

# THE BUSINESS COUNCIL BUZZ....

The Official Newsletter of the Business Council of the  
Leon Hess Business School



The Leon Hess Business Council held its Winter Meeting on December 9, 2022, at the Varsity Club of the OceanFirst Bank Center at Monmouth University. This meeting marks the first held on campus since the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic. One of the highlights of the meeting was the overview of the Council priorities for this academic year.

## **Council Priorities For Academic Year 2022-2023:**

Deb Clay, Chair, welcomed the group of attending Business Council members, faculty, administration staff, and student leaders and provided an overview of the new operating plan and key areas of focus for academic year 2022-2023. Deb explained, "Our priorities are aligned with the 5-year strategic plan of the business school and focus our resources in four key areas":

- 1) Advising on curriculum and learning approaches that best prepare students with the knowledge and skills desired in the marketplace,
- 2) Providing students with networking opportunities, internships, and employment,
- 3) Mentoring and guiding students to confidently compete for employment and successfully transition into careers with demanding expectations,
- 4) Providing financial support for key programs including student led organizations, student awards and faculty research grants.

Winter 2022 Edition



### **OFFICERS:**

Deborah Clay  
Chair  
Kenneth Young  
Vice Chair  
Thomas Cardinale  
Treasurer

### **MEMBERS:**

Jemal Beale  
Glenn G. Bellomy  
Ryan Campbell  
Brian Carolan  
Natasha Maximoff Chandler  
Charles Corsentino  
Dennis Devery  
John DiNapoli  
Philip Dunn  
Philip Forlenza  
Rick Gumina  
Sheldon S. Horowitz  
Raymond Klose  
Russell Kommer  
Ryan Lanier  
Jonathan Leifer  
William MacDonald  
Erin Moran  
Gloria Nilson  
John Paoella  
Jeana Piscatelli  
Richard L. Ricciardi  
Joseph Rice  
Christine Schaeffer  
Lawrence Shapiro  
Michael Troy  
Andrew Young

### **ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:**

Alexander Daudier  
Jason Horowitz  
Christine Nadramia  
Nicole Puccio  
Pooja Shah  
Joseph Tuzzio

Key Business Council projects planned for this academic year have been organized under working committees each led by a committee Chair and supported by a team of volunteers focused on a specific set of initiatives. Each of the five committee Chairs described what they hope to accomplish, and priority projects lined up for the year.

- The Student Engagement Committee, led by Joe Rice is focused on enhancing the Executive Mentoring Program (SEEMA) where students engage directly with business professionals to help build their network, sharpen their people skills, and gain real world business perspective. Additionally, this committee is forming recommendations on the criteria for the allocation of Business Council student award funds including the incremental funds raised through the Day of the Races event over the summer. Other priorities include plans to increase student internship and experiential learning opportunities leveraging the Council's diverse industry experience.
- Natasha Chandler, Chair of the Faculty Support Committee, commented on the curriculum advancement initiative and the strategic work this committee has delivered in collaboration with business school department leaders. Gloria Nilson is leading the faculty summer grant initiative kicking off in January.
- Richard Ricciardi, Membership Committee Chair, shared the goal of increasing Council membership to 50 with a focus on representation across industries, areas of expertise, and other dimensions of diversity.
- A newly formed Communication and Events Committee, led by Ken Young, will help promote Council efforts and elevate our website and social media presence.
- Tom Cardinale, Treasurer and Budget & Finance Committee Chair explained our desire to directly connect Council efforts and allocation of Council funding to impact strategic objectives. Tom also communicated that invoicing for member contributions for calendar 2023 will be mailed in January with a 60-day payment expectation.

Many Council members have volunteered to serve on one or more of the Committees and are actively working on key projects. Committee Chairs recognized that council volunteers have individual passions, and that availability of time varies. Deb commented, "We're able to tailor Council member engagement to best suit personal interests and available volunteer time". Engagement can vary from participating on a committee, serving as an executive mentor, helping to identify and land internships, and introducing the Leon Hess Business School to community and business leaders. Together our talents and time are helping to accelerate the accomplishment of key strategic objectives in the 5-year plan for the business school and making a meaningful difference in the experience and success of students.

#### **EMERITUS:**

Karl D. Gordinier Jr.

#### **IN MEMORIAM:**

Joseph Adelhardt (2010)

#### **STAFF:**

Raj Devasagayam, Ph.D.

Dean

Gilda Agacer, Ph.D.

Associate Dean

Janeth Merkle, DBA

Assistant Dean

Richard Ricciardi, MBA

Corporate Relations Officer

Sharon Hartmann

Assistant to the Dean

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

Giving Days - March 23-24, 2023

MU Golf Outing - June 12, 2023

Summer Social - TBD

Day at The Races - TBD

#### **BUSINESS COUNCIL MEETINGS:**

Friday, February 24, 2023

8:30am-10:00am

Varsity Club, OceanFirst Bank Center

Friday, May 5, 2023

8:30am-10:00am

Room 201, Edison Hall

## **Business Council Collaborates With LHBS Faculty on Curriculum**

### **Advancement Initiative:**

One of the areas of focus this academic year is the Curriculum Advancement initiative. Maintaining a market relevant academic structure at the undergraduate and graduate levels is essential for students to acquire the knowledge and skills that differentiate them in a competitive job market and set them up for early professional success. The accelerated pace of change in today's business environment coupled with lasting change resulting from the pandemic is driving a whole new set of desired skills and the need to modernize curriculum.

Back in June, an integrated team of business school department chairs, administration governance, and a committee from the Business Council assembled to assess market needs, draft recommendations, and lay out a phased implementation plan. The first phase of the program focused on the "core business curriculum" required of all business students regardless of concentration. Future phases will address the opportunity to update concentration specific course offerings and propose potential new concentrations.

Natasha Chandler, committee vice-chair provided an overview of the process used to synthesize trends, compare business school offerings, and review skill requirements from recent job descriptions. Natasha shared a summary of "top skills and competencies" desired in the job market today including industry business acumen, business & data analytics, effective communication, professionalism, and ability to adapt.

Joe McManus, Department Chair for Management & Leadership provided an overview of the recommended curriculum changes at the undergraduate level. Joe commented, "A key objective is to reduce the number of credits required in the core curriculum to free up capacity for students to go deeper into their concentration, pick up a second business concentration or a minor in another discipline such as information technology". Recommendations also included additional course in business and data analytics and enhancing the focus on communications within existing courses. At the graduate level, the focus is on reducing barriers to entry. Jonathan Daigle, LHBS Graduate Program Director shared competitive insights on reduced credit requirements to attract students from other majors and increasing flexibility and remote support to attract more professionals in the program.



*Dr. Joe McManus, Department Chair, Management & Leadership*

Both Joe and Jonathan expressed gratitude for the perspectives and collaborative efforts of the Business Council committee working on this initiative. Dean Raj offered his appreciation to the Business Council, Department Chairs and faculty for their leadership and efforts in driving this important work forward with meaningful change ready to be implemented in 2023.

## **Center for Entrepreneurship Hosting HawkTank '23 in the Spring:**

Alison Gilbert, Director of The Center For Entrepreneurship, spoke to the Business Council about how she arrived in this role, her mission as director, and the work underway in the early stages of building out the Center. After her introduction, Alison fielded a few questions about the Center and her upcoming plans.

Having began her career as a pastry chef, Alison then went on to become the fourth person to join a food media startup where she became the COO and helped scale the company into a multi-million dollar business and readership in the millions. From there Alison went on to found a business strategy studio where she's advised, consulted, and helped incubate hundreds of startups. As a Monmouth County native, her mother having taught at Monmouth University, Alison was quick to see the potential for a Center for Entrepreneurship and was chosen as the director in July 2022.

Alison described her mission as creating the hub for entrepreneurial activities at the university across students, faculty, and the regional New Jersey startup community. She described an untapped entrepreneurial potential at the university that the Center for Entrepreneurship aims to Inspire, Impact and Ignite through mentorship advisory support, incubation and acceleration programs, and investment. When asked about examples of the Center's early successes, Alison described several student-led entrepreneurial endeavors at various stages of evolution. The Center has engaged with these students offering them guidance and mentorship to advance their concepts into execution.

When asked about how the Business Council can be a resource for the Center for Entrepreneurship, Alison responded that as the Center scales, there will be a need for more advisors and mentors. She referenced the depth of industry experience and diversity of backgrounds within the Business Council membership as a valuable resource as the strategy for the Center unfolds. Lastly, Alison was asked about the 'HawkTank' initiative she has been working on. "HawkTank" will be a pitch competition of entrepreneurial ideas and plans, presented to a panel of judges who will select a winner. The show is planned for the spring semester and will be a showcase for Monmouth University's entrepreneurial spirit and a centerpiece for the Center for Entrepreneurship's impact.



*Alison Gilbert, Director, The Center For Entrepreneurship*

## **The Council Welcomes New Members:**

Richard Ricciardi, Chair of the Membership Committee welcomed three new members to the Business Council. Jonathan Leifer, Director, Acquisitions and Development, at Diversified Properties was inducted as a full member. Pooja Shah, a licensed CPA and currently the Content Accountant for Spotify, and Jason Horowitz, Founder, and President of Triforce Commercial Real Estate LLC, were inducted as Associate Members. Both Pooja and Jason are proud Monmouth University Alumni.

The goal is to continue to add industry diversification to the Council and these members are accomplished in the areas of Commercial Real Estate, Entrepreneurship and Music Streaming Services. All three members expressed excitement to be a part of the Leon Hess Business Council and have the opportunity to be Executive Mentors in the SEEMA program with the hope of having a positive impact on the career choices of business students. Welcome Jonathan, Jason, and Pooja!



*Jonathan Leifer, Director of Acquisitions and Development*

**Diversified Properties LLC**



*Jason Horowitz, Founder & President*

**Triforce Commercial Real Estate LLC**



*Pooja Shah, CPA, Content Accountant*

**Spotify**

## Monmouth Future Business Leaders (MFBL):

Emily Finnegan, President of MFBL, presented to the Business Council the goals and purpose of her club. Emily highlighted the core goals of MFBL to **engage** business students, **develop** personally and professionally, and to **impact** society. These core goals are achieved through regular meetings, interactions with business professionals, local projects, and international projects.

Emily outlined an MFBL fundraising initiative that takes place at the local level. Partnering with the Jersey Shore Rescue Mission based in Asbury Park, MFBL runs an annual coat drive in collaboration with Manasquan High School. In 2022 MFBL collected 1,618 coats, a 47% increase over last year. MFBL efforts are not limited to Monmouth & Ocean Counties. Emily summarized the Elevate Program with Woxsen University in India. This six-month project seeks to enhance students educational experience through fundraising and creation of instructional materials. The Elevate Program fits into the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and thus has received international recognition.

Emily shared the group's gratitude for The Business Council's financial support which will help fund membership in Future Business Leaders of America, the largest business career student organization in the world.



*Business School & Business Council Leadership join MFBL Members after the Council Meeting.*

## Dean Raj Expresses Gratitude:

Dean Raj Devasagayam provided the Business Council with a brief update on the Business School's headway on the 5-year strategic plan. The Dean applauded the Business Council's leadership and membership for their continued support of students and faculty.

Dean Raj emphasized the impact of Business Council support on the Student Excellence, Curriculum Enhancement, and Faculty Support themes in the plan. He thanked the Business Council for its continued support of the Executive Mentoring Program and stressed the importance of student interaction with practicing business professionals.



*Dr. Raj Devasagayam, Dean,  
Leon Hess Business School*

The Dean also highlighted the new Executive in Residence Program (EiR) as another avenue of student interaction with professionals during their time at the LHBS.



*Dean Raj Devasagayam, Sheldon Horowitz, EiR, Peter Samaras, EiR, Ken Young, EiR, Jeff Weinstein, EiR, Richard Ricciardi, Chair, Membership Committee, Business Council*

## **Congratulations Dr. Janeth Merkle:**

The Business Council congratulates Dr. Janeth Merkle on her new role as the Assistant Dean for Student Engagement at the Leon Hess Business School. Dr. Merkle has held the title of Assistant Dean since October 2015. In her previous role, she primarily focused on accreditations and leadership support. Dr. Merkle's new role acknowledges her additional work in the area of student engagement.

In her time as Assistant Dean, Dr. Merkle is responsible for creating several programs centered on student engagement:

- Executive Mentoring Program (SEEMA)
- Financial Literacy Program
- HESS Engage
- Mentoring Beyond Borders (MeBB)
- Monmouth Future Business Leaders (MFBL)



*Dr. Janeth Merkle, Assistant Dean for Student Engagement, Leon Hess Business School*

Dr. Merkle's passion for interacting and engaging with students is well known. Currently, she serves as the Advisor for the Beta Gamma Sigma Honors Society, Enactus, and MFBL. Dr. Merkle received her Doctor of Business Administration from Temple University in August 2022. She is pursuing the Leadership & Management Learning Track Certification of Specialization at Harvard Business School Online. Dr. Merkle is also a proud Leon Hess Business School graduate, earning her MBA with a Concentration in Accounting in 2006.

Congratulations to the new Assistant Dean for Student Engagement!