The week of October 7th was a busy week at Northern Illinois University. Not only was it homecoming week, but it was also BELIEF Week. The occurrence of homecoming and BELIEF Week falling on the same week seemed to be beneficial to students as homecoming tends to be filled with activities where students could use a healthy reminder to make ethically sound, smart, and safe decisions. BELIEF Week is an annual NIU College of Business event that is geared towards creating ethical awareness and helping develop NIU student’s ability to incorporate ethics into the business world.

During the week, 11 different guest speakers made presentations to 25 different classes throughout the college where they spoke with students about ethical leadership pertaining to their discipline. One of the more notable speakers this year was a reformed white collar criminal, Dhaval Patel, formally of the Warren Buffet Foundation. Patel’s story was one that truly fit the mission of BELIEF week as it was one that showed how even good people can fall down a slippery slope due to a few ethically unsound decisions in the business world. The keynote speaker for BELIEF Week this year was Julie Lagacy, Vice President of Finance Services Division for Caterpillar.

For those who weren’t able to attend any of the speakers, our secondary mission was just to create ethical awareness. LEAD would like to give a special thanks to Caterpillar for loaning us their front-end mover for display purposes.

See Belief on page 4
Meeting a Corporate Sponsor:

Josh Byrd of Northwestern Mutual

By Michael Silver

Josh Byrd currently participates on the NIU BELIEF Program corporate advisory board. Not only does Josh Byrd represent one of BELIEF’s corporate partners—Northwestern Mutual—but he is also an NIU Alumnus. He graduated in 2003 with a B.S. in Marketing and now currently works as a financial advisor for Northwestern Mutual. He specializes in financial security planning, where his main responsibility is to meet with clients and prospects to help align their goals with their actions in regards to their financial plans.

As a member of LEAD, I am personally very thankful for BELIEF’s corporate partners, as they have a major impact on the opportunities that BELIEF can bring to NIU’s College of Business. Not only do they supply us with funds to run events and bring in speakers, but they also provide us with great additional thoughts and ideas from their professional experience.

I was curious to find out how Josh and Northwestern Mutual got involved in being a partner, so I asked him a couple questions regarding the issue.

It turns out that it all started with Northwestern Mutual’s office in Arizona. The office became involved in a similar program and all they could do was rave about it. In response to the Arizona office experience, the head of compliance, Josh’s managing director, and a managing partner, did a conference call and explained that getting involved with a program like BELIEF was “a hands down win-win for what our organization is trying to accomplish by fostering a positive impact within our communities.

We want to make a positive and lasting impact in the communities where we work and live. The BELIEF program, along with other highly-regarded corporate partners, aligns well with our company brand.” This is what raised the opportunity for Josh to get involved, and as an NIU alumnus, he was honored to have the privilege of representing Northwestern Mutual as a corporate partner of the BELIEF Program.

Josh truly showed enthusiasm and passion towards BELIEF and also mentioned how he would have greatly enjoyed being a part of the program as a student if it was available to him. In particular, he was very pleased with BELIEF’s ability to foster a core set of ethical values and integrate it into the classroom. He believes this encourages moral decision-making that students learn in the classroom and allows them to apply it to the business world. Northwestern Mutual has also been a part of this year’s mock interviewing opportunity by BELIEF.

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LEAD Alumnus Spotlight: Wasil Pahuchy

By Michael Silver

One thing that really inspired Wasil to join LEAD was his interest in ethics. To Wasil, ethical dilemmas have a unique set of variables that result in no one correct solution. He enjoys this ambiguity as there are no absolutes, thus promoting interesting discussion and the illustration of one’s true character. Wasil first heard about BELIEF and LEAD during a LEAD presentation that was presented to his UBUS 310 class. From this presentation, he was immediately interested in becoming a part of the organization and sought to become a part of it. After months of dedicated efforts, he was finally introduced to the group for an opportunity to prove himself as a worthy member.

It’s safe to say he proved himself with his time at LEAD, as he took the role of “LEADer Guy”, who was responsible for facilitating and directing discussion at meetings. He also assisted with the planning and execution of the 1st Annual NIU Ethics Case Competition. Eventually, he stepped up to represent Northern Illinois University, with fellow member Jill Hayes (now the director of NIU’s Passport Program), at the 2010 Eller Ethics Case Competition. Even though they did not place, they represented NIU well. Wasil says they had a great time and gained a lot from the experience. He felt they were able to pass their experience down to the group that would be representing NIU the following year, Sam Kunde and Austin Shulte, who placed 2nd at the competition.

Wasil is currently an Audit Associate at KPMG and is very aware that his decisions affect other people. He feels a sense of responsibility to consider any choices and weigh the impacts of his decisions before acting on them. He emphasized his use of the publicity, mom, and “how does this make me feel?” tests, in order to effectively weigh his options. These are a few of the tests that the BELIEF Program recommends in our seven step decision-making process, and it’s nice to see an alumnus keeping those principles intact.

His time as a member of LEAD and a student at NIU is one he says he thoroughly enjoyed. He praises the opportunity that NIU was able to present to him and even wishes he could have taken advantage of even more of them, specifically the opportunities outside the College of Business to make sure he had a well-rounded experience. This is because he often reflects on his experiences as a collegiate in order to use them as a reference during his professional career. He does, however, feel confident that his experience at NIU greatly helped in preparing him for ethical issues that he encounters in the professional working world. Although he felt prepared, he mentioned that one should always still remain alert; as you will not truly be ready to handle the professional world until you finally experience it.

Salmon

Continued from page 2

M.B.A. program. She always remains conscientious of the standards for admission as some potential students will approach her. Some of these students do not meet the criteria for admission and even though they may appear as if they could succeed in the program, Mona will turn them down. This isn’t always the easiest decision, but the admission standards and criteria were developed for a reason and a major responsibility of her position is to make sure they are upheld.

She also emphasized how it would be unfair to those students who worked so hard to meet the admission criteria if exceptions were made to allow students who did not.

As the Director of M.B.A., Mona saw an opportunity to expand an ethical framework to graduate students. She has taken great strides to help achieve this and has pretty successfully created a strong ethical foundation within the program. The program now provides all of its students an ethics handbook. This helps create a solid fundamental basis for students to look upon and refer to ethical decision-making at any point during their learning. An integration of ethics throughout all of the courses has also been implemented. Occasional guest speakers will come in and discuss ethically-related content during the semester. She has also taken steps to reach out and bring some of the on-campus ethics-related events to students at the Naperville and Hoffman Estate campuses. For the last 3 years the Belief Speaker has been streamed to both campuses so that MBA students can experience BELIEF Week. Mona stated that the students certainly appreciate this opportunity and generally have a Q&A session to further expand on the experience.

Ultimately Mona feels that everyone should develop a core set of personal beliefs. When debating on potential decisions, she emphasized the importance of staying true to your core beliefs. She has certainly helped incorporate a strong ethical foundation into the M.B.A program that can help students achieve this. There is a great opportunity for these students to further develop strong personal ethical beliefs that they will be likely to follow because of her efforts of expanding BELIEF into the M.B.A. program. Her work, however, is not done, as she still has aspirations to improve and expand the ethical program for years to come.
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