

Sixth Street Journal 2.0

The Official Newsletter of the Illinois MBA

NEWS

WiB Conference a Success

by Rita Lei, Class of 2007

The Fourth Annual Women in Business (WiB) Leadership Conference was successfully held on February 10, 2007, with more than 150 attendees. Ping Fu, the keynote speaker and *Inc.* magazine's 2005 Entrepreneur of the Year, inspired the audience with her life story. Growing up during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Fu did not attend school and had been exiled to the United States as a political prisoner. She started her new life as a literature student and later founded a software company that grew over 2,000% in revenue in five years.

Wanda Costen, Assistant Professor at the University of Tennessee, spoke about leading through collaboration. Costen's speech was full of energy and led the

audience to ponder how to create an environment in which all kinds of people can succeed. The afternoon began with two workshops. One was held by Greg Northcraft, a professor in the College of Business at UIUC. His workshop, titled "Negotiate for Success," helped the audience understand the importance of negotiation.

Following the workshops, panel discussions were divided into three industry groups: Technology, Financial Services and Consumer Products. WiB invited ten panelists from firms such as Motorola, AT&T, Deloitte, JP Morgan Chase, BearingPoint and Kimberly Clark to speak.



The WiB leadership team displays pride for having organized this successful event.

"This conference cultivated the knowledge and experience of students by bringing together a diverse group of businesswomen, and we anticipate an even better conference in 2008," said Min Ju Lee, WiB president.

STUDENT AFFAIRS

MBA Students Inducted into Business Honor Society

by Damian Lay, Assistant Director of Student Affairs

Twenty students of the Illinois MBA were recently inducted into Beta Gamma Sigma, the honor society for business students. On Friday, February 9, 16 of the inductees and their guests attended a breakfast honoring their outstanding achievement.

Dean Avijit Ghosh opened the program with words of congratulations and encouraged the honorees to continue their excellent work as they graduate and join the work force. After they were individually recognized by Dean Larry DeBrock, long-time Beta Gamma Sigma member, University of Illinois professor Steve Michael delivered the keynote address. He challenged the inductees to maintain their humility, discipline and curiosity: "Humility is a virtue that is easily cultivated. We have all known people who sought to make connections by stepping on others, by judging who is worthy of talking to. Everyone has something to teach you, about business and about life. Take one day a month to work in a homeless shelter. Serving others without hope of return is a good way to avoid false pride and to learn what others have to say, the great and the small."

Congratulations to the following students on their outstanding achievements! Rashima Aggarwal, Savva Amusin, Margretta Angdjasrin, Scott Ashbaugh, Cody Boyd, Matthew Cuff, Li-Anne Foo, Jesse Gray, Zivar Hallaji, Kent Hammack, Timothy Houren, Swapna Kulkarni, Floyd Lewis, Radhika Makhija, Michael McIntosh, Aaron Smith, Tammy Stern, Yuan Han Tu, Shu-Chien Wang and Bryan White.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- Mar 2:** College of Business Spring Lucheon
- Mar 5-9:** Global Tycoon
- Mar 10:** MSA Polar Plunge
- Mar 11:** IBS International Food Night
- Mar 12:** Second Half-Session courses begin
- Mar 12:** MBA 504 Begins
- Mar 14:** LABS Salsa Night
- Mar 17-25:** Spring Break
- Mar 26:** WiB Coffee Club
- Mar 29:** WiB Self-Defense Class
- Mar 30:** Spring CareerQuest

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NEWS

Students Win Internal Case Competition, Next Stop: Big Ten Case Competition

by Judy McDermott, VP of Social Programs

Four teams of first-year MBA students faced off in late January in an Internal Case Competition (ICC) that would award the winning team a chance to compete at the 15th annual Big Ten Case Competition at the Fisher College of Business (Ohio State University) on April 12–14, 2007.



Mike Lewis, Michelle Bernardi, Maura Gill and Chris Mulliken will compete in the April competition at Ohio State.

Each team of four was given a Harvard Business School case on Gap Inc. with a week to prepare a full presentation on how best to improve Gap's business model. Presentations were held in front of Illinois MBA faculty and student judges who chose the winning team after two rounds of competition.

In the end it was first-year MBAs Michelle Bernardi, Maura Gill, Mike Lewis and Chris Mulliken who won the ICC, bragging rights and the trip to Ohio State. "Our team is very excited to be part of the Big Ten Case Competition. We see this as a tremendous opportunity to showcase the talents and skills provided by the IMBA," said Mulliken.

In the April competition, the team will have to put its case presentation together in just 24 hours, pitching it to "an often unforgiving panel of industry and academic experts," according to Ohio State.

The winner of the Big Ten Case Competition wins the chance to go on to the Big 10/PAC 10 Challenge the following year.

Last year, the IMBA team placed second, behind Ohio State, in the Big Ten Case Competition.

"We look forward to capitalizing on the experiences of last year's team to beat the competition and further develop the IMBA brand image," Gill added.

Other ICC participants this year included first-year MBAs Cesar Argueta, Judy McDermott, Peter Jin, Arhant Rawal, Noel Vivar, Nicholas Lenczycki, Sultane Salim, Michael Brown, Bhavik Rathod, Pablo Barreda, Vivek Verma, and Melvin Langhart.

MBAA President's Perspective

by Ed Austin, MBAA President

The new calendar year brings with it a new and fully integrated MBA Association (MBAA) board of officers. As the newly elected president, I assure you that this board is energetic and looks forward to serving the MBA students over the next year. We have some very audacious goals that include building upon existing programs and strengthening relationships both internally and externally. We will be hosting several educational and social events over the next year to enhance the Illinois MBA experience for current and prospective students as well as alumni.



We wish to maintain close ties with our alumni working around the world. So, mark your calendars for October 26, 2007, which will be the Second Annual MBA Alumni Awards Banquet (more details will follow). Well before that event, we will meet with alumni at the Spring Career-Quest in Chicago on March 30. And in April, we will hold our annual Spring Gala, the last combined social event before we send the second-year MBAs off into the work force.

The MBAA officers wish to continue the proud tradition of graduating students who will make an impact in business around the globe. If you have good ideas or would like to help the MBAA, we welcome your suggestions. Go Illini!

Business School Deans Agree to Take Polar Plunge

by Mark Lewis, MSA President

The MBA Service Association (MSA) is participating in the Annual Polar Plunge to benefit the Special Olympics organization of Illinois. The Plunge is taking place on



March 10, and the MSA has lined up two teams that are going to work at collecting donations to pay for the "privilege" of jumping into a really cold lake. All proceeds collected are going directly to the Special Olympics of Illinois to help fund the activities of their athletes.

Team 1 is in a contest amongst themselves to raise money. The team comprises MBA students Mark Lewis, Mark Lockwood, Chris Mulh, Ed Austin, Pablo Barreda, Min Ju Lee, Varun Aggarwal and MBA staff member, Ben Moreland. Team 1's contest consists of accepting donations individually, and the four that collect the least amount of donations will take the "plunge" for the Special Olympics.

Team 2 is being handled a little differently. This team has agreed to take the "plunge" if the MSA raises a minimum amount of \$2,000 in their names. So who is Team 2? Dean Avijit Ghosh and Associate Dean Mary Miller, of course!

So please be involved in this wonderful cause and donate! Donations can be made through Paypal links at: <http://www.mbaservice.illinoismbaa.org/polarplunge.html>.

If you would like to write a check, make it out to the MBA Service Association. Include a small note detailing which plunger you want your donation to go toward. You can mail these to:

Illinois MBA Program
ATTN: Mark Lewis
1407 W. Gregory Drive
405 David Kinley Hall, MC-706
Urbana, IL 61801

The Plunge will be videotaped, and there will be a link on both the IMBA homepage and the MSA homepage after March 10. If you have any additional questions, contact Mark Lewis at mclewis2@uiuc.edu.

ALUMNI

Update on Second Tuesdays

by Leah Pettit, Class of 2003

Hello everyone! Second Tuesdays – the Illinois MBA Alumni Association’s monthly social event – is off to a great start for 2007. After much brainstorming and new involvement, we are planning some great initiatives to see more of our alumni.

First, thank you to those who have been staunch supporters of the event. Without the core group, we would not be able to grow from where we stand. For those who have attended periodically, we understand work and personal commitments take precedent over social activities. *What we need from everyone is help spreading the word!*

ALUMNI PROFILE

Alumni Profile: Kate Fannin

by Ben Moreland, Assistant Director of Admissions

When asked what she likes most about her current job, Kate Fannin, marketing manager at Neiman Marcus, unhesitatingly replied, “the retail discounts!” Then, in concession of her slight exaggeration, she admitted “it’s an amazing feeling to actually use my degrees in a job I love, to be trusted to do the job right and to affect the bottom line.”

Kate’s flair for creative marketing landed her a job at Ford after her Illinois MBA graduation in 1998, which she notes included the perk of enjoying her free Mustang convertible while living in Hawaii and, later, California. From there she pursued her passion for clothing retail (and the accompanying discounts) by holding several positions at The Gap before coming to her current position at Neiman Marcus.

In relation to her Illinois MBA experience Kate admits that it was humbling to work on teams with “engineering geniuses” from around the world and students with PhDs and MDs. But Kate found her confidence during a team project to create a business plan to revitalize the

Let me remind everyone, this is a time to catch up with friends, make new ones and maybe help expand or promote your business. Beginning March 13, we will have a business card drop for a door prize for those in attendance. You must be present to win. The prize will be a \$50 gift certificate from Grotto on State, a classic Italian Steakhouse in the Gold Coast. You can find out more about Grotto on State at www.grottoonstate.com

If you have not yet had the opportunity to attend, we would love to have you! Second Tuesdays is held on the second Tuesday of each month from 5:30–7:30 p.m. (please note the time change) at the Elephant & Castle Pub, 111 W. Adams Street, which is near the El tracks and Metra. Light nibbles will be provided.

Urbana mall. Her passion for retail naturally led to her assuming the role as team leader. It was a defining moment for Kate when she realized that utilizing her natural interests and abilities would be the key to a successful and meaningful career. Her creative talents have even spilled over into a side business, nikita7, where she creates custom stationery and cards (www.nikita7.com).

And despite the exciting places Kate has lived since she left Illinois, she will always fondly remember the time she spent living in the college town of Urbana-Champaign: “the sports arenas, bars, bookstores, being surrounded by thousands of students, being within walking distance of almost everything . . . all these elements contribute to a great sense of community that I will always value.”



Another perk of her job or just plain lucky? Kate Fannin is pictured here with Prison Break lead actors Marshall Allman (LJ Burrows) and Dominic Purcell (Lincoln Burrows).

NEWS

Message from the Associate Dean

by Mary Miller, Associate Dean

March is the time of year when the MBA staff members go a little crazy. The Admissions staff is trying to evaluate applications and admit the Class of 2009, the Student Affairs staff is completing degree audits to make sure the Class of 2007 graduates, and Career Services staff is involved in helping students find internship or permanent positions. Being involved in these activities reminds me that MBA programs are about connections.



The success of admissions is really dependent upon the connections prospective students make with current students, faculty and alumni. When applicants talk to current Illinois students, it helps applicants envision what their life will be like as a student; and when they communicate with Illinois MBA alumni, they can imagine their aspirations being realized. Every current student or alumni we contact willingly reaches out to these applicants to answer their questions and share their perspective.

The same is true for the soon-to-be graduates. As they pursue permanent employment, they look for connections to alumni who work for their desired employer or who may have a position to which they aspire. Alumni coach and encourage our graduating students as they prepare to return to the business world. Again, these connections are essential to the success of the Illinois MBA.

Some of you have been involved in my “virtual” email introductions. I enjoy making these connections and expanding the Illinois community. Thank you to the current students, faculty and alumni who willingly give their time to the Illinois MBA. We couldn’t do it without you.

FACULTY PROFILE

Faculty Profile: Tiffany White

by Rahul Kalsi, Class of 2007

The recent flight delays and cancellations by JetBlue Airways amplify the importance of having an integrated marketing communications plan to combat unexpected events that threaten to damage a company's reputation. In Tiffany White's Promotional Strategy course, MBA students tackle real-world issues in brand management and marketing communications in order to preserve brand positioning and minimize damage to the brand. By encouraging students to be fact finders and to continuously leverage customer insights, Tiffany believes her students will be equipped with the tools to make better marketing strategy decisions.



Tiffany White has been an assistant professor at UIUC's College of Business since 1999.

Tiffany credits her educational and professional background with helping to shape the Promotional Strategy course. She earned both her B.S. and M.S. degrees in Advertising here at the University of Illi-

nois. Before rounding out her education with a PhD in Business Administration from Duke University, Tiffany worked as an Assistant Buyer for the Venture Stores in St. Louis. There, she experienced consumer buying behavior from the firm's perspective with responsibility for buying, planning and strategy decisions related to her product areas. Her subsequent doctoral research focused on how consumers respond to firm-driven actions and how to leverage this information to predict market strategy effectiveness.

Today, Tiffany incorporates both perspectives into Promotional Strategy, a lab environment course, which requires students to think about how firms and consumers might respond to changing situations. With the capstone project being a 50-page integrated marketing/communications plans book, students get an opportunity to apply marketing principles, market strategy and marketing research to reposition an existing brand.

Away from the classroom, Tiffany enjoys spending time with her husband, Jewell, Assistant Dean, Admission and Recruitment in the College of Business, and two children, Julian and Jordan. Tiffany also has a passion for traveling. Every year she plans an international trip with her family and makes it a point to visit New York twice a year for serious people-watching. Among her favorite international cities, Tiffany recommends Sydney, Amsterdam and Buenos Aires.

ADMISSIONS

Prospective Students Get Inside Look at Illinois MBA

by Ben Moreland, Assistant Director of Admissions

In an effort to allow prospective students an in-depth look at the Illinois MBA, the admissions office organized special events titled Investigate Illinois. Two events were held – one on Monday, February 12, and another on Monday, February 19. These full-day events brought a total of 24 prospective students to campus to observe a class, eat lunch with current students, get an admissions interview and take a campus walking tour or Champaign-Urbana driving tour.



Furthermore, the day ended with a presentation from Associate Director of Illinois Business Consulting (IBC) Ron Watkins and a panel session with second-year students Scott Ashbaugh, Radhika Makhija, Chris Mulh and Clara Spaanstra, who were able to answer all the prospective students' questions about the life of an Illinois MBA student.

Those who came on February 19 had the additional opportunity to meet Dean Avijit Ghosh, who gave a compelling presentation on the value of an MBA degree, commending those in attendance for their ambition in pursuing their MBA degrees and for seeking to advance their careers.

Many of those in attendance for the events expressed thanks to the Illinois MBA for holding the event. One attendee expressed thanks by writing, "Of all the schools I have applied to, Illinois is the most organized and proactive."

Director of Admissions Jackie Wilson stated one of the main reasons why the event was held, "We want our applicants to feel as if they are part of the program before they even enroll. We have a great program here, and great students. These events allowed our prospective students to see what a tremendous opportunity it is to attend the Illinois MBA."

CAREER SERVICES

Plans Set for 2007 CareerQuest in Downtown Chicago

by Annetta Culver, Senior Director of Career Services and Student Affairs

Our plans are really coming together for the 2007 CareerQuest event scheduled for March 30 in Chicago. The theme this year is "Mastering the Interview," and we are doing more than talking – we are going to do it!

Students will make a selection of behavioral or case interview format and then will be matched with alumni and/or recruiters from the student's target industry. We expect that this will be an experience that will definitely improve our student's interview success.

We still need alumni to volunteer to participate as interviewers. If you work in the downtown Chicago area and have an hour (between 1 and 3 p.m. on March 30) that you can contribute to this process, please contact Charles Kim at ckkim@uiuc.edu for more information.

After the mock interviews are complete, students and alumni will meet for happy hour and soothe those interview anxieties away. More details about the happy hour are forthcoming (or contact Mike Lewis at mblewis2@uiuc.edu).

CLUB ROUNDUP

Graduate Finance Association Starts CFA Drive

by Chris Malabver, Executive VP of GFA

The new administration of the Graduate Finance Association (GFA) has launched a new initiative geared toward assisting MBA candidates seeking to obtain the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation.

The CFA charter-holder is a globally recognized designation that positions candidates to compete and succeed in the global financial marketplace. Outside of the international acceptance and respect associated with the CFA designation, individuals are also able to cultivate valuable connections through the CFA network of individuals.

CFA exams are held in June and December. The program of preparation requires a recommended 250 hours of study for each level of the exam, requiring mostly self-study. The GFA has been able to draw on the experiences of a number of MBA candidates who have already completed Level 1 of the CFA charter process by developing a study group for Illinois MBA candidates currently making preparations for the June exams.

The GFA board saw a need for the study group after several GFA members voiced the potential benefits of having many students with CFA designations.

MBA students who plan to gain their CFA designation this year include: Guang (Peter) Jin, Baopeng (Bobby) Liu, Tso-Jui (Rico) Lu, Aaron Smith and Shu-Chien (Susan) Wang.

Students Perform Up a Storm at ABS Karaoke Night

by Rita Lei, Class of 2007

The Illinois MBA's Asian Business Society (ABS) held one of its most popular events, the Karaoke Night, on February 15, at Evo Café in Champaign.

Edward Son, the president of ABS, sang the first song to heat up the atmosphere. And first-year MBA John Paul Rudolph, the former *American Idol* candidate, brought the house down with a stellar performance singing "Save the Last Dance for Me" and "Home." Prizes were awarded to second-year MBA Anyu Chang and friends for Best Group Dancing, to "Barbie Girl." And first-year MBA Martin Lauw won a prize after singing several songs.

But the best singer of the night was first-year MBA Taihei Okabe, according to onlookers. His passionate dance and energetic performance left the deepest impression on the audience, and it made classmates aware of Okabe's, until then, unknown talent!



JP Rudolph, former *American Idol* candidate, sang "Save the Last Dance for Me."

"This event demonstrates the uniqueness and diversity of our MBA program in a relaxed ambience. I would also like to thank all the participants who made the event a success," said Son.

Looking ahead, to help IMBA students be more familiar with the emerging Asian market, ABS will hold a quiz game night on April 20. All the questions will be related to the Asian business world and travel tips. ABS invites all IMBA students and friends to attend.

LABS Holds Conversational Spanish Class

by Anna-lisa Peter, Executive VP of LABS

The new Latin American Business Society (LABS) board began their rotation of events for the spring semester with a conversational Spanish class. This event was held on February 1, 2007, after many MBA students had expressed a desire to learn the Spanish language.

The class was taught by Martin Lauw, the MBA Association's VP of Programs. After many deliberations on what and how much of the language should be taught within this one-hour schedule, it was decided that students wanted to first learn how to say greetings and phrases that would be applicable when traveling to a Latin American country.

The class comprised 17 students who learned new phrases and practiced them among one another. Like all traditional Illinois MBA club events, refreshments were served, but instead of pizza, Mexican dessert was provided, much to the delight of the class.

At the end of the class, 14 students expressed their desire to be a part of a weekly conversational Spanish class. LABS is currently working on a class schedule that will be suitable for everyone.



Erin Ha, Yingyos (Peng) Jienjiltert, Ryan Chen, Katrina Lin (back row), Jane Hung and Edward Son (front row) display their enthusiasm for karaoke. Son, President of ABS, sang the first song to kick off this popular event.

CLUB ROUNDUP

Graduate Marketing Association Hosts the 2007 Ad Bowl

by Mirela Muresan, VP of Research and Communications of GMA

The Graduate Marketing Association's (GMA) annual Ad Bowl was held at Rock's bar in Champaign this year on Super Bowl Sunday, February 4. If the Chicago Bears versus Indianapolis Colts game didn't keep attendees on their toes, then the television advertisements definitely did – as students wondered if the marketers who paid \$2.6 million for every 30 seconds of air time spent their money wisely.

The MBA students' favorite commercial was by Budweiser where a lonely mutt wandered the streets, but after he received his spots from a puddle of mud, he looked just like a Dalmatian and was loved by all in a parade! In addition to the intense football game, MBA students, friends and staff enjoyed playing Ad Bingo and Super Bowl Squares throughout the game. Winners from the games included MBA students Christine Bedi, Dan Conroe, Heejae-Brian Kim, Radhika Makhija, Vito Wu, Julie Huang, Alex Spektor and Cesar Argueta.



IMBA student Chih-Hsu (Jasper) Lin and his entire family enjoyed watching the football game, and let's not forget, the food and fun games!



Kristin Winkler, Amy Wu, Cesar Argueta, Mike Lewis and George Kritikos are all smiles as the Chicago Bears score a touchdown!

IBS Gets Set for International Food Night

by Ken Miyake, VP of Public Relations of IBS

The Illinois MBA's International Business Society (IBS) will hold its annual International Food Night on Sunday, March 11. Students, faculty and administration are welcome to enjoy the rich culture represented within the Illinois MBA by sampling international cuisine from many countries around the world.

Bring your appetite, and experience authentic food!

When: Sunday, March 11, 2007, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Where: Wesley Foundation (Great Hall), 1203 W. Green St., Urbana, IL

Tickets purchased in advance (in person and via Evite): \$5 for five food tickets
Tickets purchased at the door: \$7 for five food tickets

OTMA Holds Strategy Game Night

by Vivek Verma, Executive VP of OTMA

The new leadership team of the Operations and Technology Management Association (OTMA) is focusing on increased student membership and participation this year, with several activities on tap. The latest event was the OTMA Strategy Game Night, held on February 22, 2007. This was one of the most popular social events hosted by the OTMA, as it was spiced up a bit compared with prior years.

The evening started off with an IMBA quiz with general and fun questions about the Illinois MBA. Then there was a small break for snacks to fill the stomach and rejuvenate the mind. After that, second-year MBA student Matthew Cuff led the strategy games. In the end, Student Affairs staff member Damian Lay won the strategy game competition against the large group of students, earning him the grand prize – an iPod shuffle.

The OTMA is also planning a student-faculty panel on March 13. It is a continuation of similar OTMA events held in the fall semester. This event is a platform for the faculty to discuss operations- and technology-related courses in the second year of the Illinois MBA.

The OTMA's semester will be wrapped up with a Project Management Conference on April 20, which is a small conference where experts will talk about the intricacies of this interesting field.



First-year MBAs David Payne, Varun Aggarwal and Nicholas Lenczycki deliberate their next move to gain an advantage in the game *Ticket to Ride*.