Cream of the crop

Jennifer Smith
An award-winning graduate and her promising John Deere career
Mission Statement
The mission of the College of Business Administration faculty and administration is to foster an active learning-centered environment to provide innovative, high-quality, business-connected programs responding to the changing intellectual needs of students and the Michigan business community.
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## Alumni profiles/awards

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The College of Business Administration has accomplished a great deal during the past year. The highlight was the recent approval of a revised undergraduate business program. After more than four years in development, the new bachelor of science in business administration (B.S.B.A.) program promises to make our graduates more marketable and better prepared to be successful in that first career position. The program introduces students to important soft skills such as teamwork, writing, and oral communication early in the curriculum. These skills are continuously reinforced and applied in other courses and experiences.

The new program also requires that management information systems and financial accounting courses be completed simultaneously as students complete an integrated project across the two courses. Additional degree components include a supply chain management course, applied statistics course, and an enterprise resource planning (ERP) component and business simulation. Most importantly, we will continue to improve the curriculum in order to maximize student learning and prepare them for careers.

Career placement remains exceptional
We continue to be proud of our career placement record. We place more than 90 percent of surveyed graduates. This result is a testament to the hard work of CBA faculty, our corporate relations director Rob Petree, our career services staff, and the many events these people direct such as the semiannual Career Days.

Another bright spot in the college’s efforts to help students find internships and jobs is the Corporate Spotlight program. Rob Petree oversees a very successful program that regularly invites different corporations to CBA. Interactions with students lead to many career and internship opportunities.

Kudos to entrepreneurship program
A well-done to the entrepreneurship program. It has become the second largest major in the college with more than 300 students. Congratulations also on receiving a second-tier or top-25 ranking among all regional entrepreneurship programs in the country, as announced recently by Entrepreneur magazine.

Campaign goals exceeded, but needs remain
Although the college has been without a development officer for four months, we have exceeded our $6.8 million New Vision of Excellence campaign goal. However, we still lag behind in meeting our student scholarship and programming endowment goals. Additional scholarship funds are critical to competing for higher quality students within the state. In addition, with continued budgetary pressures, we look to fund important programmatic needs from endowed funds.

CBA faculty anticipate black belt certification
One of our important new initiatives is our partnership with The Dow Chemical Company to provide Six Sigma black belt certification for 12 CBA faculty members. Dow has generously allowed 12 of our faculty to complete the regular Six Sigma training with Dow employees. Once certified, CBA faculty black belts will deploy the Six Sigma methodology in a number of areas including green belt training for undergraduates, the Management Consulting Institute in the M.B.A. program, and training for regional firms through the Center for Supply Chain Management.

The college has firmly established a strategic niche in enterprise resource planning through our relationship with SAP. We also look forward to developing another strong niche in Six Sigma to better prepare our students and serve other constituencies within the state. We are very excited about this partnership with Dow Chemical.

As always, we hope you enjoy this issue of the Exchange. Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to participate in college activities.

Daniel Vetter
College of Business Administration Interim Dean

CBA students earn Dow Awards
Two Central Michigan University College of Business Administration students received The Dow Chemical Company Awards of Excellence for exceptional achievements in the use of Systems, Applications, and Programs in Data Processing software (SAP).

The $500 award recognizes the students’ SAP course work performance and their outstanding performance in the study of Management Information Systems (MIS).

Leslie Pionk, an MIS junior, earned her award for her final project in an SAP programming course taught by MIS professor Roger Hayen.

Thomas McGinnis had been working for Dow Corning Corporation where he helped implement SAP before coming to CMU to pursue a master of science in information systems degree.

In 1998, CMU became one of the first universities in the United States to sign an educational alliance with SAP – a move that has given its SAP students an edge in the job market.
CBA provides fertile ground for future business leaders

Real-world projects prepare outstanding students for careers

Central Michigan University’s College of Business Administration is all about the students – from the college’s dynamic faculty members to the programs and events that help students make business connections. The college’s growing reputation attracts the best students and employers.

The newly revised B.S.B.A. curriculum aims to build on this strong foundation, with classes designed to mold students into highly capable and sophisticated professionals.

This spring, as the school year was drawing to a close, students were getting the chance to show off everything they had learned.

For instance, management information systems senior Jimmy Dickinson designed in his visual basics class the software that troubleshoots tracking and ordering for a pizza place. Along with his other impressive achievements – designer for 10 university Web sites, award-winning graphic designer, volunteer raising more than $15,000 for the Children’s Miracle Network, and CMU’s 2004 Homecoming Gold Ambassador – this project helped Dickinson garner internship offers from the National Charter Schools Institute and The Dow Chemical Company.

Honoring the year’s best students

Spring semester also is the time of year when CBA honors its crème de la crème with its annual Outstanding Students of the Year Awards. The panel of judges had a tough time this year – so tough, they named six finalists instead of the usual five.

One judge, Ricardo Resio, CMU alumnus and human resources director for the Rehmann Group, said he looked for the most well-rounded student.

“CMU is fortunate to have some of the best and brightest students representing us in the community. I know these students will be great ambassadors of our university, whatever the next chapter in their lives will be,” Resio said.

The winners

• Jennifer Smith – $1,000 award
• Heidi vonDaggenhausen – $500 award
• Katie Bien, Jessica Wojciechowski, Carrie Skillman, and Mary Pudell – $250 awards

See “Farm work ethic” on page 4

The CBA Outstanding Students of the Year, from left to right: Katie Bien, Jennifer Smith, Heidi vonDaggenhausen, Jessica Wojciechowski, and Mary Pudell. Not pictured, Carrie Skillman.
‘I know I’ll only find fulfillment in helping people who are helping others, like farmers’

Marketing and logistics management major Jennifer Smith, ’05, learned the value of hard work on her family’s dairy farm. She awoke at 4:15 a.m. to milk the cows with her father, helped her grandmother toss hay bales to the calves, and experienced the satisfaction of a job well-done while the rest of the world slept.

“The farm gave me a sense of pride. Other farms have struggled, but we have managed to sustain with everybody pitching in,” Smith said.

Located six miles north of Fremont, Michigan, the Smith’s century-old dairy farm has sustained itself on the kind of high standards that Smith herself aspires to, and it instilled in her the kind of values that set her apart.

“Jennifer is very intuitive, very bright, and she has tremendous ability, but she is basing her career on how she can help other people, not on how much money she can make,” said Robert Cook, Central Michigan University marketing and logistics professor. “I think that’s what defines her most.”

John Deere internship – naturally

Smith’s glimpse into what her future might hold began last year in Des Moines, Iowa, with an internship at John Deere, a company she has believed in her whole life. As her mother puts it, “we only use John Deere equipment.”

During the internship she interviewed farmers for a research project designed to understand their purchase motives and criteria in terms of emerging farm technology – like GPS and tools to monitor crop yields.

“It’s a great honor to represent the business college as student of the year, but honors and personal glory don’t drive me. I know I’ll only find fulfillment in helping people who are helping others, like farmers, who feed the nation,” Smith said.

A semester abroad to expand horizons

Farm life didn’t allow for much travel, so Smith took advantage of CMU’s study abroad program in Spain and spring break mission trips. In particular, she remembers spending time with the people in the Tennessee mountains, parsing country music lyrics (“You’ve got to stand for something or you’ll fall for anything.”) with the locals.

“It humbles you to see what they have and how totally happy they are,” Smith said. “It made me see how I need to make use of the opportunities I’ve been given in a positive way.”
A John Deere position – just for Jennifer

In January Smith interviewed with John Deere for a job. Because she wasn’t the best fit for the original opening they had, their sales and marketing departments got together to find a position that better suited her – pricing analyst in the marketing department.

“It’s pretty amazing that a Fortune 500 company would do that,” Cook said.

Jennifer remembers long summer nights on the farm waiting for her father to finish his day’s work so the family could sit down to a late dinner. As she begins her career at John Deere, she’ll have the chance to help people like her father, and that’s important to Smith because, for her, farming isn’t a job – it’s a way of life.

GPA: 4.0
Internship: John Deere
Academics/experience: Developed and administered market research survey and interview project; logistics consultant for Jabil Circuit; studied abroad in Segovia, Spain, Spanish teacher assistant
Honors: DaimlerChrysler Outstanding Minority Student Award; CBA Outstanding Student of the Year (2005), Outstanding Student of the Year finalist (2004); Logistics Management Council Honor Society; Leo G. Erickson Excellence in Marketing Scholarship; Centralis Gold Award; Honors Program
Leadership: Member of Supply Chain Management Association (activities chair), American Marketing Association (Active Member Award), Council of Logistics Management; His House Christian Fellowship; volunteer for Mountain T.O.P. Ministries, Habitat for Humanity

CBA’s outstanding students of the year

Heidi vonDaggenhausen: The Negotiator
Heidi vonDaggenhausen, ’05, human resources management major, fell in love with labor negotiations during a 16-hour bargaining simulation in her industrial relations class.

“It’s a challenge to be able to think on your feet like that. Finding a job in human resources or labor negotiations would be a culmination of everything I’ve learned at CMU,” vonDaggenhausen said. “I feel that I’ve made my mark at CMU through touching the lives of others.”

Judy Idema, associate director of the Honors and Centralis Scholarship programs, believes vonDaggenhausen is one of those rare students who has the Midas touch.

“Heidi is intelligent, has a strong work ethic, and follows every project through to the best of her ability,” Idema said.

GPA: 3.9
Internship: The Rehmann Group
Academics/Experience: Participated in bargaining simulation; researched the Sara Lee Corporation and developed a new product line for them as part of a class project; developed a compensation plan for a fictitious organization; researched regulations for union/management functions; presented original research in environmental studies at Student Research and Creative Endeavors Exhibition (SRCEE); editor-in-chief for “Honor Bound,” the Honors Program newsletter.
Honors: Centralis Gold Scholarship; member of Beta Gamma Sigma – Honorary Business Fraternity; Dean’s List (seven semesters), President’s List (fall 2001, fall 2004)
Leadership: Served as vice president for the CMU Program Board; co-chaired the CMU Homecoming Committee; selected as CMU Female Gold Ambassador for her involvement and contributions to CMU; served the National Association for Campus Activities as regional conference delegate for three years and as national conference delegate for two years; one of three students to attend the National Collegiate Honors Council conference in fall 2003.

See “Outstanding grads” on page 24

Smith both improved her Spanish and learned about a different way of life while studying abroad in Segovia, Spain.
New B.S.B.A. curriculum blends disciplines

Now that the newly approved College of Business Administration’s B.S.B.A. curriculum is in place, students are sure to appear on the radar screens of top employers sooner rather than later.

“This is our opportunity to mold the students and make them more sophisticated in their growth,” said Frank Andera, director of the SAP University Alliance Program and professor of business information systems. “What we’ve done here is special, and I’m a firm believer in it.”

Nearly five years in the making, the process of developing a new curriculum began with faculty retreats to discuss the best way for Central Michigan University business students to prepare for real-world business careers.

“We had a desire to do something about the curriculum, which had become dated in style and delivery,” Andera said. “In order to integrate disciplines, we saw that we needed to stop teaching subjects in a silo.”

Once the faculty members hammered out a new structure for the curriculum, CBA faculty committees created master syllabi, which had to be approved by the entire faculty. This year, the Academic Senate Committee approved the new curriculum, which now is in place.

“The new business curriculum will be the difference between talking about something and doing it. We’ve moved on to a higher plane, and our graduates will be the better for it.”

– Frank Andera, director of the SAP University Alliance Program and professor of business information systems

As part of the new B.S.B.A. curriculum, students in the freshman-level essential business communication skills class learn how to make effective oral presentations, communicate in various cultural and business settings, and research business careers.
Teamwork at all levels
The key to the new B.S.B.A. curriculum lies in its integration of core classes. As early as their freshman year, students are given tools they can use and build on for future internships and jobs.

First semester freshmen take essential business skills, where they learn teamwork skills and the basics of business enterprises. In their second semester, they take essential business communication skills, where they learn skills in writing letters, cases, and reports; making effective oral presentations; working in teams; communicating in various cultural and business settings; and researching careers in business.

“This new curriculum also provides exposure to business and industry ideas and structure. What is a business? How does it work? What are its substructures? What is accounting? What is marketing? What is a supply chain?” Andera said.

Cohort-style integrated learning
With the new curriculum, CBA sophomores gain experience in integration by working as cohorts in the accounting and management information systems classes. CBA juniors also work in cohort groups in three integrated courses, beginning with accounting/finance, supply chain management, and marketing/sales/distribution. Along with these three classes, the students participate in an integrated lab, with eight weeks spent on a SAP case study. In the senior or final year, students participate in a senior project that may or may not be an actual “live” enterprise.

“The new business curriculum will be the difference between talking about something and doing it,” Andera said. “Other schools are talking about wanting to integrate core classes; but here at CMU, we are truly doing it. We’ve moved on to a higher plane, and our graduates will be the better for it.”

Andera believes there will be challenges to overcome in these early phases of change, but he’s confident any bumps will be smoothed out in time.

“Over the last few years, the CBA faculty aspired to revolutionize their style of teaching,” Andera said. “We moved from a lecture-centered approach to an active student-learning approach. Now, it is time for our core curriculum to be revolutionized. We are moving from a self-centered silo approach to integrated, interrelated core courses where dependency upon related courses is reality, not a desire.”
Students at ease during classroom exchange

For Heather Dawson, the College of Business Administration’s 12th Dialogue Days was a chance to ask business professionals the kind of questions you can’t always ask in the “real world.” What is your salary? What’s the world of commercial lending really like? What is your typical day on the job?

“During Dialogue Days you can ask anything you want in a comfortable environment – the classroom – as opposed to an interview situation,” said Dawson, a senior studying corporate finance.

Pelizzari: Work hard, work together

Following a keynote speech by John Pelizzari, president and CEO of Fifth Third Bank Northern Michigan, students interacted with more than 50 business professionals from various sectors and backgrounds.

“It really helped all of us to have these business people be so open about what they do. It’s a great resource to have this huge group of people who come here and love to share their experiences,” Dawson said.

Pelizzari delivered a simple message to CBA students: stick to it, work hard, and connect to your colleagues and customers alike.

“You need to get out and do something, get involved and be a part of helping people work together. If you do that, you can do anything. The power in a company is when you work together, particularly when you see how different everybody is and recognize the power in those differences,” Pelizzari said.

Charles Dillard: Trust, be confident

Charles Dillard drew on his more than 30 years in the banking industry, both in the United States and abroad. In his discussions with students, the first vice president at Bank One addressed such topics as the importance of understanding the U.S. banking system and monetary policy, the role of management accounting in the current financial environment, and the keys to effective financial analysis.

“I also think it’s important for students to understand the importance of having a strong internal moral compass. Trust and confidence are an important currency in the banking realm,” Dillard said. “Your career is a never-ending process of learning and development, so be receptive to new ideas and continue to educate yourself.”

Dillard, who has been involved in several Dialogue Days, does so because of his admiration and respect for CMU’s business college.

“Many professionals who participate come back to CMU to recruit employees or select students for internships,” said interim dean Daniel Vetter. “This is part of the CBA’s mission to improve the types and numbers of opportunities for students to be placed in the business community.”

“Similar power in a company is when you work together.”
– John Pelizzari, president and CEO of Fifth Third Bank Northern Michigan
Career development begins with first professional position
As a committee member for the third annual Management Aspirations Seminar, CBA student Jessica Wojciechowski hoped to give other students a chance to put the books aside for a moment and consider the “big picture.”

“We often don’t take the time to think about applying what we’re learning,” Wojciechowski said. “At the seminar we were given the chance to learn how things work in the real world.”

The seminar, “Success From the Start: Getting Beyond the Job Offer,” gave students the chance to hear what business professionals had to say about getting the most out of their first job — from applying their knowledge to handling budgets and navigating office politics.

Rhonda Wood, regional vice president for Enterprise Rent-a-Car, and John Pelizzari, president and CEO of Fifth Third Bank Northern Michigan, gave keynote speeches, which were followed by breakout sessions and panel discussions on such topics as the job hunt, internships, networking, corporate culture and ethics, and gender issues in the workplace.

“Enterprise will hire 7,000 entry-level college graduates in the next fiscal year,” Wood said. “Central Michigan University is one of our top schools, and I wanted to come here today to show how, out of 7,000 new hires, CMU students can make themselves stand out.”

When Nancy Csapo, associate professor of business information systems, became committee chair for this year’s Management Aspirations Seminar, she tapped Wojciechowski to serve because she needed someone organized, responsible, and detail oriented.

“Jessica is one of those kids who is one in a million,” Csapo said. “She’s top drawer in every way and in so many areas. The seminar is a great opportunity for her and her fellow students to talk one-on-one with business professionals.”

Career choices made easier
Wojciechowski, who is a junior majoring in marketing as well as interpersonal and public communications, said she gained a clearer view of her own career path after attending the Management Aspirations Seminar as a freshman.

“The speakers really give you direction,” Wojciechowski said. “I’d love to be a professor or consultant in marketing communications.”

She also has an interest in mentoring relationships and studying personality types. In particular, she likes the idea of going into a workplace to study its dynamics and finding ways to improve conditions.

“The speakers this year gave me something to aspire to. We hope to continue to draw more students, both business and nonbusiness majors,” Wojciechowski said. “It’s a great way for alums to give back to students. It’s also good to see people from CMU who’ve stepped up and gone on to do great things.”

Nancy Csapo, associate professor of business information systems, and junior Jessica Wojciechowski discuss business with keynote speaker Rhonda Wood, regional vice president for Enterprise Rent-a-Car, at the third annual Management Aspirations Seminar.
Students solve real-world problems

Crawford AuSable School District is just one of the satisfied clients Marketing Professor Holt Wilson and his students have successfully served through the Marketing Research and Planning Council (MRPC).

Founded by Wilson and CMU marketing professor Richard Divine in 1997, MRPC gives students the chance to learn first-hand about marketing research and planning while providing a link between professionals and students. Wilson and his students use the latest marketing tools to provide top-notch, cost-effective market research and analysis, forecasts, market plans, and training to businesses and other organizations.

“I try to teach them the nuts and bolts of research along with the appropriate theory. Students learn by getting involved, and that stimulates their interest,” Wilson said.

Helping a school district better serve the community

When the calls come in, Wilson evaluates them, chooses one or two, and matches them with the right students to provide a mutually beneficial experience for both the client and the students.

The Crawford AuSable School District Needs Assessment and Marketing Study was one such successful pairing.

Under the guidance of Wilson and marketing professor JoAnn Linrud, Michelle Couture, an ’04 marketing graduate, worked with Katie Vought and Sarah Bonnell on a school project that took approximately two months to complete.

The students and faculty met with the Crawford AuSable School District, identified and clarified objectives, then developed a list of survey questions for the client’s approval. After obtaining a list of names, the team outsourced a telephone survey, collected the data, and, after analyzing it, presented an oral and written report to the client.

“The presentations were so well-received that the students were invited back to present to the board of education,” Wilson said. “The board was very impressed with their work.”

Milli Haug, superintendent of the Crawford AuSable School District, said the research will be useful.

“The MRPC survey provides a baseline for us to use as we evaluate how well we are working with our community,” Haug said. “The process they used was excellent, and we really liked working in partnership with CMU.”

Projects that can lead to careers

The Crawford AuSable School District experience helped two of the three student researchers get jobs as marketing researchers at JD Power and Associates after graduation. Couture currently works for the firm as a marketing researcher.

“Wilson gave us a chance to learn the research process from start to finish,” Couture said.

“We really liked working in partnership with CMU.”
– Milli Haug, superintendent, Crawford AuSable School District

Senior Gina Simeri and marketing professor Holt Wilson go over the results of her Marketing Research and Planning Council project, “CMU College of Business Image Research Study,” which Simeri presented at this year’s Student Research and Creative Endeavors Exhibition.
Recent graduate eyes stockbroker profession

Jonathan Milley, ’04, has been watching the stock market rollercoaster since high school. Now that he’s placed in the top 10 of the Barron’s annual stock-picking contest, he’s starting to enjoy the ride.

“I like the whole industry,” Milley said. “It changes every day. There’s always something going on, and it’s never boring.”

Milley placed fourth out of 1,154 students competing in the contest last fall. Each investor started with a portfolio of $100,000. From September through December, Milley saw a 45.5 percent profit. He finished with a portfolio valued at $145,454.

“I stayed mostly with my initial picks,” Milley said. “USG Corporation was my biggest winner, and Pharmion Corporation was my biggest loss. I first glanced at the overall economy and determined that health care, finance, energy, technology, and basic material sectors were performing the best. Then I researched within those sectors and picked companies that had good financial statements like Procter & Gamble and Johnson & Johnson. Sometimes it’s just pick and hope for the best.”

Milley shared the victory with Central Michigan University finance professor James Felton, who placed eighth among 69 professors participating in the Barron’s challenge.

“It was an honor to be a top finisher, and for Jonathan, it expands the opportunities he will have in the future,” Felton said.

Milley will start graduate school in May, pursuing his M.B.A. in finance. After that, he’s got his eye on Chicago’s finance industry.

“I’m leaning toward research or being a stockbroker,” Milley said.

Tips for playing the stock market

By Jonathan Milley

1) Educate yourself
Look at the economy and ask what’s good?
What’s bad? Read the Wall Street Journal.

2) Find the right tools
Go online to find the right trading company for you or go through a full-service broker.

3) Do your research
Use a third party research source like Morningstar.com or Standard & Poor’s to learn different ratings.

4) Don’t rush to buy
A stock that is good today will still be good next week.

5) Pick a strategy that suits your personality and stick with it.

6) Diversify between at least three industry groups
Whether you are investing in stocks, certificates of deposit, bonds, or whatever else, the first rule of investing is: diversify.

7) Beware of dull stocks
Stocks that don’t move up or down with economic changes because investors turn to them for safety tend to under-perform over the long run.

8) Look at a company’s cash flow
To get a clear view of a firm’s business, look at its cash flow – how much money is coming in and how much is going out. You’re looking for positive cash flow and consistency.

9) Don’t be afraid to win

Savvy stock picks put finance professor James Felton, left, and Jonathan Milley, ’04, in the top ranks of the Barron’s annual stock-picking contest.
CBA students share research at annual university exhibition

This year’s 12th annual Student Research and Creative Endeavors Exhibition (SRCEE) gave dozens of Central Michigan University students the chance to share research, scholarship, and creative endeavors with professionals and the university community.

CBA student projects

Jimmy Dickinson:
Designing software for a pizza place
Management information systems senior Jimmy Dickinson’s SRCEE project began as a group classroom project to come up with a business problem and solve it. He chose a problem that had been plaguing his family’s pizza place for years—keeping track of customers and their orders.

“We created an order management system designed specifically for their needs,” Dickinson said. “It’s a prototype problem. We’ve tested it, and we’re working with another company to expand it. A software package will be influenced by this prototype.”

Dickinson enjoyed the experience of turning an academically derived project into a real-world business scenario and credits his project’s success on its user-friendliness.

Maritess Manalo:
Finding the best search engine on the Web
Second-year graduate student Maritess Manalo presented her paper, “A Comparison of the Performance of Metasearch Engine Versus Search Engine Results: An Exploratory Study.”

Manalo, who is studying information systems, found the subject interesting, although she knew that gathering the data would be difficult.

“I was curious as to why people don’t try alternatives to Google,” Manalo said. “I discovered there was a big overlap in results not only from Google but from Yahoo and Dogpile, which means they almost give the same results, but Dogpile has the advantage of including results from Yahoo and other search engines.”

Manalo likes most of her CBA courses because she learns by doing.

“These are real-world projects. And as a graduate assistant I find I’m doing work that assists me while giving me the opportunity to learn and get credit with something that will help me get a job,” Manalo said.

Manalo wants to combine her undergraduate degree in economics with information systems, business intelligence, and data mining in order to find her dream job as a business analyst.

“Putting this software package together has given me a genuine sense of accomplishment. I don’t think I could have done what I’ve been able to do here at a bigger school. CMU is a great place to be.”

– Jimmy Dickinson, senior, management information systems
Stacie Benson: Researching trucking software packages

While working as a strategic analyst for Menlo Worldwide last year, Stacie Benson, ’99, M.B.A. ’04, turned a work assignment into an M.B.A. project.

Benson graduated from CMU with a logistics and marketing degree in 1999 and began working for Menlo Worldwide as a coordinator. She was promoted to analyst in 2000.

As a graduate student and employee, she took a close look at Menlo Worldwide, which manages the switching and general trucking operations for a major chemical company, and saw that some of its operational tasks included intra-plant moves and trailer management.

“This current process is paper intensive and very manual. It creates inefficiencies and data reporting inaccuracies,” Benson said. “Management assigned me to research various software packages that will meet the needs of the switching and general trucking operations.”

Benson’s proposed solutions are expected to create efficiencies within the operation and improve reporting capabilities.

“My M.B.A. course work provided tools and methodology that could be applied in my everyday work. It helped strengthen my presenting and analytical skills while keeping me abreast of changes in the business world,” Benson said.

Senior Jimmy Dickinson meets with business information systems faculty member Zhenyu Huang to fine-tune his presentation for this year’s Student Research and Creative Endeavors Exhibition.
Research shows need for interaction between online merchants and customers

If information quality is the key to electronic business success, then conventional database management systems fall short, according to a new study by a Central Michigan University business information systems assistant professor.

In her study, “Understanding Information Quality in E-Business,” (The Journal of Computer Information Systems, Winter 2004-2005) Hongjiang Xu found that, while business managers consider information entered electronically by consumers as more accurate than when collected by a company employee over the telephone, the data may still be flawed.

“Information quality is a very important issue in e-business,” Xu said. “The rapid growth of the online community has forced commercial enterprises to rush to establish an electronic commercial presence.”

This rush can lead to degraded quality of information, which in turn leads to poor customer satisfaction as well as a loss of product quality and revenue and a degraded decision-making process.

“It could even damage the organization’s reputation and competitive advantage,” Xu said.

Xu studied the Web sites of a variety of e-businesses and found that few top managers had implemented ways to ensure reliable information gathering. Many Web sites accepted fake addresses, ZIP codes, and expired credit card numbers.

“It is clear that very little of the information captured is actually verified by human operators, with the majority finding its way into databases without further verification,” Xu said.

Part of the problem stems from an emphasis in conventional database management systems on security and speed rather than quality. If unchecked, the problem will grow. In 2003, consumers in the United States spent more than $13 million on the Web. That number will exceed $230 million by 2008.

Xu believes two-way feedback procedures would help ensure information quality.

“Users must be able to actively use and change information in the system’s database, and e-businesses must be able to communicate with users directly,” Xu said.
Passion for economics inspires Jason Taylor’s teaching and research

Jason Taylor always wears a tie in his classroom because he likes to keep his students on their toes. And he likes to get them thinking.

Before each class, Taylor puts up a question for students to begin pondering before they’ve had a chance to sit down. For instance, “Why are rich nations rich and poor nations poor?” or “What’s a poor central banker to do?”

“I try to provide a very scholarly and academic environment under the assumption that students are intellectually curious,” Taylor said.

Taylor, an assistant professor of economics at Central Michigan University, is an authority on American economic history, particularly the Great Depression and New Deal, and he also has a strong interest in contemporary U.S. macroeconomic policy. He has published numerous scholarly articles on the economic policies during the Great Depression and World War II, the economics of high wages, and the government’s general response to high unemployment.

As with the tie, Taylor keeps his methods traditional and tries to foster an environment in which students are challenged and given the freedom to ask questions.

“Jason Taylor is an exceptional professor,” said Zack Macomber, a sophomore majoring in economics. “The man knows the material he teaches like the back of his hand and tries his best to convey it to a wide range of student types. He’s very personable and courteous, and he has rekindled my love for economics.”

Paul Natke, chair of the economics department, has heard nothing but praise for Taylor.

“I think he brings a sense of surprise and wonder to the classroom because he sees economic principles working everywhere, everyday. He tries to keep students engaged by applying economic principles to their lives, things such as referring to articles he reads in newspapers and magazines,” Natke said.

Taking CMU into the future

After earning his bachelor’s degree in journalism from Ohio University, Taylor moved to Athens, Georgia, to earn his doctorate in economics from the University of Georgia. He worked for five years as an assistant professor at the University of Virginia, where he experienced something rare for teachers: a standing ovation from a class of 500 students.

“It literally brought tears to my eyes. It was a moment that I’ll never forget and a feat that I strive to duplicate in my classes at CMU. If we can get students to feel as passionate about the material as we feel, great results will follow,” Taylor said.

Taylor chose CMU in part because he and his wife were anxious to return to the Midwest, but also because he was impressed by the steps CMU was taking toward being a research university.

“I wanted to get in on the ground floor and lead that change,” Taylor said.

Staying in touch with the economies

On Taylor’s list of passions, research takes a close second to teaching. Currently, he has five papers under review at various economic journals, with a few other papers in the works.

“Most of my current research deals with economic policies during the New Deal and World War II,” Taylor said. “I’m looking at Roosevelt’s experiment in creating cartels throughout the U.S. economy between 1933 and 1935. Since it is extremely rare that cartels can operate so openly — as they are illegal under the Sherman Antitrust Act — economists can gain insight about cartel behavior by studying this historical episode.”

Taylor feels that the best teachers are those who are intellectually engaged in scholarly pursuits, who always ask questions, and who, in turn, allow themselves to be challenged by their students.

“Many teachers at CMU are doing tremendous scholarly research,” Taylor said. “Because of this, CMU’s reputation will grow in the next couple of decades, and I’m excited to be a part of that.”
Kumar Palaniswami earns praise of colleagues, students, and associates
As chair of the College of Business Administration Department of Management, Shanthakumar “Kumar” Palaniswami understands the importance of bringing diverse groups together and putting others first.

“That’s the hallmark of an exceptional leader,” said Mike Pisani, Central Michigan University management professor and specialist in international business. “I appreciate the hard work Kumar has done and is doing for the department. He is one of the reasons why I came to CMU.”

Palaniswami is committed to breaking down walls and finding ways to work together, not just within CBA, but throughout CMU’s various departments.

Center for Supply Chain Management – CMU’s connection with business
The Center for Supply Chain Management (CSCM) is one case in point. Established in 2002, CSCM provides quality, low-cost services to help businesses improve and modernize their supply chain management systems through applied research, seminars, roundtables, and training programs.

“He appreciates people’s efforts, tries to put you in the know, and makes sure you’re part of what we’re all doing,” said Patrick Okonkwo, professor of marketing and logistics. “He considers others and always asks for suggestions and opinions when forming his strategies.”

CSCM connects CMU faculty and students from business and engineering to various Michigan industries, creating a mutually beneficial experience in the pursuit of academic research and business solutions.

“What it does is give faculty and students exposure to the real world,” Palaniswami said. “For example, we have managers, engineers, and GIS people getting together every week to discuss interdisciplinary issues, problems, projects, research, and grant ideas. We’re targeting bigger, better projects with the center and expect to do better and better things.”

Getting students to think globally
Palaniswami has received several honors and awards throughout his career. In 2004, he received the “Member of the Year” award from the American Society for Quality, Saginaw Valley Chapter.

He also enjoys a national and international reputation for operations research and belongs to the Global Manufacturing Research Group, a select group of researchers from all over the world dedicated to the study and improvement of manufacturing practices worldwide.

In 2001 and 2004, he coordinated global conferences on logistics and supply chain management in India and represented CMU as a member of a Michigan trade delegation to India that explored opportunities in trade, research, and education — all experiences he brings to the classroom.

“Global experiences are extremely useful to students, who should be thinking globally,” Palaniswami said. “Business educators must bring in that component whenever we can.”

In his operations management classes, Palaniswami uses case studies and simulations, with an emphasis on the kind of data analysis that students can apply in the real world.

Graduate assistant and former student Sanjay Mudagol feels students benefit from Palaniswami’s thoroughness and ability to explain a subject from every conceivable angle.

“We’re targeting bigger, better projects with the center and expect to do better and better things.”
– Shanthakumar Palaniswami, chair, CBA department of management
Management department chair widely respected for innovations and global perspectives

Just the beginning

Palaniswami was involved in developing the new B.S.B.A. curriculum and is excited by the integration of core classes and different disciplines within CBA. But he sees the new curriculum as just the beginning.

"We were one of the first universities to bring in SAP. That's a plus for us. Companies now come to us because of our enterprise resource planning expertise," Palaniswami said. "I get calls from all over the country."

Palaniswami believes in continuous improvement on every level. For instance, he would like to see a strong, full-time M.B.A. program.

"Despite all his hard work and challenges, Kumar always manages to bring humor and a sense of camaraderie to the occasion," Utecht said.

“He’s very detailed, and he is able to relate everything to the real world,” Mudagol said.

Management professor Kathy Utecht, who has known Palaniswami as a friend and colleague for more than 20 years, has team taught a couple of M.B.A. classes with him, along with two other faculty members.

“He inspires, motivates, and challenges the students to develop a passion for learning and understanding. His students aspire to perform in order to meet Kumar’s expectations, and they show genuine respect for his knowledge and command of a discipline,” Utecht said.

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Grant-funded sessions well received by business professionals

Doing business in Mexico just got easier for the business people who attended Mike Pisani’s free training sessions on international business with Mexico.

“The major focus of the workshop was to create export awareness and capacity in the region,” said Pisani, a Central Michigan University management associate professor and specialist in international business.

The workshop occurred over three nights with a different speaker each night.

• **Day 1:** Pisani offered tips on adapting to Mexico’s cultural environment.

• **Day 2:** Dr. Van Miller, associate professor of management from Northern Kentucky University, discussed maquiladoras (foreign-owned factories tied to United States production).

• **Day 3:** Sonja Johnson, an experienced customs broker who serves as associate director of the Van Andel Global Trade Center at Grand Valley State University, laid out the nuts and bolts of trade and trade paperwork.

Lynn Berner-Kilbourn, director of marketing and sales for Powell Fabrication, in Saint Louis, Michigan, attended the first night of the workshop and couldn’t say enough good things about it.

“It was one of the most valuable workshops I’ve attended. Mexico is part of the area we’re trying to develop, so we had six or seven people from our company attend,” Berner-Kilbourn said. “All of us needed to better understand the broad cultural differences, and the workshop made it real for us.”

Pisani’s series of workshops – which in the near future will focus on the European Union, Japan, Canada, and India – are made possible through a $76,000 U.S. Department of Education grant, with matching funds from CMU, to expand international business education at CMU. These workshops will provide training for participating mid-Michigan businesses to support global competitiveness and boost the region’s economic outlook for the future.

Pisani directs the grant in partnership with Michael Vuilleemot, who is associate director of the CMU LaBelle Entrepreneurial Center. The two receive support from several graduate assistants.
Beyond the workshop – one-on-one counseling

Besides the global business-related workshops, the grant project provides for the enhancement of undergraduate and graduate programs, faculty development, export certification for practitioners, international business study-abroad learning, and one-on-one counseling for aspiring mid-Michigan exporters.

Powell Fabrication took advantage of the one-on-one counseling and invited Pisani to give on-site training for 30 of their employees on the cultural aspects of operating in Mexico.

“The counseling was customized for our experiences,” Berner-Kilbourn said. “Basically, we wanted all our people exposed to the great learning experience we’d been exposed to.”

For more information on international export training visit the Web site: www.cba.cmich.edu/programs/export.

“Beyond the workshop – one-on-one counseling”

Pisani takes advantage of one-on-one counseling to provide customized training for 30 Powell Fabrication employees.

“‘It was one of the most valuable workshops I’ve attended. All of us needed to better understand the broad cultural differences, and the workshop made it real for us.’

– Lynn Berner-Kilbourn, director of marketing and sales, Powell Fabrication

Pisani receives Provost’s Award

Scholarship, creativity, and promise recognized

Central Michigan University honored Mike Pisani, associate professor of international business, with the prestigious Provost’s Award for his excellent scholarship, creativity, and promise.

“I am very gratified that my peers have considered my research worthy of recognition,” Pisani said. “The Provost’s Award is in a real sense a validation of my research efforts. The study of international business and economic phenomena, especially within Latin America, is a very challenging proposition complicated by distance and adequate access to financial resources.”

A microfinance and Latin American business authority

Pisani, a CMU faculty member since 2002, is an authority in the areas of microfinance, microenterprise development, free trade agreements, cross-border business issues, entrepreneurship, management history, and international business, specifically in Latin America. His research has resulted in more than 20 refereed publications in prestigious academic journals.

Presented to Pisani at CMU’s Faculty Excellence Exhibition on March 23, the award comes with a $1,200 stipend for professional development. Pisani’s name will appear on a permanent plaque in Charles V. Park Library.

“Once again, it is a pleasure to review and to acknowledge the accomplishments of some of our outstanding faculty,” said Gail Scukanec, associate dean of the College of Graduate Studies. “These individuals have certainly impacted and continue to have an impact on their fields of study.”

Pisani appreciates the support he has received from his department, college, and university as active participants in funding his research endeavors.

“I share this award with both my management department colleagues and especially my family, as they all have permitted me the time, space, and encouragement to be an active researcher,” Pisani said. “My biggest thanks goes to my wife, De Jana Pisani, without whom none of my accomplishments would have been possible.”
Steve Gibson, B.S. marketing, ’90

Steve Gibson followed in his brother’s footsteps when he came to Central Michigan University, but as manager of the Con-Way Central Express business development center, he has blazed his own path.

“I made my best friendships at CMU. We still meet several times a year and network on business terms,” Gibson said. “It’s important to take advantage of being able to establish the network you’ll have going forward.”

Gibson began his career as an account executive for Nitecki, Smith & Walker. He joined Con-Way in 1991 and currently manages up to 40 sales representatives across the country.

Gibson faced his biggest challenge in 2001, when the company was forced to scale back his department. Rather than firing people, the company managed instead to promote workers and leave vacant positions unfilled. Four years later, the number of department employees has doubled.

“It was nice to get through that challenge with a nice outcome,” Gibson said.

After 14 years at Con-Way, Gibson feels he has overcome many challenges and achieved his main goals.

“Right now I’m doing something I’ve always wanted to do, managing people,” Gibson said. “I’m proud of the people I’ve hired, and I’m proud that I had a role in the careers of some of the company’s key people.”

Gibson recruits heavily through the Internet, job fairs, advertising, and referrals. He recommends that CMU students devise a strategy for their future.

“Decide what company you want to work for and find out what you can do to make it a better company. Then pursue them. It’s a long race, so don’t worry if you don’t find the right company right away,” Gibson said.

In his free time, Gibson enjoys golf and coaching his 8-year-old son’s basketball team at the YMCA.

“It’s a riot watching them learn and get excited about the game,” he said.

Darcy Orlik, B.S. marketing, ’92, M.S.A. ’95

As a clarinetist for Central Michigan University’s Marching Chippewas, Darcy Orlik remembers the words the late director Jack Saunders drilled into them: “If you are early, you are on time; if you are on time, you are late!”

“Those words of wisdom have stayed with me and have proven very useful in my subsequent business associations,” Orlik said.

As marketing and communications manager for Firstbank Corporation, Orlik draws on her artistic side to generate the kind of marketing campaigns that require little financial investment for huge image payoffs. For example, she formed the Briefcase Brigade, a drill team composed of 15 briefcase-toting bankers. She also contracted the vocal group Three Men and a Tenor to produce the radio jingle, Thank You, Bankerman.

“The most valuable thing I have learned throughout my career is that no matter what the job or position in the organization, you must always be straightforward, honest, and respectful to all your coworkers,” Orlik said.

After working in sales and human resources for the Delfield Company, Central Michigan University, and the Comfort Inn/LaBelle Management, Orlik became marketing and human resource officer at Firstbank in 1997. She was promoted to her current position in 2002.

She credits part of her success to CBA’s great faculty.

“They continue to teach me valuable lessons. If I need advice or a sounding board, there are several professors I rely on, proving that my CMU tuition is still reaping rewards years after graduation,” Orlik said.

Orlik was greatly influenced by her father, Pete Orlik, founder of CMU’s department of Broadcast and Cinematic Arts.

“I grew up watching how hard my dad works. Whether at the studios or in his den writing another copywriting textbook, he is always jumping another hurdle and obtaining another goal or honor. He is a constant reminder that determination and hard work really do pay off.”
MaryAnn Rivers, B.S. marketing, ’88

MaryAnn Rivers began her career at Valassis as a marketing services specialist fresh out of college. Since then, she has risen through the ranks to become vice president of new business development and product management, leading a team responsible for more than $1 billion in product revenue.

“From my perspective, you can be a genius but still struggle to be successful in life and in business without the ability to connect with people,” Rivers said.

“Central Michigan University taught me the power of effective communication and working successfully with others.”

Rivers, who was featured in Crain’s Detroit Business’ 40 Under 40 in 2001, says another key to success is knowing your unique talents and limitations.

“If you understand your strengths and weaknesses, you can capitalize on them and match your true gifts with the needs of a business,” Rivers said.

Rivers learned this lesson early as a CMU undergraduate majoring in art. Two years in, she changed her major to business after realizing she was more interested in the business side of product design and graphics.

“What a great move that was. My advice to others is know thyself and trust your instincts,” Rivers said.

Family also plays a big part in Rivers’ life. She likes “hanging out” with her husband and two children and acknowledges her parent’s positive influence.

“Through adversity, they still managed to send six kids to college, and they instilled in us a sense of curiosity for learning, confidence in our abilities, and a very strong work ethic,” she said.

Rivers doesn’t believe in chasing titles or money but in pursuing opportunities that will provide the best experiences for the future.

“My integrity and reputation are much more important to me than my title or my financial success,” Rivers said.

Scott Wickens, B.S. finance, ’89

Scott Wickens feels he learned a lot about the rules of business while playing varsity soccer at Central Michigan University.

“It gave me the focus, time management, and prioritization skills that I needed for my course work and that I now use every day in my work and personal life,” Wickens said.

Today, Wickens is first vice president of corporate banking at Standard Federal Bank, part of ABN AMRO Bank, one of the largest financial institutions in the world.

“Given the size and scope of the bank and my customer base, internal and external teamwork are essential to ensure strong client relationships,” Wickens said.

After graduating from CMU, Wickens joined Comerica Bank as a credit analyst. In 1996, he became Standard Federal Bank’s first middle market lender and, while obtaining his M.B.A. from the University of Detroit, moved up the ranks and was promoted to first vice president in 2001.

Wickens is one of the youngest first vice presidents in the bank’s history. He also was one of the first United States employees chosen to attend a leadership seminar in Amsterdam – world headquarters for ABN AMRO Bank. With all that behind him, Wickens still remembers his early challenges.

“I will never forget an on-site interview I had with a company during my senior year at CMU. Two executives were hosting me to lunch during the interview process when one asked me what I didn’t want in a job, and I replied, ‘cold calling.’ Needless to say I didn’t get the job,” Wickens said.

Since then, Wickens has cultivated an excellent reputation for making client contact.

“I learned that before I could even begin to discuss the bank’s products and services, I had to first establish credibility with the company on a personal level. This is where professionalism comes into play. I do my homework on the prospective client and only target the bank services that they may require to continue to prosper in this tough economic environment.”

Wickens, who still plays soccer, also enjoys spending time with his wife Caryn (Barrett), ’88, and their two daughters.
But there’s more work to be done
In its ongoing efforts to strengthen the College of Business Administration’s already exceptional business programs, the New Vision of Excellence campaign exceeded its target goal of $6.8 million, putting the grand total at over $7.2 million.

“The campaign progress to date is a great success for CMU and the many volunteers and donors involved,” said Michael A. Leto, CMU vice president for development and alumni relations.

“The ultimate goal for the campaign is to meet all of the individual college and program goals. Only three of 10 college and division goals have been met and only eight of 32 program area goals have been met to date.”

Here’s a closer look at CBA’s various donor opportunities:

**Student scholarships**
CBA has made it a top priority to become more competitive in recruiting and providing support for top students from Michigan and elsewhere. By expanding the college’s undergraduate and graduate scholarship programs, more students will have access to CMU education and will bring their energy and leadership to campus.

“A priority must be placed on increasing endowment for scholarships and also for endowed chairs, professorships, and lectureships. We must build on the great strengths that the university has already built and strengthen further our commitment to academic excellence with the strongest possible professors and students,” said Michael Rao, CMU’s president.

**Faculty development**
CBA's success relies on the quality of its faculty members. They shape future business leaders and their research fosters student learning and helps the community at large.

In recent years, donors have provided generous gifts for the endowment of the J. Edwin Towle Distinguished Professorship to support faculty positions in both the College of Education and Human Services and CBA. The CBA professorship is held by Roger Hayen, professor of business information systems.

“Additional faculty endowment funds will ensure that CMU continues to recruit and retain the very best professors while deepening its commitment to supporting excellence in teaching, research, and creative work,” Leto said.

**Programming endowment**
CBA business programs are committed to keeping up with rapidly changing times to best serve students and Michigan businesses. The LaBelle Entrepreneurship Center endowment supports an institute where entrepreneurship majors and their faculty mentors can serve the needs of the region by consulting with existing small business owners and advising new entrepreneurs.

CBA also has developed several applied research centers such as the Center for Supply Chain Management, Center for International Trade and Economic Research, Marketing Research and Planning Council, and the Institute for Management Consulting.

**Ongoing and special program support**
Annual giving of both restricted and unrestricted dollars supports innovation in programming and gives CBA flexibility to respond to the emerging needs of its students, faculty, and the community. Annual donations can leverage other gifts by serving as matching gifts for technology and equipment purchases.

“Clearly, there is a lot yet to do, and we want all alumni and friends to have an opportunity to participate,” Leto said.

CBA’s campaign committee members are: Michael Bowen (Heritage Westwood Development), Lee Dow, Robert Easterle, James Fabiano II (Fabiano Brothers Incorporated), Jackie Goforth (PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLP), Bart LaBelle (LaBelle Management), Remos Lenio (Hartwick Capital LLC), Jack Poindexter (East Jordan Ironworks Incorporated), Michael Sappington, W. Sid Smith (Smith Equities Corporation), Michelle Szymczak (IBM), and Michael Tierney (Comerica Incorporated).

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Fond farewell to retired CBA employee

Katherine Schafer

Katherine Schafer served CBA with devotion and desire

During almost 20 years at the College of Business Administration, Katherine Schafer tackled many jobs – student advisor, assistant to the dean, temporary faculty member, and business advisor. Now, she is reaping the fruits of retirement.

“I’m retiring because life is too short,” Schafer said. “I would like to do what I want to do when I want to do it, which is everybody’s dream.”

A CMU alumna, Schafer taught at Mount Pleasant High School for three years before moving to Columbus, Ohio, where she was director of information technology for the College of Education at The Ohio State University. In 1986, she returned to Mount Pleasant and took a job in CBA’s business advising office.

“I really enjoy being around young people. It was a very invigorating and satisfying atmosphere,” Schafer said.

Making a difference for students and faculty

In 1988, Schafer became director of CBA Student Services, and in 1997, assistant to the dean, serving under former deans Terry Arndt and John Schleede.

“She was excellent. She was thorough, professional, collegial, and she always had a warm, wonderful smile,” said Arndt, now an accounting professor. “She was politically savvy, too, and always gave me sound advice.”

Associate professor of accounting Debra McGilsky worked with Schafer on several fronts, from the college curriculum to getting her office carpeted.

“She was a great colleague, a wonderful friend, and she was devoted to the students of the College of Business Administration,” McGilsky said. “Her desire was to give them the best educational experience they could have, which she accomplished through excellent work in student advising, college curriculum, college assessment, class scheduling, and facilities management.”

As much as Schafer enjoyed working with CMU faculty and “idea generators,” she will have no trouble keeping busy in retirement. She already has taken a trip to Europe and the Bahamas and is planning a trip to Alaska. She also is involved in building a new home in northern Michigan and thinking about starting a business with friends.

“CMU has been very good to me, and I always aimed to leave a part of myself there. I like the people, the philosophy, the goals, and I believe in CMU’s mission,” Schafer said.

Comerica gift facilitates expansion of services to MRS agency

A College of Business Administration program that helps people with disabilities develop and launch businesses will be able to expand its service range to Michigan’s west side, thanks to a grant from Comerica.

The program, launched four years ago with a four-year innovation and expansion grant from the Michigan Rehabilitation Services agency (MRS), allowed CBA’s LaBelle Entrepreneurial Center to develop a highly successful model for providing consulting and business technical services to MRS customers. Their customers have included a range of business people, from architects to manufacturers, daycare providers, and even a magician.

“Comerica’s generous support has been absolutely critical in sustaining the program we’ve built over the past four years,” said LaBelle Center’s associate director Mike Vuillemot.

“Their $25,000 grant this year was the only reason we were able to secure the $125,000 in federal and other dollars that allowed us to continue.”

Comerica’s funding gives the LaBelle Center the opportunity to expand services beyond the mid-Michigan district to include MRS’s Grand Rapids and West-Central districts – more than doubling the program’s range.

“Our partnership with CMU is a perfect fit for Comerica because the gift supports two areas we are deeply committed to – education and entrepreneurship,” said Caroline Chambers, Comerica vice president and contributions manager. “Entrepreneurship drives economic growth in our state and nation and, as Michigan’s oldest and largest bank, we are happy to do our part to help develop the next generation of entrepreneurs and small business owners.”
Jessica Wojciechowski: The Go-Getter

From the get-go, Jessica Wojciechowski knew she’d have to separate herself from other marketing majors. So the CBA junior pursued a second major in interpersonal and public communication and set one demanding goal after another.

“I’m interested in making people excited about what excites me, and I’m fascinated by how people react to marketing schemes,” Wojciechowski said.

She is hoping to spend her senior year studying abroad in Australia, where she would like to take full advantage of every new opportunity.

“Jessica jumps in with both feet,” said management professor Kevin Love. “What distinguishes her most is her ability to present herself.”

Carrie Skillman: The Leader

Marketing major Carrie Skillman learned what it means to take the lead as president of Alpha Chi Omega, which required her to understand the needs of and make decisions for 70 women.

“That was my biggest challenge, I think, trying to figure out what they wanted, but my business classes involved a lot of group work, which helped me work better with people in a team setting,” Skillman said.

Skillman ultimately would like to take her leadership skills to New York City, where she hopes to find a job with an event-marketing firm or a prestigious advertising agency.

“Carrie is sharp. She’s street smart, well traveled, and a good leader,” said marketing instructor Joe Myslivec. “She can work with all types of individuals.”

Mary (Mahon) Pudell: The Mentor

On her first day in a CMU business class, Mary (Mahon) Pudell, ‘05, knew she’d chosen the right school when a professor came into the classroom and asked the student sitting next to her how his summer internship had gone.

Pudell, who graduated summa cum laude from Lake Michigan College with an associate degree in business administration and transferred to CMU from Western Michigan University, had never seen that kind of teacher/student interaction.

“The professors here really care about our success. I don’t think I would have gotten the same great opportunities if I hadn’t come to CMU,” Pudell said. “After finding my niche here as a tutor and mentor, I think my ultimate dream job would be as a CMU professor.”

Thanks to her exceptional SAP skills, five companies offered her a job.
Robert M. Perry Schools of Banking
backed by Michigan Bankers Association

Since its inception 30 years ago, the Robert M. Perry Schools of Banking has been giving generations of bankers across Michigan the tools they need to excel.

As a loan officer at Isabella Bank and Trust's Shepherd office, Joyce Gluch jumped at the chance to develop her leadership and management skills in order to make the seamless transition to branch manager.

"I've learned so many things. It has given me the knowledge to manage my branch effectively and solve problems. The biggest thing I learned was how to analyze income tax returns," Gluch said.

This summer will mark Gluch's third year in the program, and she is looking forward to participating in the bank management simulation, in which teams compete to make the most profitable operating, lending, and pricing decisions.

"The sessions are really intense," said James Damitio, accounting professor and coordinator of the Robert M. Perry Schools of Banking. "Students go all day and at night. In exit interviews, students overwhelmingly say great things about the program."

Money managers can bank on CBA for continuing education

Sponsored by the Michigan Bankers Association for more than 20 years, the school's curriculum is taught by experienced bankers, CMU faculty members, and other highly qualified industry experts.

"It's been a benefit to our bankers to attend the Perry Schools of Banking," said Jim Kurt, vice president of education, Michigan Bankers Association. "They walk away with great information they can apply to their work in banking. We consider it the premiere banking school in the country."

This year, David Hickman, chairman and chief executive officer of United Bank and Trust of Tecumseh, was honored as the Michigan 2005 Banker of the Year. The distinction was awarded by the Robert M. Perry Schools of Banking board of trustees and presented at CMU.

"I've met new people, made many friends, and have gotten a lot of networking done," Gluch said. "I feel like the program has helped me go back to work with fresh ideas that have improved the bank and employee relationships."