

# M

MITCHELL MAGAZINE



# contents



**ON THE COVER**

*Running with Numbers: MBA student Shane Monagle is one of eight Mitchell College of Business students who compete on the USA track and field team.*

*Left to right: Brylan Shirley, MBA student; Sam Mika, marketing major; Carter Tinnerman, economics and finance major; Nic Glass, accounting major; Mallory Norton, supply chain and logistics management major; Macy Livingston, economics and finance major; Clervie Chagot, economics and finance major; and Shane Monagle.*

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## Dear Friends of the Mitchell College of Business,

It is an exciting time to be a Jaguar and a Mobile business community member. With a new civic center arena downtown, the building of the International Airport at Brookley, a (hopefully) new Bayway bridge, the deepening and widening of the port of Mobile, and expansions at Airbus, Austal and others, the Mobile economy is certainly on a roll.

Mobile and our regional economy have the proverbial wind in their sails, and literally every month (or week), there is another groundbreaking or ribbon-cutting ceremony. Mitchell College of Business graduates are often leading these efforts with investments in building the future of the local economy. Case in point, the Mobile Chamber, CSX and Scannell Properties held a groundbreaking ceremony and formal announcement of the Platinum CSX Select Site designation for RailPort Logistics Mobile, a 500-plus acre industrial park in Theodore, Alabama. This represents another excellent employment opportunity for our Supply Chain Management students for years to come.

Also, as many of you know, this is the 25th Anniversary of the naming of the College of Business. Although not USA alumni, Abe, Mayer and Arlene Mitchell endowed the University of South Alabama College of Business in 1999. Without this transformative gift, the Mitchell College of Business would not be where it is today. The college was renamed to signify that donation's extraordinary contribution to the future of business education at South. That same year, through the generosity of Abe Mitchell, the Mitchell Scholars Program was created, which is the single largest privately funded scholarship program at the University of South Alabama. None of the success of the Mitchell College of Business would be imaginable without the generous support of Mr. Mitchell and many others in the community.

As a result of this ongoing support, multiple new programs have been developed for launch next fall, which will provide additional revenue streams and increase enrollment in the college. Think along the lines of Mitchell College Centers of Excellence, which include the Melton Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation and the South Alabama Center for Business Analytics, Real Estate and Economic Development (better known as SABRE). Both of these are self-supporting with donor and grant funding and have been instrumental in creating new undergraduate majors in Entrepreneurship and Real Estate.

Our goal is for students in the Mitchell College of Business to be part of a distinguished learning community created to cultivate the next generation of ethical business leaders. At Mitchell College of Business, we have been successful in ensuring that our students, regardless of their economic backgrounds, can pursue and realize opportunities that enable them to fulfill their dreams.

This ability to educate the next generation of ethical business leaders and transform the personal and professional trajectory of talented and deserving students is core to our mission. Through the philanthropy of our donors and the dedication and commitment of our faculty and staff, MCOB is allowed the privilege and opportunity to achieve this important strategic objective and ensure student success.

Moreover, the University of South Alabama's network of students, alumni, parents, supporters and friends runs wide and deep. USA graduates consistently support each other – academically, professionally and personally. There is a passion for this University, rightfully so. It truly does feel like being part of a family. This is a very special place, and I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as dean.

As we close out the year and look forward to the future, I am enthusiastic regarding the continued success and positive momentum for our city, our University and especially the Mitchell College of Business.

Happy New Year and Go Jags!

**MICHAEL CAPELLA, Ph.D.**  
**DEAN, MITCHELL COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**

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 **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA  
MITCHELL COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**

# 2024-25 Ambassadors

The Mitchell Ambassadors are a group of outstanding undergraduate Mitchell College of Business students who are leaders in extracurricular activities, excel in academics and represent the College at a variety of activities and events.





**Charlie Wine**  
CLASS OF 2025

**Hometown:** Cantonment, Florida  
**Major:** Marketing  
**Involvement:** Wine serves as president of the Mitchell Ambassadors for the Mitchell College of Business. He also holds the prestigious title of section leader for the Jaguar Marching Band's trumpet line.  
**Aspirations:** After graduation, he plans to work for a sports marketing agency to gain experience before starting his own marketing firm.



**Angelina Ladner**  
CLASS OF 2026

**Hometown:** Pass Christian, Mississippi  
**Major:** Marketing  
**Involvement:** Ladner is a Mitchell Scholar, a member of the Honors College, a South Alabama social media influencer and an Honors College Ambassador. She serves as a marketing assistant for the Mitchell College of Business. During the 2023-2024 academic year, she represented the Mitchell College of Business as a Student Government Association senator, and she remains actively involved in various campus organizations.

**Aspirations:** She intends to pursue an MBA at the Mitchell College of Business while working in product marketing in Mobile.



**Casey Caliva**  
CLASS OF 2026

**Hometown:** Bay St. Louis, Mississippi  
**Major:** Accounting  
**Involvement:** Caliva is a proud member of South Alabama's dance team, The Prowlers, and an active member of the Phi Mu sorority.  
**Aspirations:** After earning her bachelor's degree, she plans to obtain an MBA and pursue a career in pharmaceutical sales



**Kiera Earls**  
CLASS OF 2025

**Hometown:** Robertsdale, Alabama  
**Major:** Finance  
**Involvement:** Earls is a Mitchell Scholar, treasurer for the Financial Management Association student chapter and director of finance for her sorority, Alpha Omicron Pi. She has embraced opportunities at the Mitchell College of Business, including serving as a student manager for the Jaguar Investment Fund.

**Aspirations:** She will complete her internship with Morgan Stanley and pursue her CFA Level I certification. Earls plans a career in wealth management or corporate finance, gaining industry experience before continuing her education.



**Olivia Malasovich**  
CLASS OF 2024

**Hometown:** Slidell, Louisiana  
**Major:** General Business Management  
**Involvement:** Malasovich is actively involved in Club 505, Pathway Church, Victory Health Partners and the Society for Human Resource Management. She interned at Airbus, where she discovered her passion for human resources.  
**Aspirations:** Malasovich plans to earn an MBA with a specialization in human resources.



**Elizabeth Skeen**  
CLASS OF 2025

**Hometown:** Bay Minette, Alabama  
**Major:** Accounting  
**Involvement:** Skeen is a Mitchell Scholar, a proud member of the Chi Omega sorority and an active participant in Mortar Board, a national honor society.

**Aspirations:** She aims to work in private accounting and later return to the Mitchell College of Business to earn her MBA.



**Baxter Turner**  
CLASS OF 2027

**Hometown:** Tibbie, Alabama  
**Major:** General Business  
**Involvement:** Turner is a dedicated member of the South Alabama football team, a Mitchell Scholar and an active participant in the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and Campus Christian Fellowship.  
**Aspirations:** He plans to pursue a master's degree in forestry after graduation.



**Brianna Britton-Rocker**  
CLASS OF 2025

**Hometown:** Mobile, Alabama  
**Major:** Marketing  
**Involvement:** Rocker is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, the NAACP, Circle K International, the Black Student Union, the American Marketing Association, the Pre-Law Society and the Student Government Association.  
**Aspirations:** She plans to earn an MBA, attend law school and pursue a career as a corporate lawyer.

"I truly believe MCOB is one of the best places in the Southeast to advance students in their studies and get them good job opportunities."

—BAXTER TURNER



**Brice Knotts**  
CLASS OF 2025

**Hometown:** Mobile, Alabama  
**Major:** Finance  
**Involvement:** Knotts is involved in youth soccer development and outreach, serves at Dayspring Baptist Church and volunteers as a JV soccer coach.  
**Aspirations:** He plans to work in the insurance and financial services industry in Mobile and transition to financial management within the National Park Service.



**Maggie Overstreet**  
CLASS OF 2024

**Hometown:** Jackson, Alabama  
**Major:** Accounting  
**Involvement:** Overstreet is grateful for the opportunities she has been provided, from receiving a Mitchell Scholarship to serving as an Ambassador while pursuing her accounting degree.  
**Aspirations:** She plans to earn a master's degree in biomedical sciences and apply to medical school.



**Charbel Mawad**  
CLASS OF 2024

**Hometown:** Mobile, Alabama  
**Major:** Finance  
**Involvement:** Mawad is a Mitchell Scholar and an active member of Mortar Board and the Catholic Student Association.  
**Aspirations:** He plans to attend law school.

# Hair's Half Million

Dr. Joe Hair, director of the Ph.D. program at the Mitchell College of Business, reached a milestone when his marketing research articles were cited for the 500,000th time.

**D**r. Joe Hair, one of the most prolific academic researchers in the history of the University of South Alabama, reached a satisfyingly round number in October when his business and marketing articles were cited for the half-millionth time.

The Director of the Ph.D. program at the Mitchell College of Business ranks No. 1 in the world among professors cited in marketing, multivariate data analysis and structural equation modeling. He's also a management consultant and textbook author who describes himself as an entrepreneur always looking for opportunities.

"I basically reinvented myself when I was 62," said Hair, 80, who became a college administrator late in his academic career. "I've reinvented myself my entire career, and my long-term success as a scholar, teacher and consultant has been based on continuously reinventing myself."

At South, he recruits nontraditional graduate students with a flexible curriculum that enables them to attend classes on weekends and keep working in business and industry. The Ph.D. program's business analytics concentration was ranked No. 2 in affordability in TechGuide's 2024 ratings.

"These students are experienced, intelligent and highly motivated," Hair said. "And they too want to reinvent themselves."

Hair grew up in Orlando, where he worked for his dad's plumbing business. In the fourth grade, he won an award for selling the most magazines in a school contest. In high school, he taught ballroom dancing and urged students to buy shoes at the store where he worked on weekends.

"Talk about cross-selling," he jokes.

Hair attended the University of Florida, where he earned bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. Before coming to South, he taught at Ole Miss, Louisiana State University and Kennesaw State University.

Throughout his academic career, Hair has worked as a marketing consultant. He's made speeches at conferences and seminars on six continents. COVID-19 slowed his pace for a while, but now he's back to flying 100,000 miles a year.

He still finds time to teach graduate courses each semester.

"Teaching and research go hand in hand," Hair said. "I'm constantly updating my books, and I use my students and their feedback to learn what I need to improve upon. It's like a circular chain. I could not update my books if I didn't stay in touch with what's happening in the field, and the way I stay in touch with what's happening is through my teaching and research."



# Staying Put and Giving Back

Jay Hunt, a management instructor, student advisor and former SGA president, adds "scholarship donor" to his list of contributions at South.



**W**hen Jay Hunt teaches business communication, he tries to put Mitchell College of Business students at ease. He's fun and funny. He's also a South alumnus who's walked in their shoes.

"I tell them I've been in this classroom as a student," he said. "I remember being a freshman. I remember going to SGA meetings. I also tell them you can do a lot more than you think you can. You just need to get out of your comfort zone. That's one of my big phrases."

Hunt, 52, has done more than he ever thought he would at the University of South Alabama.

As an undergraduate, he was elected president of the Student Government Association. He earned a bachelor's degree in communication, a master's degree in communication and a master's degree in business administration.

For nearly two decades, he's taught management classes. He's an advisor for the Pi Kappa Phi fraternity. He has founded and led several business clubs and student associations.

In 2023, he started the Hunt Family Endowed Scholarship for Servant Leaders. The family donation was matched by the Mitchell-Moulton Scholarship Initiative. The interest from the endowment will help students pay tuition and continue their education.

"I wanted to give back," Hunt said. "I'm on the scholarship committee in the Mitchell College of Business, and I saw the impact these scholarships had. A few years ago, I worked with my fraternity to establish an endowed scholarship for our 50th anniversary, and that process made me realize it was something my family could do. I wanted to create a legacy that honored my family's commitment to community service, faith and giving back."

Supporting students remains one of his primary goals at South.

"I still enjoy the kids," Hunt said. "I've worked with hundreds of students since 1992 and even before that. The first lecture in my classes was about



Left to right: Dr. J. David Stearns, associate dean of students and eventual assistant vice president for enrollment services; Jeff Solomon, SGA attorney general; Alabama Gov. Guy Hunt; Jay Hunt, SGA president; and SouthPaw in 1988.

"I also tell them you can do a lot more than you think you can. You just need to get out of your comfort zone."

—JAY HUNT

how academia is different from the real world. All the rules are going to change."

Hunt loves to tell stories about what the "kids" and "dudes" in his classes are doing. He admires the young entrepreneurs who think up side gigs to make money and use what they've learned in class.

In public speaking classes, he's helped generations of students overcome their fears of talking in front of groups. He preaches patience and practice in developing an essential business skill.

Hunt grew up in Mobile and attended Baker High School near the South campus. After graduating from the University, he worked for a local company, Integrity Music, which published and produced Christian songs and albums.

"It was a vibrant time," he said. "I was there for an incredible growth phase during the heyday of Christian music. I was on the business side, but I did everything from snapping fingers

on the background track of an album to writing the royalty software program we used to process payments to songwriters."

After working in music, Hunt became a youth minister. Then he heard about an opening for an instructor at the Mitchell College of Business. Administrators at South remembered him from his days with the SGA.

Like so many alumni at South, Hunt marvels at how much the campus has grown and changed. What was a commuter college has become a regional university. He enjoys being part of a tradition of education and leadership.

His own mentors at South included Dr. Jeanne Maes, a professor of management. He often thinks of her when he comes to campus.

"Her office is my office now, which is surreal," Hunt said. "I thought she was a phenomenal teacher and caregiver. She and Don Mosley (another South management professor) were two of the professors where I thought, I want to be like them."

# Account-ability

A South graduate student's work for a campus tax program helps her get a job offer from the world's largest accounting firm.

For Margaret Bradford, a volunteer tax program at the University of South Alabama became the connection that helped her land a job with Deloitte, the biggest accounting firm in the world.

While earning bachelor's and master's degrees in accounting at South, Bradford worked with VITA — Volunteer Income Tax Assistance — a nationwide program that helps low-income people prepare their tax returns. During her first year, she remembers, a woman cried after Bradford helped her qualify for a \$500 deduction.

"That's when I fell in love with this program," Bradford said. "When you go into accounting, you don't always think it'll make a difference, but you can, in a small way."

In January 2024, Bradford applied with Deloitte and got a job interview. She talked about her VITA experience. To her surprise, one of the company managers had worked with the program, too.

It was a short meeting, which Bradford thought was a bad sign, but in February, she received a job offer. It took a few days for her to accept.

"I've always been a fighter. I've always had to fight for everything, and this was coming so easy that I almost had to question it," Bradford said. "I had to remind myself that this was a company I'd always dreamed of working for in a city where I always wanted to live."

In downtown Denver, she found an apartment near her office building. It's a short commute.

"Three minutes," Bradford said, laughing. "My apartment is 350 feet from my office."

Once a week, she drives outside the city to visit the offices of her first client, a biofuel company. She's already been hiking in the famous Garden of the Gods park in Colorado Springs.

Bradford, 26, used to enjoy jogging near South's campus. Now she's adjusting to the thin air of the Mile High City.

"As soon as I got here, I tried to do some running," she said. "I made it about half a mile and almost ate some asphalt, because I wasn't used to it."

Bradford grew up in Clarke County, 90 miles north of Mobile, where her father owns a small sand and gravel business. As a teenager, she started helping with the books. Though she's also a fine artist who enjoys oil painting, she decided to pursue a career in accounting.

At South, her work with VITA became a graduate assistantship that helped pay for her education.

Throughout her life, Bradford has struggled with dyslexia and ADHD — attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Simple tasks often require intense concentration. She fights through it.

"It's harder for some people than others," she said. "It can be very difficult for me when we have an audit and I have to do a lot of writing."

At Deloitte, Bradford is the only Southerner in the office. She's self-conscious about her accent, but co-workers tell her it's charming.

Her career goals include becoming a manager. She may return to Alabama one day. She's also interested in earning a doctorate and becoming a college professor.

Her parents helped her move to Denver. They're proud of her, but sad to see her live so far from home. They plan to return to Denver in the spring.

Bradford has been inspired by her grandmothers in Alabama, who never had the opportunity to become businesswomen or professionals.

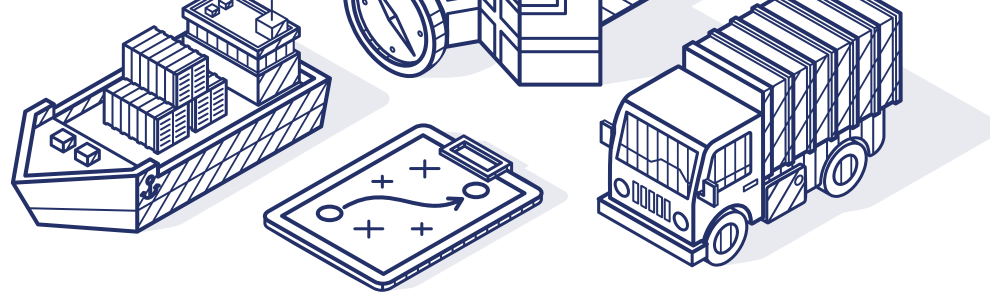
"Once, my Mimi told me that she had no regrets, but she always wondered what she could have done," Bradford said. "I know I won't reach the end of my life without finding out what I can accomplish."

"I know I won't reach the end of my life without finding out what I can accomplish."

—MARGARET BRADFORD







# Chain Reaction

With growing interest in supply chain management, the Mitchell College of Business will expand its degree program by adding new courses in port and distribution management.



Supply chain majors and Dr. Peter Simonson visit a local shipping dock to get exposure to real-world supply chain issues.

For students and professors of supply chain management, the COVID-19 pandemic remains the biggest test of global transportation systems, though there are always new problems and potential crises.

Whenever there's a dockworkers strike or a container ship stuck in the Suez Canal, business analysts wonder what lessons may be learned.

"Everybody's thinking about it more," said Dr. Peter Simonson, assistant professor of marketing, supply chain management and analytics. "The industry is moving from just-in-time production to just-in-case inventory. Overall, we probably got too lean, speaking generally, and people are moving toward having more inventory to handle disruptions."

Business schools have taught distribution and logistics for decades, but the field of supply chain management only dates back to the 1980s. Since then, global business has become ever more interconnected.

Mitchell College professors include Dr. Alvin Williams, a past Journal of Supply Chain Management editor. He has presented academic papers and led professional seminars at more than 300 conferences in the United States, Europe, Africa, Asia and South America.

Williams teaches a Supply Chain Management course, and works with juniors and seniors on independent study projects.

In the Mitchell College of Business, which offers a degree in Supply Chain and Logistics Management, students learn the theoretical background along with practical applications. There is a Supply Chain Club and an undergraduate research program. Many students choose to major in Supply Chain Management and minor in Business Analytics.

"Our students get jobs all over the country and opportunities all over the world if they want," Simonson said.

"It's that kind of field. We had one student who went to work in Singapore. She came back and said, 'All they talk about is uncertainty, just like you said in class. How do we handle uncertainty?'"

One of the lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic is that global supply chains are stronger and more resilient than many had thought. Shortages of most goods were not critical. Businesses regrouped, and transportation systems rebounded.

"Everyone was frustrated, and there were some brutal exceptions, but we could get pretty much all of the things we needed," Simonson said. "We've got a strong economy and distribution system. And without improvements in supply chain management, it would have been much worse. When you step back and look at it, you actually think, wow, that was pretty amazing."

Next fall, he will begin teaching a Distribution Center Management course. This spring, the Mitchell College of Business will add a class in Port Management. It will offer certification by the International Association of Maritime and Port Executives.

"We're one of only a few university partners with the association who offer a class for undergraduates," Simonson said. "We think it adds value to our degree to have industry certifications."

The Port of Mobile is being deepened to 40 feet, which will offer access to fully loaded freighters that have passed through the Panama Canal. There are already regional distribution centers for Amazon, Walmart and Ace Hardware. A new South Alabama Logistics Park in Theodore will offer millions of square feet of warehouse space.

All of this makes supply chain management a popular choice for business students who would like to start careers on the Gulf Coast.

"Supply chain management is kind of unusual," Simonson said. "It's very high tech, very computer-based, but it's also blue collar. If students want to be figuring out how to get something from here to there, out on the docks or in a factory, this is a great major."

"Supply chain gets you out in the field as much as anyone would want. Certain students really like that."

# Shared Leadership

Dr. Christina Wassenaar, associate professor of management, brings a business philosophy to her role as president of the Faculty Senate.

**A**s president of the Faculty Senate at the University of South Alabama, Dr. Christina Wassenaar tries to practice what she preaches as a writer and researcher in the emerging field of shared leadership.

She emphasizes teamwork and distribution of responsibility among peers, groups and organizations.

"My style is collaboration to create a shared vision, a shared goal," Wassenaar said. "I'm doing what I study in my research. I come with a lot of professional experience and consulting experience. I don't come in with the mindset that my opinion is the one that needs to win."

"What I really like is the idea of mentoring the future leadership of the Faculty Senate. We're all busy, so it's important that the time we spend together is useful. People want to be heard in a constructive way."

As an associate professor of management in the Mitchell College of Business, Wassenaar teaches undergraduate and graduate business strategy and organizational behavior courses. She's developing an executive MBA program that will begin accepting students next fall.

Her model for that effort comes from the Drucker School of Management at Claremont Graduate University, where she earned her master's degree and doctorate. She and Dr. Craig Pearce, a Claremont mentor and colleague, have written a chapter on shared leadership in a textbook called "The Nature of Leadership."

Wassenaar grew up in a Dutch farming community in Southern California. She earned her bachelor's degree in agriculture business management from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

Her career has included time overseas. While living in Turkey, she worked as a business consultant, taught at the American University of Nigeria and contributed educational material to a leadership program for young women in Afghanistan that was funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

In 2016, she joined the Mitchell College of Business faculty. Last year, she won a prestigious Fulbright Scholar Program award to study peace creation in the Republic of North Macedonia. She works closely with colleagues at the Saints Cyril and Methodius University, along with U.S. State Department representatives. Her responsibilities include strategic planning and curriculum development.

Wassenaar will make additional trips to North Macedonia this winter and next spring. The country has seen conflict between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians, which makes her work more challenging and more rewarding.

"I like areas that are a little bit dicey," she said. "I don't want to go study in the Netherlands and hang out with family and eat Dutch food. I want to actually do stuff."

In Mobile, the professor pursues a number of interests. She collects art and inherited her father's stamp collection. She hikes and rides horses when she gets a chance. She enjoys cooking, especially when meals help bring people together.

As an undergraduate at Cal Poly, Wassenaar says, she learned to think outside the walls of her discipline. As a management professor, her research includes cybersecurity and artificial intelligence, and their roles in business and leadership.

In the Faculty Senate, where issues include professor pay and teaching workloads, her goal is to be less antagonistic and more effective. She's focused on the big picture and long-term relationships with University administrators.

"I don't seek power," she said. "I seek impact."

Shared leadership at South includes a common vision for higher education, along with a commitment to doing what's best for students and the people who teach them, she said.

"We call ourselves a flagship university, so we need to act like one," Wassenaar said. "A flagship is out front. It's leading the discussion, not following it."



"I like areas that are a little bit dicey."

—DR. CHRISTINA WASSENAAR

# From Coastline to Classroom

A Mitchell College of Business student prepares to take the helm of the family oyster farm business.

**F**ather and son Doug and Ben Ankersen work together in their family oyster farm business on the bay off Dauphin Island, Alabama. Ben and his two sisters have been assisting with the operation since they were children.

Doug, a mechanical engineer, started Isle Dauphine Oyster Co. in 2013 as a supplier of equipment for local oyster farmers. He had previously begun oyster farming as a hobby at his family's property on the Dog River in Mobile County before moving to Dauphin Island.

"One day, as I looked out from our view on the river, I thought maybe we could try to grow oysters here," said Doug. "After a lot of experimentation and research, I learned that the water quality was better for oyster farming in the saltier waters of the Gulf of Mexico, and eventually a small business was born."

After high school, Ben came to South to study mechanical engineering like his father, but he changed his major in his junior year after realizing his passion was running the family business. "One day, I thought, you know, my dad owns an oyster farm, and I know that business, so maybe I'll try something in business," said Ben. "Then I took my first business class, and it just clicked. I immediately started to learn things that I took home that night and talked to my dad about. Best decision I ever made."



Ben, now a business management major, is planning to run Isle Dauphine Oyster Co. after finishing his degree. "I wanted to understand how to run the business, how to understand the financial side and how to manage people," he said.

"One of the classes that I took that had an immediate impact on our business was Organizational Communication with Jay Hunt," he said. "I didn't think I could learn so much from one class. I could immediately use what I learned in classes in an issue we were having between two employees."

Last spring, a group of Ben's classmates took a field trip to visit the company's operations. They learned how the farm operates and what ecological benefits oyster farming provides, and they had a chance to taste fresh oysters harvested that morning.

"I was so happy to share my family's entrepreneurial adventures with other students," he said. "It was exciting to discuss all that we have learned while figuring out how to run this business."

I like showing them how passionate I am about my family business, and maybe it can help them find what they're passionate about."

The oyster farming industry is booming along the Alabama Gulf Coast, with around 12 commercial farms generating an estimated economic impact of over \$300 million annually. It requires respect for the environment and an understanding of marine ecosystems, and it plays a crucial role in environmental conservation by improving water quality and creating artificial reefs. The Ankensens' oyster business practices sustainable off-bottom oyster farming and delivers fresh oysters directly to local restaurants.

"I will be graduating in December," Ben said, "and my goal is to become the general manager in five years and take the burden off of my dad, who's been doing this for the last 11 years. I'm happy that I chose to get this business degree. I know I will use everything I've learned, and I'll help grow our family's business."

*Left: Doug And Ben Ankersen show off their oyster farm bounty. Right: Business students take field trip to learn business strategies at their classmate's family oyster farm.*

"I like showing them how passionate I am about my family business, and maybe it can help them find what they're passionate about."

—BEN ANKERSEN



# Super Commuters

It's not unusual for students to commute to the University of South Alabama campus to get their education, but Noah Farhadi and Danny Navarrete fall into the super commuter category.

Both are enrolled in the Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration program in the Mitchell College of Business and are pursuing a business analytics concentration. While the program includes some online sessions, students attend classes in Mobile approximately three times per semester and a total of 20 weekends over the duration of the program. They arrive on a Thursday before leaving Sunday. That's where it gets tricky for Farhadi and Navarrete. They commute to Mobile from other continents. Farhadi makes the journey from Cairo, Egypt. Navarrete resides in Quito, Ecuador.

"I wouldn't be able to do it if I didn't love what I am currently learning," Navarrete said. "Every time I must go to the airport and say goodbye to my wife and 6-year-old daughter, I wonder, 'Are you sure you want to do this?' And the answer is always a big yes!"

To make the trip, Navarrete leaves on a Wednesday evening, boarding a midnight flight from Quito to Atlanta. He does his best to get some sleep during the five-hour flight; otherwise he endures a 36-hour day.

Farhadi's journey to South, involving nine time zones, is even more arduous. He must fly through a major European hub such as Paris, London or Frankfurt, Germany, on his way to the U.S., landing in Atlanta or Charlotte before making his final connection to Mobile.

"Staying organized and keeping a clear focus on my goals enables me to utilize my time efficiently, whether I'm in the air or on the ground," he said. "Plus, I love South's facilities and learning environment. After a long flight, I feel fresh and energized whenever I enter our facilities."

While Farhadi and Navarrete travel the farthest of anyone in their cohort, more than half of their classmates commute from the West Coast of the United States.

Dr. Joe Hair, the program's director and Cleverdon Chair of Business, understands the commitment all students make and what they bring to the program.

"I love teaching these students because they are highly motivated, intellectually curious and have the unique ability to combine practical business knowledge with the theoretical foundations and analytical methods they are learning in our Ph.D. program," he said. "Of course, we also have many students from Alabama and this region that stimulate and enhance the discussions overall."

Farhadi knew Hair prior to entering the program. Hair was also Farhadi's professor and mentor in 2008 when he was pursuing a doctorate in the United Kingdom.

"Dr. Hair is truly a global icon in data science and analytics," Farhadi said. "The Ph.D. program's emphasis on diversity and its collaborative inclusion were key factors in my decision to attend South, aligning perfectly with my academic and professional goals."

**"My experience so far has been nothing short of transformative."**

**—NOAH FARHADI**

With more than 500,000 citations of his research and scholarly accomplishments, Hair is well-known in academia and a major reason Navarrete chose South.

"Dr. Hair has so much knowledge and is recognized all over the world. I even used his book before meeting him," Navarrete said. "He really cares about the program and its students. He is simply amazing."

The Ph.D. in business administration is designed as a three-year program. Navarrete and Farhadi both expect to complete their degrees in 2026, so many more long flights are in their future.

"My experience so far has been nothing short of transformative," said Farhadi. "Balancing rigorous academic research with practical teaching applications has enhanced my understanding and approach to finance, making this journey highly rewarding."

# 2024 Ph.D. Cohort



**HIND ALMARSHAD**  
Mobile, Alabama  
Lecturer  
Bisha University in Saudi Arabia



**TYRISHA JENNINGS**  
Equality, Alabama  
Personal Banker



**FAHAD ALOWAYQIL SR.**  
Mobile, Alabama  
Lecturer  
Bisha University in Saudi Arabia



**MELINDA MAGHUOY**  
Mobile, Alabama  
President/CEO  
The Infirmary Federal Credit Union



**LOGAN BARRETT**  
Mobile, Alabama  
Executive Director of Career and Academic Success and Advising  
Spring Hill College



**ERIKA RAMSEY**  
Aiken, South Carolina  
Real Estate Agent  
Coldwell Banker Best Life Realty



**ABIGAIL HAGOOD-DOKTER**  
Mobile, Alabama  
Supply Chain Planner  
BASF



**ASHLEY ROSEBORO**  
Montgomery, Alabama  
CEO, Roseboro Holdings and Roseboro Foundation  
Adjunct Instructor, Alabama State University



**NATHANUSORO IDIO**  
Chambersburg, Pennsylvania  
Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria  
Associate Professor, University of Maryland Global Campus  
Management, Strategy and Operations Consultant



**TIMOTHY SPIVEY**  
Pensacola, Florida  
Senior Operations Analyst  
Mediacom Communications Corporation

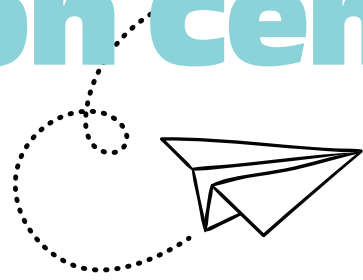


**HENRY GRANT WILLIAMS**  
Birmingham, Alabama  
Senior Marketing Manager  
Alttec Inc.



[LEARN MORE >>](#)

# The Melton Center in Action



The Melton Center helps people start and improve their businesses:

- Business plan creation.
- Startup training.
- Business consultation.
- Loan advice.
- Minority Business Accelerator program.
- Nonprofit consultation.

## Our Mission

The Melton Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation leverages federal, state and local resources to impact and expand the entrepreneurial culture at the University of South Alabama and contribute to the economic development of the Central Gulf Coast region through education, engagement and development opportunities. It all starts with an idea. See your ideas take flight at the Melton Center.

2024 Coastal Pitch Competition  
left to right: Dr. Ray Wu, Tyler  
Cassity, Jacob Vianco, Michael  
Bowdoin, Gavin Giles.



# INITIATIVES



## COASTAL PITCH COMPETITION

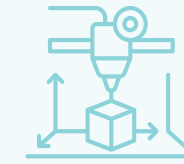
The Coastal Pitch Competition features a science fair-style format for the University's students to display their innovations and pitch to potential customers and investors. This year, students were awarded over \$10,000 between both the Coastal Pitch Competition and the Coastal Venture Competition to start and grow their businesses.

This year's Coastal Pitch Competition first-place winner was the business concept Shelf-Life, presented by business students Gavin Giles, Michael Bowdoin, Tyler Cassity and Jacob Vianco. Shelf-Life would provide a smart-scanning device that would keep track of grocery inventory levels using AI and machine learning technology.



## CLAY SHOOT FUNDRAISER

The Melton Center hosted a Clay Shoot in April at Bushy Creek Clays in Perdido, Alabama. With C Spire as the title sponsor, 18 teams competed for prizes donated by local businesses and raised nearly \$14,000 for Melton Center programs.



## COASTAL VENTURE COMPETITION

The Coastal Venture Competition gives students the opportunity to present their business ideas using a slide deck to a panel of judges in the hopes of gaining capital for their businesses.

This year's winner, Manulab, won first place and received \$3,000. Manulab's business model uses 3D printing technology to replace broken hardware and accessory parts, helping consumers reduce their overall costs and material waste.

A subcategory under the Coastal Venture Competition was for the best in-depth business plan, which was won by Brylan Shirley for his company, The Boys Moving Services.



## BUILD-A-BRIDGE PROGRAM & SPARK PITCH COMPETITION

This year, 110 students from 12 local high schools participated in the Melton Center's Build-A-Bridge Program, which aims to help students develop an entrepreneurial mindset.

Throughout the program, students learned how to start a business, market their ideas and effectively pitch their business concepts. The program concluded with the Spark Pitch Competition, where 55 students competed for over \$4,000 in seed money to launch or grow their businesses.

This year's winners were Nyla Burley and Princess Powe from LeFlore High School in Mobile for their existing business, and Ashley Cauley from Alma Bryant High School in Irvington, Alabama, for her business concept.



## \$200,000 GIFT FROM MERCHANTS & MARINE BANK

Clayton Legear, President and Chief Executive Officer of Merchants & Marine Bank, presented \$200,000 to Dr. Michael Cappella, dean of the Mitchell College of Business, and Dr. Don Mosely, executive director of the Melton Center, to support Melton Center programming.



# Notes From the Field

## Exploring Global Business

*International exposure:  
Business students study in London.*

### LONDON CALLING

The Mitchell College of Business London Study Abroad experience places students in a center of global commerce and heritage. It blends classwork with travel to provide hands-on exposure to international business and urban development.

Dr. Reid Cummings, professor of economics, finance and real estate, led the trip this past summer, July 3–Aug. 4. Students stayed at Queen Mary University of London in East London. Courses covered the main areas of business studies – finance, economics, marketing and management – allowing students a look into the intricacies of world markets.

Because London is such a prominent trade and financial city, students can visit a lot of places to gain an understanding of its global impact firsthand. “We take them to a place called the International Maritime Organization,” said Cummings about one of the most impactful visits of the trip. The IMO is a United Nations agency that regulates maritime transport.

“It’s a really important agency because over 90% of the world’s trade occurs by water,” Cummings said. Visiting the headquarters helped students see the critical role maritime trade plays in the global economy and understand how international regulations shape worldwide commerce.

Academic activities are scheduled during the week, but weekends are free for travel. Students often visit London’s many cultural sites, such as the British Museum and Tower of London, or take longer trips to other parts of the U.K. and Europe.

Allowing students that independence helps them build skills and confidence in unfamiliar surroundings. The Study Abroad program fosters personal growth and professional development by combining academic rigor with cultural exploration. Students leave with a deeper understanding of international business and valuable life skills gained from navigating new environments.

### STRICTLY SINGAPORE

“Stepping into Singapore is like stepping into another universe,” said Dr. Alvin Williams. In May 2024, seven students from the Mitchell College of Business experienced this firsthand during a Study Abroad program focused on the Asia-Pacific region.

Organized in collaboration with Global Academic Ventures, the trip provided an in-depth view of business practices in the 10 Association of Southeast Asian Nations countries. With daily classes, exams and a final project, students balanced academic rigor with exploration of the vibrant city of Singapore. Some took side trips to Malaysia and Indonesia, enriching their perception of the region’s businesses.

The trip wasn’t all work. There was plenty of time for fun. Williams, a professor of marketing, supply chain management and analytics, enjoyed Singapore’s lively arts scene, attending a performance of the musical “Hamilton.”



*Learning beyond borders:  
Students study business  
strategies in Singapore.*

“Stepping into Singapore is like  
stepping into another universe.”

—DR. ALVIN WILLIAMS

Singapore’s pristine cleanliness and discipline consistently surprise students. “It’s one of the cleanest, most organized and rule-based countries on Earth,” said Williams.

Singapore’s strict regulations, such as prohibitions against smoking in public and eating or drinking on public transport, often stand out to first-time visitors.

Williams praised the trip for its educational and cultural insights. “Singapore is a financial powerhouse, serving as a hub for Fortune 1000 Asian headquarters,” he said. “The U.S. is doing more business in the Asian realm, and students need to understand that part of the world. It’s a once-in-a-lifetime experience.”

Students absorbed knowledge through academic lectures, business site visits and cultural immersion. The Singapore Study Abroad program offers an exceptional opportunity to learn while experiencing one of the world’s most energetic and disciplined cities.



“Presenting my work alongside peers from various universities and receiving their feedback encouraged me to refine my project and explore new avenues.”

—JAMES MUHAMMAD

## 2024 SOBIE CONFERENCE

# Empowering Future Leaders

At the Mitchell College of Business, fostering undergraduate research is a commitment to shaping the leaders of tomorrow. Research equips students with vital skills and paves the way for successful careers in any field.

In April 2024, 14 Mitchell College of Business students, under the guidance of Dr. Al Chow, professor of marketing, supply chain management and analytics, participated in the Society of Business, Industry and Economics (SOBIE) Academic Conference in Miramar Beach, Florida. The students showcased a diverse array of research topics, including “Generation Z’s Ambivalence Towards Fast Fashion,” “The Role of Social Media in South’s SGA,” “The Research Process,” “Extended Availability of MCOB Resources” and “Volatility in Healthcare Pre- and Post-COVID-19.”

For senior accounting major James Muhammad, the conference was a transformative experience that enhanced his resume and motivated him to delve deeper into his research. “Presenting my work alongside peers from various universities and receiving their feedback encouraged me to refine my project and explore new avenues,” he said.

Senior finance major Cheyenne Jackson said her inaugural SOBIE conference in 2023 opened doors to opportunities like the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship at South Alabama. With funding for her research on healthcare before and after COVID-19, she presented updated findings at SOBIE 2024. “I am incredibly grateful for the past two years at this conference,” she said. “It has not only allowed me to showcase my hard work but also inspired new research topics.”

Chow, who leads the Mitchell College undergraduate research program, is passionate about mentoring students and encouraging their participation in the SOBIE conference. “This year was particularly remarkable, with research topics spanning all disciplines within MCOB,” he said.

“Cheyenne Jackson even won a research award for her outstanding academic paper, and we were thrilled to have three high-achieving freshmen present their research processes, impressing everyone with their caliber.”

Some students, like sophomore marketing major Angelina Ladner, begin their research journeys early. Seeking a mentor during her first semester, Ladner caught Chow’s attention with her dedication, leading to her participation in the 2024 conference. “Angelina started her research with Dr. Jennifer Zoghby (assistant professor of management) in 2022 and will continue in the USA Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program,” Chow said.

For recent graduate C.C. Annulis, the conference was a catalyst for newfound confidence. “Through honing my research and presentation skills, I feel more assured in my abilities for future endeavors,” she said.

The experiences gained by these students show why the Mitchell College of Business remains committed to providing learning opportunities beyond the classroom. It plans to continue supporting undergraduate research to help provide students with the skills, confidence and inspiration to excel.



The once-dissolved University of South Alabama lacrosse program saw a remarkable resurgence thanks to the dedication of two Mitchell College of Business students, Nick Hurst and Noah Nelson.

The roots of this revival can be traced to spring 2022 when Hurst and Nelson’s shared love for the game sparked a vision. What started as a casual game of catch evolved into a movement, with students rallying behind the cause in the following fall and spring semesters. By spring 2023, the program had a team roster.

Fall 2023 saw the reestablishment of South Alabama lacrosse as a University club team after a four-year absence, with Nelson as program president and Hurst as vice president. The team hosted its inaugural game in October 2023. The game drew over 200 fans, who were treated to a festive atmosphere complete with food trucks, vendors and a Chase the Gorilla competition at halftime.

The spring season of 2024 included games against such opponents as Middle Tennessee State, Chattanooga, Mississippi State and Louisiana Tech. The team finished with a 7-4 win against Louisiana Tech to close out its comeback season.

The Student Recreation Center honored South Alabama lacrosse as the 2023-24 Club Sports Team of the Year. The team solidified its status by joining the Southern Men’s Lacrosse League during the summer of 2024.

For the 2024-2025 fall/spring season, South Alabama lacrosse is poised for continued growth and success within both the University and the region. The team’s mission is to provide accessible opportunities for players to compete as a cohesive unit while fostering individual growth and development.

South Alabama lacrosse is a testament to the power of passion, dedication and the belief that with teamwork and perseverance, anything is possible.

# World of Difference

International Business offers Mitchell College of Business students the opportunity to study abroad and gain experience and perspective.

**D**r. Alex Sharland, professor of international business courses, encourages MCOB students to look beyond the Gulf Coast and embrace challenges and opportunities overseas.

There's a big world outside Mobile Bay.

"We're trying to get more students to do Study Abroad programs," Sharland said. "We think that's a positive experience, not just on their resume, but in their life experience. It's an experience that will broaden their minds."

The University of South Alabama offers a major in International Business that requires proficiency in a foreign language. Many Mitchell College professors have worked, taught and lectured overseas.

Opportunities closer to home have come courtesy of foreign investment in the state of Alabama, now home to many international businesses.

"Between Montgomery and the Kia plants in western Georgia, there are 63 Korean companies," Sharland said. "I also point to the likes of Airbus and Austal, which is technically an Australian company, and its supply chain. We also have two steel companies to the north of Mobile which were originally German companies and are now owned by different international companies. And the Port of Mobile, of course, is one of the biggest economic drivers in this region.

"With American students, the supply chain aspect of the port and international companies tends to get better traction. Supply chain jobs are a little easier to visualize than so-called international business jobs."

After years of teaching in the United States, Sharland became an American citizen, but he still has a British outlook and an English accent.

Before joining the faculty at the University of South Alabama, he taught at Hofstra University on Long Island, New York, and Barry University in Miami. He attended the State University of New York Brockport as an exchange student and then earned graduate degrees at Virginia Tech and Florida State.

He appreciates the range and diversity of the United States.

"America's not a melting pot — it's a stew," he said. "That was told to me by a Venezuelan working in Miami."

Sharland played competitive rugby as a boy, then became a coach and a referee in the United States. He's been the advisor for a club team at South. He thinks coaching a sport has improved his teaching of business.

"Some years ago, I moved away from 'Tell me what you've learned' to 'Show me what you understand,'" he said. "I got that from the rugby world. I structure my classes around a specific project, which becomes a portfolio of skills. Either a data analysis assignment, marketing plan or country evaluation.

"Students tell me this has made a difference in their job interviews. One student told me that he only got his job because he was able to say, 'I did this, I did that, I did the other.'"

Sharland, who has traveled all over the world, has done research on private investment in Caribbean economies.

"In my Introduction to Business class yesterday, we were talking about Caribbean countries and their migration from agriculture and manufacturing to services and tourism," he said. "Eighty percent of the economy in the Bahamas is generated by service industries."

Sharland teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in marketing, business analytics and supply management. He encourages students to do internships before graduating and to begin business careers before returning to college for graduate degrees.

"Employers want someone who can be productive from day one," he said. "The way to do that is with internships, which often turn into 90-day interviews. Experience — that's the key. Everybody's in a hurry these days, but it's important to get out in the workforce and demonstrate what you've learned and what you know. That's your launch point."





# JagFund

## Merging Theory with Practice for Future Financial Leaders

The Jaguar Investment Fund (JagFund) is the centerpiece of an experiential class at the Mitchell College of Business where students actively manage financial portfolios. Led by Dr. Chris Lawrey, associate professor of economics, finance and real estate, the two-semester course (FIN 425 and 426) offers hands-on experience in navigating the stock market.

It fulfills internship requirements while enhancing students' career prospects. Many students have gone on to such finance-sector careers as financial analyst, investment advisor, portfolio manager and auditor.

Established in 2015 with a \$250,000 bequest from Eleanor Ruth Frankel and Clarence M. Frankel Jr. and additional money from the Mitchell endowment, the fund aims to achieve portfolio returns that beat the S&P 500's performance. The Jaguar Investment Fund Lab is set to receive funding from the University to upgrade computers in the coming year.

Students also manage the USA Fund, a separate fund from the Jaguar Investment Fund, which began with \$750,000 in May 2021 and will receive an additional \$250,000 annually for four years starting January 2025. Very similar investment strategies are employed by both the Jaguar Investment Fund and the USA Fund. Both funds underscore the college's commitment to providing real-world investing experiences.

The Jaguar Investment Fund offers unique opportunities to participating students, including a chance to attend the 2024 Student Managed Investment Fund Consortium Conference in Chicago earlier this year. The students also attend networking events, including a CFA Institute dinner each year allowing them to connect with finance sector professionals, and work with local investment groups such as the Blue Chip Investment Group.

### ANNUALIZED RETURN (Since Inception)

JIF	14.16%
vs.	
S&P 500	14.05%
<hr/>	
USA	7.41%
vs.	
S&P 500	11.98%

### PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS (FY 2024)

#### Top Performers

Nvidia Corp. (NVDA) **+179.18%**  
 D.R. Horton Inc. (DHI) **+77.51%**  
 HCA Healthcare Inc. (HCA) **+65.23%**

#### Worst Performers

Lululemon Athletica Inc. (LULU) **-29.63%**  
 Archer-Daniels-Midland Co. (ADM) **-20.79%**  
 LKQ Corp. (LKQ) **-19.37%**

### IT SECTOR — COMPANY HIGHLIGHT Nvidia Corp.

- Nvidia had a 126% increase in FY24 revenue.
- Nvidia's data center business is a major contributor to its success, with data center sales making up almost 87% of its revenue in February to April 2024.
- Nvidia is leading the IT sector in AI development, deep learning and production of chips for autonomous vehicles.
- Nvidia is dominant in the graphics processing unit market for gaming and machine learning.
- Nvidia continues to be a strong performer with the most significant weighting in the JIF and USA portfolios.

### THE TEAM

#### 12 fund managers

- 1 senior analyst
- 10 new junior analysts
- 1 MBA with fund experience

### ASSETS UNDER MANAGEMENT

JIF investment capital \$500,000 ->  
 current JIF \$ value **\$1,371,875\***

USA investment capital \$750,000 ->  
 current USA \$ value **\$951,694\***

\*At the time of writing



# Aaron Long:

## From IT to Investment Fund Enthusiast

Aaron Long's journey is a compelling narrative of passion, dedication and continual learning. With a B.S. in Information Systems with a concentration in Office Systems, from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, he has carved a unique path, merging his information technology expertise with a newfound love for finance.

Long works in the Computer Services Center, supporting the IT needs of the University of South Alabama's administrative and presidential offices. His responsibilities extend to email administration and software licensing.

He started at South some 20 years ago. As a perk of working at the University, he could take classes in areas of interest to him. His love for numbers led him to finance, which he sees as a future career path. The student-managed Jaguar Investment Fund, introduced to him during South Board of Trustees meetings he attended as part of his IT duties, further sparked his interest.

To actively participate in the Jaguar Investment Fund, Long took several classes, culminating in the Student Managed Investment Fund course that involves managing the fund. These classes equipped him with practical skills, such as understanding financial ratios and the discounted cash flow model, vital for evaluating companies and managing portfolios.

Long highlights the investment fund class's practical application of classroom knowledge. Each student engaged in research, presented stocks and developed portfolios.

Looking ahead, Long envisions possibly becoming a financial planner. Even if he's not a professional, he aims to use his skills to guide personal investments and assist others, sharing his knowledge and fostering financial literacy.

Long's message to others interested in finance is clear: Pursue your interest. The journey is rewarding and worth the effort for those passionate about the field.

## Military Service Lessons Carry Over into College

After six years in military service, Destini Alvarado has returned to the classroom to begin a new chapter of her life at the Mitchell College of Business.

Alvarado served in the Air Force as a radiologic technologist at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi. She performed X-rays and CT scans and worked in both the emergency room and the operating room. Her father served in the Army, so military service has shaped her values and approach to life.

People close to her influenced Alvarado's decision to attend the University of South Alabama. "I was living with a family friend after leaving the military, and her son and daughter-in-law had both graduated from South," she said. "They had nothing but good things to say."

She finalized her decision after attending USA Day, a campus event for prospective students. "I got to meet some of my professors and other faculty," she said. "The small class sizes and the personal connections with the faculty really stood out to me, and that's what made me choose South."

Reflecting on her transition from military life to college, Alvarado noted how her perspective has shifted. "I dealt with real-world issues in the military, so sometimes it's hard to take every assignment too seriously," she admitted. "I still expect nothing less than an A, but I procrastinate now — and then get mad at myself for it!"

Her high standards motivate her to stay involved on campus. She seeks out opportunities with such organizations as the Public Relations Student Society of America and the Student Government Association to prepare for a future in public relations or human resources.

Another lesson from Alvarado's military experience has carried over to college life: the importance of self-advocacy. "In the Air Force, we used to say, 'No one is going to care about your career like you do.'"



Scan to listen on Spotify and YouTube



# By The Numbers Podcast Launched

The Mitchell College of Business at the University of South Alabama has launched an insightful podcast series titled "By The Numbers." Moderated by MBA graduate students Shane Monagle and Brylan Shirley, the podcast features engaging conversations with faculty members and industry experts. Each episode provides valuable insights into the world of business and finance, bridging the gap between academic theories and real-world applications.

"By The Numbers" covers a wide range of topics, from analytics and finance to management and accounting, offering students and professionals a deeper understanding of the business landscape. With 15 podcasts produced so far, this series has quickly become a cornerstone for those seeking to enhance their business acumen.

The podcast aims to expand its reach and continue delivering high-quality content, with season two of "By The Numbers" in the works. It will continue to offer a platform for students, faculty and outside professionals to share their ideas and knowledge on their specialist subjects.

# College Updates



## 25th Anniversary: What's in a Name?

In the case of South's business school, the name means everything. Twenty-five years ago, the University's business school was named the Mitchell College of Business in recognition of a generous endowment from brothers Mayer and Abraham Mitchell and Mayer's wife, Arlene Mitchell.

Though not alums, the Mitchell family endowed the college in 1999, and the college was renamed to signify the brothers' extraordinary contribution to the future of business education.

In 1958, Abe and Mayer Mitchell founded the Mitchell Company in Mobile, Alabama, which became one of the most successful real estate development firms in the southeastern United States.

The Mitchell Company grew rapidly during the 1960s and 1970s, building more than 25,000 single-family homes, 20,000 apartment units and 175 shopping centers. In 1985, the Mitchell brothers sold their interest in the company to turn their focus on philanthropic endeavors.

Members of the Mitchell family have been philanthropic leaders at the University of South Alabama for half a century, making their family one of the most generous private donors to higher education in the history of the state of Alabama. South's Mitchell Center and USA Health's Mitchell Cancer Institute have also been named in their honor.



## The Perfect Fit: Professional Attire for Business Students

This year, the Mitchell College of Business launched the Professional Closet to provide students with access to free business-appropriate attire. The service fosters career readiness by offering a variety of professional clothing, helping students make a positive impression at interviews, networking events and career fairs.

The closet, which provides clothing for both women and men, seeks donations. We especially need men's dress shirts and suits in smaller sizes and women's business suits and blouses. Please drop off donated items in front of Room 139 in the Mitchell College of Business.

## Employee Updates

- **Patty Davis** joined the college as the director of academic advising.
- **Jessica Franks** was promoted to director of graduate studies.
- **Dr. Bill Gillis** was promoted to associate dean.
- **Charles Herring** joined the college as a library technical assistant.
- **Dr. Ko Hsu**, accounting associate professor, retired after 31 years.
- **Mary Nall** joined the college as a development officer.
- **Alexis Pierce** joined the college as the assistant director of graduate career and professional development.
- **David Potter** retired as director of academic advising after 14 years.



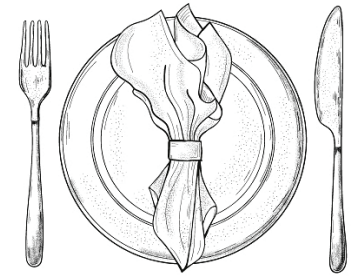
## From MBA to Public Service

Greg Caesar, holder of a 2007 Master of Business Administration degree from the Mitchell College of Business, has served since 2023 as alderman at large in Franklin, Tennessee.

Caesar attended Mitchell College of Business from 2005 to 2007, preparing for an international business career. "South, to me, feels like a group of folks that are invested in their community," he said. That inspired him to invest in where he lives – to "be a part of a community as opposed to being somebody that just appreciates it."

After receiving a bachelor's degree in Marketing Management from the University of Memphis, Caesar worked in managerial positions, including at the medical technology company Stryker. He chose South for his MBA because it "represented different segments of professional communities," he said.

After moving back to his native Tennessee, he pursued public service. During his four-year term on the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, Caesar said, he will use some of the principles he learned at South, including "the willingness to continue to fight for good."



## Stepping Up to the Plate

This past spring semester, the Mitchell College of Business introduced an innovative Dining Etiquette program aimed at equipping students with the essential manners and protocols necessary for navigating dining situations in the professional world.

Led by Jessica Franks, the college's director of graduate studies and experiential learning coordinator, and Jay Hunt a senior instructor of management, the event provided students with hands-on experience in proper dining manners, from the correct use of utensils to navigating multiple meal courses.

The Dining Etiquette program aims to equip students with the tools they need to succeed in all facets of their careers. The college's commitment to innovative education ensures that graduates are knowledgeable in their fields, polished, considerate and ready to lead in the global business environment.



### Accounting Major Is 2024-2025 SGA President

Senior accounting major and 2024-2025 Student Government Association President Hank Rader came to the University of South Alabama from Wiggins, Mississippi, with the intention of leaving his mark.

"I wanted to not be just a number and truly make a difference," Rader said. Joining the Student Government Association was not something he planned when choosing South, but the decision changed his life.

Rader connected with people across campus who made an impact on his college experience. He said that although stressful at times, SGA brought him out of his shell and provided many new opportunities.

"The Mitchell College of Business prepared me to take on the role of Student Government Association president," Rader said. "Without the skills I learned during my years in Mr. (Jay) Hunt's professional experience classes, I would not have been able to be as comfortable and prepared for this opportunity to serve my fellow students.

"The key word in the Student Government Association is 'student.' We are here to make your college experience better, and we stand as a voice for students to feel heard. We are elected to help you, so do not be shy to reach out."



### Program Launched to Develop Leaders in Medicine

The Healthcare Leadership Certificate Program is a collaborative effort among the Frederick P. Whiddon College of Medicine, the Mitchell College of Business and USA Health. This program integrates medical studies with the leadership, managerial and financial aspects of business.

Under the leadership of Dr. Binata Mukherjee, adjunct professor of management at Mitchell College of Business and assistant dean for faculty and professional development at the College of Medicine, the program aims to equip professionals with the essential skills and knowledge needed to thrive in today's dynamic healthcare environment. The comprehensive curriculum covers such vital topics, as leadership, effective communication, human resource management, financial acumen, and the principles of viability and sustainability in healthcare organizations.



Dr. Matt Howard, left, and Dr. Joe Hair

### 3 Faculty Make Top 2% List

Three faculty members of the University of South Alabama Mitchell College of Business have been recognized as leading experts in their field and named to the 2024 Stanford University World's Top 2% Scientists list, an annual ranking based on citation data.

Making the list were Dr. Joe Hair, distinguished professor of marketing and director of the Ph.D. in Business Administration Program, Dr. Matt Howard, associate professor and interim chair of the Department of Marketing, Supply Chain Management and Analytics, and Dr. Micki Kacmar, professor of management.

The ranking identifies the most cited scholars in their fields and highlights researchers whose work has had a significant impact across various scientific disciplines.

"I am always honored to appear on these lists, and I certainly appreciate the recognition," Howard said. "It benefits my research to be

widely known as a scholar. I like to focus on conducting high-quality research. If that results in appearing favorably on ranking lists, then I am very happy about it."

Hair has been a regular on this list for years. He and Howard have also made the Clarivate Highly Cited Researchers list, recognizing them as among the top 1% of all business and economics professors in the world. Hair recently surpassed 500,000 citations of his work and has been a major influence in Howard's professional career.

"I have certainly learned a lot about research from him, but Joe always puts his students first," Howard said. "Some may think it is impossible to do that while maintaining his research output. Seeing him achieve this difficult balance has probably been the biggest thing that I have learned from him."

### Faculty/Staff Excellence Awards:

- **Professor of the Year Award**  
Dr. Ermanno Affuso, professor of economics and finance
- **Excellence in Scholarship and Research Award**  
Dr. Christine Xin, associate professor of accounting
- **Excellence in Teaching Award**  
Dr. Marianne Loes, assistant professor of marketing and ecommerce
- **Outstanding Staff Award**  
Dionne Castor, assistant director of marketing and communications



*Dr. Thomas Nelson turns students' ideas into reality.*

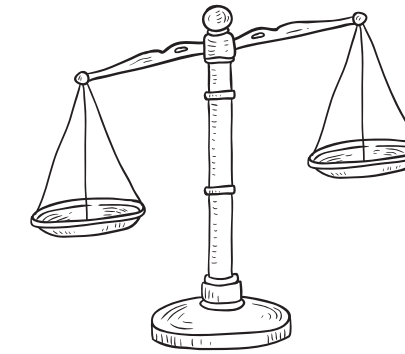
## Introducing the Jag Fab Lab

The new Jag Fabrication Lab, or Jag Fab Lab, in the Mitchell College of Business, is a hub for innovation.

Dr. Thomas Nelson, associate professor of management and director of student competitions, directs the lab. It houses a Formlabs Form 2 3D printer, offering hands-on opportunities to turn ideas into reality. In the college's Creativity and Innovation class, which Nelson teaches, students use the Jag Fab Lab to prototype their designs, turning abstract concepts into tangible products.

Whether students are experimenting with new ideas or refining a project, the lab fosters problem-solving skills, making it a valued resource for students and Mitchell College alums.

If you are passionate about fostering innovation and creativity in the next generation of entrepreneurs, the Mitchell College of Business invites you to donate to help us grow this resource. Your support is crucial in ensuring that the Jag Fab Lab continues to inspire and empower future business leaders.



## Ethics Month Events Focus on Doing the Right Thing in Business

In October 2024, the Mitchell College of Business observed its first Ethics Month, which was designed to address ethical challenges in business practices. A variety of events aimed to foster critical thinking and ethical decision-making skills.

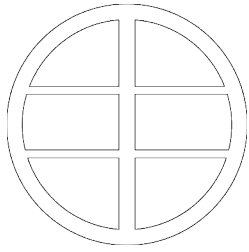
In June, faculty members and students attended the StudentCPT Leadership Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, presented by the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy Center for the Public Trust. That inspired students to establish a Business Ethics Club. During Ethics Month, MCOB student organizations — including the Ethics Club, Professional Sales and Marketing Club, Student Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management, Accounting Club, Supply Chain Club, and Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization — hosted guest speakers to discuss business ethics. Speakers included representatives from the Alabama Securities Commission, IRS Criminal Investigation division, and Public Relations Council of Alabama, and Alabama State Rep. Matt Simpson, a seminarian and a local businessperson.

A Movie Night featured the documentary film "Inside Job" about the 2007–2008 financial crisis. An ethical leadership panel discussion included a university lawyer, academics and business executives. Business law professors encouraged student attendance. The event also welcomed pre-law students.

In an Ethical Case Study Competition, student teams used such frameworks as virtue ethics, duty ethics and utilitarianism. The winning team earned \$300. Ethics Month also spurred research; two professors and three Mitchell College Ph.D. students conducted studies and distributed surveys to students. Many MCOB faculty members focused lectures, discussions, assignments and class activities on ethics.

On Oct. 16, the college participated in Global Ethics Day, an initiative by the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs. During the month, students created promotional materials, hung virtue banners in the Mitchell College of Business, distributed "Use Your Moral Compass" keychains and secured student government funding for ethical leadership certifications.

Ethics Month reinforced the College's commitment to innovation and ethics, instilling values that students will carry into their professional lives.



## 2024 Distinguished Alumni and Service Award Recipients from the Mitchell College of Business

The Distinguished Alumni and Service Awards celebrate the achievements of the University's remarkable alumni and friends. This annual event is an opportunity to publicly recognize these inspiring individuals. USA alumni are continuously making a difference across the globe and setting an example for future generations of Jaguars.

### Katherine Alexis Atkins '97

Alexis Atkins was a single mother with a full-time job when she enrolled at the University of South Alabama. She had dropped out of college years before to work for her father at Budweiser-Busch Distributing Co. Inc. of Mobile. "I really did not need a degree," she said, "but it was a personal goal I wanted to accomplish."

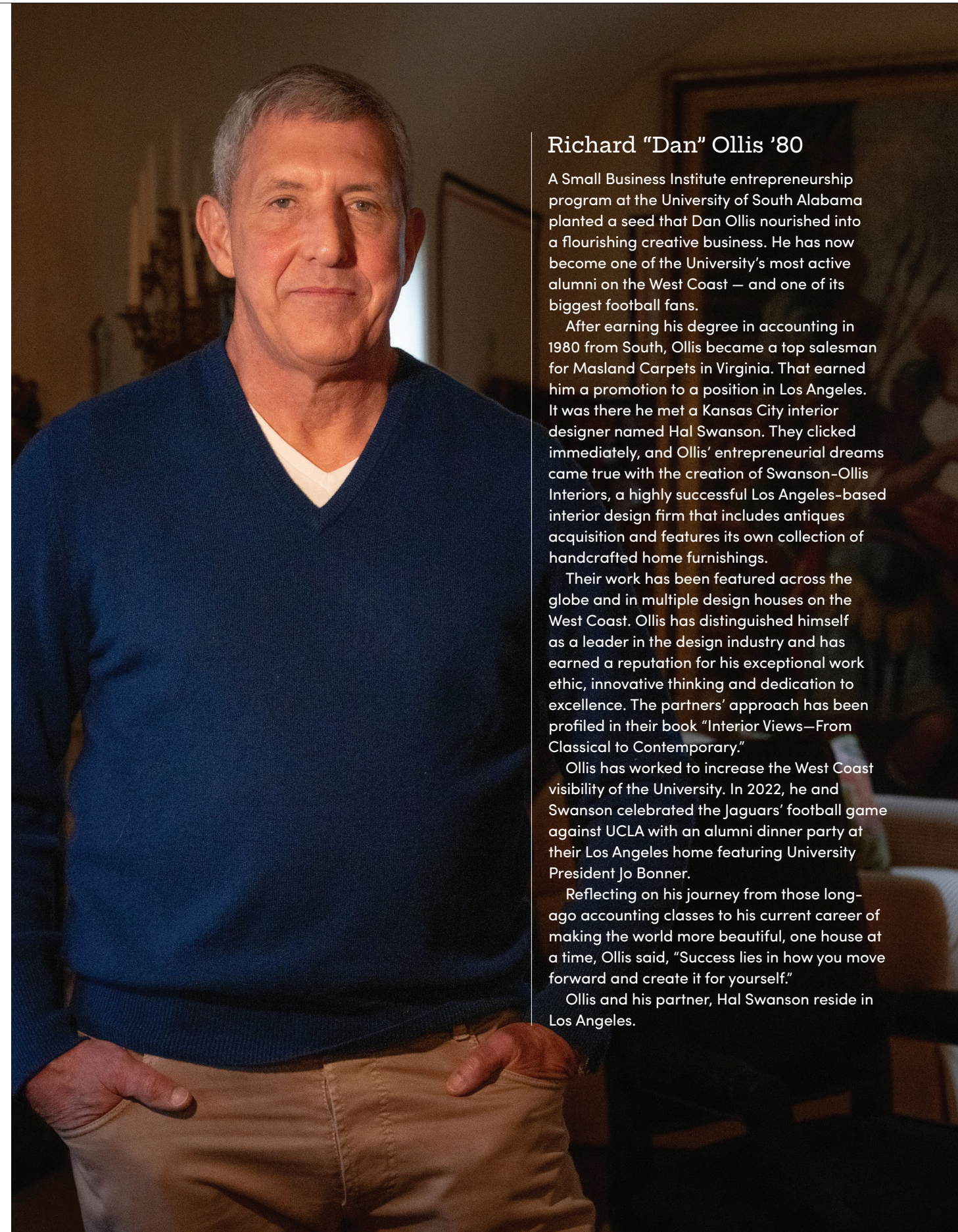
Atkins earned a degree in human resources in 1997 from South — and she has become one of the University's greatest advocates. Nominated by a friend to the National Alumni Association Board of Directors, Atkins eventually became president and served on the committee for building the MacQueen Alumni Center.

She is now vice chair of the University's Board of Trustees as well as a member of the Jaguar Athletic Fund Board of Directors and the Mitchell College of Business Executive Advisory Council.

She is a longtime volunteer and past chair of Feeding the Gulf Coast, formerly the Bay Area Food Bank. As co-owner and recently retired vice president of human resources at her family's business, she credited the employees as "the real secret of our success."

In short, Alexis Atkins cares, and she gives back. The University of South Alabama and its students and alumni have benefited immensely from her active involvement. "I can't tell you how much I enjoy it," she said. "My heart is totally into it."

Alexis has two children, Kyle and Todd, and she and her husband, Michael, reside in Mobile.



### Richard "Dan" Ollis '80

A Small Business Institute entrepreneurship program at the University of South Alabama planted a seed that Dan Ollis nourished into a flourishing creative business. He has now become one of the University's most active alumni on the West Coast — and one of its biggest football fans.

After earning his degree in accounting in 1980 from South, Ollis became a top salesman for Masland Carpets in Virginia. That earned him a promotion to a position in Los Angeles. It was there he met a Kansas City interior designer named Hal Swanson. They clicked immediately, and Ollis' entrepreneurial dreams came true with the creation of Swanson-Ollis Interiors, a highly successful Los Angeles-based interior design firm that includes antiques acquisition and features its own collection of handcrafted home furnishings.

Their work has been featured across the globe and in multiple design houses on the West Coast. Ollis has distinguished himself as a leader in the design industry and has earned a reputation for his exceptional work ethic, innovative thinking and dedication to excellence. The partners' approach has been profiled in their book "Interior Views—From Classical to Contemporary."

Ollis has worked to increase the West Coast visibility of the University. In 2022, he and Swanson celebrated the Jaguars' football game against UCLA with an alumni dinner party at their Los Angeles home featuring University President Jo Bonner.

Reflecting on his journey from those long-ago accounting classes to his current career of making the world more beautiful, one house at a time, Ollis said, "Success lies in how you move forward and create it for yourself."

Ollis and his partner, Hal Swanson reside in Los Angeles.

# Research Publications

## BOOKS

### Joe Hair

Joe Hair, with G. Tomas Hult, Christian Ringle and Marko Sarstedt, "A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling," 3rd edition, SAGE Publications, 2021

Joe Hair, with Marko Sarstedt, Christian Ringle and Siegfried Gudergan, "Advanced Issues in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling," 2nd edition, SAGE Publications, 2024

Joe Hair, with William Black, Barry Babin and Rolph Anderson, "Multivariate Data Analysis," 8th edition, Cengage Learning, 2018

Joe Hair, with Michael Page, Niek Brunsveld, Adam Merkle and Natalie Cleton, "Essentials of Business Research Methods," 5th edition, Routledge, 2023

Joe Hair, with Charles Lamb and Carl McDaniel, "MKTG," 14th edition, Cengage Learning, 2024

Joe Hair, with Dana Harrison and Haya Ajjan, "Essentials of Marketing Analytics," 2nd edition, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2024

Joe Hair, with David Ortinau and Dana Harrison, "Essentials of Marketing Research," 6th edition, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2023

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

### Joe Hair

Joe Hair, with Pratyush Sharma, Christian Ringle, Jun-Hwa Cheah, Anne Herfurth and Marko Sarstedt, "A Framework for Enhancing the Replicability of Behavioral MIS Research Using Prediction Oriented Techniques," *International Journal of Information Management*, 2024

Joe Hair, with Misty Sabol, Gabriel Cepeda-Carrion and José Roldán, "Emerging Opportunities for Information Systems Researchers to Expand their PLS-SEM Analytical Toolbox," *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 2024

Joe Hair, with Pratyush Sharma, Benjamin Liengaard, Christian Ringle, Jun-Hwa Cheah and Marko Sarstedt, "The Fallacies of Simple but Flawed Demonstrations in PLS- SEM," *European Journal of Marketing*, 2024

Joe Hair, with Pratyush Sharma, Benjamin Liengaard, Christian Ringle and Marko Sarstedt, "Going Beyond the Untold Facts in PLS-SEM and Moving Forward," *European Journal of Marketing*, 2024

Joe Hair, with Julie Steen, Brian Rutherford and Barry Babin, "The Retail Environment Design (RED) Scale: Conceptualization and Measurement," *European Journal of Marketing*, 2024

Joe Hair, with Pratyush Sharma, Benjamin Liengaard, Christian Ringle and Marko Sarstedt, "The Shortcomings of Equal Weights Estimation and the Composite Equivalence Index (CEI) in PLS-SEM," *European Journal of Marketing*, 2024

Joe Hair, with Amanda Legate and Christian Ringle, "Conducting PLS-SEM Mediation Analysis: A Method Demonstration in the R Statistical Environment," *Human Resources Development Quarterly*, 2024

Joe Hair, with Juan José García-Machado and Minerva Martínez-Avila, "The Impact of Organizational Compliance Culture and Green Culture on Environmental Behavior: The Moderating Effect of Environmental Commitment," *Green Finance*, 2024

Joe Hair, with Ronald Tsang, Amelia Baldwin, Ermanno Affuso and Kyre Lahtinen, "The Informativeness of Sentiment Types in Risk Factor Disclosures: Evidence from Firms with Cybersecurity Breaches," *Journal of Information Systems*, 2024

Joe Hair, with Misty Sabol, Gabriel Cepeda-Carrion and José Roldán, "PLS-SEM in Information Systems: Seizing the Opportunity

and Marching Ahead Full Speed to Adopt Methodological Updates," *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 2023

Joe Hair, with Abdullah Kaid Al-Swidi and Mohammed A. Al-Hakimi, "Sustainable Development-Oriented Regulatory and Competitive Pressures to Shift toward a Circular Economy: The Role of Environmental Orientation and Industry 4.0 Technologies," *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 2023

Joe Hair, with Matt Howard, "Integrating the Expanded Task-Technology Fit Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model: A Multi-Wave Empirical Analysis," *AIS Transactions on Human-Computer Interaction*, 2023

### Khandokar Istiak

Khandokar Istiak, with John Reid Cummings, Robert Forrester and Macy Adams, "Examining the Impact of Vulnerability and the Law of Justice on the IFRS Adoption Decision," *Journal of Risk and Financial Management*, 2024

Khandokar Istiak, with Giray Gozgor, "Relationship between Economic Policy Uncertainty and Domestic Credits: Evidence from the Long-Span Time Series for the UK and the USA," *Applied Economics*, 2023

Khandokar Istiak, with Shaikh Eskander, "Energy Efficiency and CO2 Emissions: Evidence from the UK Universities," *Applied Economics*, 2023

### Amelia Baldwin

Amelia Baldwin, with Qi Liu and Victoria Chiu, "The Authorship Origins of Accounting Information Systems and Emerging Technologies Research: An Analysis of Accounting Information Systems Journals," *The International Journal of Digital Accounting Research*, 2024

Amelia Baldwin, with Ronald Tsang, Joe Hair, Ermanno Affuso and Kyre Lahtinen, "The Informativeness of Sentiment Types in Risk Factor Disclosures: Evidence from Firms with Cybersecurity Breaches," *Journal of Information Systems*, 2023

### Ray Wu

Ray Wu, with Mickey Smith, "An Integrative Conceptual Review of Multiperspective Frameworks in Personality Research and a Roadmap for Extended Applications in Organizational Psychology," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 2024

### Matt Howard

Matt Howard, "The Importance of Context-Relevance: Entrepreneurial Personality Relates to Entrepreneurial Outcomes beyond the HEXACO and Dark Triad," *The Journal of Psychology*, 2024

Matt Howard, "Why Do Limbal Rings Cause Faces to Appear Healthier and More Attractive? Resolving Theoretical and Methodological Tensions in Current Research on Perceptions of Faces with(out) Limbal Rings," *Evolutionary Behavioral Sciences*, 2024

Matt Howard, "Gender and Vaccination: Understanding the Multifaceted Role of a Multidimensional Conceptualization of Vaccine Hesitancy," *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 2023

Matt Howard, with Matthew Stults-Kolehmainen, Dale Bond, Laura Richardson, Louisa Herring, Bethany Mulone, Carol Garber, John Morton, Saber Ghiassi, Andrew Duffy, Ethan Balk, Charles Abolt, Garrett Ash, Susannah Williamson, Emilian Rejane Marcon, Melissa De Los Santos, Samantha Bond, Janet Huehls, Osama Alowaish, Nina Heyman and Bruno Gaulano, "Role of the Exercise Professional in Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery," *Surgery for Obesity and Related Diseases*, 2023

Matt Howard, "Reinvestigating the Perceptions of Annual Skin Cancer Screening Scale: A Suitable Measure for Older Adults," *European Journal of Cancer Prevention*, 2023

Matt Howard, "A Meta-Analysis of Augmented Reality Programs for Education and Training," *Virtual Reality*, 2023

### Ermanno Affuso

Ermanno Affuso, with Nikola Šubová, Ján Buleca and Franklin Mixon Jr., "The Link between Household Savings Rates and GDP: Evidence from the Visegrád Group," *Post-Communist Economics*, 2023

Ermanno Affuso, with Ronald Tsang, Amelia Baldwin, Joe Hair and Kyre Lahtinen, "The Informativeness of Sentiment Types in Risk Factor Disclosures: Evidence from Firms with Cybersecurity Breaches," *Journal of Information Systems*, 2023

Ermanno Affuso, with Dengjun Zhang, Ján Buleca, Peter Tóth and Rudresh Pandey, "Relationship among R&D, Productivity and Firm Exports: The Moderating Role of Credit Constraints," *Studies in Business and Economics*, 2024

### Hua Christine Xin

Hua Christine Xin, with Hsueh-Tien Lu, "Mandatory Monthly Sales Disclosure and the Information Content of Earnings," *The International Journal of Accounting*, 2024

Hua Christine Xin, with Xudong Fu, Qin Lian, Tian Tang and Qiming Wang, "Relationship Institutions: Evidence from IPOs," *Journal of Accounting, Auditing & Finance*, 2023

### Robyn Brouer

Robyn Brouer, with Rebecca Badavy and Michael Stefanone, "Reactions to Gender-(Counter) Normative Behavior Online in the United States: Attraction and Hiring Implications," *Evidence-Based HRM: a Global Forum for Empirical Scholarship*, 2024

## PROCEEDINGS, BOOK

### CHAPTERS AND PRESENTATIONS

#### Joe Hair

Joe Hair, with Hengky Latan, Richard Noonan and Misty Sabol, "Introduction to the Partial Least Squares Path Modeling: Basic Concepts and Recent Methodological Enhancements," "Partial Least Squares Path Modeling," Springer, 2023

Joe Hair, with Serap Korkarar and Mahmut Hızıroğlu, "Institutional Context and Entrepreneurship Typologies: The Moderator Role of Environmental Uncertainty," "State of the Art in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)," Springer Proceedings in Business and Economics, 2023

Joe Hair, with Stephanie Gapud, "When Navigating Uncertainty Lead Mindfully," "State of the Art in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)," Springer Proceedings in Business and Economics, Springer, 2023

Joe Hair, with Stephanie Gapud, "Mindful Leadership Under Fire: A Validation Study of a Hierarchical Component Model," "State of the Art in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)," Springer Proceedings in Business and Economics, Springer, 2024

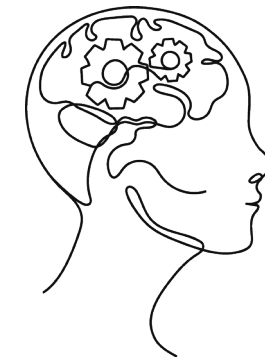
#### Robyn Brouer

Robyn Brouer, with Sonia White and Rachel O'Sullivan, "Service with a Smile: Gender Role Conformity, Servant Leadership and Followership," *Academy of Management Proceedings*, 2023

## WEBSITES

### Ying Johnson

Ying Johnson, with Rebel Cole, Melanie Jewkes and Keerat Kaur, "2024 Aspiring Homeowners Report," *HomeSolutions.com*, 2024



## MCOB Professors' Research Recognized in Premier Academic Journal

A recent paper in the prestigious *Journal of Applied Psychology* by Dr. Mickey Smith and Dr. I-Heng "Ray" Wu of the Mitchell College of Business, along with Dr. Michael Holmes and Andréa Hodge of Florida State University, has been recognized for its potential to impact science and practice in the field.

Smith is an associate professor of management. Wu is an assistant professor of management.

The journal recognized the paper as an Editor's Choice Article, an honor based on societal relevance, practical impact, and/or the potential for moving science in new directions.

The paper's title is "An Integrative Conceptual Review of Multiperspective Frameworks in Personality Research and a Roadmap for Extended Applications in Organizational Psychology." It reviews and organizes the deep areas of research studying organizational topics from multiple perspectives.

In psychology, multiperspective frameworks — for example, the social relations model, the realistic accuracy model, and the trait-reputation-identity model — provide the logic and methodology to study phenomena like personality, leadership, and performance from different perspectives at the same time.

On the other hand, topics in organizational psychology — which is the study of human behavior in organizations — are conventionally studied from a single perspective. This paper sheds light on different ways to organize research to better understand when and why studying things from different perspective-based angles might be beneficial.

Much of the existing work developing multiperspective frameworks has focused on the measurement of personality traits. These frameworks have sought to increase accuracy in personality judgments (for example, how conscientious a job applicant is). They have been used to try to understand what vantage points are best able to detect certain aspects of personality traits, such as what others can see about you that you can't. More broadly, they have challenged how we conceptualize personality in the workplace.

Smith, Wu and colleagues review the major multiperspective frameworks that exist in the research and their current applications. They also present a roadmap for applying the frameworks to study other personality topics and organizational psychology more broadly. They propose seven directions for future research focusing on topics like personality change, leadership development, and even leveraging artificial intelligence as a unique perspective in judgments.

Smith, Wu and colleagues also discuss the real-world implications of applying multiperspective frameworks in organizations. They see tremendous value in leveraging the frameworks in employee development — specifically, leadership development and performance management.

While the authors see value in collecting information from multiple perspectives, they warn about the cost of obtaining multirater data. And they caution managers about legal issues related to using multirater information to make decisions for business practices like employee selection or compensation.

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