

o Volume 2 | o Spring 2014

TEXAS A&M
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COMMERCE

LION'S *financial*

CONNECT. INSPIRE. LEARN.



▶ Alumni Ambassador Showcase



▶ *Alpha Seekers*: The Economics & Finance Society



▶ Distinguished Speaker Series: *Beyond the Classroom*



Reconnect

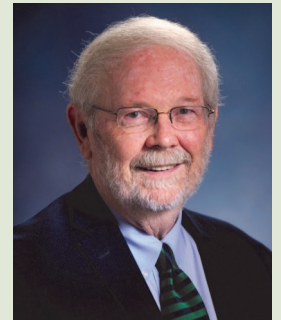
The Department of Economics & Finance would like to keep in touch with you. Please email us at ecofin@tamuc.edu and let us know how you are doing. We are always interested in learning how our graduates are doing. Whether you were an undergraduate or a graduate student, we would love to hear from you.

Department Notes



Dr. Steve Shwiff was commissioned to conduct studies on the impacts of the Tour de Paris and the ASA Archery Tournament on the local economy of Paris, Texas by the Paris Convention and Visitors Council and the Lamar County Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Dale Funderburk attended the Annual National Technology and Social Science Conference sponsored by the National Social Science Association held April 13-15 in Las Vegas. In addition to economics, the conference included sessions dealing with anthropology, sociology, psychology and political science.



Dr. Al Gormus was nominated by student members of The National Society of Leadership and Success, Sigma Alpha Pi, to receive a teaching and service award. Faculty members who are nominated have demonstrated heart and passion in teaching and have motivated students in their pursuit of education and knowledge.



Dr. Nathan Harness receives tenure and becomes Associate Professor of Finance.



Ms. Meredith Rhodes received her Charter Financial Analyst (CFA) charter in February, and will be pursuing her PhD in finance at Louisiana State University in the Fall.





Graduate Assistants Huan (Alicia) Guo Wilfrid Zoungranawon receive their Excellence in Graduate Research Certificate for their research, *Valuation of Intangible Assets with Real Option Theory*

Graduate Assistants (from left to right) Wilfrid Zoungrana, Sirinun (Ping) Jingwangsa, Chiranjeevi Sudha, Nishanth Arepalli, and Huan (Alicia) Guo won 1st place for the door decorating contest for the University's new **Quality Enhancement Program (QEP)**, which focuses on preparing students for an interconnected world.



Dr. Steve Shwiff helps a student with an economic forecasting project.



Finance Instructor Mr. Scott Wheeler brings his corporate and real life experience into the classroom.

Alumni Ambassadors



Unselfish Service to Others

Alumni Ambassadors are part of the Alumni Association at Texas A&M University – Commerce. Departments across the University choose former students to serve as their Ambassador and invite each to return to campus to interact with students and faculty. This is the highest honor that a department may bestow upon its alumni. Since 1983, 809 Ambassadors have returned to campus to participate in the Annual Alumni Ambassador Forum, which serves as a platform for Ambassadors to share their life and work experiences with current students, and also as a networking event to help students connect with potential employers or with companies they have worked with in the past.

The Economics & Finance Department's 2014 Alumni Ambassador is Mr. Joe Griffith. Mr. Griffith refers to himself as a "has been". He has been a comedian, movie actor, commercial pilot, real estate developer, stockbroker, and co-host of America's first-ever television stock market program. As a professional speaker he has delivered over 3,000 speeches world-wide. At age 40, he was the youngest person ever inducted into the National Speaker's Hall of Fame. Joe has authored three books, including the best-selling "Speaker's Library of Business Stories, Anecdotes & Humor."



President Dan Jones & Stan McKee, President of the Alumni Association Board of Directors, present Mr. Joe Griffith with an Alumni Ambassador certificate.

During his campus visit, Mr. Joe Griffith spoke to several classes about the importance of creating a game plan for life.

“I enjoyed listening to Mr. Griffith speak about his experiences and his strategy for success: find your passion and have lofty ambitions. As a veteran myself, I liked how he used his experience in the Navy as a teachable moment.”

- John Webb, Senior Finance Major



Mr. Joe Griffith speaks to Ms. Frannie Miller’s economics class on Alumni Ambassador Day.

Alpha Seekers

THE ECONOMICS & FINANCE SOCIETY



The Economics & Finance Society is a significant part of the success of the Department. The 2013-2014 academic year was one of the most active for the Society. Over the course of the year, the Society increased its membership to 20 members and six officers.

The Society's largest outreach program is the *Distinguished Speaker Series*, which brings prominent business leaders to campus to share their experiences and major trends in their industries. The speakers represent a variety of backgrounds and expertise. The primary focus of the speaker series is to broaden the professional exposure of students and to show how versatile a finance degree can be.

During the Spring semester, the Society focused on personal and professional development of those interested in pursuing a

career in economics or finance. Members developed a *Stand Out & Get Noticed* initiative in order to prepare students whom will be entering the workforce soon. The initiative consisted of a resume building workshop and mock interview sessions to help students gain the confidence needed to make a positive first impression on potential employers.

The Society also held social events during the semester. One of the most active was called *First Thursdays*. Because sometimes all you need is an informal environment to create thoughtful discussion and for great ideas to flow, the Society and Beta Alpha Psi decided to cohost a monthly informal coffee meeting at Gee Library to discuss current economic and financial events and to plan future university events. This gave members an opportunity to network with students from other business disciplines.

If you are interested in being a part of the Economics & Finance Society's Professional Development Initiative or the Distinguished Speaker Series, please email the Department at ecofin@tamuc.edu

Right: Economics & Finance Society's Media Director, Courtney Stanford, (right) discusses the impacts of a changing yield curve with Beta Alpha Psi President Matt Starek and member Arianna Lira. The Economics & Finance Society and Beta Alpha Psi members meet the First Thursday of every month to discuss current financial and economic events.



Far Left: Economics & Finance Society's Event Director, Thomas Lam, speaks with Mike Jones about the importance of gaining experience and networking in a competitive job market.

Top Right: Sirinun (Ping) Jingwangsa, Huan (Alicia) Guo, and Meredith Rhodes attend a Bloomberg Professional training session on technical analysis and charting in Dallas, Texas.



Bottom Right: President Edosa Obaseki introduces a guest speaker at one of the Economics & Finance Society's meetings.

Distinguished Speaker Series:

In the Fall of 2013 the Economics & Finance Society along with the Department kicked off the Distinguished Speaker Series to broaden the professional exposure of those students interested in a career in business.

The series gives all those in attendance the opportunity to engage with prominent business and financial leaders from various backgrounds and expertise. Each speaker shares life experiences, discusses potential career strategies for those interested in the field, and describes trends in the industry. The feedback from students have been overwhelmingly positive. After each speaker shares his story, the floor is opened for questions, which gives students an opportunity to ask questions specific to their interests and career goals.

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"The Distinguished Speaker Series is a unique and renowned event hosted exclusively by the Society. I have gained a lot from the bulk of knowledge and advice shared with us by our distinguished speakers this semester."
- Edosa Obaseki



Beyond the Classroom

SPRING 2014 DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS



MIKE JONES

Vice President and General
Manager AT&T account, Ciena



ROCKY R. MIRACLE

Senior Vice President of Corporate
Planning and Development,
El Paso Electric Co.



SANJAY MURALIDHAR

CEO, Mcube Investment Technologies,
CEO & Co-CIO, AlphaEngine Global
Investment Solutions



LUCAS PITTMAN

Senior Business Analyst, RigData

Unfettered Thought

Student Showcase

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Senior Brandyn Hinrichs Gains National Recognition for Investment Analysis in the 2nd Annual All-America Student Analyst Competition

Over 2100 students from 81 different colleges and universities across the United States enrolled in the **2013-2014 Institutional Investor All-America Student Analyst Competition** and competed for top honors in an overall category, three performance sub-categories, and seven industry sector categories. **Senior Brandyn Hinrichs** captured third place in the overall category beating graduate and undergraduate students from top universities, such as Tulane, Illinois Institute of Technology, UT-Austin, and Florida International University. Brandyn managed a long-only portfolio and captured 1.28% alpha.



Senior, Brandyn Hinrichs

The top performers and their results will be featured in the May 2014 issue of *Institutional Investor* magazine and will be added to the ALPHASEAL Recruiting Database, where industry sponsors will have the opportunity to select summer interns and full-time hires based on their track records.





**THOMAS LAM, Sophomore
Finance & Accounting Major**

Thomas entered college as a biology major, but soon realized business was a better fit, so he changed his major to finance and accounting. It was during a Beta Alpha Psi conference when he spoke to professional money managers that he realized personal finance and portfolio management were the areas he wanted to pursue as a career.



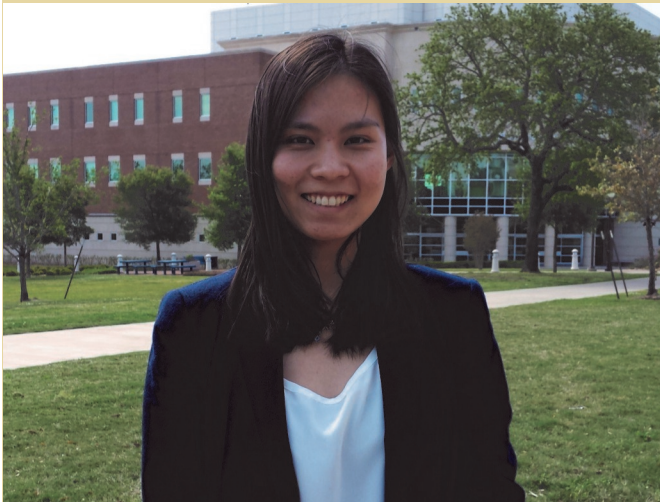
**CHRIS LAMBERSON, Junior
Finance Major**

Working in the banking industry has given Chris a unique perspective that most students lack. Seeing how financial markets and institutions operate first hand has furthered his passion in financial services with special interests in financial planning. Chris is an active member of the Economics & Finance Society.



WILFRID S. ZOUNGRANA,
Master's student

A first generation college student from Burkina Faso, West Africa, Wilfrid has a knack for research. He has won the Excellence in Graduate Research two years in a row. Wilfrid graduated in 2013 with his BPA/MBA and has enrolled in the MSF program to earn his second masters, in order to further pursue his interests in venture capitalism and intangible asset valuation.



HUAN (ALICIA) GUO
Master's student

Previous to enrolling in the MSF program, Huan worked for one of the largest investments holding companies in Asia. This furthered her passion for gaining a more in-depth understanding of finance and to begin researching the impact of innovation on company asset returns. Huan won the 2014 Excellence in Graduate Research award and will graduate in May 2014.

Fearless Investigation

Student Research Spotlight

Graduate Student Duo Wins Prestigious Excellence in Graduate Research Award at the 2014 Research Symposium

Finance master's students and graduate research assistants for the Economics & Finance Department, **Huan (Alicia) Guo** and **Wilfrid Zoungrana**, received the Excellence Award in Graduate Research for their research, Valuation of Intangible Assets with Real Option Theory, which introduces a different valuation method to better measure the value of intangible assets and in order to help companies create strategic plans with better precision. "As a finance graduate student, the annual research symposium is a great opportunity to showcase what we have learned in class and to apply our knowledge to do research analysis in the real world. I also would like to thank Dr. Kurtay Ogunc for his guidance!" said Huan (Alicia) Guo.



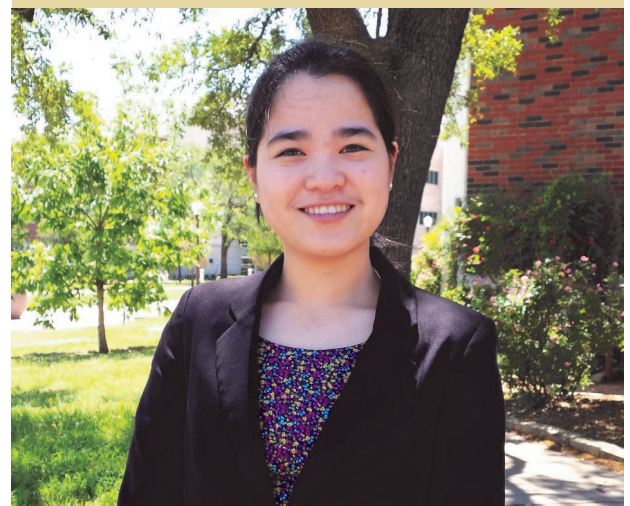
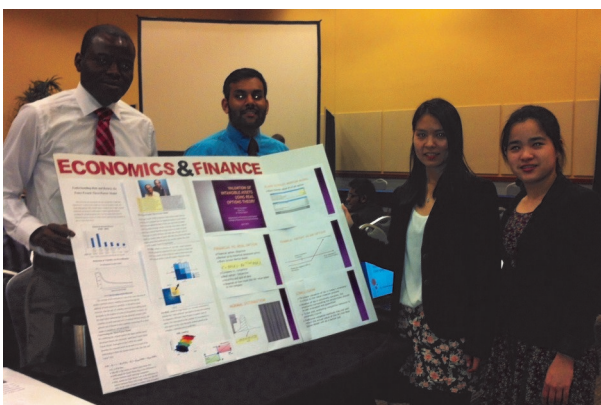
“Over the last two years, the Graduate Research Symposium has provided me with numerous opportunities to work on my verbal communication skills. It is one thing to read a book or write a paper about an idea or topic, but when you explain to someone else, you gain a deeper understanding and more importantly, you begin to realize where your strengths and weaknesses are.”

- **Wilfrid Zoungrana, MBA**
MSF Student



NISHANTH AREPALLI
Master's student

Growing up in India, Nishanth has always had an interest in emerging markets and the role they play in corporate investment. As a graduate student, he is following his interests and investigating the impacts of different strategies in penetrating global developing markets such as India and China.



Sirinun (Ping) Jingwangsa
Master's student

The possibility of maximizing return and minimizing risk has always intrigued Sirinun. The Fama-French Three-Factor Model has heavily influenced Sirinun's research interests in developing smart beta investment strategies in portfolio management.



STOCK MARKET CHALLENGE

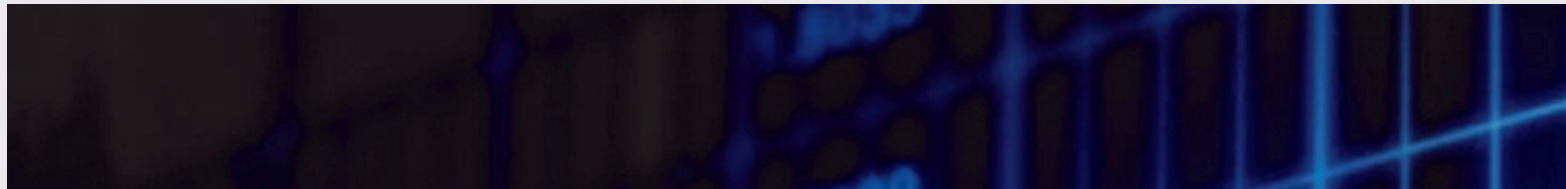
Every semester, the Economics & Finance Society begins the semester with a stock simulator challenge through Investopedia.com. Each participant is given \$100,000 of virtual money to invest however he or she deems appropriate. The challenge encourages each student to research companies and create an investing strategy. The portfolio with the highest total return at the end of the semester wins a \$50 cash prize.

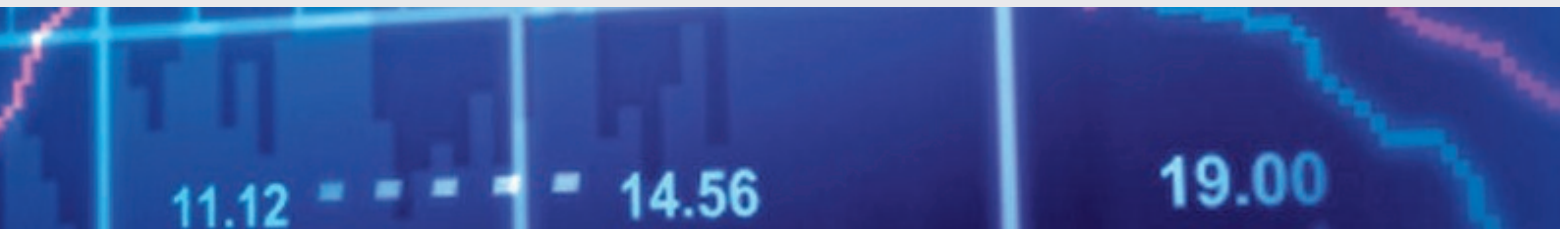
Senior Meet Patel won the Fall 2013 Economics & Finance Society's stock market challenge, along with \$50. Patel's strategy included discussing his potential investments with financial advisors and reading articles from research analysts. Patel is not new to this contest. In the Spring of 2013, he did not win but it was an invaluable learning experience because he was heavily invested in the energy sector. In the Fall he incorporated a new strategy and began investing mostly in the financial sector given his analysis of economic conditions.

Patel says that his success was based on his willingness to read and research. He feels like this contest is an opportunity for learning, but more importantly he feels that this type of venue allows him to experiment with investing strategies and apply what he is learning in class.



Meet Patel (left) receives his \$50 cash prize from the President of the Economics & Finance Society, Edosa Obaseki (right).





Bloomberg Professional



Bloomberg Professional is the most powerful and flexible platform for financial experts who need real-time data, news, and analytics. It can be used to analyze, monitor the major asset classes, including stocks, bonds, currencies and commodities.

The Economics & Finance Department is now offering Bloomberg to students. Bloomberg empowers students with the hands-on knowledge and real-world experience they will need to compete for internships and permanent positions. Bloomberg brings financial leadership into the classroom by exposing students to the industry-leading platform for news, data, analytical tools, and research that drives the global market place.

Students can earn a Bloomberg certification by completing courses and exams within the Bloomberg platform. Once a student completes the courses and passes the exams, Bloomberg will issue the student a number and a certificate that will provide evidence of completion.



Above: Students use Bloomberg Professional to conduct equity and fixed income analysis for their upper-level finance courses.

Right: A screenshot of Bloomberg's in-depth research analysis capabilities and plug-in to Excel for exporting data.





Are you in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area and interested and taking a more active role in the personal and professional development of students?

Please contact the Economics & Finance Department at ecofin@tamuc.edu to see how you can get more involved.

Are you looking to add a social event to your calendar?

Join the Economics & Finance Society on the first Thursday of every month for an informal discussion about current economic and financial events and topics.

FIRST THURSDAYS
Hosted by the Economics & Finance Society

Expand your professional network.
Open to all majors.
No prior knowledge required.

Join us at Sandella's Café
(First floor of Gee Library)
on the first Thursday of
every month at 3:30pm.

