



UNG

MIKE COTTRELL COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
Magazine for Alumni and Friends
SUMMER 2024

MCCB **hosts SEC**

**MCCB students
and faculty impress
during joint investor
roundtables**

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A Message *from the Dean*

Dear Friends of the MCCB,

In February of this year, I completed my 5th year as Dean of the Mike Cottrell College of Business. During this time we have endured COVID, planned and moved into a new building for our Dahlonega campus, continued to see the enrollments grow in the college, and added new opportunities and programs for our students, including the Masters of Science in Computer Programming. We have seen donor giving increase exponentially, providing needed resources for scholarships, faculty professional development, student activities and more.

In the past academic year, we launched the Cottrell Leadership Fellows program, added new technologies to our hands-on learning opportunities for students, and continued to solidify our impact on the regional and state economy and beyond through faculty and students engaging in economic research, beginning to map the entrepreneurial ecosystem and build entrepreneurship programming through a generous Google grant for Dahlonega and Lumpkin County, and hosting the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) flagship event. You will learn more about some of these activities in this edition of our magazine.

We also celebrated significant rankings for our MBA program during this past year. UNG's Cottrell Master of Business Administration ranked second in Georgia and 35th nationally in Fortune magazine's 'Best Part-Time MBA Programs for 2024' list released in April.



This ranking followed a #7 ranking nationally on the DiscoverBusiness.us Best Value Online MBA program ranking the previous December. The program also reached a record enrollment of 100+ students in the spring semester and continues to grow. The rankings and growth are a testament to the quality of our faculty and the program.

Thank you for your interest and commitment to the Mike Cottrell College of Business. Reach out and let us know how you would like to engage with us. We are always looking for speakers for classes, mentors and internship and job opportunities for students, and donors who want to help us continue to have an impact on our region and beyond.

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



Dr. Kurt Schulzke, along with students Abby Keener, Troy Harris, and Dustin Ward, discussed what constitutes a significant impact on companies.

SEC Roundtable Success

MCCB recently hosted the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC), North American Securities Administrators Association (NASAA), and the Georgia Secretary of State for their flagship joint investor event.

The Mike Cottrell College of Business recently hosted a special roundtable event in collaboration with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), North American Securities Administrators Association (NASAA), and Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger. The event was a prime opportunity for students, faculty, alumni, and the public to engage with key regulatory bodies and discuss pressing issues in the investment landscape.

The roundtables included various key sessions aimed at addressing investor challenges and enhancing investor protection. Portions of the event were also webcast on the SEC website. Key sessions included:

Public Roundtable Webcast and Investor Case Studies

Retail investors, investigators, and regulators shared experiences dealing with securities fraud. These discussions involved SEC’s Investor Advocate Cristina Martin Firvida and Georgia Securities Administrator Noula Zaharis.

Moderated Discussion on Investor Protection

Officials from the Securities Investor Protection Corporation and Canadian Investor Protection Fund discussed safeguarding investors during firm insolvency.

Panel on Barriers to Capital Formation Entrepreneurs and venture funders explored challenges and opportunities in community-based investing, particularly in underserved areas.

Students and faculty also presented on retail investors’ needs, discussing rulemaking, policy issues, and sharing their perspectives with federal and state regulatory leaders. Academic presentations included:

Retail Investor Perspective Presentations by Dr. Ning Wang, associate professor of finance, Dr. Maryna Murdock, professor of finance, junior finance and accounting major Luke Atwood (CEO of the UNG Investment Club), and senior finance major Jonathan Howell (CEO of the UNG Real Estate Club) were well-received.

Materiality in Investments Dr. Kurt Schulzke, along with students Abby Keener, Troy Harris, and Dustin Ward, discussed what constitutes a significant impact on companies. “Materiality is a complex area for SEC registrants and retail investors,” said Keener, from Athens, Georgia.

“We strive to connect classroom learning with real-world applications. The SEC meeting extended our efforts to prepare students for their careers.”

Dr. Kurt Schulzke
Professor of Accounting & Law

Challenges of Financial Disclosure

Associate Professor and Department Head Dr. Ellen Best addressed the balance between adequate investor protection and information overload in financial statements.

Additionally, Mike Lavender, MCCB associate dean of undergraduate programs, discussed the risks of social media advice on investments and stressed the importance of educating young investors. “For many students, realizing they belong in these environments is a huge confidence boost,” he said.

The event underscored the importance of collaboration between academic institutions and regulatory bodies in fostering a well-informed investor community.

UNG’s involvement highlighted its commitment to bridging academic insights with real-world regulatory challenges. Dr. Mary Gowan, dean of the Mike Cottrell College of Business, expressed pride in hosting the event. “It was an excellent opportunity for our community to engage with this key regulatory body and connect with various regulatory and nonprofit representatives,” she said.

The roundtable was a significant step towards enhancing investor protection, addressing fraud and overcoming economic barriers, and provided a platform for valuable dialogue. The event also showcased the College of Business’ role in preparing students to meet real-world challenges in the investment landscape.



Associate Professor and Department Head Dr. Ellen Best discussed the balance between financial disclosure and information overload.



The Panel on Barriers to Capital Formation answered audience questions.



Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensberger presented opening remarks.



The event took place in the Don & Connie Cottrell Ballroom of the Cottrell Center for Business, Technology & Innovation.

Technology Advantages

MCLEOD SOFTWARE

The Mike Cottrell College of Business sets itself apart by integrating McLeod Software into

its curriculum. This advanced logistics and transportation management software provides students with hands-on experience in real-world applications, equipping them with the skills and knowledge highly sought after in the industry. By using McLeod Software, MCCB ensures that its students are not only learning theoretical concepts but also applying them in practical, cutting-edge scenarios. This unique approach offers MCCB students a distinct advantage, preparing them to excel in a competitive job market and fostering a deeper understanding of business operations and logistics.

The Mike Cottrell College of Business was only the second business school in the country to be approved by McLeod to use the company's premier software for teaching.

“This logistics software helps to bridge the classroom and the logistics industry to help students be prepared to enter the workforce. We want to make it easier for them to adapt to their jobs when they graduate and set them up for success.”



DR. LU XU, Assistant Professor of Business Statistics and Quantitative Methods

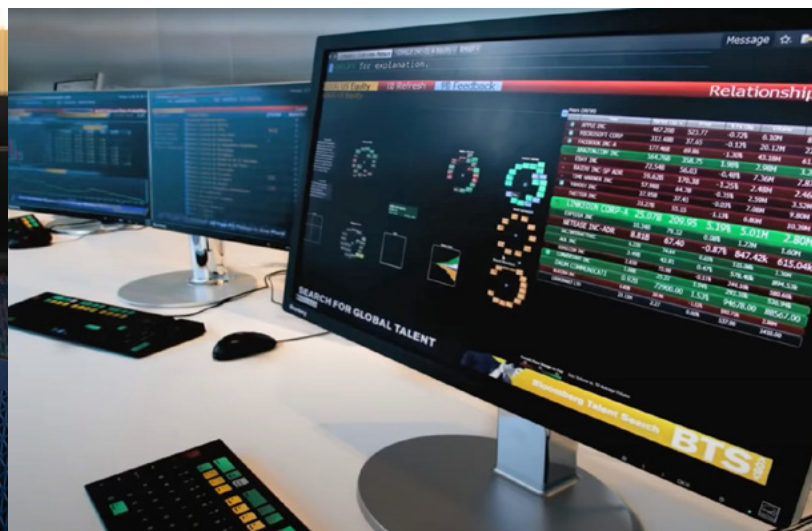
CYBER RANGE

MCCB also provides students with access to a state-of-the-art cyber range. The cyber range allows students to simulate real-world cyberattacks and defenses, honing their skills in a controlled, professional setting. By utilizing this high-tech facility, MCCB equips its students with the critical expertise needed to protect against modern cyber threats, preparing them for successful careers in cybersecurity and IT fields. MCCB also houses a cyber/forensic lab which includes a secure area with no Wi-Fi access, ensuring an environment free from external threats and perfectly suited for learning sensitive cybersecurity operations.

“The combination of classroom learning and hands-on experience we provide at UNG prepares our students to face today's toughest cyber challenges.”



DR. BRYSON PAYNE, Professor of Computer Science & Coordinator of Cybersecurity Student Programs



By leveraging the same cutting-edge tools used by industry professionals in our classrooms, MCCB ensures that our students are exceptionally well-prepared for their future careers in Logistics, Cybesecurity, Finance and more.



BLOOMBERG TERMINALS

MCCB students gain a competitive edge through the integration of Bloomberg Terminals into their coursework. These industry-standard tools provide access to real-time financial data, analytics, and trading platforms, mirroring the resources used by professionals in the finance sector. By incorporating Bloomberg Terminals, MCCB ensures that students develop a deep understanding of market dynamics and financial instruments. This practical exposure not only enhances their analytical skills but also prepares them to excel in the fast-paced world of finance, giving MCCB graduates a significant advantage as they enter the job market.

“This access allows students to earn Bloomberg Certificates, participate in trading challenges, attend on-demand educational webinars, and gain hands-on learning experiences, significantly enhancing their learning outcomes and developing real-world skills that are valuable in the workplace.

 **DR. NING WANG, Associate Professor of Finance**

SAP

With the integration of SAP, a leading enterprise resource planning (ERP) software, students gain hands-on experience with a powerful tool widely used in the business world for managing operations, financials, and customer relations. This practical training ensures that MCCB graduates are proficient in essential business processes and analytics, giving them a significant advantage as they enter the workforce. Through the use of SAP, MCCB prepares its students to seamlessly transition from the classroom to dynamic, technology-driven business environments.

“Our students dive into the core processes essential for business operations and see firsthand how an ERP system like SAP supports these functions. This practical experience has proven invaluable, with students noting that their SAP skills are highly sought after in job interviews as they near graduation.”

 **DR. T.J. GABRIEL, Professor of Management**

STUDENT *Achievements*

PCAOB Scholar Award

Erin Whatley earned UNG's Public Company Accounting Oversight Board Scholar award for the 2023-24 academic year.



Deloitte Accounting Firm Internship

Senior Dustin Ward is interning in London next spring with the Deloitte accounting firm.

NSA Codebreaker Challenge

UNG's students placed #2 in the nation, finishing behind Georgia Tech's graduate team and ahead of SANS Technology Institute's professional team.

Undergraduate Scholarship Award

Senior Daniela Zavaleta won the prestigious 2024 Undergraduate Scholarship Award from the Association for Supply Chain Management's Atlanta chapter.



innovateUNG Pitch Challenge

Cooper Bowen, Sam Farrell, Josh Wilson, Patrick Callahan and Finn Kelly Lewis earned a \$2,000 cash prize for their innovative idea.

Mid-Atlantic Regional Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl

UNG's team placed 2nd in the National Ethics Bowl.

Department of Defense Cyber Scholarships

Two MCCB students were winners of the DoD Cyber Scholarship for the 2023-2024 year.



AMA Ken Bernhardt Outstanding Collegiate Marketer Scholarship Award

Denise Gonzalez earned the prestigious AMA Scholarship award to pursue her graduate education.

Best Application of Theory Award

Cybersecurity Student Cooper Warrington won the award at the Northeast Decision Sciences Institute.

International Academy of Business Disciplines Conference

Andrew Clements and Tyler Lurie each presented at the International Academy of Business Disciplines Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada.



Virginia Tech Summit Capture the Flag (CTF)

UNG's team consisting of Elijah Elliot, Tyson Langford, and Sawyer Shepherd placed #1 at the Virginia Tech Summit CTF Competition, besting all of the other senior military college teams

The Mike Cottrell College of Business pioneered a new initiative last fall aimed at cultivating students' leadership and workforce capabilities. The Cottrell Leadership Fellows (CLF) program has debuted with 15 inaugural participants.

This three-year development journey offers fellows access to academic scholarships, support for study abroad opportunities, and avenues for undergraduate research. The program is designed to blend theory with practical experience through mentoring, portfolio creation, and tailored programming for MCCB undergraduates.

"The financial support provided allows students to focus more on learning and less on financial pressures," explained Kelli Crickey, senior lecturer of management and co-director of CLF. "Fellows not only grow individually but also contribute to the broader MCCB community through workshops and leadership opportunities."

Jenna Gardner, a junior from Gainesville, Georgia, is pursuing a management degree. She was drawn to the program by the prospect of conducting economics research with faculty mentor Dr. Ruohan Wu. Her ambition is to earn a Ph.D. to pursue a career in academia.

"This program connects me with people who can help me achieve my goals, refine my skills and learn new ones," Gardner reflected.

LEADERSHIP PIONEERS

Shaping tomorrow's leaders at MCCB

For Anthony Giordano, a senior from Cumming, Georgia, studying marketing, the CLF program offers invaluable community-building opportunities and insights from industry leaders. With aspirations in experiential marketing, he dreams of working for Nintendo Corp.

"I appreciate the diversity within the program," Giordano shared. "Everyone here has different motivations, but we're all united in our drive to become better leaders."

Anna Thompson, a sophomore from Savannah, Georgia, dual-majoring in marketing and minoring in Italian, learned about CLF from mentor Mike Higley, an alumnus. Thompson plans to work in corporate marketing in North Georgia or Savannah before opening her own coffee shop, combining her passions for coffee and community service.

"CLF empowers students to make a meaningful impact," Thompson emphasized. "We're focused on amplifying student voices, connecting with leaders, and fostering a culture of collaboration."

Dr. Jie Guo, MCCB assistant professor and co-director of CLF, envisions expanding the program to UNG's Gainesville Campus by spring 2024.

"We welcome students from both Gainesville and Dahlonega campuses to join our initiative," Guo stated. "Our fellows are poised to be advocates for student interests within MCCB, inspiring each other to grow personally and develop robust leadership skills."



Leading Logistics

CASSIE SULLENS HALL, '19, SENIOR PRICING ANALYST AT SYFAN LOGISTICS



Cassie Sullens Hall, '19, has quickly ascended the ranks at Syfan Logistics, a Gainesville, Georgia based transportation company with strong ties to MCCB. Her journey from an intern to a senior pricing analyst is a testament to her work ethic, the education she received, and the support she found at MCCB.

Cassie's introduction to Syfan Logistics was serendipitous. An encounter with Syfan Logistics at a recruitment event led to a seasonal position, which soon blossomed into an internship and eventually a full-time role. The invigorating atmosphere and the opportunity to work in different areas of the company helped Cassie find where she fit best.

The supportive environment at Syfan Logistics played a significant role in her decision to pursue full time employment. "I never felt like an intern. I always felt like I was part of the team; my ideas and the work I was doing were important," she explained. This sense of belonging and the opportunity to express her career aspirations allowed her to fine-tune her professional path.

Cassie's education at MCCB was instrumental in her success. "At MCCB, we are taught by educated industry professionals," she said. This blend of theoretical knowledge and real-world application equipped her with valuable technical skills and essential soft skills. The faculty's open-door policy provided her with the support needed to excel academically and professionally. "There are years of wisdom at MCCB and with faculty willing and ready to share that wisdom, students are able to capitalize on their goals," she added.

Today, Cassie utilizes the skills and knowledge she acquired during her college years in her role as a senior pricing analyst. Her day begins with a team check-in. "It's important that they know I'm available for any questions or concerns," she shared. Her team focuses on analyzing contract bidding opportunities, fuel rates, and creating reports and visual data presentations to drive decisions. "We live in a world full of data, but being able to capitalize on it can be difficult when speaking the logistics language," Cassie noted. Her ability to transform data into actionable insights has driven significant changes in daily operations at Syfan.

The logistics industry has evolved significantly during her tenure, particularly with technological advancements.

"Our customers are requesting more from us than simply low rates and showing up on time," she explained. Embracing technology has become essential for maintaining a competitive edge in the industry.

Cassie's commitment to leadership extends beyond her professional role. Her acceptance and participation in a leadership program organized by Hall County, GA, which included serving on a Program Advisory Committee for Youth Leadership initiatives, led to Cassie being awarded a Silver Shovel Award by Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce for her efforts in educating the community about the logistics industry.

Reflecting on her time at MCCB, Cassie emphasized the importance of the partnership between local businesses and colleges. "I've been fortunate enough to have involvement with UNG as an alumna through speaking engagements and creating projects for students using real data from our opportunities," she said.

Her collaboration with faculty and industry professionals continues to foster growth and innovation and reflects the mutual partnership the company shares with MCCB in providing students with opportunities for real-world application of knowledge, while Syfan Logistics benefits from a pipeline of enthusiastic and well trained students prepared to excel in the workforce.

For current MCCB students aspiring to enter the logistics field, Cassie offers valuable advice: "Logistics is a fast-paced industry; every 10 minutes there's a guaranteed change somewhere. Take the time to be present and be available."

As Syfan Logistics grows, Cassie envisions the expansion of her team and the adoption of new technological advances to enhance market recommendations and analytics. Her journey from an enthusiastic intern to a respected leader is a shining example of how MCCB cultivates leaders who create value in their workplaces and communities.

Cassie Sullens Hall's story is not just a celebration of her achievements, but also a testament to the transformative power of education and the supportive environment at the Mike Cottrell College of Business. Her journey continues to inspire current and future students, proving that with the right foundation, the possibilities are limitless.



“I never felt like an intern. I always felt like I was part of the team; my ideas and the work I was doing were important.”

Cassie Sullens Hall, '19
Senior Pricing Analyst
at Syfan Logistics



Innovation Boost

MCCB SECURES GOOGLE GRANT FOR RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

MCCB secured a \$200,000 grant from Google.org to bolster entrepreneurial resources in Dahlonega and Lumpkin County. This initiative, in collaboration with the Dahlonega-Lumpkin Chamber of Commerce, the Lumpkin County School District, and the Development Authority of Lumpkin County, aims to enhance the local ecosystem for budding entrepreneurs.

google.org
\$200K
GRANT

This grant aligns with Governor Brian Kemp's vision of statewide prosperity and comes as UNG welcomes a new director for its Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

The grant will support a study to identify and enhance resources for innovation, creating a thriving entrepreneurial environment in Dahlonega and Lumpkin County. With a strong STEM focus at both UNG and the Lumpkin County School System, the project will foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship from the ground up.

The Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at UNG plans to expand its community programs, emphasizing areas like computer science, cybersecurity, healthcare, and other STEM fields. Google.org's support is seen as critical to developing the entrepreneurial pipeline in rural north Georgia.

The Dahlonega-Lumpkin Chamber of Commerce has established a co-working space for small businesses, nonprofits, and startups,

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

CHRISTOPHER GREENE:

New Director of the Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation

How will you collaborate with local businesses to foster entrepreneurship & innovation?

Partnerships with Local Businesses:

Our innovateDahlonega Entrepreneurship Accelerator (IDEA) will be central in connecting students with local businesses for mutual growth.

Community Engagement:

Hosting regular networking events like coffee meetups and community-wide innovation challenges

Educational Outreach:

Expanding workshops and training sessions across North Georgia

Mentorship and Support:

Connecting aspiring entrepreneurs with experienced mentors from the community through our new Second Mountain Mentors program

Leveraging Emerging Technologies:

Collaborating with businesses and community organizations to explore and implement technologies like AI to drive innovation and efficiency

Tell us about your background

I grew up in a family with a history of entrepreneurial successes and failures, so I have always been fascinated by the various paths of life and the skills and mindsets required for the adventure of entrepreneurship and innovation. My journey has taken me through a wide variety of experiences, including roles as a tenured professor, a small business attorney, a champion of innovation for the Governor of Colorado, and a successful hospitality entrepreneur. Each role provided unique insights into the worlds of education, government, law, hospitality, and business, allowing me to better understand commonalities, differences, and the possibilities at the intersections of different groups.



providing essential resources such as high-speed internet and conference rooms. This space aims to merge resources and foster partnerships between the university and the business community. Additionally, a local “Innovation Pitch” competition will pair participants with mentors, offering mini-grants and the chance to join an accelerator program. This model will also be implemented in local high schools to nurture young entrepreneurial minds.



Dr. Mary Gowan, center, dean of UNG's Mike Cottrell College of Business, is pictured with Rebecca Mincey, Lumpkin County community and economic development director, and Robb Nichols, Dahlonega-Lumpkin Chamber of Commerce executive director.



WINNING VENTURES

Graduating seniors Cooper Bowen, Sam Farrell, and Josh Wilson, and juniors Patrick Callahan and Finn Kelly Lewis, won the 2024 innovateUNG Pitch Challenge and earned a \$2,000 cash prize for their business model, “Smart Snack Solutions.” The venture aims to provide affordable, healthy snacks for college students. Callahan and Kelly Lewis, soccer players, were inspired by their experiences as student-athletes to create nutritious snack options.

Watch the 2024
innovateUNG
Pitch Challenge



How do you plan to engage and support students who are interested in entrepreneurship & innovation?

We inspire, connect, and empower them through a holistic approach. We ignite students’ passion by helping them discover their personal purpose and the power of intention, fostering the courage that drives their journey into the unknown.

By connecting students with mentors, experts, and peers, we build a supportive community that emphasizes empathy, collaboration, and the sharing of diverse perspectives.

What are the challenges innovators and entrepreneurs face today?

There are many, but one challenge is accessing the necessary resources and support. Many have great ideas but lack funding, mentorship, and networks to bring their concepts to life.

At the CEI, we address this through our innovateUNG and innovateDahlonega programs, which provide not only comprehensive support, including mentors, funding opportunities, and a supportive community, but also a front door for people who are looking for assistance.



What unique resources or programs will be introduced at the CEI?

One of our flagship initiatives is **innovateUNG** which will use proven innovation tools to help UNG become a national leader in academic innovation. **innovateDahlonega Entrepreneurship Accelerator (IDEA)** is being developed to integrate business best-practices, community-driven ideas, and modern technology to support both new and existing ventures in downtown Dahlonega.

Our new series of ongoing workshops support this program by offering hands-on training in business start-up, social media marketing, customer service, and emerging technologies like AI and data science.

Additionally, we plan to enhance our successful innovation challenges, transforming them into comprehensive innovation systems that foster sustained and scalable entrepreneurial efforts.

Driving Success

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR CAREER SUCCESS

PROS

PROFESSIONAL ROADMAP
TO ONGOING SUCCESS

PROS - This exclusive professional development program for Mike Cottrell College of Business assists students in developing their own Professional Roadmap to Ongoing Success while in college to ensure they achieve their career goals after college.



PROS is a ladder to opportunity and success. Through PROS, I gained confidence and experience, which earned me a full-time position before I graduated."

Mansi Patel, Accounting Student



Badge One

Explore Your Options



Badge Two

Prepare and Plan



Badge Three

Connect and Test



Badge Four

Launch to Success

Badge One Example

EXPLORE ACTIVITIES

- Introduction
- Explore the MCCB
- Career assessment
- Submit a resume
- Develop your network
- Interview questions

CHOOSE 2:

- Attend certified student success event
- Research careers activity
- Impact, strengths, transferable skills activity
- Personal finance coaching

INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The internship program enables students to enter the business marketplace with real-world experience, ready to add immediate value to an organization.

Student—must have completed 60 credit hours and have at least a 2.5 GPA

Internship provider—provides a real world, professional learning environment and the opportunity for student intern to use their academic skills.

Faculty mentor—maintains contact with student during the semester and acts as support

Internship coordinator—point of contact for all parties, coordinates administrative processes



MOCK INTERVIEWS

71% of students are *extremely likely* to recommend mock interviews to others

100% of students believe that completing a mock interview was effective and will help in future endeavors

Mock Interviews

Resume Development

Pitch Practice

Career Meet & Greets

Job Search Strategy Workshops

Career Site Visits

Networking Events

Graduation Bootcamp

Career panels....and more!



"The many resources offered through the College have expanded my networking capabilities and provided me with a wealth of opportunities that have helped me confidently navigate my chosen career path."

Margaret Holt, recent marketing graduate



Leanee Crayport, Senior Consultant at Deloitte Consulting; Ebony Francis, Accountant at AvestiCorp; and Selita Bell, President of Bell Consultants.

Money Talks

The Mike Cottrell College of Business hosted the Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger's Securities Division for a transformative financial literacy program. Known as "Money Talks," this initiative aligns with the Securities Division's mission to empower and educate Georgia's students in financial fitness.

The program engaged over 200 UNG students through three enlightening sessions, which were also live-streamed to reach additional students across our campuses.

"We're thrilled to be getting this message out to as many young Georgians as possible," said Secretary Raffensperger. "By learning these crucial financial management skills at a young age, these Georgians will unlock so many opportunities."

Moderated by Art Terrell, the program featured panelists including Leanee Crayport, Senior Consultant at Deloitte Consulting; Ebony Francis, Accountant at AvestiCorp; and Selita Bell, President of Bell Consultants. The experts discussed budgeting, saving, investing, maximizing income, credit and loans, retirement planning, entrepreneurship, and starting a small business.

COTTRELL SPEAKERS

The 2023 - 2024 Cottrell Speaker Series recently featured two professionals who shared their unique experiences and expertise with our students, faculty, and staff.

Zachary Horton

*Owner,
Blind Squirrel
Nut Company*



We welcomed Zachary Horton, owner of the Blind Squirrel Nut Company, to our Gainesville campus.

Zach shared his incredible journey of faith and resilience, from overcoming the trials of being blind and a 20-month coma to starting a successful business selling Georgia pecans. His story inspired our community to persevere and pursue their dreams.

Kevin Tweddle

*Senior Executive
Vice President,
ICBA*



Next, Kevin Tweddle, Senior Executive Vice President of ICBA

Innovation, spoke at our Dahlonega campus. With extensive experience in finance and Fintech, Kevin provided valuable insights into the exciting developments within the industry, offering students and staff a unique opportunity to learn from a leader in the field.

The Cottrell Speaker Series continues to bring prominent business professionals to our campuses, fostering leadership and providing personal insights to our community.

Leading in Research & Innovation

FACULTY AWARDS AND HIGHLIGHTS

AWARDS

Dr. Tamirat Abegaz and Cooper Warrington (student)

Best Application of Theory Award for “A Comparative Analysis of ChatGPT, Bard, Snapchat, Hugging, and Perplexity on Unintentional Biases” at the NEDSI 2024 conference.

Dr. Mike Ryan

UNG Presidential Award for “Comprehensive Classroom Experiments across Microeconomics.”

Dr. Michael Gove

Presidential Summer Incentive Award for “Wage Dispersion and Team Performance: Lessons Learned from Major League Soccer.”

Dr. Ruohan Wu

Presidential Innovation Incentive Award for “Assessing the Cost of Living in North Georgia: A Student-Leading Project with Extramural Partnership.”

Presidential Summer Incentive Award for “ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) Performance of Firms under Global Competition: A Comparison between the United States and China.”

Mary Norman

Faculty Career Champion Award, UNG Career Services

Jennifer Schneider

Faculty Champion Award, UNG Career Services

Dr. William Black

Alfred R. Roberts Memorial Research Award, Academy of Accounting Historians (August 2023).

Juanita Woods

Linn Stuckenbruck Teaching Excellence Award, Project Management Institute (October 24, 2023).

Dr. Ning Wang

Presidential Innovation Incentive Award for “Student Success in Investment Fund Management: Best Practices of Experiential Learning, Regional Engagement, and Leadership Development in Student Investment Club.”

Dr. Mohammad Mohebbi

Presidential Semester Award for “Establishing The University of North Georgia’s Artificial Intelligence Laboratory.”

Dr. Lu Xu

Presidential Innovation Award for “Sustainable Supply Chain Management: An Integrated Organizational Model with Digital Transformation.”

PRESENTATIONS & SEMINARS

Denise McWilliams & Dr. Ash Mady

Completed the Harvard Business Publishing Seminar *Teaching with Cases*, consisting of four half-day virtual sessions.

Ning Wang

Presented a paper titled “A Dynamic Analysis of the Impact of Household Portfolio Allocation Decisions on the Demand for Life Insurance” at the Academy of Financial Services Association Meeting. Co-authored with Yiling Deng and Dr. Ruohan Wu.

Dr. Tamirat Abegaz

Presented two papers, “A Comparative Analysis of ChatGPT, Bard, Snapchat, Hugging, And Perplexity on Unintentional Biases” and “Exploring Evasion Attacks & Adversarial Defenses” at NEDSI 2024.

Dr. Ahmad Ghafarian

Presented the paper “Investigating Instagram Privacy through Memory Forensics” and chaired a session at the International Computing Conference in London.

Dr. Ruohan Wu

Presented a paper titled “Disappearing Learning-by-Exporting? A Further Inspection with Independent and Spillover Innovation” at the Southern Economic Association meeting in New Orleans.

MEDIA FEATURES & OTHER RECOGNITIONS

Dr. Varun Gupta

Featured as a logistics/supply chain expert on nearshoring trends in supply chains in *Global Finance Magazine*.

Juanita Woods

Published textbook, “Delivering Value with Project Management,” an open-source, zero-cost book covering foundational principles of Project Management.

Dr. Tamirat Abegaz, Dr. Varun Gupta, Dr. Lu Xu, Dr. Mohan Menon, and Dr. Luay Wahsheh

Received a cyber grant to work on a joint project funded by NSA titled “Public-Private-Partnerships to Mitigate Cyber Threats to Logistics Activities in Georgia Companies.”

HOW YOU CAN HELP US

THE POWER OF UNRESTRICTED GIFTS



In today's rapidly evolving economic landscape, the Mike Cottrell College of Business at the University of North Georgia faces unprecedented challenges and opportunities. This is where unrestricted gifts become not just beneficial, but essential. These flexible funds empower the college to navigate uncertain times, seize emerging opportunities, and maintain educational excellence without compromising its core mission.

From addressing the lingering effects of the pandemic to preparing students for jobs that don't yet exist, unrestricted gifts provide the agility needed to stay ahead in a world where change is the only constant. They represent more than just financial support; they're an investment in the future of business education and the success of tomorrow's leaders.



These are just some of the ways the Mike Cottrell College of Business is already benefitting from unrestricted gifts made to the Dean's Excellence Fund:



STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES: We have upped our game in providing additional resources for internships and job placement assistance for our students.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT: In light of state budget cuts, we have been able to use unrestricted funds to support professional development opportunities and research initiatives to keep faculty at the forefront of their fields.

SCHOLARSHIPS: We have added to scholarship funds to help us retain talented students, particularly those with the greatest need.

GLOBAL EDUCATION INITIATIVES: We have been able to help students fund a study abroad experience as an enhancement to their international business courses to prepare students for the global marketplace.

EMERGENCY FUNDS: We have been able to have a source of funds to address unforeseen challenges or opportunities as they arise.

Use your power and make a gift to the Dean's Excellence Fund to support the Mike Cottrell College of Business by visiting unggive.org/mike-cottrell-college-of-business or contact Director of Development Kim Vickers at kim.vickers@ung.edu for more information.

Thank you to all of our alumni and friends who have already made a recent gift to the Dean's Excellence Fund. Your support is truly appreciated and valued.

MIKE COTTRELL COLLEGE OF BUSINESS *Advisory Board*

ELIZABETH BROWN, '23
Community Health
Improvement Specialist,
Northeast Georgia Health System

CINDY CAMPBELL, '94
Chief Operating Officer
Rushton

ALLEN EARLS, '86
Professional Actor and CPA

TODD FERGUSON, '94
Chief Executive Officer
JT Stratford

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State Senator

KRISTI GRIFFIN
Managing Partner
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Sub-Saharan Africa, FedEx, Retired

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Founder and Managing Partner,
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Founder and Owner,
Cliffhouse Development LLC

WILLIAM "BILL" MITCHELL, '86
Restaurant Executive
Board Member
Miso Robotics and Loop Media

HUNTER PARKER, '21
Research Analyst
JT Stratford



Left to right: Bill Mitchell, Kristi Griffin, Hunter Parker, James Terry, Barbara DeMarco Williams, Jim Syfan, Mary Gowan, Mike Higley, Allen Earls, Kathy Tillman, Michelle Prater, Cindy Campbell, Elizabeth Brown, Todd Ferguson

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Department of Veterans
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JIM SYFAN
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Syfan Logistics

**LT. GEN. (RET.)
JAMES TERRY, '78**
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Superintendent,
UNG's Cadet Leadership
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KATHY TILLMAN, '82
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**MIKE COTTRELL COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH GEORGIA
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