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Business Networks is a monthly, video-enhanced electronic newsletter designed to connect, engage, and inform alumni, partners, and friends of the College of Business Administration at Florida International University. Highlights from the monthly issues are printed in magazine format twice a year—in the fall and in the spring.

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What are the best tax strategies for 2008? Plan ahead.

Death and taxes. Both are unavoidable, as the old saying goes. But with careful planning, businesses and individuals can take steps now to reduce—or at least better manage—the pain when next year’s tax deadlines roll around.

According to **Sharon Lassar**, director, School of Accounting in the College of Business Administration, it’s not too early to start reviewing 2008 tax strategies—especially in light of the current economic downturn.

What every business should consider . . .

“Whether your business is making or losing money, now is a good time to talk to your financial advisor,” she said. “Your CPA or tax accountant can help you make the best business investment, purchasing, or expensing decisions as you move through the year. You can explore different ways to borrow money or raise capital to reach your desired objective while minimizing your tax situation. Taking the time to discuss options now gives you the opportunity to think through decisions before you fully engage them.”

Certainly, the state of today’s economy combined with the credit crunch comes into play for businesses of all sizes.

“This is a good time to re-evaluate your current business tax strategy and make appropriate adjustments,” Lassar said. “You might, for one thing, consider slowing down deductions and adjusting the depreciation rate on capital additions for longer-term benefits.”

Actions individuals can take.

For individuals, Lassar recommends taking the time to review your personal 2007 tax situation closely and compare it with predicted 2008 income, expense, and investment opportunities.

“If, for example, your income is decreasing, you should re-evaluate your withholding allowances so that you don’t end up paying too much toward taxes this year,” she said.

Lassar stresses one key bit of advice for individual taxpayers: always remember to pay yourself first.

“Take advantage of any opportunities to save for retirement,” she said. “Next,

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IN THE WORKS (CONTINUED)

- Global Energy Forum stimulates discussion of factors shaping global energy demand and supply in The Americas.
- Study provides insight into green supply chain management.
- Community benefits from reaffirmation of College of Business Administration's AACSB International accreditation.
- Two student groups bring national honors back to College of Business Administration
- Executive Dean's contributions are crystal clear.
- Lectures grace Spring calendar.

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- Students step up to the challenge of regional SIFE competition.
- Student volunteers put tax expertise to work for Sweetwater residents.
- Partnership brings web presence to local businesses, range of benefits to business students.

FOCUS ON ALUMNI

ALUMNI PROFILES

Isis Roque (BBA '95)
Jesse Miller (MBA '06)
Arturo Neto, Jr. (MSF '98, BBA '93)

ALUMNI EVENTS

- Business Alumni Conference focuses on hot business issues.
- Art of Networking series concludes at Cremata Fine Art.
- One event marks two achievements for School of Accounting.

ALUMNI NOTES

BUSINESS INSIGHTS

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consider saving for your children's college education. If you are able, you also can think about gifts to other family members."



"Be sure and check in with your financial advisor in the summer months or early in the fall to review your personal tax situation, as this gives you time to change direction if your situation has shifted."

—Sharon Lassar, director, School of Accounting

Other suggestions?

"This year, we've already seen a downturn in stock portfolios," Lassar said. "Now is a good time to review and restructure your stock investments. You might consider selling some investments and recognizing losses as a way to offset potential gains."

She also suggests that individuals review itemized deductions and consider alternating itemized and standardized deductions from one year to the next.

"Be sure and check in with your financial advisor in the summer months or early in the fall to review your personal tax situation, as this gives you time to change direction if your situation has shifted," she said.

Bottom line, no one likes taxes but everyone has to pay them.

"You can't make taxes go away, but you can plan proactively to minimize the tax bite," Lassar said. ■

Transfer pricing holds clues to international money laundering, terrorist financing, and more.

Combine an economist, a detective, and a pioneer and you end up with **John Zdanowicz**, professor and Florida International Bankers Association Chair, Department of Finance and Real Estate in the College of Business Administration. For years, he has followed an investigative path that began with a study of international trade patterns, moved to international trade pricing, and recently has focused on transfer pricing and trade financing.

"The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) created the term transfer pricing, which has to do with abnormal pricing, such as overvaluing imports and undervaluing exports," he said. "It focuses on transactions between what the IRS calls 'related parties,' such as a subsidiary dealing with a parent company, or two subsidiaries dealing with each other."



"As an economist, I believed that in an efficient market, the same product should not sell for two different prices in two different markets."

—John Zdanowicz, professor
and Florida International Bankers Association
Chair, Department of Finance and Real Estate

Zdanowicz the economist first looked at international trade flows, but the detective in him awakened quickly.

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“As an economist, I believed that in an efficient market, the same product should not sell for two different prices in two different markets,” he said. “When I began to look at the pricing parameters of various products traded internationally, I discovered some significant discrepancies. I also discovered that no one had a price list for the world, and that’s where my research eventually led.”

New web site brings together years of data in highly usable form.

The data he has assembled interests many sectors, including banks that must show a process that ensures they are not inadvertently financing illegal international transactions, and law enforcement agencies. His recently launched web site, www.internationaltradealert.com, enables interested parties to check prices and determine if they are out of line.

“No one can scrutinize the price of every product going in and out of every country to detect pricing anomalies,” he said, “but the site enables users to characterize the risk of transactions and examine suspicious ones.”

Research attracts attention from U.S. Senator from Michigan.

Recently, Elise Bean, staff director, permanent subcommittee on investigations for U.S. Senator Carl Levin, contacted Zdanowicz for more information about his pioneering work.

“The subcommittee conducts investigations into money laundering and offshore tax abuses, among other topics,” she said. Noting that she has “followed your work over the years on transfer pricing as a mechanism for money laundering, tax evasion, and capital flight,” she asked him to point her to studies of his that would show an estimate of “the annual tax revenues lost from corporate transfer pricing abuses.”

The Florida International University’s Center for International Business Education and Research (FIU-CIBER) has helped fund such research by Zdanowicz. ■

Simple steps lead to huge Internet security gains.

Whether breaches in Internet security cause annoyance, compromise sensitive information, or force huge organizations to a standstill, each incursion means lost productivity and the costs associated with downtime. Yet, “a number of small, easy-to-implement actions can vastly improve any organization’s Internet safety,” according to **Manoel Oliveira**, director of the Technology Center in the College of Business Administration.

First, he said, is to install and regularly update a reliable anti-virus protection program to screen out viruses—thousands of which are created daily.

Second, pay attention to notices about security updates to the operating system and applications and install them immediately. These fixes or patches target efforts by “external entities to reach into your computer,” he said.

Third, exercise care when reading emails with attachments, especially those with an exe extension, which will be installed on your system if you open them.

“You may be installing dangerous software when you install an executable (exe) file attached to an email, even if it appears to be a harmless program,” he said.

Fourth, install a firewall to prevent unwanted requests from entering your network. Oliveira suggests a firewall software program or actual hardware, which “is more powerful because it is dedicated to the task.”

Fifth, he said, use strong passwords.

“Never use words from the dictionary, your birth date, your kids’ birthdays, or your spouse’s name, for example,” he said. “Use phrases that make no sense, vary capital and lowercase letters, and include numbers.”

While acknowledging that this complexity also makes passwords hard for the user to remember, Oliveira urges people to find a rule that makes sense to them.

Sixth, exercise caution about downloading and installing programs—such as free software—that can monitor your activities and send information to outside sources without your knowledge.

Seventh, always be sure financial information is encrypted, a process that scrambles the material when it’s in transit and which the recipient decodes.

“When a padlock icon appears at the bottom right hand corner of your screen, you will know your communication is being encrypted,” he said.

Also, to protect against “acts of God,” such as weather-related problems, back up all work regularly, including programs, in case program installation disks have gone astray or also are damaged.

Oliveira highly praises the Computer Emergency Recovery Team (CERT) and its web site www.cert.org for providing invaluable information. And although many other threats exist, these tips, and others from the CERT web site, can keep the Internet a boon rather than a problem for organizations. ■



“A number of small, easy-to-implement actions can vastly improve any organization’s Internet safety.”

—Manoel Oliveira, director,
Technology Center, College of
Business Administration

Entrepreneurship Hall of Fame ceremony celebrates a different kind of green.

Each year, the Entrepreneurship Hall of Fame (EHOF) induction ceremony and luncheon, the College of Business Administration's largest alumni event of the year, makes a glittering mark. On May 8, 2008, 450 guests—including many alumni and former inductees—celebrated the tradition for the ninth time.

Malcolm Butters (MBA '83), president and co-founder of Butters Construction & Development, Inc., was inducted in the founder category; and **Ignacio Urbieto Jr.** (MBA '85), co-owner and CEO, Urbieto Oil Company, was named the inductee in the builder category. In addition, **Sergio Pino**, chairman and president, Century Partners Group, received the 2008 South Florida Entrepreneur of the Year award. A well-known South Florida entrepreneur, Pino has established thirteen successful companies bearing the Century name.



"The 2008 inductees into the Entrepreneurship Hall of Fame demonstrate how entrepreneurship can be combined with a concern for environmental issues."

—Joyce J. Elam, executive dean

The focus underlying the ceremony wasn't only on the green representing monetary success, but also on how entrepreneurship and a concern for the environment can go hand in hand.

Executive Dean **Joyce Elam** commented on this relationship, noting that, "The 2008 inductees into the Entrepreneurship Hall of Fame demonstrate how entrepreneurship can be combined with a concern for environmental issues. Butters now designs all buildings to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certification standards, so that they will be 'green' ones that benefit their occupants and have minimal effect on the environment, and Urbieto's firm was the first E85 ethanol provider in South Florida."

For **Monique Catoggio** (EMBA '03), director of advancement and alumni relations, the office that organizes this event, the annual gathering brings excitement, with this year's enlivened by two alumni from the 1980s, who prompted her to reflect on what makes the EHOF ceremony so special.

Two alumni bring the idea of sun and heat to the event.

"Our first inductee into the EHOF, **Bob Bell** (BBA '81), founder of Banana Boat Suncare and chairman and CEO of Sea & Ski Corporation, joined us and promoted his best-selling book *From Lifeguard to Sun King: The Man Behind the Banana Boat Success Story*, published in April, 2008," she said. "In addition, alumnus **Mike Baiamonte** (BBA '86), Voice of the Miami Heat, energized the audience like never before. Their presence reminded me how very special our alumni are and how they have not only transformed their lives via their talents and

businesses, but also how they have helped to build the strong community that we are today."



Erica Courtney (EMBA '07), president of Biodiversity & Company and winner of the 2007 New Venture Challenge, also attended and provided an update of her venture's progress over the past year.



A panel of judges that includes past inductees as well as event sponsors and business leaders in the community selects the inductees. *The Miami Herald*, *El Nuevo Herald*, WorldCity, NBC 6, and Telemundo 51 were among the media sponsors. Financial sponsors included SunTrust Bank, Miami; Morrison, Brown, Argiz & Farra, LLP; and Adorno & Yoss. The ceremony took place at Jungle Island on Watson Island, Miami, Florida. ■

Innovative web sites capture major prizes in 2008 Entrepreneur Challenge Business Plan Competition.

With rich cash awards and a forum for budding entrepreneurs to pitch their business and investors to speak about what they want out of a start-up opportunity, the Entrepreneur Challenge Business Plan Competition, hosted by the Eugenio Pino and Family Global Entrepreneurship Center at Florida International University, consistently creates excitement and opportunity.

On May 13, 2008, twenty of South Florida's leading entrepreneurs, investors, and industry experts evaluated the business plans of ten finalist teams, with a total of \$25,000 awarded to the winners and runners-up in the investment track and a new social track. Concepts embraced non-profits and for-profits in industries such as Internet, green technology, social networking, education, and entertainment.

Winning companies seek to empower others.



From left, Go Global Education team leader **Archie Jeter** with **Mike Tomás** of The ASTRI Group and president of the Eugenio Pino and Family Global Entrepreneurship Center's Board; **Colleen Post**, associate director of the Center; and **Alan L. Carsrud**, executive director of the Center

Web site Go Global Education, provider of standards-based online global education programs to U.S. public, private, and charter schools, won the investment track, which the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation sponsored.

"The inspiration came from my passionate belief in the importance of having a global perspective," said team leader **Archie Jeter** (MIB '06). "I'm from a small city in the Midwest but had the opportunity to live in Spain, Australia, and Peru. Broadening your horizons, opening up your vision, and increasing your knowledge of the world empowers you."



From left, My Daily Cause team leader **Justin Vizaro** with **Lorenzo Lebrija** of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; **Alan L. Carsrud**, Pino Center executive director; and **Karym Urdaneta**, Pino Center program assistant

My Daily Cause, a web site that aggregates charities and other non-profit organizations in a way that allows individuals to donate in small increments via a click-through business model, captured the social track prize. Justin Vizaro, a twenty-year-old International Business Honors student, led the team.

"A tremendous number of people want to be involved with non-profit organizations or charities, but lack the extra time or money," he said. "Our idea is to get college or high school students to put some of their daily computer time to use, empowering them to make a difference in the non-profit world, and getting them involved with organizations that make a difference."

First-time judge **Lorenzo Lebrija** (MBA '07, BA '00), program director, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which sponsored the social track, was impressed with the event and with what he heard from the competitors.

"The presentations were innovative in the issues they were tackling and their approaches to those issues were good," he said "The idea behind My Daily Cause was so simple that we all thought 'Wow, why didn't I think of that. This really seems to work!'"

The Miami Herald and HSBC Private Bank provided additional support for the event. The traditional investment track of the competition is open to all Florida International University students or alumni, with the social track open to all South Florida residents.

Groundbreaking study tracks the distinctive characteristics of social entrepreneurship.

Ashoka, the global association of the world's leading social entrepreneurs, has elected more than 2,000 leading social entrepreneurs as Ashoka Fellows, providing them with living stipends, professional support, and access to a global network of peers in more than sixty countries.

In examining the work of these Ashoka Fellows, a question comes to mind: How do social entrepreneurs compare with commercial entrepreneurs?

A recent research project conducted by **Colleen Post** (MBA '03, BFA '00), associate director, Pino Center, and adjunct professor in entrepreneurship, management, and international business; and her colleague, **Moriah Meyskens**, a PhD student studying management and international business in the College of Business Administration, took on this query and in the process created a database of social entrepreneurs.



Colleen Post

“Our research is one of the few larger-scale empirical studies of social entrepreneurs,” Post said. “Much case work has been done, but the field needs more quantitative research. We hope this database will help drive it in that direction.”

The study focuses on identifying patterns and relationships surrounding the strategies employed by social entrepreneurs and their ventures and comparing them to existing patterns and relationships previously identified in commercial entrepreneurship-related literatures.

The findings, which indicate that social entrepreneurs demonstrate similar patterns to commercial entrepreneurs, are assessed through two different lenses of analysis—alliances and knowledge management. Statistically significant relationships were found between alliances, funding sources, innovation, and ease of replication.

The research report, entitled “Social Venture Strategy from a Global Perspective: An Exploratory Study Assessing Ashoka Fellows,” was accepted for presentation at the prestigious 2008 Babson College Entrepreneurship Research Conference held June 4-7, 2008, at the Kenan-Flagler Business School, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. ■

Capital Markets Lab offers unique ambiance and opportunity for learning.

The 2,200 square-foot Capital Markets Lab (CML) in the new College of Business Administration complex hums with action and exudes the aura of a bustling start-up. Since January, 2008, when classes began there, the area—animated by a curving 66-foot long, real-time stock quote ticker like those in brokerage firms years ago and an array of workstations sporting the leading financial software, including a Bloomberg terminal—has provided a high-powered atmosphere for hands-on learning.

No one experiences that more than the six students who are earning three elective credits for learning the software, teaching others, and helping maintain the lab twelve hours per week each.

“I learn something new every day, meet new people, and get to integrate the knowledge I already have with what I am learning.”—Miriam Lam, senior finance major

“**Joyce J. Elam**, executive dean, suggested using students in the lab and it's been great,” said the lab's director, **Helen K. Simon**, instructor, Department of Finance and Real Estate. “Their résumés will benefit because of their expertise in financial applications. They're helping others. And this first group is learning how a small business runs because they are getting in at the beginning and their ideas are helping create our policies.”



From left to right: **Michael Castell**, **Miriam Lam**, and **Jonathan Nejad**

Carefully chosen for their academic strengths, their motivation, and how well they interact with the staff, each intern must gain proficiency in all the software while also learning one or two software programs in depth so they can educate their peers and the staff.

Interns value experience and Simon hopes to expand it.

Three senior finance majors laud their internships. **Jonathan Nejad**, who “loves stocks” and has started his own investment company, is learning Crystal Ball and @Risk, and enjoys answering questions because “I realize I am learning the software,” while **Michael Castell**, describes the technology in the lab as “amazing,” and finds this job “enables me to grow as a person and as a student.” As **Miriam Lam** masters Salesforce.com, a customer relationship management (CRM) program,

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she appreciates that “I learn something new every day, meet new people, and get to integrate the knowledge I already have with what I am learning.”

“The way we are preparing all our finance students to tie together theories and practice is the difference between a piece of coal and something that’s on its way to becoming a diamond.”

—Helen K. Simon, director, Capital Markets Lab, and instructor,

Department of Finance and Real Estate



Simon hopes the lab, already popular within the business school, also will become a magnet for the local finance community—one of the intended beneficiaries of the students’ expanded knowledge—through business leaders presenting guest lectures, offering internships, or even making donations

“The way we are preparing all our finance students to tie together theories and practice is the difference between a piece of coal and something that’s on its way to becoming a diamond. Like that diamond, they’ll be very valuable,” said Simon, who can be reached at 305-348-1552. ■

Two new books take larger-than-usual view of global competition.

Within one week, **Jerry Haar**, associate dean for international affairs and projects, and professor, Department of Management and International Business in the College of Business Administration, saw the publication of two books he co-edited: *Can Latin America Compete? Confronting the Challenges of Globalization* with **John Price**; and *Small Firms, Global Markets: Competitive Challenges in the New Economy*, with **Jörg Meyer-Stamer**. They are number thirteen and fourteen in Haar’s active publication history.

Orientation of the books gives broad perspective . . . outside the firm and beyond borders.

The timeliness of the subject matter and the thrust of the content have quickly secured a high profile for the books.

*“Instead of looking at what goes on only within the firm or at the macro level, *Can Latin America Compete?* explores all the prerequisites necessary for firms to compete in the global economy.”*

—Jerry Haar, associate dean for international

affairs and projects, and professor, Department of Management and International Business



“Instead of looking at what goes on only within the firm or at the macro level, *Can Latin America Compete?* explores all the prerequisites necessary for firms to compete in the global economy,” said Haar, who has another book and a number of journal articles underway. “The book covers what I call the plumbing and electrical circuitry of competitiveness: taxes, education, logistics, judicial reform, human capital, the ability to harness technology, and the physical infrastructure.”

It has drawn praise from reviewers in the online version of *Time*, *America Economía* magazine, and *Foreign Affairs*, the principal publication of the highly respected Council on Foreign Relations. Already in its third printing, a paperback version, which will make it more accessible for use by professors, journalists, policy analysts, and the public at large, is due out in the early fall.

The second book focuses on small firms and whether they can survive globalization. The authors answered with a resounding yes.

*“Using cases from Mexico, India, Spain, Italy, and Nigeria,” *Small Firms, Global Markets* applies a global rather than a regional focus to see what it takes for small players to compete.”*

—Jerry Haar, associate dean for international affairs and projects, and professor, Department of Management and International Business

“Using cases from Mexico, India, Spain, Italy, and Nigeria,” *Small Firms, Global Markets* applies a global rather than a regional focus to see what it takes for small players to compete,” Haar said.

From Haar’s perspective, the book demolishes many myths, including the notion that smallness hampers success. In fact, in many ways, it’s an asset.

“Small firms have access to much of the same technology that larger firms do, so the questions are how they make use of it and how innovative and entrepreneurial they are,” he said.

New research direction further broadens Haar’s vision.

Both volumes fit with the general direction of Haar’s research, which has involved “the nexus between the business environment and corporate strategy, structure, and operations,” though he notes that his research “is now moving in the direction of looking at themes that directly affect this linkage, such as national innovation systems.” ■



Students step up to the challenge at regional SIFE competition.



From left to right: Kathleen Ade, SIFE members Farrel Liger and Obed Morales, faculty advisor Deanne Butchey, SIFE members Sharlita Millington, and Monica Kakanis

Often, a trip to Orlando conjures up images of theme-park fun and adventure. In April, 2008, four students from the College of Business Administration's Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) organization traveled to Orlando for a very different reason: to participate in the regional SIFE competition and demonstrate their commitment to making a difference in their communities while developing the skills to become socially responsible business leaders.

The students presented five projects: three financial literacy projects; a small business digital literacy project; a "good citizenship" campaign to educate student voters; a new business—called "Store My Dorm"—bringing storage options to dormitory residents; and a résumé-building workshop.

The financial literacy projects targeted three community groups: new immigrants unsure of the business ethics involved with buying a first home; university students needing help in corporate finance topics; and low-income inhabitants ready to complete their tax returns and open to participating in a seminar about credit responsibility.

Obed Morales, a senior business management major, presented the mortgage-related business ethics project.

"Our students returned to Miami ready to share what they learned to help implement new project ideas and to refine their presentation skills."—Deanne Butchey (PhD '05), instructor, Department of Finance and Real Estate

"Our group taught individuals to keep their eyes open when purchasing a new home and to be aware of the differences between fixed costs and variable rates," he said.

Competition provides a motivating learning experience.

This year marked only the second time the university's SIFE chapter has competed in the regional competition. What's more, according to Morales, the students had been working on their

projects for only two months prior to the event, so they all felt "a bit rushed."

"The top teams from across the country had participated in numerous other competitions, so their presentations were very well choreographed," said SIFE faculty advisor **Deanne Butchey** (PhD '05), instructor, Department of Finance and Real Estate. "Our students returned to Miami ready to share what they learned to help implement new project ideas and to refine their presentation skills."

"We've really gotten the ball rolling . . . We gained valuable experience to help us prepare for future competitions."

—Obed Morales, SIFE member

The university's team came in fifth in the competition, with the judges noting, "the level of performance given by this group was remarkable, considering the short time they have been working together."

Post competition, SIFE team members connected with the SIFE project support office for guidance in developing a project handbook.

"The handbook covers every project phase—from creating an overview statement to conducting pre- and post-project surveys," said **Sharlita Millington**, SIFE member on track to earn her degree in finance in December, 2008. "It will help our SIFE group build on this year's momentum."

Morales sees the SIFE chapter's future as "very bright."

"We've really gotten the ball rolling," he said. "The Orlando competition gave us the chance to absorb what other schools have done as projects. We gained valuable experience to help us prepare for future competitions." ■

Student volunteers put tax expertise to work for Sweetwater residents.



This tax season, 288 taxpayers in Sweetwater, Florida, got the help they needed to prepare and file their 2007 tax returns, thanks to a group of tax-savvy Florida International University students who participated in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

Sponsored by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), VITA

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offers free tax help to low-to moderate-income people who cannot prepare their own tax returns. To qualify for the program, 26 students—twenty from the College of Business Administration and six from the College of Law—took the necessary training and certification exam, then held multiple sessions in Sweetwater.

Steven Vogel, visiting instructor, School of Accounting, served as faculty advisor and helped coordinate activities with the School of Accounting, whose director, **Sharon Lassar**, offered “encouragement and moral support.”

As part of the program, the students worked closely with three Sweetwater VITA site coordinators, including **Katrina Valiente**, who has overseen the completion of more than 900 tax returns in the past three years.

“Working with the students was a privilege,” she said. “They were always motivated to help and gave a 100-percent effort.”

According to Lassar, participating students earned extra credit for the accounting course of their choice.

“This provided added incentive and reward for a great group of students who volunteered their time and talents to help others handle the often-daunting tax preparation task,” she said.

VITA volunteers help a community and gain career insights.

“...while what we did for the people in Sweetwater seemed so simple, it was always greatly appreciated.”

—Asma Hood, student and VITA volunteer

Asma Hood, a senior majoring in accounting and management, found participating in VITA to be rewarding and motivating.



On May 7, 2008, the college hosted a reception for Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) volunteers. Sharon Lassar, director of the School of Accounting, front row left, and the students were joined by Ana M. Raposo, IRS Senior Tax Consultant, and Ronald W. Albert IRS Territory Manager, far right.

“I was debating whether to pursue a career in accounting or taxes,” she said. “But after the VITA program, the choice seems clear. What can I say . . . I like figuring taxes!”

She added that “while what we did for the people in Sweetwater seemed so simple, it was always greatly appreciated.”

A special VITA volunteer recognition ceremony was held on

the University Park campus on May 7, 2008, during which Ana M. Raposo, senior tax consultant with the IRS office in Miami, thanked the students and site coordinators.

“You all worked hard this tax season to provide a valuable service,” she said. “I am sure the university is very proud of the caliber of students you are setting forth to represent your school. And I would like to thank you for our valued partnership and hope to continue to bring free tax preparation services to the residents of our county by providing more students the opportunity to reach out and lend a helping hand to those who need it the most.” ■

Partnership brings web presence to local businesses, range of benefits to business students.



Even small businesses know that being on the web no longer counts as a luxury. These days, it’s a necessity. However, finding a resource to create that site and facing the possible design costs can pose obstacles.

Not any more, thanks to a partnership between the College of Business Administration and Elevate Miami, a program that the City of Miami, under the leadership of Mayor **Manny Díaz**, facilitates and which “provides tools and skills to small business, individuals, and family members to improve their digital literacy skills,” according to **Lauren Cortinas**, the organization’s program coordinator.

“Anything involving the community with lots of interaction with students gets me excited,” said **Faisal Kaleem**, lecturer, Department of Decision Sciences and Information Systems, who teaches many courses in modern technology. He devised the idea of offering a three-credit internship course to motivate business students to establish web sites for small business owners.

IN THE COMMUNITY

“This adds value to our students and to Miami’s small business community,” he said.

Acting as consultants, students teach . . . and learn.

“I will get a certificate from Microsoft and from the City of Miami, both of which will look good on my résumé.”—José Hernandez, MIS major

The students—mostly undergraduates with varying technology experience—work in teams of two, each assigned between six and ten companies to contact on their own. They schedule two workshops during which they create the site and provide insights into how their clients could grow their businesses. Twenty strong candidates applied for the initial opportunity, with thirteen selected as technology coaches.

“Participating was a no-brainer for me,” said **José Hernandez**, an MIS major. “I will get a certificate from Microsoft and from the City of Miami, both of which will look good on my résumé. I usually sit in front of a computer rather than in front of a client, so this gave me a view of how clients

think and a chance to network with potential clients for my own business.”

“The internship supplemented my knowledge of accounting, enabled me to interact with others, and helped me learn the technology.”—George Ramos, accounting major

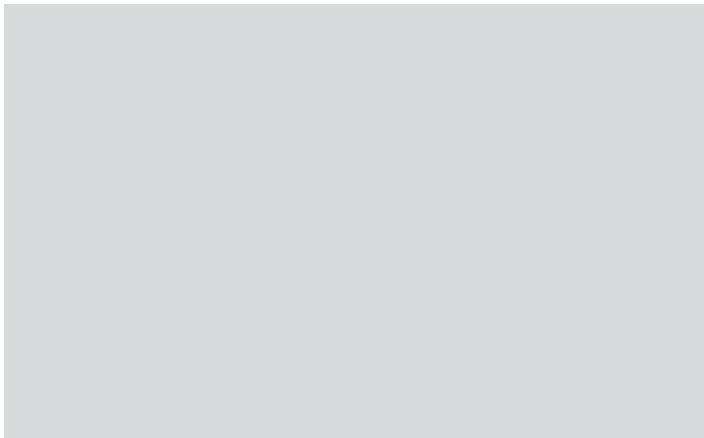
Accounting major **George Ramos**, who also has a marketing background, appreciates the way “the internship supplemented my knowledge of accounting, enabled me to interact with others, and helped me learn the technology. Maybe when I create my own business, I’ll be able to put up my own web site.”

“It’s truly an amazing opportunity for these students who otherwise would be in a classroom setting, not interacting with business people one to one,” Cortinas said, and according to Kaleem, “We are looking at how to integrate such community-based projects into our course offerings every semester, involving faculty members and student organizations.”

For more information about Elevate Miami, visit www.elevatemiami.com. ■

ALUMNI EVENTS

Art of Networking series concludes at Cremata Fine Art.



From left, Raul Cremata (BBA '82), owner, Cremata Fine Art; Tammy Taylor, Gulf recruiting manager, Progressive Insurance; Juan Carlos Hernandez (BBA '02), incoming president of the Business Alumni Chapter; Monique Catoggio (MBA '03), director of advancement and alumni relations, and Manny Matalón (MACC '03, BACC '00), current president of the Business Alumni Chapter

On April 17, 2008, the three-part Art of Networking series concluded at Cremata Fine Art. The series was created to provide a cultural venue at which alumni and friends could come together and learn practical, valuable information about the importance of business networking.

The finale boasted a substantial turnout. **Raul Cremata** (BBA '82) opened his gallery for the group and showcased his own work. **Howard Shore** (MBA '96, BACC '91) of Activate Group, guest speaker, discussed three accelerators to a person’s success: integrity, knowledge, and network.

“The series was a huge success, and we plan to continue to offer value-added events next year,” said **Michelle Joubert**, assistant director of alumni relations.

The partnership between presenting sponsor Progressive Insurance and the Business Alumni Chapter proved mutually beneficial to both organizations.

“We strongly value our relationship with the college and look forward to building upon this foundation,” said **Tammy Taylor**, Gulf recruiting manager at Progressive. “Our firm prides itself on the caliber of its employees, and FIU has been a strong ally in our continuing efforts to recruit exemplary candidates.”

Taylor noted that the firm’s “ultimate goal is to become an Employer of Choice in this community. We are confident that our alliance will continue to foster this very important initiative for us.”

“Over the course of the three networking events, we’ve learned tips that, over time, have proven their worth,” said Business Alumni Chapter President **Manny Matalón** (MACC '03, BACC '00). “On our journey to becoming more effective networkers, we realized that networking is, indeed, an art: just as an artist takes the time to pick up a brush and create his/her art, a networker must pick up that brush and create his or her own networking canvas. This is the message we wanted to convey.”

The Business Alumni Chapter would like to thank Presenting Sponsor: Progressive, the location hosts of all three events: Miami Art Group, Texas de Brazil, and Cremata Fine Art and Southern Vines for providing Cavia wine. ■

Business Alumni Conference focuses on hot business issues.



On March 27, 2008, South Florida executives, business alumni, students, and faculty attended the third annual Business Alumni Conference, sponsored by Microsoft. For many, it was their first visit to the college's new building complex—a state of the art facility at University Park.

The event began with a luncheon and an opening presentation by **Dmitry Vasilevsky**, from Microsoft, which was followed by panel discussions on current topics such as the state of global business, e-marketing, and recruiting during hard economic times:

* The *How Governance, Risk, and Compliance Overlap. Managing the New Standards and Expectations* panel was moderated by **Sharon Lassar**, professor and director, School of Accounting. Panelists were: **Kara MacCullough**, partner, Holland & Knight; **Paul Stebbins**, chairman and CEO, World Fuel Services, and **Alfredo Cepero** (BACC '88), audit partner, BDO Seidman.

* The *Creating Loyalty: E-Marketing Magic!* panel was moderated by **Luis Casas**, director of marketing and recruiting. Panelists included **Leonel Azuela**, founder and CEO of Quaxar; **Tatiana Lopez**, marketing manager for MySpace Latino, and **Andrea Arnau**, managing director, AlmaDDB Interactive.

* The *Recruit, Retain and Release: Managing Human Capital in Troubled Times* panel was moderated by **Robert Garcia** (MBA '99), director, executive and professional education. Panelists were **Ana María Lopez**, Motorola; **Ariel Regatky**, Citigroup; Catalina Bajenaru, AT&T, and **Tom Tannehill**, FedEx Express.

* The *Web 2.0: Social Networking and its Impact on Today's Business World. The Future of the Web 2.0, 3.0 and Beyond* panel was moderated by Zameer Upadhyia (BACC '03), co-founder and CEO, BabySpot.com. Panelists included: James Rivera (BACC '01), COO and co-founder, BabySpot.com; **Bob Hunter**, CEO and founder, StorkAvenue.com; **Brian Breslin**,

CEO and founder, Infinimedia.com; **Alex de Carvalho**, CEO and founder, StartPR.com; and **Irma Becerra-Fernandez**, Knight Ridder Research Professor, in the college.

* The *State of Global Business and the Decline of the Dollar* panel was moderated by **Dr. Jerry Haar**, associate dean of international affairs and projects. Panelists included **Hector Tundidor** (BACC '92), TS partner, Ernst & Young; **Tony Villamil**, CEO, The Washington Economics Group; **Ian McCluskey**, publisher, WorldCity; and **Arturo Neto**, president, Neto Financial Group, Inc.

* The *Spotlight on Entrepreneur: Demian Bellumio (BBA '00) takes the Digital Entertainment Industry by Storm with Cyloop.com*. This session was moderated by **Joyce J. Elam**, executive dean of the college and vice provost, FIU Online.

Following the conference, Haar noted that it was “a very successful event. My panel was superb—thoughtful, provocative, and engaging. [There was] terrific interaction among panelists and attendees.”

Mireya Bender (BBA '00), advancement coordinator for the School of Accounting, said she “was impressed with the quality and usefulness of the information discussed at the conference. The speakers were excellent, and the content was relevant to the issues we currently face.”

“It offered a great opportunity to learn about today's current economic and technology issues from experts,” Upadhyia added. “It was great not only from a personal development perspective but also from a business development perspective. Our company generated some new business opportunities from our participation. It was great to see the facilities and learn how much the college truly has become a beacon of leadership.”



The conference concluded with a networking reception in Commons Courtyard. Microsoft graciously provided an XBOX 360 and a Zune for raffle prizes.

Thanks again to Microsoft for sponsoring a beneficial event for students and alumni. For more information on careers at Microsoft visit: www.whyyouwillworkhere.com. ■

One event marks two major achievements for School of Accounting.



Sharon Lassar, director, School of Accounting; **Manny Dieguez**, retiring accounting professor; and **Alfredo Cepero** (BACC '88)

Accounting students, alumni, faculty, and friends gathered on June 19, 2008, as the School of Accounting in the College of Business Administration celebrated two special milestones: its 25th year of accreditation from the AACSB International—The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)—and the official launch of its Alumni Affinity Council (SOAAAC).

In 1983, the university applied for and received accreditation for the School of Accounting from AACSB. While business programs must satisfy a wide range of quality standards to achieve AACSB accreditation, schools of accounting must satisfy even higher ones. So, it was an accomplishment to celebrate when AACSB International re-affirmed its accreditation of the School of Accounting in April, 2008.

“One reason the university has been able to maintain AACSB accreditation for its School of Accounting is our interaction with the accounting profession and with alumni,” said Sharon Lassar, the school’s director.

SOAAAC to play multiple roles.

As evidence of that close relationship with its alumni, a group of dedicated accounting alumni began meeting regularly to form the School of Accounting Alumni Affinity Council (SOAAAC), a sub-group of the Business Alumni Chapter. Co-chairs **Benjamin Diaz** (EMST '96, BACC '95) and **Ed Duarte** (BACC '98) lead the group. **Maria Byrd** (BACC '95), **Fred Campos** (BACC '98), **Carlos Capurro** (MACC '07), **Valerie Colimon** (BACC '06), **Yvette Hernandez** (BBA '04), **Jorge Herrera** (BBA '86), **Angel Iglesias** (BACC '94), **Mario Nowogrodzki** (BACC '89), **Noemi Perez** (BACC '02), **Aimee Prieto** (BACC '07), **Erbin Ramirez** (BACC '98), **Josh Rodriguez** (BACC '87), **Eric Santa Maria** (BACC '01), **Patrica Siles** (MACC '96, BACC '94), **Diego Suarez** (MACC '06), and **Marcel Varela** (BBA '97) sit on the steering committee.

As its first task, the SOAAAC hosted a kickoff event to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the School of Accounting.

“There is a natural affinity among our accounting alumni,” said **Monique Catoggio** (EMBA '03), director of advancement and alumni relations. “Some of them tell me it was because of the difficulty in getting our degree. So, it’s no surprise that when we decided to host a reunion the turnout would be spectacular. With nearly 300 alumni attending, the energy was high, and the evening was very special and memorable.”

The evening of the event, **Tony Argiz** (BBA '74), a long-time supporter of the college and the university, shared insights on the growth of the school and his pride in his alma mater. **Alfredo Cepero** (BACC '88), a member of the School of Accounting Advisory Board and the Alumni Circle, said a few farewell words to **Manny Dieguez** on behalf of the students, alumni, and faculty for his 32 years teaching accounting at the university.



Nicole Chin (BACC '00), *Roary*, and *Ed Duarte* (BACC '98)

Accounting alumnus **Raul Cremata** (BBA '82) made a special presentation. Accountant turned artist and gallery owner, he donated a painting to the College of Business Administration Complex that will now hang in the common area of the Office Depot Student Center.

If you are interested in being a part of the School of Accounting Alumni Affinity Council, please contact **Michelle Joubert** at 305-348-0397 or michelle.joubert@business.fiu.edu.



Isis Roque (BBA '95)

What year did you graduate and what was your degree and area of study?

I graduated in 1995 with a BBA and a double major in marketing and international business.

Can you tell me about your company and your role there?

I started On Call Resources Group (ORG) in 2006 based on a colleague's need for outsourced human resources services. Initially recruiting for the telecommunications sector, we now focus on business specialties—finance, accounting and marketing—across several industries. The more we grew to know our clients, the more they relied on us for auxiliary services such as contract staffing and corporate events. My role is that of setting the pace and maintaining the values of the company. I take part in everything, but primarily focus my efforts on the recruiting side—working with the clients and candidates. I take the time to meet everyone in the process and understand current and future needs. It's very much like putting the pieces of a puzzle together.

What is the most challenging aspect of your job?

As in any industry, we are exposed to external pressures—economic, competitive (from existing and new entrants), and changes in corporate structure. Recruiting and contracted services are very much tied to economic changes. We need to adapt and be flexible to the needs of our clients. Maintaining good relationships and building trust help as well.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your job?

My philosophy is, "What can I do for you?" Throughout the years, I've accumulated much experience in marketing and business in general. Whether it be with a client or candidate, I usually end up helping more than I intended. My interest is in helping them achieve some measure of success. I've seen candidates realize their true potential in new industries. I've also been part of practically building a department from scratch. I am not sure you can put a price tag on that.

How did your business education help you succeed?

In a sense, I grew up at FIU. The courses were challenging and inspired my entrepreneurial spirit. I can't say enough about the career center during my time there.

Are there any special memories about FIU you would like to share?

I took advantage of the summer abroad program during my junior year. That was a defining experience for me— seeing life through a different lens. It generated an incurable interest to travel and learn about new cultures. For more than ten years, traveling was a part of my job working in various areas of marketing. It is my value now in Miami— being able to bridge that gap, working with clients and candidates.

Are you involved in the community?

I am involved with the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce as well as with Junior Achievement. My interest is in inspiring young adults. Our community is so diverse, with people of such different backgrounds and stories. I believe every young adult deserves the chance to envision possibilities.

Is there any advice you would give students?

Take advantage of the resources that are available to you at the school. Ask questions, get to know your classmates, and get involved with other activities outside of school. They broaden your horizon and give you an opportunity to place yourself for an opportune moment. I am also a big proponent of having tangible work experience before graduation. I still use some of the skills I learned at my first job during college.

What else would you like to mention about your company or yourself?

It is a little difficult to separate my own work ethic from the deliverables that we provide at ORG. In the end, I care about the results, and everyone, including me, bends over backwards to ensure that the clients' corporate events or the resources we provide them exceeds their expectations. ■



Jesse Miller (MBA '06)

Manager, Equipment Rental
Midtown Video

After earning his undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan with majors in philosophy and computer science, **Jesse Miller** (MBA '06) was pursuing career opportunities in California in 2003 when he received a call from his father asking him to return to Miami and help his family's business "on the management side."

He'd devoted his summers since 1984 to working for the company, Midtown Video, and figured that his undergraduate education, particularly in computer science and information technology, would be helpful. So he returned to Miami.

When he learned about the college's new Downtown MBA program, he jumped at the chance to enroll because of Florida International University's excellent reputation and because the program was so "convenient, would take less than two years to complete, and would give me the information I needed to know: finance, legal issues, HR, supply chain, and customer relations."

■



Arturo Neto Jr. (MSF '98, BBA '93)

Founder and CEO,
Neto Financial Group

Currently "chief everything officer" of his own firm, **Arturo Neto Jr.** (MSF '98, BBA '93), is working to market, asset raise, and develop a client base for the start-up venture Neto Financial Group. Now he faces the challenge of managing his time to deliver service while building the business, but he looks forward to the time when he can focus on research and investment analysis, which he considers his strengths.

Crediting the College of Business Administration with enabling him "to learn how to learn and to be flexible," Neto underscored his attachment to the college by noting that the students he knew when Florida International University consisted of four or five buildings are still colleagues and friends.

Accustomed to giving financial advice, he also offered some personal guidance.

"Pursue your passion," he said. "Everything will take care of itself if you find that passion and pursue it." ■

- Miami Today featured **Tony Argiz** (BBA '74) in its "The Achiever" profile the week of May 15, 2008. The two-page interview discussed his journey to the top of leading Miami CPA firm Morrison, Brown, Argiz & Farra, LLP. The firm received the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce's "2008 South Florida Good to Great Award" for the category of 51-249 employees. Argiz serves on the College of Business Administration's Dean's Council and the School of Accounting Advisory Board, and is an inductee into the college's Entrepreneurship Hall of Fame.
 - **Rene M. Cibran** (BBA '80) is a financial consultant and business advisor as well as a licensed insurance agent and registered representative for MassMutual. Cibran also is the executive director for TimePlus Payroll, which provides payroll management services to businesses throughout South Florida
 - **Robert Bell's** (BBA '85) From Lifeguard to Sun King makes #8 on the Wall Street Journal's "Best Selling Business Books" list and is now a #1 national best seller on Barnes & Noble.com in two categories: business biography and entrepreneur.
 - **Enrique Fernandez-Cavada** (MIS '86) purchased an auto collision repair facility in West Kendall in January, 2007. Sunrise Paint & Body Inc. has been in business since 1988 and has contracts with various insurance companies, including State Farm, Hanover/Citizens, and Liberty Mutual. His company is licensed to do work for any individual or insurance company in Florida.
 - **Anya Schnoor** (BBA '91), chief executive officer, Dehring Bunting and Golding (DB&G) and a senior vice-president of the Scotiabank Jamaica Group, was featured recently in the Jamaica Cleaner online publication.
 - **Charles Sachs** (MBA '99) is the vice president of Evensky & Katz. Sachs is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA). He is a member of The CFA Institute, The CFA Miami Society, the Financial Planning Association, and The Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce. He serves on the Evensky & Katz Investment Committee and currently is pursuing the CFP designation. He is a graduate of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and a former Marine Corps flight test crewmember.
- **Johane Jean** (BBA '01) of Baker & Daniels, LLP, and volunteer with Central Indiana's United Way, graduated in May, 2008, from United Way's comprehensive leadership development program, Leadership United, in the largest group to complete it in the program's history.
 - **Kimon Andreou** (MIS '04), IT manager, Royal Caribbean, co-authored *Winternals: Defragmentation, Recovery, and Administration Field Guide* and *How to Cheat at Windows System Administration Using Command Line Scripts*.
 - **Sylvia Isern** (MSF '04) is the owner and manager of Goin' Postal Shipping Store on Sunset Drive in Miami. Goin' Postal celebrated its second anniversary in April, 2008.
 - **Basil Bernard** (MBA '05), president, Apricot Office Supplies and Furniture Inc./Office Furniture USA is a 2008 finalist in the category of Entrepreneurial/Professional at The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Miami (LM) program, "A Salute to Miami's Leaders" Awards, which honors LM alumni who have distinguished themselves within their professions and who, by their actions, have made Miami a stronger, more vibrant community.
 - **Archie Jeter** (MIB '06) was the grand prize winner of the investment track for the 2008 Entrepreneur Challenge. His business plan for "Go Global Educational Company" is dedicated to creating U.S. standards-based teaching modules delivered through the web. The company's international reach connects students to news, events, and people all over the world.
 - **J.C. Mendoza** (BBA '06) currently is in the Finance Management Associate Program (FMAP) at Bank of America.



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