Energized by The College of Business, Mary Simmons keeps NV Energy connected to its community
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Excellence is a key attribute of The College of Business at the University of Nevada, Reno. This quality of “being outstanding or extremely good” generally requires an attachment to some characteristic or activity to have any meaning. In the case of The College of Business, that excellence is instilled across the breadth of our academic programs in instruction, research and outreach. It continues as it describes our stakeholder including students, faculty, staff, supporters and alumni. This community of scholarship is constantly expanding and reflects a need for all those stakeholders to maintain awareness, vigilance and commitment so that excellence does not become fleeting. This publication is one way The College of Business and The College of Business Alumni Association work together to keep those stakeholders informed of why they can be justifiably proud of their College of Business and its distinction.

The quality of our academic programs is increasingly well known throughout the nation and world. With exchange partners in China, Germany, Poland and Mexico, the College has been expanding global awareness of our programs. Our Nevada Global Business Program allows our students to become College of Business and State of Nevada ambassadors as they study in Canada, the United Kingdom, New York, Singapore and Australia. Over 100 students participated last year. With a total enrollment of over 3,300 students in our undergraduate and graduate programs and over 700 students pursuing a business minor, those programs have an opportunity to continue to grow.

Across the State of Nevada, the Nevada Small Business Development Center continues a tradition of excellence in outreach to provide advice and assistance to business owners, or to those who want to be. Building on a practice of collaboration with other institutions the NSBDC and The College of Business are part of the economic development activities contributing to a robust and sustainable economy in the state.

Our outstanding faculty continue to make contributions across the breadth of our mission. There are a total of seventy-six full time faculty and numerous staff and professionals who contribute to excellence in all things that are expected from a college of our size and stature. Their research is leading edge and represents our commitment to the role of knowledge creation as a foundation of the best business programs in the world. That foundation informs us as we work with our students with the goal of building a next generation of global leaders.

The articles in this publication are meant for sharing. Tell your friends and coworkers, and maybe some total strangers, about the great activities taking place in the University of Nevada, Reno College of Business. Share the excellence.

Sincerely,

Gregory C. Mosier  
Dean, College of Business

Greetings Fellow Alumni and Friends!

I am excited to kick off the year by presenting you with the sixth annual issue of our magazine, Nevada Venture. The magazine was originally created and continues on as a means to keep all of you connected to and informed about the College, your fellow alumni and friends of the College, and related progress and achievements. COBAA’s mission is to support the College while also enriching the lives of alumni and friends by helping establish lifelong relationships between the College, its alumni and friends, and our community. With your support, COBAA is able to provide networking opportunities for students and members of the business community through various annual events such as Pack Picnics, Prepare for the Fair, our annual golf tournament and student scholarship opportunities. This magazine, along with the numerous events COBAA is involved with throughout the year, are just a few of the tools COBAA uses to support its mission and help build those lifelong relationships.

After completing my MBA (2014), I wanted to find ways to give back to the University and The College of Business and to stay connected with my fellow Alumni. I, along with so many others that have been part of the COBAA, have been able to build and create new relationships with alumni and facility that continue to have an impact on my personal and professional life. I encourage everyone who is looking for a way to get more involved with the College and COBAA to do so through participation in our events, through financial support or both. The best way to stay connected is through membership in COBAA and by following us on Facebook and LinkedIn. If you would like to consider membership or other involvement, please visit www.unr.edu/business/alumni-and-giving for more information regarding such opportunities.

As we continue to open the doors of the College and share the stories and current activities happening within its walls, we want to give an opportunity for our alumni and friends to share their stories, job promotions, and other significant life accomplishments. To help us continue to accomplish these goals, we would love to hear from you! Please email us at coba@unr.edu to let us know what content you enjoy seeing in the magazine, to pass along ideas regarding events/activities and to update us on what’s happening in your lives. These stories help build the foundation of the magazine and is the reason we’ve been able to successfully continue to publish great magazines with great stories and content.

Lastly, I would like to thank you for all of your past and continuing support and involvement. The success of the College is dependent upon support from all of you. I look forward to the upcoming year serving as COBAA’s President and to start another year of growth and outreach for the College of Business Alumni Association.

Sincerely,

Erika Saiz  
President of COBAA
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To find out more information about The College of Business, or exciting ways that you can support our students and programs, contact Mitch Klaich, Director of Development & Alumni Relations.

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mklaich@unr.edu  | www.unr.edu/business

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Getting the pulse on every aspect of her company and community is a top priority for Mary Simmons, vice president for business development and community strategy for NV Energy, and has been throughout her career.

“Mary is very much involved with all the employees, she knows everyone by name,” said Sarah Polito, senior corporate communications specialist, corporate communications for NV Energy. “She comes out of her office every day and talks to her team about what’s going on with NV Energy. I think that helps infuse a great deal of pride in the company.”

Simmons absorbed the management philosophy from colleagues over the years and has found it effective in her duties at NV Energy.

“If you sit in your office and read emails or talk on the phone all day, you don’t learn a lot about what’s going on,” Simmons said in an interview at NV Energy’s complex in South Reno. “I find it fascinating what you can learn when you walk down the hallway and talk to people.”

She extends those personal relationships to NV Energy’s customers and clients, willingly giving her expertise on any issue they may have. It is not uncommon for her to speak with someone one-on-one or even in front of a large group.

“People are very surprised when she answers her own phone,” Polito said.

Simmons explained that regardless of her role, she should be accessible to everyone, especially with customers and clients in the ever-changing and complex world of utilities.

Simmons started her career at NV Energy in 1985 when it was then still called Sierra Pacific Power Company. She has seen the company go through the peaks and valleys of the utility industry, including rebranding to NV Energy in 2008.

Ironically, when Simmons arrived at the utility company, she never envisioned staying long.

Simmons graduated from the University of Nevada, Reno College of Business in 1978 with a bachelor’s degree in business administration with an emphasis in accounting. Like many of her classmates, she figured a career in accounting was a logical choice and earned her CPA certification. She went to work for the Northern Nevada accounting firm, Kafoury & Armstrong, but after a while contemplated a different career path.

She had a few acquaintances from Sierra Pacific who expressed to her that it was a great place to work.

“A position came up and they were looking for someone with a CPA background that would round out the department from a financial standpoint,” Simmons said. “At first I thought this sounds kind of boring and figured I’d stay there two years maximum and then find something else.”

But as she gratefully admits, nothing could have been farther from the truth.

“I can say this 32 years later, I haven’t yet had a boring day as I’ve moved through several different departments,” Simmons said. “The industry is constantly changing. While it’s challenging, it’s also rewarding because you keep learning new things.”

One example of that change is the recently concluded Legislative Session, as Nevadans debated whether to reintroduce solar power into the utility landscape. Simmons said even in the aftermath of the session, research is still under way to determine if solar power still has a future for Nevada utility companies.

She says ultimately the utility has to do what’s best for NV Energy’s customers and adds even though it virtually has control of the utility market in Northern Nevada, it still carries a great deal of responsibility.

During her tenure at the utility, Simmons has served in several other capacities, including vice president for external affairs, vice president of rates and regulatory affairs, controller, and director of water policy and planning.

She also serves as secretary for NV Energy’s charitable foundation, the charitable arm of the company that grants funds to local organizations dedicated to the arts, health and human services and education. One of the foundation’s many benefactors is the University of Nevada, Reno, from Wolf Pack athletics to various scholarship programs. For instance, NV Energy has been a sponsor of the Governor’s Series, an annual academic and athletic competition between the University of Nevada, Reno and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Simmons also helps coordinate NV Energy’s community service endeavors. She lauded NV Energy’s employees whom she said collectively volunteered 37,000 hours to various kinds of community service.

In addition to her roles at NV Energy, she serves on the boards for other nonprofits, including the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada (EDAWN), the Reno Philharmonic, the Great Basin National Park Foundation and the UNR Foundation, the fundraising arm of the University of Nevada, Reno.

Simmons says community involvement has been one of the most important roles she has had in her career.

Mary Simmons
Photo courtesy University of Nevada, Reno
“I’ve been blessed to be able to connect with the local business community such as The Chamber and the economic development organizations,” Simmons said. “I’ve been able to see things not only from NV Energy’s perspective, but also be involved with people in the community as well.”

Simmons was awarded the university’s President’s Medal at the Spring 2017 Commencement Ceremonies. She indicated the award represents NV Energy’s continued support of university programs, including the construction of the new engineering building on campus.

Simmons has found the coursework she took while attending the College of Business at the University of Nevada, Reno beneficial at many times in her career.

“There were so many times when I was taking classes at UNR and I would think, ‘When I am ever going to use any of this stuff?’” Simmons said. “But I’ve found having that accounting background has been very helpful in my various roles at NV Energy.”

Simmons grew up in the northeastern Nevada mining town of Ely. Throughout her childhood, her parents and particularly her grandparents stressed education as a top priority to Simmons and her siblings.

Still, she had no idea what career path she wanted to follow until a family friend, a CPA in Las Vegas, playfully insisted she go into accounting. The idea intrigued her.

Simmons chose the University of Nevada, Reno partly because she had friends and her brother already at the university. She recalls it was a little intimidating coming from a small town to the vast college campus, but her time at the University of Nevada, Reno College of Business made it all worthwhile.

“It was a great experience and The College of Business was definitely the right choice for me,” Simmons said.

Simmons said she gives the University of Nevada, Reno a plug now and then whenever she has the opportunity. She commended the College of Business Dean Greg Mosier and the staff for developing the school into one of the top business programs in the nation.

“I always ask kids, ‘where do you want to go to school?’” Simmons said. “I always tell them UNR is a great place to go to school, and especially now that we see more opportunities for jobs and careers in the region. There’s also a lot of really great people and programs at The College of Business.”

Mary Simmons is the vice president for business development and community strategy for NV Energy, as well as a graduate of the University of Nevada, Reno’s College of Business. Photo by Brad Coman/Nevada Appeal
Building connections for a lifetime  by Rob Sabo

Tom Burns may have graduated from the College of Business at University of Nevada, Reno more than three decades ago, but the bonds formed with friends while attending the University remain as strong as the days when they were first forged.

Burns, president of Cragin & Pike Insurance in southern Nevada, has taken a trip with his college buddies every fall for the past 25 years to watch college football – often returning to Reno to root for the Wolf Pack on game day.

Other bonds formed while a student at University of Nevada, Reno run even deeper. Burns met his wife, Shelly, while attending the university. The two have been married for 31 years and have two adult children.

“I met my wife and my three best friends through my experiences at the University of Nevada, Reno,” Burns said. “We all moved to Las Vegas and moved each other into our first apartments and then into our first homes. Over the last 32 years we have celebrated the birth of our children, mourned the passing of loved ones, supported each other through life’s struggles, shared an occasional adult beverage, and have had many laughs along the way.”

The Burns both graduated in 1985. Tom earned his Bachelor of Science degree in accounting, while Shelly earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. They moved to southern Nevada soon after graduation to begin their careers – Tom Burns attended Bonanza High School and is a Las Vegas native.

Shelly Burns went on to earn her master’s degree in education and taught in the Clark County School District for 25 years as a literary specialist and instructional coach before retiring in 2015. Tom, meanwhile, worked in accounting for six years, including a three-year stint with Deloitte, before landing an entry-level job at Cragin & Pike in 1991.

Burns worked his way up the ladder to become a shareholder in the firm in 1998, and he was tabbed to be the company’s president in 2010. He works with a wide range of clients but primarily specializes in the construction industry. One of his favorite aspects of his job is having a front-row seat to see how his varied clientele make money.

“I really like dealing with people and watching how they run their businesses,” Burns said. “If I meet with 20 different people, there are 20 different ways they have found to put bread on the table. It’s pretty fascinating stuff.”

Burns also is tasked with managing the overall direction and corporate culture of the Cragin & Pike office, which has a total staff of 50.

“I spend a fair amount of time ensuring we have a good, receptive culture,” he said. “I am really big on culture and what it can do for a firm. I work on our culture, and the direction we are going as a firm. I am also one of the main faces of the firm, so I am also very active in the Las Vegas community.”

Burns is chairman of the board for Make-A-Wish Southern Nevada. He’s been involved with the organization for three years, and he also served on the board in the mid-1990s.

“I am really connected to the mission of Make-A-Wish and the power of what it can do,” he said. “It really provides a moment of joy for sick children and their families and helps them with what they are facing in a difficult time.”

Burns also was very socially active while attending the University of Nevada, Reno. He was a member of the Delta Sigma Pi professional business fraternity and the Beta Alpha Psi accounting and finance fraternity. His experiences in both organizations helped greatly when he eventually stepped out of college and began his journey into the workforce.

“Being in a fraternity really helps sharpen your interpersonal skills, which is important in business,” Burns said. “What you’ll find down the road is that you are not the only bright person in the room that understands the product. You have to learn how to differentiate yourself and explain to people why they should be doing business with you and not your competitors.”

Setting yourself apart is just one of the many challenges that comes with working in the highly competitive insurance industry. Burns said his background in accounting often gives him a leg up on many of his peers because they lack his breadth of financial acumen. Acquiring and maintaining talent – and clients – is another big task.

“We are constantly on the lookout for bright, talented people that fit into the way we do business here and bringing them along,” Burns said.

Burns landed at University of Nevada, Reno almost by happenstance. His primary choices for college were in Reno or the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and he wanted to step out of his comfortable environment and leave home. So he made the decision to move north and attend University of Nevada, Reno.

It proved to be a fortuitous decision. Burns credits his dedicated professors at the university for taking an interest in him and helping him succeed during his academic journey.

“Going to the University of Nevada, Reno exceeded my expectations,” he said. “Many of my professors took a personal interest in me and in their other students – and some of them weren’t even my professors. They looked after you and had your best interest at heart if you were earnest in your efforts. I don’t think you can get that same kind of personal experience at a bigger school.”

College, much like work and life in general, is truly what you make of it. Burns said one of the keys to success in life and in business is to always think big and don’t be afraid to fail. Too often, he said, young people place self-imposed limits on their dreams because of perceptions they have about themselves.

“Sometimes we sell ourselves short and underestimate what we perceive we can do,” he said. “Frankly, if you don’t fail sometimes, you are not doing anything.”
Global Business program has worldwide reach

When University of Nevada, Reno College of Business Dean Greg Mosier created the Nevada Global Business program in 2008, the program featured just one city.

That year, 18 College of Business students jumped at the chance to study international business in Toronto. Nearly a decade later the Nevada Global Business program has grown to five cities – Toronto, London, New York, Singapore and Sidney – and 105 students went on business trips this summer.

Mosier says the Nevada Global Business program was a necessary step in the evolution of the College of Business, especially for students majoring in international business.

"Many of our students seek careers in local and regional organizations that have a global presence, and the Nevada Global Business program provides them an opportunity to study in an environment that provides a cross-cultural and comparative experience," Mosier said. "At the time we created the program we offered an international business major, but it did not provide an opportunity to actually have an international experience. This program closed the loop on their international business education."

Jim McClenahan, director of career and corporate outreach for The College of Business and organizer of the program, said the insight gained from immersion into international business practices is one of the main benefits for students. It also can set them apart from their peers, he noted. In highly competitive hiring environments, sometimes it’s not enough to just have a business degree — demonstrated experience in a global environment can set University of Nevada, Reno College of Business graduates apart from their peers.

“Students have to show that they are not only competitive in Nevada and the United States, but that they also are competitive globally,” McClenahan said. “They understand what it’s like to go through customs, deal with people from a different country, and navigate around a city when they are not familiar with the language and culture of the people. It provides them with functional skills as well as very practical business skills.”

The Nevada Global Business Program has grown 483 percent from its first year through 2017, and the roster of cities continues to expand as well. In 2018, the College of Business expects to include a trip to Buenos Aires, and in 2019, it plans to add a trip to Cape Town — which would place Nevada business students studying on every habitable continent around the globe.

Students who travel to foreign countries typically visit College of Business corporate partners who have overseas offices, such as drinking fountain and emergency eyewash equipment maker Haws Corporation of Sparks, or rack-mounted power distribution manufacturer Server Technology of South Meadows.

Students conduct company visits every morning and afternoon to learn the challenges of American companies doing business in foreign countries.

“The countries we are in become our classrooms, and the business professionals we meet become our textbooks,” McClenahan said. “The most fascinating part of the program is that no matter how far away we are from Reno, we always find someone with a Nevada connection. It shows the students that the world is really a pretty small place, and they need to be prepared to work in it.”
The College of Business typically caps enrollment at 20 students for each trip to keep cohesion among travelers. In addition to spending a week abroad, students also spend four weeks in an online classroom prior to departure. The program originally included only graduate students, but it’s now open to undergraduate students at The College of Business as well.

Graduate students can receive up to six credits of classroom experience and only are gone from their job or home for a total of two weeks. McClenahan said that’s one of the reasons the program has proved so popular among students pursuing master’s degrees.

“It’s been hugely successful in helping them finish their degree faster,” he said.

London is the exception to the week-long format. Undergraduate students study for an entire month with professors from the University of Nevada, Reno along with students and one professor from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas’ Lee School of Business. Business students from University of Nevada, Las Vegas are welcome to attend any of the Nevada Global Business program trips, but the partnership on the London trip is strongest, McClenahan said.

The break in format provides business students with a more intense and immersive experience.

“Many undergraduate students don’t have the means or time to do a full semester abroad, so we created the London program as a four-week mini-immersive experience,” McClenahan said.

Dean Mosier says that immersion into different cultures and business environments often forces College of Business students to think on their feet — a trait that can serve them well throughout their careers.

“In many instances it is possible to observe the maturation the students’ experience,” Mosier said. “They are thrust into different cultures with different perspectives, and in some cases with a different language. Their problem-solving skills do not necessarily translate to those new environments. They have to begin to account for some entirely different expectations, and that expands their ability to think critically.

Scholarships are Lifeblood of Nevada Global Business Program

Scholarships are crucial to the success of the Nevada Global Business program.

For many University of Nevada, Reno students, finding ways to pay for tuition without mortgaging 10 to 20 years of their future to student loans is extremely challenging. These students simply lack the resources to undertake trips offered through the Nevada Global Business program.

Donors such as Server Technology, the Crystal Family Foundation and the Confidence Foundation have helped many students with undergraduate and graduate student scholarships.

Jim McClenahan, director of career and corporate outreach for The College of Business, said the college couldn’t run the Nevada Global Business program without outside help for students.

“A lot of our students need financial help,” McClenahan said. “Students can learn a lot of great things in business school. They learn accounting skills, or financial management and marketing skills, but sometimes students lack context of how these things are applied in business. These trips show them how to apply their learning in an international business and cultural context.”

“Oftentimes, conversations focus on what it’s like working for a Reno office when you are based in another country,” Mosier said.

“For students who are interested in working for those organizations, the program provides a great window into how global business works. For students who are looking at other opportunities, the skills and knowledge they acquire through the Nevada Global Business program are transferable to any organization.”

Students often grill expatriates about navigating the challenges of working and living in another country. For instance, Americans who work for Haws Corporation’s office in Singapore have very different working relationships with their headquarters than those who work for Microsoft’s office in the Malaysian metropolis.

“They are very different businesses, and how they communicate back to their headquarters in the United States is different as well,” McClenahan said. “Our students learn about the challenges, rules and regulations of interacting with those different cultures, as well as issues associated with different time zones.”

Take Server Technologies as a prime example of scheduling challenges. With offices in Reno, Hong Kong, Singapore, New York and London, there’s only one time of day where executives from all locations can all meet virtually for a conference call—and even then it’s 10 p.m. for someone and 6 a.m. for another.

As the Nevada Global Business program continues to grow, it becomes more time-consuming for The College of Business staff to find partner corporations in new cities, as well as line up housing, travel and other crucial aspects of the program. But the program remains an integral element of the degree programs offered through The College of Business.

“This program helps us keep pace with best practices of our peer and aspirant colleges of business around the United States that already have robust international business study programs in place,” Mosier said.
What exactly does a third-party logistics company (3PL) do? Simply put, the management and facilitation of the movement and storage of goods. A 3PL may offer a single service such as transportation or warehouse storage, or it can be an integrated package of services capable of managing an entire supply chain. That is exactly what ITS Logistics has done, and done well, since its inception in December 1999—homegrown right here Reno.

THE BEGINNING

The three original founders of ITS were all Nevada-born, and attended the University of Nevada, Reno before starting their careers in their chosen fields.

Dan Allen, CFO, received a degree in accounting from The College of Business and worked for the accounting firm Deloitte in taxation and then for nine years at Grant Thornton in assurance.

Darryl Bader, president of warehouse and distribution, earned his degree in logistics from The College of Business. He moved to the Bay Area to work for a company that provided manufacturing and distribution for customers including Apple, Adobe and Microsoft. He then returned to Reno and worked for a national 3PL as general manager.

Jeff Lynch, founder and principal, attended the University of Nevada, Reno before leaving to pursue a career in logistics. He worked for both a small family transportation company and one of the largest transportation and logistics companies in the U.S., ending as an executive vice president.

In 1999 Jeff decided he was done working for someone else, and reached out to Darryl and Dan to see if they were interested in starting up a new logistics company in their hometown. They agreed, and formed ITS Logistics as equal partners. They hit the ground running and signed their first dedicated contract with CLIF Bar/New Life Bakery and acquired 40,000 square feet of office and warehouse space and two trucks. They became a $1 million company in the first full year.

ITS Logistics continued to grow and add service lines with more trucks, warehouses, skilled employees and technology, working with companies like Starbucks, Amazon, Kellogg’s, Ralston, the U.S. Navy and Mercedes-Benz—most of which are still important customers to this day.

ITS LOGISTICS NOW

Today, ITS Logistics has more than 520 employees and has continued to expand both its service offerings and geographical footprint. ITS offers three full 3PL service lines that include:

**Dedicated Transportation**

The backbone of ITS, this asset-based fleet specializes in long-term, dedicated operations that move freight daily for Fortune 500 companies such as Starbucks, Tesla and Mercedes-Benz, as well as expedited line-haul for companies such as DHL and OnTrac. This division has found its niche by creating unique and “outside of the box” trucking solutions,
combined with the latest equipment and some of the industry’s best and safest drivers. The fleet division is headquartered in Sparks but has additional facilities in the Pacific Northwest, northern and southern California, and Phoenix, Ariz.

**Warehousing and Distribution**

In 2016, ITS consolidated from five separate locations across the Reno/Sparks area and expanded its corporate offices and warehouse and distribution center into a newly remodeled 630,000-square-foot campus in Sparks that was formerly the distribution center for General Motors. With this AIB-certified food grade facility and a focus on custom-engineered solutions and cutting-edge technology, ITS handles more than 40 customers and provides some of the best 3PL services in the state. Not only is Nevada a business-friendly state, but the Reno/Sparks area is at the intersection of U.S. 395 and Interstate 80. That allows for next-day ground service anywhere in the western United States — which makes this a great location for manufacturing and distribution.

**Freight Brokerage**

The Freight Brokerage service line really took off in January 2013 when they promoted Mike Crawford to head the division. It was very small in the first year, but has been on an accelerated rate of growth ever since. The division broke $70 million in revenue in 2016 and was named the #60 Top Freight Brokerage firm in the country by *Transport Topics* magazine (out of 14,000 registered brokers). The Brokerage division operates in the United States, Mexico and Canada offering traditional services like truckload, less-than-truckload, intermodal, rail and transportation management, and has recently found great success with their enhanced drayage and dedicated service offerings. Last year, the Brokerage division expanded into the entire fourth floor of 50 West Liberty St., a strategic location at the intersection of downtown Reno and Midtown, and within two miles of the University of Nevada, Reno.

**ITS Logistics and the University of Nevada**

All three founders attended the University of Nevada, Reno and the education that they received on campus started the path that led to the founding of ITS Logistics. But the ties run deeper than that. The senior leadership team is full of Nevada graduates. Director of IT Dave Espinosa received his undergrad degree and Master of Science in Information Systems; Director of Marketing Patrick McFarland graduated from the Reynolds School of Journalism, and even worked for the University as Art Director of Nevada Silver & Blue for seven years; Director of Sales for Warehouse and Distribution Kasia Wenker received her Bachelor of Science in Management and MBA in Supply Chain; Industrial Engineer and Network Design Kent Bergantz, received his Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and an MBA; and the list goes on and on (SEE SIDEBAR). In fact, ITS has Nevada grads in every department of the company, from warehouse and distribution to accounting to IT to HR to Freight Brokerage.

President of Freight Brokerage Mike Crawford has a special connection to the University of Nevada, Reno. Not only is he a graduate, but was also a walk-on to the Nevada Wolf Pack football team. He ended his college career as team captain and MVP of the Las Vegas Bowl, before being drafted into the NFL. He played three years for the Miami Dolphins and Minnesota Vikings before deciding to walk away from football in 2002. In 2016 he was also inducted into the Nevada Athletics Hall of Fame.

Crawford has continued to build that link to the University of Nevada, Reno and has hired almost 30 Nevada grads over the last two years, as well as a handful of former Wolf Pack athletes. In fact, ITS’ Brokerage division is currently hiring four to six new employees per month and hopes that ITS/Nevada connection continues to flourish. If you are a current Nevada student or graduate and looking for an exciting opportunity in a global trillion-dollar industry—right in our own back yard, contact Paul Brashier, Director of Operations at pbrashier@its4logistics.com today!
An award for outstanding teaching in The College of Business has been established in honor of the late Willem “Wim” Houwink, a professor of economics in the University of Nevada, Reno College of Business from 1957 to 1983. Additional contributions in memory of the widely respected and admired professor are being accepted to create a scholarship endowment for students at the University whose studies include travel to or from foreign countries.

Born in Meppel, Holland in 1920, Wim excelled in both athletics and academics and was the youngest graduate in his high school class with the highest grade point average. He began his undergraduate studies at the University of Rotterdam, but his education was derailed by the arrival of World War II. During the war, Wim was a member of the Dutch underground resistance and was arrested by the Gestapo in 1942 and interned in the Nazi-controlled Dachau concentration camp from 1943 to 1945. He survived Dachau, and the experience instilled in him a respect for moral strength and character that defined the remainder of his life and career.

Houwink earned his doctorate in 1947 from the Netherlands School of Economics, where he worked for Professor Jan Tinbergen, the first person to receive the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences. Houwink first came to Nevada in 1949 to visit a friend, and his credentials as a student of Tinbergen earned him an invitation to give a talk to the University’s Department of Economics. After a stint in espionage behind the Iron Curtain, he was granted entry into the United States through a congressional bill signed by President Truman and became a U.S. citizen. He then worked six years with what is now Citibank on Wall Street and returned to Nevada in 1957 to accept a teaching position in the University’s new College of Business.

At Nevada, Professor Houwink was an energetic and engaged faculty member who maintained lifelong friendships with many of his students. He played a leading role in launching the Nevada Business Review, served on the Economic Education in Public Schools Committee, became chairman of the Department of Economics, established the University’s Honors Program and was a visiting professor in Turkey, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, England, Egypt and Mexico. He lectured throughout the United States on international economics and free enterprise. In 1983, Houwink left Nevada to take a position at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, where he became one of the first westerners to teach free market economics in China. In 2010, he was recognized as one of the top 29 most influential overseas experts on China. After more than two decades of teaching in the country, Houwink retired. He was living in Walla Walla, Wash., when he died on March 25, 2016, at the age of 95.

In the wake of Professor Houwink’s death, the University received many donations in his memory from former students, colleagues and community members who had known him as an extraordinary mentor and friend. The first project to be funded by these gifts was the Willem Houwink Memorial Award for Teaching Excellence Endowment in The College of Business, which will be presented for the first time in the 2018-2019 academic year. Designed to honor Professor Houwink’s commitment to academic achievement, ethics and civic engagement, the award will be given to professors nominated for their professional skill, demonstrated understanding of the importance of moral strength in human relationships, and passion for mentoring students to become leaders in a global economy.

In addition to the teaching endowment, memorial gifts are being used to create an endowed scholarship fund to help University of Nevada, Reno students either going to or coming from countries abroad. This will honor Professor Houwink’s work to give students a deeper understanding of the global community in which they live. Once these gifts total $12,500, a former student and friend of Houwink’s who became director of the Nevada Department Commerce, Larry Struve ’64 (political science), along with this wife Colleen ’69 (English), ’76 M.A. (English), have committed to match those gifts to create a $25,000 endowment fund. This will allow a scholarship to be awarded each year in perpetuity to students who exemplify Professor Houwink’s commitment to moral strength, rigorous pursuit of knowledge and the desire to better understand other peoples and cultures that is a building block for peace and harmony among nations.

In June 2016, a number of Houwink’s lifelong friends gathered in Reno to celebrate his life. “The prevailing memory of Wim centered not on the specifics of what he taught us but on how he made us feel confident, capable and purposeful. It significantly enhanced our careers and life choices,” said Larry Struve.

To contribute to the Willem Houwink Memorial Endowed Scholarship Fund in The College of Business, please contact Mitch Klaich, director of development, 775-682-6490 or mklaich@unr.edu.

The late Willem “Wim” Houwink, who was a professor of economics in the University of Nevada, Reno College of Business from 1957 to 1983, is seen relaxing in this family photo. the Willem Houwink Memorial Award for Teaching Excellence Endowment in The College of Business is named in his honor.
You'd expect a basketball player for the University of Nevada, Reno team that made it all the way to NCAA Sweet 16 (2003-2004) would be brimming with confidence.

But entering the business world, requires a whole different type of confidence.

Garry Hill-Thomas, co-owner of Pink Hill Properties, LLC, with basketball teammate Kevinn Pinkney, entered the University of Nevada, Reno College of Business to be prepared for whatever professional life threw at him.

“It gave me a lot of confidence,” said Hill-Thomas, who graduated from The College of Business in 2015. “It allowed me to meet a lot of different people doing a lot of different things (in the community).”

A large part of his studies for his Masters of Business Administration degree involved networking with fellow students and professors. Those contacts continue to help him build his businesses.

As he’s transitioned from student to businessman, Hill-Thomas and Pinkney are giving back to the community and university.

Hill-Thomas and Pinkney, who continues to play professional basketball with an Israeli team, already have a track record of giving back to the community.

“Both Kevinn and I love it here,” Hill-Thomas said. “We’ve both made Reno our home.”

In 2010, the pair worked with the Children’s Cabinet, Inc., to found the Nevada C.C. Wolverines basketball program to help children develop social, athletic and academic skills.

Hill-Thomas also played professional basketball before returning to Reno. He now serves as assistant coach with the Reno Bighorns. He lives full-time in Reno with his wife and two sons.

As their first development project, Pinkney and Hill-Thomas are transforming an eyesore across from the university into modern student housing and a gathering place for students.

The Towers at Pink Hill, which is under construction on North Virginia at 14th Street, is a four-story, mixed-use building that will add 23 units to student-housing options and commercial space on the ground floor.

The project is on three lots that formerly included a boarded-up house, an alley, and an open lot used for parking.

The project got a little behind due to the record-breaking winter in the area, but was expected to be move-in ready in early September.

Getting to this point took extensive planning and negotiations, something The College of Business gave Hill-Thomas the knowledge to manage.

The business partners first noticed the weed-infested block across from the neatly managed university as a sad contrast.

“We just wanted to do something nice for the university. To give something back,” Hill-Thomas said in a previous interview. “It was tough driving by and seeing one side of the street looking nice and the other looking sad.”

What at first seemed like a problem that could be solved with a few phone calls and financing, turned into a three-year battle.

They purchased two of the offending parcels and discovered zoning restrictions blocked their plans. The west side of North Virginia Street was zoned for single-family homes.

“It took many, many phone calls, lunch meetings, pledges, begging,” Hill-Thomas said.

Through several months, the city worked with them through layers of red tape to rezone their lots to multifamily and mixed use.

But the victory was short-lived. Their lots were next to a home, creating another obstacle.

“Come to find out, if it’s next to a single-family home, you can’t build multifamily next to it,” he said.

“We explained what we planned to do; what we planned to bring to the area.”

In a year and a half working with the city, the officials caught their vision.

With the city on board, the entire block was rezoned to allow mixed, multifamily and commercial development.

“Within a couple weeks, a couple student-housing development companies literally bought the entire (remaining) block,” Hill-Thomas said.

When complete, the 23 units, which range from studio to four-bedroom, will serve student needs.

Greater Nevada Credit Union, which provided financing for the project, is set to occupy half of the commercial space.

The remaining space will be filled with what Hill-Thomas calls a three-restaurant concept that the business partners envisioned.

The goal is to build the social side of life for students attending a major college campus, to provide an easily accessible place to gather after games, meet friends and eat, he said.

“Many students don’t have the luxury of cars” so they need easy walking access to places to gather and get food.

Pink Hill will offer a café/deli concept, a modern twist to a pizza place, and an ice cream sandwich shop.

It’s all designed with the needs of students and their families in mind.

“We wanted to create a safe environment, a newer environment,” Hill-Thomas said. “A lot of housing around here are older buildings.

“It’s also a place for parents to leave their kid and feel it’s a safer environment as they drive home.”

Despite the difficulties at the start of the Pink Hill project, the experience has only whet the appetite of Pinkney and Hill-Thomas.

“We plan to continue this and continue to grow,” Hill-Thomas said.

Garry Hill-Thomas, left and Kevinn Pinkney, partners in Pink Hill Properties, LLC are seen at the construction site of The Towers at Pink Hill. Hill-Thomas is a 2015 graduate of The college of Business. Photo courtesy 120 West
Helping people plan their financial future isn’t just a job to University of Nevada, Reno graduates Kyle McCann and Benson Mathews. It’s a privilege. A responsibility. A calling.

“We want our clients to understand what is going on, understand their plan, understand their investments,” McCann said.

It’s this belief in the importance of clear, honest, straightforward and ethical financial planning that brought McCann and Mathews together to form a new firm: Vantage Wealth Planning.

“Our passion has always been doing the planning that gets people to a better place in their lives,” Mathews said.

Becoming a financial planning team has been an aspiration for both McCann and Mathews for a long time. They’ve been friends since middle school, attended McQueen High School and were roommates while McCann completed his undergraduate degree in finance at The College of Business at the University of Nevada, Reno.

“My time at the university gave me the knowledge, tools, skills, and ethics to build my career,” said McCann, who also served as the president of the College of Business Alumni Association from 2015-2016. “The business school’s emphasis on integrity helped form my standards and has stayed with me every day.”

After McCann completed his master’s degree in finance from The College of Business in 2005, the two friends stayed connected as their careers took McCann to Cincinnati and Mathews to Seattle.

“We were always bouncing ideas off each other—trying to figure out the best industry standard or the best way to approach a specific planning technique,” Mathews said. “We’re both so like-minded from a planning perspective, and we’ve always had it in the back of our minds that it would be a wonderful opportunity for us to form a business together.”

Vantage Wealth Planning differentiates itself by focusing on three key aspects: fiduciary responsibility, a fee-only structure, and Certified Financial Planner accreditation.

Both McCann and Mathews are fiduciaries and have a legal responsibility to act in the best interests of their clients and to put their clients’ interests above their own.

“This isn’t just a legal requirement for us,” Mathews said. “It is part of our DNA.”

The fiduciary standard for McCann and Mathews is different from the suitability rule under which other financial brokers operate. For example, according to the fiduciary standard, an advisor is prohibited from recommending investments that may result in higher commissions for the advisor or his or her investment firm.

On the other hand, the suitability rule only requires that brokers make recommendations they reasonably believe to be suitable for the client. The broker does not have to place his or her interests below that of the client.

This may sound like a nuance in language, but it can mean the difference between getting average financial planning advice and having a trusted planner make the right decisions for a client’s unique situation. Another big difference is that under the suitability rule, a broker’s duty is to the broker-dealer he or she works for, not necessarily the client served. Under the fiduciary standard, the advisor is bound to the client.

To truly fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities, McCann and Mathews founded Vantage to be a fee-only firm. They charge a flat rate instead of taking compensation from commissions on investment transactions.

“Basically, it takes a biased, conflicted situation off the table entirely because it doesn’t matter to us what specific products our clients are invested in,” McCann said. “What matters to us is that our clients are in the right product or mix of products to achieve their goals.”

While fee-only firms are relatively uncommon in Reno, McCann and Mathews both experienced the benefits of this type of compensation structure during their more than two decades of combined experience.

“We want there to be clarity,” Mathews said. “Our clients know upfront what they’re paying us and don’t have to worry whether our recommendations are in their best interest or not. We are sitting on the same side of the table.”

The final piece of Vantage’s value system is the Certified Financial Planner accreditation. Both McCann and Mathews are recognized by the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, and as such completed extensive training and experience requirements and are held to rigorous ethical standards. This puts both men in a small, elite category of financial planning professionals—there are only 315 Certified Financial Planner practitioners in the state of Nevada.

“This distinction is more than a certificate on a wall—it’s an assurance of quality and ethics,” Mathews said.

As Certified Financial Planners, both McCann and Mathews take a long-range look at their client’s financial strategy.

“Is your advisor doing more than simply allocating your portfolio?” Mathews asked. “Are they thinking about things like your estate and legacy plan? Are they focusing on how you’re going to get your income once you retire? Are they planning for the unforeseen, the what-ifs in life? Are they truly doing comprehensive financial planning? We look at our clients’ entire picture and how the pieces work together.”

With those three principles in place, McCann and Mathews are excited to launch Vantage and provide a high level of service to their clients.

“Vantage allows us the ability to provide objective, thoughtful, independent advice to individuals with the backing of very seasoned organizations,” McCann said. “We’ve partnered with larger organizations such as Morningstar Investment Services and Schwab Institutional, which will allow us to leverage their expertise in certain areas. We’re a team.”

With those resources in place, McCann and Mathews are ready for the opportunity to work together full-time, helping people plan for a secure and comfortable future.

“We go the extra mile and the more difficult route because it is what is in our clients’ best interest,” McCann said. “It is what is going to ultimately allow them to achieve their most important goals: Their peace of mind and the ability to go and do what they want to do in retirement without having to worry.”
The Edwards Jones firm has offered financial advice to clients in Reno for more than 30 years. There are more than 45 branches in the Reno-Sparks area and many more throughout the state of Nevada.

Ingrained into the community, the company has drawn many of its advisors from The University of Nevada, Reno College of Business.

“We feel that not only is it important to recruit local talent, but it is important to support the community we live in,” Neil Saiz, a financial advisor with Edward Jones, said. “I first learned about Edward Jones while going through the University.”

Saiz graduated from the University of Nevada, Reno with a degree in sociology who also took classes through the College of Business.

Edward Jones participates in The College of Business internship, which has helped many students navigate the job market after they graduate.

“It is really a great way to get exposure to the industry,” Saiz said. The College of Business also provided him with the tools and resources he needed to launch his career.

“The College of Business did a great job helping me and directing me through the process,” Saiz said. “I think that it was very influential in my success.”

Dan Dooley, a financial advisor for Edward Jones for 11 years, agrees. He received both his bachelor’s degree and his MBA from The College of Business.

“We have a lot of graduates of Nevada, which is pretty incredible,” Dooley said.

He explained that Edward Jones creates partnerships with not only The College of Business but also with the other colleges through campus career fairs.

“We found (the University of Nevada, Reno) to be a good source of quality candidates for possible employment with our firm,” Dooley said.

According to Dooley, the relationships that he formed during his time at the University of Nevada, Reno are the most valuable aspects of going through The College of Business.

“I think that was probably one of the best values of going through the Nevada program,” he said.

Edward Jones financial advisor John Boyd has been at the company for 24 years. He graduated from The College of Business with a degree in accounting in 1988. Boyd recruited Dan Dooley to Edward Jones when Dooley was a student.

“Edward Jones is always looking for quality candidates that are local, who have grown up in the community and are interested in putting roots in the community,” Boyd said.

Edward Jones gives recent graduates the ability to start their own practice in their community.

“What we are looking for in terms of candidates are people who want to build a career who enjoy the entrepreneurial side of it,” Boyd said.

For more information about Edward Jones, visit www.edwardjones.com.
A small business owner has an idea for expansion, but is not sure how to finance it. A mother of three who makes homemade jam would like to sell it commercially, but is intimidated by becoming an entrepreneur. A traveler sees a unique business franchise in another area and would like to replicate it in Nevada. A student’s research has led to the development of a new product, but he doesn’t know how to turn it into a viable business. Where do they go?

They go to the Nevada Small Business Development Center, headquartered in the University of Nevada, Reno College of Business. SBDCs are primarily funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration and receive matching funds from universities, governments and private businesses, including banks like Bank of Nevada and Wells Fargo in Nevada. They offer a variety of assistance to potential, new and expanding small businesses. In the year ending Sept. 30, 2016, the Nevada SBDC helped start 125 new businesses in the state. Their work helped create more than 475 jobs, and their clients realized more than $56 million in new financing.

Teach a man to fish

The majority of the Nevada SBDC’s services, including one-on-one counseling, business management training and local economic and demographic research, are offered free of charge. The center’s focus is on coaching small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs to be successful for the long-term in Nevada’s business climate.

“It is very important that each client develops their own business plan,” State Director Sam Males (’76 MBA), who founded the office in 1985, said. “We are not creating the plan for them—we’re talking them through it and coaxing out their own ideas. We encourage them to think about what will make their business successful: Are they different than the competition? Are they planning to locate in an area with a lot of potential for growth? We teach them to think like business people, because they need to keep thinking that way and planning that way throughout the life of their business.”

With 14 offices throughout the state, Nevada SBDC counselors guide their clients through the challenges posed by starting a business in a particular geographic area.

“The needs of our rural clients are much different than our clients in Reno and Las Vegas,” Males said. “We talk them through setting up online sales, how to market to people online, because they’re not going to be able to rely on foot traffic like our urban clients can. We also offer financial expertise—which banks tend to finance what types of projects and how to prepare business plans that will increase their chances of being accepted for a loan. These relationships can be difficult to navigate.”

From students to success stories

In addition to counselors with professional business experience, the Nevada SBDC’s headquarters on the University of Nevada, Reno campus employs students from The College of Business. Depending on their level of experience, these student workers serve as demographic researchers, data analysts and marketing consultants, and often sit in on client meetings. By the time they graduate, students are able to add several years of business advising experience to their resumes.

One such student is Jennifer Ott (’13 MBA). Ott, who had a background in chemistry and experience in marketing and communications, was hired as a graduate assistant at the Nevada SBDC, where she worked as a counselor and project manager. At the same time, she created a business plan for her biochemical startup, EscaZyme, with one-on-one mentoring from Nevada SBDC Director of Counseling Rod Jorgensen. She entered the plan into the University’s Sontag Entrepreneurship Competition, an annual challenge established by University alumnus Rick Sontag ’66 M.S. (physics) to encourage students to develop business ideas. Ott’s plan garnered the $50,000 grand prize.

“Rod was a grounding influence. He is a finance guy, not a scientist, so he was essential in helping me state my ideas in terms that lay people could understand,” Ott said. “At the Nevada SBDC, I learned that the smartest thing you can do is work with people who can expose your weaknesses. If you just surround yourself with people who think like you and agree with you, you never grow and improve. The Nevada SBDC is great because they offer an informed set of eyes and a fresh perspective.”

In addition to managing EscaZyme, which made its first sales in 2016, Ott now serves as the project manager at the University’s Desert Farming Initiative, a program created through a partnership between the College of Business, the Nevada SBDC, the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources and the Cooperative Extension and now managed by CABNR. The DFI uses urban greenhouses and hoop houses to train students and the community in agricultural entrepreneurship. Ott is frequently contacted by community members who are hoping to start farms, create food products or open restaurants in Nevada.

“We are in such a unique growing climate here, so we can’t take growing practices from California or any other state and apply them to Nevada. By having a farm and using a variety of production methods, we can help both local farmers and the industry at large, we can provide education and training and we can talk with producers about marketing and sales,” Ott said.

When those entrepreneurs need help developing and planning for their businesses, Ott refers them straight back to the Nevada SBDC.

To learn more about the Nevada Small Business Development Center, visit www.nsbdc.org or contact the office’s Reno headquarters at 800-240-7094. To make a donation in support of the Nevada SBDC, please contact Mitch Klaich, director of development, at 775-682-6490 or mklaiach@ unr.edu.
ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

COBAA fundraiser brings members for fun day in the Reno sun by Erika Saiz

The College of Business Alumni Association (COBAA) held their 26th annual golf tournament this past spring.

The 2017 tournament was held on a sunny Friday afternoon in June. Those in attendance enjoyed a barbecue lunch, followed by an afternoon “scramble” on the Wolf Run Golf Course in Reno. After the round of golf, teams relaxed and ate, while some lucky individuals won raffle prizes. Everything from his and her gift baskets to tickets to a Giant’s game in San Francisco was up for grabs. The proceeds we raised will be used by COBAA to support their mission of developing relationships with The College of Business and its students.

The funds raised from the golf tournament enable COBAA to follow its mission statement through support of student organizations, sponsorship of networking events, the college’s Career & Internship Fair, and funding of business student scholarships. Highlights from last spring’s student funding include COBAA providing the funds for the student groups ENACTUS, Business Student Council and the College’s Management and Human Resources Association.

ENACTUS used the funds to help fund their international project in Sri Lanka. The Business Student Council used the funds for its Leader Event, which is designed to create opportunities for members to meet and learn from exciting individuals at the forefront of their respective fields. The Management and Human Resources Association used the funds to get more quality guest speakers to help students get more exposure to career-oriented experiences and opportunities. This is in addition to COBAA’s continued support of the College of Business through collaboration with the college on special projects. Using these opportunities, the association sees the unique opportunities to help students with their future success.

The value of the annual golf tournament extends beyond the money raised since participants come from a wide array of the Northern Nevada business community. College of Business Alumni and other members of the community are provided with an excellent opportunity for networking in a relaxed and informal setting.

The success of the golf tournament hinges on the support from the participants and corporate sponsors. This year’s winning team included team players from the Argentum Group. COBAA would like to give a big thank you to all the participants and attendants. A very special thank you goes to our sponsors: Wells Fargo, Eide Bailly, New West Distribution, and Port of Subs. The continued support of the corporate partners and Alumni is highly appreciated.

COBAA hopes to continue to have successful tournaments in the coming years. A continued effort will be made to increase the positive impact on The College of Business, the students, as well as the community.

Save the date for next year. The 27th annual golf tournament will take place June 1, 2018, at Wolf Run Golf Course. For more information about participation or sponsorship opportunities, please contact the association at cobaa@unr.edu or visit www.cobaa.org.

We hope you can join us next spring for the 27th annual COBAA Golf Tournament.

University of Nevada, Reno
College of Business alumni pause for a photo during the 2017 COBAA golf tournament held in June at Wolf Run Golf Course. Photo courtesy COBAA
THANK YOU CORP

If you would like more information about the Corporate Partners Program, please contact Mitch Klaich, Director of Development (mklaich@unr.edu) or Jim McClenahan, Director of Corporate Outreach (jmcclenahan@unr.edu)

HTTP://ALUMNI.UNR.EDU/CHAPTERS/CHAPTER.ASPX?ID=11

$30 Annual Membership Fee
$500 Lifetime Membership Fee

For more information about joining the COBAA or becoming a board member, contact Chapter President Erika V. Saiz (erikaibaibarriaga@yahoo.com)

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An independent chapter of the Nevada Alumni Association

The College of Business
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO
If you would like more information about the Corporate Partners Program, please contact Mitch Klaich, Director of Development (mklaich@unr.edu) or Jim McClenahan, Director of Corporate Outreach (jmcclenahan@unr.edu)
Textbook Brokers:  
“**We BOOK the Pack!**”

by Mark Mazurowski

When fourth generation Nevada alumnus Janessa McCombs ('07) first met her husband Jeffrey Loftin, the meeting was more comic book than textbook. A little nervous, Jeffrey made small talk and in the process said something nice about Janessa’s sister. Practical and literal, Janessa gave her sister an actual push towards Jeffrey and suggested that he take her out. It was a mess that took months and one awkward sister-to-sister talk to completely untangle.

While studying marketing in Utah in 2007, Jeffrey began working for BBA Solutions, a college retail store operator. An agile company founded in 1996 by two friends named James, Barnes and Batcheller, BBA Solutions now services over 100 colleges and universities in 24 states. With an early emphasis in software and technology development for the college retail store environment, BBA Solutions has also grown to service more than 30 on-campus bookstores as their “white-label” provider.

Jeffrey and Janessa visited dozens of college towns together, looking for a student population that could sincerely benefit from the options that an off-campus textbook store can provide. There was even a spreadsheet showing student population versus textbook prices and opportunities for growth. When Jeffrey visited the University of Nevada, Reno for the first time, Reno rocketed to the top of the list of schools with students in need of textbook options; Janessa was pleased to say the least.

“I saw Reno immediately for what it is: a community in transition, with outstanding resources, an ideal size, grit and independence with a techy future-focus. Reno is an absolute gem and we saw immediately that we could provide a value to TMCC students and hoped to grow within two years to service the University of Nevada, Reno as well.”

After a wedding rapidly followed by six months of intensive management training inside a BBA-operated Textbook Brokers branded store that services Arkansas State University, Jeffrey and Janessa were off on an adventure of entrepreneurship. Opening Textbook Brokers TMCC in April of 2010, Reno students responded with vigor to the availability of local options in the local textbook marketplace.

“We broke all the records,” Janessa said, explaining that in 14 years of opening stores, Textbook Brokers TMCC saw greater acceptance and turnout from students, proportionally, than any store in the company’s history to that time. “College towns in the south and east, even in the Bay Area, may have two or three off-campus textbook stores. Reno students were excited that we were here to do one thing: give them every book they wanted, cheap.”

Within six months Textbook Brokers TMCC was seeing so many students from TMCC and the University of Nevada, Reno that a second location became essential.

“Developing commercial space near the University of Nevada, Reno is so important. BBA Solutions services institutions of higher learning all over America, and we have seen how commercial and retail space adjacent to the campus strengthens the connection between the citizens of the community and the students on campus. Private development can make a beautiful link, a gateway between the community and the campus itself,” Jeffrey explains, adding the local transit authority is discussing plans to eliminate his University of Nevada, Reno location.

“Private (retail) development can make a beautiful link, a gateway between the community and the campus itself.”

— Jeffrey Loftin, Co-owner BBA Solutions at UNR

“Offering cheap rental prices and providing a free way for students to defer paying for their textbooks for up to 30 days after the start of class; those are the two unique things that Textbook Brokers offers that students responded to quickly,” says Janessa. “BookNV.com has been a great way to help students understand our commitment to making textbooks cheap, rentable on mobile, with free shipping, everything students now expect. And while our website, BookNV.com, is growing—we would hate to see our UNR location, which services literally thousands of students, plowed under to make an overpriced bus stop when there’s already a bus stop across the street. RTA funds would go much further expanding the existing stop rather than plowing under 11 businesses and displacing 80-plus commercial and residential tenants.”

Textbook Brokers UNR is an official corporate sponsor of The College of Business, and employs over 50 seasonal employees, which are all University of Nevada, Reno students. Developing an internship program where students from the College of Business can work a fun job, near campus, and get real world experience in accounting, supervision, supply chain management, and retail management is one of TBB-UNR Manager Mark Mazurowski’s initiatives for 2017. “People, I believe, underestimate the scope of business experience that a vibrant entrepreneurial store such as Textbook Brokers can provide.”

Mark, University of Nevada, Reno pre-law, explains how he enjoys the challenge of servicing thousands of his classmates from the scrappy location across the street from campus.

“Being a corporate sponsor is one of the best things we’ve ever done. There is no other company in town that can say that 100 percent of their customers are current University of Nevada, Reno students. Even when we operate on-campus stores, we can’t say that because there we know that alumni make up an important portion of that picture. But Rent Now, Pay Later at BookNV.com — getting your textbooks cheaper than Amazon with free shipping, for UNR classes — let’s just say that even the best alum DO come knocking for textbooks, but it’s not pleasure reading, it’s usually for their kids and grandkids.”
A Night for Women in Business and Entrepreneurship by Madi Weingardt

University of Nevada, Reno’s College of Business and The Ozmen Center for Entrepreneurship put on A Night for Women in Business and Entrepreneurship, this past May. The event was designed to inspire current and future business women in the community.

Keynote speaker Joelle K. Jay, an award-winning executive coach and author, gave a talk on her personal business experiences. Jay included a handout from her book “The Inner Edge: The Top 10 Practices of Personal Leadership” with her top recommendations. Jay also emphasized the importance of having and maintaining one’s own vision.

“The question here is, ‘What do you want?’” Jay said. “Briefly, review your vision so your focus will be aimed in the right direction. Take a step back and take a panoramic view of your life.”

The Women’s Initiative strives to empower female businesses in the community and build a stronger network for women entrepreneurs. Throughout May, the Ozmen Center held a speaker series designed to inspire and connect students with local business and community leaders.

As a business owner herself, Reno Mayor Hillary Schieve also supports the Women’s Initiative. Mayor Schieve owns Clothes Mentor and a Plato’s Closet franchise. Schieve was unable to appear at this year’s event, but she did send a message for her fellow aspiring business women.

“Female-owned businesses are growing exponentially in our country right now,” Schieve said. “Some of the fastest-growing industries in women-owned businesses are health care, scientific and technical services and retail trade. Women can often provide a new perspective to help make businesses more successful and profitable.”

Joelle K. Jay, an award-winning executive coach and author, discussing her personal business experiences at the Night for Women in Business and Entrepreneurship. Photo courtesy University of Nevada, Reno

From a young age, it was embedded into me the idea that knowledge is power. This drove me to do well in school and excel in all activities that I participated in. Growing up with a single mother, I was the first of my siblings to attend a four-year university, and will be the first in my family to graduate with a degree in higher education. My family’s influence has led me onto a successful path, and the opportunities at the University Nevada have gotten me even further in my future endeavors.

As a bright-eyed freshman, I immediately immersed myself into student life by joining the Business Student Council, club volleyball, and becoming involved in resident life at the dorms. My network quickly grew, and I was lucky enough to fall into a marketing job at The College of Business. I learned about professionalism, networking, career growth, event planning, and graphic design in my role on the Business Student Council and working as a student marketing coordinator. These successes did not come without struggle, of course, but the network of people I had helped me overcome the obstacles that came with university life.

During my time here at the University of Nevada, I have grown into a person who has realized that I just want happiness. Life is short, and I have seen that demonstrated with the passing of my brother, the loss of dear friends, and the passing of time that seems to have happened in a blink of an eye. I am lucky enough to truly enjoy what I have been studying in business marketing, and I believe that people should do something that makes them happy. I am thankful for the past four years, the struggles, the successes, and everyone who has guided me along the way.

Mentor: Jim McClanahan ’06 MBA

Melissa Perez-Rios honored as The College of Business Top Senior Scholar for Spring 2017 by Melissa Perez-Rios
TEDxUniversityofNevada draws more than 1,500 people to share big ideas by Nicole Shearer

Speakers challenged assumptions, encouraged dialogue around numerous current – and often uncomfortable – issues and begged the question, ‘What makes me special?’

When you hit discomfort, you hit complexity, and that creates growth.”

These words from Bill Eckstrom – one of 21 speakers to take the TEDxUniversityofNevada stage, Saturday, Jan. 21, 2017 – provided an overarching theme for the event. With 22 talks and performances (one performer also presented a talk), more than 1,500 attendees were given the opportunity to hear ideas that offered clear viewpoints and powerful calls to action. While not always comfortable, these ideas seek to inspire audience members to be open minded, learn and broaden their perspectives.

TEDx events are locally organized programs aimed at sharing short talks focused on one “big idea worth spreading.” The format helps communities, organizations and individuals spark international dialogue through videos of the talks and performances, which will be posted to the official TEDx YouTube site in the coming days.

This year’s event was another milestone for organizers at the University of Nevada, Reno’s College of Business.

“Our goal is always to create an inspiring event, and given current events, we really aimed to find speakers and performers who could offer ideas related to relevant topics,” Bret Simmons, College of Business associate professor and TEDxUniversityofNevada organizer, said. “All of this year’s speakers and performers hit it out of the park. Combined with the help of community volunteers from more than 21 different organizations, along with the new venue at the Grand Theatre in the Grand Sierra Resort, the event was our best yet.”

Session 1: Identity, discomfort, leadership and ownership

Walking on stage and singing the national anthem unannounced, Albert Lee quickly brought the crowd to its feet. Lee, an assistant professor of voice and opera at the University, then spoke about what being an American meant to him and called for better citizenship. Following Lee, Eckstrom, founder of EcSell Institute, shared his story of being fired from a high-profile corporate position. Eckstrom’s idea that growth only occurs in a state of discomfort, was supported by a number of personal and historical stories. Reynolds School of Journalism faculty member Vanessa Vancour then started her talk completely in Spanish. Vancour transitioned her talk about assumptions to English and described the surprise many people often show when they realize her Spanish. Vancour transitioned her talk about assumptions to English and described the surprise many people often show when they realize her Spanish. 

Session 2: Birth, death, systemic racism, recovery and the stories behind the music

Switch Executive Vice President of Strategy Adam Kramer kicked off the second session by thanking Paris Hilton for changing his life. Kramer spoke about the importance of doing what you love for a company you believe in. Next, University faculty member and certified doula Ashley Greenwald Tragash asked the audience, “Who gave birth to your baby?” In her talk, she advocated for improved maternity practices and an end to the over medicalization of child birth.

University Student Speaker Competition Winner and MBA student Ashley Evdokimo encouraged people to think about how they want to die and detailed the importance of completing a state-specific advanced directive.

Session 3: Gender, race, violence against women and music as a tool for survival

Tyler Glenn opened the third session singing and speaking of the crisis of faith he was thrown into last fall when the Mormon Church announced a new policy that identifies those in same-sex marriages as apostates. “LGBTQ people, you are divine. You are beautiful. You have a story and will change things,” he said.
ProtectHer founder Alexis Jones then declared, “Violence against women is a house on fire.” Her talk detailed work she does with athletes in locker rooms trying to help them directly understand the problem.

Ashley Clift-Jennings, founder of Girlmade, challenged the audience to think about soul mates and shared the story of when her husband revealed being transgender. Her talk wove a narrative of selfless love.

Wrapping up the session, slam poet and Davidson Academy student Ming Li Wu moved the audience with two of her poems and a monologue in between about how poetry has allowed her to open up about some of her personal vulnerabilities. Cam closed the third session by sharing her belief in music’s ability to help us survive.

**Session 4: Relationships, religion, recovery and punch lines**

Songwriter, producer and lead vocalist for O.A.R., Marc Roberge opened the final session of the event. His talk about real connections was echoed in his music, which told stories of relationships he’s had throughout his life.

Samina Ali followed Roberge with a powerful talk about the hijab, a head covering worn by some Muslim women. Her detailed historical account behind veiling questioned its significance in today’s culture.

Model and body diversity champion Iskra Lawrence then came on stage to talk about women’s “self-care.” She pleaded with women and men to stop comparing themselves to others and instead challenged them to begin a journey of self-love.

Recovery advocate and former Miss USA Tara Conner opened her heart and educated the audience with an honest and raw talk about addiction and recovery. According to Conner, the average age of kids drinking today is 11-years-old.

Closing the day’s event, comedian Michael Jr. had everyone in stitches as he described not only how comedy works but also the reason why he does comedy.

All told, the event was a resounding success and left audience members enlightened and eager to discuss the myriad topics.

“We are eternally grateful to our sponsors and volunteers, without whom this event could not have happened,” Simmons said.

Event sponsors include the University of Nevada, Reno; the University’s College of Business; Associated Students of The University of Nevada (ASUN); the Nevada Wolf Shop; Grand Sierra Resort and Casino; JamPro Music Factory; The Abbi Agency; Bristlecone Holdings; Dolan Auto Group; Marked Studios; Reno-Tahoe Limousine; Red Carpet Events and Design; Your Authentic Image; KTHX-FM; Microsoft; AT&T; RSCVA; Argentum Partners; Marcio Decker Fine Arts; Roundabout Grill; edible Reno-Tahoe; and Yelp!

All TEDxUniversityofNevada talks will be posted to the TEDx YouTube site. A complete photo album of the day’s event can be viewed on the event’s flickr site.
Listening to Mike Pansky talk about his business, InterKn, is like listening to an enthusiastic shepherd talk about sheep herding. Except that, in this case, the sheep are government-backed research-and-development grants that he is trying to corral for the small businesses of America.

“There are thousands and thousands of startups that we profile that the government wants to work with,” Pansky said. “The government wants to mature these into larger companies and, obviously, so do I.”

The unusual spelling of InterKn, which is pronounced “intern,” comes both from the fact that its work involves interknotting information about government funding from multiple sources and from Pansky’s view of himself as an ongoing apprentice in this new area of data collection.

“I’m going to be an intern for the rest of my life, so I like to say that I’m the eternal intern regardless of how big the company gets,” he said.

For now, the company is not merely in its start-up phase, but it is trailblazing the field in which it performs.

Essentially, InterKn mines the World Wide Web for news about the federal government’s Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs.

It collects this data and makes it available through its website, www.interkn.com: free for businesses that just want to conduct a simple search, and for a $3,500 yearly fee for those that want a dose of enterprise analytics as well.

“We now encompass more than 50,000 licensable technologies,” Pansky said. “We aggregate from all the national institutions, the national research labs and the agencies, bringing this information into one single location for all the licensable tech.”

The College of Business at the University of Nevada, Reno actually stepped in during Pansky’s freshman year – in the form of a freshman economics course taught by instructor Brad Schiller – and guided him to the profession he is developing.

“My original plan was to be an attorney, and then I realized I like the business aspect more than the legal aspect,” he said. “The mergers and acquisitions area was an immediate fixation with me, and the understanding of inorganic growth (growth via takeovers and mergers, rather than through sales growth) for organizations.”

Born in Tarzana, Calif., Pansky grew up in Woodbridge, Va., where his father, Steven, was a mid-level supervisor in the Federal Aviation Administration. After the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the East Coast, Pansky’s father was appointed a federal security director for the airports of Northern Nevada and moved his family to Reno.

As the 21st century moved on, Pansky earned both his bachelor’s and his master’s degrees from The College of Business, then headed east across the Truckee Meadows to Sierra Nevada Corporation, where he continued his work with mergers and acquisitions analysis.

From Sierra Nevada Corporation, Pansky moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, where he worked on market strategy and business development for Westfield Retail Solutions, a retail research arm of global shopping-center firm Westfield Corp.

This experience, and his work at Sierra Nevada Corporation, led him to form InterKn in the third quarter of 2015 while he was still in the Bay Area, though he moved back to Reno in January 2016 for its more advantageous business environment.

Patrick Garman, senior vice president of business operations for Sierra Nevada Corporation and a man Pansky still considers a mentor, said that the young entrepreneur clearly was qualified to start his business.

“He’s got a domain knowledge that is not common, because he’s gone deep into it,” Garman said. “He’s got a skill set and a desire to take that domain knowledge and put it into creating a tool that is usable and can grow.”

And above all, one that is far less expensive than current methods.

“I have these business development guys, and that’s what they do,” Garman said. “I pay a guy $150,000 to $180,000 a year, and his entire job is to look at the Web, walk around at conferences and find out what’s happening in industry.

“And here’s something that can do that for a teeny fraction of the cost.”

It also is something that Pansky hopes he can do with the help of University of Nevada, Reno graduates, whom he considers to be ideal candidates for his home-town firm, unlike many from other schools in the nation.

“A lot of graduates I talk to in those places really don’t have a buy-in to their town, or their school. A lot of them are ready to jump across the country if it means the right opportunity,” he said.

“With a lot of the students here, they really have a personal pride in the university. Which is great: having that community aspect is a big factor, and something you don’t often see.”
Preparation to be ‘BIZ-FIT’

WHAT IS BIZ-FIT?

BIZ-FIT is The College of Business Freshmen Intensive Transition program, designed to expose incoming freshmen to academic curriculum that relates to all programs of study within the College. The program is designed to simulate a typical Finals Week, allowing students to experience the challenges of time management, college academics, and independence without the actual repercussions. By the end of the program, the students will be prepared for their academic, personal, and professional college careers.

WHY DO STUDENTS CHOOSE BIZ-FIT?

• Gain core skills and knowledge related to The College of Business
• Earn a head start on their academics and college experience
• Develop professional presentation skills and entrepreneurship experience
• Increase study and time management practices to a college level
• Network with The College of Business faculty, staff, and advisers
• Become acquainted with The College of Business resources

WHAT HAPPENS AT BIZ-FIT?
The College of Business BIZ-FIT program is created to simulate the most intense and compact college experience that can be drafted. The BIZ-FIT students participate in actual college academics including lectures, discussions, presentations, projects, and assignments. BIZ-FIT students also experience the professional environment of mock interviews, elevator pitches, internship opportunities, and career planning.

In addition to the program’s focus on academic and professional success, the program highlights the college experience from a student perspective. Current and past Nevada Business students serve as Mentors to the BIZ-FIT participants to provide guidance and support throughout the program. The BIZ-FIT Mentors embody the best and brightest faces within The College of Business, proving to provide intelligent, realistic, and sound advice to incoming freshmen.

HOW DOES BIZ-FIT BENEFIT STUDENTS?
BIZ-FIT has proven to have a positive impact on the academic experience of the students who participate. The data below has been collected to provide an understanding of the impact BIZ-FIT has had over the past semesters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Spring 2016</th>
<th>Non-BIZ-FIT</th>
<th>BIZ-FIT Summer 15</th>
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<td>Average GPA</td>
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<td>Average Unit Enrollment</td>
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<tr>
<td># Probation Not Enrolled Spring16</td>
<td>32 (8.2%)</td>
<td>1 (1.6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHAT DO THE EXPERTS SAY?

“BIZ-FIT was my first college experience and I would not trade it in for anything in the world. BIZ-FIT is where I made the connections for my first job and BIZ-FIT is where I learned how to manage my time in order to balance all the social aspects of college with the academic responsibilities.”


“You can always tell who the BIZ-FIT students are once the semester begins – they are familiar with the expectations of the college and stand out in the classrooms. The BIZ-FIT students have the advantage of already knowing the faculty members and tend to be remembered.”

– Jeremy Tiedt (Director of Advising, Recruitment, and Retention)

“BIZ-FIT is the place where we see students transform from adolescents to adults. Although it is only a week-long program, it jump starts them for the semesters to come. They enter the semester feeling more confident than their peers who did not attend. We challenge them to find their strengths and to be comfortable standing in their own truths, at the end of this program we see students rise to the challenge and stand out amongst the best.”

– Gregrette Perry-Simmons
(Academic Advisor, BIZ-FIT Coordinator)
The Bighorns invest in talent of College of Business on and off the court  

by Chris Boline ’15

When the average person thinks of NBA basketball, an array of exciting moments might come to mind. Perhaps they would picture the triumphant image of Michael Jordan sinking “The Shot” in his Air Jordan 4’s over Craig Ehlo. Or there’s the possibility they recall Allen Iverson stepping over Tyronn Lue in the 2001 NBA Finals.

However, what the layperson doesn't normally associate with the pro game is its ability to nurture and diversify the local economy of a city. Not only can a professional franchise galvanize civic pride with a championship-caliber squad on the court, it can also offer employment opportunities to individuals to bolster their careers in a variety of different capacities.

This is where the Reno Bighorns come in. The Bighorns have made a concerted effort to employ a multitude of University of Nevada, Reno graduates from sales and game operations to marketing and public relations.

This past season, Reno set a slew of franchise-best marks. Not only did the Bighorns feature four Sacramento Kings draft picks at one point, but they also set a new team record for most group sales revenue in a season and notched their highest-grossing game in franchise history. Additionally, the team’s social media platforms had double- to triple-digit growth (depending on the medium). This upcoming season will also usher in the new era of the NBA G League (formerly Development League) along with the second year the Bighorns will partner with the Nevada Career Studio as part of the Pack Internship Grant Program that gives a current University of Nevada, Reno student hands-on experience working in sports communications. In fact, as of July 2017, over half the Bighorns’ front office has ties throughout the University.

Beyond business operations, the Bighorns have a rich history of Nevada basketball alumni suiting up for them. Two of the most famous examples are Nick Fazekas and Mo Charlo. The former is the all-time leading scorer (2,464 points) and second all-time leading rebounder (1,254) for the Pack and the latter was an NBA Development All-Star in 2014 for the Bighorns. Additionally, current Wolf Pack head coach Eric Musselman was head man of Reno during the team’s best season in 2010-11 when the Bighorns notched a 34-16 record.

Most recently, former Nevada stalwart Garry Hill-Thomas (’04 marketing and ’15 MBA) was an assistant coach with the Bighorns last season. Hill-Thomas, now a co-owner at Pink Hill Properties, LLC, also played on the Bighorns during his post-collegiate years and spent 2012 as the Director of Basketball Operations and associate head coach for Reno.
Keenan Polan (’11, business management) was president of business operations for the past two seasons and was on staff with the Bighorns for three years prior, so he has seen the organization grow and develop in a variety of ways.

Polan, now a Partner at BizClub Zero & 4505 Consulting Group, reflected on the different ways his professors at the College of Business influenced the way it helped his professional career.

“I had multiple professors that shaped my career by emphasizing how important networking can be for your personal and professional life,” Polan said. “They also taught me the value of business ethics and treating people in a genuine manner.”

Polan and the Sacramento Kings brass agreed it was important to have a strong connection to the University of Nevada, Reno and especially, The College of Business.

“Business students are a great fit because they have been taught how to act and operate in a business setting,” Polan said. “So our goal was to recruit COB students for internships and provide them the opportunities to grow into full-time roles. We also tried to bring students to our games and offer them fundraising opportunities and unique experiences.”

Rod Hidalgo (’17, business management) was one of those students who took full advantage of all the opportunities the Bighorns had to offer.

“I was first introduced to the Reno Bighorns last September when Chris (Boline) reached out to my fraternity, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. He told us of an amazing opportunity — to perform at a Bighorns game,” Hidalgo said. “Chris and the Bighorns staff treated my fraternity like family. Anytime we had a question or needed anything, someone from the Reno Bighorns staff was there. So when I saw that the Bighorns were coming to campus to talk about the position of account executive, my eyes lit up.”

Now a freshly-minted front office team member with the Bighorns, Hidalgo is excited to see where this first step in his career will go. He also has not forgotten the tremendous foundation the college laid for him.

“The College of Business gave me the tools to build a solid base for my skills and gave me multiple opportunities to practice and perfect my art,” Hidalgo said. “In particular, the courses at the COB helped me to get used to working in a team environment and especially helped myself focus on public speaking and developing my interpersonal skills. It’s the reason why I was able to build up the confidence within myself to practice in front of my peers and eventually turn my skills into a career.”

Left:
The 2016-17 Bighorns front office and game operations staff celebrate after the final game of the season. For the first time ever, the team employed a social media crew made up entirely of Nevada students and featured the highest number of University of Nevada, Reno graduates as full-time employees in the franchise’s history.
Photo courtesy Reno Bighorns

Opposite Page:
Bighorns guard Cam Griffin soars through the air for a hellacious dunk on Zubaz Night on Wednesday, March 29, 2017. The Bighorns partnered with University of Nevada, Reno non-profit NRAP – Nevada’s Recovery & Prevention Community – to auction off the theme jerseys for the night with 100 percent of the proceeds going back to benefit NRAP and their constituents.
Photo courtesy Reno Bighorns
Following Footsteps

Wolf Pack Shadow event gives students the opportunity to explore careers

The Career and Corporate Outreach Center at the University of Nevada, Reno launched Wolf Pack Shadow in 2014 as a tool to engage the College of Business’ best and brightest with companies in both Northern and Southern Nevada. Headed by the College’s Director of Career Services, Staller Lufrano-Jardine, the program steadily gains momentum each semester, attracting more students and increasing participation from well-known companies. The program’s process is completely unique and repeatedly proves to be beneficial for both the student and the employer. With a 117 percent increase in applications within the past year, the program demonstrates a clear need to provide career exploration opportunities to students and employers access to upcoming talent.

Applications to participate have spiked, thanks to big names such as Microsoft, Haws, and Server Technology. After the application process, qualified students are selected to tour the company’s headquarters, shadow professionals, and network with executives. Participation in the event is seen by students as a privilege and allows them to truly experience the daily operations of a professional in their desired field, helping them better understand and explore their options after graduation. They are also given an inside look at the company’s culture, providing insight on what qualities employers look for from a recent graduate.

During spring break of 2016, Wolf Pack Shadow was held in Southern Nevada for the first time with Ameriprise Financial. The following year, a visit to the Zappos campus in Las Vegas exposed students to a casual, one-of-a-kind company culture. Those who participated in these Wolf Pack Shadow events were able to discover what employment opportunities await University of Nevada, Reno graduates in other cities. More growth came when Wolf Pack Shadow went to Reno’s largest nonprofit medical provider, Renown Health, in the spring of 2017. Word of this shadowing experience quickly spread amongst university students, eliciting a large applicant pool of both business and health science majors. The same development took place with an event held at the Patagonia Reno Distribution Center last semester. The sustainability driven company attracted students with a passion for the environment and the betterment of global business operations. The growth and diversification of participating students truly highlights the importance of this program and the benefits it brings Nevada students.

In the coming semesters, the Career and Corporate Outreach Center at the College of Business intends to expand the program even further, involving more companies and attempting to create space for as many students as possible.

Participation in the event is seen by students as a privilege and allows them to truly experience the daily operations of a professional in their desired field, helping them better understand and explore their options after graduation.

— Laura Gaudet

If you are interested in attending or hosting a Wolf Pack Shadow event, please visit https://www.unr.edu/business/career-center/wolf-pack-shadow

Students in the Wolf Pack Shadow program tour companies such as the Grand Sierra Resort and Renown to get a better feel for what a career in those industries would be like. Photo courtesy The College of Business
PAY IT FORWARD

Scholarship endowment honors Nevada research professor by Joanna Trieger

The Morris S. Smith Foundation has established a scholarship endowment in honor of Frederick A. Steinmann ’02 (economics), ’04 M.S. (economics), a research assistant professor and a member of the University Center for Economic Development, to benefit students in the College of Business who need financial assistance to pursue their education.

Steinmann is both a product of the College of Business and a part of the team of faculty members working to make it a useful and centralized resource for the state. His interest in practical, effective governance was sparked after he earned his master’s degree and started working at the City of Reno Redevelopment Agency, where he found that he had an affinity for the nuts and bolts of local government administration and economic development.

“I loved getting my hands dirty and seeing the economic principles I’d been learning in an applied setting,” he says.

Armed with this love of applied economics, Steinmann pursued his doctoral degree in policy, planning and development from the University of Southern California in 2010 and successfully defended his dissertation, “The Twilight of the Local Redevelopment Era: The Past, Present, and Future of Urban Revitalization and Urban Economic Development in Nevada and California.” He then returned to Nevada and made his way to the University Center for Economic Development. There, he helped to found the Nevada Leadership Program, which trains elected officials and participating groups in the administration of government in Nevada.

“I felt that there was a need in Nevada for ongoing assessment and training for government workers to make our state and local governments run effectively and efficiently,” Steinmann says. “In school, you learn principles of business and economics, but it’s difficult to translate those into the real world. The Nevada Leadership Program and the specific trainings the UCED offers are designed to use the University’s resources to teach the nuts and bolts. We know that individuals in leadership positions understand the principles, but how do they actually go about putting those principles into practice?”

In addition to running training programs and developing reference resources for government officials, Steinmann brings his economic development and management expertise to the classroom through both foundational business courses, like Principles of Statistics, and more nuanced courses like Changing Environments, which explores ethical management in the shifting cultural, economic and technological landscape of modern business, and Strategic Management and Policy, which focuses on strategic planning.

The scholarship endowment in Steinmann’s honor was established by the Morris S. Smith Foundation, whose trustee, Sterling Franklin, became friends with Steinmann and recognized the importance of his work during his time at USC. Franklin’s goal in creating the scholarship is to give students in the College of Business the chance to develop into strong and effective leaders, a cause Steinmann champions.

Jane Bessette Scholarship Endowment supports business students by Joanna Trieger

An endowed scholarship has been established in honor of Jane Bessette (’86, Accounting), (’03, M.S. Human Development and Family Studies), the former director of career connections and alumni relations in The College of Business. The scholarship will benefit undergraduate students who have taken on leadership roles in The College of Business and in the community.

Bessette worked at the University of Nevada, Reno for 17 years with a decade as director of career connections. During this time, she made it her mission to provide students with professional opportunities to better position them for promising careers after graduation, from developing a career module for a required management class to hosting career and internship fairs, mock interviews and networking events to working to establish the Corporate Partners Program, which connects students to local industry leaders. She also served as the advisor for the Business Student Council and personally mentored many students.

“Jane is a remarkable individual, and her personal efforts helped many of our students to make the connections that have led to satisfying and successful careers,” said College of Business Dean Greg Mosier. “She truly went above and beyond to make sure that every student in The College of Business had the opportunity to get a start on their career aspirations long before they graduated. It makes a degree from the college so much more valuable when our students can say that they haven’t just taken classes in business, but they have hands-on experience in business because that experience is built into the curriculum. Jane looked for ways to make that happen, and we are continuing to build on her efforts.”

In honor of Jane’s service, The College of Business Alumni Association made a gift to establish the Jane Bessette Scholarship Endowment Fund to benefit future students who aspire to careers in business. Gifts made in Jane’s honor at the time of her retirement, along with a contribution from Jane herself, were added to the endowment.

— To contribute to the Jane Bessette Scholarship Endowment Fund or to learn more about supporting students in The College of Business, please contact Mitch Klaich, director of development, at mklaich@unr.edu or 775-682-6490.
The Business Student Council exists to serve the Dean's office and the business-minded student by advancing The College of Business initiatives, adding another dimension of professional development education, and enhancing the student experience. Through their role, members of the Business Student Council benefit from personal development opportunities. The Council includes students from each class, freshman through senior level to greater encompass a wide variety of opinions and perspectives. They host a variety of events throughout the school year, including Business Week, the Honors and Awards Banquet, professional firm tours, speaker panels, etiquette dinners, and various other student focused events.
OUTSTANDING SENIORS

BRANDON BOONE - SERVICE
Brandon Boone is a senior at the University of Nevada, Reno graduating with a B.S. in Information Systems degree this spring. He currently serves as the president of the Associated Students in which he works to help foster the university town atmosphere in Reno and to create opportunities for students to become civically engaged. Brandon is a proud brother of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. and has held the positions of treasurer and parliamentarian in his chapter. Also a member of Blue Key National Honor Society, he has demonstrated a strong commitment to his community and organizations that seek to improve the lives of others. While he has not determined which school he will be attending yet, Brandon plans to enroll in graduate school this fall where he will pursue his Masters in Public Administration.

ERIKA FROST - ACADEMICS
Erika Frost is a senior at the University of Nevada, Reno double majoring in economics and mathematics. She has been active in clubs throughout her time in University, and currently holds leadership positions in Economics Club, Entrepreneurship Club, and Professional Network of Women. Last year, she served as president of Economics Club and vice president of student outreach of The Hayek Group, a local nonprofit. Erika enjoys learning outside of the classroom and being involved in the entrepreneurial community in Reno. She has also conducted research as an undergraduate, with a paper currently under review at an undergraduate research journal. Erika is thankful for the continued support of her professors in the pursuit of her goals and is excited to begin her Ph.D. in economics starting in the fall.

LEAH JOHNSON - ENGAGEMENT
Leah Johnson will graduate from The University of Nevada, Reno College of Business in May 2017 with a degree in marketing and a minor in Communication Studies. She has served as a UNR employee for the past 3 years as student assistant in the Office for Prospective Students. Leah's passion for involvement and service is evidenced through her membership in over eight different clubs and organizations, including The College of Business Peer Mentors Program, Nevada Student Ambassadors, and the Nevada Blue Key Honor Society. Her marketing and communication skills have been put to use as a sports marketing intern for Nevada Athletics over the past two years. Leah's future plans include pursuing a career in sports marketing and promotions for either a sports network or professional team.

JAMI EDWARDS - GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE
Jami Michelle Edwards is a driven student and a ruthless adventurer. She graduates Magna Cum Laude from the University of Nevada, Reno with Bachelor of Science degrees in both International Business and Management, with a minor in Economic Policy. Jami has been on The College of Business Dean's List throughout her career at UNR and has received scholarships for her study abroad opportunities. She decided to pursue an international business education due to her mother’s success as an entrepreneur and a life-long love of all things French. Jami has studied French since her freshman year of high school, and hopes to continue using this skill in her professional life. Thanks to supportive parents and an open, adventurous spirit, she has visited Belgium, England, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Singapore, and Thailand. All of these experiences have enhanced Jami’s academic career and her personal growth. Looking forward, she hopes to travel to Latin America and Africa to gain an even broader world-view.

ALYSSA YOCOM - LEADERSHIP
Alyssa Yocom is a first-generation college student completing her dual degree in Finance and Economics with Honors. Alyssa’s three core values are personal development, service to others, and leadership. Alyssa’s core value of personal development is tied to her love for learning that goes beyond the classroom. Her core value of service is shown through her continuous dedication to community service organizations and overall community involvement. And her core value of leadership is exemplified through the various clubs and organizations that she is a part of. During her time at the University of Nevada, Reno, Alyssa has participated and held a leadership position in Circle K International, Honors Student Ambassadors, the Professional Network of Women, and the Business Student Council. Alyssa believes that leadership is not simply holding a position, but it is an opportunity to empower others to achieve their personal goals and to enact positive change. Following graduation, Alyssa will begin her career as a financial advisor and will work to obtain her Certified Financial Planner designation.
Executive Online MBA program receives top national ranking

U.S. News & World Report highlights the University of Nevada, Reno as No. 1 for Online MBA 3-year graduation rate

The University of Nevada, Reno received recognition this week from U.S. News & World Report as offering a top online graduate program in the country. The Online Executive MBA, offered in partnership between the College of Business and Extended Studies, was ranked No. 36 of more than 200 schools in the “2017 Best Online MBA Programs” category. In addition to its overall ranking, the program ranked as having the highest 3-year graduation rate, with 100 percent of its participants who started between July 2012 and June 2013 graduating within three years.

In this category, about 1,000 regionally accredited institutions were sent statistical questionnaires, and certain other conditions and definitions had to be met to be included in the final ranking. U.S. News ranked online MBA programs using five categories: student engagement; admissions selectivity; peer reputation; faculty credentials and training; student services and technology. The University’s Online Executive MBA received particularly high marks for its student engagement - ranking fourth in this category - which is defined by student graduation rate, class size and retention rates.

“I wanted to get an MBA, but needed the flexibility of online courses,” Sean Nichols, EMBA graduate and business entrepreneur, said. “I am an executive at two companies and the director of a charity so it would have been tough to find time to be on campus. Plus, the two-year program was a definite plus.”

The 2017 Best Online MBA Programs ranking evaluates schools based solely on data related to their distance education MBA programs. Non-MBA graduate business degrees in areas such as finance, marketing and management are assessed separately for a different ranking: Best Online Graduate Business Programs.

The College of Business’ Executive MBA Program meets the accreditation standards of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the highest attainable level of accreditation in business education.

“We are incredibly proud of the Online Executive MBA program we have built in the College of Business,” Kambiz Raffiee, the program’s director and associate dean of the College of Business, said. “Top rankings from U.S. News & World Report continue to be a major milestone for the program. The hard work of the faculty, students and program administration have made this possible.”

For more information on the Online Executive MBA Program, visit www.emba.unr.edu.

EDAWN Coin awarded for commitment to economic development

The Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada (EDAWN) last year recognized John Handzo, pollution prevention projects manager at The Nevada Business Environmental Program, and Rod Jorgensen, director of counseling at the Nevada Small Business Development Center, a program of the College of Business at the University of Nevada, Reno, for their significant contributions to environmentally sustainable economic development.

The EDAWN Coin award, which both Handzo and Jorgensen received, is awarded to those who are known to have made exceptional leadership, engagement and/or cooperation in supporting Reno-Sparks regional economic development efforts.

Though Handzo and Jorgensen work in different capacities, both are known for their hands-on approach to helping small businesses succeed in northern Nevada with their work for the Small Business Development Center.

Handzo is also highly involved in helping businesses become, and stay, environmentally conscious as the Pollution Prevention Projects Manager at The Nevada Business Environmental Project.

“EDAWN’s recognition of these community members is yet another step towards incorporating the University’s business school with the northern Nevada business community,” Sam Males, state director of the Nevada Small Business Development Center, said.
Erika Saiz - President
Erika Saiz ('09, Management, '14, MBA) is a Pharmaceutical Sales Representative for GlaxoSmithKline (GSK). She is also the co-owner of a manufacturing company, Silver State Design, which manufacturers custom architectural foam shapes. Erika is a business enthusiast with a strong entrepreneurial spirit. She is proud of her Alma Mater and will serve as the President on the College of Business Alumni Association Board. In her free time she enjoys traveling with her husband, Neil Saiz and enjoying the outdoors with her dogs.

Megan Lowe - President Elect
Megan Lowe ('10 Management) is a residential Real Estate Associate for Chase International Real Estate. Megan has a rare blend of skills that cultivate from years of hands-on experience and an ambitious desire to please. This spirited business sense comes naturally to Megan who is well known for her bright and amicable approach to life. She’s a leader, an avid volunteer and has a great appreciation for the outdoors. When time allows, Megan loves to spend time with family and friends all over the High Sierra.

Paul Klein - VIP Membership
Paul Klein specializes in advertising, public relations and public affairs. He has more than a decade of experience creating and managing campaigns for products and political causes. He helped L.A. Gear Shoes rebuild their brand, Cousins Maine Lobster expand across the country and Nikki Beach Resorts open international properties, to name a few.

Klein's local government work includes the ReImagine Reno master planning campaign, the award-winning public art vs. pollution campaign and several election campaigns for local officials.

Klein graduated magna cum laude from the University of Nevada with a degree in Pre-Law Criminal Justice and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) with a concentration in public policy.

As a volunteer, Klein helped found the #BiggestLittleCity movement and the Reno-Tahoe Young Professionals Network. He served the City of Reno as a two-term commissioner on the parks and recreation board and the arts and culture commission.

Klein was named a Twenty Under 40 Young Professional award recipient and honored as the Outstanding Young Alumnus of the University of Nevada in 2010.

Spencer Lewis - VP Public Relations
Spencer Lewis ('11, Psychology) works for the UNR Environmental Health and Safety Department as a safety specialist. His role within the department includes developing emergency response plans and egress maps, as well as conducting evacuation drills, safety training, and accident investigations. Spencer is currently pursuing his MBA and serves as a graduate student liaison for the College of Business Alumni Association.

Richard J. Corn, CPA - Treasurer
Richard J. Corn ('14, Finance & Accounting) is a senior accountant at Intuit where he specializes in payments accounting for Intuit’s QuickBooks customers. He is also the co-founder of 775blue, a clothing company with the mission of returning profits to the university.

Thomas (TJ) O’Carroll - Secretary
TJ O’Carroll ('10, Accounting, ’11, Master of Accountancy) works as a tax senior associate at Eide Bailly. After graduating in 2011, he moved to San Francisco to start another master’s program in Sport Management. There he worked for the United States Golf Association and the San Francisco Giants. Working in those organizations made him realize how important being a CPA would be if he wanted to move up in the finance department of an organization. He moved back to Reno in 2013 after graduating from the Sport Management program.

Gary Brooks - Board Member
Gary Brooks ('14, MBA) is director of pharmacy and dietary services at Tahoe Pacific Hospitals. He is part of a team that specializes in the treatment of medically complex patients who require extended hospitalization. He earned his doctor of pharmacy degree from the University of Pacific in Stockton, Calif. in 2004 and holds advanced board certifications in pharmacotherapy and nutrition support.

Gary is the secretary for the College of Business Alumni Association Board.

Chris Boline - Board Member
Chris Boline ('15, Business Management) is a senior account executive with the Sacramento Kings’ NBA Gatorade League affiliate, the Reno Bighorns. He is also an active board member of the Riverwalk Merchants Association, the Nevada Sagebrush Alumni Chapter, and the University of Nevada’s Student Media Advisory Board.

Laura Nelson, CPA - Board Member
Laura (Kelb) Nelson ('12, Accounting) is a manager at Eide Bailly LLP (formerly Muckel Anderson CPAs) in Reno. She provides accounting services, tax and audit and specializes in tax services for government not-for-profit organizations.

Laura joined the College of Business Alumni Association in 2015 and is currently serving as the VP of Development on the Board of Directors.

Kyle R. McCann, CFP - Board Member
Kyle R. McCann ('05, Finance, '11, Masters in Finance) is a certified financial planner and founder of KRM Wealth Management, LLC. KRM is an independent, fee-only advisory firm specializing in comprehensive wealth management for families, high-net-worth individuals, small businesses and non-profit organizations.

Stephanie Berggren - Past President
Stephanie Berggren ('06, Accounting) is a manager at Eide Bailly LLP (formerly Muckel Anderson CPAs) in Reno. She provides accounting services, tax and audit and specializes in account and auditing services for government and not-for-profit organizations. Stephanie currently serves as the president of the College of Business Alumni Association Board.
eBravium wins $50,000 in Sontag Entrepreneurship Competition

Inspired by his sister’s challenges with learning, eBravium co-founder and University MBA student, Cody Grimes, set out to create a software program that combines screen time learning and academic performance. The result is eBravium – a software that gamifies smart devices by making access contingent upon correctly answering academic questions correctly.

For his innovation, Grimes was awarded $50,000 Monday, March 27 in the Sixth Annual Sontag Entrepreneurship Competition, during a luncheon held at Harrah’s Reno.

The Sontag Entrepreneurship Award is possible through a major gift to the University of Nevada, Reno’s College of Business from University of Nevada, Reno alumnus Rick Sontag ('66), in 2011. The endowment created by the gift funds the award.

“To see this process get validated by a group of individuals such as yourselves in very rewarding,” Grimes said at the awards luncheon. “During the time you’ve all been sitting here, statistics tell us you’ve likely checked your phone about 10 times. Our research is informing some really exciting possibilities and we look forward to sharing those in the future.”

Grimes, along with his father, Patrick Grimes, started working on eBravium in March 2014. In 2016 they received a grant from the National Science Foundation’s Small Business Innovation Research program, which has allowed them to pilot the software.

Through the software’s ‘learn-to-earn’ philosophy, with a simple download from the app store, the product incentivizes children to earn smart phone use. According to eBravium’s product description, the proprietary algorithm parachutes adaptive questions into the device at the optimal time of learning relative to the reward creating a new generation of artificial intelligence. eBravium’s software is already protected by five patent applications.

To win the $50,000 eBravium bested more than 27 Sontag Entrepreneurship Competition applicants and four additional finalists, which included:

• “Blue Radiate,” a software designed to help public relations applicants and four additional finalists, which included:

To win the $50,000 eBravium bested more than 27 Sontag Entrepreneurship Competition applicants and four additional finalists, which included:

• “Salty Snail Studios,” an indie mobile entertainment software startup.
• “New Paths,” a facility for homeless youth in northern Nevada to live and receive social services, and
• “Eat Rank.io,” a food-sharing and review platform for specific dishes at restaurants,
• “New Paths,” a facility for homeless youth in northern Nevada to live and receive social services, and
• “Salty Snail Studios,” an indie mobile entertainment software startup.

“The Sontag competition offers student competitors the skills and mentoring needed to see their dreams become a reality while providing the winner with a tremendous financial advantage in starting their business,” College of Business Dean Greg Mosier said. “The Sontag Entrepreneurship award is one of the largest university-based awards for a student business competition.”

University Executive Vice President and Provost Kevin Carman said the Sontag competition is one avenue that has helped the University of Nevada, Reno deepen its commitment to bring innovative ideas out into the community.

The competition, which received a record 50 intents to compete, is run through the Ozmen Center for Entrepreneurship, a program of the University’s College of Business. Over the course of five months, students work with University faculty and community business members who offer mentorships throughout the competition. The competition consists of four open-topic weekend workshops, a detailed business plan, along with feedback and a revised business plan for finalists. Finalists are also required to pitch their plan to judges, who include University faculty and community members, who have long been involved with the Sontag competition.

Past Sontag participants open up about the competition

The Sontag Entrepreneurship Competition has produced a number of successful startup companies. Of note, many of the competition’s runner-ups have also gone on to see success in their businesses and attribute their success to the intense process and mentorship they received through Sontag.

University of Nevada, Reno alumni Denis Phares and Sean Nichols, finalists in the 2014 Sontag Competition, have reached yet another major milestone in their careers. A publicly traded Chinese company’s investment of $2 million in the Reno-based startup, Dragonfly Energy, which makes lithium-ion batteries, is expected to accelerate expansion of the manufacturing capacity for the growing company.

“Our goal is to drive down the costs of energy storage,” Phares said. “Manufacturing is one piece of the puzzle, but it is an important one that has been neglected awhile, since the primary focus has been the development of new electrode materials.”

Dragonfly Energy started as a research and development company creating manufacturing methods for reducing the cost of energy storage. Phares and Nichols, who are both graduates of the University’s Online Executive MBA program, first made their mark when Dragonfly Energy became a finalist in the 2014 Sontag Entrepreneurship Competition. The company later grew to manufacture and market a line of 12-volt deep cycle lithium-ion batteries for RV, marine and off-grid solar applications.

“After competing in the Sontag competition, we were able to secure funding to continue our journey,” Nichols said. “Our team has matured as has our company. Now we are working toward creating a new standard in energy storage. This is not the end, it’s the beginning of our next chapter, a very exciting time for all of us here at Dragonfly Energy.”

“We really don’t want it to be just an academic exercise,” Dean Mosier said. “We’re hoping the people who choose to compete are serious about starting a business. Even if they don’t win, we’re hoping many of the companies that do develop these business plans will actually give it a try.”

Executive Vice President and Provost Kevin Carman, Patrick Grimes, Cody Grimes and College of Business Dean Greg Mosier celebrate eBravium’s big win of the 2017 Sontag Entrepreneurship Competition.

Photo courtesy University of Nevada, Reno
Darrell Plummer  
Broker/Owner  
- Past President of Delta Sigma Pi Business Fraternity  
- Graduate College of Business at UNR  
- Past President College of Business Alumni Association 1990-1992  
- Past Chair of Dean’s Advisory Board 1998  
- Recipient College of Business Outstanding Alumnus Award 1992  
- Past Member University of Nevada Alumni Council  
- Current Corporate Partner College of Business at UNR  
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