

Taking Care of **BUSINESS**

University of Mount Union's Department of Economics, Accounting and Business Administration Sets Students up for Success

The unique teaching approach by the Department of Economics, Accounting and Business Administration (EABA) at Mount Union is preparing students in the department for success upon graduation.

A wide variety of course offerings, business opportunities, diverse faculty expertise and hands-on advising are just a few of the things that set Mount Union's EABA students on paths to success after leaving Mount Union.

"The University has strong ties to the business community, and the Department of EABA takes every opportunity to leverage those relationships," said Dr. Patricia Draves, vice president for academic affairs and dean of the University. "The combination of putting students in contact with businesses both in and out of the classroom and exposing them to varied course offerings during their college careers is preparing them to enter numerous business-related fields upon graduation."

Strategic Courses

Students in the department take a set of core courses to start and have the option of choosing one of seven majors – economics, accounting, finance, human resource management, international business and economics, management or marketing. A minor in business administration is offered as well.

According to Professor Mark McConnell, chair of the department and assistant professor of marketing, students have a chance to "sample" many different business-related fields.

"Students will need all of these courses in their careers, but they don't have to lock in on a specific business-related major right away," he said. "They're able to keep an open mind until they've had a little bit of everything."

In addition, students in the Department of EABA are required take two courses related to professional development and corporate culture. Courses include BA 243, Exploring and Evaluating Life Options, and BA 343, Pursuing Personal Life/Career Plans. Through these courses, students have an opportunity to work on resumes, participate in mock interviews, attend a job and graduate school fair and prepare for the transition from college to career.

"Students spend an enormous amount of time in the presence of professional recruiters so that they become more comfortable and more competent during the recruiting process and, ultimately, the corporate culture," said Becky Doak, executive director of The Center for Student Success and Office of Career Development. "College recruiters report that our students often bypass mentoring programs as they enter the working world more career savvy. They also report that our alumni attain advancement at a faster pace than other college graduates."

Working with Businesses

Students in the Department of EABA are exposed to numerous opportunities to work with businesses as early as their sophomore year. For example, marketing majors recently worked as part of a team to create a marketing plan for area organizations, including A.J. Oster Foils, Inc., an Alliance company.

"We view the idea to partner Mount Union students with a local company as extremely innovative and mutually beneficial to our company and to students," said Beth Tirey, general manager and vice president of A.J. Oster Foils, Inc. "The marketing plan they created allowed us to view lead generation in a different light. We are optimistic about our future growth within this product line due largely to the students' efforts."



“We take the technical side of advising – scheduling courses – as a given. The softer side of advising is in finding ways to make sure students have internships, international study experiences and involvement and leadership with campus organizations.”

– **Mark McConnell**
 Chair of the Department of Economics, Accounting and Business Administration and Assistant Professor of Marketing

For Katlin Gainer ’14, a marketing and French major who participated in the project, the experience led to a job upon graduation.

“The company contacted me because of my work in the B2B marketing class and offered me a full-time position as an outside sales representative,” Gainer said. “It’s an amazing opportunity that I would have never been afforded had it not been for that class at Mount Union.”

In addition, accounting students do tax returns for individuals unable to afford assistance, and management majors use their business savvy to plan and lead service projects such as Raider Relief. McConnell said these are the types of opportunities that give students stories to share in a job interview.

“Every job candidate has gone to class, taken tests and written papers,” he said. “That does not distinguish you. What does distinguish you is when you use what you learned in management to lead a service project like Raider Relief and you end up applying things from a management course to doing a home makeover for a disabled veteran in Alliance, Ohio. Now that’s a story to share in an interview!”

Mix of Theory and Practice

Faculty in the Department of EABA come from both academic and corporate backgrounds. McConnell has worked in the hospitality and automotive industries and started his own ad agency before going into teaching full-time.

“We have people like myself who have more of a corporate, entrepreneurial background as well as the more traditional professors who are highly respected in their fields and are engaged in research, publication and presentations,” McConnell

said. “It allows us to come together and truly prepare students for meaningful work.”

Both theoretical and practical career preparation are important for students, according to McConnell.

“You have to figure out how to put the theory into practice no matter what’s thrown in your direction,” he said.

Hands-on Advising

The Department of EABA has a very hands-on approach to advising students.

“The department does an exceptional job of seeing that each student has one-on-one time with a full-time faculty member in his or her major every semester,” McConnell said. “We take the technical side of advising – scheduling courses – as a given. The softer side of advising is in finding ways to make sure students have internships, international study experiences and involvement and leadership with campus organizations.”

Proven Success

According to the First Destination report, an impressive percentage of members of the Class of 2013 who graduated with a degree in accounting, business administration, economics, finance, healthcare management, human resource management, international business, management or marketing, secured jobs upon graduation. Of the 95% of majors from the Department of EABA who self reported, 98.3% of those had secured degree-required employment or graduate school placement and 96% of those did so in their field of study.

For more information on Mount Union’s Department of EABA, visit mountunion.edu.