downtown Nacogdoches.

The school partnered with Goodwill to offer the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Clinic for qualified individuals — those whose annual income is \$54,000 or less, people with disabilities and limited English-speaking taxpayers.

Tim Stephenson, Cedar Park accounting graduate student at SFA, is the VITA student coordinator for the clinic.

"It's offline, so people get human interaction and can understand the tax process better," Stephenson said.



*SFA accounting students offered free tax-preparation services to community members at Goodwill in downtown Nacogdoches. Pictured are graduate accounting students Kaili Crow, of Spring; Jennifer Nicely, of Tomball; Tim Stephenson, of Cedar Park; and Mark McLean, accounting and economics junior from Aledo.*

Most of the student volunteers were members of Beta Alpha Psi, the professional accounting fraternity, and served as tax preparers during the clinic.

“Getting experience outside the classroom helps you put together and understand the concepts you learn in class,” said Jennifer Nicely, SFA accounting graduate student from Tomball. “You can see that what you’re learning has the potential to help others in real life.”

Stephenson agrees the clinic provided a valuable community service.

“You talk with people and help them with a task that can be pretty challenging,” Stephenson said. “It’s a more direct way to help others, and you can see the results of your efforts.”

Kacie Czapla, senior lecturer at SFA and clinic supervisor, teaches tax courses and explained that through this endeavor students learn the basics of federal and state income tax preparation and how to interact with clients.

“Students gain real-world experience and help taxpayers file their tax returns,” Czapla said. “Students are providing a service to the community while also getting experience.”

## MICHAEL CALBERT RECOGNIZED AS SFA’S BETA GAMMA SIGMA CHAPTER HONOREE

Michael Calbert, chairman of the board for Dollar General Corporation, was SFA’s Beta Gamma Sigma Chapter Honoree and ceremony speaker during the April induction.

The chapter honoree award is reserved for someone who has achieved distinction primarily in business and administration and possesses qualities the society fosters, including honor, integrity, pursuit of wisdom, earnestness and service.

BGS is the international honor society serving business programs that are accredited by AACSB International. BGS membership is the highest recognition a business student can receive in a business program accredited by AACSB International.

While on campus, Calbert also spoke to approximately 200 students about how he transitioned from a business consultant with Arthur Andersen to being responsible for the \$30 billion global retail private equity practice at Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co. He also discussed the KKR buyout of Dollar General and how he helped create value for Dollar General through growth and generating returns while still remaining accountable to constituents and stakeholders. He also offered career advice to students.

“This was outstanding for our students, as it allowed them the opportunity to have direct, one-on-one contact and discussions with Mr. Calbert,” said Cathy Henderson, lecturer of management at SFA.



*Michael Calbert, chairman of the board for Dollar General Corporation, left, and Dr. Tim Bisping, dean of the Rusche College of Business, attend a class presentation in the McGee Business Building.*

## SFA RUSCHE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS STUDENTS PLACE SECOND NATIONALLY IN TRAINING COMPETITION

SFA students studying sports business ranked second among more than 50 nationwide organizations and universities during the April competition of The Training Game powered by The Sales Huddle Group.

The Training Game is a mobile app designed to train employees using a game format instead of trainers, manuals or webinars. The game uses various modes such as three-minute games, challenges, 20-minute training sessions and more to educate participants. Users can customize the content to reflect their company’s needs and policies.

During the spring semester, SFA gradually moved up in the rankings each month. Dr. Jason Reese, SFA assistant professor in the Rusche College of Business, said he is using the interactive teaching method to help educate students pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in sports business.

“The experience provides students opportunities to learn more about various aspects of sport sales and sales in general. This includes the process they go through when making a sale,” Reese said.

The competition quizzed students on sales-related topics such



*SFA students studying sports business ranked second among more than 50 nationwide organizations and universities during the April competition of The Training Game powered by The Sales Huddle Group. Dr. Jason Reese, SFA assistant professor in the College of Business, said he is using the interactive teaching method to help educate students pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in sports business.*

as principles of sales, asking clients questions, presenting sales material, how to deal with objecting clients and closing the sale. Students competed with employees of professional sports organizations, including the Tampa Bay Lightning, Chicago White Sox, Miami Marlins, Washington Capitals, Houston Dynamo, Red Bull Arena and others.

“With our sports business degree program being new, this ranking is a huge accomplishment for our students as it helps them stand out among other programs across the nation,” Reese said.

SFA’s sports business degree program focuses on courses that prepare students for

careers in the sports industry, such as sports promotion and sales, sports analytics, sports marketing, sports economics and more. Faculty members create and revise courses by receiving input from industry professionals.

For more information about SFA’s sports business degree program, contact Reese at [reesejd1@sfasu.edu](mailto:reesejd1@sfasu.edu).



# STUDENTS RECEIVE SCHOLARSHIPS THROUGH STUDENT SUCCESS PASSPORT PROGRAM



*Each semester, SFA's Rusche College of Business students compete for scholarships while building their professional skills through the college's Student Success Passport Program. In the spring semester, the college awarded 44 scholarships totaling \$50,000 to students in the Student Success Passport Program.*

SFA's Rusche College of Business awarded 44 scholarships totaling \$50,000 to students in the Student Success Passport Program. The college awarded four \$2,500 scholarships to top scholars and 40 \$1,000 runner-up scholarships.

"This program is life changing for students. It helps provide them the skills needed to succeed when they graduate and also helps alleviate some of the financial worry higher education can cause," said Megan Sellers, coordinator for career success and corporate engagement and an academic advisor in the college.

The program, which began in fall 2015, aims to help students hone their professional skills through workshops, conferences and online assignments while competing for scholarships.

"The program was a huge success this year. Participation increased, and we had great attendance at all our events," Sellers said. "I am extremely proud of these students who received scholarships. I watched them work hard to learn, grow and develop professionally this year."

As a top scholar, Connor Vilven, an SFA freshman international business major from Austin, received a scholarship and remembered first becoming interested in the Student Success Passport Program during orientation.

"The Passport Program is awesome," Vilven said. "During the past two semesters, I definitely learned professional and personal development skills, and I've improved my ability to present myself professionally."

The program works on a point system. Program activities are designed to help develop students in personal and professional branding, experiential learning, leadership development, and engage in college activities and events. Assignments include developing a personal mission statement, attending an etiquette presentation, completing an internship and more.

SFA sophomore Braxton Berthot, a general business major from Douglass, received a top scholar scholarship for the second consecutive year and expressed,

"I love this program and the College of Business."

Top scholar Kareene Telesford, a junior accounting major from Grenada in the Caribbean, also received a scholarship. "The Passport Program opened up a lot of opportunities for me to learn professional concepts," she said.

The College of Business' College to Career Conference was a favorite Student Success Passport Program event among scholarship recipients, including top scholar Corey Johnson, a Dallas senior marketing major.

"I loved hearing what professionals said we should expect when we graduate and the different things to watch for in the corporate environment, as well as how to be professional, respect people and earn respect," Johnson said. "It is a huge honor for me to receive this scholarship. I worked very hard. The Passport Program motivates you to be successful when you graduate."



*Dr. Timothy Bisping, dean of SFA's Rusche College of Business, presents top scholars with \$2,500 Student Success Passport Program Scholarships. From left: Connor Vilven, an SFA freshman international business major from Austin; Braxton Berthot, an SFA sophomore general business major from Douglass; Kareene Telesford, an SFA junior accounting major from Grenada in the Caribbean; and Corey Johnson, an SFA senior marketing major from Dallas.*



## HOOKED ON TEACHING: SFA BUSINESS PROFESSOR, FRESHMAN SEMINAR COORDINATOR RETIRES AFTER 36 YEARS OF SERVICE

Skillfully carved into a fishhook, the Hei Matau bone necklace dangles around his neck making a simple yet profound statement. At first glance, it seems out of place — a natural artifact juxtaposed against his business attire — but after a quick conversation with Dr. Tim Clipson, professor emeritus for the Department of Business Communication and Legal Studies at SFA, the meaning of the symbolic ornament is revealed.

"I wear this necklace to represent the fact that I'm hooked. I'm hooked on my faith, family, friends, fun, food and being fearless," Clipson said.

While presenting research in Hawaii two years ago, Clipson discovered the hook necklace in a store and asked a local what it symbolized.

"He said if you wear it, you'll catch a lot of fish. I don't fish much, but I love the water," Clipson said. "I researched it more and found the Hei Matau had a deeper meaning."

Hei Matau originated from the Māori people of New Zealand and represents strength, good luck and safe travel over water. Being a sailor, Clipson adopted the necklace as part of his wardrobe and decided to name his sailboat Matau.

Clipson retired in May after 36 years of service to SFA and is now spending more time on the open water.

"I often say being a university professor is by far one of the best jobs anyone could have. It has allowed me to fulfill what I believe I was called to do," Clipson said. "My personal mission is to do as much good for as many people as I possibly can in my life. Teaching became the vehicle to live my mission. Whether in public school, at the university or in corporate training, I have been blessed to help others during my life as a teacher."

Prior to joining SFA in 1981, Clipson taught public school at the junior high and high school levels. He also is president of a corporate leadership company, Leadership Is For Everyone (LIFE!).

During his tenure at SFA, Clipson has held the ranks of assistant professor, associate professor and professor in the Rusche College of Business' Department of Business Communication and Legal Studies where he taught specialized courses on executive leadership. Clipson also served as SFA's commencement speaker for spring 2017.

"Dr. Clipson's innovative undergraduate and graduate courses on executive leadership have been highly sought after

and widely acclaimed by current and former students," said Dr. Marsha Bayless, chair of SFA's Department of Business Communication and Legal Studies. "Successful alumni serving on our department and college advisory councils comment on the courses' value to their careers and inspiration to their personal lives."

Clipson developed many of the courses he has taught at SFA as well as the training development course and leadership courses for the College of Business. He views his classrooms as

non-threatening learning laboratories where students aren't afraid to make mistakes.

"I believe the more students enjoy the learning experience the more they tend to take away from the classroom," Clipson said. "The toughest thing about retirement is thinking about leaving the classroom."

Clipson may be embarking on a new journey, but his contributions to SFA will have a lasting impact on future generations.

Since 1998, Clipson has served as the SFA 101 Freshman Success coordinator. SFA 101 is a specially designed course introducing new students to life at SFA. With approximately 75 sections offered a year, SFA 101 has served thousands of students and is proven to raise GPA and college retention.

"An outstanding experience for me was helping build the SFA 101 program and seeing how it has made a positive difference in the lives of thousands of young people. I've also enjoyed working with the program instructors and staff members," Clipson said.

Additionally, Clipson has served as chapter president of the international business

honor society Beta Gamma Sigma for 16 years and is currently the Alpha Tau Omega national president.

His accolades include the Meada Gibbs Outstanding Teacher-Scholar Award for the Association for Business Communication, Outstanding Educator Award in 2016 for the Federation of Business Disciplines, Distinguished Paper Award for the Association for Business Communication-Southwestern United States, Teaching Innovation Award from the Rusche College of Business, Marlin C. Young Teaching Excellence Award, SFA Teaching Excellence Award and Distinguished Professor.

"Dr. Clipson is the epitome of sincere dedication to his students, colleagues, SFA, the profession and all who come in contact with him," Bayless said. "His impact has been and is tremendous, and his profound influence enduring."



**"I often say being a university professor is by far one of the best jobs anyone could have. It has allowed me to fulfill what I believe I was called to do." - Dr. Tim Clipson**



## DR. CROCKER NAMED ASSOCIATE DEAN OF STUDENT SERVICES



Beginning in fall 2017, Dr. Mitch Crocker, associate professor and chair of the Department of Management, Marketing and International Business, will transition to the associate dean of student services position. Dr. Ann Wilson previously held this position.

While serving as department chair for the past seven years, Crocker also was an associate professor of management with a teaching focus in employee and labor relations, human resource management, and principles of management.

"I'm excited and looking forward to serving as associate dean. I am committed to helping our students successfully navigate the college experience and launch their careers," Crocker said. "Our faculty and staff members are committed professionals and their efforts make working here enjoyable. Together, we will create the culture and environment that supports and promotes the

business experience."

Dr. Tim Bispig, dean of the Rusche College of Business, said he is looking forward to working alongside Crocker.

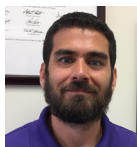
"Dr. Crocker brings with him significant administrative experience, but more importantly, he has a passion for student success and the desire to be innovative while continually setting new, higher goals," Bispig said. "I am looking forward to seeing all Dr. Crocker will accomplish in this position."

Wilson held the associate dean position for three years after serving five years as chair of the Department of Business Communication and Legal Studies. In fall 2017, she will return to what she says is her first love — teaching.

"As I move closer to retirement, it's exciting to give someone else an opportunity to step into a college-level leadership role," Wilson said. "It was perfect timing with Dr. Clipson's retirement, as I was able pick up where he left off by taking over his courses in leadership."

## FACULTY AWARDS

### BETA GAMMA SIGMA FACULTY AWARDS



**DR. JUSTIN BLOUNT**

Outstanding Researcher



**DR. KYLE JONES**

Marlin C. Young Teaching Excellence Award



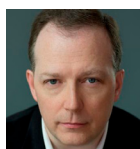
**MARIE KELLY**

Service/Experiential Learning Award



**DR. MATTHEW LINDSEY**

Distinguished Service Award



**DR. CHRISTOPHER MCKENNA**

Teaching Innovation Award



**DR. RAJAT MISHRA**

Outstanding Intellectual Contribution

### RETIREES



**DR. TIM CLIPSON**

Professor Emeritus, Business Communication and Legal Studies

36 years



**DR. J. KEATON GRUBBS**

Professor, Business Communication and Legal Studies

17 years

### CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SERVICE



**ESTHER R. BUNN**

Lecturer in Accounting



**DR. MIKHAIL KOULIAVTSEV**

Chair, Department of Economics and Finance



**DR. RYAN T. PHELPS**

Associate Professor, Economics and Finance



**DR. JASON REESE**

Distinguished Faculty Member Award

### CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF SERVICE



**CATHY R. HENDERSON**

Lecturer, Management, Marketing and International Business



**DR. GARLAND DEMARCUS SIMMONS**

Associate Professor, Economics and Finance