

ROMAIN • COLLEGE OF Business

ENGAGEMENT IMPACT INNOVATION

Dean's Remarks

Dear Colleagues, Students, Alumni and Friends of the Romain College of Business,

USI recently made the difficult decision to move its coursework online for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester, and to require its faculty and most of its staff to work remotely from their homes until at least April 30. We do this as part of our role in slowing the spread of the deadly COVID-19 virus. Our faculty are working hard to convert their course content to an online format. Many have never taught online before, and many of our students never wanted to learn online. Yet everyone has risen to the challenge! While our physical campus is largely vacant, we want to make sure everyone recognizes that we are still open. We are answering our phones and email. We are conducting classes and interacting with our students. We are working behind the scenes to ensure the best learning experience that we can provide under the circumstances.

What can you do to help? Our students still need the support and guidance of our community. Many of them are missing out on the final months of their senior year. Others are just learning to adjust to college life. Still others are involved in clubs, Greek life and competitions. This crucial time is when many students would ordinarily find jobs, receive awards, enjoy the company of good friends through collaborative activities and celebrate a job well done as they enter a new phase in their lives. If you are an alum or friend of the college and have been involved with our students in some way, please continue to stay engaged with the faculty and students virtually. If you have not been involved, but would like to be, contact me, and we can discuss ways that you can still present to classes or mentor students. And if you prefer, you can help by contributing to scholarships, funding future learning experiences for students or supporting faculty research through a donation to the Romain College of Business.

If you are a student, please stay engaged. Talk to us about what you are experiencing and how we can help. We want you to be successful. And we are committed to helping you be the best you can be.

We are all in this together. Stay safe. Stay home. But stay engaged.

Cathy Carey, Dean



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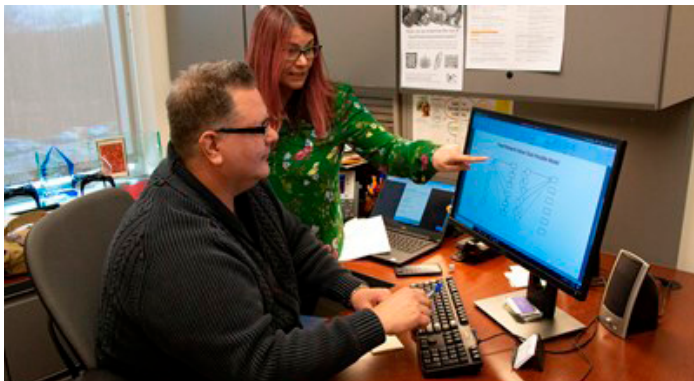
by John Michael O'Leary

Romain College of Business is pleased to recognize six educators as recipients of summer faculty fellowships. Each brings a unique and promising perspective to their field of study—and a personal commitment to shape a better future for students, fellow researchers, people in business and the community at large.

Community-Based Engagement Fellowships

"It's hard to know precisely, but well over 30,000 people in our community are food-insecure," says Bryan Bourdeau, instructor in business. "They lack access to nutritious food for an active, healthy life."

That fact has led Bourdeau and Dr. Sima Fortsch, assistant professor of management, to put this critical quality-of-life issue squarely in their sights. Their fellowship, "Analyzing Supply Chain to Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness for all Stakeholders Involved" targets Evansville's food insecurity ecosystem for remedy.



"We're studying three flows in the supply chain," says Fortsch. "There's the physical flow of product, the flow of information and the flow of funds."

Right now, about two dozen organizations comprise the supply chain; the dominant stakeholder in the food-insecurity ecosystem is Tri-State Food Bank. But all the other stakeholders in the ecosystem tend to be siloed, with no formal network in place to guide their cooperation. As a result, the system for obtaining and distributing food throughout Evansville is inefficient and often wasteful.

"We intend to develop multiple models, with different costs and benefits, and let the client choose," says Fortsch.

"With a good model in place, it will be clear for all stakeholders, especially new suppliers, how they can take part most effectively," says Bourdeau. "Ultimately, it's about keeping people from going hungry and ensuring they have access to the nutrition they need."

Creating Computer Knowledge

"Many students in middle school and high school have an interest in computer science, but they have few opportunities to study it," says Scott Anderson, instructor in computer science and coordinator of computer science program. He points to research that shows fewer than half of all high schools offer such instruction, while 58% of all new STEM jobs are in computing. Such facts are the impetus behind Anderson's fellowship, "Develop Middle and High School Summer Computer Science Camps."



After getting a nod of cooperation from the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation in early February, Anderson is now at work on developing the curriculum and materials. He plans to conduct two, five-day camps; one for middle school students (June 8 to 12) and one for high schoolers (June 15 to 19). He will lead the camps at USI with cooperation and support of the SwiSTEM Resource Center.

The fee for students is \$150, but corporate sponsorship may be available for students needing registration assistance. Registration is available online.

"One week of instruction does not substitute for taking an entry-level university CS course," says Anderson. "But it should give students a jump start on success when they do. This program is also a good way to expose students to the study of computing science at USI."

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Innovation in Student Learning and Teaching Fellowship

"I have noticed that most students in my Introduction to Operations Research do not bring their textbooks to class, despite my best advice," says Dr. Gary Black, associate professor of decision science. "I conclude this is because they have not purchased the book . . . at a list price of \$295, I understand why."

Black's response to this problem is the focus of his fellowship. He will develop an e-textbook and make it available to students at no cost starting in the fall. As an unpublished work, it will reside on Blackboard (the University's online, course-management system) and access will be limited to students enrolled in the class.

Black anticipates a substantial savings for students in the aggregate—as much as \$14,750 a year based on the cost of a new book for an estimated 50 students.

"I am excited about this project's potential to enhance student-centered learning, particularly their analytical, problem-solving skills," says Black.

Mentoring Uncertainty Research

Dr. Cristina Gilstrap, assistant professor of business communication, will conduct an empirical study, "Facing Uncertainty While Paying It Forward: Uncertainties Experienced by Healthcare Executives as Formal Organizational Mentors."



"Individuals experience uncertainty when information or situations are ambiguous, complex, unpredictable, unavailable or inconsistent," says Gilstrap. "The purpose of this study is to examine the uncertainties healthcare executives experience as formal mentors to junior administrators and identify strategies to help mentors effectively manage their uncertainties."

Gilstrap also sees this study as having the potential to

improve the structure of formal mentoring programs, elevate the satisfaction of mentors and mentees and enhance the outcomes for healthcare organizations. Her study will conclude with a paper on findings, which she will submit for presentation at the International Communication Association's annual conference. She will also submit her findings for journal publication.

"I know how important mentoring has been to my own success," says Gilstrap. "Good mentoring really helps, but a lack of mentoring creates challenges for people in organizations."

Mobile Communications Research

"Teams within organizations rely on mobile applications for chatting," says Dr. Curt Gilstrap, assistant professor of business communication. "But little is understood about the use of unsanctioned platforms."



Gilstrap believes investigation can inform team leaders how to leverage chatting platforms in the pursuit of a team's missions. His research fellowship, "Exploring Unsanctioned Chat Application Behavior Relative to Sanctioned Team Work" is designed to provide groundbreaking data on the phenomenon. He intends to mine insights on the potential risks and rewards for project management and make a needed contribution to the existing body of knowledge on mobile technologies.

"My methodology combines deep background interviews of mobile team members matched with a broader survey of additional mobile team members," he says.

His research follows his previous related investigation, "Exploring m-leader affordances: team leaders and mobile technologies," published last year in *Team Performance Management*, an international journal.

"This phenomenon likely touches every organization," says Gilstrap. "I believe there is a good chance I can move this investigation into a team publication channel in the near future."

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Optimizing Code

"You may recall the failed launch of healthcare.gov in late 2013," says Dr. Xue Han, assistant professor of computer science. "An unexpectedly high number of users soon caused the website to go down."

Han intends to define a model that can help developers avoid that kind of failure and others. Building on his prior research into software testing and performance, he is focusing his fellowship work on "A Configuration-Aware Performance Profiling Tool."



"Modern computer software systems have a lot of configuration options for users," says Han. "Apache, for example, has a few hundred such options—too many even for experts to fully understand. What's needed is a tool that pinpoints where performance can be optimized in configuration and even at a code level."

He plans to submit his findings to the *Journal of Systems and Software*, a leading, peer-reviewed publication on software engineering.

"I've been working on this issue for the last couple of years," says Han. "The feedback I am getting from reviewers in different channels is encouraging."

Trailblazing Women

by John Michael O'Leary

The Federal Reserve, the central banking system of the United States, is arguably the world's most influential financial institution. Markets and fortunes rise and fall in accord with its pronouncements. So it's heartening that this icon of monetary policy is working to further the participation of women in economics.



The St. Louis Fed's Women in Economics initiative complements a similar focus underway at the Romain College of Business. Dr. Daria Sevastianova, associate professor of economics, is a champion for making the study of economics more inclusive. She has accompanied USI student delegations to Women in Economics Symposia at the St. Louis Fed. Last year she led the chartering of the USI Economics Club with its extracurricular focus on opportunities for women. The club's official launch in September was auspicious, coinciding with a visit to campus by representatives of

the St. Louis Fed. The purpose of that visit: to record a conversation with Daria and club members for the Women in Economics podcast series.

"Over the past three decades, the underrepresentation of women in economics has changed very little," says Dr. Cathy Carey, dean of Romain College of Business and professor of economics. "It is exciting that our students are playing a part in the St. Louis Fed's initiative to emphasize the voices and roles of women in economics. Dr. Sevastianova is an excellent role model with her tireless dedication to support and encourage female students in the field."

The 20-minute podcast featuring the USI Economics Club includes an interview with Dr. Sevastianova and comments by several club members. You can learn more and listen to the podcast on our website at USI.edu/business..

What's In It For You?

by John Michael O'Leary

Jamie Read is director of marketing and strategic development with Hubb Management in Evansville. She completed the master's in business administration (MBA) in December 2018 with a concentration in data analytics. She shared her thoughts with us about her motivation for achieving the degree, her experience in the program and what it has meant to her career.



Why did you enroll in USI's MBA program?

I have a master's in occupational therapy; however, my professional experience and background has focused more on business development and sales. I pursued a master's in business administration to enhance my technical knowledge and increase my credibility as a business leader. In addition, I looked at this endeavor as a personal investment that would help me develop a framework for problem-solving, improve my leadership skills, network with other business professionals, improve my strategic thinking and build on my communication skills within the business world.

What is your impression of USI's MBA program?

I valued the convenience of the program in that I could complete all classes online and within a reasonable timeframe. USI's program did not require me to sit for the GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Test) because I met certain criteria due to my GPA, professional experience and prior master's degree. Lastly, the structure of the program allowed me to focus on other important roles in my life, such as being a parent, wife and employee. Cost played a factor as well.

How would you describe the learning environment in the program?

I enjoyed the networking between students and professors, and I felt that the professors were dedicated to their role in helping and challenging students to learn. I was impressed at how readily available most professors were to connect via LinkedIn and provide guidance. Moreover, the alumni community is extensive at USI and is very active in the direction of the College.

Has what you learned in the MBA program made a difference in your career?

I believe that my MBA set me up for the promotion to my current position. I have repeatedly used the skills that I learned in my classes on leadership, data visualization, marketing, strategy and economics. I have been able to take these transferable skills and apply them to marketing, project management, data collection and analyses and communication. I feel that now I have several frameworks that prepare me to be more independent, creative and proactive in my business dealings. I am thankful for my experience at USI, and more importantly, I am thankful for the self-confidence and sense of pride I received from completing the MBA program.

"The MBA curriculum is designed to be very practical," says Dr. Jack Smothers, associate professor of management and the MBA program director. "We want each class to improve our students' lives and impact their organizations. What students learn one day, they can put into practice the next."

What might an MBA mean to your career? Find out more, including admission requirements, cost and how to apply at [USI.edu/MBA](https://www.usi.edu/mba).

The MBA at the Romain College of Business comprises of 30 postgraduate credit hours across all business disciplines. With the recent addition of project management, the program now offers a choice of six concentrations (i.e., accounting, data analytics, engineering management, healthcare administration, human resources and project management) in addition to the option of a traditional MBA. The project management concentration equips students with the knowledge to pass the Project Management Institute exams and equips them with the skills to manage projects in the workplace.

Trading Spaces



by John Michael O'Leary

"I was impressed by the smaller class sizes at USI," says Dag Grothe, graduate business student from Osnabrück, Germany. "When I began my studies in Germany, we had 800 students in one class. Here, it's easier to ask questions in class and get help from the professor outside class."

Grothe plans to complete his MBA at UO with a specialization in accounting next February. During the 2019 fall semester, as an exchange student at USI, he took three accounting classes and a course in English. He is studying this semester in Thailand. "I think the more international experience I get, the better my job opportunities will be."

While at USI, Grothe taught in the German language lab, competed in intramural basketball and volleyball and got involved in campus ministry. It all helped him feel connected to the school's social fabric. "In three years of study at home, I knew few if any of my fellow students," says Grothe. "After a semester at USI, I know all the faces, if not all the names."

Perhaps the biggest difference Grothe noticed at USI is the way students are graded. "I had no homework in Germany, and no one takes attendance. You have one exam that accounts for 100 percent of your grade. At USI I had homework in every class. Attendance is expected. And if you work hard all through the semester, the final is not so critical for your grade."

Grothe also saw differences in how Germany and the United States fund education. "Students don't pay tuition in Germany,

because education is supported by the government. At home I pay about \$400 a semester for a public transportation ticket and \$300 for rent. I rent textbooks for free at the library. My meals, which include a main dish and three sides, are about \$4 each."

Grothe plans to someday work as a corporate controller or for a consultancy firm, and he believes his studies at USI will serve him well. "Understanding the differences in accounting standards between the United States and Germany will be especially useful if I work for a company that has to prepare

"I enjoyed my time in Evansville. I met a lot of nice people. I would certainly consider an internship here."

-Dag Grothe, exchange student, Osnabrück, Germany

different financial statements for foreign operations."

Evansville native William Elfreich is a junior at USI with a double major in marketing and finance. As a recipient of a twin cities scholarship, he attended the International Summer Language School during August and September at the University of Applied Sciences in Osnabrück. He was one of about 90 international students to take part.

"My ancestry is mainly German," says Elfreich. "Studying in Osnabrück not only helped me with my foreign language skills, it was a chance to learn more about my family's heritage."

The course required five hours of daily classroom work, Monday through Friday. Weekends brought the chance to take

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in Germany's culture, and Elfreich joined fellow students on instructor-led tours of Bremen, Münster and Berlin.

"The German people are friendly," says Elfreich. "They open up when you get to know them. And there's a strong sense of community—you see lots of people gathered in coffee shops and out walking. The [cities] are designed for people to walk . . . you don't have to drive everywhere and worry about getting gas or fighting traffic. When you do want to travel, you find the public transportation systems are well developed."

Upon completion of the language program, Elfreich took advantage of being in Europe to backpack solo for 2 1/2 weeks. At the same time, he was taking USI classes online. "I had to make sure my hostel or inn had wifi so I could keep up with coursework."

"Studying in Osnabrück not only helped me with my foreign language skills, it was a chance to learn more about my family's heritage."

-William Elfreich, junior, marketing and finance

Elfreich plans to graduate in spring 2021 with a bachelor's degree in marketing and finance. This semester, his studies include a sales internship with State Farm. "Sales skills and the ability to talk to people will be helpful in any part of life."

Reflecting on his time in Germany, the thing that clings most to memory is the human connections.

"I think what was most valuable for me was interacting with fellow students," says Elfreich. "I made lifelong friends from China and Japan, from Algeria, Brazil, Columbia and the UK . . . and now I want to visit all those places."

Spotlight: Bill Theby

"One of the biggest challenges to running a family business, or any business, is balancing the need for good business decisions with the need to be understanding and empathetic to the people impacted by those decisions," says Bill Theby, CEO, Lensing Building Specialties. "Successful people are those who care—about the people they work with, about their friends, about their community."



It's not surprising that Theby is known for his willingness to help improve the local business climate. He has been a member of the Board of Advisors for the Romain College of Business for several years, served on the Family Business Alliance of the Southwest Indiana Chamber of Commerce, worked with the Evansville Industrial Foundation, and he holds a community directorship with the Evansville Region Board of Old National Bank. His community spirit extends to participation with the United Way Campaign Cabinet and membership in the Rotary Club. He has helped lead capital campaigns for Holy Rosary Parish and for Reitz Memorial High School.

"It has been rewarding to play a part in the Romain College of Business' growth," says Theby. "Our community is blessed to have

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Inside These Halls, Inside Our Hearts.

by John Michael O'Leary

Dr. Carl Saxby, associate professor of marketing emeritus, concluded a 22.5-year teaching career with USI in December. He earned a bachelor's degree in accounting at Illinois State University, a master's degree in finance from Keller School of Management and a doctorate in marketing from the University of Memphis.

"When I came to USI in 1997, I'd already spent about 18 years in industry, primarily in corporate finance," says Saxby. "Teaching was my second career."

During his first years in the classroom Saxby was primarily responsible for teaching strategy and sales. But the onset of a profound loss of hearing put his future as an educator in doubt. "The principles of selling require instruction that is highly verbal," he says. "I didn't know if I could continue teaching, given my disability."

Saxby's value to the College, however, was never in doubt. He recalls that the school's administration was understanding. "They worked with me, letting me move into subjects that were less demanding verbally."

At about this time, robust development across the World Wide Web was revealing a marketing frontier in want of academic investigation. It was an ideal milieu for Saxby. "I became intrigued with interactive marketing and its many differences compared to face-to-face marketing and sales. It was revolutionary on a mass scale."

Earned Collegiate Respect

"I joined the faculty in 2001, and Carl was among the first to welcome me," says Dr. Kevin Celuch, professor of marketing and Blair Chair of Business Science. "Our paths soon crossed with a shared interest in developing critical thinking abilities in our students."

The two also shared a special interest in teaching ethical decision-making. When *The Journal of Marketing Education* devoted a special issue to ethics, it gave prominent placement to a paper they co-authored: "Counter-Factual Thinking and Ethical Decision-Making: A New Approach to an Old Problem in Marketing Education."

"Carl brought a strong student-orientation to his studies, particularly in his projects on student learning," says Celuch.

"Carl has been a mentor to me as well as a colleague," says Dr. Chad Milewicz, associate professor of marketing. "He's had a huge impact on the Marketing Department and what it is today. He was integral in creating the Sales Suite (a specially

designed classroom with role-play areas). And he led efforts to bring interactive digital marketing into the curriculum."

Professional respect for Carl extends beyond the campus. In 2013, the Midwest Higher Education Compact selected him to take part in a cross-state tuning initiative. "Carl was one of 15 marketing educators who worked for over a year, collaborating with representatives from academia and industry, to advance the quality of post-secondary marketing education," says Milewicz. "The team did excellent work and it was special having a leader of the team also teaching at USI."



Treasured Memories

When asked about memories he holds dear, Saxby recalls the time a new student came to his office for guidance while her mother stood outside the door, sobbing. "She was overcome with emotion at the thought her child would get a college education." Then there's the time he offered a few encouraging words to a student who was struggling academically, words that helped the student gain a clearer sense of purpose. Most cherished of all, he remembers meeting the woman who would become his wife.

"It happened one summer that Lori and I were both assigned to the same online seminar," says Saxby. "We were seated at terminals across the table from each other. I like to joke that we met online."

Now, he says, the moments he appreciates most are when he hears from former students and learns they are doing well.

Logan Lane took Saxby's Introduction to Marketing class as a sophomore. "I liked the class so much I just kept taking Carl's

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classes through my senior year,” he says.

The two became good friends, staying in touch after Lane graduated in 2015. “Professor Saxby has always been available to give me good advice,” says Lane. “He’s a really good texter.”

When Lane decided to pursue a master’s in urban and regional planning at Ball State University, he drew on his experience as Saxby’s student. “Carl prepared me for what I would experience at a higher academic level,” he says. “The graduate work was difficult, with an emphasis on learning on your own—which is how Carl prepared me.”

What’s Next

Saxby says retirement gives him and Lori the freedom to travel. Their most recent outing: a fall-foliage tour of New England and New Brunswick. He’s also mulling how he might best use some of his free time to make a difference for others with disabilities. He still lives by the belief that you can accomplish whatever you want if you put your heart into it.

“If you want it, go after it—nobody’s going to give it to you,” he says. “I went from a hog farm to a wonderful and fulfilling career. You can achieve, too. It takes time . . . have some patience.”

“A big focus of my teaching was helping students learn to think critically and make ethical decisions. The data I’ve collected from my classes shows that it worked . . . I’m pretty happy about that.”

-- Dr. Carl Saxby, associate professor of marketing emeritus