



Alumni News

Deepening our connection

Dean's Note

From our humble beginnings in the '60s when NIU created the Department of Business Education to meet the high demand for business knowledge, we have come a long way. At that time, nearly 500 NIU business degrees were awarded. Over time, our curriculum expanded to address student interests, business needs and kept pace with emerging technologies. And as a result, we have graduated over 50,000 students to date.

Despite the exponential growth in the alumni base, it wasn't until the late 1980s that we formalized our relationship with alumni by creating alumni clubs, establishing the annual alumni luncheon and recognizing alumni for their achievements. Today, we actively invest in our alumni engagement activities early to inspire them to sustain lifelong relationships with us.

We are grateful for our College of Business alumni base who have supported us phenomenally over the years, even through the pandemic. Our alumni and friends have helped us execute our five strategic priorities.

Creating a Culture of Innovation

Maintaining a vibrant institution requires that we continue to innovate and experiment with ideas. Alumni and donors have pledged \$750,000 in support of the Creativity Lab in

Barsema Hall, and KPMG has invested \$500,000 to launch the KPMG Innovation Fund. Programmatic elements of these initiatives will nurture innovation among students, faculty, staff and the broader community around us.

Supporting Distinctive Student Experiences and Career Advancement

A transformative gift of \$1 million was pledged by an alumnus to give full-ride scholarships to select accountancy students and to create distinctive student experiences. Several alumni have contributed to support global travel experiences for our students. Approximately eight firms sponsor experiential learning projects over the academic year. The dean's board of executive advisors contribute to the dean's strategic fund which supports a range of student experiences including student travel to participate in competitions. A recent pledge of \$250,000 supports the launch of a fintech lab, adds Bloomberg terminals and creates additional space for our students. Alumni also give back by sharing personal and professional experiences with students. Both forms of support have enabled our students to complete their degrees and launch their careers.

Supporting Faculty Professional Development and Research Impact

Several professorships and fellowships have been sustained through the



Dean Balaji Rajagopalan

generosity of our alumni and our corporate partners. These funds provide additional salary and research support needed to attract, retain and recognize scholarly activity and teaching excellence. Students are the ultimate beneficiaries of this investment as our faculty bring cutting-edge knowledge to the classroom and remain committed to their success.

Enhancing Mission and Market-driven Curriculum and Programmatic Transformation

Alumni have contributed their expertise to make our curriculum relevant to the transformational changes in the industry. Recent changes in our MBA curriculum exemplify how we remain tuned in to industry needs for nurturing leaders of tomorrow. With the help of alumni experts, we designed

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Alumni award winners

Dean's Note

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and launched graduate programs in data analytics and digital marketing. Both programs have shown record growth in the last couple of years.

Creating an Inclusive Community

An annual survey taken by alumni (*Poets&Quants*) has ranked us third among top business schools in the country for diversity, thus recognizing our reputation for a rich, inclusive teaching environment. We're launching alumni mentoring programs to support our students, particularly students of color.

While alumni engagement and giving has remained steady for the last several years, increased engagement and support can enhance opportunities for our students and launch their careers for extraordinary success. More support for unrestricted gifts to the College of Business will help us continue to strengthen our reputation and continue our efforts to put us on the national map for social mobility, an index that measures how well we do in changing the lives of those who come from underprivileged backgrounds. Your support can transform the lives of our students.

Thank you for your continued loyalty and support. With your encouragement, the best years for us will always be ahead as we continue to raise the bars of reputation and student success.

With Huskie pride,



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Each year at our alumni awards luncheon, we recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of our illustrious alumni. While the pandemic postponed our 2020 awards celebration, we would like to recognize them here.

Be sure to visit go.niu.edu/cobawards.

Wes Saber – Distinguished Alumni Award

Mary Vrancic – Young Alumni Award

Jackie Sander – Honorary Alumni Award

Jack Molloy – Innovation and Entrepreneurship Award

Sarjoo Patel – Social Impact Award

Robert Rothkopf – Student Engagement Award

A recognition event is being planned for the fall, celebrating both 2020 and 2021 awardees.

Watch your email for details.



Wes Saber



Mary Vrancic



Jackie Sander



Jack Molloy



Sarjoo Patel



Robert Rothkopf

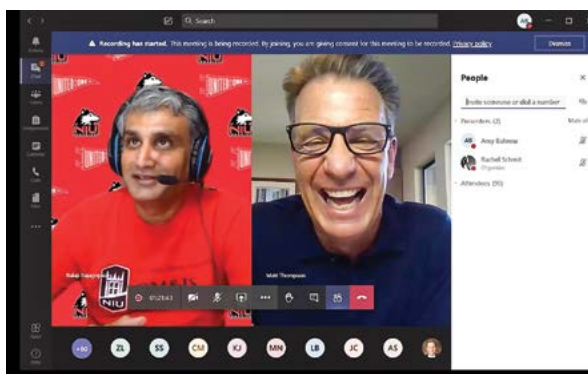
New alumni programs and platforms add value

When the rapid spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) sent NIU students home in the middle of the 2020 spring semester, the College of Business quickly pivoted to remote teaching and unique strategies to replace in-class learning. Virtual activities and supplemental plans were launched to replace some of the Business Passport Program events. In June, we piloted an online speaker series, Wednesday Night Wisdom, to keep students, alumni and friends connected and engaged.

“We were very pleased at our business students’ willingness to engage virtually,” said Amy Buhrow, senior director of Strategy, Student Success and Accreditation. “Connectivity is the core of the college experience. We launched the Wednesday Night Wisdom series to keep our students, alumni and friends connected to one another and to learning, wherever they may be.”

Each year, the College of Business hosts nearly 500 alumni and business professional visits. With limits on face-to-face interactions, the Wednesday Night Wisdom online speaker series taps our valued alumni and friends virtually to share knowledge in a safe, interactive way.

“The NIU College of Business has an expansive and highly informed base of alumni and faculty — any one of whom could be described as an expert in any number of fields,” said Cassandra Young, College of Business director of Alumni Relations. “Time and time again, they have proven the value of their knowledge as consultants through publications, to students and to other alumni. We are proud and delighted to feature their expertise and perspectives in the Wednesday Night Wisdom series.”



“We launched the series slowly in June and have completed a few events each month,” said Rachel Schmit, senior event coordinator for NIU’s College of Business. “The live event is recorded and then edited for a downloadable future podcast.”

We are grateful to alumni for sharing a wide-range of topics, including tapping into networks during this challenging time, managing finances

through retirement, cyber security, and leadership through a crisis. Our alumni and faculty members have stepped up to provide a wealth of information and are helping others to stay focused and productive on their business, school assignments, projects and personal lives.

Participate in our next Wednesday Night Wisdom at go.niu.edu/wnw.

Alumni profile — Jack Tierney

From an early age, Jack Tierney was keen on making good investments.

Read how this College of Business alumnus now invests his time in NIU at go.niu.edu/tierney.



Jack Tierney

You can make a difference

Contributing to the Dean's Strategic Fund at foundation.myniu.com/give.php gives the college funding to invest in its top priorities including faculty research, student success, and alumni relationships. You can make a difference by creating opportunities that will transform the lives of current and future Huskies.

Department update

Our departments are always finding unique ways for students to learn from research and real-life experiences. Click here for the latest updates in each department:

College Updates
cob.news.niu.edu

Accountancy
cob.niu.edu/academics/accountancy

Finance
cob.niu.edu/academics/finance

Management
cob.niu.edu/academics/management

Marketing
cob.niu.edu/academics/marketing

Operations Management and Information Systems
cob.niu.edu/academics/omis

MBA Programs
cob.niu.edu/academics/mba

Stay connected

Update your contact information here. We'll make sure your details are up-to-date in our alumni database.

[go.niu.edu/
cobupdate](http://go.niu.edu/cobupdate)

