



NELSON RUSCHE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

RUSCHE REVIEW

» HIGHLIGHTS



Sprinkles founder to serve as lecture series speaker



Alumni in Texas Rangers front office celebrate World Series win



Catholic school works with Business and Community Services



Economics grad lands data analyst job at National Security Agency

I RUSCHE EXPANDS STUDENT SUCCESS SERVICES

Student success is based on more than just academics. To help students develop the skills they need to effectively manage not only their future careers but their lives in general, the Rusche College of Business expanded its Office of Student Services and, in September 2022, named a new assistant dean for academic and career success, Dr. Laurie Rogers.

“The quote that lit a spark in me as a young educator was William Butler Yeats’ ‘Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire,’” Rogers said. “Whether it’s academic advising or career prep, we strive to be one of the sparks which enables our students to be informed, focused and intentional with their academic career.”

When Dr. Tim Bisping, dean of the college, selected Rogers for her new role, she was teaching business communication classes at SFA. He said her combination of corporate and higher education work experience was the perfect foundation on which to build programs that help students transition from college to professional careers.

“I knew she was the right person to create change with purposeful innovations for

Rusche students,” Bisping said. “Her passion is to support our next generations in their pursuit of meeting their potential.”

Bisping also knew Allison Thornton, who at the time was working in the dean’s office while earning her Master of Business Administration, had big ideas for ramping up Rusche’s **Career Success Passport** program.

“I love this college and I’m invested in helping our students build those professional skills and be intentional about their career goals,” Thornton said.

Since the program’s launch in 2015, faculty members and administrators have seen that students who participate in Passport increasingly demonstrated in-demand career skills and soft skills. They wanted all business students to benefit from the program, so, in fall 2022, Passport was built into the curriculum and made mandatory for students entering the college. By fall 2025, all students will be enrolled in the class.

“It’s a free, zero-credit-hour course, so it doesn’t affect their GPA,” Thornton said. “There are no exams or textbooks, but it is a graduation requirement, so a P for pass or an F for fail will go on the student’s transcript.”



Allison Thornton and Dr. Laurie Rogers

Students who invest significant time in building their personal and professional brand, participating in experiential learning and developing leadership skills earn points, which add up to scholarships. The program

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



It's about the students. They're why we're here.

It's also why our Office of Student Services, led by Dr.

Laurie Rogers, our new assistant dean for academic and career success, has expanded. We know students are looking to us to provide not only exceptional academic programs but also career-building opportunities.

Our cover story highlights the efforts of Assistant Dean Rogers and Allison Thornton, Rusche's first full-time career program director, to broaden the Career Success Passport program, which became mandatory for all Rusche students starting in fall 2022. We also have a faculty career mentoring program, and Rusche Reboot helps students who may be falling behind.

Also, regarding career-building opportunities for students, this issue includes updates on our four centers: the Arnold Center for Entrepreneurship, Business and Community Services office, Center for Business and Economic Research, and Small Business Resource Hub. Each of these centers not only serves our community but also provides students with real-world experiences to enhance their professional growth.

I hope to see you at our next installment of the Nelson Rusche Distinguished Lecture Series featuring Candace Nelson, bestselling author, entrepreneur and founder of Sprinkles Cupcakes. The event starts at 7:30 p.m. March 26 in the Baker Pattillo Student Center Grand Ballroom. A VIP reception and book signing will be held before the event. It is going to be an outstanding evening for all! To learn more, visit sfasu.edu/rusche.

Thank you for your support, and axe 'em in 2024!

Tim Bisping, Dean

awarded \$16,000 in fall 2023 and expects to award even more this spring.

"Students can complete the activities they want do when they want to do them," Thornton said. "We tell them to choose the activities that specifically benefit them and their career goals. There are different activities for different points in a career path."

The program's activities include the annual [College to Career Conference](#), workshops on résumé building, and the informational interview, which involves a student reaching out to professionals and asking them about their career experiences.

"One of our students was bold enough to message the Miami Dolphins' marketing manager on LinkedIn, and that executive responded, and they had a great discussion," Thornton said.

In addition to more Career Success Passport point-earning options, a new faculty career mentoring program for Rusche juniors and seniors was launched in fall 2023. All full-time Rusche College of Business faculty members participate in the career mentoring program to actively help students launch successful careers.

"Everybody recognizes the importance and value of the program," Rogers said.

In its first semester, the mentoring

program matched over 700 business students to faculty career mentors. Students who have earned more than 60 hours and who aren't on probation are highly encouraged to engage. Rogers hopes to expand the program to sophomore and first-year students as it develops.

The Office of Student Services also has expanded its support and resources for students who are not meeting academic standards — "early alert, probation and suspension" students — through a new program called Rusche Reboot, which launches this spring.

A cross-college collaboration, Rusche Reboot involves hiring an intern who is a student in SFAS's Master of Social Work program in the College of Liberal and Applied Arts to monitor students, create opportunities for conversation and engagement, and offer support.

The office's peer support efforts are also increasing through its Student Advisory Committee members. At the beginning of a semester, SAC and other business student organizations will host game nights and throw a college-wide barbecue to help first-year students get to know other Rusche students.

Stay tuned for more student services updates in the next issue of Rusche Review.

CAREER PASSPORT FALL WINNERS

The Career Success Passport program, led by Career Program Director Allison Thornton, and the college's SFAS 1101 course, led by Sports Business Senior Lecturer Dr. Robert McDermid, celebrated a big success at the end of the fall semester. Six of the SFAS 1101 students earned the most Passport points in the first-year student category. Pictured, from left, are Ava Hoffpauir, Logan Quale, Iris Cordova, Adriana Mandujano, Christian Muzquiz and Jennifer Venegas. Cordova earned the most points for a first-year student (253 points), while the



sophomore winner was Meghan Townsend with 157 points, the junior winner was Jessica Frasier with 176 points, and the senior winner was Vanessa Rojo with 202 points. Passport point requirements are 20 for first-year students, 40 for sophomores, and 60 for juniors and seniors.

SPRINKLES FOUNDER TO SERVE AS LECTURE SERIES SPEAKER

Candace Nelson is a serial entrepreneur, “Shark Tank” guest shark, “Cupcake Wars” judge, New York Times and Wall Street Journal bestselling author, and an expert in turning one's passion into a profitable business.

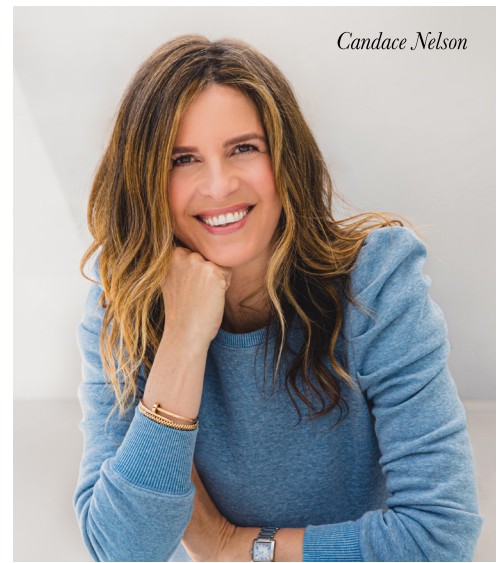
She also is the guest speaker for the fourth installment of the Nelson Rusche Distinguished Lecture Series, slated for 7:30 p.m. March 26 in the Baker Patillo Student Center Grand Ballroom on campus. A private reception and book signing will be held prior to the lecture at 6 p.m.

“The Nelson Rusche Distinguished Lecture Series was established to inspire our students to pursue their dreams by bringing highly accomplished business

leaders to campus to engage in discussion as students plan their futures,” said Dr. Tim Bisping, dean of the Rusche College of Business. “Candace Nelson’s story is one of perseverance applied to passion resulting in incredible success. We are so honored to have her here to speak with our students, sharing with them her invaluable insights and expertise.”

The event is free and open to the public. To purchase tickets for the 6 p.m. private reception, contact SFA's Office of Development at (936) 468-5406 or rsvp@sfasu.edu. Tickets cost \$100.

Free tickets for the main event at 7:30 p.m. will be available for pickup starting Feb. 15 at the Charles Bright Visitor Center



in Nacogdoches or at the student center information desk and the McGee Building, Room 137, on campus.

For more information, visit sfasu.edu/rusche.

ALUMNI MAKE HISTORY WITH TEXAS RANGERS

Four sports business alumni helped the Texas Rangers during their World Series run as part of the organization’s business development and ticketing operations staff.

Bryana Novogil '21 & '23, Aaron Rangel '20, Isaiah Schreiber '20 and Isaiah Yates '18 saw their team take home its first World Series title in its 62-year history.

“Achieving the status of World Series Champions is beyond a dream,” said Novogil, a Houston native, who has been an account executive for new business development with the Rangers for two seasons. “Playing a small role in this accomplishment is truly remarkable, and the feeling of hoisting the trophy has not faded.”

Rangel, a Tyler native, wrapped up his third season of serving as an account executive for season tickets.

“From enduring a challenging 102-loss season in my first year in 2021 to witnessing the surreal transformation into a 2023



Pictured, from left, Aaron Rangel '20, Isaiah Schreiber '20, Bryana Novogil '21 & '23 and Isaiah Yates '18.

championship, the journey has been an extraordinary rollercoaster of emotions, proving that perseverance and commitment can turn dreams into reality,” he said.

Yates, another Tyler native, has served the Rangers for five seasons as an account executive in group sales.

“I was able to be in attendance for the clinching game 5 victory with my fellow SFA sports business alumni,” he said. “It is truly amazing to be able to experience this milestone alongside some of the same folks that I started my journey with.”

In his third season with the Rangers as a new business development representative, Schreiber said his SFA connections were key to his joining the team right after college.

“The faculty at SFA supported my

career path and provided me with the early networking opportunities that helped me enter the Rangers organization shortly after I graduated,” he said.

Dr. Jason Reese, associate dean of the Rusche College of Business and an associate professor of sports marketing, said these alumni’s achievements are a testament to the experiential learning opportunities provided by [SFA's sports business program](#).

“Through our partnership with SFA Athletics and with Lone Star Sports & Entertainment, these students were able to participate in the whole sales process for sporting event tickets before they left SFA,” Reese said. “They learned what it was like to make a sales call, overcome objections and make a sale.”



Eight business students led by Matthew Smilor, ACE director, and Dr. Raymond Jones, assistant professor and director of SFA's entrepreneurship program, attended The Houston Innovation Summit at The Cannon in October.

FALL ACE EVENTS INCLUDE CANNON VISIT

A field trip to The Houston Innovation Summit at The Cannon was a highlight of the Arnold Center for Entrepreneurship's fall programming for students.

Eight business students led by Matthew Smilor, ACE director, and Dr. Raymond Jones, assistant professor and director of SFA's entrepreneurship program, attended the summit, "to see what a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem can look like and obtain additional resources, connections and insights as they pursue their own potential startups," Smilor said.

Students were given a private tour of the space and a chance to discuss their ideas with Jon Lambert, CEO of The Cannon. The trip also included a networking session; a panel discussion on the state of the ecosystem with leaders from The Cannon, The Ion, HX, SheWork and more; and breakout sessions on topics such as human experiences, finance, industry topics and early-stage startups or student ventures.

A highlight was the Dell Houston Pitch Showcase, during which six startups presented their ideas to a panel of judges. The two entries that best represented Houston startups received \$15,000 in Dell Rewards.

Other ACE events included a conversation with social media influencer and SFA alumna Meg Reily '19. With more than 2 million followers on TikTok, Reily shared her entrepreneurial journey, from posting her first TikTok video to quitting her day job with Fox 7 Austin to devote all her time to developing social media content.

ACE also has partnered with GenHERation to offer SFA students access to virtual workshops on wellness, interview tips, goal setting and mentorship versus sponsorship. This fall, participants heard from experts at Capital One, Fossil, Google and NASA. Visit sfasu.edu/ace for upcoming events.

FALL 2023 TOP POP-UP PITCH IDEAS ANNOUNCED

The following budding entrepreneurs from five of SFA's six colleges have advanced to the next level of ACE's pop-up pitch competitions. Each of the following teams received \$1,000 in scholarship funds to split among the members.

- JanJan's Homemade Creations by Ayanna Monderoy, James I. Perkins College of Education
- Micro-satellite company by Duston Judson, College of Sciences and Mathematics
- Quercus Cookies by Brooks Bays and Wallace Daily, Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture
- QuickTix by Carson Roling and Zach Stephen, Nelson Rusche College of Business
- Time Management Consultants by Makahla Bolin-Davis, Claire Boyd, Kylee Hillman and Daxton Owen, College of Liberal and Applied Arts

Next up, the teams' recorded idea pitches will be shown to attendees of an SFA men's basketball game in February. The winner, as designated by audience applause-o-meter, will advance to the annual Lumberjack Entrepreneurship Competition in April and receive \$2,000 in additional scholarships. The runner-up will win \$1,000 in additional scholarships, and the third-place team will receive \$500 in additional scholarships. Visit sfasu.edu/ace for competition dates and times.

RUSCHE RADIO LAUNCHES

The Social Media Team, under the direction of Dr. Charlotte Allen, professor of marketing, launched the Rusche Radio podcast on Spotify in November. Visit gosfa.com/rusche-radio.



The Piney Woods Entrepreneurship Network launched in September with its first meet-up at the Fredonia Brewery in Nacogdoches. Hosted by ACE and the Small Business Resource Hub, this network invites East Texans to an informal setting to learn from each other and promote new venture creation and growth inside and outside SFA. "The network brings together lawyers, accountants, bankers, investors, entrepreneurs and students once a month in a location somewhere in the region," said Matthew Smilor, ACE director. "It's a good environment for new and experienced entrepreneurs, small business owners, community members and students to learn from one another." Visit sfasu.edu/ace for the next meet-up.

SBRH RECEIVES SUPPORT FROM COMMUNITY

Throughout the summer and fall, ACE’s Small Business Resource Hub received generous financial support from the following partners to enhance resources for small businesses in East Texas. SBRH’s client numbers also grew.

“SBRH has been increasing the number of new clients and

expanding our market served beyond Nacogdoches County to the entire East Texas area,” said Larry Cain, SBRH director. “We just signed up an SFA alumnus in the Dallas area with an exciting new business idea. Can’t wait to assist him in bringing it to fruition!” Learn more at sfasu.edu/ace/sbrh.



Austin Bank



Cadence Bank



Commercial Bank of Texas



Nacogdoches Economic Development Corporation



Regions Bank



Southside Bank

CBER PROJECTS HELP STUDENTS EXPLORE LOCAL ECONOMY

Several economics and finance seniors spent the fall semester working on real-world economic problems in deep East Texas as part of a grant received by the college's Center for Business and Economic Research (sfasu.edu/cber).

The grant, issued through SFA's Center for Applied Research and Rural Innovation, gave CBER nearly \$24,000 to establish and maintain a set of metrics that CARRI's staff members can use to measure the economic contribution of CARRI activities to the region. It also supported economic development work specifically for Nacogdoches. The grant helped cover paid internships for Clay Patrick of Livingston, Dan Nguyen of Vietnam and Chareese MacDonald of Lufkin.



Dr. Mikhail Kouliavtsev, CBER director and chair of SFA's Department of Economics and Finance, and Clay Patrick, economics senior

In addition, Ryan Knights, an economics senior from Cypress, worked with CBER on several economic impact assessments, including one for The Cole Art Center @

The Old Opera House. This project was a contribution to another CARRI grant awarded to faculty members in SFA's School of Art. Visit gosfa.com/carri-grant.



Members of the Rusche College of Business Executive Advisory Board gathered for the fall 2023 EAB meeting during Homecoming weekend. Learn more about EAB at gosfa.com/rusche-eab.

AAF UPDATE

Marketing majors Liz Canales, Isabel Jedmears and Jennifer Reyes worked with marketing professor Dr. Marlene Kahla to prepare for the District 10 American Advertising Federation Student Conference and Competition held in November in Houston. Students from SFA's School of

Art, Department of Mass Communication, and Department of Management and Marketing worked alongside their peers from other universities in Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana and Oklahoma to create and present an advertising campaign for PSR Brands. Visit gosfa.com/aaf-con.



After launching last fall, Business and Community Services (sfasu.edu/cob/services/bcs) matched student and faculty interests and expertise with three Texas projects during the spring semester. For one of the projects, graduate students worked with Charlotte Adams, principal and headmistress of St. Patrick Catholic School in Lufkin, and Father Denzil Vithanage, pastor at St. Patrick, to propose revised strategic plans for the school. "The data analysis was excellent," Vithanage said. "The insightful and extremely helpful initiatives created a basis to improve our fundraising, increase our enrollment and make a greater impact in our community communication efforts. This year, we plan to implement several suggested strategies."

LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS OFFER ENTREPRENEURIAL ADVICE

More than two dozen SFA students majoring in a variety of subjects spent the semester exploring local businesses to learn about the challenges owners faced on their paths to success.

The students, who are either members of the Rusche College of Business Economics Reading Group or participants in the college's "Discovering Business in Costa Rica" study abroad course, are considering how to start their own businesses.

"The entrepreneurial spirit is growing fast among SFA students, and we want to be intentional about nurturing it," said Dr. Tim Bisping, dean of the college.

"Opportunities like these help a variety of students come together to share ideas and

learn how to run businesses that reflect their diverse passions, from fitness centers to clothing lines to medical practices."

Inspired by "Roadside MBA," a book by three leading business school professors who traveled the country to learn from small business owners, the students visited with the owners of three local businesses: Turner Fabrication, MyMD Select and Helping House.

"All of the business owners were phenomenal," said Dr. Ryan Phelps, associate professor of economics and finance, as well as faculty advisor for the Economics Reading Group and the "Discovering Business" study abroad courses. "This term really had something for everyone." Visit gosfa.com/local-bus.



Ashley Esquivel '21 and family

ESQUIVEL PUTS ONLINE DEGREE TO WORK

You don't have to be on campus to take advantage of a high-quality, affordable education at SFA. You also don't have to be available to attend classes between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

"Most of our online students are nontraditional," said Megan Weatherly, executive director of the Lumberjack Learning Commons at SFA. "From caregivers to full-time workers to students who are constantly on the move, online programs provide them the flexibility and access to reach their educational goals."

Ashley Esquivel '21, an online general business alumna and working mom of four, was one of those nontraditional students. Family obligations required Esquivel to take a 14-year hiatus from college, but she returned to SFA virtually in 2018 to earn her [BBA in general business](#). She learned about the fully online degree offered by the Rusche College of Business from a fortuitous trip to a mall in Corpus Christi, which was hosting a college fair.

"To my surprise, there was a recruiter from SFA there," Esquivel said. "I learned that SFA had an online program where I could continue my education in the comfort of my own home and still finish what I started many years ago. In all honesty, I hated knowing that I did not complete my education and did not have the heart to finish anywhere else." Visit gosfa.com/nat-dlw.

SPORTS BUSINESS STUDENTS MAKE SMA TOP 4



Matthew Morgan, Eli Standley and Steven Luenser

A team of three sports business students earned a spot in the final four of the Sport Marketing Association's 2023 Case Study Competition in October at the SMA annual conference in Tampa Bay, Florida.

Matthew Morgan, a sports business senior from Allen; Eli Standley, a sports business junior from Warren; and Steven Luenser, a general business and marketing senior from Coppell, secured SFA a spot in the top four by demonstrating solid working knowledge of the issues

confronting the case study team and presenting in a persuasive, enthusiastic fashion, according to Dr. Derek Walton, assistant professor of sports marketing at SFA and faculty sponsor for the team.

"Their impressive achievement in the case study competition was not only a testament to their dedication and skills but also a reminder that students from deep East Texas can achieve great things in the sport industry if they set their minds to it," Walton said. Visit gosfa.com/smacon.

BANKING STUDENT LAUNCHES CAREER BEFORE GRADUATING

Sophie Clakley of Carthage, a December 2023 banking graduate, was attending the Independent Bankers Association of Texas annual convention in September 2022 when she struck up a conversation with her future boss.

C Welch, a certified fraud examiner and assistant deputy comptroller for midsize and community banks with the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency in Longview, was impressed with Clakley and offered her a financial internship at the OCC beginning in January 2023.

“In just one conversation with Sophie, I could tell she’d be a good fit for the OCC,” Welch said. “Knowing that she planned to earn her degree in banking at SFA sealed the deal for me.”

Clakley’s attendance at the conference was sponsored by IBAT through an educational partnership with SFA’s banking program.



Sophie Clakley '23

“One of the main goals of our program is to help students connect with banking professionals who can mentor them and help them advance their careers,” said David Kaiser, director of the banking program. “We’re one of the few banking programs in the state that regularly takes students to conferences so they can make these important connections.” Visit gosfa.com/bank-careers.



As part of Hajoca Day Nov. 2, several members of the Hajoca Corporation team visited the Rusche College of Business to interview students and discuss how their interests might match the corporation’s job and internship opportunities. Pictured, from left, are Dr. Mikhail Kouliavtsev, chair of the Department of Economics and Finance; Dr. Kelly Noe, director of the Schlief School of Accountancy; Dr. Carol Wright, chair of the Department of Business Communication and Legal Studies; Toby Dollar, profit center manager at Moore Supply in Denton; Mark Allen, profit center manager at Moore Supply in Fort Worth; Trent Ollre, profit center manager at Moore Supply in Texarkana; Matt McGeehan, profit center manager at Moore Supply in Cleburne; Tom Maples, purchasing director at Hajoca; Blake Westmoreland, general manager for Moore Supply Co. in Nacogdoches; Dr. Jason Reese, associate dean of faculty and administration; and Dr. Laurie Rogers, assistant dean for academic and career success.

NEW FACULTY MEMBERS

Dr. Brandon Ater

Assistant professor, Schlief School of Accountancy

Ms. Kathryn Blevins

Lecturer, Department of Management and Marketing

Dr. Matthew Jaramillo

Lecturer, Department of Economics and Finance

Mr. George Paul

Lecturer, Department of Business Communication and Legal Studies

Dr. Hannah Wich

Assistant professor, Department of Economics and Finance



Sarah Datweyler, a May 2023 business economics graduate, received a data analyst job offer from the National Security Agency the following July and began working at its San Antonio branch in September. The application process lasted almost a year, and Drs. Stephen Kosovich and Rebecca Davis in the Department of Economics and Finance worked closely with Datweyler throughout her time at SFA and assisted with her background checks during the application process.