

ROMAIN • COLLEGE OF Business

ENGAGEMENT IMPACT INNOVATION

Dean's Remarks

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

It's almost here. The day that we have been working towards since mid-March. The day when students return to USI. We are excited to welcome back students and faculty who have been physically away from campus throughout the summer. We have reworked the Fall 2020 schedule in such a way as to provide students with a variety of learning options, including online, hybrid, and face-to-face classes. We have been busy preparing the classrooms following the appropriate social distancing guidelines and incorporating new technologies allowing us to accommodate students via multiple delivery mediums. The safety of our faculty, staff and students has been at the forefront of all our planning efforts.

While the hope is that the dangers of COVID-19 will soon pass, there is no doubt that the pandemic has left its mark on higher education for many years to come. The way we interact with students, the way we teach, the way we hold meetings, just to name a few, are some of the activities in the life of higher education that will be forever transformed.

Student spaces in the award-winning Business and Engineering Building, including the Rosemary and D. Patrick O'Daniel Atrium, the Vectren Lakeside Study Lounge and Balcony and smaller lounges on each floor were created specifically with student interaction and collaboration in mind. But now the comfortable furniture arranged to encourage gathering has been pulled apart. Green stickers indicate where students may sit in the classrooms and arrows mark the direction of travel throughout the building. While face coverings may mask the smiles of our students and faculty, we will continue to prepare our students for a post-COVID-19 world, working toward our vision to develop distinctive graduates who create value through impactful business solutions.

The faculty, staff and students of the Romain College of Business are excited to begin our new school year. As always, 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,



mentor students and/or contribute by funding future learning experiences for students or supporting faculty research through a donation to the Romain College of Business.

Best wishes for a safe and healthy fall.

Dr. Cathy Carey, Dean

In This Issue

No Pomp; Weird Circumstance

Summer Camp - No DEET Required

Excellence Has a Name and a Face

There's Nothing Else Like It

Elvis Has Left the Building

Pandemic with a Side of Cold Turkey

Spotlight on Nikki Roser '94 M'98

No Pomp; Weird Circumstance



Like most seniors, Alicia Frederick '20, finance, had long looked forward to graduation and the happy events surrounding it. She recalls with numb clarity the moment she learned her rites of passage were cancelled, as she waited outside the door of her professor's office.

"It was a Tuesday at 1:30 p.m. when I got the email that Commencement was cancelled," says Alicia. "I just started crying."

The pity party didn't drag her down for long. As Alicia says, she likes to "stay busy." She kept with her studies and completed them online. "It seemed like professors tried to make things more accommodating."



She also applied her energy to finding what she calls a "big girl" job. She had worked hard to get experience while in school. That, coupled with a job search on LinkedIn, helped open a door.

"I was in touch with a man at Evansville Teachers Federal Credit Union who had just gotten a promotion, and he told me about a new position they had created."

Alicia applied and got the job, a wire and accounting specialist. She's already hopeful for a promotion next year. In the meantime, she's working toward an MBA and will sit for

the CPA exam in November. And she's still looking forward to walking across the stage and receiving her diploma—eventually. If it happens later rather than sooner, she says she's okay with that.

"I guess the last few months have shown me I am resilient," says Alicia "Before the pandemic, I didn't know if I would be working or continuing my studies, but now I am full force in my job and school—it's surprising to me."

While some mourned the loss of celebration, others grappled with disruption of domicile.

"I was on Spring Break when I learned I had one week to vacate my campus residence," says Thomas Engels, '21, marketing. "My parents and I made the trip down (from Lebanon, Indiana), packed me up and I moved back home."

Thomas was enrolled in five classes and completed them all online. During the first summer session he took two classes that he says he had "planned to take online anyway." He also picked up a summer job at Old Navy. So far, the disruption of school-as-usual has not altered his plan for completing his bachelor's degree a semester early in December 2021.

"Online is not my preferred method for learning," says Thomas. "I really like the in-person, face-to-face interaction with other students and professors."

This fall, his schedule gives him some of both; one class is online, one is a traditional classroom setting and three are

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hybrids with a mix of online and classroom instruction. He is uncertain about how he'll feel as he adjusts to the new normal.

"Because I'm so far into my college journey, it will really be different not having those important upper-level classes in person," says Thomas. "I also wonder about my campus job. I usually work in the special events department, and I'm not sure how that will be affected."

Although disappointed by how the fates have turned, he says he understands completely why things must be as they are.

"My mom is a nurse, and some of her coworkers have had the (novel) coronavirus. It was kind of scary for a couple of weeks when we thought she might have been exposed, but it turns out the person she was in contact with was negative. I definitely believe

in following guidelines for masks and social distancing."

"The pandemic shutdown was so unexpected, and it's been a strange time for everyone," says Thomas Busche '21, accounting and professional services. "Even though we have electronic communication, I miss the human interaction. I pick up a lot more in the classroom than I do watching videos, so the switch was a little difficult for me, especially in accounting classes.



Besides managing a full class load during the Spring Semester, Busche was working an internship with local accounting firm BKD—in the crunch-time of tax season. He says the firm took safety measures to protect him and his fellow interns, moving them from one small room to distanced placement in an open space and eventually sending them home to work remotely.

"The firm was doing as much as it could under the circumstances," says Busche. "We kept hearing a lot of different things about whether the tax deadlines would change ... the extensions made things a lot easier."

Busche spent his summer hiatus working in a shaved ice business. He'll resume classwork in the Fall Semester with 17 credit hours of study. "Going through a pandemic is not an experience I would wish on anyone but it has shown the adaptability of people."

Spotlight on Nikki Roser '94 M'98

You could say Nikki Roser '94, accounting, M'98, has a heaping helping of business responsibilities on her plate. She oversees 115 employees in First Bank's businesses across White and Wabash Counties in Illinois and in Gibson, Posey and Vanderburgh Counties in Indiana. She serves on boards for the bank, for Ferrell Hospital in Eldorado and for the Absher Foundation, which supports education and healthcare in White County. Such responsibilities seem to come naturally to Nikki, and they support another thing she is passionate about—mentoring and developing young people.

"I serve on the board of White County CEO, which stands for Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities," says Nikki. "We created this group to expose high school seniors to businesses and to help them understand the opportunities for entrepreneurship. We encourage our young people to stay in White County and be part of the area's economic development."

Nikki's passion for developing the talents of young people is known by the USI community as well. As a member of the USI Accounting Circle she works with faculty and students to discuss the accounting profession and to promote its multi-faceted opportunities.

"USI is so ingrained with the business community, the networking I was exposed to as a student was priceless. Now, I am thankful for the opportunity to offer my experience to help young people figure out what they want to do with their career and cultivate the skills they need to achieve their goals."



Summer Camp - No DEET Required

As we reported in February, Scott Anderson, Program Coordinator of Computer Science, was hard at work (as he always is.) But his special focus at that time was a fellowship to develop summer camps in computing science for middle and high school students. When pandemic precluded a physical gathering of students around the campfire of enlightenment, he rebooted the curriculum for at-home participation.

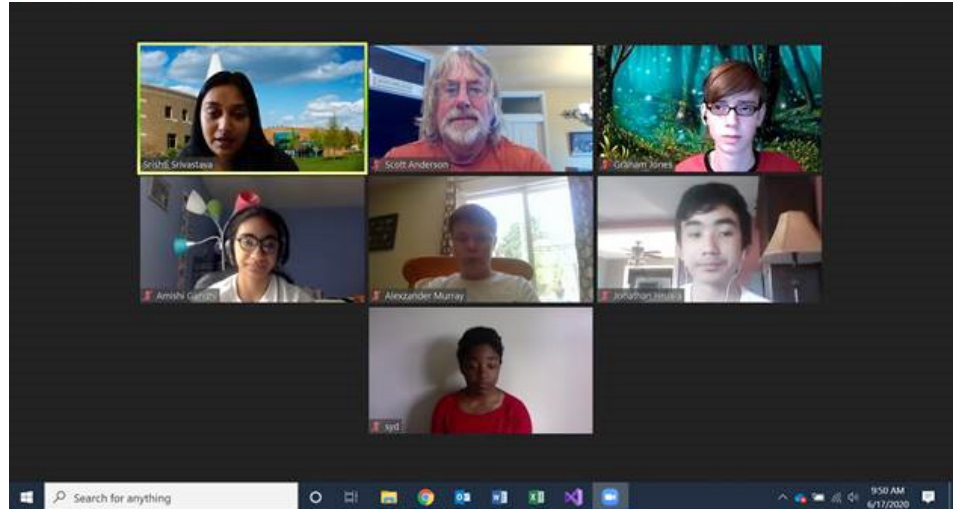
“We met over Zoom,” says Anderson. “In the mornings, we would give instruction and assign work and then we would stay online in case anyone needed additional help. In the afternoon, we would meet and review the students’ work.”

Wendy Wooldridge, Instructor of Computer Science, and Srishti Srivastava, Assistant Professor of Computer Science, helped Anderson with instructor duties. The middle school camp put their fingers to work in Scratch (June 8 to 12) and the high schoolers wrestled with Python coding (June 15 to 19). Each kid completed a series of exercises and presented a capstone project at the end.

Anderson says the camps were highly successful, despite enrollment below pre-pandemic expectations. “Student feedback gave us almost perfect scores on fun ... and they reported a big increase in confidence for computer programming. Everything shows we have developed good content for future summer camps—as well as for after-school activities during the school year.”

More Happy Campers?

If two or three instructors can open a dozen young minds to power of computing science, imagine how many students could be enlightened with the help of hundreds of K through 12 educators. Such is the aim of IndianaComputes!, a collaboration among 14 universities in Indiana, including USI. Anderson says the collaboration was one of five organizations the Indiana Department



Scott Anderson (top center) meets with middle schoolers over Zoom as they gather virtually to learn about computing science. Companies in the local IT Alliance had provided funding for kids in need to participate, but those funds were unneeded and returned when the camps ended up online.

of Education funded to provide this learning opportunity—and the only recipient of money for all grade bands (K-5,6-8 and 9-12). Anderson’s grant request for USI’s participation as a subcontractor was awarded \$26K.

“We are developing four of the program’s 20 teaching modules, including problem-solving and after-school clubs and activities,” says Anderson. “We’ve already proven some of the content in our summer camps.”

The grant also underwrites synchronous instruction by content-expert facilitators. Srivastava helps

“We’re hosting a website as a homeroom for participating educators in southwest Indiana,” says Anderson. “It’s a place where they can get study assistance and materials ... and it gives them a chance to expose their students to USI. We’re here to help them go as far as they want to go.”

“Student feedback gave us almost perfect scores on fun ...”

--Scott Anderson

represent USI, and she rotates with other facilitators at each university to ensure educators have about eight opportunities each week to Zoom in for additional instruction. About 300 educators across the state are participating in this first year of the program.

Pandemic with a Side of Cold Turkey

When the pandemic forced classroom instruction to migrate to the internet, Dr. Jason Fertig, Associate Professor of Management, says he could have easily adapted his HR Management seminar to an online format. But rather than force a round syllabus through a rectangular screen, he pursued what Monty Python's Flying Circus might refer to as "something completely different."



"I didn't want to assume class would be business as usual except that we would be meeting over Zoom," says Fertig. "Students were going through big changes in routine, and I wanted them to reflect on those changes ... I was fortunate in that the objectives for the course allowed flexibility."

He found inspiration in a book by Catherine Price, *How to Break Up With Your Phone*. His assignment for students: to break up with their phones for 30

days. He shepherded about 40 students through the exercise; each submitted a thought paper on the experience and what they learned. Generally speaking, the papers revealed how students were coming to grips with their new reality, with shrinking social circles and loss of jobs or hours worked. Against this backdrop, they learned how phone habits affect their lives.

"Ultimately, it wasn't about giving up the phone, but about reframing the relationship with it to get to something deeper and more meaningful," says Fertig.

He adds that adults, including himself, also deal with phone addiction. "Going through the exercise kept me honest about my own habits. It felt like I was doing more research on the pandemic than I had done for my dissertation."

Fertig reached Price by Zoom after the class concluded. He shared what he had learned as grist for her continuing work on helping people live more fully. (Find out more at screenlifebalance.com.)

Although Fertig has no immediate plans to conduct this exercise again, he says he may do so at some point. Right now, his focus is on preparing for the Fall Semester. Regardless of how the mix of classroom and online instruction might change in the weeks ahead, he is clear about one thing. "We're all trying to do the best for students."

Connect with Romain College of Business

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There's Nothing Else Like It

Dr. Cathy Carey, Dean of Romain College of Business, discovered something about distinctiveness years ago on a tour of The Coca-Cola Company.

"They talked about how their iconic bottle was essential to the brand," says Carey. "It was by design—the company wanted a package so distinctive that it could be instantly identifiable—whether on the store shelf, in the dark or even in pieces on the ground."

The idea of making the Romain College of Business distinctive played into Carey's thinking for the development of the College's recently drafted strategic plan. As project champion, Carey worked with a five-person task force chaired by Dr. Andrew Dill, Assistant Professor of Accounting.

"We considered plans from other colleges as well as our College's previous strategic plans," says Dill. "We worked to balance what the dean envisioned with our thoughts for the direction of the school—and to put forth a plan that is both aspirational and achievable."

The result, as Carey describes it, is a means for creating value through impact—four words which describe the very essence of the plan.

"Value and impact are critical to everything we do," says Carey. "We want to develop graduates who create value through the impact they make in business. We want to inspire faculty who create value through making an impact on students, on their professions and in the community. And we are committed to making these happen in a culture that embraces diversity and inclusion. As we do these things, we will make our school distinctive."

A staunch belief in planning is part of Carey's own personal brand; she was determined to direct her energy toward the school's strategic thinking in her first year as dean.

"A plan gets us all moving in the same direction," says Carey. "It provides a basis for making decisions on every activity we undertake and every dollar we spend. And when we live up to our plan, graduates and faculty of our College will be known for the distinctive value they create through their impact in the region."

Elvis Has Left the Building

Accidental Evansvillian

Dr. Ernest Nolan wasn't supposed to go to college.

"My dad worked in a factory, and we lived on a little farm where I milked cows. I never thought about going to college—nobody in my family ever had—I just assumed I would work in a trade."

But SAT scores showed he was destined for higher education.

"I had intended to apply for college at Jeffersonville because it was close to my home," says Nolan, Assistant Professor Emeritus of Computer Information Systems. "When I asked for the application, they misunderstood and gave me an application for Evansville. I was so bashful that I did not say anything. No one who knows me now can believe I was ever bashful—I always told my students I would feel comfortable delivering a speech to 10,000 people. The point is, we all mature and change."

Nolan would go on to graduate from University of Evansville with a degree in math and computing science and subsequently earn a master's degree in business administration. He took a position with his alma mater as supervisor of operations before going to Chayes Virginia, a Johnson & Johnson company, and rising to CIO. He began teaching full-time at USI (then ISUE) in 1983 with the understanding that he could continue to provide private consulting in addition to his teaching duties.

"I had taught some summer classes at ISUE a few years earlier, over my lunch hour," says Nolan. "I joined the faculty the same year as Bill Henderson (Assistant Professor Emeritus of Computer Information Systems). We started the CIS degree program."

Nolan approached teaching with a healthy respect for skepticism, which he encouraged his students to cultivate as well. "I never read a textbook I agree with 100%—I could always find differences based on my experience. I think my experience kept students interested, because they could see how concepts apply in real life."

Those students may well recall Nolan's weekly attention-getters, a "thought for the week," "quote of the week" or a photo of the "tractor of the week." "Every student knows I love and collect antique tractors." Retirement affords him plenty of time to tinker with his machines—and to maintain his pastoral homestead on 14 acres. "I enjoy cutting the grass; it takes all summer."

"For about 25 years I taught both a freshman and a senior class," says Nolan. "Seeing how their thinking matured is what I enjoyed the most ... I wouldn't trade my teaching experience for anything."

Although Nolan's time in the classroom has ended, his penchant for programming has not. "I still write some code now and then. But I'm ready to get this COVID-19 thing over and do some traveling."



Retirement gives Ernie Nolan, Assistant Professor Emeritus of Computer Information Systems, plenty of time to tend 14 acres and tinker with his 23 antique tractors, including this 1936 Farmall Model F-12. Behind him (left) is a 1953 Ford Model Jubilee and a 1949 John Deere Model A.

Romain College of Business welcomes these educators to the ranks of emeritus.

Dr. Ernest Nolan, Assistant Professor Emeritus of Computer Information Systems (1983 to 2020)

Sharlett Gillard, Professor Emerita of Computer Information Systems (1986 to 2020)

Jennifer Williams, Professor Emerita of Computer Information Systems (1993 to 2020)

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Mother, Teacher, Nurturer

Dr. Jennifer Williams describes her time with USI this way:

“Wow! I can’t believe what I watched happen—and how fast it all flew by. I loved my work, my students and the people I worked with. USI became my family and I was there during the most exciting times.”

Williams, Professor Emerita of Computer Information Systems, joined the faculty in January 1993 after serving as a temporary instructor in management the previous semester. Teaching was a second career, begun in her thirties after raising three children. The calling sent her back to school as a commuter student.

“I drove 120 miles one-way from my home (in Webster County, Kentucky) to Western Kentucky University,” says Williams. “For my doctorate, I commuted to and from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.” At one point, she was living in Webster County, studying at Carbondale and teaching in Evansville. “I used to carry a tape recorder with me to make notes while driving,” she recalls. “It wasn’t unusual for me to get home at midnight.”

Her high-mileage resume made her a logical choice when the school needed to send a representative to Indianapolis for a governor’s conference on distance education in 1993. When distance education morphed into online learning, Williams was at the helm of USI’s first online MBA class. “We were the fastest-growing school in the state for years, and we faced problems of how to make room for all the people.”

Williams saw her role as educator inseparable from that of nurturer. “Every time I looked in my students’ faces, I saw my own kids,” says Williams. “Many were the first generations in their families to go to college. It was my job to do whatever I could to help them have a bright future.”

Sometimes she dug into her own purse to buy a textbook, or she loaded a sick kid into her car and drove them to the ER. “I have gifts from the mothers of some of my international students; they told me I was their kid’s mama when they couldn’t be.”

She says her teaching philosophy reflects the love she experienced being raised in a faith-filled home—and from the conviction that all things are redeemable.

“My greatest strength is probably my greatest weakness, but I was always ready to give someone another chance. When I caught a student cheating, my thought wasn’t about punishment, but about how to teach them what they did was wrong and why they shouldn’t do it again.”

Williams admits she didn’t want to leave teaching, but it was taking a physical toll. “I do have some issues with my back, but it is markedly better now than it has been in 20 years.” And she is glad to again be the resident, full time nurturer in her family, looking after her mother and keeping all well during the pandemic.

“I believe in the power of education to changes lives and to change the world. I also believe strongly in the power of love. I am so happy to have been a part of teaching my students to ‘love to learn,’ and I hope they saw in me the happiness that comes from loving one another.”



Jennifer Williams, Professor Emerita of Computer Information Systems, shares a moment of levity with her computer information systems CIS 201 students in December 2019, following the last lecture of her teaching career.

Excellence Has a Name and a Face

We are proud to announce the 2020 Dean's Awards for Excellence in Teaching, Research and Service. These awards recognize full-time faculty members who have made outstanding contributions to the mission and goals of the Romain College of Business.



Dean's Award for Excellence in Teaching
Dr. Brett Bueltel, Assistant Professor of Accounting

Dr. Brett Bueltel's teaching package demonstrates his teaching skills, his dedication to engaging students with their subject matter, and his commitment to growth through professional development. Dr. Bueltel teaches a subject that is judged as difficult by his students, and yet they still rate him highly. His teaching includes a number of experiential learning activities which are consistent with the college's current and previous missions and visions. Dr. Bueltel engages with students at all levels of their learning experience at USI. For example, he coordinates and serves as a mentor for the RCOB LLC and teaches UNIV 101, both of which help him develop relationships with business students in their Freshman year. He uses innovative teaching exercises in his upper level classes, and his students have the opportunity to apply what they learn in the classroom to real-life situations through the VITA program, which he also coordinates. As the chair of the RCOB Accounting Curriculum and Assessment committee, assurance of learning is of particular interest to him. In addition, Dr. Bueltel takes advantage of professional development in teaching and learning via workshops, such as the AACSB AOL Seminar, the USI UNIV 101 Teaching workshop, and the USI Online Course Development Program.

"I'm honored to be recognized among my great colleagues with the Dean's Award for Excellence in Teaching. I truly enjoy interacting with our students and helping them develop into business professionals. Seeing our students grow and excel is one of the best feelings I can experience as a professor!"



Dean's Award for Excellence in Research
Dr. Curt Gilstrap, Assistant Professor of Business Communication

Dr. Curt Gilstrap's research activities included two peer reviewed journal publications in the evaluation year (including one single authored) and one from a prior year. Also of note is the quantity of research articles under review and in progress. His research is current, relevant and applied, consistent with our mission. Dr. Gilstrap uses innovative applied methodologies with Leximancer technologies and notes that his research currently benefits and is being used by both national and international organizations.

"I am very honored to have been selected as one of two Dean's Award for Excellence in Research recipients for 2019-2020. I am likewise encouraged by our colleagues' recognition of both my team management research and my marketing communication research programs. It is my hope to continue to enhance both fields as I move forward with a number of research teams."

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Dean's Award for Excellence in Research

Dr. Srishti Srivastava, Assistant Professor of Computer Science

Dr. Srishti Srivastava's research activities included five peer reviewed conference publications accepted or published in the evaluation year, along with two peer reviewed conferences, four peer reviewed journal articles and a book chapter from the previous (five) years. Dr. Srivastava also has a number of non PRJs and works in progress and has received two external grants in the past two years. Dr. Srivastava describes her work as "novel techniques for analyzing the robustness of resource allocations in parallel and distributed computing environments."

"I am very honored to receive the Dean's Award for Excellence in Research. I would like to convey my heartfelt thanks to the selection committee members, the deans of Romain College, my department chair, and all my wonderful Romain College colleagues for providing the motivation and inspiration to do better in my academic career at USI."



Dean's Award for Excellence in Service

Jeanette Maier-Lytle, Instructor in Accounting

Ms. Maier-Lytle's service contributions during the 2019 evaluation year can be found at every level—from contributions to her profession and local community to contributions to the university, college and department. At the professional and community level, she stays engaged with the local chapter of the IMA, from speaking at multiple events and organizing members for fund drives, to engaging accounting professionals with students from the classroom to national case competitions. She is also actively involved with the Accounting Circle Extravaganza, Accounting Circle Board meetings and the High School Business Day, and she serves on the board of a local nonprofit. Ms. Maier-Lytle also finds time to serve the university's CETL, help with college recruiting activities, and advise the Accounting Club/IMA Student Organization. She serves on several significant Accounting Department committees. As Ms. Maier-Lytle mentioned in her package, she believes in the mission that "excellence in and outside the classroom prepares students for excellence in business." And she does what she does "...because I want to be a more supportive and compassionate individual."

"The service award uplifted my spirits during a time of mental drain from the countless hours of online preparation and teaching, while taking care of my family. Service has always been a part of my life. My mom instilled the act of serving in me years ago, as I watched her lead a Boy Scout troop, work as a waitress and cook, and take care of her family.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve in many different capacities, but I particularly love serving as the adviser for the the Accounting Club and the student case study competition teams. We have amazing students, and it is such a joy to watch them grow and develop into young professionals."