Time Marches On!

Many of you reading this newsletter are graduates of our department and remember when Business Education, Distributive Education, and Office Management was our moniker. You took courses with the BDOM prefix. Later, when “marketing education” replaced “distributive education” as more contemporary terminology, Marketing Education replaced Distributive Education as a part of our department name and we assumed the BMOM prefix.

Today we are known as the Department of Business Communication and Entrepreneurship. The addition of an entrepreneurship minor in 1996 and a major in 2000 resulted in phenomenal enrollment growth for us. Entrepreneurship is now our largest program with approximately 200 majors. Business Communication remains our largest course of study in terms of students served. Thus, a new department name was needed. Business Communication and Entrepreneurship (BCEN) seemed a logical choice.

Although our name has changed, we continue to offer viable undergraduate programs in business education and office management. The Master of Business Education (M.B.E.) program continues to grow with many students making career changes and seeking postbaccalaureate teacher licensure. Each semester we have 8–12 student teachers representing our undergraduate and M.B.E. programs. Preliminary research is being conducted to determine the feasibility of a business communication degree, and we are excited about the possibility of adding that program and the career opportunities it could offer our students.

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“The dynamic nature of a global business environment provides challenges”

Stephen Lewis, Department Chair

BCEN Degree Programs

Business Education. The Business Education major leads to a Bachelor of Science degree. Students who complete this degree with a minor in Secondary Education may be licensed to teach business and business technology subjects in grades 7–12.

Business Education, Nonteaching, or Business Education, Training and Development. These two options lead to a Bachelor of Science degree with a minor in Business Administration.

Entrepreneurship. This major, which leads to a Bachelor of Business Administration degree, is designed for students interested in starting and running their own businesses.

Office Management. The Office Management major leads to a Bachelor of Business Administration and is for students interested in managing administrative support functions of businesses.

The BCEN Department offers these minors: Business Communication, Entrepreneurship, Marketing Education, and Office Management.
Extraordinary growth in middle Tennessee bodes well for all of our programs. More business teachers will be needed as new high schools are added. Rapid economic development will mean additional jobs for office management graduates. While we continually evaluate all our programs for timeliness, special research is underway to determine any needed curricular changes in the Office Management program as well as a more contemporary name for the program. Our intent is to provide the best possible training for future administrative professionals.

The dynamic nature of a global business environment provides challenges for a department offering such diverse majors as those in BCEN, but we gladly accept the challenge and look forward to providing students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in their chosen careers.

— Stephen Lewis, BCEN Department Chair

BCEN faculty members wear many hats. Above all, they are educators—typically teaching twelve hours in both fall and spring semesters. They also serve as conference presenters and/or workshop leaders and are productive researchers and writers.

Their most recent articles appear in the following journals: Advances in Health Care Management; Business Communication Quarterly; Business Education Digest; Business Education Forum; Encyclopedia of Business and Finance; Georgia Business Education Association Journal; DPE Journal; Entrepreneurial Executive; Journal of Academic Administration in Higher Education; Journal of Applied Research in Business Instruction; Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship; Journal of Entrepreneurship Education; Journal of Organizational Culture, Communication and Conflict; Journal of Training and Development; NABTE Review; and NBEA Yearbook.

New Faculty

**Patrick Geho, J.D., associate professor,** joined the BCEN faculty in 2006. He divides his time between teaching entrepreneurship courses and being state executive director of MTSU’s Small Business Development Center Network and Business Resource Center. He also serves on the MTSU President’s Cabinet, and he, along with Dr. Robert Lahm, received the 2007 Distinguished Research Award from Allied Academies, Academy of Entrepreneurship Education.

Dr. Geho is a board member of the Technology Corridor Council, MTSU Institutional Review Board, Business Education Partnership of Rutherford County, Rutherford County Business and Industry Alliance, and others. He received his J.D. from Nashville School of Law.

K. Virginia Hemby, Ph.D., associate professor, began teaching business communication and office management courses at MTSU in fall 2004. Before joining the BCEN faculty, she taught at Indiana University of Pennsylvania in the Technology Support and Training Department. She received her Ph.D. in adult education with a concentration in business technology education from the University of Southern Mississippi.

Dr. Hemby is national president of Delta Pi Epsilon and is a member of the NBEA Policies Commission for Business and Economic Education.

She has assumed active roles in NBEA, OSRA, ACTE, and DPE, serving on committees and in leadership positions. She coauthored a textbook, Effective Communication for Criminal Justice Professionals, and she edits the Business Education Digest.

**Ronda Henderson, Ph.D., assistant professor,** joined the Department as an assistant professor in fall 2006. Before coming to MTSU, she was an instructor at North Carolina A&T State University, where she taught a variety of technology courses. Dr. Henderson teaches business communication, business technology, and office management courses. Her research interests include e-learning, Web 2.0 technology, and the digital divide.

Dr. Henderson is on the editorial review board for the *Journal of Applied Research in Business Instruction* (JARBI) and the *Business Education Digest* and is editor of the TBEA Newsletter. She earned her Ph.D. in career and technical education with an emphasis in business information technology from Virginia Tech University in 2005.

**Sherry Roberts, Ph.D., assistant professor,** became a BCEN faculty member in fall 2007. Before MTSU, she taught at the University of Central Arkansas and was president of the Arkansas Business Education Association, which named her Teacher
of the Year. She serves as vice president of SBEA and as a representative on the NBEA Policies Commission for Business and Economic Education and the task force for professional development and technology.

Her work for the Personal Finance Institute and Insurance Education Institute at the University of Central Arkansas prompted her to write a secondary education textbook on financial literacy, which should be published next year. She earned her Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction from the University of Louisville. Dr. Roberts teaches business communication courses.

Rachel Wilson, Ph.D., assistant professor, who joined the faculty in fall 2007, focuses her teaching in the entrepreneurship area. Before MTSU, Dr. Wilson taught at the University of Nebraska–Omaha in strategic management and entrepreneurship and presided over the UNO Maverick Entrepreneurship Institute. In the international studies arena, she has supervised projects based in the United Kingdom and in Ireland.

Dr. Wilson received her Ph.D. in 2002 from the University of Alabama–Birmingham in administration-health services with an emphasis in strategic management. Her business experience primarily relates to the health care industry; she also has entrepreneurial experience in a construction venture in Omaha. Her primary areas of research focus on strategic alliances in the pharmaceutical and biotech industries.

**Faculty News**

**Dr. Robert B. Blair** was recently appointed interim assistant dean to work on assurances of learning, assessment, and accreditation issues. He also serves as director of the Center for Economic Education. Dr. Blair received the 2007 NBEA Collegiate Teacher of the Year award, the 2007 SBEA Outstanding Leadership award, and the 2006–2007 Distinguished Associate Professor award.

**Dr. Robert Lahm** received the Distinguished Research Award at Allied Academies, Academy of Entrepreneurship Education (with Patrick Geho) and the Best Paper Award at the Academic Business World International Conference in 2007.

**Dr. Stephen Lewis** became chair of the BCEN Department in 2004. He was named an MTSU College of Continuing Education and Distance Learning Distinguished Educator in Distance Learning in 2007.

**Dr. Linda McGrew** serves on the NBEA Publications Committee and as coordinator for MTSU’s Master of Science in Professional Science (M.S.P.S.) degree.
Alumna Pledges $1.25 Million for Entrepreneurship Endowed Chair

Pam Wright (B.S. ’73) has established an entrepreneurship professorship in the Jennings A. Jones College of Business. She became an entrepreneur in 1981 when she started Wright Travel Agency in Nashville. The company now has more than $100 million in annual revenue, over 70 employees, and offices throughout Tennessee and in other states. Wright Travel is the largest travel agency in Tennessee.

Wright is proud to be an MTSU graduate and appreciates the support she has received from the middle Tennessee region. She has given of her time on the MTSU Foundation Board and the Jones College Advisory Board. Now, her pledge of $1.25 million, to be paid over five years, will fund a professorship in entrepreneurship.

Fann / Sawyer Retire after Years of Service

Ms. Nancy Fann retired in 2006 after 28 years of service in the department. Besides being the department’s grammar guru, she was an active member of NBEA, SBEA, TBEA, and the Gamma Eta Chapter of DPE. For several years, she served as historian for TBEA and Gamma Eta and edited the BMOM newsletter. As a result, she honed her skills as a photographer and became an ardent scrapbooker. Ms. Fann worked with high school BPA and FBLA student organizations and with the collegiate PBL student organization.

Mr. Joe Sawyer retired in July 2004 after more than 40 years as a member of the department. He was instrumental in organizing TBEA and is a past president of that organization. He was also an active member of SBEA, NBEA, and DPE. Mr. Sawyer made presentations at TBEA and SBEA conferences; gave presentations to high school business classes about business, business education, and MTSU; and worked with high school BPA and FBLA student organizations. He is well known in middle Tennessee and across the state for contributions to and support of his profession. Mr. Sawyer is an avid sports fan and also known for his love of his alma mater, the University of Alabama. He has supported all areas of MTSU athletics and been a major supporter of MTSU baseball.

Both Nancy and Joe are missed in the halls of the BCEN Department—missed for their professionalism, their sense of humor, and their concern and appreciation for fellow educators.

Faculty News cont.

Dr. Marsha O. Smith is the entrepreneurship section editor for Business Education Forum and Advisory Committee chair of the business systems technology program at the Tennessee Technology Center in Murfreesboro.

Dr. Vincent W. Smith was named Tennessee Business Education Association Postsecondary Business Teacher of the Year and an MTSU College of Continuing Education and Distance Learning Distinguished Educator in Distance Learning in 2007. He is the basic business section editor for the Business Education Forum and serves on the Advisory Committee at Oakland High School.
Community Learns from Successful Entrepreneurs

National Entrepreneurship Week (February 25–29, 2008) gave students, faculty, staff, and the Murfreesboro community “an opportunity to meet, network, and learn from some of the best entrepreneurs in this area,” said Professor Marsha Smith. About 40 guest speakers from diverse fields shared the ins and outs of starting and operating their own businesses.

One of this year’s speakers was Lona Dunn, owner of Anastasia’s boutique in downtown Murfreesboro since August 2006. Dunn told the audience that her first year as owner involved a learning process. She had to learn from her mistakes and find her niche. Ronnie Barrett, who founded Barrett Firearms Manufacturing, was a featured speaker on Friday. He began his business career in humble fashion, overcoming great odds to become an award-winning professional photographer, distinguished inventor, and businessman whose name is now recognized around the world. Pam Wright, president, owner, and CEO of Wright Travel, was also one of Friday’s featured speakers.
Before Jenny Vining graduated with a master’s in business education and earned her Tennessee teaching certificate, she had a teaching position. She was hired at the same high school she had attended 18 years earlier—Smyrna High School! There, she teaches Keyboarding and Banking and Finance, a work-based learning class allowing students to use the knowledge and skills to operate an actual bank located at the school.

Jenny received her B.B.A. in office management in 1994. After graduating, she owned and operated Ms. Jenny’s Daycare, a Tennessee state-licensed family daycare facility. Her business was successful, earning three stars on Tennessee’s Child Care Report Card System for six years. Although she enjoyed caring for young children, she wanted to fulfill her dream of becoming a certified teacher. With the support of her husband and family, she returned to MTSU and earned her M.B.E. in August 2007. She is licensed to teach Business/ Business Technology and Economics (highly qualified status).

What does Jenny have to say about her first year of teaching? “I absolutely love my job—teaching students about the world of business! Sure, being a first-year teacher is challenging. Every day brings new challenges and discoveries about who I am and what type of teacher I want to be. And although I’m the teacher in the classroom, there are many days I’m actually the student, for I know even teachers never stop learning. I know in my heart that I made the right decision to become a teacher. Being a teacher is the most awesome, most rewarding experience! In what other career can you learn so much about others and, ultimately, yourself?”

Entrepreneurship Major Building a Future

Abby Maxwell Dodson is achieving great success as an entrepreneur and credits her degree as a huge factor in her success. Upon graduation from MTSU in 2005, Abby took over operation of her family’s custom cabinet business, Larry Maxwell Inc., in Nashville. The business is now going stronger than Abby ever imagined—she just reached her first million dollar year in sales!

While studying entrepreneurship at MTSU, Abby often used her family’s business for projects in Dr. Marsha Smith’s classes, especially in the capstone course, Business Plan Development.

According to Abby, “Writing a business plan was tough, but I am so glad I had the business plan to get a line of credit for the startup of a new cabinet line that now accounts for 85 percent of total sales. I know that my family’s business would not have survived without my entrepreneurship degree.”

Abby has been very generous with her compliments about the entrepreneurship program, and she added, “I am the first in my family to complete college, and my degree has greatly impacted my life. I hope that I can encourage others, especially young women, to consider entrepreneurship.”
Kari Janetvilay graduated in August 2006 with a B.B.A. in office management. She works as an administrative assistant for Alumni Relations at MTSU. Her immediate supervisor is Michelle Stepp, associate director for Alumni Relations. Kari’s office management duties include Web correspondence, event reservations, inventory control, student worker supervision, and other general office tasks. She is a member of Beta Gamma Sigma.

Kari says, “I am blessed to be able to work in a field I have always loved, and I am thrilled to be working at MTSU in Alumni Relations. It gives me a great opportunity to keep up with my alma mater, to get involved with the many events available to our alumni, and to meet alumni that I would not have met without Alumni Relations and their events.”

For a complete listing of undergraduate and graduate courses scheduled for the Fall ’08 semester, please visit

www.mtsu.edu/~bcen
www.mtsu.edu/~records
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Ronda Henderson, Ph.D., assistant professor
Robert Lahm, Ph.D., assistant professor
Stephen D. Lewis, Ph.D., professor
Linda G. McGrew, Ed.D., professor
Marsha O. Smith, Ed.D., professor
Vincent W. Smith, Ed.D., professor
Dorothy Warren, M.B.E., instructor
Raholanda White, Ph.D., associate professor
Rachel Wilson, Ph.D., assistant professor