

UNG

MIKE COTTRELL COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
Magazine for Alumni and Friends

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Launching into the Future

New Lab for Entrepreneurship
and Innovation Serves Student
Entrepreneurs *page 10*

6 A PROFILE IN LEADERSHIP
Jim Syfan navigates his way
through a long career in logistics

12 REAL WORLD IMPACT
MCCB rises to meet nation's
growing cybersecurity threats

14 FACULTY PERSPECTIVE
Dr. Sushil Nifadkar examines
the challenges and opportunities
facing business students



TABLE OF CONTENTS

03
A Message from the Dean

04/05
MCCB Latest

06/07
A Profile in Leadership

08
Student Achievements

09
Excellence in Education

10/11
Launching into the Future

12/13
Real World Impact

14/15
Faculty Perspective

16
Virtual Solutions

17
Faculty Highlights

18
How You Can Help

19
MCCB Advisory Board

A Message *from the Dean*



Dear Friends of the MCCB,

I am sitting in my office looking out the window at the progress being made on the Cottrell Center for Business, Technology & Innovation. The construction is moving along on schedule, and we plan to be in the new building late summer in time for a fall 2022 semester start. Thanks to many of the companies that employ our students, as well as alumni and friends, we have received generous naming gifts for classrooms, labs, the executive board room, and numerous other spaces. You can read about how the Syfan Logistics Lab came to be in the story in this issue about Jim Syfan, CEO of Syfan Logistics and member of the University System of Georgia Board of Regents. The naming investments collectively will provide funds for student engagement and development, as well as faculty professional development for many years to come.

We are also looking forward to expanded space on the Gainesville campus. The new space will provide us with a more dedicated presence on that campus for our students, faculty, and staff. The plan is for us to expand our footprint there over the summer, so we will be quite busy with that move, moving into the Cottrell Center, and onboarding the new faculty we have already hired and will be hiring for fall semester.

As the economy has rebounded, we recognize the need to ensure our students have the connections and knowledge and skills to help address the talent shortage in Georgia and beyond. With that goal in mind, we continue to provide programs, experiences and resources to prepare our students to be successful professionals and leaders in their careers and in their communities. Students are taking part in competitions, earning certifications,

“We continue to be committed to our vision of being recognized as a leader in creating value for our students and communities through business and technology education and innovation.”

engaging with faculty on research projects, preparing income taxes for low income community members, taking part in pitch competitions, and working with clients on digital marketing projects. Those are just a few examples of the hands-on learning our students experience in the Mike Cottrell College of Business and some of the reasons that we recently received notice that we were reaccredited by AACSB, the premier accrediting body for colleges and schools of business. That accreditation keeps us in the group of fewer than 5% of business programs around the world that are accredited by AACSB.

We continue to be committed to our vision of being recognized as a leader in creating value for our students and communities through business and technology education and innovation. The future is indeed very bright for the MCCB.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary A. Gowan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary A. Gowan, Ph.D.
Dean, Mike Cottrell College of Business

BUILDING ANTICIPATION

The Cottrell Center for Business, Technology & Innovation, currently under construction and slated to open in the fall of 2022, will serve to elevate the Mike Cottrell College of Business to new heights and provide students with a technology-rich learning environment carefully designed to promote academic and career success. The expansive project is progressing quickly, and anticipation for the new facility continues to grow as the new building takes shape and marks an impressive addition to the Dahlonega campus.

“When we gave the naming gift in 2006, we saw the potential for having a first-rate business school in north Georgia,” said Mike Cottrell, the College’s namesake benefactor. “This new home for the College will be transformative as it provides the right space for the College to continue to build its reputation as the best place to study business in Georgia.”



Mike and Lynn Cottrell’s generosity led to a \$10 million naming gift to support construction of a new home for the Mike Cottrell College of Business.

JUNE 6, 2019 A SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT IS MADE

The announcement of a \$10 million gift, which places the Cottrell family’s contributions to UNG at more than \$20 million, is made at the quarterly meeting of the UNG Foundation Board of Trustees. Mike Cottrell is a trustee emeritus of the board.

NOVEMBER 9, 2020 GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY FOR COTTRELL CENTER FOR BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION COMMENCES

The Mike Cottrell College of Business celebrated a game-changer in its efforts to provide well-prepared graduates in business and computer science with the Nov. 9 groundbreaking ceremony for the Cottrell Center for Business, Technology & Innovation on UNG’s Dahlonega Campus.

AUGUST 19, 2021 TOPPING OFF CEREMONY AND BEAM SIGNING MARKS EXCITING PROGRESS

The “topping out” ceremony marked a significant milestone in the construction project. The MCCB leadership and guests celebrated the special occasion by signing the final beam before it was installed in the building.





**FALL 2022
NEW BUILDING IS
SLATED TO OPEN FALL
SEMESTER 2022**



THE GOLD STANDARD

MCCB RECEIVES AACSB RE-ACCREDITATION



The Mike Cottrell College of Business (MCCB) recently earned its re-accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International. UNG was one of 48 universities worldwide to have its accreditation in business extended this month. The AACSB reaccreditation keeps the MCCB among the top 5% of business schools worldwide.

“First and foremost, our faculty are committed to providing a high-quality, engaged classroom learning experience for our students,” MCCB Dean Dr. Mary Gowan said. “They complement these efforts through involving students in high impact learning activities including internships and undergraduate research.”

The AACSB peer review team especially noted UNG’s community engagement through its Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation and BB&T Center for Ethical Leadership.

Additionally, MCCB faculty members’ research also stood out in the accreditation process.

“Research serves as evidence that our faculty are staying up to date in their field,” MCCB Associate Dean Dr. Wendy Walker said. “They are then able to help students see connections between what’s in their textbooks and the real world.”

MCCB applies for renewal of its AACSB accreditation every five years by reporting on all of its activities, ranging from student enrollment, finances, support from donors, curriculum enhancements and revisions to how it is preparing students for future careers.

“AACSB is the gold standard of accrediting agencies,” Gowan said. “This re-accreditation affirms we have a clearly defined mission and a strategic plan that aligns our actions with that mission.”

The AACSB re-accreditation comes on the heels of MCCB’s computer science program earning ABET accreditation for the first time (page 9). Having both AACSB and ABET accreditations is a rare achievement for business colleges in Georgia.

A PROFILE *in Leadership*

JIM SYFAN NAVIGATES HIS WAY INTO A LONG CAREER IN LOGISTICS

Jim Syfan did not always know what he wanted to do for a living. As co-founder and CEO of the second company he has started in the logistics industry, and with nearly half a century of experience in trucking services and logistics under his belt, Syfan has no doubt that he finally found his passion.

In sharing his career journey, Syfan talked about where he started and how he got to where he is now. One of his first jobs took place on weekends loading heavy bricks into a wheelbarrow and pushing them uphill to bring to the brick mason. That job led him to a profound conclusion: “I do not want to do this for the rest of my life.”

His early school years were somewhat of a struggle due to reading difficulties resulting from dyslexia. “In the early 50s and 60s, dyslexia was not as widely understood as it is today, and teachers thought I was dumb,” Syfan said. “But if the information was presented to me visually or audibly, I could excel. I was fortunate to be an average C student.”

Syfan attended college on a partial football scholarship and played defensive end for the University of Georgia. When he started school, he hoped the lecturing format of a college classroom would allow him to learn more effectively so that

his dyslexia would be less of a problem, but he soon realized his football commitments rarely allowed him to attend many of his courses. Finally, after one especially unpleasant and rainy practice, Syfan decided he didn’t have much of a future in football. “This is not fun,” he thought, so he left the football team so he could focus more on other aspects of his college experience.

The following year he married his girlfriend, Gloria, and they moved to Atlanta and soon welcomed their first son, Greg. Syfan enrolled in night classes to complete his education while also working at Firestone Tire & Rubber Company. He excelled in his role at

Firestone and the company offered to make him the manager of a store in Griffin, GA. The position provided financial stability and practical work experience so he moved his family to Griffin, bought a farm and a horse, and introduced their second son, Steve, to the world.



Jim Syfan stands with visiting MCCB students on location at Syfan Logistics

Syfan credits his time at Firestone with teaching him about business and how to respect money. He was offered a position of district manager at age 21 but turned it down because he didn’t want to move to Akron, Ohio. Accepting the position would have made him the youngest district manager in the company.

Syfan soon met a man who needed a partner for his refrigeration company. Jim took the job and eventually bought into a third of the business. One of the more interesting areas the company focused on was designing and engineering layouts in supermarkets to

make shopping more efficient and convenient, providing shoppers with an overall more comfortable experience. That job provided Jim with an understanding of consumer preferences that had been previously unfamiliar to him.

While his future in the refrigeration business was promising, Syfan was soon thinking about what he wanted to do next. He sold his third of the business, sold his farm in Griffin, and went through a stretch of time exploring potential career options. During that time, he attended night school to acquire an insurance broker license and then a real estate broker’s license and worked briefly for a

real estate company. He followed his real estate career with the purchase and ownership of a restaurant in Dahlonega, GA, followed by an acquisition of a mason company which reminded him that he still didn't like that line of work very much. Finally, he bought into a printing company. That job still didn't give him the satisfaction he was looking for in his work. "Those jobs didn't make me smile," he said. After learning that Syfan was not thrilled with his current position, an acquaintance who happened to be a truck broker offered Syfan the opportunity to work for him. "I knew two things about trucks," Syfan said. "They're either in my way or trying to run me over." But he was ready for a change. He sold his share of the printing company and decided to work for the truck broker. Sitting at his new desk three days later, he had an epiphany—"Here it is. This is what I want to do for the rest of my life."

Within two years, Syfan accepted a new position with Interstate Transport and was promoted to general manager overseeing 12 employees. When he learned seven years later that he would not have the opportunity to become a partner in the company, he realized it was time to move on and put the biggest lesson he had learned into practice. "I am not going to get where I want to go unless I own it and am in total control of it," he said.

In 1984, Syfan, his wife and two sons officially launched their first company, Turbo Transport, in Gainesville, GA. Their office was a tiny trailer beside the railroad tracks. "We had to put customers on hold whenever a train was going by because we couldn't hear them," he said.

Over the course of the next two decades, the hard work of the Syfan family under Jim's dedication and leadership was rewarded as the fledgling business by the train tracks grew into a \$100 million company with 150 employees. The Syfans eventually sold that company and started Syfan Logistics. The company now boasts more than 375 employees and provides services throughout the continental United States, Mexico and Canada. As his company grew, so did Syfan's leadership acumen. "I certainly changed, because I have learned a lot during the last 49 years," he said. "There are also a multitude of ways you should not change when it's important to stick to your core beliefs."

Syfan Logistics' profitability and growth as a company did not happen by accident. The success is a result of business principals learned and practiced over time, and a willingness to learn from the mistakes and successes of others. "If a plant is root-bound in a too small pot, it can't grow," Syfan said. "The money you make is not to just pay bills. It is to grow your company."

Syfan Logistics is a testament to the effectiveness of the principles Jim has learned. Over the course of three years, the company set out to earn \$250 million but ended up earning over \$400 million, and the Covid-19 pandemic did not slow them down. While many logistics businesses suffered through the course of the pandemic, Syfan Logistics avoided those consequences by shifting their goals and primarily focusing on food transportation services, observing that even in a locked down economy people needed to eat.

"There is no formula," Syfan said. "There is a foundation that stays the same in any business, but there is no set formula for determining goals and achieving success. A business must pay attention to what is going on around it. If you try and rely on a fixed formula, you will not see growth because things never stay the same." He further shared that "there are 26 logistics firms in and around this area and 19 of them are my alumni," said Syfan.

University of North Georgia (UNG) students benefit from Jim's passion, knowledge and resources. For a number of years, Syfan has partnered with the Mike Cottrell College of Business (MCCB) in the development of a strong logistics program.

Most recently, Syfan has made a substantial gift to name the Syfan Logistics Lab in the new Cottrell Center for Business, Technology & Innovation. This lab will have a prominent location on the first floor of the Cottrell Center and will provide students with a learning environment that emulates a real logistics center, merging current technologies with the benefits of classroom instruction. "Our operations happen in a large, open room," Syfan said. "That is not by accident. Rather than a lecture hall, I thought it would be helpful to contribute to an environment that will hone students' communication skills with real world applications."

In the Syfan Lab, students will gain hands-on experience with McLeod Software, the leading software in the logistics industry, thanks to the generous support of McLeod Software and Syfan Logistics. "These gifts are transformative for our logistics and supply chain program," stated MCCB Dean Mary Gowan. "Our students excel in internships at Syfan Logistics and our alumni do well in the industry, but having the Syfan Logistics Lab and the McLeod Software in the lab will ensure our students are even more competitive in the industry as they graduate. We are truly thankful for the partnership we have with the Syfan family. They provide jobs for our students and support for our program."

Syfan's commitment to student success doesn't end with the naming of the Logistics Lab, either. Through his generosity, the MCCB was able to award two \$10,000 scholarships to highly deserving MCCB students and provide other support from Syfan for professional development opportunities for students.

Jim Syfan has a vision for UNG's business program: "The College will serve as a premier education resource in this area, and it turns out I will also benefit from a steady supply of highly educated logisticians, and North Georgia's business economy will prosper. One piece is part of the rest of the piece. There is no seam. You help the school. The school helps you."

Syfan's business acumen and passion for education have recently opened a new door for him. Georgia Governor Brian Kemp appointed Syfan to serve as a member of the USG Board of Regents in February. In this new, and very significant role, Syfan will help guide the course of the universities across the state and play a role in the education of thousands of Georgia students.

STUDENT *Achievements*



Hannah McSwain presented her research on cloud-level network security at the Consortium for Computing Sciences in Colleges' Southeastern Conference. The senior from Ellijay, Georgia, pursuing a degree in computer science wanted to get more ideas to further her research on cloud-level network security. McSwain applied and was accepted to present her research at the Consortium for Computing Sciences in Colleges' Southeastern Conference.



UNG CyberHawks scored 323,150 points to win the 2020 NSA Codebreaker Challenge, which wrapped up Jan. 31, 2021. UNG students, faculty and staff tallied 323,150 points, while second-place Georgia Tech finished with 74,010. Oregon State University, University of Cincinnati, and University of California, Santa Cruz rounded out the top five of the event.



Michael Morris and Nolan Edge won the innovateUNG Pitch Challenge on March 16, 2021, with their innovation that removes rust. The freshmen from Monroe, Georgia, shared their passion for their "E-Z Rust" innovation at the third annual innovateUNG Pitch Challenge on March 16 and emerged with the \$2,000 first prize.



Jessica Berliner, Kaitlyn Bowling and Kaeley Creasman finished in the top 2% out of more than 2,200 competitors in the virtual RNMKRS spring sales competition held April 14-15, 2021. UNG had 31 students finish in the top 30%, the sixth-highest number among the 63 competing universities and colleges from the U.S., Canada and Germany.



Austin Rich placed fifth individually in the 2021 National Collegiate Sports Sales Championship to lead UNG's sixth-place team finish. UNG hosted the virtual event held over a three-week period in February and March with Baylor University and the Atlanta Hawks.



Thomas Hayes earned a full-ride graduate school scholarship through the CyberCorps Scholarship for Service program. The recent alumnus is pursuing a master's degree in cybersecurity and privacy at New Jersey Institute of Technology.



Rafaella Jean Villanueva designed and developed an app that would eliminate excessive commission costs and ease the way to engage in money exchange. She presented her idea at The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) University Pitch Competition in February, 2021.



Chandler Harris, UNG senior cadet and president of UNG's chapter of the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association (AFCEA), won the AFCEA Atlanta chapter's 2021 merit scholarship.



COMPUTER SCIENCE PROGRAMS *Accredited by ABET*

UNG's computer science bachelor's degree program earned ABET accreditation this past year. ABET is the premier accrediting agency for programs in applied natural science, computing, engineering and engineering technology. The accreditation demonstrates to external stakeholders that the computer science program in the Mike Cottrell College of Business meets the highest standards of the discipline and is among the best in the world.

ABET accreditation requires renewal every five years, with renewal based on the program's continuous improvement plan. The plan includes ensuring that coursework is current and that faculty members are engaged in knowledge creation, collecting feedback from students about their courses, conducting a comprehensive major field test annually to assess student learning relative to program goals, and involvement of an advisory board of industry professionals and potential employers of graduates to provide counsel and feedback. In a business landscape that is constantly changing, the annual feedback, evaluation, and hands-on research process ensure that

UNG continues to offer the most relevant computer science curriculum for students.

"This [ABET accreditation] is a clear public indication of who we are," said Dr. Ash Mady, department head of UNG's Department of Computer Science and Information Systems at the time accreditation was earned, and currently assistant professor of computer science. "We are able to supply our region's businesses with future leaders who are well prepared."

Students in the computer science program learn to program in multiple languages, develop databases and infrastructure, and think critically – skills that will ultimately prepare them to be innovative leaders in careers in software engineering, systems administration, management, programming, and research. The ABET accreditation affirms the expertise of UNG's computer science program and ensures students and future employers are partners in sustaining an industry-leading degree program.

"It's wonderful to show the community that we deliver on our promise and that our offerings exceed the expectations," Mady said. ABET accreditation is an important milestone for UNG and demonstrates its commitment to providing high-quality programs focused on preparing students for future success.

Launching into the Future

UNG LAUNCHES NEW SPACE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP



What does it take to be a successful entrepreneur? The first part is recognizing an opportunity to fill a need, and then being willing to take a risk to turn that opportunity into a viable product or service and then into a successful business.

The Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (CEI) has long played a role in introducing students at the University of North Georgia (UNG) to the world of entrepreneurship. The Center is part of the Mike Cottrell College of Business (MCCB) and serves the entire UNG campus community and beyond. The Center grew out of a program created as part of the Cottrell naming gift for the MCCB that was focused on the economic advancement for the future of North Georgia. Recognizing that one of the best ways to grow a region is through entrepreneurial activities led to the creation of the CEI.

Formerly housed in a small office complex across from the Convocation Center, the CEI moved into its new location in 2021 and branded the space as the LaunchPad to connote its purpose—assisting individuals and teams with launching entrepreneurial ventures into successful businesses. The director, Dr. Ruben Boling, describes the LaunchPad as a space where everyone across UNG can have access to an incubator and accelerator to explore and develop creative ideas. In turn, the LaunchPad helps keep the North Georgia business community lively and flourishing.

“It’s a place set aside to encourage students, faculty, and anyone at the University to come and work on their business ideas,” Boling explained. “It provides an opportunity to meet with folks at the Center who can give them advice on starting a new business or growing a start-up, as well as serving as a space for entrepreneurial-minded students to gather.”

The Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation has already begun creating exciting opportunities for students and others on the UNG campuses, particularly focusing on how to enable students and community members to have the opportunity to start and grow a business. Even students who do not want to start their own business often understand that thinking like an entrepreneur is a plus, regardless of what career path is chosen, and often engage in CEI initiatives.

“The main thing the Center does is non-academic,” Boling said. “We opened the LaunchPad during COVID, and we are working toward where we want it to be. We already have an annual

innovateUNG pitch competition at UNG, and have established innovateUNG pitch competitions at several Forsyth County schools with an eye toward growing that number to expand it to a regional competition.”

One of Boling’s students, UNG senior Sebastian Salinas, knows first-hand the value of the Center. Salinas is the head of the Entrepreneurship Club and the Sales Club at the Mike Cottrell College of Business and has often utilized the LaunchPad space and resources.

“So many people have amazing ideas,” Salinas explained. “They share these ideas with their parents or roommates or other people who don’t necessarily know how they can support them. We want to create a space where people feel supported in creating their ideas.” With Dr. Boling’s help, I realized I can make something into reality, and he encouraged me to do that.”

“Business ideas aren’t created by one single person,” Salinas said. “Great ideas are created and implemented by a group of people working hard together.”

According to Boling, the new space’s strategic location right on the edge of campus on Chestatee Street, the main street into Dahlonega, is already catching the attention of students from across UNG, as well as local residents. Entrepreneurship is a well understood concept, associated with taking innovative ideas and turning them into business concepts that are marketable. By having this space, we are signaling to the students and the larger community that UNG knows the importance of fostering innovative ideas and providing the resources to turn those into businesses that can help the community economically.

“When I saw the space on Chestatee become available, I knew immediately that was the right space for UNG’s Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation,” said MCCB Dean Dr. Mary Gowan. “Dr. Boling has been working hard to build the program and having a well-designed, prime location was just the next step we needed to make the vision a reality. We are very grateful to the administration at UNG for making the space available to us and doing the kind of renovation that lends itself to building this program for UNG and the community.”



Students prepare for pitch presentations inside UNG's new entrepreneurship lab, the LaunchPad.

Real World Impact

MCCB RISES TO MEET NATION'S GROWING CYBERSECURITY THREATS



Cyberattacks have become increasingly disruptive to Americans' everyday lives. The last year alone has seen an abundance of worrying headlines: The Colonial Pipeline, the largest fuel pipeline in the US; Brazil's JBS, the world's largest meat processor that resulted in the closure of US operations; even Florida's water supply—to name a few. "The fact that cyber-related emergencies are plaguing the news almost every day is an indication of the tremendous need for trained cyber professionals in the workforce," said Dr. Bryson Payne, a professor of computer science and Coordinator of Student Cyber Programs for the University of North Georgia's (UNG) Mike Cottrell College of Business (MCCB).

The threat of cyberattacks, once an obscure and peripheral danger to many Americans, has been quickly elevated to the forefront of the American consciousness due to the impactful and tangible consequences of these attacks including gas shortages, supply chain interruptions, and economic volatility—and it's not just large corporations or government entities under threat. Identity theft has become easier than ever as thieves readily access social security numbers, and hackers acquire social media passwords and sell personal information to the highest bidder.

The technological innovations and devices through which these threats could be executed are numerous. Faced with a global pandemic, the world adapted and learned to interact, work and connect with each other digitally. Unfortunately, those miraculous technologies that allowed us to imitate face-to-face conversations miles apart also provided hackers and cyber thieves with new windows into our private lives.

Even worse, there is a critical shortage of qualified cyber professionals, both military and civilian, in the US. The state of Georgia, alone, has more than 17,000 open cyber jobs.

As the list of cyber emergencies continues to grow at an alarming rate, Dr. Payne recognizes that, so too, must our efforts grow to combat those emergencies that threaten our nation's security and wellbeing.

Through the hard work and dedication of professors like Dr. Payne, the MCCB is answering that call by expanding its already impressive cybersecurity program through a \$10 million Department of Defense (DOD) appropriation to the National Security Agency (NSA) to be shared among the nation's six senior military colleges for creating cybersecurity institutes. UNG received approximately \$1.475 million of the funds to establish an institute.

UNG is already designated by the NSA and Department of Homeland Security as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense, but the DOD appropriation will "open the door for scholarships that will empower women, minorities, first-generation college students, rural community members and other promising students in North Georgia to excel in cybersecurity," Dr. Payne said.

The Institute for Cyber Operations will be housed in the MCCB's soon-to-be completed Cottrell Center for Business, Technology & Innovation, which will include a state-of-the-art cybersecurity range. "The ever-evolving threats to the nation's data security infrastructure requires continued growth in



**"We are
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expertise and management to address these concerns," said Christopher Mitchiner, who was selected to fulfill the new role of Executive Director of the Institute for Cyber Operations. "We play a critical role in that process because we are developing the next generation of experts to bolster our nation's interests in every global sector."

The Institute will feature additional faculty, administrative and information technology support and increased interaction with DOD personnel to help students excel in their future cyber careers.

In the shadow of a global cyber crisis, the Mike Cottrell College of Business is primed and ready to combat the difficult challenges our country is facing. MCCB Cyber students have consistently demonstrated a propensity to excel in the cyber field as evidenced by their exceptional performance in national and international competitions, as well as many individual successes. Grants like the DOD appropriation will allow the College to continue building on its foundation of success and reach new heights by providing more opportunities for students to discover their true potential and create indispensable value for overcoming our nation's future cybersecurity threats.

"There's never been a better time to study cybersecurity," Dr. Payne said. "It's going to take all of our best problem-solvers working together to protect our economy, our government, and our way of life for the next generation."

Faculty *Perspective*

THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS: Challenges and Opportunities for Business Students

BY SUSHIL NIFADKAR, PH.D.

Associate Professor of Management and Associate Department Head, Department of Management and Marketing



TECHNOLOGY

Technology is the most fundamental way in which society is changing. Within my lifetime, I have seen the transition from a manual typewriter to an electronic typewriter to desktop publishing and voice-based typing and printing. More recently, researchers at MIT, Carnegie Mellon University, and other research centers have made substantial progress in reading people's thoughts through the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Similar giant technological strides have been made in all major fields of human activity such as medicine, transportation, telecommunication, and data processing. Scholars predict that the pace of technological advances will continue to accelerate in the foreseeable future.

These rapid and widespread technological advances have created interesting new opportunities for business students who are proficient in and comfortable with technology. Such technology-friendly students will be able to devise new products, services, and solutions and create innovative ways of serving the needs of individuals and businesses. Thus, to face the accelerating technological changes, I would advise business students from all fields, whether human resources, accounting, economics, or marketing, to develop their technical skills. MS Office and Google products such as Word, Excel, and Google Sheets are the current baseline requirements. However, for succeeding in the future marketplace, business students should go a few steps further and try to learn at least a few basic programming languages such as Python, Java, and C++, because these are the new languages of conducting business!

GLOBALIZATION

Researchers of ancient history and global human migration have reported that humans have been traveling to places near and far ever since they appeared on the Earth. Some of these migrations took place because of climatic changes. However, a significant proportion of migrations happened because of economic reasons: people traveled to places where they could trade, set up businesses, and find jobs. Recent advances in transportation and communication and an increased focus on economies of scale and global talent search have ensured that countries and people across the world are more connected with each other. Growing prosperity and mobility will ensure that such global interconnectedness will continue to increase in the foreseeable future.

Increased globalization has created challenges for individuals and corporations, however. Some individuals struggle to find jobs because of competition from people in other countries and because manufacturing and other industries are setting up operations in more economical countries. Some corporations that were accustomed to thriving in protected environments are now struggling to compete with more nimble and innovative companies from abroad. Despite such challenges for individuals and corporations, several opportunities exist for business students in the increasingly globalizing world. Given the changing times, students are advised to see themselves as global citizens and learn more about other cultures and countries. This approach will help them to develop a more refined understanding of the world and identify

employment and business opportunities across the globe. Working for a multinational corporation or moving to another country for short-term assignments are likely to help students develop professional connections abroad, and these connections may lead to the generation of innovative and cost-effective business ideas in the future. Thus, rather than viewing globalization as a challenge, business students are advised to actively look for and utilize opportunities offered by the increasingly open and interconnected world.

SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Last, society's expectations of corporations and business leaders are changing in multiple ways. In 2015, the United Nations adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, protect the planet, and promote global peace and prosperity. These goals include good health and well-being, affordable and clean energy, responsible consumption and production, and other such activities to ensure that the current generation passes on the world to future generations in conditions better than how they inherited it. Similarly, according to an article published in The Guardian, 'Eco-anxiety,' or the fear of environmental doom, exists in the minds of young people. The new generation also wants to work for ethical corporations, use products from socially responsible companies, and promote businesses that are contributing to human welfare globally.

The increased interest in sustainable and responsible business practices will incline corporations to invest more in these areas. Business students who equip themselves with knowledge and skills in sustainability will find themselves well-placed to utilize these opportunities. Thus, enterprising students are advised to come up with solutions that meet the increasing social emphasis on responsible corporate conduct. For instance, opportunities exist for students to make healthcare accessible and affordable to global citizens, offer new ways to generate energy without harming the environment, and reduce waste during the entire logistics trail and reuse the waste that communities and businesses produce. Through such initiatives, they will be able to pass on the Earth to future generations in a sustainable way.

To end, we need to remember that the world has always been changing since humans first appeared on this planet. It is true that the pace of change has accelerated in recent years because of significant advances in technology. It is normal to feel apprehensive about the rapidly changing world and the new challenges it presents. However, business students who are aware of global trends can plan for the future and, rather than being stymied by changes, use these challenges to come up with new solutions. Doing so will help them prosper as individuals and contribute significantly to the global society.



Associate Professor of
Sales & Marketing

DR. CINDY RIPPÉ'S TOP 3

REASONS STUDENTS SHOULD DEVELOP SALES SKILLS

HIGH EARNING POTENTIAL. Proficiency in sales means lucrative paychecks in a flexible job where every day is different. Sales offers a variety of structure of pay from straight commission, to salary plus bonus, and salary plus commission. Many sales jobs come with perks such as company cars, phone allowances, travel reimbursement, and extra spiffs for selling particular things. Sales is the only job that pays you more for doing what you are required to do.

EXCELLENT FUTURE JOB OUTLOOK. Job opportunities in sales abundantly flow across industries. Students can align their passions and interests with their careers by selling a product they enjoy. A sales career is one of the most versatile choices because every business needs qualified sellers. A career in sales also allows flexibility to meet new people and help solve their issues with the seller's unique solutions in a stimulating and rewarding job environment. According to the Sales Education Foundation, sales program graduates ramp up 50% faster when they start their sales careers and experience 30% less turnover.

STRONG FOUNDATION FOR CAREER GROWTH AND PERSONAL CONTROL. No matter what a student chooses for a career, the ability to sell helps in positioning ideas, moving others, effectively communicating, overcoming challenges, and adapting to different personality types. In sales, socializing is part of the job, and one has personal control. The salesperson plans his or her schedule. The more hours one works, the more money one makes. The harder one works, the more money one makes. The smarter one works, the more money one makes. The more one learns about selling, the better one becomes at selling. In sales, you are your own boss but do not have to deal with the risks of starting your own business.

VIRTUAL *Solutions*

LEADING VOICES

The **Cottrell Speaker Series** prides itself in welcoming prominent business leaders and professionals with diverse backgrounds to the Mike Cottrell College of Business to share and discuss leadership topics and practices with students, faculty, staff and local members of the business community.

The college welcomed Principal Software Engineer at Oracle Cloud Infrastructure and Gainesville State College (GSC) Alum Juan Llanes and Senior Vice President and Associate Research Director for the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta Dr. Paula Tkac for two virtual installments of the series.



Juan Llanes



Dr. Paula Tkac

Llanes currently works as a principal software engineer at Oracle Cloud Infrastructure, which is based in Seattle, Wash. His prior experience includes working at Microsoft Azure where he helped build a core component of their cloud. During his webinar, Llanes shared his personal and professional journey to where he is today. Coming from a multi-generational family who immigrated from Cuba to Spain, and then ultimately to the United States, Llanes attributes much of his success to being afforded the opportunity to pursue higher education across multiple states in the U.S and pairing his innate curiosity with hard work to drive his ambition and bring his dreams to fruition.

Dr. Tkac conducts research on various financial market topics including investor decision making, the mutual fund industry, financial regulation and the recent financial crisis and policy responses. Over 175 students across all five UNG campuses tuned in to listen to Dr. Tkac's presentation titled "So You Want To Be An Economist," during which she shared her experience of working in a male-dominated profession, how economics is a part of everyone's everyday lives, the impact of Covid-19 on the financial sector, and how having a solid understanding of economics can empower individuals in their personal and professional lives.



For more information about the **Cottrell Speaker Series** and news about upcoming speakers, scan the QR code.

ETHICS BOWL SUCCESSFULLY PIVOTS TO VIRTUAL FORMAT

The **BB&T Center for Ethical Leadership** (BB&T CEL) helps provide students with a deeper understanding of ethical leadership and how to apply that leadership via becoming a catalyst for ethical thought, analysis and engagement. While the center offers a wealth of resources and knowledge regarding all areas of ethics, it also provides students with many opportunities to practice and apply what they learn. One such opportunity is participating in Ethics Bowls.

"Through the bowl, we have a platform to safely and progressively discuss these challenges our nation is facing and get to the heart of difficult conversations," Rose Proctor, director of the BB&T Center for Ethical Leadership and UNG ethics bowl team coach said. "There is no better place to create a forum to have that conversation than in higher education."

Student teams from various institutions of higher learning compete against each other by presenting their ethical analysis of a selected case. A moderator poses questions and a panel of judges probes and evaluates the teams' responses defending their position. Rating criteria are based on intelligibility, focus on ethically relevant considerations, avoidance of ethical irrelevance, and deliberative thoughtfulness.

The University of North Georgia (through the BB&T CEL) hosts the Mid-Atlantic Regional Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl. Usually held in person, the Covid-19 Pandemic required UNG to pivot to an online format for the first time in 2020 and virtually host 13 schools and 18 teams on November 6 - 7. Over 120 undergraduate students, 28 coaches, 10 moderators, and over 40 judges participated in the event through four rounds, a semi-final and a final round.

"We asked ourselves, 'Can we cancel? Yes.' Then we asked, 'Should we cancel? No,'" Proctor said. "That decision was the turning point. We thought, 'We can do this. We can keep it going.'"

The endeavor is a campus-wide event, bringing together various administrators, faculty, staff, students and community and business leaders to discuss some of our nation's most challenging ethics cases, ranging from protests and property destruction, mask mandates, affirmative action and many more.

"After hearing how the bowl would take place and what we would have to do, I became much more open and excited about the opportunity," said Andres Perez, a member of the 2020 Ethics Bowl team. "While it was different from the norm, I appreciated them doing everything they could in order for us to get this experience."



Ethics Bowl Participants compete via zoom due to Covid-19.

Leading in Research & Innovation

FACULTY AWARDS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Bryson Payne

Professor of Computer Science

UNG Alumni Association's Distinguished Professor Award

Dr. Caroline Muñoz

Associate Professor of Marketing

USG 2021 Regents' Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award

Dr. Michael Gove

Associate Professor of Economics

Ann Purdy Matthews Outstanding Teacher Award for Gainesville Campus

Dr. Cindy Rippé

Associate Professor of Sales

Society for Marketing Advances' 2021 Distinguished Teaching Award for her presentation "Teaching from the heart: Creating success stories" and Best Paper for "The global phenomenon of lonely and insecure self-gifters: Cross-cultural insights from the United States and India"

PRESIDENTIAL SEMESTER INCENTIVE AWARD

Projects receive a full semester release from teaching and service, plus funding support of up to \$12,000 each.

Dr. Yong Wei

Computer Science and Information Systems

Development of Autonomous Li-ion Battery Management Systems (BMS) using Machine Learning (ML) Techniques for State-of-Health (SOHQ) Diagnostics from Electrochemical Impedance Spectroscopy (EIS) Data

PRESIDENTIAL INCENTIVE AWARDS FOR INNOVATION

Projects receive up to \$5,000 each to support full-time faculty and staff members in interdisciplinary and/or cross-functional collaborations or individual pursuits focused on innovations and partnerships to promote implementation of best practice models.

Dr. Zuoming Liu

Management & Marketing

Coupling Global Supply Chain with Agility, Adaptability, and Alignment to Improve Competitive Advantages

HOW YOU CAN HELP US

Lead, Empower and Create Value

Our new vision for the **Mike Cottrell College of Business** is to be a recognized leader in creating value for our students and communities through business and technology education and innovation. We invite you to join us in advancing this vision through your generous support.



NAMING OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW BUILDING

Funds from naming opportunities are investments in the future of the College. Our new home on the Dahlonega campus offers an opportunity for our corporate partners, alumni and friends to have their name prominently displayed in the Cottrell Center. We have a broad range of naming opportunities, and your gifts can be given over multiple



years. If you would like more information, including a naming opportunity list, please reach out to **Dean Mary Gowan (mary.gowan@ung.edu)** or **Development Officer Kim Vickers (kim.vickers@ung.edu)**, or go online at unggive.org/cottrell-center.



YOUR GIFT CAN PROVIDE FOR...

Students to:

- Participate in study abroad experiences in places like London and Italy
- Attend student professional conferences to represent the Mike Cottrell College of Business and network with professionals in their fields
- Represent the College in competitions that hone their critical thinking, problem solving and analytical skills
- Pay for textbook scholarships to help reduce the cost of college for students

Faculty to:

- Receive curriculum development grants that ensure students receive cutting-edge knowledge and experiences in the classroom
- Receive summer research grants that enable faculty to be thought leaders in their disciplines
- Travel to present their scholarship at professional meetings, building the reputation of the College and University

Your gift to the Dean's Excellence Fund can be a one-time gift or a monthly pledge. A gift of \$25 a month for 12 months would help support a student's study abroad experience or a faculty member's professional development. Your gift of \$1,000 would provide the funds for a student (or two) to participate in a student leadership conference or in a competition, or support a faculty member's summer research activities. A pledge of \$25,000 paid over five years can endow a student scholarship. The opportunities are endless.

Please contact **Dean Mary Gowan (mary.gowan@ung.edu)** or **Development Officer Kim Vickers (kim.vickers@ung.edu)** to learn more about giving opportunities, or go online at unggive.org/mike-cottrell-college-of-business to make a gift or pledge. Your gifts truly do make a difference in the quality of our programs and the success of our students.

MIKE COTTRELL COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

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Left to right: Rope Roberts, Alex Gregory, Mike Higley, Dean Mary Gowan, Bob Swoszowski, UNG President Bonita Jacobs, Jim Syfan, Lt. Gen. James Terry, '78

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**LEAD.
EMPOWER.
CREATE VALUE.**

MISSION: THE MIKE COTTRELL COLLEGE OF BUSINESS LEADS IN THE EXPLORATION, CREATION, AND DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE. WE EMPOWER STUDENTS TO BECOME INNOVATIVE AND ETHICAL BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS. WE CREATE VALUE FOR INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITIES.

VISION: TO BE A RECOGNIZED LEADER IN CREATING VALUE FOR OUR STUDENTS AND COMMUNITIES THROUGH BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION AND INNOVATION.

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College of Business
UNIVERSITY of NORTH GEORGIA™

