

# BUSINESS MATTERS

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State University of New York at Fredonia

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Department of Business Administration

## Notes from the Chair

- The Michael J. Quatroche Scholarship is the newest addition to the list of departmental scholarships. It brings to 14 the list of financial sources available to honor and support students of various majors and classes in our department. The Quatroche scholarship is a one-time award designed for a well-motivated student majoring in Finance.



- The department will soon launch a special undergraduate program for non-traditional students. These students are employed full time and are not able to attend day time classes. This new program will ensure that such students would be able to finish all their major course requirements within two years by taking classes online and at night.

- You can now tweet your department! In case you have not visited our website recently, we have added a Twitter account. So, between Facebook and Twitter, we are quite present on social media. Here is the link:

<http://home.fredonia.edu/businessadministration>

- Currently, an active search is going on to add a new Assistant Professor of Accounting to our faculty. If everything goes as planned, next fall we will have a full-time instructor teaching courses such as ACCT 407 (Accounting Information Systems II) and ACCT 445 (Advanced Auditing and Fraud Examination).

-Dr. Moj Seyedian

## Alumni Spotlight



Ryan Cooper, '03

Ryan Cooper, an alum of the Department of Business Administration, has been making Fredonia proud with his accomplishments.

As of January 2016, he has been the North America Senior Operations Manager for the GE Renewable Energy Department located in Schenectady, NY. His responsibilities in this position include: managing a team of three service project managers, representing the North America Projects and Services General Manager in meeting forums, collaborating with different groups across the business in order to help increase productivity, acting as a resource for commercial teams to help develop and negotiate new deals, as well as assisting the finance team. He has become an important figure at GE – showing that hard work and dedication can get you higher positions in a field.

Before he became the North America Senior Operations Manager, he served as a Senior Project Manager for GE from February 2011 to January 2016. He got promoted to be the Senior Project Manager after he was a Global ASCP Material Planner in February of

2009, where he planned stock levels globally for three central warehouses and multiple regional warehouses, which translated into purchases in excess of \$100 million annually. Prior to this position, he was a Global Wind Top Issue Material Manager from October 2007 to February 2009, in which he was responsible for working directly with 12 different program managers to develop a certified parts schedule as well as planning and purchasing over \$30 million of inventory annually.

He was transferred to the GE Renewable Energy department from the GE Transportation department in October 2007. At GE Transportation, he worked as an Operations Manager for two years. Prior to this is when he started his career in May 2003 as the Lead Technical Director for GE Transportation.

Cooper has been working for GE since he graduated from Fredonia with his Bachelors of Science in Business Administration with concentrations in Finance and Management. When he started GE, he was fortunate to have a mentor who helped push his career growth. He actually never actively sought out any of the positions he was granted after his first job at GE. Cooper has this to say about the students here at Fredonia:

“My one recommendation to anyone who is coming out into the job market would be this: do not rush your career. Take the time to learn from each role you have, and build a solid foundation for yourself. Don’t think of your current position as ‘just a job,’ but think of it as an investment in yourself. Take what you can on your path to becoming one of the leaders of tomorrow.”

-Kayla Newland

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## Meet Professor Lisa Walters

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### 1. What courses do you teach?

I currently teach Operations Management I and Operations Management II. I have taught Strategic Management in the spring semester as well.

### 2. If you could teach a new course, what would it be?

Absolutely beyond a doubt, I would teach supply chain management. This is such



Dr. Lisa Walters

a growing field, and organizations are searching for those professionals with proficiency in this area. In fact, certifications are growing in this area, with the American Society for Quality (ASQ) recently implementing a new certification concerning supply chain management. This concept deserves so much more than a brief look in Operations Management I.

### 3. Tell me a little about your teaching style.

I like to use constructivist learning whenever I can—using a flipped classroom approach as applicable. For example, I might assign some readings or video, and then work the problems that would typically be the homework in class, where I can help students reach the solution. In my Operations Management I class, I might do some lecture early in the week, and then do some sort of application later in the week. I also like to use technology in the classroom, as technology is the watch word of operations...it’s efficient and effective.

For Operations Management II, my students do a live problem-solving project using the six sigma phases of project management. Six sigma is a widely popular systematic, data-driven approach to solving problems; professionals who have skill with this tool have a definite edge in the workplace. My goal is to give my students this edge.

Currently, my students are pleased to be working with Serta. The folks at Serta are very skilled with Lean and Quality techniques, so my students are not only learning with me, but they are seeing the application of the operational quality tools at Serta, and learning from current practitioners.

### 4. What suggestions do you have for students to be successful in your courses?

Come to class, stay engaged! I don’t give a ton of outside homework, and thus I expect your A-game when you come to class. When we do break-outs, participate with your peers---learn from them! Everyone has a perspective, everyone has an opinion—share yours!

### 5. What are your pet peeves in the classroom?

Lack of engagement! We all get tired, but we’ve got to condition ourselves to give what we can so we can maximize our learning experience. I also dislike disrespectful behaviors, such as giggling with one another, laughing at the expense of others, and approaching group work and in-class activities as a chore.

## 6. What kind of research are you working on?

I love all things Quality and Regulatory Compliance within biologics. My research emphasizes quality tools and techniques within non-traditional environments, such as higher education, as well as development of techniques that assist organizations in achieving quality and regulatory compliance within biologics.

## 7. How long have you worked at Fredonia?

I worked as an adjunct professor from 2001 – 2012. I began full-time work in September of 2012.

## 8. Where were you before joining Fredonia?

I served as the Principal Quality and Compliance Analyst for the American Red Cross Biomedical organization. I also was the Principal Officer of Healthy Solutions Quality Consulting, LLC.

## 9. Where did you do your undergraduate and graduate studies?

I have a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Medical Technology from the Clarion University of Pennsylvania; an MBA from St. Francis University (Loretto, PA), and a PhD in Management from California Coast University (Santa Ana, CA).

## 10. Why did you decide to come to Fredonia?

It is a terrific environment, with incredible beauty and good, kind people, from students, to administration, to staff, to faculty.

## 11. Who has been your biggest influence in life?

My grandmother and my husband. My grandmother taught me my work ethic, and my husband helps keep me grounded and keep my sense of humor.

## 12. What is your family life like now?

Crazy! My son is 15 and busy with school and all that goes with that, including scouts, basketball, and whatever else seems like a good idea at the time. My husband is a dental practice partner, and also is a partner in a sleep dentistry business...so he's busy too! In addition to my duties at Fredonia, I am also a Kiwanian, I advise the Kiwanian Kids at a local elementary school in Erie, PA, and I am on the board of the American Society of Quality. On top of our "people" busyness, we also have two cats, and one dog...so three more kids! And two of these furred family members are seniors, and require quite a bit of tender loving

care. So my family life is actually a lot like everyone else's nowadays!

## 13. What advice do you have for graduating Management seniors?

Don't be afraid to start at the bottom and learn the business in the industry you find yourself. Don't believe you know more than those with the experience. And don't be afraid to take on a challenge....remember, if not you, then who?

## 14. What do you like about the Business Department?

The people!

## 15. Is there anything else you would like to share with our readers?

It is my distinct privilege to part of the Fredonia family. This job is not just a stop on my way to somewhere else; I view it as my destination. It is my hope that the readers have a similar special experience here; and I hope that perhaps I may add to their positive experience.

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## Politically Connected Directors and Corporate Governance

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In the midst of the Chesapeake Energy scandal- where the company failed to disclose the CEO's questionable financial practices- were two powerful ex-politicians. Senator Don Nickles and Governor Frank Keating enjoyed several perks, such as access to the firm's private planes for travel, while failing to maintain their fiduciary duty (McIntyre & Zajac, 2012). However, while more attention is paid to scandals regarding governance failures, these directors were likely an anomaly to the many politicians sitting on boards that bring value to firms. My research empirically investigates the association between politicians on corporate boards and



Justin Mindzak, Visiting Assistant Professor of Accounting

corporate governance.

Academics, the business media and governance experts have started to take a closer look at ex-politicians sitting on corporate boards. While there has been an increasing amount of literature recently regarding politically connected firms, the extant literature has tended to focus on countries with underdeveloped financial markets or in highly corrupt political environments. However, the prevalence of political figures, albeit often retired from public office, being nominated to board positions in the United States is becoming more common. Politicians identified in my work are those that have sat on high level public positions, such as former presidential candidates, senators, congressmen, big city mayors, governors, secretaries, and ambassadors. These politicians are independent directors and are less likely to have direct business connections than other outside directors.

The extant literature often takes a resource dependence view on director nominations. The board of directors can be seen as a linking instrument between the organization and the external environment. Political leaders (who can be classified as community influence type directors) often have different background than other types of board members (business experts/insiders, support specialists) (Hillman et al., 2000). However, these politicians share many of the same traits, skills, and previous job experiences as corporate directors. These directors are often high profile and have been shown to help business procure government contracts, reduce borrowing costs, and allow firms to benefit from becoming more tax aggressive.

Data in my paper is collected from management information circulars (proxy statements), Compustat, CRSP and ISS/RiskMetrix, for the years 2007 to 2012. 6,372 firm-years are examined and show that 29% of listed firms in the sample have or had at least one politician on its board of directors. Furthermore, these politically connected firms tend to have different firm characteristics and governance characteristics than their counterparts. However, there are little differences in their performance characteristics.

My work utilizes two of the most well known corporate governance quality indexes, Gompers et al. (2003)'s Governance Index and Berbusch et al. (2009)'s Entrenchment Index. The paper hypothesizes and finds

that firms with politician directors are associated with higher corporate governance scores. This relationship persists after controlling for firm-level, performance, and governance based variables. Changes models and difference-in-differences regressions show that adding a politician to a board of directors increases the governance quality, while dropping a politician from a board of directors decreases the governance quality.

This paper contributes to the corporate governance literature and to the diverse research field of politically connected firms. Although governance policies and practices tend to be "sticky" over time, I find that adding a politician to a corporate board provides an incremental governance benefit to corporations. My results imply that successful politicians who become corporate directors are an effective corporate governance mechanism for firms.

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-Justin Mindzak

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## Accounting Society Attends IMA Conference

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Showing off their Accounting Society T-Shirts, from left to right; back row: Professor Olsavsky, Katlynn Cole, Ryli Chmiel, Ryan Balas, and Sawyer Bell; front row: Jess Bolsei, Harley Jones, and Professor Hall.

The students from the Accounting Society that went to the Institute of Management Accountants Student Leadership Conference were Ryli Chmiel, Jess Bolsei, Harley Jones, Katlynn Cole, Sawyer Bell, and Ryan Balas. Two accounting faculty members also joined us, Professor John Olsavsky, the Accounting Society's Advisor, and Professor Linda Hall.

We left Fredonia on Thursday, November 10th at 5am to get to Detroit in time for our tours. When we arrived we took a tour of the GM Renaissance Center and learned about the history of Detroit. Then later on the first day, we went to a career fair/networking event, where we visited tables of potential employers and CMA review providers. The next day and half at the conference there were educational sessions that we attended including those titled "Navigating the Workplace: Tips for Communicating Across Generations", "Forensic Accounting: How Your Accounting Skills Help Catch the Crooks", and "Leading from the Start," all of which were presented by industry professionals.

While we were there, we also got to explore Detroit a little bit. We experienced their nightlife, visited Greektown and also took what they call the "People Mover" which does about a 15 minute loop around the city; so we got to see some more of Detroit as we passed by.

Overall, this trip was a great bonding experience for the members of the E-Board that went and

was also educational. We got to learn about a side of accounting (management accounting) that is not emphasized as much as public accounting, and got to meet professionals, ask questions, and also meet students from many different schools. Although we were all tired from this busy trip, I think that everyone enjoyed their time at the conference and we hope that this becomes something that future Accounting Society members can take part in as well. For more information on IMA, please click on:

<https://www.imastudentconference.org/>

-Katlynn Cole

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## Fredonia Adds New Paltz to Accelerated B.S./MBA Program

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The number of accelerated Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree programs that Fredonia has in place with other colleges and universities has expanded to nine with the addition of SUNY New Paltz. The 4+1 B.S./MBA program in the Department of Business Administration enables Fredonia students to earn a bachelor's degree and MBA in five years. Students accepted into the program attend Fredonia for four years and the designated graduate school for one year.

Admission requirements in the SUNY New Paltz 4+1 program include a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher and the grade of "B" or higher in the following courses: ACCT 201, ECON 200, ECON 201, ECON 202, ACCT311/BUAD 310 and BUAD 320. Prospective students are to submit an application and send official transcripts and three letters of recommendation to SUNY New Paltz. A score of at least 450 on the Graduate Management Admission Test or a minimum GRE score of 295 are also required.

Articulation agreements for the 4+1 B.S./M.B.A. program are also in place with the following: Alfred University, Canisius College, Clarkson University, Long Island University, Niagara University, SUNY Oswego, Rochester Institute of Technology and St. Bonaventure University.

Students interested in the program are advised to contact their academic advisor early in their junior year. More information is available on the Business Administration Department's website.

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## AMA LinkedIn Workshop

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Christopher LaGrow of the CDO conducting the workshop

The American Marketing Association hosted a Career Development Office LinkedIn workshop on November 1st at the Williams Center. The purpose of this event was to encourage students to start networking by creating or updating their LinkedIn accounts so that they could connect with possible future employers. AMA wants the students to have as much opportunity as possible to put their name out there and create a professional image.

-Latrell Tyson

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## Open for Business

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Patrick Toscano, CEO of the Snack Shack, at work

The Snack Shack is a student-run convenience store located on the third floor of Thompson Hall. The Shack operates as a strategic business unit within the Business Club. Six interns oversee the Shack's day to day operations. The management team strives to provide Fredonia with an easy to access alternative to

any of the other convenience stores on campus. The Snack Shack's management team is always coming up with new promotions and ideas to keep its customers happy.

The six interns that are responsible for the day to day operations have individual responsibilities and also work at the cash register. Feel free to stop by and chat with them! Roberta Samson is the inventory intern and is responsible for making sure that the Shack's shelves stay stocked. Andrew Diekman is the CFO and is responsible for keeping track of revenues and expenditures. Ashley Neidrauer is the human resources intern responsible for scheduling and new hires. Lily VanDevalk is in charge of advertising and promotion. Max Matricardi is the COO and keeps operations running smoothly. Patrick Toscano is the CEO and oversees the management team.



The Snack Shack is open from 7:45am until 6:30pm Monday through Thursday, and from 7:45am until 3pm on Fridays. A multitude of products are sold at the Shack including, Red Bull, Coca-Cola, Sprite, Pop-Tarts and potato chips. Catering services are also available. The management team also recently installed a phone charging station compatible with both Apple and Samsung phones. If you have any questions about the Snack Shack, feel free to email the CEO, Patrick Toscano at: [tosc0789@fredonia.edu](mailto:tosc0789@fredonia.edu). Stop by today!

-Patrick Toscano

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Business Matters is a student-run online publication of the Department of Business Administration Chair's Student Advisory Council, established in Spring 2007. For story ideas and comments, contact the Editor:

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