

Impact

m a g a z i n e

MICHIGAN TECH
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

2019-20 | VOLUME 10

INDUSTRY 4.0

A future-proof outlook
for tomorrow's business
students begins at
Michigan Tech today.



The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, which is conducted annually by the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, lists business as the most popular undergraduate major earned by far. Further analysis highlights business and healthcare as the top two degrees for female students and business and engineering as the top two degrees for males.

Forecasting the needs and trends of tomorrow, the Princeton Review expects business to remain a sought-after area of study for its problem solving, number crunching, and decision making as well as communications. Business majors, they say, learn to budget, organize, plan, hire, direct, control, and manage businesses from entrepreneurial start-ups to multi-million-dollar corporations.

I share this with you to highlight the importance of business students on our campus. As Michigan Tech looks to grow and diversify enrollment, our newly renamed College of Business is now more than ever an area of devoted resources and opportunity.

What sets business Huskies apart from graduates of other business schools is that they become adept at collaborating with analytical minds amongst their STEM-student peers. They have a mastery of technology that leads to confident risk-taking and big rewards. They are innovative in their thinking and demand faculty who are on the leading edge offering tech-infused, hands-on education.

That's the advantage of earning the world's most popular major at a technological university. The Tech Advantage is also what makes our graduates highly employable, highly rewarded for their skills, and future-proof as we advance into the Fourth Industrial Revolution where technology rapidly changes every facet of life.

A major aspect of my job as dean is to ensure our growing student body has the state-of-the-art tools and facilities to accomplish their dreams. Plans and fundraising are underway for a new facility for business students and professors. Our curriculum is new and nimble. Our professors have industry experience, build industry partnerships, and pursue advanced training.

Access to these incredible opportunities is a shared focus as well. We want the Michigan Tech business program to be available to all high-achieving students. As such, we have more than 50 sponsored scholarships in addition to University merit awards and need-based aid.

Speaking of merit, if you are a non-resident or international student, you'll want to see details about the new National Business Scholars Award (page 15). Alumni, if you know a high school senior interested in a business major, contact the College of Business and let's work together to create the future one business student at a time.

Dean Johnson,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dean Johnson', written in a cursive style.

Dean, Michigan Tech College of Business



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Impact is an annual print and digital publication produced by the Michigan Technological University College of Business. Notes to the editor may be directed to business@mtu.edu

ACHIEVEMENTS AND NEWS



HUSKIES MASTER MANAGEMENT IN STATE COMPETITION

Each spring semester, up to 12 Michigan Tech students compete in THE Project, an annual collegiate project management competition offered by the Western Michigan Project Management Institute. It engages college students in the practice of project management*, develops their leadership skills, and provides them with a platform to demonstrate their abilities to business and community leaders.

Michigan Tech has competed in all eight of the competitions, placing second and third in 2019, third in 2018, and first back in 2017 (beating out other Michigan schools, including Western Michigan University and Grand Valley State University).

***Project Management:**
The way a person or group organizes and manages resources that are necessary to complete a project.

THE FUTURE OF RETIREMENT (IS IN HUSKIES' HANDS)

For the second time in four years, a team from Michigan Tech won a national retirement security essay competition.

The student team, comprised of graduate student Zach Rosenbaum and undergraduates Cole Peppin and John Ruf, won the 2019 iOme Challenge sponsored by the Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement (WISER). The iOme Challenge is a national competition designed to raise awareness among college students about the impact of retirement security on the social and economic well-being of society.

Students from across the country responded to the annual essay competition with a policy paper and a promotional video. They were asked to imagine that Congress named them to an Independent Commission on Retirement, with instructions to re-evaluate and modernize the retirement system from the perspective of Gen Z-ers. The Michigan Tech team's winning essay was titled "The Basic Proposal: Retirement Policy for a New Generation."

Winning the iOme Challenge is no small feat; the Husky team faced competition from universities including Harvard and Columbia. The winning team shares a \$5,000 prize, with an additional \$1,500 awarded to the team's advisor, Emanuel Xavier-Oliveira, associate professor of economics.

In addition to meeting policymakers from the US Senate and the House of Representatives, including senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters and rep. Jack Bergman, the team presented its paper at a symposium in Washington, DC.

Read the team's winning essay and watch the video here:
iomechallenge.org/home/past-challenges

STUDENT-RUN INVESTMENT FUND GROWS TO NEARLY \$2 MILLION

In 1998, Michigan Tech was an early adopter of student-run investment funds. While other institutions have played catch-up to model similar programs—primarily for graduate students—Michigan Tech's portfolio management program is still unique. Here, there is no safety net. Undergraduate students call the shots and have full control to determine investment philosophy.

This year's team grew the fund to \$1.8 million!

Interested in joining the Applied Portfolio Management Program (APMP)? Each spring semester, students of all majors are invited to apply. Participants are chosen based on rigorous interviews, demonstrated aptitude, and leadership skills in the areas of finance and financial economic theory. Email dean@mtu.edu for more information.

Learn more about APMP—watch:
youtube.com/watch?v=99hN5KKw8jM

MINOR IN BUSINESS

Chances are Michigan Tech graduates will go on to work for, start, or run a company. Learn solid business skills as an undergraduate with the addition of a business minor. Course content complements a variety of STEM-based majors.

NEW DEGREE PROGRAMS

New Data Analytics Concentration in Accounting

The increasing importance of data and analytics has changed the field of accounting and Huskies are responding to the need. A new 18-credit concentration was introduced this year, which leverages accounting, information systems, and math coursework to help accounting students become specialists in databases, data cleaning and visualization, statistical programming, and analytical methods.

Master's Degree in Engineering Management

Take your STEM degree further by pursuing a master's degree in engineering management (MEM). This new program with an accelerated, one-year path positions graduates for managerial roles in technology fields.

Learn more: mtu.edu/business/graduate/engineering-management

Construction Management

As an interdisciplinary degree, construction management students at Michigan Tech have access to the tools, resources, and mentorship of both the College of Business and the Department of Civil Engineering. The program provides students a well-rounded, hands-on curriculum and a 100-percent job placement rate! Learn more:

mtu.edu/construction-management

By minoring in business, students will learn the fundamentals of operating a business, including critical marketing and accounting skills to better prepare them to work in and lead a technology-focused enterprise.

Jodie Filpus-Paakola
coordinator of academic services,
College of Business



ACHIEVEMENTS AND NEWS

I'm learning about the legislation process while honing my skills.

Anna Nault

Intern, Sen. Gary Peters, Marquette Office, Michigan



WHICH BUSINESS MAJOR IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Visit mtu.edu/business/undergraduate/assessment and take our one-minute assessment to discover more.

WHERE DO BUSINESS HUSKIES INTERN?

Just to name a few...

Auto Owner's Insurance
Bank of America/Merrill Lynch
Entrust Datacard
Fastenal
Fiat Chrysler
General Motors
Kohler
Manthei Group
Mercer
US Senate Offices
Yanfeng Automotive Interiors

PURSUING A BUSINESS MAJOR AT MICHIGAN TECH IS A CRAZY SMART DECISION:

93%

Michigan Tech undergraduate
placement rate overall

Top 50

student-run investment funds
in the nation valued at nearly
\$2 million

50+

sponsored scholarships
available to
business Huskies

12:1

student-to-faculty ratio

DONOR PRIDE ALIVE

Check out the incredible impact from
Black and Gold Give Back Day held this spring.
A Husky thank you to all who contributed!

\$72,000

total raised for COB

\$50,000

single-largest donation

85

total number of donors

17 & 5

Gifts came in from
17 states and 5 countries

ACHIEVEMENTS AND NEWS



BUSINESS TEACHER OF THE YEAR

The students have spoken, and the 2018-19 teacher of the year in the College of Business is Jun Min, associate professor of marketing. Min was recognized for his dedication, passion, and for going the extra mile to support students. One nominator wrote: "Jun Min genuinely cares about his students and their success. He goes out of his way to hold meetings after class, just to get to know students and their goals." Min gives his time and resources, developing connections for students that lead to paid internships, co-ops, and full-time employment. He also serves as the advisor to the Michigan Tech student branch of the American Marketing Association.

All about Dr. Min:

Book I think every student should read: *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* by Robert Kiyosaki. It discusses the various streams of income every entrepreneurial-minded person should consider. It also advocates personal financial literacy, which is a skill all students (of any major) should learn in their early career development to achieve professional success in the future.

Quote I live by: "Every man's life ends the same way. It is only the details of how he lived and how he died that distinguish one man from another." -Ernest Hemingway

Before I was a professor I was: A senior research executive at AC Nielsen in New York. I conducted international marketing projects that focused on the customer solutions for corporate business problems. I enjoyed working with many passionate marketers in more than 20 different countries.

My research is in: The business relationship governance strategy to initiate, develop, and maintain the system of customer value delivery. In particular, the emerging digital business relationship requires more innovative marketing channel management to respond to demands from tech-savvy customers and their lifestyles.

I spend my downtime by: Fishing, even though most of the time I end up feeding them rather than catching them [chuckles].

Why marketers are needed now: The first three industrial revolutions have changed our lifestyle from manufacturing-product orientation to the consumer-brand experience. A common success from these previous industrial revolutions was the huge impact on the supply side. The Fourth Industrial Revolution will result in an enormous improvement in the supply side, creating new roles for marketers who are responsible for demand, satisfying customer needs and wants, and play a critical role in future business.



BEST IN BUSINESS: GET TO KNOW TOP STUDENTS IN THE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Anthony Custard

Martial artist. Applied Portfolio Management Program investor and finance student. Anthony Custard '21 of Marquette, Michigan, is the 2019 Outstanding Man of Business. This past summer, he participated in a co-op with Superior National Bank and Trust in preparation for a career in banking. Anthony says that the award is a culmination of his hard work so far and his belief in himself.



Sarah Goble

Nordic skier. Economics student and researcher. Sarah Goble '20 of Harbor Springs, Michigan, is the 2019 Outstanding Woman of Business. Over the summer, she traveled to Germany to participate in an intensive international business and economics program. Sarah is honored that the award is an opportunity to showcase her efforts outside the classroom.

BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

The leap from classroom to career is now clearer for business students. "The Professional Blueprint program rewards students who complete various steps in professional development," says Sheila Milligan, senior lecturer. Steps in the program include students visiting Career Services on campus to improve their LinkedIn profile, participating in mock interviews, or engaging in an opportunity to do a presentation. "These are important experiences to become a job-ready professional," Milligan says.

Those who complete the program earn an honor cord designation at graduation.

Learn about more resources and opportunities for business undergraduates: mtu.edu/business/undergraduate/organizations



COLLEGE OF BUSINESS IMPACT SCHOLAR 2019-20

The Impact Scholarship is an annual competitive award recognizing incoming business students and leaders at Michigan Tech. This past year, 21 high school senior finalists from across the country participated in leadership activities on campus and received Impact awards.

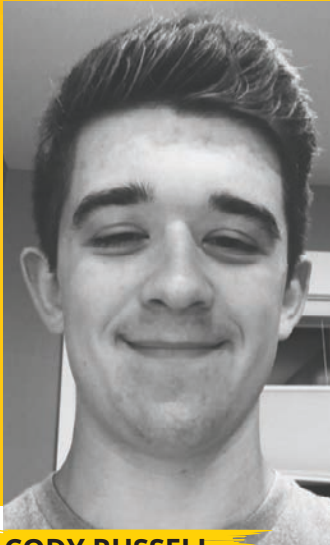
Victoria Cameron of Petoskey, Michigan, was selected as the recipient of full in-state tuition for four years.

The first in her immediate family to attend college, Cameron gains inspiration from her father, a former Green Beret in the US Army, and her maternal grandfather and great-grandfather, who served in the British Army. "Serving my country feels like one of the noblest things I can do. I want to continue my family's legacy," she says.

She credits the friendly feel of Michigan Tech's campus as the driving factor in her college decision. "My mom's friend encouraged me to look at Michigan Tech's business school. When I visited, I instantly felt at home."

In addition to her general business studies, Cameron plans to become a cadet in the Michigan Tech Army ROTC program.

MEET A FEW OF OUR OTHER CRAZY SMART IMPACT SCHOLARS



CODY RUSSELL

Engineering Management

HOMETOWN: Wayland, Michigan

HIGH SCHOOL: West Michigan Aviation Academy

CAREER GOAL: I would love to take over my dad's business, Beaver Research Chemical Company.

Looking forward to being a Husky because. . . I am really looking forward to the education, and also all of the outdoor activities and snow!

My favorite brand is Carved—they make wood and epoxy phone cases. I love working with wood and they create some of the most beautiful phone cases and wallets I have ever seen.



ELISABETH MATTSON

Accounting

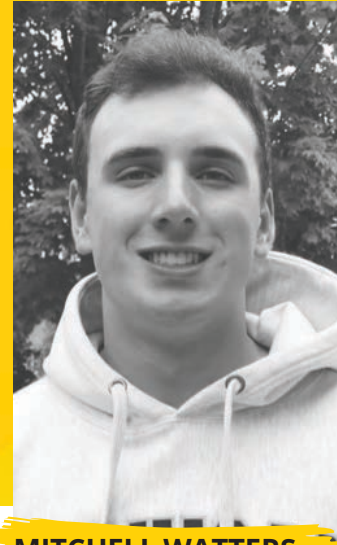
HOMETOWN: Davisburg, Michigan

HOMESCHOOLED

CAREER GOAL: I plan to become a CPA to consult and perform audits for businesses, individuals, non-profits, and the government. I would also like to be involved with forensic accounting.

Looking forward to being a Husky because. . . I am excited for the opportunities and all of the welcoming and friendly faces at Tech.

My business role model is Mike Adenuga, owner of Globacom. He's the second-richest man in Nigeria with a net worth of \$9.4 billion, yet he displays uncommon humility and generosity. He is committed to achieving the best for his country and faces challenges head on.



MITCHELL WATTERS

Engineering Management

HOMETOWN: Schofield, Wisconsin

HIGH SCHOOL: DC Everest Senior High

CAREER GOAL: I would like to run a company.

Looking forward to being a Husky because. . . all the snow! I love snowmobiling, so I am very excited to live in Houghton.

My business role model is Elon Musk because he is doing very cool things, but also has a fun time doing it. I like that he is very active on Twitter.



EMILY KUGHN

Marketing

Hometown: Jackson, Michigan

High school: Hanover-Horton High School

Career goal: To obtain both my bachelor's and master's degrees at Michigan Tech and become a force in the business world

Looking forward to being a Husky because. . . I can't wait to be surrounded by students who are just as motivated as I am. I also love the atmosphere at Tech and am beyond excited to learn new things, make new friends, and explore the Keweenaw Peninsula!

My business role model is my father, Greg Kughn. He works for Berry Global, which is one of the world's largest plastic packaging companies. He works so hard and is extremely passionate about what he does. He makes me want to work hard and become a powerful businesswoman.



JENNA RUBICK

Management with a concentration in Supply Chain and Operations Management

Hometown: Gladstone, Michigan

High school: Rapid River High School

Career goal: I would like to become a supply chain manager in the fashion industry.

Looking forward to being a Husky because. . . I am excited for the new atmosphere of college life and to meet new people.

My business role model is Amazon's Jeff Bezos. He really embraced new technology and took e-commerce to the next level.



JACK GOCKENBACH

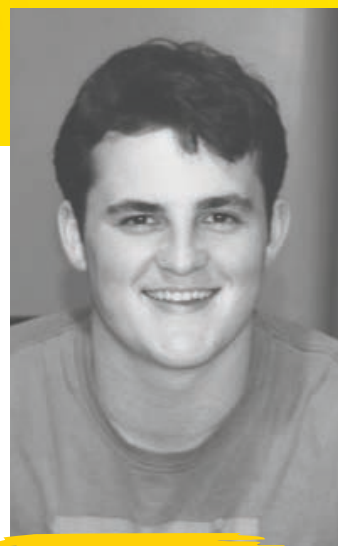
Finance and possibly Accounting

Hometown: Chassell, Michigan

High school: Chassell High School

Career goal: Federal law enforcement, possibly the FBI

Looking forward to being a Husky because. . . The academic quality of the University



CAMDEN WHEELER

Engineering Management

Hometown: Green Bay, Wisconsin

High School: Ashwaubenon High School

Career goal: Still deciding

Looking forward to being a Husky because. . . both of my parents went to Michigan Tech.

Favorite brand and why: My favorite brand is Patagonia because the apparel is high-quality and durable.



YOU COULD BE NEXT!

Impact Scholarship applications due December 8:
mtu.edu/admissions/impact



LYTH SUPPORT

The Joyce Caylor Lyth Memorial Endowed Scholarship is an opportunity for women studying in the College of Business at Michigan Tech.

Born in the Upper Peninsula, the late Joyce Caylor Lyth studied accounting at Michigan Tech. She went on to become a chief accountant, controller, and entrepreneur. Supporting students was a priority for Joyce and her husband, David Lyth '73.

Today Mr. Lyth continues to support female pioneers in the business field.

Recipients of the scholarship are leaders in and out of the classroom who embrace hard work and embody strong ethics. Students focus on their academics, gain confidence and skills in business, and receive support and mentoring from successful COB alumnae.

Criteria:

- Female
- Enrolled in College of Business
- 2.75 GPA

Not only have I been given the financial resources to achieve my goals and follow my dreams, I have been blessed with a sisterhood of fellow recipients who have helped me succeed at Michigan Tech.

I will be graduating from Michigan Tech in a few years and commissioning into the United States Air Force with plans to become a financial officer, using what I learn here to lead budgeting and financial projects.

Haille Anderson

recipient, Joyce Caylor Lyth Memorial Endowed Scholarship (back row, second from left)



BUSINESS 4.0 FOUR BIG QUESTIONS WITH PRESIDENT RICHARD J. KOUBEK

There's never been a more exciting time to be a business student at Michigan Tech. President Koubek shares his vision for continuing the tradition of excellence in the College of Business while growing opportunities for business-focused Huskies:

Question: You have been a part of top-tier schools, some of which are known for both strong engineering and strong business programs. What do you think makes Michigan Tech business students stand apart?

Koubek: Michigan Tech attracts a technologically focused, environmentally conscience student, which is what makes them stand apart. Here, our students constantly ask the "so what" question, then get right to the answer with intense focus and hard work. Our future business leaders, engineers, and scientists arrive at Michigan Tech ready to solve tomorrow's challenges while upholding their commitment to helping people and helping society.

Q: What are the advantages, as you see it, for a business college embedded inside a technological institution?

Koubek: First and foremost—technology is at the core of who we are. To that point, the faculty in the College of Business ensure that the curriculum is agile and fluent in technology. I believe, in general, this will be a prerequisite for leadership in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Secondly, our interdisciplinary research programs allow faculty in the College of Business to work with other researchers on campus to solve some of the toughest challenges confronting our society. For example, our professors in the College of Business are part of an interdisciplinary team exploring data analytics and artificial intelligence to improve mobility. I have said many times that in today's world, bigger is not always better. With the rapid pace of technology, agility and flexibility will be the keys to success for universities moving forward.

Q: Why is growth vital to the College of Business (COB) at Michigan Tech and how can we achieve it?

Koubek: Michigan Tech's history runs deep, but fundamentally our role is to provide well-trained, socially aware graduates who are equipped with the knowledge and wherewithal to advance our community. Each day as our country's workforce needs evolve, the lines differentiating majors and colleges become more blurred. The conversation isn't business or engineering; it's business and engineering and the humanities and the arts, and the many diverse, tech-centered disciplines on campus. This hearkens back to my point about agility. We must prepare our students to flex with the changing demands of industry, which is why a strong business program that can be interdisciplinary in nature is vital to our long-term success as a university.

To touch on the second question about growth. It's necessary that we expand our recruiting efforts. One way is through the National Business Scholars Program, which provides the university with an opportunity to engage with high-quality prospective business students who may not have otherwise considered Michigan Tech. In my experience, increasing enrollment and aligning with the state's economic development priorities certainly make a strong case for renovating and expanding our facilities.

Q: Finally, what do you most want prospective families who are considering business at Michigan Tech to know?

Koubek: This is a special moment in time. It requires a special university to prepare future graduates. Michigan Tech is right up there with the best.

NATIONAL BUSINESS SCHOLARS PROGRAM

High school seniors who reside outside the state of Michigan (nonresident and international), and who apply and are accepted into a major in the College of Business at Michigan Tech for the fall 2020 semester, will be awarded the National Business Scholars Award. This automatic scholarship offers incredible value:

- Valued at \$20,000 per year (minimum of \$80,000 toward college expenses)
- Renewable for four years (eight semesters) of study provided student remains enrolled in a business degree program at Michigan Tech and maintains additional renewal criteria
- The opportunity to earn additional aid based on results from student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Michigan Tech's College of Business is AACSB accredited, and was named by Money magazine as one of the "best colleges for your money."

High school seniors can apply for free (no essay or letter of recommendation required!):
mtu.edu/admissions/apply

For more information, text or call Shannon Rinkinen in the College of Business at 906-670-4303 or smrinkin@mtu.edu

FROM SCHOOL TO COLLEGE

Our business program is growing. We offer more majors, minors, and graduate options than ever before. Our plans call for hiring additional faculty and recruiting more high-achieving students from across the country. Design plans are under development for a new facility.

Our advancement to the College of Business in November 2019 is a logical promotion reflecting our expanded stature. Our new name reflects our history, quality, pride, and future.

MBA STUDENTS HELP REVIVE KEWEENAW LODGE

“PEOPLE
DON’T
STUMBLE
UPON
COPPER
HARBOR.
THE AREA
IS NOT FOR
EVERYONE.”

When investor John Mueller took on the challenge of purchasing the 85-year-old Keweenaw Mountain Lodge, he took on a peninsula-sized opportunity. To achieve his grand vision of bringing back “fun, joy, and adventure” to the resort grounds—home to nearby Copper Harbor Trails, one of the top trail systems in the nation—a call to the College of Business was one of his initial tasks.

In addition to his interim general manager duties, Mueller is a professor of innovation and entrepreneurship at St. Edwards University. He saw partnering with area business students as critical to reviving the lodge at the tippy-top of Michigan’s northernmost peninsula.

“People don’t stumble upon Copper Harbor. The area is not for everyone. We knew we needed to be intentional in our marketing to attract guests that fit our values and vision,” says Mueller.



Professor Soonkwan Hong, who teaches marketing courses for the TechMBA® program, was eager to engage his students in this real-world project. He divided the MBA cohort into five teams:

STRATEGY TEAM

"That's the bird's-eye view," Hong says.

MARKET RESEARCH TEAM

"People think market research is marketing, but it's not," Hong explains.

TACTICAL TEAM

"They were in charge of marketing collateral like brochures." Hong says the group placed finished materials in visitor centers.

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

"Developed content to attract more and better-skilled mountain bikers, as well as tap into the event/wedding/banquet market."

TECHNICAL TEAM

"Video, website, and more."

Using principles of the Experience Economy (Pine and Gilmore), Hong challenged his students to create a customer experience map putting lodge customers first—not just strategy or tactics. "Managers and Fortune 500 companies tend to think about numbers, stats, and graphs, but in the real world, nothing is linear. That method may have worked in the past, but back then there weren't as many variables to selling a product or service. Now, consumers go through a winding, circular process when making a purchase decision."

The students mapped a sophisticated experience that is not unlike a stage performance. Says Hong, "There must be theatricality for each point in the customer experience. At each stage, customers perform. The brand and consumer must click at every touchpoint—that's the dilemma for marketers to solve."

"Michigan Tech students understood our call, and built a customer experience map that allows us to focus on one of our main niche markets—mountain bikers," Mueller adds.

Ready to achieve your MBA? At Michigan Tech, you can accomplish it in one year.

Get more information and get started today:
mtu.edu/business/graduate/techmba





PREPARING ECONOMISTS TO FORECAST TOMORROW

Led by students in the Economics Club, the KHOB Economic Outlook Report is an annual outlook of the economic performance of Keweenaw, Houghton, Ontonagon, and Baraga counties. The semester-long project was sponsored by Superior National Bank and presented socioeconomic data for the four-county area, including local average wages per sector and most relevant industries. Last fall the group presented their findings in front of a packed lecture hall with community members, business owners, and policy makers.

This project involves not only economics, but marketing, data analytics, and statistics. It helps equip our students with interdisciplinary, state-of-the-art skills that will contribute to their success in professional endeavors or graduate programs.

Emanuel Xavier-Oliveira
associate professor of economics
and KHOB project advisor

A photograph of two soldiers in camouflage uniforms and caps, wearing sunglasses, looking at a map held by one of them. They are outdoors in a grassy area with trees in the background. Another soldier is partially visible in the lower right corner.

GRAD PROFILE: CAMERON GREGG

Senior finance major and Army ROTC cadet, Cameron Gregg '19 from Columbus, Indiana, was the 2019 Cadet Battalion Commander of the Michigan Tech Army ROTC "Arctic Warriors". Gregg put his team skills and public speaking practice to work leading five committees and 75 cadets to execute training and networking events.

Following graduation, he attended the Army's Infantry Basic Officer Leadership Course in Fort Benning, Georgia, and has a goal of Army Ranger School.

In addition to his military responsibilities, Gregg is training with AXA Advisors in Columbus, Ohio, where he will be employed as a financial advisor. In both capacities, he solves complex problems and communicates to a variety of audiences. He said being a business student at Michigan Tech effectively prepared him for his future.

ALL ABOUT MAJORING IN MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

A degree in management information systems (MIS) from Michigan Tech combines information technologies with business skills. If you have an interest in computer science and also enjoy working with people, MIS can be a perfect fit.

Students do projects for Ford Motor Company, Target, Kyocera, the Department of Defense, and Microsoft.

Grads and interns land in-demand roles in business analytics, data analytics, software development, software engineering, and beyond.



No. 6

named **No. 6** by Niche.com
(in "Best Colleges for Information
Technology in America")

3-4

job offers
before graduation

78

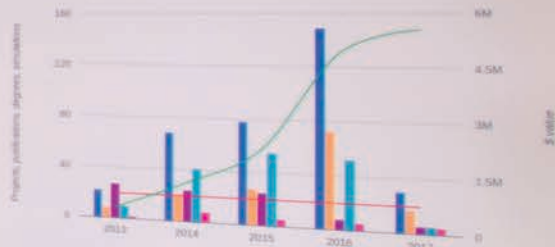
employers on campus
seeking MIS majors

\$65K+

\$65,000-\$70,000+
starting salary



Year by year usage, production and value





THE STUDENT ENTREPRENEURS

Don't wait. Launch your business as a Husky today.



Really Smart Art

Crazy smart is blending business and art—like engineering management student Amanda Vermeer has with her startup UP Ukes, which offers hand-painted ukuleles.

I first started my ukulele painting business back in 2016 kind of by accident. I went to Ghana as part of the Pavlis Honors College, and bought an extra ukulele in preparation for the trip. Music is a huge part of my life and I didn't want to be without an instrument for seven weeks while I was abroad. Per my creative usual, I ended up painting the silhouette of the UP backdropped by the Northern Lights over Lake Superior on it before I left. I posted a picture online—and it blew up! People started messaging me wanting to know where they could get one, and I started taking commissions. I

think I only sold three or four that first year, but it was enough to get me started. I stumbled into this niche by accident, but it's the best thing that could have happened.

I named my business UP Ukes after that first design.

Since then I've painted more than 20 ukuleles, a few for myself, but mostly commissions—everything from Michigan-inspired landscapes to the Portage Lake Lift Bridge to dinosaurs to (my personal favorite) a cat parody of Michelangelo's 'The Creation of Adam'. I've developed a great relationship with Good Times Music in downtown Houghton; I buy all of my new ukuleles for commission from the owner and he lets me display a finished uke or two for sale in his shop. I've also recently started designing ukulele-themed stickers and opened an Etsy shop.

My main goal for my business is to expand to a point where I can create full time and earn the majority of my living from that. I have really supportive friends and family; my mom and aunt have been especially encouraging, and I've been learning a lot about business and marketing from my professors. Social media has been a major tool for me as well, so I'm also hoping to take a class or two on improving small business promotions. I'm excited to see where I can take UP Ukes in the future!



For the Love of [Fast] Cars

Nathan Sodini's passion for engines—combined with his experience on campus—is proving profitable.

It began with my new job at a local country club as a bag attendant/tennis instructor and my very first set of wheels, a 1998 Eddie Bauer Ford Expedition. Not a very glamorous ride for a teen to roll into the club. Little did I know that it would be the catalyst for my future business. That Expedition was a target of many jokes and great banter with the club members, who were accustomed to fancy cars of all makes and models. Soon, my friendships, networking, and passion for vehicles led me to additional work detailing some of the most valuable car collections in the Traverse City area.

This was the start of my business, Sodini Automobili. The work has spidered out to include valet service, assisting with auto storage and shipment of classic and luxury vehicles, and most recently—car brokering.

My favorite business perk is working the Porsche Michigan Drivers School at Grattan Raceway every spring.

This summer took a turn when I was offered my first internship at General Motors as a production group leader at the Flint Truck Assembly Plant. It has been awesome to be part of the launch of the new 2020 trucks. This has given me time to spend branding Sodini Automobili, researching various new markets, and working to create an umbrella of services. My weekends are still busy detailing. In the future . . . who knows?

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS



2626922AL_JUL21

Fenby with wife Bethany, and Tom Harris CLU, ChFC, FLMI Executive Vice President and Chief Distribution Office of Penn Mutual

BLACK AND GOLD TO PURE GOLD: FENBY NO. 1 IN COMPANY

For 2008 marketing graduate Bobby Fenby, the values he learned as a Husky are instilled in his work as a regional marketing director for the second oldest mutual life insurance company in the US, Penn Mutual. "My football coach would tell me, 'If you are going to make a mistake, make it at 120 mph,'" says Fenby.

Those interactions and personal attention from coaches and professors are what he holds onto most from his time on campus. The experiences have led to successes such as becoming the youngest person ever to earn the Penn Mutual Gold Award for Regional Marketing Director of the Year in 2018.

"I approach my career just like I approached football," says Fenby. "There were always people smarter, bigger, and faster, but I always tried to outwork them, which is something my dad taught me. The same goes for my career. I work hard by executing what I promise while trying to be as efficient as possible."

Fenby remains in close contact with fellow graduates. "We talk often and get together whenever family and work allows," he says. "These guys are some of the most successful people I know and I think it's because of Michigan Tech that we are all wired this way. We're always happy for each other and always striving for the next goal. At Tech, we were on an island and there was no other option but to work hard."

Fenby's younger brother, Zack Stone, is also poised to follow in his brother's Husky footsteps.

As for Fenby, the next big goal looks like the C-suite. "I'm still identifying my next move," he explains. "But advancing into senior leadership positions within the company is now in my sights."



THE BUSINESS SIDE OF MEDICINE

Pursuing the TechMBA® after achieving her bachelor's degree in biological sciences with an emphasis in medicine and biochemistry might seem like an unlikely turn for graduate student Mariel Leibovitz of New Lenox, Illinois.

And if she's being honest, it wasn't her first path at all.

"Knowing I was coming to Michigan Tech, my dad encouraged me to pursue an engineering degree. But once I got into biomedical engineering, I realized it wasn't for me," says the former volleyball Husky who has always been interested in health professions.

Still homing in on her destination, Leibovitz shadowed various professionals including physicians. "I found myself being less focused on the clinical side and being incredibly curious about the medical equipment. I wanted to know how it was made, what purpose it serves, and how it helps people."

Helping people was at the core of her passion. And when she discovered she could pair her undergraduate skills with business thinking achieved in an MBA to help people from the business side, her path in medical equipment sales and marketing became crystal clear.

"Sales alone isn't me, but merging business and medicine is really exciting to me," she says.

Leibovitz dives deeper into her graduate studies this fall, but has already been intrigued by her economics and statistics courses. "I leave class excited to share what I'm learning."



TECHMBA® KEY INGREDIENT TO BLECKE'S SUCCESS

Where can the TechMBA® take your career? MBA grad Scott Blecke '13, vice president of engineering at Great Lakes Energy, is leading construction efforts of a 1,000-mile fiber-optic network, bringing high-speed internet to 15,000 rural Michigan residents.

Great Lakes Energy is a rural electric cooperative. There is a desperate need for internet and voice services giving rural residents and businesses access to its many opportunities, including working remotely, online education, and telemedicine, as well as streaming and gaming. Additionally, as the traditional utility business model evolves, costs will be reduced for advancing technologies like distributed energy resources, renewables, battery storage, and electric vehicles.

Scott credits the MBA for his ability to make the business decisions necessary throughout the eight- to 10-year build-out process.

Q&A WITH SONIA GOLTZ, MANAGEMENT PROFESSOR

Question: Tell us about your current research.

Answer: There are common themes in my work particularly around both gender equity and organizational change. An interdisciplinary group I am a part of has received two National Science Foundation (NSF) ADVANCE grants (more than \$1 million in total) to bring equity programs for women and minority faculty in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) to our campus and to other Midwestern universities.

We need to increase the presence and satisfaction of underrepresented STEM faculty in the Midwest to be able to better support underrepresented students.

I also explore the relationships between power, coercion, equity/equality, and freedom. It is important to examine this because coercion requires power, equality requires freedom, and freedom has been conceptualized as being the opposite of being subjected to coercion. I think we need to get a handle on how these elements all interact and where exactly we want to place ourselves. I recently presented a discussion paper at the American Psychological Association on this topic and I am very interested in what people have to say about these matters.

Q: What inspired you to get started in this work?

A: The gender equity work was motivated by my own experiences and also by observations of what others were going through.

My interest in power, coercion, and freedom also relates to this, but additionally, I am concerned about how we as a species handle our newfound ability to influence people using technology. Nobel Prize winners Thaler and Sunstein wrote the book *Nudge*, which describes what is called “choice architecture.” Choice architecture refers to methods in which people are subtly influenced to make certain choices. This has always occurred in some form, but is now easier to do in a nontransparent and nonconsensual way given advances in technology. I believe more thought needs to be put into the ethics of using choice architecture, such as how much transparency and consent we should require.

Q: What impacts on the future can this research have?

A: I hope that the ADVANCE programs on university campuses stimulate greater equity to occur in a shorter amount of time. To solve tomorrow's

problems we need everyone to participate fully, and continuing inequities will not allow us to best use everyone's capacities to make a better world.

I also hope that the work on looking at the interaction of power, coercion, equity, and freedom gives people pause so that we don't end up using technology to create greater inequities in power and decreased freedom for the groups of people who don't have much control over technology or data.

Q: What role has technology had in your work?

A: My area is organizational behavior (OB), which might not sound like it has much to do with technology, but human behavior is influenced by technology and vice versa, so it is important to examine how behavior changes when technology changes—thus the interest in the increasing role that choice architecture is playing. Also, I certainly wouldn't be as interested in equity in STEM disciplines if I didn't work at a technological university.

Q: How do you merge your teaching and research?

A: I have a range of interests, so I constantly read about different areas to conduct my research. Then I teach on a topic and something I read when doing my research comes to mind and I bring it into my lecture.

Also, in order to teach, I have to know about a lot of topics. OB covers a range of the social sciences—from anthropology to sociology to psychology and even political science and economics—and applies their principles to the workplace. This wide basis of knowledge required to teach OB to students provides a springboard for me to go and do work in a particular area if I get interested in it. In other words, I don't feel constrained to work only on a focused topic because of a lack of knowledge.

Q: Can students participate in this project, and if so, how?

A: Yes, we have graduate students who examine the data generated as part of the NSF grant. If a student is interested in the conceptual work I'm doing on power and freedom, they can work with me on additional papers since I'm only beginning to explore this topic. If you are intellectually curious and like to reflect about concepts, this would be your kind of project!

Q: What trends are you seeing in your field?

A: I am really excited to see the research that young people are doing and presenting in my field. Topics that were not considered mainstream in the past are now becoming mainstream. Also, more individuals are interested in research on sustainability. Seeing this work gives me a lot of hope for the future. I can see that current students—both undergraduates and graduate students—are interested in doing research that will help the world solve its problems. I think that will go a long way to turning things like climate change and economic inequities around.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a blue blouse, is sitting at a desk. She is looking directly at the camera. In front of her is a computer monitor displaying a spreadsheet with various data columns and rows. The background is slightly blurred, showing a desk with a microphone and other office equipment.

THE ECONOMY DOESN'T SIT STILL. NEITHER DO WE.

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