

The Bottom Line

News from the Nathan M. Bisk College of Business

Spring 2021

Inside this Issue

Panthers on the Rise2

Doctor of Business
Administration Update3

Student Spotlight:
Ramone Hemphill Sr.....4

True Religion Hosts
Florida Tech Business
Competition4

weVENTURE Events Go
Virtual5

Scholarship Spotlight5

A+ Accolades5

Expert Perspectives6

Welcome to the Board.....6

Alumni Spotlight:
Sanjay Rishi8



Message From Dean Theodore Richardson

Thank you to senior administration, faculty, staff and students for helping the [Nathan M. Bisk College of Business](#) endure the COVID-19 pandemic while continuing to educate our future leaders. It has been a difficult year, but everyone who has—and continues to—adhere to our campus safety protocols has contributed to the college's success.



During the past year, the college has been preparing for our business accreditation self-study visit, which occurred remotely in January. The self-study determines if the college is adhering to the principles of accreditation for the International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE). The process is rigorous and demonstrates to our accreditors that we are dedicated to continuous improvement on our outcome assessment. I am pleased to report that the college has adhered to the rigorous principles of accreditation, and we have received reaffirmation of accreditation.

weVENTURE Women's Business Center continues to support future female and male entrepreneurs and to encourage them to discover the possibilities of a future in the business world. weVENTURE successfully transitioned its IMPACT Summit and Women Who Rock Awards events online with tremendous reception from the community. Please visit [weventure.fit.edu](#) for future exciting events geared toward empowering successful female entrepreneurs.

Finally, throughout the ups and downs of the past few semesters, the Bisk College of Business Advisory Board has remained vital to informing the strategy, curriculum, marketing and philanthropic direction of the business school with prominent thought leaders in business today.

I hope you enjoy *The Bottom Line* spring 2021 edition, stay safe in the face of the continuing pandemic and continue to imagine the possibilities for pathways to success in business.

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



Panthers on the Rise

DYLAN CROSS '19

Dylan Cross '19 recognizes that most plastic taken from the ocean goes to a landfill, a valiant but one-way process that only moves the waste rather than removing it. So, in 2020, he launched Sea Threads, a startup that turns pollution into product by producing garments from 100% certified ocean plastic. Studying regional environments like the Indian River Lagoon, Key West, the Galápagos Islands and Cuba while he pursued his business degree stuck with him, and now, he has joined the two passions into one venture.



"Your mission needs to be something that you are personally passionate enough about to make the needed sacrifices to achieve," he says.

KARLA SMITH JACKSON '94 M.S.

As the senior procurement executive, deputy chief acquisition officer and assistant administrator for procurement at NASA, Karla Smith Jackson '94 M.S. oversees the agency's procurement functions, policy and initiatives to a workforce of more than 4,400 personnel. She serves on the Federal Acquisition Regulation Council and is one of only three signatory authorities who can execute procurement policies and procedures on behalf of the federal government. Karla has almost 30 years of experience in the field, having previously served at organizations like the Missile Defense Agency, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, the Department



of Homeland Security and the U.S. Coast Guard. She holds a [master's degree in contract and acquisition management](#) from Florida Tech.

DOMINIC ALPUCHE '12 MBA

In September, Dominic Alpuche '12 MBA was named chief financial officer of Options for Learning, a child development and early education nonprofit in California. He brings more than 20 years of experience in grant management and financial administration to the position, most recently serving as director of finance and senior fiscal officer at University of California at San Diego Alzheimer's Disease Cooperative Study. Dominic earned his [MBA in accounting and finance](#) from Florida Tech, an experience he says has contributed to his success thus far.



"My experience at Florida Tech has given me the opportunity to be successful in my past positions and truly prepared me for the road ahead as the newly appointed CFO of a \$100 million not-for-profit organization."

MAJ. GEN. CEDRIC T. WINS, RETIRED, '95 M.S.

In April, Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '95 M.S. was named superintendent of the Virginia Military Institute, a position in which he has served in an interim capacity since November. The 15th superintendent and first Black man to lead the school in its 181-year history, Cedric played



basketball at VMI while earning a degree in economics, becoming one of the top five scorers in school history. He later commissioned into the Army as a field artillery officer and served for 34 years. He has two master's degrees, one in [management](#) from Florida Tech and one in national security and strategic studies from the National War College.

ELAINE CHRISTINE '79, '83 MBA, '95 PH.D.

In March, Elaine Christine '79, '83 MBA, '95 Ph.D., was selected for inclusion in *Marquis Who's Who*, a biographical data publication that has chronicled the lives of present-day leaders and achievers from around the world in various fields for more than 120 years. Elaine was a software engineer from 1980 to 2000 and was sole proprietor at Yoga with Christine from 2001 to 2004. In 2005, she founded Aquaterra, and she published a spiritual trilogy, *The Peace Prophecy*, in 2009, 2015 and 2019. As a peace partner, today, Elaine trains peacemakers in her signature 6-Step Peace Process at the Charter for Compassion and hosts the annual World Peace Telesummit.



JOHN HILL

[DBA](#) student John Hill is the chief information officer and senior vice president of business planning for Carhartt, the iconic business apparel company. He decided to pursue his doctorate because he wants to become a professor when



he leaves the corporate world and feels his future students will benefit from his years of experience. When he started the DBA program, he had not been enrolled in school for more than 25 years, and while the sheer volume of reading and writing for the program was a wake-up call, he has since learned to balance his studies with his work and family life. His advice for students:

“Stay focused on the objective: graduating. It’s too easy to get distracted by things that take you off that path. Listen to the advice of the faculty, as they have the same objective!”

ALEX YATES

Alex Yates is a [business administration](#) student who transferred to Florida Tech in her junior year and is on track to graduate in fall 2021.



In pursuit of a future career in the sports industry, Alex is participating in an internship in hospitality and guest

relations with the Atlanta Braves in North Port, Florida. She recently was offered a hospitality job with The Battery Atlanta, a mixed-use entertainment development anchored by Truist Park, home to the Atlanta Braves. Her mantra:

“Keep pushing yourself to be better than the day before. Nothing is impossible!”

LUCY EATON '19, '21 MBA

Not only is Lucy Eaton '19, '21 MBA, a double-alumna, but she is also a double-Panther-athlete. Originally from Yorkshire, England, Lucy earned her [bachelor's degree in business administration and global management and finance](#) while on a scholarship from the women's golf team, with whom she won the national championship her senior year. Then, while earning her MBA, Lucy joined the women's rowing team. She also worked as a [weVENTURE Women's Business Center](#) graduate assistant and is in the Optional Practical



Training (OPT) application process with hopes of staying and working in the United States for at least another year.

MATT MAXWELL

Matt Maxwell is a DBA student and health care executive who splits his time between North Carolina and Florida. Matt attributes much of his recent career progression to the advanced skills he has learned in his DBA classes. He appreciates Florida Tech's high-tech atmosphere and the opportunity to share the classroom with students from diverse backgrounds, despite adjustments the program has made due to the coronavirus pandemic.



“The transition to virtual learning presented new challenges, but I was impressed at how quickly the school adapted, and I really enjoy being able to see everyone's face all at once through our virtual class sessions,” he says.

Doctor of Business Administration Program Update

Florida Tech's [Doctor of Business Administration \(DBA\)](#) program is now accredited by the International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE). This mission-driven, outcomes-based accreditation is program-specific and involves an independent, external evaluation. Thank you, and congratulations to everyone involved in securing this illustrious distinction.

DBA PROGRAM KUDOS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following DBA students were accepted to present at the International Conference on Industry, Engineering, and Management Systems (IEMS):

- **Under professor Abram Walton, Center for Innovation Management and Business Analytics director:** Bruce Rideout, Matthew Maxwell, John Hill, Ryan Bailey, Pawel Kazanowski and Chandra Talerico
- **Under professor Andrew Cudmore:** Clare Dowgiallo, Chandy Hylton and Kevin Hutchison

Congratulations to: Chandra Talerico for acceptance of her paper, “HR Analytic Competencies: A Comparison of Developed Versus Developing Country HR Practitioner Skill Sets,” to the third International Conference on Business, Management, and Finance (ICBMF), which will be held virtually from Oxford, United Kingdom.

Congratulations to: Su Rayburn for successfully defending her DBA dissertation, “The Role of the Top Management Team in Orchestrating Big Data Analytics for Competitive Advantage.”

In fall 2021, the DBA program will launch a new course: BUS 6038, Advanced Marketing Management. The course will emphasize dual management and consumer perspectives on exchange across critical topics in marketing.

The DBA program is accepting applications for Cohort 7, which will begin classes in fall 2021.

Student Spotlight

READY FOR TAKEOFF

MBA student Ramone Hemphill Sr. launches nonprofit to make the aviation industry more accessible, diverse

Only about 3 percent of aircraft pilots in the U.S. are Black, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Ramone Hemphill Sr. is one of the few, but he refuses to remain that way.

That is why in December 2020, Ramone and his wife launched the 99th Squadron, a nonprofit organization seeking to expose young people, particularly minorities, to the vast opportunities in the aviation industry and STEM fields beyond.

A [project management MBA](#) student with a Private Pilot License and Instrument Rating who works full time as a systems engineer in avionics at Collins Aerospace, Ramone developed a five-week free ground school course curriculum for teaching middle and high school students the aviation basics. The course culminates in a flight, during

which students have the opportunity to take the yoke.

“The ultimate goal is just to change the narrative among minorities as far as what is truly within reach,” Ramone says. “Not only are they capable, but they are needed.”



AT A GLANCE

Profession: Systems engineer in avionics

Current City: Malabar, Florida

Why Florida Tech: “Florida Tech is an offspring of the Space Coast, and at the same time, it’s a big influence on it. That was a big deal to me.”

True Religion Hosts Florida Tech Business Competition

During the spring 2021 semester, designer jeans and clothing brand True Religion hosted a Florida Tech-exclusive business competition to assist in rebuilding its business strategy.

More than 100 students from several Bisk College of Business courses participated in the monthlong project, researching the fashion jeans industry and e-commerce business and submitting a three-minute video and executive summary outlining a strategic business plan to double True Religion’s online sales in three years.

Suggestions ranged from expanding international marketing efforts to incorporating Anime community outreach to creating a “Travel” collection for a more

youthful audience, and the top four teams presented to True Religion executives.

“They got to talk to, ask questions of and present to True Religion’s CEO, VP of e-commerce, VP of design and VP of human resources. It was a unique experience,” says COB instructor Tim Muth, who oversaw the competition.

Camilla Ribeiro, Ryan Hull and Brandon Browne, students in Bob Keimer’s Management Principles course, comprised the winning team. Their proposal focused on social media advertising and engagement, enhancing inclusivity and representation and creating an app and loyalty rewards program.



weVENTURE Events Go Virtual

Pandemic precautions didn't stop [weVENTURE Women's Business Center](#) from inspiring, motivating and celebrating professional women and small businesses through its two major annual events. In fact, by going virtual, the [2020 IMPACT Summit](#) and [2021 Women Who Rock Awards](#) could reach a larger audience than ever before.

IMPACT SUMMIT

From Aug. 28–31, the “Relentless Pursuit of Greatness”-themed IMPACT Summit featured a host of inspirational female speakers, including Liz Sara, chairwoman of the National Women's Business Council; Gen. Ann Dunwoody '87 M.S., former commanding general of the U.S. Army Materiel Command and a Florida Tech board of trustees member; Monique Picou '93 MBA, vice president of Product, Technology Strategy and Global Server Operations at Google; Sandra Shpilberg, author of *New Startup Mindset*; and Lisa Dinhofer, MA, CT, known as the “crisis tamer.”



WOMEN WHO ROCK AWARDS

After receiving a record 65 nominations, on March 23, the Women Who Rock Awards Ceremony virtually announced winners in each of six categories:

- **Excellence in Mentorship Award:**
Rochelle Hood, PINK Consulting
- **Female Small Business Owner of the Year Award:** Kelley Higney, Bug Bite Thing
- **Women in the Workplace Individual Champion:** Shalarie Highsmith, U.S. Department of Defense
- **Women in the Workplace Business Champion:** Lockheed Martin
- **Dr. Mary Helen McCay STEM Award:**
Kelli Hunsucker '07 M.S., '13 Ph.D., Florida Tech
- **Zonta Yellow Rose for Excellence in Community Service Award:**
Tara Pagliarini, Family Promise of Brevard



A+ Accolades

The Bisk College of Business and its programs continue to be recognized as some of the best in the nation. Some of our most exciting recent accolades:

Online business bachelor's degree program

- **No. 2** among 73 private universities
- **No. 35** overall among 145 schools
— *U.S. News & World Report*

Online MBA program

- **Top 40** program among 153 private schools
- **No. 135** among all 324 programs ranked overall
— *U.S. News & World Report*
- **Top 50** program nationwide
— *Princeton Review*

- **No. 14** best [master's in database management degree program](#)
- **No. 19** best [MBA in healthcare management degree program](#)
- **No. 23** best [MBA in information technology degree program](#)
— *Intelligent.com*



Scholarship Spotlight

Ana Stankovic '17, '20 M.S., '20 MBA, was awarded a Newt Becker Scholarship in March 2021. The scholarship, valued at \$2,400 and granted based on academic merit and financial need to only 110 students nationwide, provides her access to one of the nation's top CPA exam review courses for 24 months. Congratulations, Ana!

Expert Perspectives

RECENT PUBLICATIONS



“Robotic Process Automation to Aid Accounting and Finance Departments”

ISACA Journal, December 2020

- » Angel Otero, Ph.D., assistant professor of accounting, academic chair for accounting and finance online
- » Ryan Fink '18 business administration/accounting, '20 M.S. accounting and financial forensics, '20 MBA

“Fundamental Analysis of GASB’S New Financial Reporting Model”

Tennessee CPA Journal, January/February 2021

- » Khaled Abdel Ghany, Ph.D., professor of online accounting

RECENT APPOINTMENTS

Abram Walton, Ph.D., has been appointed as a U.S. delegate to the International Standards Organization (ISO) for the Technical Committee on the standardization of blockchains and distributed ledger technologies to support interoperability and data interchange among users, applications and systems.

Welcome to the Board

Established decades ago to support the values, vision and goals of the Bisk College of Business, the [College of Business Advisory Board](#) has been rapidly expanding ever since. Composed of business leaders, entrepreneurs and educators from various industries, the board has welcomed four new members this academic year, bringing the total members to 24.

Join us in welcoming the advisory board’s newest members and in learning a little more about their backgrounds and experiences that are sure to benefit the college as we progress.



PETER DYSON '85 M.S.

Joined: Fall '20

Position: CEO, Modus Operandi

About Peter: Peter has more than 30 years of experience leading the development and application of advanced computing technologies to solve the complex problems of commercial and government clients. From his earliest career assignments, Peter has been passionate about finding better ways to harness data for improving situational understanding and decision-making to achieve better outcomes. His primary focus has been on solving the unique and urgent challenges of national defense and intelligence organizations.

Fun Fact: Peter co-developed the original business plan for his company as part of his coursework at Florida Tech.



RANDALL THOMPSON '11

Joined: Fall '20

Position: Founder, Dugout Mugs

About Randall: Originally from Orlando, Florida, Randall played baseball while earning his [business administration bachelor's degree](#) at Florida Tech. He went on to play for the Toronto Blue Jays for a year before returning to Florida Tech to work as a pitching coach in 2013. It was there the idea for Dugout Mugs hit him “like a 12th inning walk off,” as he puts it. Launched in 2016, today, the baseball drinkware company is officially licensed by Major League Baseball, Minor League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association, and its products are sold in 70-plus MiLB & MLB stadium team stores across the United States.

Fun Fact: Randall came up with the Dugout Mugs concept while working as a pitching coach at Florida Tech.



DAN KASS '92 MBA

Joined: Fall '20

Position: Vice President, Import & Export Sales, Marketing, Business Development, AC Foods – Suntreat Packing

About Dan: In addition to his role at AC Foods – Suntreat Packing, Dan is an international speaker and consultant. Throughout his more than two decades in the agriculture and produce industries, his primary focus has always been on developing sustainable plans, executing visible strategies, successfully completing cross-border negotiations and driving reduced costs and enhanced profit margins. He has secured multiple highly valued accounts, forging strategic alliances and understanding business models across the Americas, Asia, Australia, Europe and the South Pacific region.

Fun Fact: In 2013, Dan completed Cornell University's food executive program, a unique five-day program that covers emerging food industry trends, personal leadership style, work-life balance, best-in-class food retailing strategies and the economic environment.



TYLER SLOAN '13

Joined: Spring '21

Position: Vice President, Product & Marketing, SportBLX

About Tyler: Tyler is a published scientist, entrepreneur and emerging technology evangelist. Before his current role at SportBLX, an innovative financial technology company that has developed a marketplace for sports investments, Tyler was director of business development for Clarke Global, a consulting and marketing firm that assists global fintech and blockchain companies. Before that, he co-founded Real Estate Chain, a real estate blockchain startup focused on property data, and later, he served as a teaching and research associate at St. John's University, New York, focusing on applications of new technologies and social media for business management.

Fun Fact: Tyler's undergraduate degree isn't in business but in marine biology, and he spent three additional years studying as a Ph.D. student in Florida Tech's [biological sciences](#) program before transitioning to technology and business, a career trajectory he attributes to his participation in the [Student Business Incubator's](#) pitch competition.

MEET THE REST OF THE BOARD

- » **Kenneth Acampora '91**, *DURABLE Wealth Management*
- » **Richard Brady '89**, *Buckingham Research Group*
- » **Gene Cavallucci**, *Harris Corp., retired*
- » **Corey Cook '08 M.S., '10 MBA**, *Lockheed Martin Corp.*
- » **Christine Deveney '87**, *KPMG*
- » **Michael Durante**, *Berman Hopkins*
- » **Michael Gaich '70 M.S.**, *Michael Gaich Co.*
- » **Paula Just**, *Health First*
- » **Michael D. Kelleher**, *U.S. Army, retired*
- » **James Krantz '92**, *The Avalon Group at Morgan Stanley*
- » **Michael J. Marks**, *Indian River Consulting Group*
- » **Monique Picou '93 MBA**, *Google*
- » **Alan Prestwood**, *Wells Fargo Advisors*
- » **Sanjay Rishi '85 M.S.**, *JLL*
- » **John Russo '95 MBA**, *Broadband Consulting Group*
- » **Jeffrey S. Shuman**, *Quest Diagnostics, retired*
- » **Janell Smith**, *Comprehensive Health Services*
- » **Stephen C. Thomas '88**, *Lowndes, P.A.*
- » **Col. Frank A. Tricomi '74 M.S.**, *Conley & Associates Inc.*
- » **Scottie Winslow**, *UnitedHealthcare*



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Alumni Spotlight

REOPENING THE WORKPLACE

Sanjay Rishi '85 M.S., D.M., becomes go-to expert for workplace reentry amid pandemic

One of the most highly discussed topics in business this year has been reentry into the workplace. Most companies have struggled with whether to do it, when to do it and how to do it safely. Sanjay Rishi '85 M.S., D.M., has become a go-to expert on the topic.

As CEO of corporate solutions in the Americas at JLL, a global real estate investment management firm, Rishi's daily role involves helping clients create, shape and manage the future of work by enhancing the performance of their workplaces, real estate portfolios and people. As the pandemic persisted into the second half of 2020, his role evolved into interacting with clients' C-suite executives to share experience and best practices related to workplace reentry.

"The nature of workplaces has evolved rapidly during the pandemic," Rishi says. "Topics like health and wellness in the workplace, clean air, work from anywhere, digital transformation and technology in the workplace are all ones that organizations are grappling with and seek our ideas and experiences of."

A COB advisory board member, Rishi is a proud [systems management M.S.](#) alumna.



AT A GLANCE

Florida Tech Degree: M.S. Systems Management '85

Profession: CEO of corporate solutions in the Americas at JLL

Current City: Chicago

Hobbies: Golfing and hiking

Favorite Florida Tech memory: Arriving at the SUB on a bus from Orlando International Airport after traveling 8,000 miles on planes, trains and automobiles—wide-eyed, anxious, fearless and oh, so naive! And getting married and spending our last semester together on campus.

“ For me, Florida Tech provided an environment where I could learn as much from the classroom as from the community. A safe, vibrant student population—from many walks of life and diverse backgrounds and with a broad spectrum of experience levels—provided for a foundation that has proven to be strong.”

—Sanjay Rishi '85 M.S., D.M.