Growth. Leadership. Innovation. These are the hallmarks of the Entrepreneurship and Emerging Enterprises (EEE) program at the Martin J. Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University.

The 2014-15 academic year marked a year of substantial growth for the EEE program. Our Couri Hatchery, housed in the Falcone Center for Entrepreneurship, expanded to a record 103 student companies that collectively raised nearly $3 million in external capital. Thanks to the generosity of our alumni donors, the Hatchery was renovated and expanded to allow for more collaboration and a creative environment in which to innovate, create and develop new businesses.

In addition, the Falcone Center received $330,000 in funding from the U.S. Small Business Administration to support the expansion of entrepreneurship services for veterans through its newly established Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC). The funding further extends Whitman’s dedication to our nation’s military personnel and veterans, a commitment that also includes the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities programs, which annually serves 230 military veterans and/or family members.

Our faculty continue to lead the way in conducting innovative research, resulting in dozens of articles in leading scholarly journals. A team of our researchers, Johan Wiklund and Tom Lumpkin, received a distinguished international award for writing the most influential article in the field of entrepreneurship. Several EEE professors continued service as editors and editorial board members of top international journals. The team also sponsored and participated in the 35th annual Babson College Entrepreneurship Research Conference, widely considered the premier conference for entrepreneurship research.

Our reputation as a top-ranked, innovative entrepreneurship program has attracted students and other researchers from around the country, as well as community members, alumni, business owners and organizations seeking counsel and entrepreneurial guidance.

We thank you for your continuing support of our program and welcome your partnership as we strengthen our position among the nation’s elite in entrepreneurship, education and advancement.

**ON THE COVER:** The Couri Hatchery student incubator, part of the Whitman School’s Falcone Center for Entrepreneurship, was expanded and renovated over the summer to create a more collaborative space for the student entrepreneurs. More than 100 student companies are housed within the Couri Hatchery. Student designers helped design the new space, including Industrial & Interactive Design students Ryan Pierson ’16, Ryn Adkins ’16, Sally Zheng ’16 and Nicholas Krapf ’16, and Cassie Pettinati ’15.
KENNETH WALSLEBEN has been named a professor of entrepreneurial practice at the Whitman School after serving for five years as an adjunct professor. He earned his B.A. in economics at Syracuse University in 1983.

Prior to teaching at Whitman, he was the founder and principal of The Hamilton Group (Delaware), Inc., Hamilton Capital Resources, LLC and The Hamilton Companies, Inc., all in the Syracuse, N.Y. area. In these positions, he developed and coordinated all aspects of the companies, including developing the first-of-its-kind financial solution for supply chain funding in the U.S. His areas of expertise include, but are not limited to, alternative structures in corporate finance, alternative funding options of entrepreneurial enterprises and corporate advisory services for entrepreneurial enterprises.

Before that, Walsleben served as the vice president of financial services at United Computer Capital Corp., Inc., where he developed and coordinated all aspects of lease financing with third-party bank lenders and generated more than $1 million toward the annual margin in his first year with the firm. Prior to this, Walsleben served as a manager to debt programs at Continental Information Systems, Inc. where he helped develop transactional pricing and non-recourse debt placements. He was the youngest person in the industry and the country to hold such a position of authority.

Walsleben has added an invaluable component to the Whitman's entrepreneurial program by using his extensive industry knowledge. In April of 2012, he was cited for entrepreneurial excellence by the EEE Department Chair and received the highest rating ever for the senior capstone course at 4.95 out of 5.00 in the fall 2013 semester. Walsleben has coached numerous capstone teams over the years, including one first place finish, an additional two second place finishes and a third to a final round.

TRENT WILLIAMS joined the Whitman faculty this fall. Williams recently completed his Ph.D. from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University after working in consulting for a few years. The Kelley School of Business is one of the top schools nationally and internationally for entrepreneurship and Williams’ dissertation committee included some of the most accomplished entrepreneurship research scholars in the field.

“Williams is one of the top recent doctoral graduates in entrepreneurship and the Whitman faculty is delighted with his addition,” said Alex McKelvie, associate professor of entrepreneurship and chair of the entrepreneurship and emerging enterprises department at Whitman. “He has an exemplary research publication record for his level of experience and we look forward to him expanding on it at Whitman.”

Williams has also received two teaching awards at Indiana University, another rarity for a doctoral student. “Williams is not only an exceptional entrepreneurship researcher, but an educator as well,” said McKelvie.

Williams’ commitment to academic entrepreneurship is just as impressive outside of the classroom. He has been involved in several impactful social entrepreneurship programs, including traveling to Haiti with students in 2013, where they spent two weeks in Haiti’s capital, Port-au-Prince, after a 2010 earthquake shook the region. His research focuses on local entrepreneurship in the aftermath of the earthquake. To gauge the recovery, he interviewed 55 entrepreneurs, their suppliers and customers.

Williams is originally from Provo, Utah. Along with his Ph.D., Williams received a master of business from Indiana University and an MBA from Purdue University. He completed his B.A. in English and philosophy at Brigham Young University.
EEE 2014-15 YEAR AT A GLANCE

RANKINGS ↑

#5 Bloomberg Businessweek best undergraduate schools for entrepreneurship
#6 Princeton Review/Entrepreneur magazine undergraduate entrepreneurship program
#12 U.S. News and World Report undergraduate entrepreneurship program
#14 Forbes list of America’s most entrepreneurial universities
#17 Princeton Review/Entrepreneur magazine graduate entrepreneurship program
#19 U.S. News and World Report graduate entrepreneurship program

EDUCATION 🎓

181 MAJORS
96 MINORS
1,761 UNDERGRAD STUDENTS
521 GRADUATE STUDENTS
5 FULL-TIME PH.D. STUDENTS

FACULTY RESEARCH 📚

4 EDITORSHIPS
21 EDITORIAL BOARD POSITIONS AT LEADING JOURNALS
31 FACULTY AND PH.D. STUDENT PUBLICATIONS IN TOP-TIER JOURNALS
4 BOOKS
25 PAPERS PRESENTED AT LEADING INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES
27 BUSINESSES IN THE SOUTH SIDE INNOVATION CENTER

103 STUDENT BUSINESSES RUN THROUGH THE COURI HATCHERY

NEARLY $3M IN EXTERNAL CAPITAL RAISED BY HATCHERY COMPANIES

5X INCREASE IN THE AMOUNT OF EXTERNAL CAPITAL RAISED BY HATCHERY COMPANIES

59 COMPANIES WORKED WITH AS PART OF FOR CREDIT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

6 STUDENTS SELECTED FOR COLLEGIATE ENTREPRENEURS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

$300,000 TOTAL WON IN STUDENT BUSINESS COMPETITIONS

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

38 COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS IN THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP BOOTCAMP

49 ENTREPRENEURSHIP BOOTCAMP PARTICIPANTS

900 WISE SYMPOSIUM ATTENDEES

631 INDIVIDUALS TRAINED THROUGH THE WISE WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTER

27 BUSINESSES IN THE SOUTH SIDE INNOVATION CENTER

COLLECTIVELY, SSIC & WISE WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTER SERVED OVER 1,000 COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN CLIENT TRAINING WITH CLIENTS’ GROSS REVENUE TOTALING OVER $10 MILLION

COURI HATCHERY

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

COLLECTIVELY, SSIC & WISE WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTER SERVED OVER 1,000 COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN CLIENT TRAINING WITH CLIENTS’ GROSS REVENUE TOTALING OVER $10 MILLION
Entrepreneurship and Emerging Enterprises is a flagship program at the Whitman School. Consistently ranked as one of the top entrepreneurship programs in the nation, Whitman EEE helps students discover their innate entrepreneurial potential, giving them a set of tools and perspective to help launch their careers.

The underlying philosophy of the EEE program is experiential learning. The entire program is dedicated to providing hands-on opportunities for students to live entrepreneurship, whether through starting their own companies, working with local start-ups or by engaging in consulting projects with established businesses or not-for-profits. Students also gain practical experience through connecting with the programs offered through the Falcone Center for Entrepreneurship.

Whitman’s entrepreneurship program is designed to examine and enhance the connection between educational excellence and entrepreneurship ingenuity, offering specialized tracks and coursework in new venture creation, corporate entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship and family business. Graduates are well suited for entrepreneurial management opportunities in a variety of settings, from both small and large organizations, to startups and family businesses.

THE EEE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM
Combining classroom time with experiential learning opportunities and real-world business practice, undergraduate students gain invaluable hands-on experiences through intensive and interactive group-oriented projects—including biannual business plan competitions and business simulations. During their senior year, every Whitman undergraduate participates in Whitman’s Capstone experience, an experiential program that brings together all the elements of the Whitman education in the context of an original business concept that students conceive and develop as a viable, sustainable and innovative new venture.
THE EEE GRADUATE PROGRAM
For MBA students, Whitman offers a concentration in entrepreneurship, focusing on entrepreneurial management—how to bring an entrepreneurial perspective to the challenges and opportunities confronting organizations of all sizes and types. All MBA students also complete the Global Entrepreneurial Management course, a field experience built around the actual implementation of an entrepreneurial concept.

Our one-year M.S. in Entrepreneurship (MSE) program is designed for students who want a “mini-MBA” with a key focus on entrepreneurship. This year we welcomed the largest incoming MSE class yet. Providing a rigorous immersion into the nature of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial process the program includes many hands-on classes. Core content is coupled with a strong commitment to experiential learning. MSE students’ companies have been profiled in Forbes and Inc. magazine, among other media outlets.

CASSE
Whitman’s Certificate of Advanced Study in Sustainable Enterprise (CASSE) program is a cross-campus collaboration between Whitman, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and the Syracuse Center of Excellence. Students in CASSE courses learn from a cross-functional team of faculty, as well as from their peers from other colleges across campus, acquiring a unique perspective that provides them with a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

THE EEE PH.D. PROGRAM
The Ph.D. program in entrepreneurship at the Whitman School of Management produces leading scholars and teachers in the rapidly growing field of entrepreneurship. Rob Nason, a 2014 EEE doctoral graduate, joined the faculty of Concordia University in Canada.

STUDENT BUSINESS AWARD WINNERS USE REWARDS TO MOVE VENTURES FORWARD
Earlier this year, Gabriela Escalante ’15 and Hannah Fagut ’16 received the CNY Student Business Award from the Whitman Alumni Club of CNY. The pair won the award for their company, EBAActive, which develops, manufactures and markets athletic LED apparel. After meeting in a class at Whitman, Escalante and Fagut realized there was an opportunity for a business venture with their combined talents and backgrounds. At the time, Escalante was looking into wearable technology and Fagut came from an athletic background, as her dad was a former pro-cyclist and the owner of local high-end cycling stores. This combination sparked an idea and EBAActive was born. The Whitman Alumni Club of CNY created the CNY Student Business Award to aid Whitman students in their entrepreneurial efforts. The Club awards the recipients with a cash price of $3,000 and up to $7,000 in services donated by the alumni. Additionally, EBAActive earned a $3,200 and a $3,000 award from Syracuse University initiatives, RvD IDEA and the Innovation and Creativity Awards as part of the Panasci Business Plan Competition, respectively. Escalante cites these awards as the opportunity to begin operations sooner than anticipated.

Escalante and Fagut credit much of their success to the Falcone Center and the general support of the Whitman school and its team. The two plan to remain in central New York to launch EBAActive operations as they have developed a comprehensive network of potential clients and valuable sources, like those of the Whitman School and Syracuse University. EBAActive is slated to initially promote its products at annual cycling trade shows once it funds its launch at an estimated launch of $60,000.
PROFESSOR LOOKS TO PREPARE ASPIRING ENTREPRENEURS WITH NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS

What do the founders of Virgin Group, JetBlue and Ikea have in common? They are all successful entrepreneurs who share an Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) diagnosis. Dr. Johan Wiklund, professor of entrepreneurship and emerging enterprises, is studying the connection between ADHD and entrepreneurship. He asserts that the accompanying characteristics of ADHD, such as sensation seeking, risk tolerance, hyper focus and impulsivity, can be assets for entrepreneurs. Wiklund has interviewed numerous individuals with an ADHD diagnosis who pursue entrepreneurship. He has found these individuals often gravitate to business ownership, because they can dictate the parameters of the business to their comfort. They can work hours that suit their internal clocks and patterns of sleep and alert times, they can choose the tasks for which they are best suited and pursue activities they are passionate about. Wiklund’s conviction is that entrepreneurship can offer a productive career path for people who otherwise have problems fitting in and contributing to society.

Knowing that people with ADHD gravitate towards entrepreneurship, Wiklund feels it is important to provide education to these individuals in ways that suit their needs. He aspires to offer entrepreneurship classes that are pedagogically tailored for students with ADHD and other neurological diagnoses.

“We often speak about inclusion and diversity in higher education,” shared Wiklund. “I would like to offer classes that truly embrace neurodiversity and build on the strengths of people with such diagnoses. My ultimate aim is to assist these individuals in reaching their maximum potential through entrepreneurship.”

Whitman’s team of renowned research faculty and accomplished professors of practice have led the EEE program to national recognition since its inception in the late 1990s. One important component of a leading academic entrepreneurship program is the development of new knowledge. The EEE faculty members have received both national and international acclaim for their thought leadership and continue to be very active participants in leading academic discussions. They continue to serve as editors and on the editorial boards of the leading journals of the field. The research productivity of the EEE faculty is among the very best in the world. Further, much of the work is cited not only in academic debate but also in industry publications, such as Forbes, Inc. magazine and Bloomberg BusinessWeek. These accolades reflect our faculty’s commitment to industry advancement and providing an innovative academic experience that prepares students to chart a path to entrepreneurial success.

HONORS AND RECOGNITION

The following are a few of the recent acknowledgments for faculty research achievements.

ALEXANDRA KOSTAKIS
- Received the 2015 Oberwager Award for her leadership as a housemaster in Whitman’s Goodman IMPRESS program.

G. THOMAS LUMPKIN
- Reappointed for another three-year term as co-editor of Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal.

ALEXANDER MCKELVIE

MINET SCHINDEHUTTE
- Joined the editorial board of the Journal of Management.

JOHAN WIKLUND AND G. THOMAS LUMPKIN
- Received the 2015 Greif Research Impact Award for their co-authored paper, “Entrepreneurial orientation and business performance: An assessment of past research and suggestions for the future,” published in 2009 in Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice. This award is for the most influential paper in the field of entrepreneurship published in the year 2009.
SELECTED PUBLICATIONS


MARIA MINNITI (with Kautonen, T.), “‘Fifty is the new thirty’: Aging well and start-up activities,” Applied Economics Letters, 2014.


WHITMAN SPONSORS BABSON COLLEGE ENTREPRENEURSHIP RESEARCH CONFERENCE

The Whitman School was a Gold Sponsor of the 35th annual Babson College Entrepreneurship Research Conference (BCERC) this summer. The Conference was held on June 10-13 in Natick, Mass.

BCERC, widely considered the premier conference for entrepreneurship research, was established in 1981 to provide a dynamic venue where academics and real-world practitioners link theory and practice, and to encourage and increase quality research in entrepreneurship. The 2015 BCERC Call for Papers received 566 abstracts from 36 countries. Of these, more than 315 researchers are attending the conference from 25 countries to present papers.

Four Whitman Ph.D. students—EJ Ko, CK Lee, Kiven Pierre and Wei Yu—presented their own research at BCERC this year. The Ph.D. candidates were completing their second year and had taken their qualifying exams just before attending the conference. Having a paper accepted for presentation is a major accomplishment as there are a limited number of accepted papers. More than 315 researchers attended the conference from 25 countries to present their research.

Babson College also held the 2015 Babson Doctoral Consortium Program in conjunction with BCERC. The Doctoral Consortium provides doctoral students with the opportunity to gain insight into current research issues through intense interaction with consortium faculty, and seeks to encourage scholars and educators to become leaders in the field of entrepreneurship education. The Doctoral Consortium received 96 applications from 19 countries and the top 25 were selected to participate. Whitman’s Kiven Pierre was invited to participate.
PANASCII WINNER'S VISION DECREASES ATHLETIC INJURIES

Daniel Goldberg '15 received first place and a $20,000 award at the Panasci Business Plan Competition for his business, Diamond MMA. With more than $200,000 in sales, Diamond aims to “empower athletes to overcome the obstacle of being human” by selling enhanced groin protection equipment and compression shorts. However, Goldberg is also the sole founder of a second company, Golden Gear, which he alone started to sell high-quality combat and boxing equipment.

Goldberg began Muay Thai fighting, a combination of kickboxing with elbows and knees, when he was 11, however injuries prevented him from pursuing the sport long-term. When he was 14, he began to learn about the athletic equipment industry and birthed the idea for Golden Gear, eventually joining as a co-founder for his second business, Diamond, in 2014.

“Syracuse University does a great job of encouraging students to get their feet wet in entrepreneurship,” said Goldberg. “The faculty helped to shape my dream and put me in control of my own future.”

He added “people hear ‘just do it’ all the time, but don’t ever realize how much you can do on your own. Students have the advantage of having the freedom to find their passion, see what works and what doesn’t, so they know what they want in the future.”

Currently, Goldberg is exploring how large and fast he can grow his company. He continuously searches for new ventures and is planning for the next step in his entrepreneurial career.

COURI HATCHERY

The Couri Hatchery is a supportive business incubator available at no cost to students to help them start, establish and develop their businesses to the point where they can stand on their own. Over the past two years, the growth of student-run companies utilizing the Hatchery increased by 600 percent to more than 100 firms. These firms raised more than $2 million in external capital during the year. It has also grown its portfolio of mentors who meet with students on a regular basis, including a lawyer, accountant, HR representative, sales and marketing expert, banker and technology analyst. Two members of the Hatchery won $25,000 awards from the Grants for Growth program – Azeer and Solstice Power.

PANASCII BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

The campus-wide Panasci Business Plan Competition awards more than $35,000 in prize money to the top three teams whose new venture ideas represent the best potential for sustainable growth and attracting outside financing. Forty-seven student teams participated in the program in 2014-15.

FALCONE CENTER RENOVATION

The Couri Hatchery student incubator, part of the Whitman School’s Falcone Center for Entrepreneurship, was expanded and renovated over the summer to create a more collaborative environment.
ENTREPRENEURSHIP CLUB (E-CLUB)
The Entrepreneurship Club is dedicated to encouraging the spirit of entrepreneurship among the student body and to supporting the needs of students who are interested in entrepreneurship. Student members engage in business pitch competitions, bring in notable guest speakers, coordinate field trips and work together on entrepreneurial ventures.

FAMILY BUSINESS CLUB
The Family Business Club is dedicated to preparing students for the unique challenges of working for and running a family business. The goal is to improve the professional development of members through the exchange of ideas, best practices and experiences. Club members work with alumni and guests from local family businesses to discuss many of the important issues that family businesses face. A select group of students, led by Professor of Practice Ken Walsleben, attended the third annual Family Enterprise Case Competition at the University of Vermont in January. The team received the Team Spirit award.

CREATIVITY, INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP LEARNING COMMUNITY (CIE)
The CIE, led by Professor of Practice Alexandra Kostakis, is housed on the third floor of SU’s Dellplain Residence Hall. CIE is dedicated to the discovery and celebration of entrepreneurship and innovation. Students work with real-world challenges, develop tools and learn techniques to foster their entrepreneurial potential. In the 2014-2015 academic year, 32 students participated in the one-credit course related to the CIE.

D’ANIELLO INTERNSHIP PROGRAM AN INVALUABLE EXPERIENCE
Every year, Whitman offers D’Aniello Internships through a highly selective program that provides exemplary undergraduate and graduate students with unique entrepreneurial opportunities. This year Whitman had the largest class of D’Aniello interns in history. The D’Aniello interns from this past spring included Aldrine Ashong-Katai, Rydyl Bibber, Alex Burschtin, Anthony Casa, Tom Charles, Katherine Desy, Dale Dykes II, Jay Kling, Patrick McKenna, Austin Miller, Gabriel Veras and Sally Zheng. In the fall 2014, the interns were Michael Roman, Madison Carter, Rachel Mohler, Kwaku Bonsu and Lee Buttolph. Each semester, a select group of highly qualified Whitman entrepreneurial students work directly with an executive or founder in a rapidly growing, innovative entrepreneurial environment in the greater Syracuse area.

The D’Aniello Internship is both an honor and an invaluable experience. The program challenges its interns with hands-on, experiential learning. Interns are valuable members of the team and are expected to produce visible results. They work on business development, marketing, social media planning, supply chain logistics and useful deliverables to further the company. By working directly with an executive, a student is exposed to every facet of a business and is given a real look into the professional world. This experience provides interns a priceless edge among their competitors upon graduation.

space for the student entrepreneurs. More than 100 student companies are housed within the Couri Hatchery. Student designers helped design the new space, including Industrial & Interactive Design Students Ryan Pierson, Ryn Adkins, Sally Zheng and Nicholas Krapf ’16, and Cassie Pettinati ’15.
WHITMAN RECEIVES FEDERAL FUNDING TO EXPAND ENTREPRENEURSHIP OUTREACH TO VETERANS

The Falcone Center for Entrepreneurship received funding from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to support the expansion of services for veterans through its newly established Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC). The funding, which is approximately $330,000 for the first year, enables Whitman’s VBOC to provide counseling, training, assistance, comprehensive business assessment and mentoring to veteran and service-disabled veteran entrepreneurs. It also will help Reserve Component, National Guard and transitioning service members who are interested in starting or expanding a small business.

“This is a tremendous opportunity to expand Syracuse University’s service to our veterans who have sacrificed so much for us,” said Terry Brown, executive director of the Falcone Center for Entrepreneurship. “A key responsibility of Whitman’s VBOC is to support transitioning service members as they embark on post military service careers that often include small business ownership and other forms of self-employment. We’re proud to be able to offer the valuable support our veterans need to be successful.”

A portion of the funding will be used to cover costs associated with coordinating, delivering and conducting outreach to increase participation in the entrepreneurship track of the Department of Defense’s (DoD’s) Transition Assistance Program (TAP), known as Boots to Business, on military installations in the continental United States and its territories. VBOCs are directed by the Small Business Act to participate in the DoD’s Transition Assistance Program.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP BOOTCAMP

The Entrepreneurship Bootcamp is tailored to local aspiring entrepreneurs in the Syracuse area. Participants are exposed to critical concepts, ideas and approaches that work in creating successful ventures, as well as common mistakes and pitfalls to avoid. To date, the Bootcamp has graduated more than 540 local entrepreneurs.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP BOOTCAMP FOR VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES

The Barnes Family Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities (EBV) program offers cutting-edge, experiential training in entrepreneurship and small business management for post-9/11 soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines disabled as a result of their service to our country. The Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans’ Families (EBV-F) program was also launched for caregivers of seriously wounded veterans to provide the same educational and mentoring opportunity. More than 890 veterans and caregivers have gone through the EBV and EBV-F programs, free of charge, since their launch in 2007.

WOMEN IGNITING THE SPIRIT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP (WISE)

Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship (WISE) is an initiative to train and inspire women interested in launching or growing a business venture. The program’s objective is to provide information, resources and support for women entrepreneurs, enabling each to successfully advance her business to the next stage of profitability and success.

Last year, the WISE Women’s Business Center served 87 women entrepreneurs. These firms reported over $1.3 million in gross revenues. WISE worked with 544 others through training and workshops.

The one-day WISE Symposium—attended by more than 900 women—included a variety of seminars and panel discussions offering practical advice covering topics from all aspects of the business world; motivational speeches from local and nationally-known successful women business owners; many networking opportunities; a business expo featuring 128 exhibitors; 30 speakers throughout the day and much more. This year was the first time that the symposium was held on campus at the Carrier Dome.
THE 2015 WISE SYMPOSIUM:
• 13th annual event hosting more than 900 in attendance at the event.
• Reached 6.2 million people on the Twitter hashtag #WISE2015 and had eight local businesses sponsor the Twitter Party.
• 30 speakers throughout the day, including two keynote presenters and 14 breakout sessions.
• 128 exhibitors on the interactive business expo floor, including 42 event sponsors.
• WISE Latinas fifth annual luncheon sessions on site at the event, featuring distinguished guest Maria Contreras-Sweet, administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

SOUTH SIDE INNOVATION CENTER
A community based microenterprise incubator, the 14,000-square-foot South Side Innovation Center (SSIC) provides office space and equipment to foster the creation of new ventures and help existing businesses grow. The SSIC currently is at full capacity with 27 tenant companies. The SSIC also worked with another 350 entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs this year. Collectively, these firms reported more than $9 million in gross revenues.

BETTER DESSERTS FOR THE HEALTH OF IT
After years working as an insurance claim representative, Tracie Long ditched the 9-5 office job to pursue her long-time passion of baking, but she added a twist. Long has a history of heart disease and high cholesterol in her family and after her doctor told her to cut out the sweets, Long decided to instead turn her sugary vice into a healthy one. After six years of experimenting to create delicious and nutritious desserts, Long created Avocadough in March 2014.

She started by replacing unhealthy ingredients in her products with the healthy alternative of avocados, but her line has now expanded to include options for those with vegan and Paleo dietary restrictions. Seeking unprocessed and organic ingredients, Long creates delicious treats that are healthy for the heart and body. She plans to create a fun and employee-focused work environment as she continues to produce products she feels good selling to the public.

“I always give 110 percent, but it also helps to have a strong support base and stay open minded because you may have questions you don’t even know how to ask yet,” she said.

With an open mind and willing to take on any obstacle, Long plans to continue to grow and develop her company. Averaging 200 to 300 units sold a week, she is currently examining other regions in the U.S. where her product would be well-received, including California, Colorado, Florida and Vermont.
GURSHA NAMED 2015 WHITMAN YOUNG ALUMNUS

Michael Gursha ’10 was named the 2015 Whitman Young Alumnus of the Year. A dual EEE major at Whitman and television, radio and film at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Gursha is now the inaugural entrepreneur-in-residence at Syracuse University’s S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. Prior to that he served as vice president of strategic initiatives at Curemark, a New York-based startup biotech company focused on the treatment of autism and other neurological disorders.

“I had a great experience at SU,” said Gursha. “I feel very strongly about staying involved and helping students bring their creative ideas to life.”

During his sophomore year, Gursha was a founding team member of Dream Water, which won first place and $25,000 at the 2008 Panasci Business Plan Competition. “Participating in the Panasci Competition was a tremendous learning experience,” added Gursha. “It gave me a real life perspective of how the start-up process worked and an entrepreneurial foundation that led me to Curemark.”

Since commencement, Gursha has been an active alumnus. In addition to judging competitions, he is a member of Generation Orange Leadership Society of New York and an advisor to the Digital Media Entrepreneurship Center at Newhouse.

Last fall, Gursha was brought to Whitman to address students as a guest speaker for the Goodman IMPRESS program. He concluded his talk by sharing his takeaways for success: “Always be curious. Ask questions and listen. People are everything. Don’t be afraid to fail. Make mistakes and learn from them. Don’t listen to naysayers. Create opportunities. Be yourself. Have fun! If you do these things, the sky is the limit.”

MAKING HOUSING AVAILABLE TO STUDY ABROAD STUDENTS

Ryan Blum ’14 is the co-founder and CEO of Study Abroad Apartments, a third party intermediary between American students studying abroad and international housing providers. University students are able to rent apartments for as little as a few weeks at a time to several months. It also offers a roommate matching service and a brand ambassador program for college students. Brand ambassadors have the opportunity to earn money for themselves and discounts for the people they refer, all while spreading the mission of Study Abroad Apartments.

Blum started the company his senior year after coming back from studying abroad in Barcelona, Spain, and encountering inefficiencies with housing. He teamed up with Brett Newman, now president of Study Abroad Apartments, who graduated from Ohio State University in 2014. They realized there was an untapped market in housing for students abroad, and immediately wrote a business plan to support this venture.

Today, Blum travels around the world to personally approve each apartment to ensure the company can find apartments that will suit the various needs of students studying internationally. Study Abroad Apartments currently offers more than 2,250 apartments in 10 major European cities as well as Tel Aviv, Israel.

BELL NAMED 2015 EEE YOUNG ALUM

Eileen Bell ’14 was named the 2015 EEE Program Young Alumna of the Year. Bell graduated with a bachelor’s in entrepreneurship and finance and is the founder and CEO of Azeer Swim LLC. Founded in July 2014, Azeer creates high-quality swimwear for women with above average assets.

Drawing from her personal frustration shopping for swimwear that fit well, but was also affordable and trendy, Bell decided to take her fashion destiny into her own hands. Bell took classes, read books and studied as much as possible to understand the fashion language, as well.

Bell credits Syracuse University and Whitman for helping her develop her company from an idea to a reality. She spent the majority of her senior spring preparing for the Panasci Business Plan Competition and RvD IDEA, building her company with the aid of her mentor and advisor, Terry Brown, executive director of the Falcone Center for Entrepreneurship.

“Our professors have the experience we are lacking, the networks we have yet to build and the knowledge to help us get our business moving,” she said. In the future, Bell plans to expand her line to also include lingerie, continuing to grow her brand.
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