MS in Organizational Leadership Program Experiences Great Success with First Group of Graduates & Military Pilot Program — page 6

Computer Science Graduate Students Impress at CSU Research Conference — page 9
Dear Turner College Stakeholder:

We are pleased to present you with the second edition of the Commerce and Technology Review. The Review is intended to keep our alumni and stakeholders connected with the College and to make them aware of important events taking place at CSU. These are exciting times in the Turner College and we hope you take a few minutes to get reacquainted with us.

A few highlights of this issue include:
• Exciting Changes in Turner College Administration;
• An update from the Butler Center for Business and Economic Research;
• The first graduating class of the Master of Science in Organizational Leadership program;
• Expanded graduate degree offerings in Computer Science;
• Student success in research projects;
• Results from this year’s Business Plan Competition;
• Pictures from the Turner College Student Appreciation event.

We hope you enjoy this issue and we invite your comments and suggestions. Please feel free to contact Mrs. Bethany Yandell, the editor of Commerce and Technology Review, by phone at 706-507-8186 or by email at yandell_bethany@columbusstate.edu.

Sincerely,

Linda U. Hadley, Ph.D.
Dean
The college recently renovated two classrooms into new “boardroom style” graduate classrooms, featuring state-of-the-art technology, comfortable leather chairs, and windows that allow current students to peek into the life of a College of Business graduate student.

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Call for Submissions...

We invite Business or Computer Science current students and alumni to submit ideas for articles either on research or projects you may be participating in, or if you are an alumni with achievements to share. We would love to hear ideas and feedback from our readers, so please email Bethany Yandell at yandell_bethany@columbusstate.edu to contribute.
Exciting Administrative Changes in the Turner College of Business

The New Year brought several changes to the Turner College including a new Associate Dean and the addition of the college’s first Development Officer.

Fonda Carter, Associate Professor of Accounting, assumed the role of Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Operations in the Turner College of Business as of April 1, 2012. Dr. Carter began her career at CSU in 1988 and has been widely recognized for her effectiveness in the classroom and her overall commitment to student success. In addition to assuming responsibility for scheduling, student services and daily operations, Dr. Carter will also lead the college’s efforts to improve undergraduate retention and recruitment. Dr. Carter is a favorite professor among students and a two-time recipient of the Excellence in Teaching award. Business students will be happy to see a friendly familiar face in the administrative offices.

Meri Robinson joins the Turner College of Business as the College Development Officer after serving as CSU’s Director of Annual Giving and Alumni Relations for the past 11 years. She led the university’s efforts to raise friends and funds in support of campus-wide initiatives for CSU students and faculty.

She will put her experience to work to develop and implement a program to increase awareness, involvement and financial support from alumni, friends, corporations and private foundations for the Turner College of Business. She will assist with donor recognition and stewardship programs. A large part of her mission will be to establish regular communication with the College’s various constituents.

Meri’s philosophy is, “It’s important to remember that our donors do not invest in us because we have needs, but because we meet needs.”

CSU Alumnus First to Earn New Computer Science Teaching Endorsement

Mike Evans pauses before teaching a spring computing class at LaGrange High School.

A LaGrange High School teacher for a decade, Mike Evans might not strike the casual observer as a pioneer. But, thanks to Columbus State, a coincidence and his initiative, Evans has become Georgia’s first teacher with a computer science endorsement — meaning he now has special expertise to share with his many students who are curious about pursuing a career in computing.

Until 2011, most high school classes focusing on computing were taught by teachers with a certification to teach business courses. That’s OK for students interested in learning the intricacies of Microsoft Office, but it doesn’t serve well students with more advanced interests in, say, programming.

Evans, 38, graduated from Columbus State in May 2011 with a Bachelor of Science in Applied Computer Science and, somewhere near the end of his studies, Evans realized that he only needed a couple of education courses beyond that degree to meet all the requirements for Georgia’s new teaching endorsement for computer science. Last fall, he got his endorsement and immediately started offering an overview programming course at LaGrange High.

Columbus State was able to establish the foundation for its computer science teaching endorsement and launch several other initiatives as a result of a 2009 grant for $117,369 from the National Science Foundation that partnered CSU with Georgia Tech. Georgia Tech, along with CSU, has been a proponent of the new computer science teaching endorsement.
Open for Business …

The newly established Butler Center for Business and Economic Research is now open for business! In August 2011, Dr. Ben Blair joined the faculty of the Turner College of Business as director of the center and associate professor of economics. “The mission of the center is to actively participate in the economic development of the region by providing objective business and economic analysis. We will facilitate, coordinate, and be a focal point of the regional economic research and development activities of the University and the Turner College,” said Blair. “We want to provide timely economic and business information (that is easily accessible) and communicate our analysis”.

Benjamin F. Blair
Sarah T. Butler
Distinguished University Chair
Director of the Butler Center for Business and Economic Research

The chair and center were endowed to honor Sarah Turner Butler’s commitment to excellence in all things and to enhance the mission of the Turner College of Business, which is named after her father, D. Abbott Turner.

From the Butler Center …

Recently the Butler Center released a Community Fact Sheet entitled “Employment Trends and Recovery in the Columbus GA-AL Metropolitan Statistical Area, 2003-2011.”

The fact sheet described how employment is measured and how it has changed over time, especially over the course of the recession. The main findings were that

- The Columbus MSA lost 6,700 jobs from December 2007 through January 2010.
- During the recession the number of jobs in the Columbus MSA fell by only 3.2% compared to 7.2% for the state.
- The number of residents in the Columbus MSA that have jobs has rebounded to pre-recession levels.

1 A copy of this fact sheet and full report, as well as other Butler Center research reports, can be accessed at the Center’s website http://butlercenter.columbusstate.edu.
Inaugural Class of MS in Organizational Leadership Students Graduate
At CSU’s December 2011 graduation, The Turner College of Business had a lot to be proud of, including the graduation of the college’s first Master of Science in Organizational Leadership (MSOL) graduates.

The MSOL degree program, which started in the fall of 2009, is a 36-hour specialized degree that prepares professionals for higher leadership and executive positions in private, public, and non-profit organizations. Students in the MSOL program have the option of two specialized tracks, Human Resource Management and Servant Leadership. Since the start of the program, enrollment has more than doubled (including students on full-tuition scholarships from Aflac Inc., TSYS Inc., Synovus Financial, and CB & T).

The first five graduates came to the program from various career paths, but all left with a clear vision of the role leadership would play in their lives.

After several years in retail, Adrienne Hart found her niche while pursuing the Human Resource Management concentration in the MSOL degree program. Hart said, “The MSOL program developed my skills to become a more effective leader. I have gone from an operational mindset to a strategic one. The program has changed the way I approach situations as well as the way I interact with others at work on a daily basis. After graduation, Hart accepted a position in CSU’s Human Resources Office as a Human Resources Assistant.

Khalida Kukoyi found that the program was helpful in creating an avenue for her to break into the field of Human Resource Management. Kukoyi explains, “The curriculum was in depth, and very insightful about the things we would actually be working on in our various fields.” Kukoyi recently moved to Nigeria to accept a position with the US Embassy as a Human Resources Associate.

Caitlyn Brock was a recent Bachelor in Business Administration graduate of Columbus State University when she decided to come back and pursue graduate education. For Brock, it was more than just getting another degree to bring home a larger paycheck. “It was more important that the degree made me a more well-rounded person. The MSOL Servant Leadership program helped me to become just that,” Brock explains. In the short time since graduating, Brock feels she has been more successful in managing relationships, being more sensitive to people’s differences, and approaching an assortment of circumstances in the most ethical way possible.

Kelli Parker, the College and Community Coordinator for the Center for Servant Leadership at the Pastoral Institute in Columbus, found the MSOL Servant Leadership program to be a perfect fit. “It challenged me to explore Servant Leadership in a new way,” explains Parker. Part of Parker’s job is to work with the CSU Servant Leadership Program undergraduate students. Parker says, “This degree has helped me to be a better teacher and student of Servant Leadership.”

Michael Weiss, a Servant Leadership student, came into the program with 20+ years of leadership in the non-profit sector. “I felt the MSOL would give me the academic credentials necessary to progress to the next level,” says Weiss. Since graduating Weiss has been involved in a new startup that works with non-governmental organizations and international development. Weiss feels his experience in the MSOL degree program was fundamental in making his career change happen.

A Bright Future Ahead….

With Columbus, GA, being named the nation’s first “Servant Leadership City” by the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership in 2010, the MSOL’s Servant Leadership track has found a perfect home in the Turner College of Business at CSU. This specialized degree continues to attract seasoned and up-in-coming leaders who are eager to expand their knowledge of Servant Leadership and add value to their organizations.

The Human Resource Management track is also drawing in bright professionals from all over the region. The HR track is recognized by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) as a graduate degree that is aligned with their HR Curriculum Guidebook and Templates. The program has attracted several students from outside of Georgia over the last year because this high quality program is offered with both AACSB accreditation and the SHRM recognition.

The MSOL degree is finding interest from the military as well. The Turner College of Business is excited to have recently agreed to a pilot program with Fort Benning, to provide the MSOL to cohorts of career Army Captains. The first cohort of about twenty will begin the program during the 2012-2013 academic year. The MSOL has a broad base of appeal, because it is a leadership degree and provides a skillset that is useful for those looking to advance in careers in numerous fields, including business, military, government, non-profit, and many others.
An exciting new program called the Combined BS/MS in Computer Science program will be offered this coming fall as part of the TSYS School of Computer Science’s efforts to continuously improve its curriculum. The program will be available to top undergraduate students and will allow these students to complete a combined bachelor of science in computer science and master of science in computer science one semester sooner than if the two programs were completed separately. The goals of the program are to: (a) integrate more research training into the computer science curriculum; (b) attract high quality undergraduate students to pursue the school’s graduate program by providing an accelerated path to a graduate degree, with awarding of both BS and MS degrees; (c) create an on-campus community of graduate students, and (d) foster an environment that enables additional research training and production of meaningful research work.

In addition, this fall the school will offer three stand-alone, non-degree graduate certificate programs: Modeling and Simulation, Information Systems Security Officer, and Information Systems Security Professional. The Graduate Certificate in Modeling and Simulation will provide the opportunity for professionals and scientists to develop or enhance their expertise in the modeling and simulation field, thus providing additional education and employment opportunities in research, national defense, consulting, health care, entertainment, business, training, or any other field where the use of modeling and simulation can be of value. The Graduate Certificates in Information Systems Security Officer and Information Systems Security Professional will provide the opportunity for individuals to expand their knowledge of information security as well as provide documentation that they have successfully completed a program of study that meets and/or exceeds the national training and education standards for duties and responsibilities of Information Systems Security Professionals (NSTISSI 4011) and Officers (CNSSI 4014). These standards are set forth and certified by the National Security Agency. These certificates may also be of value to individuals considering employment by the federal government in the security field.

For additional information on the Combined BS/MS and certificate programs, see http://cs.columbusstate.edu/curriculum/index.php or email cs@ColumbusState.edu.

The Graduate Certificates in Information Systems Security Officer and Information Systems Security Professional will provide the opportunity for individuals to expand their knowledge of information security.
CSU hosted its first Graduate Research Conference in November 2011 at the Cunningham Center involving participants from CSU as well as a number of regional universities. Computer Science graduate students Mary House, Rojin Aliehyaei and John King won acclaim for presenting research the audience found quite fascinating. All three of the projects they worked on involved the application of a relatively new approach to solving problems that are so unstructured and complex that it is extremely difficult or inefficient to solve them using the traditional algorithmic approach. Known collectively as soft computing, this approach involves dealing with problems described in imprecise (or fuzzy) terms, and also borrowing ideas from nature such as the process of evolution.

Titled “Fuzzy Logic-Based Democracy Index”, Mary House’s work used the knowledge of experts on the components of a democratic government and its consolidation in order to produce a ranked list indicating the degree to which countries function as a true democracy. Fuzzy logic was considered appropriate for this endeavor because the social science focusing on politics is largely subjective and often demands the use of uncertain terms in describing events in international relations. Mary presented the rankings from the system she developed and compared them with those published by The Economist. The two rankings were found to be in broad agreement.

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Credit scoring is an important topic in today’s world of finance and economics. As a part of work for her Master’s thesis, Rojin Aliehyaei proposed and implemented a technique for evaluating people’s creditworthiness based on the genetic programming approach. Genetic programming involves using computer programs that continuously evolve themselves until they are capable of producing accurate solutions to a given problem. Aliehyaei’s experimental results, compared with historical credit scoring data, showed that genetic programming is capable of evaluating credit risk. In November 2011, Aliehyaei’s paper was published in the proceedings of the peer-reviewed International Conference on Computational Intelligence and Bioinformatics held in Pittsburgh. Both House and Aliehyaei also had their papers accepted for presentation at the Association for Computing Machinery Mid South-East Conference in March 2012.

John King’s research presentation was titled: “The Mouse, the Maze, and the Robot: Application of a Genetic Algorithm in Solving a Maze by a Robotic Mouse”. The goals of his investigation were to emulate the behavior of a real mouse using artificial intelligence and demonstrate the feasibility of employing low cost robotics in this relatively complex application. John’s robotic mouse successfully negotiated a maze after “training itself” through the use of genetic evolution.
The team of Ann and Joseph Harber, 15- and 17-year-old homeschooled sister and brother, beat out the competition to win the top prize at the second annual Columbus State University Business Plan Competition. The Harbers and other winners were announced at a luncheon hosted by CSU’s Turner College of Business.

The Harbers spent nearly 150 hours developing their plan Café Joe, a specialty coffee and gourmet shop, which would be located in Midland. They scouted locations, interviewed potential customers and had solid financial projections. Their plan was the only high school plan to make it through the first round of judging.

“The business plan and presentation by Ann and Joseph Harber was exceptional,” said Kirk Heriot, Crowley Chair of Entrepreneurship at the Turner College of Business. “Their hard work and passion for their idea were instrumental in winning the grand prize. In 2013, we look forward to the opportunity to add a third category devoted to entrepreneurs in the local community.”

Steve Taylor, a Turner College of Business alumnus, was the keynote speaker. He also was presented with the Excellence in Alumni Achievement award during this event. Taylor began his career with CB&T and later worked for Aflac before starting and subsequently selling two separate, very successful start-up businesses. Taylor, who has supported the Business Plan Competition from the beginning, shared valuable insights from his many successful business ventures with the budding entrepreneurs in attendance.

The Business Plan Competition recognizes business plans submitted by college and high school students and has a total of $10,000 in cash prizes. The goal of this competition is to promote entrepreneurship.

All plans are reviewed by members of CSU’s Turner College of Business faculty and local small business owners, who chose plans to submit to the next round of competition. Once selected, finalists are given an opportunity to present their plans to a panel of judges comprised of faculty and business owners.

In the college category, first place was won by “Front Yard Diner”, a mobile restaurant which would travel to its customers. The team members were Chandra Chikkakalbalu, Pasqual Duttlinger, Oyemayowa Sanwo and Kim Yongsoon.

The team of Kat Cannella, Monchai Chuaychoo, Tony Henderson and Monica Sicka took second place for the college category with WeeGo, a concierge service with a very specific service area.

And third place for the college category went to the team of Kate Lindsey, Ashley Moore, Cierra Rubert and Sandra Spivey for Forget-Me-Not Errands and Concierge Service.
1. Turner College students enjoying the college’s first Student Appreciation Cook-Out.

2. Business professors Dr. Phil Bryant and Dr. Steven Brown grilling up some hamburgers and hotdogs to show appreciation to our students.

3. Computer Science professors Dr. Shamim Khan and Dr. Chris Whitehead sporting the new TSYS School of Computer Science t-shirts.

4. Marketing student Sebastian Villalta kicks one out of the park during the students v. faculty kickball game.

5. Despite the efforts of the faculty/staff cheering section, the students won 9-1! Rematch scheduled for next year’s student appreciation event!
CSU ALUMNI WEEKEND
October 12 – 13, 2012

Alumni Recognition Luncheon • Friday Uptown Fun Night
Alumni Golf Outing • Dancing on the Green with “The Grapevine”

Plan on being a part of the fun! www.ColumbusState.edu/alumni