This past year we realized a number of important milestones, developed new partnerships, and earned notable new awards. We celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities and the South Side Innovation Center and began preparations for celebrating the tenth anniversary of the WISE Women’s Business Center. We worked collaboratively with our various partners across the Syracuse University campus, most notably welcoming the new Blackstone LaunchPad. This additional support resource will help our student entrepreneurs achieve even greater successes in the future.

We again had a record year in terms of student businesses launched in the Couri Hatchery. Our classes remain popular and provide cutting-edge educational experiences, and our faculty team receives among the best teaching evaluations at the Whitman School. Staff and faculty members received important accolades this year, including Joanne Lenweaver’s global recognition for work with women entrepreneurs, Maria Minniti’s international leadership in entrepreneurship and public policy research, first-year faculty member Trent Williams’ multiple publications in premier journals and Johan Wiklund’s scholarly recognitions, including receiving the Al Berg Endowed Chair in Entrepreneurship.

Our reputation as a top-ranked entrepreneurship program continues to attract individuals from around the globe seeking resources and guidance for their new ventures, as well as the home of new, innovative ideas. The Entrepreneurship and Emerging Enterprises (EEE) program is seen as having among the very best group of entrepreneurship scholars in the world and the Whitman School a desired location to conduct exemplary research. Our alumni astound us as they boldly execute their dreams and visions for their companies. We are only at the tip of the iceberg of tracking and celebrating the success of our alumni. Please continue to share your entrepreneurial stories with us!

Thank you for your unwavering support of the EEE program at Whitman. We are able to achieve our successes only through our partnerships and collaborations as we strengthen our position among the world’s elite in entrepreneurship education, research and outreach. We are looking forward to continuing the celebration in the year to come.
SHARING REAL-LIFE ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

Professor of Entrepreneurial Practice Alexandra “Alex” Kostakis first began teaching at the Whitman School several years ago as an adjunct instructor. Today, as a professor of practice, she teaches an average of three classes a semester to undergraduates, as well as those in the Defense Comptrollership Program, plus online and in-person courses for veterans and transitioning military members who want to learn more about starting their own businesses.

She also teaches in the Boots to Business program that provides a high-level view of what it takes to run a business. Through the program she travels to military bases all over the world helping service members.

Outside the classroom, Kostakis serves as one of the Goodman IMPRESS program housemasters, and is a faculty mentor for the Creativity, Innovation, Entrepreneurship (CIE) Learning Community in Dellplain Hall.

“I’m glad I have opportunities to interact with the whole school and not just those in the EEE major,” said Kostakis. “I enjoy connecting students with resources and activities that help them pursue their passions.”

Since 1999, Kostakis has owned her own business with her mother, Hellinis Imports, an importer/wholesaler and distributor of a variety of Greek items. She uses her experience as a longtime business owner to help students not only to become innovative thinkers, but also successful entrepreneurs.

“I think having my own business makes me good at what I do because I can give real-life examples to the students – things they won’t get from a textbook,” she said. “They appreciate hearing about the successes and the failures!”

FROM THE GOLF COURSE TO THE CLASSROOM

John Petosa is a professor of accounting and entrepreneurial practice at the Whitman School. An adjunct instructor for five years, he recently completed his sixth full year as a professor of practice and is the perfect example of how a golf game can influence a career.

Nearly 12 years ago, while on the golf course with Professor of Accounting Practice Bill Walsh, Petosa first considered being an adjunct professor. Walsh thought he’d be a natural. Shortly thereafter, Petosa taught his first class. As the semesters rolled by, he kept taking on more and more classes until he finally decided to join the Whitman faculty full time as a professor of accounting and entrepreneurial practice.

One of the courses Petosa teaches is Advanced Topics in Family Business, which completes the EEE family business track.

“I teach our students some of the major issues that family businesses face, if they desire to transition the business to the next generation,” he said. “Completion of our two courses as part of the track really prepares them for working in a family business.”

In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Petosa judges the annual Capstone Competition finals. He also serves as one of the Goodman IMPRESS program “housemasters,” as well as the advisor to the Beta Alpha Psi accounting fraternity, an honor society for the brightest accounting majors at Whitman.

Another honor? Petosa was selected by students as the Faculty of the Year for both the 2016 undergraduate and graduate classes, meaning he was the invited to speak at both convocations. This was the third year in a row Petosa was selected as the graduate honoree.

When he’s not teaching, he serves as chief financial officer of Deli-Boy, a Judge in the nearby town of Camillus, and is a tax preparer and attorney.
EEE 2015-16 YEAR AT A GLANCE

RANKINGS

#12 U.S. News and World Report 2016 Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Program
#13 Princeton Review/Entrepreneur magazine 2016 Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Program

#17 U.S. News and World Report 2016 Graduate Entrepreneurship Program
#20 Princeton Review/Entrepreneur magazine 2016 Graduate Entrepreneurship Program

EDUCATION

196 MAJORS
126 MINORS
1,759 UNDERGRAD STUDENTS
722 GRADUATE STUDENTS
5 FULL-TIME PH.D. STUDENTS

FACULTY RESEARCH

4 EDITORIAL BOARD POSITIONS AT LEADING JOURNALS
21 FACULTY AND PH.D. STUDENT PUBLICATIONS IN TOP-TIER JOURNALS
31 PAPERS PRESENTED AT LEADING INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES
**EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

- **148** Student Businesses run through the Couri Hatchery
- **NEARLY $3M** in external capital raised by Hatchery companies
- **6X GROWTH** in Couri Hatchery businesses over the past 3 years
- **99** Teams pitching new venture ideas for Capstone class
- **28** Students selected to attend collegiate entrepreneurship conferences

$45K+ Given at Panasci Business Plan Competition

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

- **41** Community participants in the entrepreneurship bootcamp
- **27** entrepreneurship bootcamp for veterans (EBV) participants
- **1,300** veterans served as part of EBV since initiation
- **633** 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 $55 million
NEW COURSE EXPLORES ALTERNATIVE PATH TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP

A new EEE class debuted during fall 2015. Created by Professor of Practice Ken Walsleben, Entrepreneurial Turnarounds exposes students to alternative entrepreneurship paths and trains them to revive struggling companies.

“Entrepreneurship might be starting a business, and that’s certainly a valid direction, but it’s not the only one,” said Walsleben. “There is a whole industry that deals with turnarounds, yet few places address it academically.”

The class is open to Syracuse University undergraduate and graduate students. It primarily focuses on small- to mid-size entrepreneurial firms. Students learn how to detect sources of poor performance, navigate the reinvention or sale of struggling businesses and initiate successful workplace turnarounds.

“At some point in your career, you will work with an entrepreneurial turnaround,” said Walsleben. “Either you’ll own one, work for one, do business with one, buy product from one or sell to one. We challenge students to immerse themselves in that world to prepare for improving the performance of an existing business.”

Course topics include ideal first steps, finding short- and long-term concerns and management of stakeholders, financiers, owners, customers and creditors. Walsleben incorporates real-world examples through case studies and interviews with industry practitioners. He said student feedback from the first course offering was enthusiastic and supportive.

“This course opens your eyes to a path to business ownership that few people realize exists,” said Walsleben. “Entrepreneurial Turnarounds will make you a better business person regardless of what path you pursue in your business career.”

THE EEE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

The EEE undergraduate program combines classroom time with experiential learning opportunities and real-world business practice. Culminating in a senior year capstone experience where all students start a high-growth new venture and present it to a panel of external judges, EEE students gain invaluable hands-on experiences through intensive and interactive group-oriented projects.

THE EEE GRADUATE PROGRAM

All MBA students at the Whitman School get to experience entrepreneurship through the capstone Global Entrepreneurial Management course, where they develop and implement a high-potential entrepreneurial concept. MBA students are also able to take a concentration in entrepreneurship where they earn in-depth knowledge about start-ups and entrepreneurial management. Many MBA@Syracuse students also participated in intensive residency programs. In 2015-16, the program hosted residencies on sustainable entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship.

The one-year M.S. in entrepreneurship (MSE) program is designed for students who want a “mini-MBA” with a key focus on entrepreneurship. The program offers a rigorous entrepreneurial immersion with a large number of hands-on experiential learning courses. 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 involves the Whitman School, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and the Syracuse Center of Excellence. This cross-functional perspective enriches teaching, providing students with a unique perspective to approach sustainability. In turn, this gives students a competitive advantage in the marketplace. The number of students graduating from the CASSE program has increased 20 percent over the past three years, with roughly half of the students taking jobs at sustainability-focused organizations. Students routinely report that having the CASSE certificate on their resume was a key discussion point in their job interviews, highlighting the increased attention that today’s organizations are placing on sustainability.

THE EEE PH.D. PROGRAM
The Ph.D. program in entrepreneurship at the Whitman School of Management produces scholars and teachers in the rapidly growing field of entrepreneurship. The EEE program currently has five doctoral students, all at the later dissertation stages of their Ph.D. programs.

ENGINEERING AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP PARTNERSHIP ESTABLISHED
In fall of 2015, Mark Povinelli joined Syracuse University as the Kenneth A. and Mary Ann Shaw Professor of Practice in Entrepreneurial Leadership at the College of Engineering and Computer Science. In this role, he works across campus to encourage collaboration and learning around entrepreneurship.

In addition to bringing together EEE faculty and students with engineering students to provide a cross-functional view of entrepreneurship, Povinelli holds office hours in the Couri Hatchery, providing advice to student entrepreneurs on their engineering and prototyping needs.

STUDENT BUSINESS AWARD WINNERS USE REWARDS TO MOVE VENTURES FORWARD
With more than 21,000 students, Syracuse University offers a high-potential customer base for Central New York businesses. As a freshman, Richard Lewis ’17 recognized this opportunity yet soon realized that students rarely left Marshall Street and the university campus to visit other stores. An idea was born. Lewis is the founder of StudentTicket, a company that brings local businesses and college students together using discounts and promotions. Students purchase a StudentTicket, then present it at participating local businesses to save money.

“The thought process behind StudentTicket is that it will influence students’ buying habits,” said Lewis. “In turn, we can get more students downtown and in the surrounding areas of Syracuse to shop and explore local. If this succeeds, SU students could play a major role in revitalizing Syracuse as a whole by simply influencing their buying power.

The Whitman Alumni Club of Central New York awarded Lewis the Syracuse University CNY Business Award for StudentTicket this past spring. The award supports student businesses that are focused on staying within the local community. The winner receives resources such as money, office space, pro-bono services, legal assistance and human resources, which are meant to help the business expand and succeed. StudentTicket is part of the Couri Hatchery.

Summarizing his experience, Lewis said, “After winning the award it not only gave me a boost of confidence, but it gave validation to what StudentTicket is, and the direction it is headed.”
PH.D. STUDENTS SEE CONFERENCE SUCCESS
This past year, the EEE program’s five Ph.D. students presented papers focused on a variety of topics, at major international conferences such as the Babson College Entrepreneurship Research Conference and the Academy of Management conference. “These are very select conferences and the students are competing for presentation slots with faculty from all around the world. Their acceptance at these conferences is very impressive,” said Johan Wiklund, Al Berg Chair in Entrepreneurship and director of the EEE doctoral program.

“Our doctoral students are often the first authors on these research projects, driving the bus on the ideas,” said Alex McKelvie, EEE department chair and associate professor. “They work closely with faculty members as co-authors, turning out quality work.”

JOHAN WIKLUND ASSUMES THE AL BERG CHAIR IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Whitman’s newest endowed chair is the Al Berg Chair in Entrepreneurship. Johan Wiklund, professor of entrepreneurship, assumed this chair in recognition of his research accomplishments. The funding will allow him to focus on research while continuing to supervise his Ph.D. students, two aspects of his work of which he is most passionate.

“This funding will allow me to conduct actual empirical research and to organize and participate in academic meetings,” said Wiklund. “I am currently exploring the topic of mental health and entrepreneurship, in particular how certain mental disorders, such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), may actually convey advantages in the entrepreneurship context.”

Wiklund added that he also conducts research on the growth of entrepreneurial firms and plans to explore topics related to how entrepreneurship relates to more existential issues, such as how it can be a vehicle for self-realization and self-exploration.

Berg is a longtime supporter of Whitman and the entrepreneurship department. He is a serial entrepreneur who graduated from the School in 1973 with a B.S. in accounting.

The Whitman School’s team of EEE faculty members have received both national and international acclaim for their scholarly accomplishments. This thought leadership is evident in EEE faculty serving as editors, on editorial boards of premier journals, directing doctoral consortia, and being invited speakers in key academic discussions. The scholarly work that the EEE faculty provides helps develop new knowledge and theories to better understand practice and provide an innovative academic experience for students.

The EEE team’s research productivity continues to be among the very best in the world, as evidenced by the program’s top rankings year after year. Further, much of the faculty’s work and their expertise is cited not only in academic debate but also in industry publications, such as Forbes, Inc. magazine and Bloomberg BusinessWeek.

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

ALEXANDER MCKELVIE, department chair and associate professor of entrepreneurship, and J. MICHAEL HAYNIE, vice chancellor and Barnes Professor of Entrepreneurship, were named to the CNBC Disruptor 50 Advisory Council.

MARIA MINNITI, The Bantle Chair of Entrepreneurship and Public Policy, was appointed Visiting Distinguished Professor at the Department of Management Studies, Aalto University (Finland).

MARIA MINNITI gave the keynote address at the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor conference, July 2015.

JOHAN WIKLUND, The Al Berg Chair in Entrepreneurship, gave the keynote address at the USASBE conference, January 2016.

JOHAN WIKLUND has been appointed as editor for Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS


WHITMAN PROFESSORS MAKING A MARK ON FUTURE ENTREPRENEURSHIP RESEARCH

The future of entrepreneurship research is shaped at doctoral consortia. International doctoral students gather at these conferences to refine their work, discuss emerging topics and network with established scholars. In doing so, they influence the direction of entrepreneurship research—and Whitman EEE professors are at the forefront of the process.

Three EEE professors recently held leading doctoral consortia roles: Johan Wiklund co-directed the Babson College Entrepreneurship Research Conference in June, Maria Minniti directed the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor doctoral workshop in February and Alex McKelvie co-directed the Academy of Management Entrepreneurship Division Doctoral Consortium in August. Additional EEE professors also played supporting conference roles, acting as speakers or panelists.

“These are some of the most prolific conferences internationally, and EEE faculty members are helping train the next generation of entrepreneurship scholars across the globe,” said McKelvie. “It highlights the leadership role that we are playing in the field.”

Wiklund explained that by providing advice about research topics, journals and academic careers, professors shape students’ perspectives and actions. The students will, in turn, become leaders of the field of entrepreneurship.

“We wouldn’t be able to be part of, and in some cases lead, some of the preeminent doctoral workshops if we weren’t recognized as a very active and diverse group in the field of entrepreneurship,” said Minniti. “This is why PhDs are involved with us and are willing to travel long distances to work with us. It’s very rewarding. It’s a wonderful experience.”
TWO BUSINESS PLANS WIN 2016 PANASCI COMPETITION

Each year, the Panasci Business Plan Competition brings together Syracuse University student entrepreneurs for a two-day business plan competition. The April event, which is hosted by the Falcone Center for Entrepreneurship, awards students based on the quality of their business plan and the novelty of their idea.

This year there were two first place winners: PowerSpike, led by Angelo Damiano, and ExPrep, led by Brandon Eng. The two plans tied for first place, with each team receiving $12,500 to facilitate business growth.

PowerSpike developed an innovative solution to help make full time streaming financially feasible. By helping brands create integrated in-stream campaigns, PowerSpike turns streamers into digital sellers without having to negotiate contracts with thousands of individual channels one on one. The technology allows streamers or eSports organizations to easily find brands willing to sponsor them in an open marketplace, and monitor their channel analytics in one convenient dashboard.

ExPrep is also a technology company, but it focuses on enhancing the Microsoft Excel experience for beginner-level users. ExPrep downloads into Excel and provides interactive training, leading users through multiple different Excel topics. It helps users learn the basics of the program, fix their mistakes and utilize shortcuts. ExPrep also identifies proficiency levels, providing scores that rate users’ skill levels.

COU RI HATCHERY

The Couri Hatchery is a student-centered business incubator available at no cost to students. Through mentoring and guidance, students are prepared to 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 nearly 150 firms. These firms raised more than nearly $3 million in external capital during the 2015-16 year. The Couri Hatchery has also grown its portfolio of mentors who meet with students on a regular basis, including lawyers, an accountant, HR representative, sales and marketing experts, a banker, technology analyst and prototype and design support.

PANASCI BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

The campus-wide Panasci Business Plan Competition awarded nearly $50,000 in prize money to top teams whose new venture ideas represent the best potential for sustainable growth and attracting outside financing. Forty-two student teams participated in the program in 2015-16.

CNECT

The Falcone Center recently co-founded The Central Network of Entrepreneurial Collegiate Teams (CNECT) together with Stanford University (BASES), Columbia University (CORE), Harvard University, Northwestern University and others. CNECT is an online platform for student entrepreneur communities across the nation to share their events, newly found ideas and opinions on relevant news. By bringing student-led entrepreneurship organizations into a conversation and ultimately creating an information hub for anyone interested in learning more about thought leaders, student entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial opportunities for the next generation of college entrepreneurs.

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 goal of the Family Business Club is to prepare students for the unique challenges of working for and running a family business. Students improve their skillset through professional development sessions, and sharing experiences and ideas from their own family businesses. Club members work with alumni and guests from local companies to discuss many of the important issues that family businesses face.

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.

BLACKSTONE LAUNCHPAD: A NEW RESOURCE FOR ENTREPRENEURS
Blackstone LaunchPad is a newly created campus-based entrepreneurship resource center open to students, alumni, staff and faculty, offering coaching, ideation and venture creation support. Based on a multi-year grant from the Blackstone Foundation and in collaboration with four other New York universities, the LaunchPad is a physical location at the center of the SU campus, in the Bird Library.

Directed by Linda Dickerson Hartsock, who has considerable experience in economic development and the start-up community, the LaunchPad adds to the many resources available to student entrepreneurs through the Whitman School and other campus entities. “Syracuse University has a very robust entrepreneurial ecosystem, and the Blackstone LaunchPad initiative will help enhance that strong foundation through expanded partnerships,” said Hartsock. “The initiative connects students to a national and global network that supports aspiring entrepreneurs. We are working closely with the EEE program to help support their students and team members.”

D’ANIELLO INTERNSHIP PROGRAM AN INVALUABLE EXPERIENCE
Each semester, Whitman offers D’Aniello Internships that provide a select group of exemplary undergraduate and graduate students with unique entrepreneurial opportunities. For the 2015-16 academic year, 15 students were offered a spot in this highly selective program. The fall 2015 interns included Sebastian Brogan, Lee Buttolph, Jim Coleman, Jr., Kyle Hoberman, Emily Jozefowicz, Amanda Kwong and Brandon Reiter. The spring 2016 interns were Brett Aston, Maria Canellas, Patricia Fernandez, Anna B. Hodge, Steven Magee, Kip Nairin, Rebeka Spencer and Kelly Stefany.

The D’Aniello Internship is an honor that provides the interns with invaluable work experience. Selected students work directly with an executive or founder of a rapidly growing, innovative entrepreneurial environment in the greater Syracuse area. Interns are challenged and expected to produce visible results through hands-on, experiential learning.

“This opportunity has shown me the importance of having confidence in myself and the quality of work that I am capable of producing,” said Stefany, who graduated in spring 2016 with majors in marketing management and entrepreneurship. “The program provided me with incomparable experiential learning that has helped me leverage my course studies in a real-world business position.”

By successfully completing the internship, D’Aniello interns develop skills in business development, marketing, social media planning and supply chain logistics that make them significantly more competitive in the job market upon graduation.
ENTREPRENEURIAL EXPERIENCES OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

WHITMAN STUDENTS AND ALUMNA WIN PRIZES IN FIRST-EVER “ORANGE TANK” COMPETITION

On Oct. 23, 2015, current students and alumni gathered at the Whitman School to compete in the first-ever Orange Tank competition. Similar to Shark Tank, teams presented their new venture ideas to a panel of judges in hopes of winning the $1,000 prize sponsored by the Whitman Dean’s Fund.

Rising junior Angelo Damiano and his team won the student competition. The team pitched PowerSpike, a business that helps gaming influencers, eSports organizations and eSports teams connect with brands.

Whitman alumna, Liz Knickerbocker, won the alumni competition with her start-up business The Reaverbocker Brewery and Public House. The brewery is slated to open in Syracuse, New York in 2016. The brewery will offer patrons an opportunity to view the art of craft beer making in the relaxed setting of a neighborhood pub.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY SELECTS ITS ACC INVENTURE PRIZE COMPETITION TEAM

PowerSpike represented Syracuse University at the inaugural Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) InVenture Prize Competition on April 5 – 6, at Georgia Institute of Technology. A “Shark Tank” style pitch competition where a team of undergraduates representing each ACC university pitches inventions or businesses before a live audience and panel of judges, the InVenture competition carries with it prizes worth $30,000. PowerSpike competed in the preliminary round April 5.

Angelo Damiano, a sophomore in the EEE program, led the PowerSpike team. The company connects gaming influencers, eSports organizations, and eSports teams with brands. Statistics indicate that in 2015, online video game tournaments, otherwise known as “eSports,” got more views than the Masters, NBA Finals, World Series and Stanley Cup. These tournaments, as well as other individual live streamers, have built their fan following on an online video game livestreaming service called Twitch.tv. While Twitch gets a massive amount of viewership collectively, tens of thousands of people stream on the site every day, and the viewership is spread across thousands of unique, individual channels, making it difficult to sponsor streamers as a brand, or to get sponsored by a brand as a streamer.

“At PowerSpike, we’ve developed an innovative solution to help make full-time streaming financially feasible. We help brands create and integrate in-stream campaigns, which turn streamers into digital sellers without having to negotiate out contracts with thousands of individual channels one on one,” said Damiano. “Our technology allows streamers or eSports organizations to easily find brands willing to sponsor them in an open marketplace, and monitor their channel analytics in one convenient dashboard. We enable brands to find streamers/eSports organizations which best fit their campaigns, and effortlessly monitor their total outreach in seconds. At PowerSpike, we’re creating the next generation of online branding.”

PICTURING SUCCESS

Abigail (Abby) Hamilton’s passion for entrepreneurship started long before she came to the Whitman School. From the lemonade stand she started at age 10 to Patriot Portraits, the photography service that she began in high school for military families facing deployment, Hamilton actively pursued her dream of running her own business. Patriot Portraits empowers young photographers by providing them with their first photography jobs allowing them to break into the professional industry, and provides military families with photos to cherish during times of separation from loved ones.

Hamilton’s business knowledge and success only continues to grow. Her business was featured in the Huffington Post and an Olympic ad for Citi Bank with athlete Kerri Walsh Jennings earlier this year. She has entered the Panasci Business Plan Competition and is working on another business idea, Spolitic, a platform that allows millennials to engage with political events in their area.

Now a rising junior in the EEE program, she is a member of the Couri Hatchery. According to Hamilton, her Whitman education and time with the Couri Hatchery has helped her further her business ventures by providing her a deeper understanding of a business’ foundation. She continues to learn tactics in her classes that directly apply to running her business.
Linda Dickerson Hartsock, executive director of Blackstone LaunchPad

Compete CNY Pitch competition at Blackstone LaunchPad

2016 Student Entrepreneur of the Year Angelo Damiano '18 and Terry Brown, executive director of the Falcone Center
EEE YOUNG ALUM OF THE YEAR: BRANDON ENG OF EXPREP

After falling asleep to numerous Microsoft Excel tutorial videos, EEE alumnus Brandon Eng ’15 woke up to a new business idea. To become fluent in the program, he needed engaging, directly-applicable training—provided within the program itself, rather than by outside videos. Seeing an opportunity in the marketplace, Eng fulfilled it with ExPrep.

ExPrep is an application downloaded into Microsoft Excel. Users learn at their own pace by completing a variety of problems and receiving feedback from the application, which helps to highlight and fix their mistakes. ExPrep also teaches users how to more effectively use Microsoft Excel with timesavers such as shortcut keys.

Moreover, the program gives scores for users’ Microsoft Excel skill levels. Job applicants can use these scores to indicate their levels of proficiency and expertise, benefitting recruiters by providing more specificity than a typical “proficient in Excel” statement.

The first package of ExPrep was released to the business community in February 2016, followed by a March release of ExPrep for individuals. The package trains users in 50 different topics, and has been purchased by several Syracuse companies.

Eng and his team are currently developing two additional packages of ExPrep, which will provide advanced training and guide users from program competency to mastery.

Eng was awarded the EEE Young Alumni Excellence in Entrepreneurship Award in April 2016. He earned a Bachelor of Science in entrepreneurship and marketing from the Whitman School of Management in 2015.

APPAREL WITH A CAUSE

After graduation, Kyle Barrett ’12 went into commercial real estate brokerage, working exclusively on industrial deals. He began studying various manufacturing sectors and learning about how harmful so many of these businesses are for people and the planet. Never far from mind was the dream of moving out west and starting a business of his own.

In early 2015, he moved to Denver, Colorado, to live closer to the mountains and start his own business. This is where his passion for the environment and sustainable business collided, and the idea for Bighorn Apparel was born.

“The apparel industry is notorious for its harmful effects on both the environment and the people involved in making the clothing: forced labor, child labor, factory injuries and death, heavy pesticide use, diseased farmers and mass water pollution are just a few of the headlines,” said Barrett. “I decided to start a company that would make the highest quality lifestyle clothing while minimizing social and environmental harm, and help raise awareness of these issues.”

Barrett focuses on using the most environmentally-friendly materials and manufacturing processes, as well as working only with factories that hold the highest standards for treatment of their employees. Bighorn uses organic cotton, recycled polyester and hemp in its products in place of more traditional materials. The bulk of production is done in Colorado, which decreases Bighorn’s footprint even more.

After a year of learning and navigating the world of apparel Barrett launched the Bighorn Apparel website, wearbighorn.com in late December 2015.

MAKING HER OWN LIFESTYLE

When Stephanie Howitt ’09 graduated from the Whitman School with a bachelor’s degree in EEE, she discovered a job market in turmoil. She decided to add to her degree by studying interior design at the Fashion Institute of Technology, enabling her to make her own career mark as the founder of SLH Lifestyle LLC, a lifestyle management and concierge company.

“My boutique firm operates within an extensive network of the world’s leading luxury specialists to bring clients a full-service experience,” said Howitt. “We offer interior design and art direction, style consultations, exquisite gifting, rare ticket procurement, curated travel excursions and much more.”

The company serves clients in the greater New York City area both in person and through a mobile app, available on Android and iPhone devices. In addition to consulting, Howitt also curates content in the areas of design, fashion, travel and epicure through The SLH Lifestyle Guide, the company’s viral platform, and is an editorial contributor to leading New York-based publications.

“My future plans include expanding SLH Lifestyle beyond the luxury market, providing efficient living solutions for everyone,” said Howitt. “I’d love to introduce a designed line of home and organizational products, for example.”
JOURNEY TO SUCCESS

Graduating from college is often referred to as the beginning of a journey. For Whitman alumnus Chinedu Echeruo ’95, one journey wasn’t enough—he has helped billions of people navigate their own journeys across the globe.

Echeruo is the founder of HopStop, an online and app-based mass transit navigation service that was purchased by Apple in 2013, and Tripology, a travel industry service that was sold to Rand McNally in 2010 and later acquired by USA Today.

Echeruo’s own journey began in Nigeria. He moved to the United States and earned a bachelor’s degree from the Whitman School before receiving an MBA from Harvard Business School. Echeruo initially pursued finance, working at JPMorgan Chase and AM Investment Partners. Yet entrepreneurship soon captured his attention, giving rise to the creation of HopStop and Tripology. Following the sale of both companies, Echeruo returned to the finance industry in Nigeria as a principal at Constant Capital Partners Ltd. Today Echeruo works in New York City as the founder and CEO of Gigameet, a networking platform that supports charities.

He was named the EEE Program’s Distinguished Entrepreneur of the Year in April 2016. Echeruo remains committed to empowering young entrepreneurs: while visiting the Whitman School in April, he judged the Panasci Business Plan Competition semi-finals and met with EEE students. He will also serve as a Goodman IMPRESS Program guest speaker in October 2016, an event open to all Whitman undergraduates.

Echeruo’s career exemplifies the journey to success that students can experience after their Whitman education.

ORANGE FAMILY LEGACY: THREE GENERATIONS OF ACKERMANS

Milt Ackerman, entrepreneur and 1980 graduate of the Whitman School of Management, is president of Ackerman’s Military Resale Solutions, a family-owned business he runs with his four children. Recently his company, Military Resale Solutions, was recognized by Inc. 5000 as one of the fastest growing privately-held businesses in America for back-to-back years. The company supports U.S. military families by providing marketing, sales and distribution services to commissaries and exchanges on behalf of consumer packaged goods companies.

Ackerman’s son, Greg, is the co-owner and vice president of finance for the company. He, too, is a Whitman graduate who earned his B.S. in 2008 and M.S. in 2009. While at Whitman he earned first place in both the Capstone Business Plan Competition and the New World Ventures Business Plan Competition.

The Ackerman family is originally from Syracuse, New York, and three generations have attended SU. Ackerman’s mother, Lena, graduated from SU’s School of Liberal Arts in 1948!
WISE PARTNERS WITH SWEEP TO PROMOTE GENDER AND DIVERSITY INITIATIVES AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Started in 2015 as a grass roots movement between student organizations at the Whitman School, the School of Information Studies (iSchool) and WISE Women’s Business Center, the Syracuse Women’s Empowerment and Engagement Partnership (SWEEP) promotes gender and diversity initiatives on the Syracuse University campus and throughout Central New York. This is part of the EEE program’s commitment to support and promote women’s entrepreneurship among students, staff and faculty, and community organizations.

In spring 2015, SWEEP hosted events celebrating International Women’s Month. These events included a keynote speaker (Jill Tietjen, CEO of the National Women’s Hall of Fame) and alumni speakers sharing stories about how they got to where they are today. The group also hosted a dining etiquette workshop and what not to wear fashion show for women.

“It’s been amazing to see the growth of this partnership that began with several student leaders who recognized an importance to celebrate International Women’s Month on our campus,” said Sheila Clifford-Bova, SWEEP’s staff advisor and facilitator. “From there, this movement has grown to include almost every school on campus, from the student, staff and faculty level and beyond! It’s a true collaboration that speaks directly to our Chancellor’s vision of One University.”

In addition to the WISE Women’s Business Center, community partners for SWEEP include Clear Path for Veterans and the Women’s Fund of Central New York.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP BOOTCAMP

The Entrepreneurship Bootcamp is tailored to local aspiring entrepreneurs in the Syracuse, New York area. Offered for six Saturdays in a row in the fall, participants learn about the nuts and bolts of how to evaluate and start a successful new venture, as well as common mistakes and pitfalls to avoid. To date, the Bootcamp has graduated over 550 local entrepreneurs.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP BOOTCAMP FOR VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES (EBV)

The Barnes Family Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities (EBV) program is celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2016. Originally started at the Whitman School, the EBV program is offered at 10 top universities across the United States and offers cutting-edge 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. Since its initiation, the EBV program has trained more than 1,300 graduates, with 68 percent of graduates launching a business after graduating from the program. 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.

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. Celebrating its tenth anniversary in fall 2016, the WISE Women’s Business Center has hosted an annual symposium, as well as other special events designed to train and inspire female entrepreneurs. The center has served over 8,000 clients and provided over 10,000 hours of training since its inception.

SOUTH SIDE INNOVATION CENTER (SSIC)

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. In addition to the 350 entrepreneurs the SSIC works with on an annual basis, the SSIC currently hosts 27 tenant companies.

10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY
EBV, SSIC AND WISE WBC

CLIENTS GROSSED OVER $55M OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS
TECH4KIDZ MAKES TECHNOLOGY ACCESSIBLE AND EXCITING FOR SYRACUSE YOUTH

At Tech4Kidz, computer programming involves more than code and keyboards. In the company’s classes and camps, you’ll also find creativity, laughter and children. This engaging environment was the vision of Pamela Puri, CEO of Tech4Kidz.

The company launched in 2014 after Puri moved to Syracuse, New York and realized, as the mother of three children, that youth technology opportunities were lacking. There were classes for high schoolers, but not for younger children.

With the help of the WISE Women’s Business Center, run through the Falcone Center for Entrepreneurship, Puri began developing technology classes herself. She combined her experience as a certified public accountant and certified financial planner.

Today, Tech4Kidz is a haven for children at all stages of coding. The company provides computer-programming classes and summer camps for children ages 8 to 15. The classes and camps are held in computer labs at Le Moyne College.

Puri currently has seven employees and is planning a second location in Rochester, New York. The new Tech4Kidz location will operate in partnership with the Rochester Institute of Technology.

Her startup has earned Puri recognition in the business community. In May 2016, Tech4Kidz received the Small Business Administration Excellence Award. Yet her success is also evident in the Tech4Kidz computer labs, where children finally have technology opportunities.

“It’s amazing to see the look on the kids’ faces when their animations come together,” said Puri.

DIRECTOR OF THE WISE WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTER JOANNE LENWEAVER RECEIVES HONORS

Joanne Lenweaver, director of the WISE Women’s Business Center—a program run through the Falcone Center for Entrepreneurship—was recognized with the 2015 Award of Outstanding Mentor at the inaugural Successful Business Women Awards Sept. 24, 2015. Lenweaver was one of 13 recipients to be recognized as an industry leader who works to ignite success in women across the Central New York region.

Lenweaver was also selected as one of the 2016 Women of Distinction Award recipients and was honored at the 4th Annual Women of Distinction Awards ceremony April 16, at the Matilda Joslyn Gage House in Fayetteville, New York. The event was sponsored by New York State Assemblyman Al Stirpe and honors women who have made a positive impact on the local community through service.

“Joanne Lenweaver’s honors over the past year are well deserved,” said Terry Brown, executive director of the Falcone Center for Entrepreneurship. “She works tirelessly to support women in their entrepreneurial journey and has a passion for helping others to realize their dreams and help them become a reality.”

Lenweaver has previously been recognized as a recipient of the WISE Women’s Business Center “Economic Champion” by CenterState CEO in 2013; and the Zonta International “Crystal Award” in 2013.
SSIC CELEBRATES 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY ON HEELS OF EAP AWARD

Ten years ago, the South Side Innovation Center (SSIC) began modeling the very goal that it helps entrepreneurs achieve: launching a venture and developing it to success. This year, the non-profit organization celebrated a decade of facilitating entrepreneurial innovation and growth within the Syracuse community.

The SSIC utilizes a university-community partnership to benefit both parties. Operated by the Falcone Center for Entrepreneurship, the SSIC supports local entrepreneurs who own a new business or hope to start one. The center offers numerous resources, including education, training, consulting, mentoring and credit assistance. Participants can cultivate business plans, improve their financial capabilities, receive technical help, utilize office space and more. While clients benefit from the assistance of professional counselors, Whitman students can gain practical experience through SSIC internships, work-study jobs and projects.

Since 2006, hundreds of jobs have resulted from SSIC clients’ businesses. Three-hundred people utilize SSIC resources annually, and the center is at full capacity with its current 27 resident clients. The New York State Entrepreneurial Assistance Program (EAP) recognized the SSIC’s success in August 2015, presenting it with the 2015 Award of Excellence for Outstanding Program Performance and Achievement and Dedication to the Entrepreneurs of New York State.

The award honored the prosperity of the SSIC in the 2014-15 funding year. Yet it also points to the SSIC’s positive impact on the Syracuse community and the Falcone Center within 10 years of existence. Entrepreneurs have realized dreams, businesses have started and students have received practical experience. One decade in, there is much to celebrate and much to look forward to.