



# The Department of Business and Economics Bulletin

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## From the Department Chair



Dear business and economics alumni and friends,

As another year draws to a close, we are reminded by those around us about how special of a place Ursinus College is and even more so the business and economics department. This year has been nothing short of transformative — we launched three new majors (finance, economics, and business

economics), piloted a new student-run UCIMCO structure, and established the Bloomberg Trading Room. But what truly sets this department apart is its commitment to helping students achieve their full potential. With a record number of honor students working on impactful research projects, and new faculty members still finding their footing, we were fortunate to have Dr. Heather O'Neill come out of retirement to lend a hand. Her vast experience and insatiable curiosity proved invaluable to both honors students and faculty members alike, as they collaborated and shared ideas in a colloquium format. It is a reminder that when we come together, we can achieve great things. When one of us is in need, three people step forward. I hope each of you has continued to find a supportive community to surround yourself with; you are and will continue to be a valued part of the Ursinus and B&E community.

Jennifer VanGilder

Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Business and Economics

## This issue:

From the Department Chair

PAGE 01

Class of 2024,  
Compton/Rose Prize

PAGE 02

CoSA, Special Program  
Updates

PAGE 03

Special Program Updates,  
Bloomberg Terminals

PAGE 04

Bloomberg Terminals,  
Endowed Scholarship

PAGE 05

Alumni Spotlight

PAGE 06

# Congratulations to our graduates!



**Congratulations to the 151st graduating class of Ursinus College — we wish the following business and economics department students continued success in all of their future endeavors!**

Michael Agbeye, Jake Amendola-Reichard, Paul Army, Eleanor Bruggeman, Ryan Burton, Dale Clayton, Evan Coffey, Patrick Coleman, William Cook, Dylan Crammer, Olivia DeFusco, Riley DeShetler, Sarah Dilello, Walter Elliott, Peyton Evans, Beau Everett, Sean Folcher, Kaela Frenchman, Griffin Geib, Devin Grinnage, Charles Harris, Ayden Hughes, Tristan Hulme, Julian Jones, Brittain Kasoff, William Kelley, Alexander Kessel, Caleb Krause, Patrick Loftus, Harrison Lorenc, Christopher Loughery, Stephen Lyons, Kieran Macdonough, Matthew Marlin, Eugene Marriggi, Brendan McPeake, Mary Michaud, Thomas Mollis, Dante Monaco, Madelyn Nau, Edwin Newman, Stefanos Nikolaou, Mason Powlus, Kipp Ransome, Kirk Ransome, Avery Samer, Tyler Sargent, Lucas Selb, Carter Serxner, Scott Sloan, Storm Snape, Tyler Snyder, Madelynn Solow, Avery Sweisfort, Eric Tanz, Kate Templeton, McKade Trauger, Nicholas Troha, Carly Troilo, Matthew Tuley, Jason Werrick, Brett Wilkinson, Ethan Yu, and Matthew Zarrilli

In addition, Jake Amendola-Reichard, Eleanor Bruggeman, Evan Coffey, Kipp Ransome, Kirk Ransome, Avery Samer, and Lucas Selb graduated as members of Phi Beta Kappa, a prestigious national honor society that celebrates excellence in the liberal arts and sciences.

## Compton/Rose Prize

The Compton/Rose Fund was established by Barbara Rose Compton, 1969, and Robert L. Compton, Jr., 1968, in memory of their late parents, Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Compton, Sr. and Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur B. Rose. This award is given each year to two outstanding graduating seniors, one male and one female. The winners for 2024 are Kaela Frenchman and Evan Coffey.



Kaela makes her presence known with her radiant positivity and kindness. High achieving but humble, Kaela has been an Economic Ambassador, Accounting Teaching Assistant, UCIMCO CEO, and athlete. This summer she will be starting her professional career at Great Valley Advisor Group.



Evan is kind, supportive, motivated, and someone that gets the job done. His enthusiasm and positive outlook is contagious and makes you want to also get involved. He is an Honors student, UCIMCO CEO, Valedictorian, and athlete. Evan will be starting his professional career at Great Valley Advisor Group.

# Celebration of Student Achievement (CoSA)

Every April, we reschedule classes for a day so every student can participate in the Celebration of Student Achievement (CoSA). The day is filled with talks, poster presentations, and performances from hundreds of students from every discipline.

Held this year on April 24, student presenters gained valuable experience sharing their work with friends, faculty, and staff while students learned about the wide range of great work their peers are doing and what opportunities are available to them. From sharing their internship experiences to showcasing their research projects — business and economics students have a wide range of interests and CoSA helps us celebrate their accomplishments!



## Special Program Updates

### UCIMCO

The Ursinus College Investment Management Company, also known as UCIMCO, manages two funds on behalf of the College. UCIMCO’s goal is to assist students, regardless of major, in learning and understanding the complexity of financial markets, securities, and institutions, while also developing their skills in presenting and evaluating economic, industry, and security analyses.

On April 24 during the Celebration of Student Achievement at Ursinus, the UCIMCO teams presented their research and decisions to visiting supporters and alumni. Before the presentations, graduating seniors were recognized and UCIMCO “gave back” to Ursinus. Each year UCIMCO presents Ursinus with a donation, and the amount given reflects the current year. This year’s check was for \$2024. This tradition was set forth by the late Prof. Scott Deacle, who served as faculty adviser (and unwavering champion) of UCIMCO.



### Economic Ambassadors

Economic Ambassadors are a group of student ambassadors who are passionate about economic ideas and are selected to work alongside faculty advisors to help organize and promote community-wide events. This year's Economic Ambassadors were Hailley Lynch and Olivia DeFusco. Their goal is to foster an interdisciplinary conversation that

incorporates diverse perspectives. Events and participation are open to anyone across the College who is interested in political economy. This spring semester, the group was pleased to offer two events:

### **Economic Freedom and Women's Wellbeing**

Are markets forces of oppression for women, or do they provide women with an important means through which they might be able to improve their lives? Dr. Rosemary Fike, Senior Fellow at the Fraser Institute, explored this important question.

### **Film Screening and Discussion: *The Founder***

Film screening of *The Founder*, a film that depicts the story of the creation of the McDonald's fast-food restaurant chain. A group discussion was held following the movie.

## Wall Street Comes to Main Street in Collegeville

New Bloomberg terminals allow students to study stocks in real time and earn finance certifications as Ursinus trading floor becomes a reality.

This was Scott Deacle's dream.

For years, the beloved late professor imagined a trading floor on the Ursinus College campus, where students could get real-world training and certification on state-of-the-art Bloomberg terminals. Wall Street right here on Main Street.

That dream is now a reality as the second floor of the Myrin Library is adorned with 12 terminals, which are interactive workstations that allow students to receive and analyze real-time financial data.



“There aren't many liberal arts colleges that can say they have this resource, and this is giving our students a cutting edge as they enter the finance sector and begin their careers,” said Jennifer VanGilder professor and chair of business and economics. “It gives our students a leg up, and when they graduate, they'll have Ursinus credentials and Bloomberg credentials. It will only make their experience here more powerful.”

VanGilder said the new trading lab isn't just for finance majors. Capturing the spirit of an Ursinus education, it truly is a multidisciplinary venture, and students from any major can use the lab to gain one of three Bloomberg certifications. The e-learning courses expose students to financial markets, related career paths, and principles of sustainable investing.

Evan Coffey '24 is a finance major, and a chief curriculum officer of the Ursinus College Investment Management Company. He said, “This is such a powerful tool, but it's user-friendly and has a wealth of information, and having access to it before entering the workforce is an advantage that I'm thankful for.”

VanGilder and Coffey said Deacle—who passed away in May 2023 and was instrumental in bringing a finance

major to Ursinus—had envisioned a trading lab on campus for many years to complement and enhance undergraduate education. This “trading lab” is part of an ongoing effort to continue his legacy, one that includes the Scott Deacle Memorial Endowed Scholarship, for which Coffey is the inaugural recipient.

“We were always in the weeds together, crunching the numbers,” Coffey said. “He would have loved this.”

Ursinus joins more than 1,000 academic institutions across the globe with Bloomberg terminals. The space on the second floor of the Myrin Library is temporary. Ultimately, the terminals (nine of which were free) will move to another existing space on campus that will be reimagined as a trading floor, complete with a stock market ticker. And through partnerships and sponsorships, there is an opportunity to gain more terminals.

“I want it to be called the Deacle Trading Lab,” VanGilder said. “A collaborative learning space where students can work together and do research—a space where you can really feel the energy. I think that would speak to how passionate he was.”

## Alumnus Pledges \$2 Million to Support Business Students

An Ursinus College alumnus has made a \$2 million estate intention to support scholarships for business students—a pledge that will have an enduring impact at a time when the college is doubling-down on its commitment to access and affordability.

The Mason Williams ’71 Endowed Scholarship in Business marks one of the largest individual gifts in the history of the college. It will be awarded annually to students who demonstrate financial need with preference to those majoring in business or related academic disciplines.

Williams, who enjoyed a long and fulfilling career as an insurance executive, said he is proud of the impact that Ursinus made on his life and hopes others will join him by investing in Ursinus. “It is my hope that this endowment will allow future students to enjoy the experience I had at Ursinus, which allowed me to have an enriching, fulfilling, and successful career in business,” Williams said.

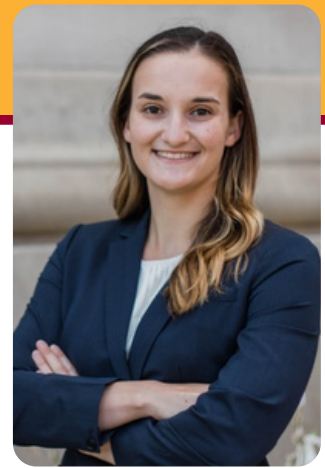
Williams and his wife, Trudy, reside on the Hawaiian island of Maui, about 30 miles northeast of Lahaina, which saw devastation in the wildfires of 2023. The couple is involved philanthropically in Maui, supporting several different charities, including those supporting health and wellness initiatives for victims of the wildfires, as well as other humanitarian causes. Williams has served on the boards of Aloha House, Malama Family Recovery Center, and Maui Youth & Family Services since 2014. He previously served on the board of Easter Seals Hawaii and served as volunteer CEO for one year. Nominated by Aloha House, he was named Humanitarian Award winner of the year in 2021 by the Maui Non-Profit Directors Association for his countless hours ensuring that nonprofits have the resources and governance needed for their sustained success.

“We are profoundly grateful for Mason’s extraordinary gift, which ignites a beacon of hope and opportunity for countless students to come,” President Robyn Hannigan said.



# Alumni Spotlight: Riley Acton

Riley Acton '15 is an Assistant Professor of Economics in the Farmer School of Business at Miami University. On a daily basis, Riley splits time between teaching/advising students and conducting empirical research with collaborators across the country, most of which focus on the economics of education. Riley started at Miami in 2020 after finishing her Ph.D. in economics at Michigan State University.



Riley shares that the most rewarding part of her job is the research, especially when it can directly inform important public policy issues and/or when she can involve undergraduate students in the process. She also sees a connection between the time she spent as a business and economics major and what she has been able to do since, noting “As an economist and economics professor, it is pretty easy to see the connections between my days as a student and my life now. The biggest one that I see, and that I am very grateful for, is the excellent instruction I received inside and outside of the classroom from all of my professors in the department. You do not learn much about teaching when you get a Ph.D., so I feel lucky that I had great instructors to now emulate!

In terms of advice for current students, and how they can make the most of their Ursinus experience, Riley shares “Take advantage of the fact that your professors work at Ursinus because they want to work closely with undergraduate students and want to help you achieve your goals. Go to office hours, show up to external speakers and events, apply for opportunities like Summer Fellows and honors research, and put the time into fostering strong relationships with faculty and staff on campus. Those relationships are what will stay with you long after your days in Collegeville are done!

