

Fall 2024 Newsletter



December 2024 ♦



Rendering for the New Gordon Ford College of
Business Building to open Fall 2025

Greetings from the Management Department!

Greetings alumni and friends!
Exciting changes are happening in the Management Department. We have significantly revised our curriculum, added 5 certificates, and will launch a Center for Strategic Management in 2025. This Center will bolster our applied education efforts and strengthen community ties - a win-win for our students, faculty, and stakeholders. More details about these efforts will be featured in our May newsletter.

Our enrollment continues to set records, with 787 Management students and 3,000 students in the GFCB. Across our concentrations, minors, and certificates, we are currently serving approximately 1000 students, marking a 20% enrollment growth since 2020.

We also have exciting updates to share about our faculty.

Welcome Dr. Rahul Nilakantan!

Dr. Nilakantan joins us in operations and supply chain management. With dual Ph.D. degrees in Economics (University of Southern California, 2010) and Logistics & Supply Chain Management (Georgia Southern University, 2024), he brings a fascinating background to our team. Read more about Dr. Nilakantan [HERE](#).

Farewell to Professor Sedrik

Newbern. Professor Newbern, an impactful instructor and valued team member, will now serve as President for the Center for Public Trust and Chief Ethics Officer for the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy. We deeply appreciate his contributions to our students and Department and wish him all the best in this new role. Read more about his appointment, visit [HERE](#).

Goodbye to Dr. Paula Burt. After a 23 year career at WKU, Dr. Burt is concluding her remarkable career. Learn more about her valuable contributions to the Department, College, and University on page 3.

We invite you to explore the updates and additional highlights from Fall 2024. Please reach out with any questions or follow-up. We look forward to connecting - or reconnecting - with you and finding ways for you to engage with and impact the future of our Department.

Sincerely,

Whitney Oliver Peake

Whitney Oliver Peake,
Vitale Professor and Chair



Fall 2024 Highlights and Points of Pride

Learn.Grow.Lead

Swift Leadership

Alumni & Dept.
Spotlight

Dr. Paula Burt
Retirement

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Advisory Council
Meeting

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for Student
Success

Alumni
Spotlight -
Travis Hudson



Learn.Grow.Lead.

Growth. Since restructuring our programs in 2022/23, we continue to grow. The GFCB now enrolls approximately 3000 students, including 787 management students, representing about one-quarter of the college's enrollment.

Our growth has been intentional and focused on a value proposition to our students. Our programs and curriculum prepare students for their careers while offering them maximum time to select a concentration. All five concentrations - business administration, entrepreneurship, global business, human resources, and supply chain - share a six-course core, providing students with flexibility to explore their options and stay on track to graduate on time.

We actively guide our students in problem-solving, critical thinking, and professionalism. To learn more about our programs and curriculum visit [HERE](#).



Certificates. In Fall 2022, we asked our Management Advisory Council whether they preferred certificates or minors for students. They supported certificates and the following year, the Management Department launched three certificates based on their recommendations - Executive Influence in Organizations, Creativity and Innovation Management, and Managing Inclusive Organizations.

Our certificates currently range from 12-15 hours and often do not require Management students to take additional classes. They enable students to brand the skillsets gained during their studies and effectively communicate those capabilities to employers.

In just one year, these certificates have attracted enrollments of just under 40 students. We currently are awaiting approval for two additional certificates: Business Fundamentals for non-business majors and Business Law. If you're interested in learning more about our certificates and their requirements, visit [HERE](#).

Dr. Mariah Yates's Forthcoming Book Gives Lessons on 'Swift Leadership'



In 2023, Mike Urick pitched an idea for a book in his series "Exploring Effective Leadership Practices through Pop Culture." A colleague told him of Dr. Mariah Yates's interest in Taylor Swift, and in summer 2023, they began putting together a proposal for a "Swift Leadership" book concept.

The idea behind the book is to allow readers to learn about various leadership theories, approaches, and behaviors using Taylor Swift as an illustrative case study. Concepts are defined and introduced to readers, followed by demonstrations of theory-in-practice by means of Swift's actions and strategic decision-making. Academic textbooks that cover leadership theories are often stale and not particularly compelling reads. By framing the concepts using the beloved pop star as the exemplar, Drs. Yates and Urick hope to reach new audiences who go on to put those leadership lessons into practice within their own lives.

Dr. Yates shared, "I am most proud of the concluding chapter of the book, as it summarizes the key lessons from Swift's career and offers readers action steps for leading in a way that is innovative, inspiring, and upholds integrity. I believe anytime you can use your writing to help someone else feel empowered to take on new challenges within their own lives, that is something of great value." Dr. Yates is also a Taylor Swift fan, and recently attended the New Orleans stop of the Eras Tour. She was "excited to witness the contagious joy and positive economic impact that Swift and her fans have brought to each tour stop."

The book will be available on Emerald's website for pre-order in the coming months at the following link: [Swift Leadership: A Taylor-Made Approach to Influence and Decision-Making](#). Alumni and friends can reach Dr. Yates via email at mariah.yates@wku.edu to learn more about her work.

Dr. Yates will be using her work in this area to teach an Honors Seminar and a Management Department summer elective offering. Watch Dr. Yates talk about her book and how this will translate into an Honors Seminar for Spring 2025 [HERE](#).

Alumni & Department Highlights



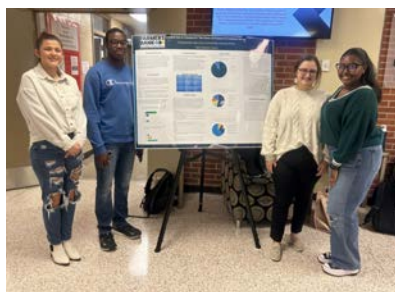
Dr. Brian Sullivan Building a Legacy with Department Scholarship

Dr. Brian Sullivan worked at WKU from 1976 until 2021, teaching courses in law and sustainability. In continuing his legacy, Dr. Sullivan set up the Brian Sullivan Scholarship Fund to award a scholarship to students in the Department of Management who demonstrate leadership and financial need. This scholarship will be awarded for Fall 2025. If you would like to talk about funding a scholarship please contact whitney.peake@wku.edu.



MGT 417 Guest Speaker - Dr. Terry Daniels

Dr. Terry Daniels of Focal Point Consulting and member of the Management Department Advisory Council served as a guest speaker in Dr. Paula Burt's MGT 417 course in Fall 2024, discussing emotional intelligence and leadership with the students. If you are interested in serving as a guest speaker in our classes, contact whitney.peake@wku.edu



HR Students Solve Real- World Training Problems

In the Fall 2024 Training and Development class taught by Dr. Dana Henson, students partnered with regional organizations to address a triggering event which required a training intervention. The students applied an instructional systems design model that included needs assessment, design, development, and implementation and evaluation planning. They presented their project work at a poster session in late November.



Drs. Spiller and Hatfield Lead Chamber of Commerce Workshop

Drs. Bob Hatfield and Shane Spiller joined forces with Dr. Thad Crews from the Business and Data Analytics Department to deliver a Chamber of Commerce and Regional Technology Council sponsored workshop on *How Artificial Intelligence will Transform Businesses*. They helped participants learn how to create strategic frameworks for identifying opportunities to use AI in business and best practices for managing AI transformation and change.

Celebrating the Career of Dr. Paula Burt



Dr. Paula Burt will be retiring effective December 31 of this year. As a WKU alum in '85 and '88, Dr. Burt graduated from the University of Kentucky with a Ph.D. in Business Administration and began working in the WKU Management Department as an Assistant Professor. Throughout her twenty-three and a half year career with WKU, Dr. Burt taught courses in organizational behavior and introduction to management, along with a number of MBA courses.

She served as the Chair of the Management Department from 2015 through 2019, when she moved into the Interim MBA Director role until 2020. Dr. Burt likewise led the University Strategic Plan Steering Committee in 2017-2018 as co-chair. She is a recipient of the 2003-2004 Gordon Ford College of Business Teaching Award and won the inaugural University Faculty Mentoring Award in 2016.

Given her role co-chairing the University Strategic Plan Steering Committee, Dr. Burt's legacy will continue well into the future through the priorities of the strategic plan. For example, WKU's focus on work to serve as a regional lighthouse, engaged in our local communities, improves both the student experience and the communities in which we live and serve within our region.

If you have any well-wishes for Dr. Burt in her retirement, please share them to mgt@wku.edu by January 10.

Management Advisory Council Fall 2024 Meeting

The Management Department Advisory Council engages with the department each semester, offering input on curriculum, student preparation, and areas requiring industry expertise.

At the October 25th meeting, members reviewed updates on the department's status and engaged with faculty presentations related to generative AI and the future of human resources. Council members shared insights on how these developments impact their industries and provided guidance to help the Management Department adapt curriculum and student preparation to meet these emerging changes.

The meeting concluded with a networking lunch and a hard hat tour of the new building.

If you are interested in considering joining our Management Advisory Council in the future, please reach out to whitney.peake@wku.edu.



Dr. LeAnne Coder Named First Faculty Fellow for Student Success



Dr. LeAnne Coder, Professor of Management, was named the first Faculty Fellow for Student Success for the GFCB. She coordinates the curriculum for our professionalism courses and is responsible for leading important curriculum and assessment efforts for the college.

The professionalism classes enable students to create their personal brand by helping them develop a career plan, a solid resume, an elevator pitch, a LinkedIn profile, and a career portfolio. Students are also required to complete at least one mock interview so they can polish their interviewing skills to land an internship or their first professional job upon graduation.

The curriculum and assurance of learning aspects of the position allow the GFCB and Management Dept. to ensure our students are learning what they need to be successful in the work world. Under Dr. Coder's leadership, the college and departments create a relevant curriculum of classes and topics and then assess what students have learned during their time here. This ensures students are learning what we think we are teaching them. If any gaps are discovered, we can address them right away.

When asked how our alumni and friends can help with student success efforts, Dr. Coder shared, "I am always looking for working professionals to help with resume reviews, virtual mock interviews, and graduate panels that happen twice a year, in late October and in April." She welcomes guest speakers sharing career wisdom for her career readiness classes, and encourages you to reach out if you have any interest in helping with any of these efforts. Dr. Coder can be reached at LeAnne.Coder@wku.edu.

Student Spotlights



Dasean Tyus, Human Resources Management

Dasean Tyus is a first generation Hilltopper from Louisville, KY, majoring in Human Resources Management. While at WKU, Dasean served as President of Alpha Kappa Psi Professional Business Fraternity, Inc., Executive VP of WKU SHRM, and as a Peer Coordinator, Navigator at the Intercultural Student Engagement Center.

Dasean will join Enterprise Mobility in their Management Trainee Program after graduation. Read more about Dasean [HERE](#).



Adam Beickman, Business Administration

Adam Beickman came to WKU from Henderson, Kentucky, majoring in Business Administration. While at WKU, Adam held two internships and after graduation will join Sazerac in Louisville, KY as a Logistic Support Specialist.

Adam notes his most impactful classroom experiences were with Dr. Gihan Edirisinghe and Dr. Shane Spiller. He says, "The life lessons I learned will forever impact me. I want to thank them both for that."



Alumni Spotlight - Travis Hudson, -94 WKU Women's Volleyball Head Coach

Travis Hudson came to WKU from Bee Spring in Edmonson County, KY as a first generation college student. He worked two jobs while pursuing his degree in Business Management and graduated in 1994.


In the early 1990's Hudson joined the WKU Volleyball program and served as Assistant Coach. He served as Interim Head Coach twice, and was named Head Coach in 1995, at the age of 24 - the youngest head coach in the US at that time. Over his 30 years at the helm, he has steadily improved the team's record the first three years in the top spot and has never finished a season below 0.500 since 1998.

Hudson and his Lady Toppers recently won its C-USA sixth straight regular season championship, totaling 13 regular season championships in the last 14 seasons.

Under Hudson's Leadership, the Lady Tops have made appearances in 17 NCAA Tournaments and have now won at least one NCAA Volleyball Tournament match in five of the six most recent seasons. He was named the Sun Belt conference Coach of the Year five times and has been named C-USA Coach of the year six times, the most recent 3 back-to-back honors in 2021, 2022, and 2023.

In October 2020, Coach Hudson was inducted as a member of Western Kentucky University Hall of Distinguished Alumni. Hudson lives in Bowling Green with his wife, Cindy. They have two sons, Andrew and Tyler.

Thank you for reading!

	
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