

Spring 2024 Newsletter



Rendering for the New Gordon Ford College of Business Building to open Fall 2025

Greetings from the Management Department!

Welcome to our first Management Department e-newsletter! We are excited to share with you some of the highlights from our Department over the spring 2024 semester.

We are experiencing record enrollments (775 Management students; GFCB 2624 students), and are well-positioned with a relevant, focused curriculum that prepares students for world-class internships and careers. The growth we've seen in enrollment supports the changes we've made to our programs in the last few years.

Our students have been recognized with prestigious awards, our alumni are forging innovative paths forward in their careers, and the faculty and staff of our department continue to work under our unified vision to best equip our students for their futures. I am proud of the work being done through our Department.

We have some congratulations, well wishes, and news to share that I am sure will interest you.

We are watching history being built for our college with the construction of the new Gordon Ford College of Business Building (see livestream updates [HERE](#)).

Congratulations to [Dr. LeAnne Coder](#) for being named the first Faculty Fellow for Student Success.

Congratulations to [Drs. Bob Hatfield](#) and [Shane Spiller](#) on their 1st place award in the 2024 Ford Forward Innovation Challenge with their project - Augmented Intelligence Project (with Dr. Thad Crews of AIS).

We are excited to have [Dr. Dana Henson](#) rejoin our Department after serving as Associate Dean for Graduate Programs & Outreach.

Congratulations to [Professor Tamara Strom](#), GFCB Award Winner for Student Advisement and the Early Career Teaching Award Winner.

Congratulations to [Dr. Mariah Yates](#) on her promotion and tenure to Associate Professor.

We give our best to [Dr. Tony Kim](#) as he takes on a new position in Fall 2024.

We welcome to [Dr. Rahul Nilakantan](#) to our faculty in the area of Supply Chain this August. He will graduate this summer from Georgia Southern University with a Ph.D. in Logistics and Supply Chain Management.

Congratulations to [Dr. Evelyn Thrasher](#) on being named Dean of the Gordon Ford College of Business in March and to [Dr. Alex Lebedinsky](#) for being named Associate Dean of the GFCB in April.

I hope you enjoy reviewing the highlights of our Department from Spring 2024. Please reach out with any questions or follow-up. We would be excited to connect with you and find ways for you to be involved and impact the future of our Department.

Sincerely,

Whitney Oliver Peake

Whitney Oliver Peake,
Vitale Professor and Chair



Spring 2024 Points of Pride

Learn.Grow.Lead

Certificates

Alumni & Dept. Highlights

Noncompete News Spotlight

Dr. Meggers Memorial Book Gifts

Student Spotlights

GFCB Building Beam Raising Ceremony

Alumni Spotlight - Eric Thomas



Learn.Grow.Lead.

Dual Credit. Business Management is one of the 5 career tracks provided through the Early College at WKU in Glasgow Program. Professor Angela Spiller offered one of the first courses - Management Explorations, to the initial cohort of 17 students. This course was a favorite among students. Pictured above is a class field trip to SpanTech, a local manufacturing facility.

As part of this program, students take college courses on campus with WKU in Glasgow students throughout the morning. They return to their high school each afternoon to attend high school classes. Upon completion, Early College students will graduate high school with 30 hours of WKU credit. To learn more about the program, click [HERE](#).

Human Resource Management Program Renews SHRM Alignment. The Management Department Human Resource Management Concentration renewed its alignment with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) under the required guidelines.

Created in 2006 and revalidated in 2010, 2013, 2017, and 2022 –the guidelines are part of SHRM's Academic Initiative to define HR education standards taught in business schools and help universities develop degree programs that follow these standards.

WKU Management hosts one of two SHRM-aligned programs in the state of KY. Read more [HERE](#).



Certificates

After consulting with our Management Advisory Council in the 2022-2023 academic year, the Management Department launched 3 undergraduate certificate programs in Creativity and Innovation Management, Executive Influence in Organizations, and Managing Inclusive Organizations in Fall 2023.

Our first students graduated in each certificate area, and enrollments are growing! These certificates are accessible to students across campus and further brand their specific skillsets in the marketplace.



Dr. Daniels Gives Insights on Non-Competes

The Federal Trade Commission recently banned non-competes, effective retroactively summer 2024. Dr. Aquesha Daniels, Associate Pedagogical Professor, spoke with the Bowling Green Daily news regarding the potential impacts.

Dr. Daniels shares that there are other methods to safeguard organization information, and gives additional insights in this [STORY](#).

Alumni & Department Highlights



Spence Sheldon '16 - Named 2024 Small Business Person of the Year

Entrepreneurship alum Spence Sheldon, a Bowling Green native and Donato's Pizza franchisee, recently won the BG Area Chamber of Commerce 2024 Small Business Person of the Year award.

Read more about Spence and the award [HERE](#).



HillTALKer Podcast

Professors Gihan Edirisinghe and Sedrik Newbern host the Management for Me Speaker Series, which highlights management professionals each month. They have also turned this event into an informative podcast. Now students can tune in live via Zoom or listen later. You can listen to the podcast [HERE](#).



Innovation Management Course Connects with the Innovation Campus

On April 9, 2024, the WKU Innovation Campus hosted 24 students from our Innovation Management course taught by Mr. Sedrik Newbern. Led by the Director of the WKU Innovation Campus, Jeff Hook, the students toured the facility, learned about the technology investments made to support the various startups from across the state, and even had the opportunity to talk and share with a few entrepreneurs onsite, including GFCB alum, Kahlil Garmon.



Two Teams of Alumni Earn 2nd Place Honors in Student Consulting Competition

Two teams from the spring 2023 offering of the Hilltopper Student Consulting Experience course won second place in their respective categories at the Small Business Institute Conference in April 2024. For more details read the [STORY](#).

Dr. Kay Meggers Memorial Book Fund



Dr. Kay H. Meggers was the Hays Watkins Executive in Residence in the Management Department. Dr. Meggers passed away unexpectedly in December, 2022, but his legacy continues.

Dr. Meggers gifted his graduating seniors the book, "Make Your Bed" by Admiral William H. McRaven. The book shared the critical importance of little things in achieving goals.

Faculty member, Shane Spiller has worked to continue this tradition and expand it to all capstone sections offered by the Management Department. Read and watch more about this initiative [HERE](#).

Student Spotlights



**Kate Smith named
Management Dept.
Outstanding Senior**

Kate Smith, Management - Entrepreneurship Concentration major from Bowling Green, KY, was named the Outstanding Senior for the Management Dept. in April. Kate graduated with honors, owns her own business, and is the permanent on-site wedding planner and coordinator for the WhiteStone Barn wedding venue.



**Brooke Gilbreth named
Management Dept.
Outstanding Junior**

Brooke Gilbreth, Management - Human Resources Concentration Major from Bowling Green, KY, was named the Outstanding Junior for the Management Dept. in April. Brooke has a 4.0 GPA and is a Human Resources Intern for Bendix.



**Heaven Howard - Global
Business**

Heaven Howard from Gallatin, TN, graduated in spring 2024, with a degree in Management - Global Business Concentration.

Heaven credited her study abroad experience as a transformative aspect of her academic journey, providing invaluable international exposure that complemented her coursework and enhanced her understanding of global business concepts.



**Hunter Robinson -
Entrepreneurship**

Hunter Robinson graduated on May 2nd in the Business Management - Entrepreneurship Concentration.

"I came to WKU originally to help myself run my business, but when I changed courses and began to focus on flying, I did not need it as much. I decided that I needed to stay here and finish what I have started. I'm glad I did because of the experiences I have gained along the way..."

Read the complete story [HERE](#).

New GFCB Building Beam Raising Held April 18, 2024



WKU broke ground on the new Gordon Ford College of Business building in June 2023, and on April 18th, 2024 raised the final beam into place.

Attendees at the ceremony had an opportunity to sign the red-coated beam and watch it be hoisted into place.

The project is made possible by the Kentucky General Assembly. As part of House Bill 1, in April 2022, legislators approved funding for a new Gordon Ford College of Business, providing \$74.4 million from the state in the 2022-24 budget.

Read the full story of the celebration [HERE](#).



Alumni Spotlight - Eric Thomas '17, Founder and President, Aquatic Resource Center


As a middle schooler, Eric Thomas built a koi pond in his family's backyard in Owensboro, Kentucky. After many months of research, and a lot of trial and error, he began to import koi from Japan to sell online. Later in high school, he expanded his small hobby-business as part of his Supervised Agricultural Experience through his local FFA chapter. Eric became a Freshman at WKU in the fall of 2014, continuing his work with koi and koi ponds, traveling from Bowling Green to Owensboro frequently to continue to serve his customers.

As part of an Entrepreneurship Business Plan class in 2016, Eric launched Aquatic Resource Center to better serve his customers while expanding his service area to include Evansville, In., Bowling Green, Ky., and their surrounding areas. After graduating from WKU in 2017, Eric moved back to Owensboro to put his newly earned Entrepreneurship degree to work as the President of Aquatic Resource Center.

Eric's journey took an exciting turn in 2019 when he saw a billboard for a new penguin habitat while visiting Mesker Park Zoo in Evansville, In. After winning the bid to provide the filtration system for the new penguin habitat, Aquatic Resource Center made the switch to commercial construction, as it's known for today. Aquatic Resource Center now provides specialty construction services for public zoos and aquariums across the country, completing work in more than a dozen states.

Eric continues to expand his entrepreneurial spirit into other businesses as needs arise in his work through Aquatic Resource Center. He has since opened separate businesses in the equipment rental and commercial real estate areas, and is always searching for the next adventure.

Thank you for reading!

	
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