MBS Graduate Lisa Colburn Writes Book, Starts Publishing Company

Maine Business School alumnus Lisa Colburn is a new author and publisher.

A non-traditional student who graduated from MBS in 2008, Colburn has written a new book filled with tips, tricks, and advice from knowledgeable and successful gardeners in Maine titled *The Maine Garden Journal – Insider secrets from Maine people who love to put their hands in the dirt.*

A compilation of expertise gathered from more than 100 ornamental gardeners from Kittery to Fort Kent, the book contains information about such things as the best pest management products, where to purchase garden supplies, plants, and tools, and which trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals, tropical plants and houseplants thrive in Maine.

Alumnus Eric Wages, Operations Manager at Google, Talks to MBS Students

Maine Business School students got a glimpse of what it’s like to work at Google last April when University of Maine alumnus Eric Wages, site operations manager at Google’s Moncks Corner, S.C., data center, served as guest speaker at Professor Nory Jones’ e-commerce class.

Winners of the first annual University of Maine Business Challenge are brothers Luke Thomas ‘13 and Jacob Thomas ‘13, creators and owners of Aerial Fly, which specializes in aerial imaging. Luke is a Maine Business School student while Jacob attends the University of Maine at Farmington. Creators of the Business Challenge are (l-r) Sangam Lama, Owen McCarthy, James Morin and Matt Diampa, all 2010 alumni who partnered with the Maine Business School and the Foster Center for Student Innovation to create a competition for UMaine student entrepreneurs.
Rod Sparrow ’71, President of Leaktite Corp., Says Business Innovation is Vital

Businesses must constantly reinvent themselves if they want to be successful, says Maine Business School alumnus Rod Sparrow, president of Leaktite Corporation in Leominster, Mass., a small, family-owned company that manufactures and markets plastic containers for professional and household use.

“You can’t rely on a product just because it’s currently popular,” says Sparrow, a Lexington, Mass., native who played on the University of Maine football team and earned a bachelor’s degree in business from MBS in 1971. Shortly after graduation, he joined Leaktite, then owned by his father.

“Reinventing itself periodically to infuse some excitement is the only way a small niche company can survive today,” says Sparrow, who lives in Bolton, Mass. “Our vision of the future demands that we remain sharp and respond to the needs of our customers and of the evolving marketplace. This has given my business longevity and allowed me to have something to pass on to my children.”

Google from page 1

Wages earned a computer engineering degree from UMaine in 2001 and attended MBS in 2003 and 2004, working towards his MBA. Professor Jones, director of graduate programs at MBS, invited him to talk about what it’s like to work at Google and about the employment opportunities at the company as part of a series she developed called “MBS Careers: What do you want to be when you grow up?” Other speakers who visited her class over the spring semester were from the insurance, banking and real estate industries.

Wages previously was employed by UMaine and COLSA Corporation in Alabama where he worked on the evolution of the MACH 5 supercomputer, the world’s largest Apple-based computational cluster. He has been employed for four years at Google which Fortune Magazine ranked among the top five on its list of one hundred best companies to work for. He oversees the teams responsible for deploying and maintaining the many computer hardware systems within the data center that run the various Google services, such as YouTube, Gmail and Search.

“I love my job,” Wages told the class. “I’m a computer geek first and foremost, but now I’m a manager geek, too. I have a whole team of people who fix hardware in data centers all day long. We have two giant buildings jam-packed full of computers valued at around $1.2 billion. We design our own servers, components, and power supplies so we hyper-optimize everything. My team keeps google.com running. It’s scary and comfortable at the same time to realize that if they don’t come to work things will fall apart.”

Google is a great place to work, according to Wages, who said the company is anything but conventional. “Job satisfaction is high. Most people are incredibly happy. We have awesome health benefits and we’re compensated pretty well. And the environment’s great – we’ve got air hockey and foosball, a rock climbing wall and a zen room. There are also massages. Working at Google is a weird world where the grass isn’t green, but rainbow colored. It’s like Willy Wonka’s Chocolate Factory. It’s not quite reality. People in their first job likely wonder if every place is like this.”

Google hires a certain type of person, Wages told the class. “We want go getters – people who always want to learn and who aren’t satisfied with the status quo, but want to make a difference in the world. We don’t want people who just want a job. We hire people who are driven to make revolutionary changes.”

With offices around the globe, Google has around 30,000 employees. Besides the data center where Wages works there are facilities in North Carolina, Oregon, Iowa, Oklahoma and Georgia, as well as two in Europe. Six or seven more are under construction.

Google is growing in terms of jobs, according to Wages. “It’s incredible how many positions we hire people for – everything under the sun. We launch projects all the time and we always need engineers and sales and marketing people. We hire massage therapists, janitors, electricians, CEOs, and anything and everything in-between. No matter your interest, your background or your experience, chances are there will be something available for you. I applied blindly to the website, which is proof that it works. You don’t have to know someone.

“If you have a math and business interest, we have a business operations department which works with everyone in the company to help them understand how they can be more efficient. They helped us assess how much it costs to repair machines and helped us optimize our repair processes. This department provides the statistics that make our lives better. They’re a really cool group to be involved with.”

Calling Google’s hiring process “legendary,” Wages said his own interview took six months.

“You need to be able to think on your feet because you’re given questions like ‘how many ping pong balls would fit into this room?’ We want people who can estimate quickly and shoot from the hip, who are comfortable making decisions on imperfect information. We evaluate people on knowledge and expertise, so if you’re a superstar programmer fresh out of school, you could be in the running. We talk to prospective employees about leadership and how well we think they could work in an environment where you’re always trying to advance and not just remain...”
MBS Adjunct Professor John Burns Manages the Small Enterprise Growth Fund

Nearly 17 years after it was established by the Maine Legislature, the Small Enterprise Growth Fund (SEGF) continues to support the state’s small businesses and entrepreneurs with help from Fund Manager John Burns, adjunct professor at the Maine Business School and 1977 graduate of the University of Maine.

Created in 1995, the SEGF is a venture capital firm that provides assistance to eligible small businesses in almost any industry sector through a $13 million revolving “evergreen” fund. The SEGF typically buys stock in a company, helps it grow and succeed, then sells its shares, takes the profit, and looks for other Maine companies in which to invest.

“We’re an economic development tool for Maine,” said Professor Burns, who scours the state searching for great investment opportunities. “We invest in promising small businesses that will contribute to the prosperity of Maine.”

Over the years, the fund has received capital contributions from the state and invested in a wide variety of companies including Coast of Maine Organic Products, which makes premium organic soils, Bar Harbor Biotechnology, Inc., which makes tools for genetic researchers, Angela Adams LLC, a design firm, and Anodyne Health Partners, which sold business intelligence software and conducts billing services for the healthcare industry.

The only venture capital firm in the state that invests solely in Maine businesses, the SEGF looks for companies that have potential for high growth and public benefit and that are either starting to generate revenue or are well into the market. Among other criteria, eligible companies must employ 50 or fewer people or have gross sales of $5 million or less within the past 12 months. All investments are approved by the SEGF’s 11-member board of directors.

Spreading the word about the SEGF is an important part of his job, said Professor Burns, who has been with the Fund since 2000.

Last fall he gave a presentation to the MBS advisory board and each month the Fund sends out an e-newsletter to about 600 entrepreneurs and companies with information about the Fund, its portfolio companies, and other facts relevant to early stage companies and entrepreneurs. He and his team make sure the public knows about the SEGF in other ways.

For instance, the Fund helps organize the Pitch Competition as part of the biennial Juice Conference in Camden, which brings together Maine entrepreneurs, artists, innovators, technology experts, finance professionals and business leaders. Thanks to contributions from individuals and organizations, the competition awards prize money to the companies with the most innovative and creative business plan. Last year, $150,000 in prize money was invested in several businesses. Professor Burns said he hopes that the number of participants and amount of prizes will increase in 2013.

Each year the SEGF awards the Shawn McKenna Scholarship to a first year MBA student at the University of Maine. The scholarship, named for Shawn McKenna, a 1977 MBS graduate continued on page 16
MBS News

MBS Professors Receive Summer Research Awards

Congratulations to four Maine Business School faculty members who have received summer research awards. They are:

• Assistant Professor of Management
  Patti Miles

• Assistant Professor of Human Resource Management
  Niclas Erhardt

• Associate Professor of Management
  Information Systems
  Nory Jones

• Associate Professor of Management
  Terry Porter

The professors, whose research spans a wide variety of topics, said that they were delighted with the grant. They said that they appreciated the recognition of their work and that they considered the award an affirmation that their research is valuable. They look forward to being able to spend the summer focusing solely on their research and aim to have it published in journals and to present it at conferences.

“This summer research award is a wonderful gift,” said Professor Porter. “I love to study, write, and think, but there are so many other distractions that it’s often hard to find the time.”

Professor Porter, who coordinates the MBA’s Business and Sustainability Track, plans to research how companies move towards becoming sustainable. When a firm uses sustainable business practices it focuses not only on economics, but on the environmental (ecological) impact as well as on social implications.

“I want to explore questions about how sustainability becomes part of doing business,” she said. “I’ll look at the strategic internal procedures of organizations and study the networking practices, interpersonal processes, and social dynamics that characterize companies which are going green. In addition to reading and writing, I am aiming to design empirical studies, talk to employees of companies, and plan collaborative projects with colleagues in other parts of the country and the world.”

Professor Erhardt will spend the summer researching the different types of teamwork that characterize men’s baseball, football and ice hockey. “We can learn from sports teams how to organize teams in the workplace,” said Professor Erhardt, who is a newly appointed faculty liaison for the UMaine men’s hockey team. Although he previously has written papers comparing teamwork in the business world to teamwork on sports teams, he now is embarking on a new tack. “Team sports are a useful laboratory for managers because they mirror business. Concepts such as ‘home run’, ‘point guard’, ‘coach’, ‘team player’, ‘quarterback’, ‘playing defense’, ‘singles hitters’, and ‘winners and losers’ resonate with most managers and professionals that engage in teamwork,” he said.

“I use interviews of coaches and players to understand how the structure and strategy of a game is created and transmitted through the team and how the team learns from mistakes. I’m also interested in how knowledge about one’s teammates’ capabilities, strengths, tendencies and weaknesses impacts the nature of teamwork. Some teamwork requires more adjustments based on the other players’ capabilities, which complicates things. I’m working under the assumption that it varies depending on the game.”

Professor Jones, director of the MBS Graduate Program, said she plans to explore how and why entrepreneurs use social media such as Facebook and LinkedIn. “I want to see what type of information they’re looking for and whether they find it and then use it as a competitive advantage,” she said. “For example, do they use it to obtain financial support or marketing ideas from other entrepreneurs? Or do they use it to increase brand awareness, boost sales or improve customer service? Over the summer, I’ll monitor the conversations and knowledge-sharing that occur in the social media sites and then see what I come up with.

“In addition to publishing this information, I’ll be able to transfer it into my classes,” said Professor Jones, who teaches e-commerce.

Professor Miles is interested in determining whether companies committed to sustainable business practices perform better while compensating their executives with lower salaries and paying higher corporate taxes. She recently completed a pilot study of 240 firms and said she was shocked to find that companies truly committed to corporate social responsibility do indeed pay executives less (about half of what their peers pay) while paying more in corporate taxes. The magnitude of this study motivated her to expand her research to include all Fortune 500 companies for the last 15 years. She is interested in determining if this is true for all Fortune 500 companies and, if so, what is the magnitude. She hypothesizes that if all Fortune 500 companies paid as little as 5% of their total revenue in taxes, some $2 trillion dollars would be added to the U.S. tax budget.

“I think firms with a stronger commitment to sustainability associate executive compensation with firm performance while other firms pay their executives a high salary regardless of how the firm performs,” she said. “Similarly, I think that firms with a commitment to sustainability pay more corporate taxes and actually have a higher return on investment and pretax income.” In preparation for her research, she has gathered 15 years of data on 490 public Fortune 500 companies and plans on spending the summer assessing their executive compensation, corporate taxes, and financial performance to see if her hypotheses hold up.
The University of Maine Net Impact chapter attended a March 22 conference sponsored by the Maine International Trade Association, where four German bio-energy companies discussed the latest technologies and processes they developed as well as the potential for future renewable energy markets.

The conference, held in Portland, featured representatives from:

- BIS E.M.S. GmbH, who focused on technologies the company developed for converting raw biogas into bio-methane, described as a more stable and valuable energy resource;
- APOS GmbH, who discussed the value of the company’s high-tech optical sensing device that can be used in power plants and in the wood products industry to optimize efficiency of biomass boilers;
- Vecoplan AG, who highlighted the company’s products for shredding, conveying and processing wood, especially for the creation of wood pellets; and
- Buttner mbH, who discussed the company’s industrial drying technology which is sold to the wood panel industry.

Attending the conference with Professor Terry Porter, who leads Net Impact and coordinates MBS’ Business and Sustainability Track, were Net Impact members Cassie Vaillancourt and Christopher Wallace, who are MBA students, and Christopher Burrell and Patrick Hart, who are undergraduate economics majors.

The purpose of the conference was to enable the German companies to network with Maine-based companies and find potential business opportunities in Maine and the U.S. “This event showcased what our Business and Sustainability Program offers – exposure to best practices around sustainability and business,” said Professor Porter.

With 240 chapters throughout the world, Net Impact is based in San Francisco and is aimed at providing opportunities for students interested in using business skills to further social and environmental goals.

Net Impact members said they enjoyed the conference and came away with new insight into bio-energy, which is any electric power or useful chemical product derived from organic matter, whether directly from plants or indirectly from plant-derived industrial, commercial, or urban wastes, or agricultural and forestry residues.

Christopher Wallace said he liked hearing from German companies which use innovative ways to make power plants more efficient and use biofuels. “I particularly enjoyed the presentation from BIS E.M.S GmbH and their focus on raw bio-gas to create bio-methane,” he said. “I am highly interested in technology and the company’s process for reusing particulates from the emissions, like carbon, for processes like carbonizing soft drinks. On the technical side, I was impressed with another company’s measurement systems for power plant fuels. This proves that companies are highly interested in marketing their products and sharing their innovative thinking for a better tomorrow.”

Cassie Vaillancourt said the conference “was a great opportunity to learn about some of the most modern and upcoming technologies in renewable energy from the companies that developed the technologies.” “I was interested in attending because many of the technologies pertain to the woods products industry,” she said. “Having a forestry background, I thought it would be a great opportunity to learn more about the technologies that are being developed to utilize and process wood products in different ways and that will have a great impact on the forest products industry.”
Maine Business School graduate students always enjoy and learn from the annual John Molson MBA International Case Competition in Montreal and this year was no exception.

First held in 1981, the Molson Competition is the oldest and largest MBA case competition in the world, providing valuable real life experience for more than 150 MBA students from around the globe who participate in a round-robin competition of business problem-solving which requires them to quickly put theory into practice. The competition is judged by 250 members of the Canadian business community who assess students on their creativity, insight, substance, and plausibility of implementation.

Team Maine consisted of Ian Burns, Fred Kaiser, Caitlin Clark and Richmond Dickey, who were coached by Executive-in-Residence Paul Myer and Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship Jason Harkins. Timothy Stormann, who served as team alternate and automatically has a place on next year’s MBS team, competed as a member of “Team Global,” a special team organized by the Molson event to take the place of a team from Nigeria that was unable to participate due to visa issues.

Students said the challenging and prestigious competition was a great opportunity to develop contacts with future business leaders from around the world, bring some competition into their academics, and benefit from personal mentoring from professors Myer and Harkins. They said that they came away with a new understanding and perspective of the issues that companies deal with every day and that they were pleased to be able to hone their creative thinking, analyzing, strategizing, team building, problem-solving and organizational skills.

Professor Myer, who has been involved with the Molson competition for five years, said each year he is impressed with the level of commitment and performance of the MBA students. “Whatever the competitive results, Molson is a dynamic and powerful learning and networking experience. The students have returned with a degree of understanding and self-confidence that will serve them well in future personal, academic and professional pursuits.”

Added Professor Harkins, “We saw a great deal of growth in the team this year that we anticipate will help them succeed in their classes as well as in their future jobs.”

Adding to the excitement were Dean Ivan Manev and fellow MBA student and former Molson participant Joseph Kellner, who attended the competition to lend their support to the MBS team.

The UMaine team was in a division with Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary; the Katz Graduate School of Business from the University of Pittsburgh; the Aalto University School of Economics in Finland; the Asper School of Business from the University of Manitoba; and the Sobey School of Business from St. Mary’s University in Nova Scotia.

Using the skills, knowledge and experience they acquired from their MBA classes, students spent three hours analyzing and evaluating four complex cases or challenges and developing a feasible solution which they had 25 minutes to present to judges. Participants also had an intense 15-minute period of questions and answers.

Through the cases, students were called on to make recommendations about how quickly a business should expand and where to obtain the necessary financing to ensure success; create a comprehensive philanthropy plan for a company; and determine sound business strategy for a firm in the aftermath of the unexpected death of one of the owners.

As part of a live case, CGI, a Canadian IT firm, asked the teams for ideas and recommendations on how it could continue to grow its global business. Team Maine developed and presented an aggressive growth strategy focused on the U.S. market, specifically the government and health care sectors. In a close contest, Team Maine won the case against the Aalto University School of Economics.

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Dennis Carey ’68 and Kristen (Everett) Stewart ’81 Join MBS Advisory Board

Welcome to Maine Business School’s new advisory board members Dennis Carey ’68 and Kristen E. Stewart ’81.

Now retired, Carey, a native of Rumford, Maine, has held senior executive positions at several Fortune 50 companies including the CFO of Home Depot, CEO of General Electric’s Leverage Buy Out business, and CEO of an eight-business unit sector for Motorola. He has served on numerous corporate boards as well as national non-profit boards. With his wife Wendy, he spends several months in Atlanta and the rest of the year on Long Lake in Naples. The couple has two grown children.

Vice-president and senior portfolio manager of BNY Mellon Wealth Management in Boston since 2010, Stewart has provided consulting and investment management services to institutional and private investors at firms including Shepherd Kaplan LLC, Putnam Investments, and Gannett, Welsh and Kotler. A native of Needham, Mass., she began her career as a commercial lender at Bank of New England. She lives in Dover, Mass., with her husband Rick and daughters Ashley, 17, and Mallory, 15.

Both Carey and Stewart said they look forward to helping ensure that MBS maintains high standards, that its curriculum reflects the current and future needs of the local business community, and that it continues to gain notoriety as one of the country’s top business schools.

“We have a real gem in the MBS,” Carey said, “and I would like to see our top prospects knocking down the door to gain admission.”

As a board member, Carey hopes to implement a plan that calls for organizing MBS alumni from the same community who would work together to promote the business school within the community and advocate for MBS at the local high school.

Carey, who has been deeply involved in leadership development at each company for which he has worked, said he hopes to share his learning in this and in other areas to help MBS graduates be work-ready and excel in their companies and organizations.

He may be retired, but Carey said he is busier than ever renovating and restoring a former summer camp for girls on Sebago Lake. Plans may include renting out the compound for functions such as weddings and corporate retreats.

Stewart said another of her goals as an advisory board member is to get to know students on a personal level. She hopes to help young people explore their interests and passions so they can find the right career path.

“I want to try and help them better define what they love to do so they can pursue the particular aspect of business that best suits them,” she said. Stewart also wants to help develop a wider business network for students to easily access as they begin their job searches.

“I want to be a resource for them as they begin to cultivate and manage their business relationships,” she said. Former captain of the University of Maine Tennis Team, Stewart said she still plays tennis regularly. She is an amateur photographer and enjoys skiing, boating, bicycling, and playing golf.

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The company offers what’s called “20 percent time” in which employees may spend a portion of their time developing new projects of their own choosing, he told students.

“It’s an effort to give people a creative outlet,” said Wages, who gives balance to his life through community involvement. He serves on the board of trustees at Trident Technical College, the second largest college in South Carolina, works with a technology incubator, and makes presentations at schools.

“That’s my 20 percent time,” he said. “That’s the stuff that keeps me engaged. It’s great that Google values it, too.”
Rod Sparrow from page 1

Leaktite sells a variety of multi-purpose utility and promotional pails, paper tubs, and pre-measured containers to hardware, paint and home center stores across the U.S. and North America. The company is known primarily for its customer branded five-gallon paint pail which is the number one item sold at Home Depot. With 92 employees, Leaktite manufactures its products on-site in Leominster, something that makes Sparrow especially proud.

“People appreciate purchasing goods that are made right here in the U.S., which supports the idea of this country being more self-sufficient.”

Adhering to his philosophy, Sparrow has made numerous changes to Leaktite over the years. Among other things, he transitioned from using metal tin plate to using plastic resin to make his products, added the five-gallon size pail to his line, and began producing heavier walled buckets used as shipping containers as a way to expand into new markets.

“We noticed that people were going into restaurants asking for empty buckets that had been used to package food,” Sparrow says. “We realized that these ‘packaging’ pails were a bonafide new product that could be sold in paint, hardware and building home centers. People wanted them for a variety of uses like washing their cars or mixing paint. It has turned out to be a very good secondary market.”

Sparrow initiated one of the biggest changes to Leaktite in 1996 when he decided to sell Leaktite products to Home Depot.

“Big box stores hadn’t been viewed as a volume outlet for our products,” says Sparrow. “But I thought we should partner with Home Depot and sell the pail potentially to every customer coming in the store who buys materials to do their project. It promotes the brand name of Home Depot which has become a very prestigious location for us. Today we sell 14 million pails a year to Home Depot and our 5-gallon pail is the number one item in Home Depot stores, stacked at the end of every aisle.”

Leaktite’s most recent change came in response to a growing consumer demand for environmentally friendly products. In 2002 Leaktite introduced “Leaktite Green,” a product line consisting of a variety of the company’s most popular trays, pails and buckets manufactured with sustainability in mind.

“We have hired designers to create new types of buckets and we have decided to start selling our products at automotive, sporting goods and marine supply outlets,” he says.

“Leaktite Green” is an example of how we met the changing needs of the marketplace,” Sparrow says.

Deciding to major in business at the University of Maine came easily to Sparrow, who was involved with Leaktite at an early age. “I worked at the company making pails during school vacations and summers. I wanted to follow in my father’s footsteps. I loved his low key style as a manager and leader.”

Sparrow, who played on the University of Maine football team, praised MBS for preparing him for a career and life after graduation. “I got a great foundation in accounting, statistics, business law and economics. I was anxious to learn as much as I could. I came to understand that a good businessman may not always have all the answers, but he always knows where to find them. My MBS education, coupled with my experience as a student athlete, honed my leadership skills and set me on the road to success.”

A devoted alumnus, Sparrow, with his wife Deborah ’72, provided in 2008 a generous gift to the University of Maine football program and athletic training education facility dedicated to the memory of Wes Jordan, the legendary trainer who treated thousands of UMaine athletes. Knowing how important it is for students to complement their class work with real life experience, he hopes down the road to help strengthen the internship program at MBS.

Meanwhile, Sparrow continues to initiate more changes at Leaktite.

“We have hired designers to create new types of buckets and we have decided to start selling our products at automotive, sporting goods and marine supply outlets,” he says. “We’ve also started a new line called Bucket Companion which will consist of a variety of accessories that can be added on to our pails so they can be used for other functions.”

Originally called Peerless Pressed Metal Corporation, the company was started by Rod Sparrow’s great-grandfather in 1925. It became Leaktite Corporation in 1945. His father took over in 1965 and Rod purchased it from him in 1984 to become president and sole owner. Today, his two daughters and son-in-law are co-owners of the company. Tobey Marchal is vice president in charge of Human Resources, and Stacey Brooks is clerk. Stacey’s husband, Jay Brooks, is vice president of sales and marketing.

“The wonderful thing is that I am passing something on to my children,” says Sparrow, for whom running a family business is immensely rewarding. Building for future generations provides a sense of purpose and pride and prompts the long-term perspective needed to grow the business.

Even after more than 40 years, Sparrow still takes pleasure in being active in the business.

“I view it as being the captain of my ship and controlling my own destiny,” he says. “I like mentoring the next generation and keeping everything running smoothly. I enjoy knowing I am contributing to the livelihood of my employees.” ■
MBA Student Richard Cannon Produces Recruiting Video

New and prospective students will be able to learn about the Maine Business School thanks to a video created last semester by MBA student Richard Cannon.

The approximately 10-minute film, which Cannon produced as part of the Correll Graduate Student Fellowship he was awarded in 2011, shows new and prospective students what MBS has to offer and helps them get a feel for the school.

In addition to presenting the University of Maine campus and the D.P. Corbett Business Building, the video features Cannon’s interviews with MBS students who discuss extra-curricular organizations, internships, and international experiences and explain how they are benefitting from and enjoying their MBS education. Cannon also included introductions to MBS professors, visits to classes and club meetings, and facts and information about the business school as well as clips from University Relations.

The video will be shown during open houses, accepted-student days, and student orientations and may be incorporated into the MBS website, according to Associate Dean Stephanie Welcomer, who asked Cannon to make the video.

Cannon said he enjoyed learning the video editing technology and talking to students and professors. “I was able to meet a lot of people and I got a new perspective on student business organizations,” he said. “In fact, while making the video I sat in on a NetImpact meeting and, after learning more about the group’s interests and goals, I decided to get involved.

“Producing the video turned out to be a great learning experience because I got to practice using video software and hone the video editing tools I learned in Dr. Welcomer’s organizational behavior class,” he said. “When I needed tech support, I went to the Collaborative Media Lab at Fogler Library and when I needed marketing advice, I asked the business school’s chapter of the American Marketing Association. Everyone was very friendly and helpful.”

Kristen Morrison, co-president of the AMA, said her group is “happy to help anyone looking for marketing advice.

“We advised Richard on the type of information to include in the video and on how best to reach people,” said Morrison, who appears in the video along with AMA Co-President Meryl McLellan.

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MBA Students Travel to Nicaragua to Study Fair Trade Coffee Production

Eight Maine Business School graduate students ended the Fall 2011 semester on a high note, travelling to Nicaragua from Dec. 28-Jan. 6 to study the social, economic and political effects of fair trade coffee.

The 10-day trip led by Associate Dean Stephanie Welcomer, associate professor of management, was one of the international field experiences offered by the business school each year. Co-leader was University of Maine alumna Sarah Bigney ’07, an organizer at the AFL-CIO who has worked at the Maine Fair Trade Alliance and is fluent in Spanish.

“Our goal was to explore fair trade coffee and how it is different from the conventional coffee trade,” said Associate Dean Welcomer. “We wanted students to better understand the practices and policies of growing and marketing fair trade coffee. We also hoped, through living in a rural coffee-producing village, to develop a heightened sense of the opportunities and challenges facing those who produce this crop.”

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Kim Preble ’11 Uses Marketing Skills at Engenuity Systems, Inc.

Working as a marketing associate at Engenuity Systems, Inc., in Chandler, Arizona, Kim Preble ’11 is enjoying using the skills she obtained at the Maine Business School even as she gains new proficiencies.

Co-founded in 1994 by University of Maine College of Engineering alumnus Tracy Markie ’84, Engenuity is the world’s largest distributor for energy efficiency control systems.

Preble, a native of Auburn, Maine, majored in marketing and management and minored in French, Spanish, and political science. She landed her job just three months after graduating from MBS.

Her parents, Joanne Deasy Preble and Jeffrey Preble, graduated from the University of Maine with Markie and kept in touch with him over the years, according to Kim Preble. When he happened to tell them that he needed someone to help his company with marketing, it seemed serendipitous.

“There I was with a marketing degree looking for a job,” she said. “It was all about networking.”

Preble’s sister, Sara Preble, also is a UMaine alumna who graduated in 2008 with a degree in nutrition. She is working towards a master’s degree in public health policy at UMaine.

The days fly by for Preble, who is non-stop busy. Her duties include writing newsletters and news releases, managing the information Engenuity posts on social media sites, researching data bases that the company uses to track customers, performing quality control checks and helping with sales support.

“I love my job,” she said. “I like the variety of tasks in which I’m involved. One week I’ll be working on a newsletter and the next on a press release. The next week something totally different comes along. I did a lot of writing at MBS, so I feel comfortable writing newsletters and news releases. Our products are very technical, so the biggest challenge has been to learn the practical, detailed side of everything. But it’s been really fun and interesting to learn. I also enjoy the marketing side of business. I find it interesting to look at human behavior and figure out why people make certain purchases.”

Preble, who credits MBS with preparing her for the workplace, made it a point to tell marketing Professor Harold Daniel and Executive-in-Residence Paul Myer about her new job. She knew her former teachers would be happy and proud to hear about her successful transition from school to career.

“MBS helped transform me from a teenager to a young adult,” Preble continued. “I learned how to be professional and go from a school setting to the business world.”

Happily ensconced at Engenuity, Preble advised young job seekers to branch out and expand past their comfort zone. Apply for a job, “even if you don’t come from a technical background,” she said. “As long as you are willing to learn, you will do fine.”

Community service is important to Preble, who plans to join the Rotary Club. She is using her marketing skills to help maintain social networking sites for a local domestic violence shelter for which Engenuity is raising funds.

“It’s nice to know that Engenuity is a successful business working to make a difference in people’s lives,” she said. “It’s an exciting and interesting company. I know my opinions and work are valued here. It’s rewarding to be excited by my work and feel like it truly is meaningful.”
Gary Roderick ’66 BS, ’67 MBA, Enjoyed Successful Career in Marketing Research

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tired after a successful 40-year career in marketing research, Gary Roderick says he enjoyed helping companies identify and develop new business opportunities, promote products, conduct and analyze consumer surveys and create advertising campaigns.

“I always liked the wide variety of the many projects in which I was involved,” says Roderick, who worked at a number of diverse businesses providing everything from financial services and ophthalmic products to real estate appraisals and household cleaning and health and beauty aids.

“A lot of new products fail without correct research,” he said. “So I studied demographics and competitive intelligence, and analyzed the psychology — such as likes and dislikes — behind people’s buying habits. This enabled me to help develop new products and marketing strategies for companies and to determine the best type of advertising and measure the effectiveness of these campaigns. Top executives used the information I provided in their decision making and in their strategic and market planning.”

A marketing major who was born in Portland, Maine and grew up in Caribou, Roderick earned a bachelor’s degree in business in 1966 and an MBA in 1967. He landed his first job as marketing research supervisor at Stanley Home Products in Easthampton, Mass., and went on to work as manager of marketing research at American Optical Corporation in Southbridge, Mass., vice president and manager of marketing research and information at Society for Savings in Hartford, Conn., vice president and manager of marketing research at Shawmut National Bank in Hartford, marketing manager at Gentex Optics in Dudley, Mass., and assistant vice president/marketing and development manager at Connex Credit Union in North Haven, Conn. He also served as an independent marketing research consultant for Amadon and Associates, a commercial real estate appraisal firm in Hartford.

“My work challenged me intellectually and it was exciting to see how research could be used effectively,” said Roderick. “I learned that the key to successful marketing is to create awareness of the product, service or company. If consumers are not aware of what you are offering they will not be able to purchase what you are selling as well as you expect them to.”

He also enjoyed the vagaries of his field. “I once heard a presentation by the executive who conducted marketing research for the Ford Mustang,” he recalled. “The advertising campaign had been aimed at young adults in their 20s and 30s, but it turned out to also be wildly successful with middle aged and older men who had always wanted a sports car. The presentation made me realize that marketing holds lots of surprises.”

Roderick, who retired in 2007, initially planned to major in history and government in college, but changed his mind after his father, an F.W. Woolworth store manager in Caribou, told him a business degree was likely to lead to more job opportunities after graduation.

It didn’t take long for him to realize that MBS was the place for him.

“The school provided valuable real-world experience,” he said.

He recalled a project in which he and his classmates were asked to develop a marketing campaign for Saddleback Ski Resort in Rangeley, Maine. “We had to conduct research and then develop an advertising campaign and make a presentation to the owners and managers. It was great to work with a real business.”

The case study method used at MBS helped prepare students for the business world, Roderick said, because it required them to analyze business challenges faced by real companies and then come up with possible solutions.

“We would work in groups, write up an analysis, make presentations and then have class discussions,” he said. “These case studies made the courses interesting, showed us the type of problems businesses encountered and gave us practice working collaboratively.”

Watching young people come and go during his lengthy career, Roderick said would-be entrepreneurs should have good writing and speaking skills and a familiarity with business technology. They should be flexible and adaptable, possess good time management skills and understand the value of networking.

“Staying in touch is important — you never know when you’ll need someone’s help,” said Roderick who recalled using networking to his advantage in identifying job opportunities and obtaining interviews.

Roderick lives with his wife Dolores in South Windsor, Conn., where he enjoys substitute teaching at the local middle school and high school, downhill skiing, and swimming and gardening. He spends a portion of each summer in northern Maine at the cottage he and his father built on Cross Lake in 1959.
Six years after graduating from the Maine Business School, Meghan Sayles ’06 is happily employed at Communispace, one of the fastest growing on-line market research companies in Boston.

Communispace takes the idea of focus groups to a whole new level by using private, on-line “communities” -- or groups of 300-500 consumers -- to help companies gain insight into how they do business.

Through discussions, surveys and live chats within these private on-line communities, Communispace obtains consumer perspectives on topics that a client company wants to learn about. This relevant and in-depth feedback enables businesses to more effectively conduct strategic planning, create advertising campaigns, develop marketing strategies, launch new products, improve and refine existing products, stay in touch with lifestyle trends and understand the mindset and purchasing habits that drive consumers.

“It’s market research with a unique twist,” says Sayles, a member services consultant at Communispace. She is responsible for recruiting participants into communities based on specific criteria and demographics established by clients.

“Communispace allows our clients access to a handpicked, ready-made group of individuals who offer ideas and advice from shared experiences and generate insight that helps drive businesses’ strategic decision-making,” she says.

“I work on recruiting members for many different communities at a time, so I’m constantly at different points in the process, bringing on new members and phasing out others. The recruitment efforts are different for each client, which keeps things interesting.”

Established in 1999, Communispace has built and facilitated more than 500 communities for clients including Hallmark, Kraft, Hewlett Packard, Godiva, MTV, GlaxoSmithKline and Mattel.

Sayles, who lives in Cambridge, Mass., has been busy since graduating from MBS with a degree in accounting. She worked at a small public accounting firm in Boston and then earned her MBA from Suffolk University. After learning through a web search that Communispace had been named one of the region’s fastest-growing private companies in the Boston Business Journal’s second annual Pacesetters awards in 2008, Sayles applied for a job-on-line. She was hired in January, 2011. She’s glad she decided to switch gears and try something different.

“Communispace is a really fun place to work,” says Sayles, one of about 350 employees in the Boston office. Another 50 are in satellite offices in New York City, London and Sydney, Australia.

“It’s a fast paced, exciting setting. We have a unique work environment where highly motivated employees are given the freedom and flexibility to implement creative, innovative ideas. It’s pretty empowering to have that freedom. Although recruiting members can be challenging, it’s fun to be able to get imaginative with my recruitment techniques. I’m slowly trying new and different ways to bring people on board. Also, having such a wide range of clients in different industries enables me to mix things up and helps me understand various business perspectives.

“Our unique company culture adds to the fun environment,” she continues. “There are lots of different events and activities for Communispace employees so we have become friends as well as colleagues.”

Constantly falling back on lessons she learned at MBS, Sayles says she has been able to translate into her market research role the critical analysis and thinking skills obtained through her accounting concentration.

“I also came away with an in-depth knowledge of Excel and, more importantly, a truly global business perspective,” says Sayles, who spent her senior year in Italy. “And, because of the great business foundation I received at MBS, I was able to waive many of the classes in my MBA program.”

In an interesting twist, MBS Professor Harold Daniel was showing his marketing research class a video about Communispace last fall when they happened to spot Sayles in the film. (Dr. Daniel, who aims to expose students to the cutting edge in marketing research practice, also often invites practitioners from select companies to speak in class, often through Skype.)

“I was doubly pleased to have the students see the video because it allowed them to see young people like themselves actually working in a firm on the cutting edge of this field,” he said. “It was great fun and quite a surprise to see a former MBS student and learn what she had been up to since graduation.”

Enjoying life in Boston, Sayles spends her down-time running half marathons and exploring restaurants. She keeps in touch with many of her former classmates. “I made some great friends at MBS,” she says. “We find lots of opportunities to network and help each other out.”
Nicaragua from page 9

Required for MBA students, these travel opportunities are about more than being a tourist; they are rigorous academic courses with assignments before, during, and after the journey.

Participants always enjoy and learn from their MBS-sponsored trips and this latest one was no exception. The days were jam packed as the UMaine travelers picked coffee beans, learned how coffee was processed, visited a fair trade cooperative, met with representatives of the fair trade cooperative organizations and spoke with economists, activists and political scientists to discuss the political and economic policies connected with fair trade coffee. They listened to presentations from social and political figures about the country’s political unrest, education system and current affairs. They spent several nights at the homes of coffee-growing families, toured the cities of Managua and Matagalpa and hiked in the Selva Negra Cloud Forest and the Masaya Volcano.

Several student travelers said they came away with a better understanding and appreciation of the people, culture, economy, business practices, politics and history of Nicaragua. They agreed they would never again look at their morning cup of coffee in the same way.

Shannon Byers, management major

“The coffee farmers pick coffee on the sides of steep, muddy mountain slopes. The coffee is grown on six-foot trees and, at this point, look like bright red cherries. The pickers fill baskets tied around their waists with coffee ‘cherries’ and empty the baskets into 40 pound burlap bags and then lug them back down the slippery slope.

“I’ve developed a huge appreciation for all the luxuries we have. I often think about the homesteads where we stayed and how few things the coffee farmers owned — some pots and pans, a couple of bowls, a wooden table and plastic lawn chairs for furniture. There was one light bulb hanging from the ceiling. The villagers subsisted mainly on beans and rice, but made sure we visitors had meat at every meal. They had to work so hard to survive. I woke up each morning at 5 a.m. to the sound of our hostess mashing corn to make tortillas.

“I enjoyed learning about the struggles of coffee bean farmers and how Fair Trade aims to help provide better living conditions and wages for them. I came away realizing that businesses play a huge role in social justice and have a responsibility to citizens of the U.S. and other countries.”

Ryan Curry, accounting major

“For me, the highlight of the trip was meeting Byron Corrales, an organic coffee farmer. Corrales was not fair trade certified due to the cost of certification but he exemplified many of the best values that fair trade attempts to accomplish. His goal was to be completely independent from oil. He used no chemical pesticides and his wet mill was the most efficient that we had seen so far. He used the same farming practices from hundreds of years ago that are not taught in school but instead passed down through the generations. He was voted the best coffee in the world in 2004 by Coffeereview.com, which means his methods must have some validity to them.

“The residents in the village where we stayed were part of a coffee cooperative. It’s prestigious to be a member of a coffee cooperative. You earn higher wages and everyone watches out for each other and helps each other. I stayed with a father, mother and two children in a one room house with a dirt floor. The family did not have many luxuries but were very happy with what they had. They were extremely friendly and interested in our families and how we lived. They told us stories about the travelers they had hosted from around the world and how much they enjoyed meeting new people.

“One cooperative member said fair trade has helped increase the revenues from coffee. He said the price is fair but that there are too many middlemen involved in the process. He told us that his cooperative, which has a volunteer board of directors, is a member of a larger group of 21 cooperatives which provides technical advice and financing. His cooperative’s greatest challenge is communication since many directors cannot read and are unsure if their interests are being fairly represented.”

December 2011 Graduates

Emily Antonico, Accounting & Marketing, Manchester, NH
Matthew Beaudet, Management, Brunswick, ME
John Bekus, Finance, Hillsborough, NJ
Brian Berube, Greene, ME
Rachel Binder-Hathaway, Finance & Accounting, East Millinocket, ME
Brandon Brown, Accounting, Poland, ME
Jonathan Charette, Lisbon, ME
Michael Cleary, Finance, New Limerick, ME
Paige Clifton, Accounting, Portland, ME
Jennifer Colby, Accounting, Bath, ME
Marcus Desjardins, Management, Bangor, ME
John Diamond, Management, Glenburn, ME
Robert Foster, Finance & Accounting, Hampden, ME
Linda Gagain, Management & Psychology, Lincoln, ME
Kirsten Glidden, Management, Cape Nedlick, ME
Cameron Gunn, Management, Orono, ME
Casey Henderson, Finance, Bangor, ME
Gregory Henrikson, Bath, ME
Jane Hewes, Accounting, Portland, ME
Gregory Hodgkins, Finance, Jefferson, ME
Blake Jordan, Finance, Madison, ME
Kathleen Kienstra, Finance & Marketing, West Bath, ME
Gregory Kolvoord, Accounting, Newburgh, ME
Travis Lebrun, Marketing, Lewiston, ME
Andrew Martin, Management, Orono, ME
Charles McMahan, Newburgh, ME
Melinda Rivera, Marketing, Bangor, ME
Ronald Roope, Jr., Brewer, ME
Abbey Setiel, Marketing & Management, Old Town, ME
Mary Simón, Auckland, New Zealand
Bronson Swazy, Marketing & Psychology, Bangor, ME
Eric Taylor, Management, Bucksport, ME
Jeffrey Valliere, Management, Biddeford, ME
Andrew Whittaker, Finance, Mansfield, MA
Sean Wignall, Management, Mount Desert, ME
Laura Wolfson, Management, New Gloucester, ME

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Jeff Schweitzer ’97 Says
Social Media is Good for Business

Maine Business School alumnus Jeffrey Schweitzer, EPA, CEP, ATP of Northeast Financial Strategies, Inc., in Wrentham, Mass., is using Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn to grow his family business.

"Just as email became a major part of business 15 years ago, social media has done the same today," said Schweitzer, a tax and financial services professional who earned a bachelor’s degree from MBS in 1997. "It has made it possible to enhance our advertising, find out what people are looking for and build relationships with our clients and their families. It ties us to our community by helping us keep up to date on what’s going on.

"Since today’s consumers rely on social networking sites as well as on-line communities, blogs, and the Internet to find information about products and services, it’s crucial for entrepreneurs to adapt their business to the changing times," he continued. "If people in this business don’t make it a point to get on these platforms today, they’re going to miss out.”

Northeast Financial Strategies, Inc., has become a major player in the Wrentham area. In a local newspaper contest, the company recently won the “best place to do your taxes in Wrentham/Foxborough” title.

Founded by Schweitzer’s father Jim Schweitzer in 1976, NFS offers financial and estate planning, investments, insurance, accounting, payroll and income tax preparation for individuals and small businesses in the area. The company serves about 800 clients. In addition to Jeff and his father, the NFS team includes Jeff’s wife Dawn (Wright) Schweitzer ’97 and neighbor Michelle Ricci.

Although he originally planned on a career as a radio disc jockey, Schweitzer discovered the salaries in that industry to be disappointing. He joined NFS in 1998, learning the ropes with help from his father and continuing education courses. Today he holds his Life, Accident and Health Insurance Broker’s license and has earned the Estate Planning Associate (EPA) designation and the Certified Estate Planner (CEP) designation, and is an Accredited Tax Preparer (ATP) through the Accreditation Council for Accountancy and Taxation (ACAT). He specializes in financial and estate planning, insurance, accounting, payroll, income tax preparation and notary services.

“I wear many different hats and I enjoy the variety,” he said. “I like dealing with all kinds of people and the challenges they bring me. No two people are the same and everyone’s situation has its own complexities. We work with everyone – people right out of college, young parents with families, pre-retirees and seniors. Every day is an adventure.”

Schweitzer loves being involved in a family business.

“You’re working alongside people who are willing to do what it takes to get the job done the right way for the client and who are working equally as hard because it is our name that goes on the final product.”

A technophile who always enjoyed using social media personally, Schweitzer found it natural to take the next step and rely on it for professional reasons. His father, who always considered NFS to be a front runner when it came to technology, liked the idea of having a company presence on social media sites.

“Although my father isn’t involved with Twitter yet, he does have his own personal Facebook page,” Jeff Schweitzer said. “He has always made sure that we stay up on ways to keep the business ahead of the rest when it comes to presence online.”

Schweitzer uses technology to advance his business in other ways. He manages an extensive company website which includes links where viewers can get information about financial concepts and business financial decisions as well as access financial worksheets and government documents and forms. Customer testimonials also can be found on the website which he created after taking a Management Information Systems (MIS) course at MBS. It has evolved from a one-page business card and can be found at (www.nfsnet.com).

Schweitzer also writes a company newsletter that he sends out by email each week. Each newsletter deals with a different topic and includes inspirational quotes and short stories. He updates the NFS website each day in the typical “blog” format with timely information on tax and financial happenings.

Last September he won a YouTube video contest launched by Life Insurance Selling Magazine, a sales publication for life, health and financial planning professionals. He credits his victory to his friends on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

“I have quite a strong group of social media connections whom I asked to vote for me and who helped me win 55% of the votes,” said Schweitzer, who won an iPad and a “Producer Profile” article complete with cover photo for his winning video about the importance of purchasing life insurance.

“This drives home the point about how powerful social media is and how it allows you to reach a huge amount of people,” he said.

Nearly 15 years after graduating from MBS, Schweitzer continues to fall back on his business education. “The Maine
Lisa Colburn from page 1

Last year, nearing completion of the book, Colburn realized she wanted to control important decisions about editing, designing, marketing, distributing, producing and selling. So she started Fern Leaf Publishing, aiming not only to publish her own book but also to help other authors issue books about living the good life in Maine.

“Whether the topic is gardening, cooking, crafting, or even short stories about growing up in Maine, I want to publish books that share the values and practical good sense characterized by Maine people and explore and reveal the spirit of our communities,” Colburn says.

An avid gardener who spent most of her life in Fort Kent, Colburn was inspired to write The Maine Garden Journal after moving south to Orono in 2000 and encountering numerous challenges trying to start a garden in a new Plant Hardiness Zone, a geographically-defined area in which a specific category of plant life is capable of growing.

“Going from Zone 3 in the St. John Valley to Zone 5 in central Maine, I felt as though I had moved to the tropics of Maine,” says Colburn.

“Although the new zone opened up a whole new world of possibilities as far as gardening was concerned, it left me with lots of questions about where to find plant experts, nurseries with unusual plants, and organizations with real, put-your-hands-in-the-dirt gardeners. It took me so long to figure these things out that I thought, ‘It shouldn’t be this hard!’”

Using newspapers and garden-related publications, Colburn asked people to contact her if they wanted to share their garden experiences. Gratified to hear from passionate gardeners throughout the state, she sent them a 12-page survey asking about the plants they grew, the gardening books they read, the products they used, how they dealt with black flies, and much more.

“I received an almost 100 percent response,” she says. “People were so excited about participating. They not only answered questions, they wrote in the margins, stapled extra pages, sent photos, and even corrected my spelling. They provided extensive gardening tips, tricks, techniques and good old common sense. Not only did they provide facts, but they included entertaining stories written in a wonderful folksy way that I also included in the book. Many of them thanked me, saying ‘I’ve wanted to tell someone this stuff forever.’”

Colburn spent more than a year compiling the secrets of these successful gardeners into databases and spreadsheets, making sure the taxonomic names and contact information were correct, and taking photos to accompany the text.

Published this spring, The Maine Garden Journal is available at retailers throughout the state and on Amazon.com.

“I learned so much from writing this book,” says Colburn. “All these pearls of wisdom from people — many of whom have been gardening all their lives — makes for a fantastic resource.”

To read more about Colburn’s book, go to MaineGardenJournal.com ▼

Schweitzer continued

Business School gave me the skillset to handle the challenges I face every day in business,” he said. “I constantly revisit principles used in my accounting, marketing and management classes. My professors were phenomenal — they pushed me to excel past my limitations. And my classes were challenging and rewarding.”

The days fly by for Schweitzer, who is proud of how far he has come since graduating from MBS. Running a successful business means listening to clients, acting on their feedback, keeping promises, staying accessible and visible and being active and involved in the community, said Schweitzer, who lives in Wrentham. He and his father sponsor local sports teams, host fundraisers for local organizations and coach teams for the local sports programs, including the American Legion Baseball program which Jeff and Jim Schweitzer founded. In addition to participating in the extracurricular activities of his three daughters, ages 8, 5, and 3, he volunteers in their classrooms. A life member of the University of Maine Alumni Association and the National Eagle Scout Association, he serves as secretary for the Massachusetts/Rhode Island Chapter of the National Association of Tax Professionals and as treasurer of the Wrentham Youth Baseball/Softball Association.

“Giving back to the community is a priority for us,” he said. ■
Professor Nory Jones, director of MBS graduate programs, said, “I am proud of the enthusiasm and dedication of our MBA students, who always strive to make the most of their learning experiences. They do a terrific job representing the Maine Business School at the annual Molson Case Competition.”

MBS participants agreed that they benefitted from the Molson competition in a variety of ways.

“It fused a lot of the knowledge I had about various business functions into something that could be used to problem-solve strategically instead of tactically,” said Ian Burns. “I also came away with a new appreciation for focus. When you have limited time to sort through a fair amount of data, it forces you to prioritize. Finally, my experience will help me when I interview for a job since many companies are weaving problem-solving through business cases into the interview process. After being part of the Molson competition, I couldn’t imagine a better way to prepare for that.”

Caitlin Clark obtained valuable experience in communicating effectively and thinking quickly on her feet. “I also gained some insight from the viewpoints of the other teams and judges,” she said. “The Canadian judges demonstrated some differences in perception of business environment, strategy and operations that I wasn’t expecting, but found interesting.”

Richmond Dickey said he learned how to “better approach business issues and challenges quickly and effectively. This experience really pushed the limits of my knowledge and teamwork skills and will allow me to tackle problems more effectively and enable me to look at all the solutions available rather than the most obvious.”

Fred Kaiser said his teammates’ talent “helped me reach deep and give the best of myself.”

He called the competition “a wonderful opportunity for business students to have an experience that may mirror their actual future careers,” and said the experience has made him more confident in reasoning and communication.

One of the most important lessons he learned came from right from the Maine Business School.

“I was so pleased that Dean Manev and fellow MBS student and former Molson competitor Joe Kellner took time out of their schedules to drive to Montreal to watch the team compete and to lend their support,” he said. “It helped me realize the importance of a manager or a colleague supporting people on the road. I will always remember to take care of my team when they are working away from the home office.”

“International Case Competition from page 6

John Burns from page 3

who serves on the MBS board of advisors and is CEO and managing director of Starlight Development Overseas Ltd., an international restaurant company, provides tuition as well as an internship with the SEGF.

Now, aiming for increased visibility, the SEGF has hired Cook Consulting in Portland to help with marketing.

“Cook Consulting will help us increase our social media presence, for instance through Facebook, and also work to increase the number of press releases we send out and the circulation of our monthly newsletter,” Professor Burns said.

“We know that many newer companies with the potential for high growth and public benefit have heard about the SEGF, but we want to make sure that businesses that have been around for 5-20 years know about us.”

Professor Burns finds up-and-coming businesses in which to invest by collaborating with entities in Maine that work with high growth potential companies such as the Maine Technology Institute in Brunswick, the Maine Center for Entrepreneurial Development in Portland, Coastal Enterprises, Inc., in Wiscasset and its for-profit venture capital subsidiary, Coastal Ventures, as well as the Target Technology Incubator in Orono. He also discusses investment opportunities with the Maine Angels, a group of business executives and financial and technical professionals who invest in promising early-stage companies.

“My job is always stimulating,” said Professor Burns, who holds the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation and earned a bachelor’s degree in resource economics from the University of Maine, a master’s degree in resource economics from Pennsylvania State University, and an MBA from Babson College in Boston.

“I enjoy learning how a particular company is unique and why its products and services are valuable,” he said. “I’ve met lots of interesting entrepreneurs and I find it gratifying to help them work through the myriad of issues that small companies face so they can grow and succeed.”

When he’s not working with the state’s small businesses, Professor Burns teaches a consulting course for MBA students at the Maine Business School where he has been an adjunct professor since 2007. As part of the class, students work with businesses with which the SEGF is involved. “Last year one of our companies, Red Zone Wireless, was looking to expand so students did a study of new markets and new products that it could develop,” he said.

“Our students provide a real value for our portfolio companies,” he said. “They enjoy the opportunity to work with CEOs and help Maine businesses, some of which may be struggling. They take these projects seriously and do a great job.” Anyone interested in working with the SEGF or who knows an eligible business looking for growth capital may contact Professor Burns at john@segfmaine.com or 207-373-9306.”
Michael Rankin ’12 Takes Job at Macdonald Page & Co. LLC

Maine Business School graduate Michael Rankin ’12 has taken a job at Macdonald Page & Co. LLC in Augusta. He will be a member of the audit staff at the Maine-based accounting firm, which also has an office in South Portland.

Rankin, who was hired when he was a junior accounting major at MBS, participated in an eight-month internship last year at Macdonald Page’s Augusta office where he was assigned a variety of duties, including preparing tax returns and auditing various companies and government entities. As part of an audit team, his role was primarily working with cash, accounts payable, and fixed assets. He thoroughly enjoyed being part of a professional team in a fast-paced environment. When Macpage offered him a job after graduation, he jumped at the opportunity.

The internship helped launch his financial career, said Rankin, who grew up in Manchester, Maine, just 15 minutes from where his new office is located.

“It was incredible how valuable my experience was,” said Rankin, who wrote weekly reports and received nine credits for his internship. “I worked during tax season so I was quickly immersed in the whole environment. I learned about the rules and regulations involved with tax returns and how to use the tax and audit software. I also enjoyed meeting CEOs and finance directors of the various companies we worked with. As a college student, having the opportunity to develop relationships with so many executive level and influential people added tremendous value to my overall experience. Everyone was very patient, took time to answer my questions and provided positive reinforcement.”

MBS Professor Steve Colburn’s class in Federal Taxation of Individuals helped prepare him for the rigors of his internship, according to Rankin, who plans on becoming a CPA. “I got a great foundation and was introduced to the most important rules and regulations. I felt very well prepared for the challenges I faced at Macdonald Page on a day-to-day basis. It was great to be able to build on my classroom experience while learning exactly what it takes to survive in the high-pressure atmosphere of public accounting. I learned as I went and asked lots of questions.”

Sara Hasty, office manager at Macdonald Page, one of the largest accounting firms in northern New England, said her firm was fortunate to have Rankin as an intern. “Mike was exceptional,” she said. “We enjoyed having him at Macpage. He was an asset to the firm. We appreciated his work ethic, his sense of humor, and his desire to learn.”

Internships benefit businesses by creating a candidate pool for future hiring, providing first-hand knowledge of abilities of potential future employees, providing extra manpower, creating a way to give back to the community and strengthening the relationship with the Maine Business School.

Macdonald Page hires interns each year for its South Portland and Augusta offices, according to Hasty, who said internships “help us gauge what future accountants/CPAs are learning and how they will fit into the Macpage culture.”

Over the years, more than half of Macdonald Page’s interns have been MBS students. These MBS interns often are hired as full-time employees. When Rankin, who considered his professors to be friends and mentors, told them about his job offer, they were excited for him and proud of him.

“We knew you would do well,” they said.

Now a new MBS graduate, Rankin is excited about the future. “I am very much looking forward to starting my career as a public accountant with such a great firm,” he said. “It was nice to be recognized for my hard work. I put in 60 hours a week during tax season and the job offer made it all worthwhile. Signing my contract lifted a tremendous amount of weight off my shoulders. I felt like all my hard work all these years had finally paid off.”

Tim Stormann from page 6
excellent opportunity to further sharpen my decision making skills and learn how to build effective and successful teams. I enjoyed the networking opportunities, I met some fantastic people, and I liked how Team Global’s attitude was centered around learning as much as possible and taking in as much as possible from the opportunity given to us.”
Sasha Misan ‘09 Is Strategy Analyst at Shell Exploration & Production Services in Moscow

Nearly three years after graduating from the Maine Business School, Russian native Sasha Misan is back in her home country, working as a strategy analyst at Shell in Moscow.

“My job is exciting and challenging,” says Misan, who supports governance of Shell’s Russian assets through planning and strategy processes.

“For Russia, oil and gas is a very important business,” she said last December during a visit to campus. “I never really liked politics, but here I am working in the most political industry in the world. I find this business to be very interesting because it has global presence. You have to think about not only what’s happening here in Russia but also about the impact from, for example, events in Libya and Japan.”

After graduating from MBS in 2009 with a degree in finance, Misan planned for a career in investment banking. However, she was offered a year-long internship at Competitive Energy Services, a Portland, Maine, company which provides a broad variety of strategic energy management services such as procurement, risk management and budgeting. She accepted, knowing this would be a great way to broaden her professional skills. Then, life events sent her back to Russia where she happily assumed her current position at Shell.

“She’s glad she did.

“I love my job,” she says. “It’s never the same. My team gets involved in lots of different projects so I work with a variety of stakeholders and get exposure not only to financial, but also to technical, legal and commercial aspects of the business. I am able to see a very broad picture of Shell’s activities in the region as well as globally.

“I joined Shell through what’s called the Shell Graduate Program which is focused on personal and professional early career development. Within my first year and a half here, I’ve been able to grow professionally in many ways. I have not only developed an understanding of the oil and gas business but, maybe more importantly, I have honed my ability to communicate with people and deliver results more efficiently.

“I really like my colleagues,” she continues. “Going to work is like going to meet my friends. There’s a lot to do and we’re busy all day, but we don’t lose our personal side. Another great thing is that Shell is truly an international company and on any given day in one room there can be people from Italy, South Africa, Netherlands, Ireland and, of course, Russia - all working for one company to reach one goal.”

Misan, who grew up in Irkutsk, was introduced to the University of Maine while attending high school in nearby Brewer through an international exchange program. “My host family would take me to Black Bear hockey games and I came to really love the campus,” she says.

“UMaine is just the right size – small enough so you’re not just a face in the crowd, but big enough so you’re not always seeing the same people.”

The decision to attend the Maine Business School was easy. “A business degree prepares you for many different careers,” says Misan, who majored in finance.

Her MBS education gave her a strong foundation, says Misan, noting that the knowledge that she got in the classroom, her experience in SPIFFY (Student Portfolio Investment Club) and her internships at United Way of Eastern Maine and at Johnson Management Group, both in Bangor, enabled her to go out into the workplace feeling prepared and confident.

“The Maine Business School provided me with the functional and soft skills I use every day, but it also shaped me as a person which is the best thing that college can do for you,” says Misan. “I learned such crucial skills as problem solving, time management and presentation. I have great confidence in the education I got here.”

She praises MBS faculty for “providing the opportunity to take what you have learned in class one step further.”

“My professors always were offering to share books, articles and case studies,” she says. “If you took advantage of these you could greatly expand your classroom knowledge. Professors Bob Strong, Rick Borgman and John Mahon are truly my friends and mentors. When I got my job at Shell, they were among the first people I told. I knew they’d be proud of my accomplishments.”

As a recent graduate, Misan found it easy to come up with advice for those about to enter the workforce. “Be open minded and don’t box yourself in thinking there’s only one career path for you,” she suggests. “There’s so much you can do with your business degree and what you learn here at MBS is likely to be applicable in any industry. Also, start applying for jobs early – don’t wait until May when you’ve graduated. Many big companies start hiring in January, so start sending resumes in the fall of your senior year. Finally, don’t hesitate to talk with recruiting agents. They can help you explore different jobs and help you shape your resume.”

Sasha Misan

Sasha Misan ‘09 is strategy analyst at Shell Exploration & Production Services in Moscow.
Meet Scott Burian ’14

Scott Burian is making the most of his time at the Maine Business School.

In addition to his classes, the junior marketing major participates in a number of extra-curricular activities. He serves as a student ambassador, engaging new and prospective students. He performs community service as part of Alternative Spring Break. And, last semester, he worked as an intern at the University of Maine Alumni Association.

“I like being busy,” says Burian, a member of Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity.

Calling his UMAA internship a “great learning experience,” Burian says he spent much of his time focusing on social media marketing. Among other things, he helped set up a LinkedIn account for the association’s new Black Bear Business Network.

“The UMAA plans to use the network to feature alumni stories about business school graduates and help them advertise their businesses and start discussions.”

A Connecticut native, Burian says he enjoys being a student ambassador helping UMaine’s Office of Admissions. He promotes the University of Maine and the Maine Business School at open houses, college fairs and “accepted student days,” and he contacts prospective and admitted students to answer questions they may have about the school.

“I like having a leadership role, sharing my experiences and being informative and helpful,” he says. “It’s good to know I have prompted other students to come to UMaine so they can enjoy the school as much as I have.”

Alternative Spring Break has been a highlight of his UMaine experience. Most recently he assisted Peace River Refuge and Ranch in Zolfo, Fla., a nonprofit exotic animal sanctuary that cares for abused, neglected, confiscated or unwanted animals. Last year he worked with the Martha O’Bryan Center in Nashville, a faith-based facility which helps children, youth and adults transform their lives through work, education, employment and fellowship.

“Community service has always been important to me – I like knowing I’m helping make a difference,” says Burian who joined Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity because of the fraternity’s focus on philanthropy and community involvement.

Meanwhile, he is enjoying his time at the Maine Business School.

“I’m definitely learning a lot about all aspects of business,” says Burian, whose father, Steven Burian, earned a graduate degree in entomology at UMaine.

For his part, Scott Burian hopes to pursue a career in advertising. “I have some creative ideas and I think I’ll be able to come up with some good marketing strategies,” he says. “I’m getting excited about going out in the world and seeing what changes I can make.”

The Fund is an opportunity for those closest to the University of Maine, our alumni, parents, friends, and faculty/staff to play an important role in the University’s present and in its future.

As its name suggests, The Fund seeks support each and every year, from new and existing donors. The Fund is used to support teaching, research and student facilities, and to provide scholarships. Our main objective is to ensure there are funds available to allow us to respond quickly and appropriately to the areas of greatest need within the University. Your donations, combined with those of others, make a significant and immediate impact on the quality of the ‘UMaine Experience’ for our students.

We invite you to become an active part of this campaign by making your gift on behalf of the Maine Business School today. Please make your gift to The FUND by visiting us on-line at www.umaine.edu/give or by calling 207-581-1148 or toll-free 866-578-2156. Remember, it isn’t just about how much you give, but the fact that you give that makes a real difference.

For more information about The Fund, contact Ullysses Tucker, Jr. (ullysses.tucker@maine.edu), Director of Annual Giving, at 207-581-1157.

Again, thank you very much for your consideration and support.
Tourism Research

The Maine Business School is helping the state’s tourism industry by conducting research for the Maine Office of Tourism and the Maine Woods Consortium about the types of vacation experiences that would attract travelers.

During the past academic year, students in Associate Professor Harold Daniel’s marketing research class and MBA graduate assistant Ian Burns surveyed more than 600 leisure travelers in the U.S. and Canada through an on-line questionnaire. Students helped create the questionnaire that was distributed by Survey Sampling International, a global provider of sampling solutions for survey research. Students then analyzed the data using standard industry software for data analysis. Also participating in the project was Bowdoin Professor David Vail, who has written extensively about tourism in Maine.

The focus of the survey was the measurement of leisure traveler interest in and willingness to pay extra for quality assurance or quality labeling of tourism businesses by objective third party organizations. This is often called business “certification.” Respondents in the survey were asked about how much they valued hospitality services and recreational activities labeled “certified,” as well as how much they valued assurance of minimal environmental impact and maximum contribution to the economy of the host community. Respondents were also asked whether they were interested in vacationing in Maine.

According to the findings:

A substantial segment of potential tourists highly value certified dining quality, lodging quality and recreational activity quality as well as certified sustainable environmental practices and community economic contributions for the host community.

There is a market segment of creative or “experiential” tourists who are interested in activities involving hands-on “learning-and-doing.” These tourists could represent the primary target market for vacations in interior Maine involving skiing, hiking and wildlife watching, as well as for vacation packages featuring educational activities lead by expert guides, naturalists, historians, artists, photographers, crafters and others.

These creative tourists place the most value on all types of certification.

Findings point to several strategic initiatives that might be investigated for application by individual businesses, by the Maine Woods Discovery partners and by Maine Woods destination communities and regions, said Professor Daniel. These include opportunities for outdoor recreation providers to enrich itineraries through seasonal festivals, performance series, arts and crafts galleries and antique shops, and attracting tourists by enriching core outdoor recreation offerings with learning-and-doing activities.

“An important take-away conclusion from the analysis is that the state’s tourism and regional economic development programs could sharpen their focus on investments that enhance tourists’ opportunities to learn about our state’s culture and heritage through direct involvement in it,” Professor Daniel said.

This is the second consecutive year Professor Daniel’s marketing class has taken on a real-life marketing research project based in the state’s tourism industry. In 2011 students surveyed leisure travelers on behalf of Four Directions Development Corporation, the non-profit economic and community development agency serving Maine’s four Wabanaki tribes, to determine whether a business opportunity exists in voluntourism. These special research projects have proven to be extremely valuable educational experiences for the students and provide a real benefit to the client organizations involved,” Professor Daniel said.

“We plan to submit the findings from the most recent project for publication in the Maine Policy Review,” he said.