

The Bottom Line

News from the Nathan M. Bisk College of Business

Fall 2025

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Message From Dean Theodore Richardson

Classes have begun for the fall semester with our inspiring students ready to explore the many career opportunities in business.

Our [Bisk College of Business Advisory Board](#) continues to help the college connect real-world businesses with students and faculty. Our focus this fall is on highlighting the numerous career opportunities available to business students through events with real employers and customers of business education.

The college continues to host and participate in collaborative events with other colleges on campus, demonstrating our commitment to interdisciplinary STEM education. Through clubs and external business competitions, our students compete against other business schools nationwide, highlighting the rigor of a Florida Tech business education.

As outlined in the university's strategic plan, [Forward Together, Boundless Potential](#), the [Bisk College of Business](#) remains committed to providing "People of Excellence" and "Programs Driven by Innovation" through "Transformative Partnerships" and "Optimized Learning and Social Environments."



Respectfully,
Theodore R. Richardson III, Ed.D.
Dean, Bisk College of Business

Panthers on the Rise

MAUREEN MANN '84 M.S., '85 M.S.



Maureen Mann '84 M.S., '85 M.S., is a nationally recognized health care executive and dedicated cancer advocate with more than 20 years of experience in oncology and community health leadership. Mann has contributed to high-profile initiatives, including the White House Cancer Moonshot, and has led key regional efforts focused on cancer prevention, early detection and advancing health equity.

She serves as vice president of both the Lynn Cancer Institute and the Lynn Women's Health and Wellness Institute, divisions of Baptist Health South Florida. In addition, she chairs the board of directors for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), where she helps shape national policy around cancer care and prevention.

PAULETTE KING-MORIN '94



Paulette King-Morin '94 was inducted into the Space Coast Sports Hall of Fame in recognition of her achievements as a Florida Tech scholar-athlete. Honored in the college category, King-Morin made a lasting impact on the [women's basketball program](#) from 1991 to 1993 and was inducted into the [Florida Tech Sports Hall of Fame](#) in 1999.

King-Morin helped lead the Panthers to a 51-8 record over two seasons, capturing the program's first Sunshine State Conference (SSC) regular season and tournament championships—earning two NCAA Division II Tournament appearances. Her consistent excellence earned her back-to-back SSC Player of the Year, All-American, All-SSC First Team and SSC Tournament Team honors.

In her two seasons at Florida Tech, King-Morin led NCAA Division II in scoring. Her career scoring average of 28.3 points per game remains an NCAA Division II record.

ANDREW CALLAHAN '94 MBA



Andrew Callahan '94 MBA was appointed operating advisor at Clayton, Dubilier & Rice (CD&R), bringing nearly three decades of leadership experience in the consumer-packaged goods industry. Over his career, Callahan has held executive roles at some of the sector's most recognized companies.

From 2018 to 2023, Callahan served as president, CEO and executive director of Hostess Brands. Prior to that, he held two president-level roles at Tyson Foods. His leadership experience also includes serving as president of retail at Hillshire Brands, a series of senior roles at Sara Lee and 13 years at Kraft Foods in roles of increasing responsibility in marketing, sales and general management.

GIAO PHAN '97 M.S.



Giao Phan '97 M.S. has been appointed to the board of directors at Serco Inc., following a decorated civilian career that spanned more than 40 years with the U.S. Department of Defense.

Phan most recently served as executive director at Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA), becoming the first Asian American woman to serve in the role. As executive director, she oversaw the Navy's largest systems command, managing more than 87,000 personnel and a \$50 billion portfolio dedicated to the development, acquisition and lifecycle support of naval vessels and systems.

Earlier in her career, Phan held senior leadership positions at NAVSEA, including executive director for surface ship maintenance and modernization and deputy commander for Navy regional maintenance centers.

Her service has earned her some of the nation's highest civilian honors, including the Presidential Rank Award (Meritorious), the Navy Distinguished and Superior Civilian Service Awards and the Coast Guard Superior Achievement Award.

MATTHEW HILL '07



Matthew Hill '07, a [Florida Tech men's basketball](#) player from 2003 to 2007, lived out every basketball fan's fantasy when he was selected as the winner of the Atlanta Hawks' "10 Day Dream" experience, an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at life as an NBA pro. Inspired by the league's 10-day contract, the experience gave Hill unprecedented access to the inner workings of the team.

Over 10 days, Hill trained with professional-level coaches, traveled with the team and connected with Hawks players and staff—all while enjoying the lifestyle of an NBA athlete. His experience included luxury transportation

to games, showcasing his gameday outfit, pregame warmups on the court and a tunnel entrance in a custom Hawks jersey.

KEITH WILTFONG '10 M.S., '12 MBA



Keith Wiltfong '10 M.S., '12 MBA, has published a new book, *Make Life Happen: Your Guide to The Better Retirement Journey*, now available on Amazon.

The book shares the same proven strategies Wiltfong has used with hundreds of clients, offering a step-by-step, holistic approach that connects financial planning with life goals to create a clear roadmap toward a confident retirement.

COL. GABE WEAVER '12 MS



Col. Gabe Weaver '12 M.S. assumed command of U.S. Army Garrison Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield during a change of command ceremony at Cashe Gardens in Fort Stewart, Georgia.

"There's a strong foundation already in place and, working with our incredible teams, soldiers and dedicated civilians—I'm sure we can continue to excel and make this a place where people want to be," Weaver said.

JOAN JUNKALA-BROWN '21 MPA



Joan Junkala-Brown '21 MPA has joined the City of Melbourne as deputy city manager, bringing extensive leadership and community development

experience to the role.

She previously served as deputy city manager for the City of Palm Bay, where she oversaw key development departments, including building, growth management, community and economic development and utilities, as well as development-related functions within public works.

CHRISTINA "TINA" LEIGHTY '22 MBA



Christina "Tina" Leighty '22 MBA has been named chairperson of National Space Club Florida (NSCFL) for 2025. In this leadership role, she will oversee nearly 60 board members, multiple committees, 12 annual events and a membership base of close to 300 people.

NSCFL is a nonprofit organization uniting leaders from industry, government, NASA, the Department of Defense, education and the community, all dedicated to advancing public awareness of the nation's aerospace programs.

HADASSAH ETIENNE '23



Hadassah Etienne '23 has been appointed executive director of the Brevard Symphony Orchestra (BSO).

"I am deeply honored to take on the role of executive director for the Brevard Symphony Orchestra," Etienne said in a *Florida Today* article. "Growing up in this community, I developed a lifelong passion for the arts, and I am excited to contribute to BSO's rich legacy of bringing world-class music to our region. Together, we will continue to inspire and engage audiences through the transformative power of music."

STEPHEN DANSKY '24 DBA



Stephen Dansky '24 DBA has had four research papers accepted for publication this year. Two of those papers—"Rethinking Internalization Theory due to Coase's 'Hidden in Plain Sight' Assumption" and "Experimental Evidence of Prospect Theory within a Project-Financing Context"—were co-authored with Florida Tech professors [Brian \(Andrew\) Cudmore](#) and [Amitabh Dutta](#) and were accepted by two journals on the same day. His third paper, "[Can nuclear power be financed within deregulated electricity markets?](#)" was also co-authored with Cudmore.

TYLER DIETZ '25



[Tyler Dietz](#) '25 signed a contract with the San Diego Padres as an undrafted free agent, becoming the 19th Panther to sign with a Major League Baseball franchise and the 27th player overall to earn a professional baseball contract at all levels.

During his Florida Tech career, Dietz struck out 31 batters in 30.2 innings pitched and held opponents to a .189 batting average against. In the 2025 season, he allowed just 13 earned runs and 12 hits in his 17.1 innings.

Dietz will begin his professional baseball career in the Arizona Complex League and report to the Padres' rookie-level affiliate in Peoria, Arizona.

Alumni Spotlight: Thomas Larkin

Thomas Larkin is the president and founder of NanTenna, an innovative antenna company headquartered in Melbourne, Florida.

Larkin stands as a pioneering force at the forefront of driving innovative communication capabilities within the U.S. Department of Defense and collaborating with partner forces.

But what compelled a [business](#) alumnus to get into the antenna industry?

"In my previous roles, I kept hearing customers complain about the antennas they use in their day-to-day roles," Larkin says. "They break too often; they don't perform how they would like them to; or the technology, in general, hasn't changed in years."

He realized that no one in the market was focused on antennas, and NanTenna was born.

Using the skills he had learned in his business classes at Florida Tech with faculty such as instructor [Tim Muth](#) and professor [Brian \(Andrew\) Cudmore](#), Larkin took a problem and created a solution.

Established in 2020, NanTenna began with a bold vision to redefine military satellite communications (SATCOM) with groundbreaking antenna technology.

Five years later, the company has five products and clients spanning over nine countries and every time zone.

"The most challenging part of starting my own business was the self-doubt," Larkin says. "But there's a lot to be said about being uncomfortable and trying new things."

Within his role, Larkin spends much of his time traveling for trade shows, where he oversees the marketing and sales strategies of the company.

During his travels, Larkin has learned firsthand that no matter how far he is from Melbourne, the Florida Tech Panthers are never too distant.

"In October 2024, I attended the largest Army trade show in the world, which was being hosted in Washington D.C.," Larkin says. "At this event, I connected with another antenna company located in Norway, and it turns out that the company's representative had a daughter on [Florida Tech's women's soccer](#) team who I went to school with!"

Through their Florida Tech connection, Larkin has gained a new business contact.

"Everyone always talks about how Florida Tech is a smaller university and has a more tight-knit atmosphere, but I've learned being in the outside world that we're a small school with some seriously big reach."

When he's not working, Larkin likes to spend quality time with his wife and fellow Panther Devon Larkin '17, '18 M.S., and their young son, as well as their two dogs, Chloe and Marley.

Q&A

- Alternate career:**
Professional hockey player
- When would you time travel to:**
Being a kid again
- Last TV show you binged:**
"Yellowstone"
- Bucket list item:**
Scuba dive the Great Barrier Reef
- Dream dinner companion:**
Daniel Craig, actor

“The most challenging part of starting my own business was the self-doubt. But there’s a lot to be said about being uncomfortable and trying new things.”

—Thomas Larkin



Feature

How We'll Innovate at the Speed of AI



Abram Walton

Few technological revolutions have taken hold as quickly as AI. What's ahead? Bisk College of Business experts share their insights.

Call him the antidoomer: In a world that AI seems poised to fundamentally upend, professor of management [Abram Walton](#) sees boundless potential.

"I've been teaching and researching technology, leadership strategy, human capital management and innovation for 20 years," he says. "And I see AI as a catalyst for human flourishing."

And while he understands the peril of AI in the hands of bad actors, he says those most poised to benefit from AI's massive power are those who embrace its possibilities.

"It's true that people often don't want to change," he says. "But when we encourage people to lean into it and embrace it, as these waves are coming, they won't get knocked down by them. They'll be able to ride them."



Jignya Patel

We can create an AI-fueled world that is innovative and ethical.

[Jignya Patel](#) is an assistant professor of [information systems](#).

Right now, we seem to live in an AI landscape with two camps: people who want faster, bigger and better AI, and those who want much more regulation, guardrails and frameworks for its responsible use and development.

But we shouldn't be fighting—we should be having more conversations. We need to put all the power players in one room to have a brainstorming session. That would include leaders of companies like OpenAI, Apple, Meta and Amazon. It would include major political leaders from around the world. And it would include the world's top ethicists. The goal would be to come up with ideas and solutions together. This is important because AI is so powerful and dangerous.

We know that there are historical precedents for collaborative efforts with similarly transformational innovations, such as nuclear technology. We have many guardrails around nuclear power, and it works. We don't see stories about people stealing uranium and threatening to bomb something.

It did take time to do the right thing with nuclear technology, but we know we can do the right thing. AI is moving fast, so we need to come up with ground rules, penalties and consequences at the same speed.

That's why I'd like to see all these people coming together to talk, because they can have a huge influence on the trajectory of this technology.

We can level the playing field for smaller accounting firms.

[Angel Otero](#) is an associate professor of [accounting](#).

Imagine a world where AI is not just a tool reserved for the "Big Four" accounting firms but an accessible, game-changing asset for smaller, public accounting firms. These smaller firms, which serve countless businesses and



Angel Otero

Many COB faculty share Walton's fundamental optimism. They are diving deep into the technology to understand its impact in their own areas of expertise and teaching its nuances to students in their classes.

COB experts see AI as an incredible tool that can speed progress in uncountable ways. It can supercharge productivity, fuel corporate insights and give smaller companies a better chance to compete with the behemoths, for starters. They're clear-eyed about the dangers—but also, ready to harness its strengths for good.

Here, they share their vision of a future shaped by AI—one that, with the right steps, can become reality.

organizations, often lack the financial and technological resources to compete with industry giants. However, with the right investment, AI could revolutionize how these firms operate, enhancing efficiency, accuracy and client service, while leveling the playing field in the accounting profession.

The Big Four have already demonstrated AI's transformative potential by developing proprietary platforms and investing billions in AI-powered analytics, risk assessment and predictive insights. These advancements allow them to streamline audits, detect fraud more effectively and provide deeper business insights to their clients, among others.

But why should only the largest firms reap these benefits? The real opportunity lies in democratizing AI, ensuring that even small and mid-sized firms can harness its power to optimize their operations.

My vision is to develop an AI-powered ecosystem for smaller accounting firms. This platform would provide affordable, scalable AI solutions, from predictive financial analysis to automated risk detection and chatbot-driven client communications.

By leveraging AI, these firms could conduct audits more efficiently, identify irregularities with greater precision and offer personalized financial insights—capabilities that were once exclusive to their larger counterparts.

The impact would be profound: increased efficiency, reduced costs, enhanced fraud detection and improved client services. More importantly, it would foster a more competitive and diverse accounting industry—one where innovation is not confined to a select few but is accessible to all.

By empowering smaller firms with AI, the accounting landscape can be reshaped, ensuring that businesses receive high-quality, data-driven insights regardless of the size of the firm they engage with. This is the future of accounting—one where AI is not an exclusive advantage but a universal tool for progress.

We can unleash untapped human potential at every level through the strategic use of AI.

Professor of management [Abram Walton](#) is executive director of the [Center for Innovation Management and Business Analytics](#).

For decades, the Lean Six Sigma philosophy has focused on eliminating waste and improving process flow in seven areas: inventory, motion, overprocessing, overproduction, waiting, transport and defects. But in recent years, it became clear that there was an eighth factor that might be even more important: untapped human potential.

Such untapped human potential includes people who are disengaged in their jobs or people who are in areas of the world where they don't have the coaching or access to opportunity to thrive and flourish. But this untapped potential also exists at the corporate level and an even more macro level.

For example, surveys typically show that about two-thirds of people are disengaged at their jobs. But what if they could use AI as a coach and mentor to help identify their talents, get encouragement and move forward in their careers? AI can be their customized, always-available sounding board.

At the corporate level, AI systems could be built to minimize fraud, abuse and waste. We have whole industries built on top of the idea of deterring or monitoring these problems, like title insurance for homes. Transferring titles is time-consuming and expensive. But by using AI and pairing it with transparent "smart contracts" that are on the blockchain, we wouldn't need title insurance at all.

At a global level, we know that intentional, multinational cooperation—typically through cooperative trading agreements—provides a winning economic model and a shared benefit of avoiding wars. By helping optimize supply chains across countries or anticipating potential trade disruptions, AI will allow us to collaborate and flourish in new ways.

AI can help not just people become the best versions of themselves but also organizations and countries become the best versions of themselves.

We can supercharge business innovation by strengthening AI safety measures.

[Alina Malkova](#) is an assistant professor of [business](#).

While AI can help businesses increase profits and lead to business expansion, we also know that most businesses are hesitant to use some types of AI because of security and unreliability.

Bigger firms, especially, are often taking a more conservative approach. This makes sense: They don't want to disclose sensitive or personal data. They want to protect their intellectual property. And they worry about mistakes.

In many cases, firms are trying to develop their own internal AI systems. But it's a slow, complicated and expensive process. You've got to create the technology and train the models. AI requires extensive computational resources, and it will likely require retraining for many workers. And while AI will probably replace some workers, right now, people are often still cheaper than this technology.

Some things that could help further the transformation include laws and regulations that protect corporate property rights and intellectual property. In some cases, because of the ways that AI systems are improving, we still don't know the ways that corporations will need to protect themselves in the future.

When firms feel confident that AI systems are safe and reliable, we will see a huge boost in productivity and profitability.

A+ Accolades

2025–2026 College of Distinction

Colleges of Distinction

Florida Tech has been named a 2025–2026 College of Distinction, a national honor in recognition of the university's success in helping students learn, grow and succeed.

One of just 12 Florida colleges and universities to receive the recognition, Florida Tech also earned College of Distinction honors for its [business](#), [engineering](#), [career development](#), [international](#) and [military support](#) programs.

Doctor of Business Administration Update

DBA Program Celebrates 10 Years

The [Bisk College of Business](#) is celebrating the 10th anniversary of its [Doctor of Business Administration](#) (DBA) program, a milestone that reflects a decade of growth, innovation and student success. Designed for experienced professionals, the DBA has continually adapted to meet the demands of a changing business landscape while producing scholarship that advances the field.

"In pursuit of greatness, the Bisk College of Business promises an innovative, excellent and immersive educational experience to every student, providing top-quality preparation for a variety of careers in the global business environment," said [Theodore Richardson](#), COB dean. "The DBA aligns with the college's mission and expands the body of knowledge in business education through outstanding research, as evidenced by the high-quality [dissertations](#) produced by our students."

This anniversary also marks a major transition: The DBA has moved fully online, making it more accessible to working professionals while preserving its academic rigor.

"As we look forward to the next 10 years of educational excellence, the Bisk College of Business' online DBA program will continue to evolve into an even more personalized learning experience, offering an executive education customized to individual career trajectories, while continuing to educate our future business leaders on relevant business strategies and topics, ensuring DBA graduates lead transformative change in ever-changing markets," said COB graduate programs department head Emily Martinez-Vogt.

Students, such as Penny Warner and Jason Burgos, have already felt the program's impact in their professional lives.

Burgos, director of health informatics and program management at Brevard Health Alliance, credited the DBA program with broadening his skills and perspective.

"I've been applying that knowledge in my workplace and feel I now have a higher level of language that I can use across different departments with external and internal stakeholders. I'm also able to strategize more effectively with different plans and optimizations, participate in strategic discussions with leadership and facilitate planning and execution sessions from multiple perspectives," he said. "The DBA program has definitely helped me elevate my thinking, and I recommend the program to people in business or related fields who want to challenge themselves and grow."

Warner, who has worked in the time and labor field for 15 years and is now completing her dissertation, echoed the program's value.

"Reflecting on my journey through the DBA program, I recognize that while it has been one of the toughest undertakings of my professional life, it has also been the most rewarding," Warner said. "Navigating demanding coursework, engaging in rigorous research and collaborating with my cohort have challenged me in ways I could not have anticipated. The skills, mindset shifts and relationships I have gained are truly invaluable. Choosing this program was a decision that pushed me to grow, and I am grateful for every step along the way."

Happenings

NEW SITE AT PSFB

In June, Florida Tech opened a new instructional location at Patrick Space Force Base (PSFB), expanding access to graduate education for military personnel, civilian employees and working professionals on the Space Coast.

The PSFB site offers four of Florida Tech’s most in-demand master’s programs, including two from the [Bisk College of Business](#): an [MBA](#) and the [M.S. in acquisition and contract management](#). The two programs outside the COB are the [M.S. in space systems](#) and the [M.S. in space systems management](#). Each program is designed for working professionals looking to lead in sectors vital to aerospace advancement, homeland security and economic innovation.

Courses are taught in eight-week, hybrid terms through a combination of online and classroom instruction, which will be on base in its Education and Training Center. Florida Tech’s site at PSFB reflects a shared commitment to preparing leaders for the complex challenges of tomorrow—on Earth and beyond.

LIBRARY NAMES EVENT HORIZON CONTEST WINNERS



[Evans Library](#)’s 40th anniversary celebration came to a close with the announcement of a winner for its Event Horizon commemoration contest. [Bisk College of Business](#) student Robert Gadomski’s “SpaceCast” [podcast](#) on the future of space exploration won first place.

Two more business students received honorable mentions for their presentations: “[Breaking the Cosmic Silence: 40 Years of Bridging Alien Language](#)” by Kozmo Colina; and “[Beyond the Horizon: The Future of Space Entrepreneurship](#)” by Eseroghene Oguma.

The contest was created in tandem with the Astronauts Memorial Foundation (AMF) and challenged Florida Tech students to use library resources to express what they believe the next 40 years of space exploration will bring. Students were judged on overall quality, creativity and best use of library resources, and winners received tickets to tour the Astronaut Memorial Foundation and Center for Space Education, free tickets to the Kennedy Space

Center Visitor Complex, a NASA swag bag and a commemorative award certificate.

CEL HOSTS PANEL ON THE EFFECTS OF AI



On April 3, the [Center for Ethics and Leadership](#) (CEL) hosted a panel discussion on artificial intelligence, ethics and leadership standards. The event, The Effect of Artificial Intelligence on Business, Society and the Human Condition, brought together scholars and industry leaders for a conversation on pressing issues shaping today’s business environment.

Panelists included [Ted Richardson](#), [Bisk College of Business](#) dean and CEL director; [Abram Walton](#), director of the [Center for Innovation Management and Business Analytics](#) and professor of management; [Brandon May](#), assistant professor in the [College of Psychology and Liberal Arts](#); Keith Nugent ’07, founder and strategist of Camberlion; Letwan Sutton ’20 A.A., ’20, ’21 MBA, aviation tax manager at MySky; and [Mike Marks](#) of Indian River Consulting.

The panel explored topics such as transparency and explainability, accountability and responsibility, workforce impact and the ethical development and deployment of AI, all aiming to promote strong leadership and ethical standards.

COB STUDENTS EXCEL AT CASE COMPETITIONS

[Bisk College of Business](#) (COB) students made their mark this year in three major case competitions, showcasing their ability to apply classroom knowledge to real-world business challenges.

CapSource Live Case Competition

In CapSource’s largest-ever Live Case Competition, powered by the International Accreditation Council for Business Education, more than 190 students from over 20 institutions worldwide worked as consultants to tackle a pressing challenge: how to engage Gen Z and young professionals with scalable, effective financial literacy tools. Over five weeks, 44 teams developed go-to-market strategies and pitched their solutions to sponsor WealthFluent’s leadership, board members and advisors.

Florida Tech’s team—Meghan Walker, Peter Voltaire, Blake Lewis and Ronelda Broisrond—earned third place and a cash prize with a [plan](#) that blended Duolingo-style financial education modules, investment simulations with milestone badges, a campus ambassador program and influencer podcast ads, including a recorded mock spot. Their recommendations, informed by user experience/user interface (UX/UI) suggestions, video prototypes and primary research with 24 Gen Z professionals, emphasized that simple, accessible onboarding builds trust and empowers first-time investors.

UNM Global Scaling Challenge



Two Florida Tech teams excelled in the University of New Mexico’s [Global Scaling Challenge](#), placing third and 12th out of 46 teams and bringing home more than \$4,000 in combined prize money.

The Global Scaling Challenge paired student teams with firms, including Hoonify and Nexus Health, facing immediate business issues. Acting as consultants, the teams were given two weeks to research, work with the companies’ CEOs and prepare recommendations before presenting their ideas to the firms and a panel of judges.

The third-place team included Walker, Jonathan Moore, Miguel Wiesner and Lachlan McCure. The 12th-place team included Lewis, Voltaire, Jacobo De Collibus and Prathik Venkatesh.

X-Culture Global Symposium



Instructor [Tim Muth](#) and student Jonathan Moore represented Florida Tech at the X-Culture Global Symposium at the University of Vaasa in Finland. The symposium gathered more than

200 students, faculty and business leaders from over 50 countries for a week of case challenges, company visits, cultural experience and educational sessions focused on sustainability and advanced technologies in business.

As part of the [X-Culture](#) experiential international business project, Moore worked with teammates from India, Kenya and North Carolina to develop recommendations for Finnish company Crimppi.

MUTH HONORED FOR INNOVATIVE TEACHING AT BUSINESS PEDAGOGY WORKSHOP



[Bisk College of Business](#) faculty member [Tim Muth](#) won the Teaching Innovations competition at the Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) teaching workshop at Georgia State University in Atlanta.

The annual event drew about 80 attendees from the U.S. and internationally for discussions, lectures and interactive engagement on a range of areas, from the latest teaching innovations and modern instructional tools to best practices for student engagement and skill-based training for students.

The event also featured a Teaching Innovations competition. The nine participating educators had each submitted a summary of their innovative teaching activity prior to the workshop, and at the workshop, they had three minutes to present their innovations.

Muth’s topic was “Ten Simple (but Effective) Tips to Engage & Motivate Students.”

Muth said he started with an activity he has used on the first day of his classes involving a shelled peanut and a question: “How are you like this peanut?” The exercise is a novel icebreaker that eases students into their new class and allows Muth to learn something about each student’s personality as they respond to the question.

Then, he told a student engagement story using his top 10 tips, a collection of practical, easy-to-implement steps, such as: know your students, foster active class discussion, set a positive tone, tell stories to explain complex topics, and assign experiential learning projects.

Attendees voted on the “best/favorite” teaching innovation, and Muth and his tips came out on top.

WEVENTURE HONORS WOMEN WHO ROCK



[weVENTURE Women’s Business Center](#) honored six winners at its 2025 Women Who Rock Awards in March. The sold-out luncheon, hosting more than 400 attendees, celebrated 45 nominees.

Congratulations to this year’s winners:

Small Business Owner of the Year
Courtney Arndt, founder and CEO, Florida Music Therapy

Executive of the Year
Monica Newman McCluney, head of U.S. corporate social responsibility and The Embraer Foundation, Embraer

Excellence in Mentorship
Lucille D’Amico, chemistry teacher, Melbourne High School

Women Trending in Tech
Luna Majumder, Ph.D., scientist system engineer, L3Harris Technologies Inc.

Excellence in Caregiving
Yoshita Patel Hosking, DDS, MHP, owner, Viera Pediatric Dentistry

Zonta Yellow Rose Award for Excellence in Community Service
Candice Hodge, vice president, education, Junior Achievement of the Space Coast

WEVENTURE WBC CONTINUES TO FUEL LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH



[weVENTURE Women’s Business Center](#) (WBC) continues to support small businesses on the space and treasure coasts this year, providing 1,780 hours of one-on-one support and leading 78 group trainings on topics ranging from artificial intelligence to succession planning.

With funding from the Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Growth Accelerator Fund Competition (GAFC), weVENTURE WBC partnered with [Vertex Applied Innovation Hub](#) to launch the [Techcelerator Program](#). The initiative combines business mentorship with

technical expertise from Vertex. The GAFC funded three clients through the inaugural cohort, which is now available as a fee-for-service option for other companies.

In 2025, weVENTURE WBC will award \$30,000 in direct funding to local companies through its IMPACT Grant program, now in its third year. The initiative highlights access to capital as a leading challenge for small businesses. Funding comes from the League of Extraordinary Investors and contributions from the Wine Women & Shoes fundraiser.

A partnership with the Association of Women’s Business Centers and Verizon has expanded educational opportunities, as well. More than 360 weVENTURE WBC clients registered for the Verizon Small Business Digital Readiness Platform, which offers live and recorded courses led by experts. Verizon also invested \$20,000 to support in-person business coaching at weVENTURE WBC.

The center was [named](#) SBA’s 2025 South Florida District and State of Florida Women’s Business Center of the Year.

Former executive director Beth Gitlin committed \$100,000 to establish an endowment fund for weVENTURE WBC, with a goal of reaching \$5 million. The endowment is intended to sustain the program as federal funding for the SBA WBC grant program faces potential cuts.

BUSINESS CONNECT EVENT PREPS STUDENTS FOR THE ‘REAL WORLD’

On Oct. 24, the [Bisk College of Business](#) hosted Business Connect, a professional development event featuring 12 workshops. The sessions were designed to help students prepare for interviews, internships and employment. Topics included networking, building credibility, job-hunting strategies and leadership.

“The idea behind this morning of workshops is to equip our students with the tools to confidently translate their academic experiences into real-world opportunities with professionalism, credibility and strong communication,” said Jodi Joss, director of philanthropy for the COB. “It’s also a great way to highlight what sets Florida Tech College of Business students apart in a competitive market: We focus on creating value through early professional development, building strong networks and preparing them to thrive in cross-functional environments.”

Companies represented at the event included Blue Origin, Embraer, United Aviate, Indian River Consulting, Patton Consulting Group, Camberlion, Halo Solutions, MySky, and Carr, Riggs & Ingram.

Expert Perspectives



CIMBA Champions Innovation from the Space Coast to the World Stage

The [Center for Innovation Management and Business Analytics \(CIMBA\)](#) participated in a range of professional and academic activities over the last few months.

Students and research fellows attended regional enrichment events, such as Space Coast Economic Development Commission board meetings, gaining exposure to business networks and contributing to industry projects. These connections led to new opportunities for students, including Andrea Walke, who began an internship with the Space Coast Office of Tourism, as well as Bella Pommer and Mindy Artelli, who accepted full-time positions at Structural Composites.

At the state level, DBA students [Natalie Shah](#) '18, '22 MBA, and Bob Chicvak presented two sessions at the Society for Human Resource Management's Florida conference: "Fortifying Recruitment and Workforce Strategies" and "Diagnosing and Elevating Team Performance." CIMBA research fellow and DBA faculty member Shellie Halstead managed the conference's main event production and, alongside professor of management and CIMBA executive director [Abram Walton](#), co-led the HR Florida Analytics and Innovation Research Committee. Walton also delivered a preconference session on artificial intelligence in organizations.

CIMBA faculty and students also published research through SHRM Florida outlets. Walton and Ph.D. student Alex Silverman '22 M.S. co-authored "Perceived Organizational Support in the Return-to-Office Era" and "Rethinking Quality of Work Life" for *SHRM Florida Newswire*. Along with Halstead and Shah, they also reported "HR Florida Conference Insights" in the Newswire's September 2025 edition.

At the international level, CIMBA advanced its leadership in three committees on innovation, AI and blockchain standards. CIMBA research fellow [John Greaves](#), U.S. Technical Advisory Group chair for the International Organization for Standardization Technical Committee (ISO/TC) 307, co-authored the book *Mixed Reality Leadership*. Alongside Walton, a lead U.S. delegate, he helped secure Melbourne, Florida, as host of the International ISO Plenary on blockchain in November—the first time the U.S. has hosted this global meeting.

The plenary brought together international delegates, such as thought leaders, technical experts and national standards bodies, spotlighting Melbourne's role in blockchain innovation and governance.



Otero Presents, Co-Authors Paper on Artificial Intelligence in Accounting

Associate professor [Angel R. Otero](#) is exploring how artificial intelligence could affect the world of financial auditing and information systems.

In a conference presentation last year and as co-author of a recent article in *Current Issues in Auditing*, Otero explores [what happens when AI is utilized in financial statement audits](#).

What happens? In short, AI can help increase audit efficiency in data processing, predictive analysis and more to increase overall audit quality and effectiveness, but it can also potentially lead to issues with data security and privacy, regulatory compliance, source data verification and more.

At the Academic and Business Research Institute Virtual Conferences last year, Otero presented, "Financial Statement Audits: Literature Review Regarding Advantages and Disadvantages for Accounting Firms When Employing Artificial Intelligence."

"According to the reviewed literature, addressing challenges ... requires collaboration between human auditors and the artificial intelligence platform, implementation of rigorous security measures, validation processes, and bias mitigation strategies," Otero wrote in the manuscript accompanying his presentation. "Despite these challenges, the literature argues that efficiencies may be gained from incorporating ChatGPT in financial statement audits resulting in a strategic investment for accounting firms seeking to enhance audit efficiency and effectiveness."

Research Roundup

Scan for a full list of recent faculty publications:



Yang Investigates Cryptocurrency Volatility with Adaptive Learning

Joy Yang, assistant professor of finance, published "Cryptocurrency's price volatility and adaptive learning" in *Global Finance Journal*.

Her study tackles the question of why cryptocurrencies are so volatile. By introducing adaptive learning—where investors update expectations based on past data—Yang

shows how high learning rates can destabilize markets, leading to cycles, chaos or explosive price paths.

These dynamics help explain the dramatic boom-and-bust behavior of digital currencies, offering new insight into their extreme volatility.

To Attack or Not Attack? Competition Within the AMC Framework

[Tejas Channagiri](#), assistant professor of strategy and entrepreneurship, co-authored "To attack or not attack? The role of relative status, awareness, and motivation" in *Long Range Planning*.

The study examines how social status shapes competition within the Awareness-Motivation-Capability (AMC) framework. Using surveys and interviews with food truck

owners, the researchers found that lower-status businesses are more motivated to challenge higher-status competitors because they pay closer attention to them.

Awareness, not status alone, drives this motivation—a finding that advances competitive strategy research and cautions high-status firms against underestimating ambitious rivals.