

ventures

SPRING 2011

A publication of the **Sigmund Weis School of Business** at Susquehanna University



**CULTIVATING SUSQUEHANNA'S
BUDDING ENTREPRENEURS**



“In reaffirming the greatness of our nation, we understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned. Our journey has never been one of shortcuts or settling for less. It has not been the path for the faint-hearted—for those who prefer leisure over work, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame. Rather, it has been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things—some celebrated, but more often men and women obscure in their labor—who have carried us up the long, rugged path toward prosperity and freedom.”

These words, spoken by President Barack Obama at his inauguration on Jan. 20, 2009, were a call to arms for entrepreneurs of the nation to help get the economy back on its feet. He recognized then, and continues to recognize—through proposed initiatives to support small businesses, announced in his recent State of the Union address—that entrepreneurial effort and innovation will play a key role in the business growth and job creation that will ensure America’s future economic strength.

This issue of Ventures is dedicated to our entrepreneurship program and the entrepreneurs who assist us in developing our students’ entrepreneurial spirits. Our business management major with an entrepreneurship emphasis continues to grow with each new class. We have also developed a minor in entrepreneurship, designed to attract non-business majors with aspirations of turning their major field of study into an entrepreneurial enterprise. This program also continues to grow. As today’s students explore their options, many foresee a time when they will have that spark of an idea—see a need locally, regionally or internationally—that prompts them to take a risk and convert their idea into their profession.

We also highlight several individuals who introduce entrepreneurship theories and practice to our students, whether their studies focus on entrepreneurship or some other discipline. In the business school, we believe all disciplines can ultimately lead to developing one’s own business. Thus, this issue highlights two of our very capable faculty members, **Leann Mischel** and **Mengsteab Tesfayohannes**. In addition, our alumni feature spotlights **Greg Carr ’83** and his for-profit and nonprofit endeavors. Greg also serves on the Dean’s Advisory Council for the Sigmund Weis School of Business and makes regular visits to the entrepreneurship classes. Finally, this year’s Sigmund Weis lecturers were the husband-and-wife entrepreneurial dynamos Cynthia Fisher of Viacord and Jim Koch of Boston Brewery. Be sure to read about their lecture on turning one’s passion into a business.

This year’s theme for the university, as you may recall, is sustainability. The spirit and actions of entrepreneurs are the means by which America sustains its economic viability. And for that, we acknowledge and salute the entrepreneurs in our world—past, present and future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alicia J. Jackson', written in a cursive style.

Alicia J. Jackson
Dean of the Sigmund Weis School of Business

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Susquehanna
UNIVERSITY

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CULTIVATING SUSQUEHANNA'S BUDDING ENTREPRENEURS

By Bruce E. Beans

Since small businesses generate 65 percent of the net new jobs in this country, Susquehanna alumni who have become entrepreneurs play a vital role in helping to revive the U.S. economy. So, too, may enterprising students in the Sigmund Weis School of Business' rapidly growing entrepreneurship program after they graduate.

When it was launched in 2005, the entrepreneurship emphasis within the business management major attracted just five students. But by 2007, it had become one of the most popular business emphases, second only to marketing. This year, 52 students have declared an entrepreneurship emphasis, with many students declaring double emphases in both entrepreneurship and marketing.

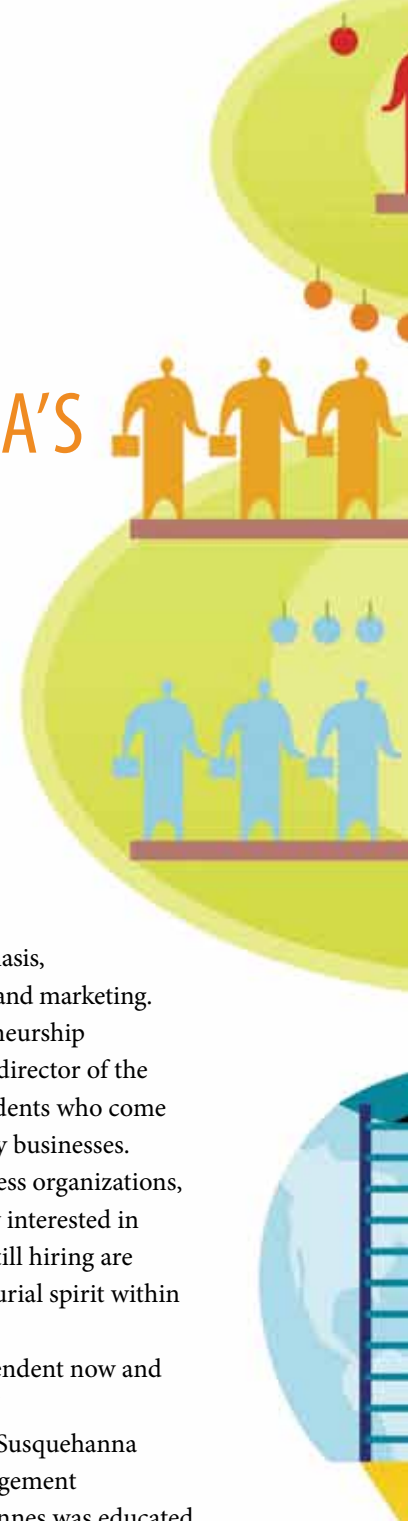
"There are a number of factors driving the popularity of the entrepreneurship emphasis," says **Leann Mischel**, associate professor of management and director of the program. "Some of it has to do with the fact that we have quite a few students who come from family businesses and who want to eventually take over their family businesses.

"A lot also has to do with the economy. With the downsizing of business organizations, it's harder for students to find jobs in their chosen fields, so they are very interested in starting their own companies. Meanwhile, some organizations that are still hiring are looking for these types of skills and trying to nurture a more entrepreneurial spirit within their organizations so they can become more innovative.

"Finally, it's also a generational thing. Students are much more independent now and much more interested in seeing if they can make a go of it on their own."

The program has become so popular that Mischel, who has taught at Susquehanna since 2003, was joined in the fall of 2009 by Associate Professor of Management **Mengsteab Tesfayohannes**. A native of Eritrea in East Africa, Tesfayohannes was educated in Ethiopia, Austria and Germany, and taught and conducted research and consulting for almost two decades at universities in Botswana, Germany, Austria, South Africa and Canada before arriving in Selinsgrove. (*See related article on Page 11.*) "Because Mengsteab has experience in so many different countries, he truly brings an international focus to our program," says Mischel.

"With formal employment shrinking and a lot of companies unwilling to hire new employees on a permanent basis, the innovation you find in entrepreneurship brings people together and creates new jobs, new products and services," says Tesfayohannes. "That's one of the important ways that the economy can revive and sustainably develop."





Mischel and Tesfayohannes take a hands-on approach to teaching aspiring entrepreneurs. For example, Mischel has offered a taste of real-life business experience to the entire student body through three “speed-pitching” opportunities. Teams of students who have developed business proposals briefly outline their concepts to experts. During the most recent event, held last fall, students had just three minutes to pitch their ideas. The experts then judged which proposals they liked the best. Three students won \$600, funded by a state grant as seed money for their business. They have since launched their own T-shirt company. (See *related story on Page 9.*)

Leann Mischel, associate professor and director of the entrepreneurship program, conducts the introductory entrepreneurship course like Donald Trump’s *The Apprentice*.

Similarly, Mischel, a former vice president of JPMorgan Chase, Priceline and Advanta Bank Corp., conducts the introductory entrepreneurship

course, Management of Small Business & Entrepreneurship, borrowing elements of Donald Trump’s *The Apprentice* TV program. (See *related article on Page 8.*) Tesfayohannes requires students in his new Venture Startup & Financing course to launch and operate mini-ventures, such as a shuttle service or converting videos and photos to DVDs. In her Entrepreneurial Experience course, Mischel also requires students to operate a business. One that’s gained popularity is an eBay operation.

During the small business and entrepreneurship course, the *Apprentice*-like assignments include competing in teams against each other to see who can raise the most money for different charitable organizations. The team members with the most revenue earn A’s. Last fall, the teams also analyzed Lake Augusta Outfitters in nearby Sunbury, Pa.,



a first-year business that rents various watercraft for use on the Susquehanna River. The class also reviewed the marketing plans of **Todd Kiebort '95**, a manufacturing representative from Exton, Pa., who recently acquired the rights to market the Orthopedic Knee Crutch.

The recommendations for outfitter Angela Troutman included offering preteen day camps, historical tours and business retreats; targeting local schools and groups at nearby colleges; renting fishing equipment; and enhancing her website content and capabilities. In both cases, the winning teams' recommendations also included using social networking to attract more customers with minimal cash outlay.

"I definitely got different points of view and great ideas I hadn't thought of," says Troutman, who plans to implement some of them this year.

Kiebort, a sociology major, agrees. "Some of the students really got it and figured out how to do it on a shoestring." He is incorporating the students' ideas into a website that is being revamped by business management major **Brooks Olphin '10**.

"Dr. Mischel gave us enough space to show our intelligence and creativity," says **Jiachen "Karen" Wang**, a native of Beijing and a junior exchange student from the University of Macau, who was a member of both winning teams. "We had a wonderful cooperative experience."

"These projects were a great opportunity to give us the chance to have actual hands-on exercises with real-world effects," adds **Louis Pollack**, a junior from South Orange, N.J., who also was on the winning team for both projects. "It's one thing to read a case study, but to be able to actually work on something where your suggestions matter was incredible."

Typical of many entrepreneurship majors, Pollack's father owns a textile company with locations in New Jersey and India, and his brother and sister-in-law own a New York City media manufacturing company. Hoping ultimately to start his own business in sports management or sports marketing, Pollack has already incorporated his company, Money Market Sports LLC, and established a website.

Of her students, Mischel says, "They have all these fabulous ideas that can be turned into companies, and they're learning how to actually do it so they can leave here and start a company. Or, in some cases, they can start their own company before they even leave Susquehanna."

"I like the freedom of the work, how I don't have someone looking over my shoulder, telling me what to do. For the most part, I'm running the show. They're my decisions."

Drew Kruger '11

That's true of **Drew Kruger**, of Gilbertsville, Pa., a senior who last year was disenchanted about the prospect of spending his summer in another corporate internship. His solution was to start his own business, and he did just that, successfully bidding with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to win a five-year contract to operate the snack stand at a lake in Bald Eagle State Park, near Lock Haven.

With some financial backing from his father, Kruger bought used cooking equipment within 10 days, just in time for Memorial Day weekend. With his 16-year-old brother, Derek, as his only employee, Kruger worked up to 70 hours a week cooking hot dogs, hamburgers, cheese steaks, french fries and specialty sandwiches, and selling ice cream and candy. By midsummer he added kayak rentals to his business. He plans on adding fishing and camping equipment and supplies to his offerings this year.

"When the people from the state first realized I was still in school, you could see in their faces that they were skeptical," says Kruger, "but by the end of the summer, they were telling me how much I had my stuff together."

The biggest challenge, he says, was managing his inventory. "I went through a lot of food spoilage the first couple weeks," he says. But the business grew so well, he expects to be in the black by the end of this coming summer. Kruger also plans to buy a used mobile home to live in this summer. He wants to renovate and then sell it, and continue to "flip" more

mobile homes until he builds his business to the point where he is renovating and reselling homes.

“I like the freedom of the work, how I don’t have someone looking over my shoulder, telling me what to do,” says Kruger. “For the most part, I’m running the show. They’re my decisions.”

Kruger seems destined to follow in the footsteps of numerous Susquehanna graduates who have made their mark as entrepreneurs. **Marcus Zavattaro ’87**, who majored in marketing, parlayed his experience working independently cleaning swimming pools during college to create a pool construction and maintenance company servicing 240 pools a week. Within three years, it was servicing nearly 1,000 per week. After starting a mail-order, high-end art business, Zavattaro worked for eight months as a mortgage banker/broker and then—within the span of two years—opened mortgage banks in Connecticut, New York and New Jersey, and was writing between \$100 million to \$150 million worth of mortgages a year.

“All the principles we teach are applicable across the board for any major; that’s true for students in the sciences thinking about starting their own consulting businesses, musicians thinking about starting their own bands, writers, artists, or psychology majors who want to become independent psychologists.”

Leann Mischel
Associate Professor of Management

Showing the same dogged determination as Kruger, Zavattaro, when he started out, would not end his day until he had asked for business from 150 people. Zavattaro was eventually bought out by a Greenwich bank, which he then helped grow from two to 19 branches in a decade. For the past two years, he has been the managing director of a start-up wealth management firm in Connecticut.

“Even during the past 12 years, the corporate environment I’ve been in has been very

entrepreneurial and self-starting,” says Zavattaro, who has spoken to Susquehanna’s entrepreneurial students. “You have to delve into your own business to ferret out where your customer base is coming from, and then, obviously, you have to service the living daylights out of them.”

Rob Leslie ’80, a music major at Susquehanna, significantly shifted his career focus after graduation. After earning a master’s degree in business administration from the University of Maryland, he went on to a career as an investment manager and derivatives trader who managed assets worth millions—and even billions—of dollars, including the United Mine Workers of America’s pension fund and Invesco mutual funds. But, he says, he always wanted to go out on his own. So two years ago, he and three partners launched Brasada Capital Management, a Houston-based hedge fund.

“I love it,” says Leslie, the six-employee firm’s managing director. “I think I’ve always had an independent streak.” A member of the Sigmund Weis School of Business Advisory Board and a financial supporter of the Susquehanna University Student Investment Program, Leslie is a big believer in a broad-based liberal arts education like the one he received at SU.

“Having an excellent understanding of history and philosophy opens you up as an investor to just how wide a variety of outcomes are possible in terms of economic cycles, swings in human emotions and behavioral changes,” he says. “I love what I do. It’s really fun, because we are at the intersection of everything that is changing in the world in terms of economics, new products, social changes and politics. All of those factors affect the marketplace and individual companies.”

One of the goals of the entrepreneurship program is to increase the percentage of non-business majors—now between 10 and 15 percent—who take the classes. “All the principles we teach are applicable across the board for any major,” says Mischel. “That’s true for students in the sciences thinking about starting their own consulting businesses, musicians thinking about starting their own bands, writers,

artists or psychology majors who want to become independent psychologists.”

Aaron Abel, a senior creative writing major, took Mischel’s small business and entrepreneurship class two years ago. “For me, it was the excitement of starting a new business, and the dignity and integrity that come with a small business, that are arguably lost in [larger] corporations,” says Abel, who now hopes to use his writing and communication skills in a business environment.

The entrepreneurship program is also going international. This summer, Mischel will lead a two-week trip to northern Italy as part of the new Central Curriculum’s Global Opportunities (GO) program. Her “GO Short” program will focus on local businesses in the Lake Garda area near Verona. Next year, Tesfayohannes will lead a similar program in Botswana in southern Africa. Tesfayohannes also wants to establish a “Flying on Your Own” student entrepreneurship club on campus.

The two professors’ current research involves such issues as successful family businesses, environmentally sustainable enterprises and social entrepreneurship—companies that have a strong social-issue focus such as microfinancing organizations. Among their research is a study Tesfayohannes is undertaking with **Alicia Jackson**, dean of the Sigmund Weis School of Business, and Associate Professor of Information Systems **Richard Orwig**. The study focuses on the feasibility and benefits of expanding microfinance initiatives in the commonwealth for the benefit of low-income Pennsylvanians.

Funded in part by a second matching Keystone Innovation Zone grant worth \$25,000—the first was worth \$95,000—the entrepreneurship program is spearheading the efforts of Susquehanna students and faculty to develop the entrepreneurial skills and environmentally sustainable business practices of companies in the greater Susquehanna Valley.

Tesfayohannes and **Jerry Habegger**, associate professor of accounting, also have written multiple articles and op-ed essays about the untapped potential for local businesses to develop foreign



Leann Mischel has developed a short-term study-away opportunity for students to explore local businesses in northern Italy as part of the university’s Global Opportunities (GO) program.

markets. Accordingly, Tesfayohannes is currently seeking funding to study the feasibility of serving as a resource for small businesses exporting to emerging economies.

The articles, says Tesfayohannes, should serve as wake-up calls for small businesses in Pennsylvania currently focusing on just local or domestic markets. “They need to actively engage in the turbulent international business environment in a variety of ways, including strategic partnerships and cooperation in subsidiaries, joint ventures, outsourcing, import and export links, technology transfer and sharing, and mergers and acquisitions,” he and Habegger wrote in the *Central Pennsylvania Business Journal*. “These are mandatory prerequisites for [owners of] Pennsylvania’s small and medium enterprises who want their companies to remain competitive, vibrant and sustainable.”

In short, Tesfayohannes says, “We are laying a strong foundation for the future growth of the entrepreneurship program.” ■

Bruce E. Beans is a contributing writer from Warrington, Pa.

Leann Mischel: A Hands-On Entrepreneur

By Bruce E. Beans



When it comes to entrepreneurship, **Leann Mischel** is as hands-on as the assignments she gives her students.

In 1997, Mischel, who is associate professor of management and director of Susquehanna's entrepreneurship program, co-founded Cara Plastics Inc., a company involved in the research, development and manufacturing of plastic resins derived from soy oil. Four years ago, she founded the Donor Offspring Health Corp., which offers a website—touted by MSN and Ladies' Home Journal—enabling sperm and egg donors and offspring to anonymously share health-related information.

Earlier this year, she also launched Global Faculty Internships LLC, which maintains a website matching college and university faculty interested in short-term and long-term internships with companies interested in tapping into such expertise.

“It's a classic win-win situation,” she says. “The faculty member gets exposure to a company and is then able to bring that experience back to the classroom. This can also generate internship opportunities for students, and research and consulting opportunities for the professors. The companies, meanwhile, gain access to an expert familiar with the latest research for less than the cost of typical consulting fees.”

Mischel is also on the advisory boards of several small companies, including a family-owned Pittsburgh energy company and a Selinsgrove-based Web design startup.

Her research has real-world applications, too. For example, she and a colleague, Cindy Iannarelli, a professor at Bernelli University in Morgantown, W. Va., have researched family-owned and -operated businesses—of particular relevance to the significant number of Susquehanna business majors whose families operate their own businesses.

“We found that when children are exposed to a family business 24 hours a day practically from birth, when they listen to conversations around the dinner table and help with the business, they are more likely to be successful entrepreneurs themselves,” Mischel says.

“I want to use what we've learned as a model for a case book I hope to write during my sabbatical next fall. It could be used in class and in consulting with other family businesses.”

One of Mischel's other passions is for the Lake Garda region of northern Italy, where she will lead a two-week Global Opportunities (GO Short) program for Susquehanna students this summer. “It is an isolated region where people have operated family businesses for generations, including wine, olive oil and cheese producers, and silk and yarn factories,” she says. “You can really trace the changes these companies have undergone, how their values have or have not changed, and how they run a business in this part of Italy.”

The GO experience will be beneficial to both Mischel and the students who travel with her. For Mischel, the trip will mark an opportunity to advance her research. For students, it will not only fulfill their study-away requirement for the new Central Curriculum, but it will provide them with the chance to learn up close from a true hands-on entrepreneur. ■

Sophomores Take a 360 Into the World of T-shirt Design

By Bruce E. Beans

Sophomores **Charles Boyce**, **Marcus Cheatham** and **Ryan Rossi** aren't waiting until they graduate to start their own business. They're already entrepreneurs.

They learned only days before the event that Associate Professor of Management **Leann Mischel** was holding a "speed-pitching" competition last December. The best student business proposal, as judged by a panel of expert investors, would earn \$600 in state-funded seed money.

Despite the short notice, the trio was prepared to pounce on the opportunity. Friends from Baltimore, Boyce and Cheatham had been sitting around last spring feeling, in Boyce's words, like "we weren't doing anything with our lives, so we decided to start a clothing line."

Boyce, who had done a graphic design internship at his father's Web design and publishing firm, sketched nine different T-shirt designs with input from Cheatham. They had the designs silkscreened onto eight different-colored shirts last summer and began selling them when they returned to Susquehanna in the fall. Thanks to their website, a Facebook account and word of mouth, Susquehanna students, friends at home and students as far away as North Carolina and Florida bought out the entire stock of 120 shirts in four months.

Then along came Rossi, a creative writing major from Rye, N.Y., who liked what they were doing and the prospect of the speed-pitching competition. They had just four minutes to impress the judges with their concepts and business plan. "They absolutely loved it," says Cheatham, a theatre major with minors in business management and Spanish. "Even after our time was up, one of the investors kept talking to us about different companies and clothing to research and emulate."

Thus was Paradigm Wear launched. Their latest idea is T-shirts with 360-degree designs. Over winter break, Cheatham and Rossi visited 40 shirt-printing plants until they found one in Port Chester, N.Y., that could print their wraparound designs. They expect to be selling 200 of the \$25 shirts this spring.

"We've learned so much about clothing and how things are made already," says Rossi. Cheatham is now boning up by reading books about how to start a business, including legal and tax requirements.

"All three of us love Paradigm like it's our child," he says.

Boyce, who is still undecided about his major, agrees: "We all want this to blow up and be our main source of income. We just love what we are doing and want to keep going forward with it." ▀



Budding entrepreneurs (left to right) Marcus Cheatham, Ryan Rossi and Charles Boyce started a successful T-shirt business with the help of a website, Facebook and word-of-mouth marketing.

Greg Carr '83: Making Money and Letting It Go for the Common Good

By Victoria Kidd



Greg Carr at The Uncommon Thread, a nonprofit early-intervention resource center he and his wife, Aileen, established for children with autism and related disorders

Greg Carr '83 was a successful entrepreneur in the technology expense management industry when his son Mitchell, now 10, was born. He had built his company, Teledata Control Inc., from a startup with one employee to an enterprise that was managing 270 employees and \$27 million a year in revenues. Greg and his wife, Aileen, seemed to have everything—a successful business, happy family and two beautiful children, with a third to come two years later.

But when Mitchell began exhibiting atypical behavior, their life began to unravel. Mitchell wasn't developing verbal skills. He wouldn't make eye contact or let anyone hug him. He developed repetitive behavior patterns and threw tantrums that would last most

of the day. At 26 months old, Mitchell was diagnosed with autism. Hence began a journey that would completely transform the Carrs' lives.

The Carrs were in a position to provide Mitchell with the best, most intensive early-intervention therapy money can buy, and the investment paid off. Today, Mitchell learns largely without the assistance of specialized teachers or aides. He is heavily involved in extracurricular activities and has many friends. In short, he's beat the odds autism stacked against him to live a typical life.

Now the Carrs are helping other families beat those same odds. They realized that most people couldn't afford to do what they did and aren't as fortunate as they were to have sound, expert guidance to navigate the murky waters of autism treatment. Their deep-seated appreciation for these blessings led them in 2006 to establish The Uncommon Thread, a nonprofit early-intervention resource center for children with autism and related disorders. At their center in Stirling, N.J., the Carrs have created an individualized educational environment where early intervention becomes a comprehensive strategy among parents, specialists, therapists and educators to combat the debilitating effects of disorders such as autism.

"The timing was right," Greg says. Mitchell's therapy and education were progressing well, and he and his sisters were all in school. Two years earlier, Greg had merged his company with Broadmargin to form Control Point Solutions, a firm employing 400 people and managing more than \$7 billion in telecom expenses. After managing the merger and creation of Control Point, Greg was ready to divest from the company and focus his attention on his new passion.

"I shifted my passions from telemarketing to autism," Greg says. And with that shift came the creation of The Uncommon Thread.

And although Greg jokes that the family "went from making money to losing money," he and Aileen are quick to admit that they wouldn't change a thing about their life's journey. ■

Read more about how the Carrs navigated autism in the next issue of Susquehanna Currents magazine, hitting mailboxes in April.

Mengsteab Tesfayohannes: Overcoming Obstacles and Finding Hope in His Homeland

By Bruce E. Beans



Like many children from the war-torn countries of Africa, Associate Professor of Management **Mengsteab Tesfayohannes** faced tragedy early in life. Born poor in Eritrea, in East Africa, he was a ninth-grader when his father, an innocent bystander, was killed during a civil war. The oldest of five children, Mengsteab went to work full time as a municipal clerk to support his family.

“However,” he says, “I did not allow this unfortunate situation to deter me from pursuing my educational endeavors.” Attending high school part time, he passed the National Secondary School Leaving Exam before reaching 12th grade.

After graduating from Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia with a degree in accounting, he served there for two years as a graduate assistant. He then spent six months in intensive

German language training to enter a master’s program at the University of Economic Sciences in Germany and a doctoral program at the University of Graz, Austria, on a full scholarship. Written in German, his 300-page dissertation analyzed the sustainable development of small and medium-sized industries in Eritrea—the first of many research papers and book chapters he has written on sub-Saharan Africa.

Tesfayohannes taught at the University of Graz, Austria, and the University of Bayreuth in Germany; earned a prestigious three-year German postdoctoral fellowship; and then taught at the University of Botswana and the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, before immigrating to Canada in 2002. “I wanted to join all my siblings who had lived in North America for quite some time,” he explains, “and to give our three children a better opportunity for personal development in a safer environment.”

Until his arrival at Susquehanna in the fall of 2009, he taught at four Canadian universities: the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University, University of Guelph and Saint Mary’s University. He also researched the role of Canada’s federal government funding to promote manufacturing technology, innovation and commercialization. His conclusions were well received by high-level Canadian officials, including Prime Minister Paul Martin.

Next year, Tesfayohannes plans to take Susquehanna students on a two-week Global Opportunities (GO Short) program to Botswana, where a democratic government and open economic development policies have spurred significant economic progress. In fact, Tesfayohannes is encouraged by the potential for progress, economic development and business marketing opportunities for U.S. entrepreneurs throughout Africa.

“No other continent has Africa’s natural resources, and groundbreaking technologies are penetrating the continent,” he says. “Last summer in Botswana, I was astonished to see couples living in mud huts communicating with each other with cell phones. These homes are electrified and have TVs, and even the most remote schools have access to the Internet through satellite communications.”

Thanks in part to U.N. development programs, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and German banks, education also is mushrooming, with 98 percent of all Botswana children attending school. The country, which invested heavily in its infrastructure after diamond mines were discovered there, is an encouraging example of what Tesfayohannes predicts will happen throughout Africa. “I think the coming two decades will see drastic changes in the development of Africa and other emerging nations. It is important for American entrepreneurs to be part of these opportunities for mutual benefit,” he concludes. ▀

beyond
the ‘grove

Internship Experience Highlights Benefit of Student-Alumni Connections

Senior business major **Justin Darlea**, of Allentown, N.J., was recently featured in *The Examiner*, a publication of Greater Media Newspapers, based in Freehold, N.J. The Feb. 24 article, written by managing editor Jennifer Kohlhepp, highlighted Darlea's work as an export development intern with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA).

According to *The Examiner*, the NJDA charged Darlea with contacting more than 2,000 agricultural businesses to promote Food Export USA–Northeast, a nonprofit organization that provides businesses with cost-share service assistance to promote their agricultural-based products in international markets. "The companies benefit from getting more of their goods abroad, bringing in more revenue for them," Darlea told *The Examiner*. "It opens more doors for them and broadens horizons by adding new markets and finding out how to work in other markets abroad. The cost-sharing program helps businesses expand and get more product lines out."

Darlea began the path toward an NJDA internship when he met **Al Murray '83** at an alumni event. After the event, he stayed in touch with Murray, assistant secretary of agriculture and director of the NJDA's Division of Marketing and Development, and eventually met Logan Brown, economic development representative for the NJDA. These connections ultimately parlayed into the internship.

Throughout his internship, Darlea had the opportunity to work closely with another Susquehanna alumnus **Robert Vivian '87**, NJDA's legislative liaison. *The Examiner* reported that Vivian even got Darlea a seat at New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie's State of the State address earlier this year.

"It's rare to find another person, let alone two people, from the same school working in the same department," Darlea told *The Examiner* of Vivian and Murray.

Darlea's experience represents the kind of success the Sigmund Weis School of Business Alumni Engagement Pilot Program aims to accomplish. This student-alumni mentorship program, led by a group of alumni business professionals with the support of the business school, the Office of Alumni Relations and the Center for Career Development, matches students to alumni with professional backgrounds similar to their career aspirations. Alumni provide the students with everything from résumé reviews and interview tips to internship opportunities and job leads. For more information about the business school's alumni engagement program, contact **Becky Bramer '92 Deitrick**, director of alumni relations, at alumni@susqu.edu or 570-372-4115.

Justin Darlea (center) with (left to right) Al Murray, assistant director of agriculture and director of marketing and development for the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA); N.J. Secretary of Agriculture Douglas Fisher; and Robert Vivian, NJDA legislative liaison



LIFE Experience

The Sigmund Weis School of Business will present the annual Leadership Institute for Entrepreneurship (LIFE) to high school students July 11–16. Now in its 21st year, LIFE introduces students to finance, banking, stock and bond markets, sales, advertising and global trade concepts. Students grow in their understanding of the field of business and gain experience in effective collaboration as they work side by side with an excellent team of university faculty, staff and students.

In a simulated entrepreneurial experience as real business owners, LIFE participants work in teams, start and run their own businesses, and handle the successes and challenges that any new business might throw at them. In addition to structured time for leadership development, entrepreneurship and team building, the program includes time for creating relationships and having fun.

High school students entering grades 10 through 12 are encouraged to apply. Selection is competitive and based on recommendations, academic skills, leadership qualities and future career aspirations. Applications and recommendation forms can be found at <http://www.susqu.edu/about/LIFE.asp>. The application deadline is June 13.



The LIFE program brings high school students to campus each summer for a week of simulated business experience.

Entrepreneurs Profess Passion as the Key to a Successful Business

Sharing the stage for the first time, husband-and-wife team Jim Koch and Cynthia Fisher brought their message *Turning Your Passion Into a Profession* to Susquehanna for the 2011 Sigmund Weis Memorial Lecture. The couple discussed how they took their respective passions for making beer and banking cord-blood stem cells and built multimillion-dollar companies.

Fisher was the founder and former CEO of ViaCord Inc., as well as the co-founder and former president of the cellular medicines company ViaCell Inc. The company develops pharmaceutical-grade cord-blood stem cell products and human cellular therapies to treat diseases. Established in 1993, ViaCord, which merged with ViaCell, stores stem cells from umbilical cord blood for expectant families. In 2002, she founded BioMed 20/20 Technologies Inc., a health care and medical information products company.

Koch, founder and chairman of the Boston Beer Co., brewers of Samuel Adams Boston Lager, spent the first 35 years of his life thinking the market for full-flavored beer—and hence, his family’s generations-long business—had reached its end. But in the early 1980s, his passion for quality brewing drove him to seek out a niche for a high-quality American beer. He found it and then some, taking beer to an entirely new level of popularity. ▀

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