



NELSON RUSCHE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

RUSCHE REVIEW

» HIGHLIGHTS



**Accounting standout
lands major scholarship**



**Rusche duo leads Student
Government Association**



**Legal scholars published
in Ivy League journal**



**TV exec alum gives
summer commencement
address**

SFA BUSINESS GRADS LAUNCHING THEIR CAREERS AT LOCKHEED MARTIN

For top business graduates, the landing spot of Lufkin is increasingly becoming an option. And while the nightlife and the food scene might not compare to what a young professional would find in Houston or Dallas, the opportunity surely does.

Located on Lufkin’s west loop, one of Angelina County’s largest employers, Lockheed Martin, offers great pay, meaningful work, top-tier benefits, and the chance to be part of one of the largest companies in the world. The aerospace, defense, arms, security, and advanced technologies company employs 110,000 people globally, and had nearly \$60 billion in net sales last year.

While Lockheed has been a fixture at SFA career fairs since 2017 – it most recently participated in the Fall Career and Internship Expo in October – and while it’s been known as a destination for engineers, a handful of business alums have joined the company since 2018. It’s a new yet positive trend, one that Dr. Pam Rogers, a professor in the Department of Management and Marketing, wants to nurture.



From left, Trevor Crittenden and Kelsey Bowers Massey both launched their careers in advanced manufacturing at Lockheed Martin shortly after graduating from SFA in 2019.

“They are now looking to the Rusche College of Business for talent – not just engineering students, but business students,” Rogers said. “It’s obvious they’d want the engineering students, but the business students aren’t that obvious.”

Trevor Crittenden was one such student. He enrolled at SFA when he was 25 years old. He was behind with his degree, his career, and even his life. Or so he thought.

That was in fall 2017, after he’d convinced himself to break out of a

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Greetings from everyone in the Rusche College of Business!

I hope that your new year has already been a great one and that you share in our determination to make this year one of our best yet.

The spring semester is already up and running, and our students, faculty and staff are set to successfully complete a full year of socially distanced education. As you read through this edition of the Rusche Review, I suspect you will find yourself wondering what kinds of new and exciting accomplishments our students will achieve in the months ahead, having already accomplished so much during such unusual times. I know this has been my reaction while observing the talents on display. If you are an employer, I can tell you this is a great time to be hiring Lumberjacks! I have never been more impressed by a group of students than I have in the past year. They know how to persevere and take care of business.

I hope you will continue to follow us as we work toward a successful conclusion of this academic year, while working toward an even greater future. The support of our alumni and friends is one of the things that makes the Rusche College of Business so special. Thanks for your support. If you are ever on campus do stop in and say hello. My door is open!

All my best,
Tim Bisping, Dean

dead-end job in Longview and reclaim his ambition with an all-in move to Nacogdoches. The goal was simple – take a lot of courses in a short amount of time and get himself back in the game.

He did just that. In two years – with the help of completed prerequisites and a 15-hour summer semester – Crittenden earned his degree in general business and landed a job as a manufacturing planner with Lockheed.

Nowadays, Crittenden, 28, doesn't think of himself as being behind. And having met his fiancé, Brooke, at the Lufkin location, he considers himself right on time, or even a bit ahead of the pack.

"I needed to dedicate two years of my life for the rest of my life," he said. "I looked at all the things I could possibly do, and in business there are no limits. The more I put in, the more I'll get out."

While Crittenden was in high school, he was in a serious motorcycle accident that left him with major back problems that ultimately derailed his first attempt at a degree in nursing. A series of surgeries, the last of which was successful, left him unable to finish the program, hence the associate degree and a job as a cardiac stress technician in Longview. But even if he had found his health, Crittenden knew there was something bigger out there.

"There wasn't any growth," Crittenden said. "I couldn't move up because I didn't have a bachelor's degree."

And then came SFA and Rusche's faculty and staff.

"I found my home," he said. "They would do whatever was in their power to help me succeed."

Crittenden wrapped up his two-year push through business school with a 3.9 GPA and went to work two days after he graduated in May 2019.

Dr. Tim Bisping, dean of the business college, sees a long-term, fruitful connection developing between business majors and the blue-chip company that's employing them: Alums have a quality place to begin their careers while Lockheed can rely on them to do the job they're hired to do.

"Graduates of the Rusche College of Business are prepared to have an immediate impact on business operations," Bisping said. "This continuing relationship with Lockheed Martin serves as validation of this, and it represents an outstanding opportunity for both our graduates and the company."

Kelsey Bowers Massey knew going into college that she wanted a career in manufacturing, so a degree in business management was the only thing on her academic radar.

"I was one of those students who was anxious to get done and jump into the business world," Massey said.

If that was her goal, she accomplished it. She was hired as a manufacturing planner four months prior to graduation, starting two days after college was over in December 2019.

But just because she was career-oriented from the beginning didn't mean she blazed through college without enjoying the experience. She cherishes the hands-on, face-to-face time she had with professors, particularly Rogers and Dr. Matt Lindsey, her advisor.

During her senior year, Massey was president of the SFA chapter of Delta Delta Delta, one of the largest sororities in the United States. With about 130 members at SFA, not to mention the chapter's finances and its 30-plus officers, Massey had her hands full.

"I learned how a business works," she said. "It prepared me for a real job. You see everything."

In the near future, Massey plans on returning to school for an MBA, which puts her on the long track for upper management. And since Lockheed has locations in every state and in countries around the world, Lufkin might not be her ultimate destination.

"I'll never turn down an opportunity," she said.

Even if she winds up in a major metro with a plumb position and a salary to match, the alma mater will never be far from her thoughts.

"I want to be part of the SFA community," Massey said.

RUSCHE DUO LEADS STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Both the president and the vice president of the Student Government Association for the 2020-2021 academic year are students in the Rusche College of Business. Chris Moore and Bre'Anna Locke are in office for their last year on campus, as both are expected to graduate in May.

President Moore of Carrollton and Vice President Locke of Dallas took office in April.

While the pandemic shut down campus last spring, the summer and fall saw a noticeable uptick in activity. Moore, a sports business major, worked on a team of SFA faculty and staff members to develop operational standards for COVID-19, a process that is still ongoing in light of challenges that could emerge in 2021. Moore also served on the search committee for the replacement for the vice president of University Affairs, Dr. Steve Westbrook, who retired in December. Between the two initiatives, Moore said he met a wide array of university staff, administrators and professors.

His mantra is “speak it into existence,” which he hopes will parlay into a productive future.

Moore, 21, is already studying for the LSAT, the entrance exam for law students, but plans on taking a year off before heading back to school. Any future academic plans would likely include a historically black college or university, either Southern University in Baton Rouge, Howard University in Washington, D.C. or the Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University in Houston. Moore is a member and former vice president of the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity. His other accomplishments include an internship with the sports marketing department, being named National Pan-Hellenic Man of the Year, and becoming CPR and automated external defibrillator certified.

“I’m really proud of Chris and Bre’Anna for taking on these crucial leadership roles and for being so successful in these positions,” said Dr.



Bre’Anna Locke, left, and Chris Moore, are vice president and president, respectively, of the SFA Student Government Association for the 2020-2021 academic year. Both are students in the Rusche College of Business.

Tim Bisping, dean of the business college. “Our business students work hard at building leadership skills, and our faculty and staff are devoted to helping them develop in this way. When I first heard that both the president and vice president of SGA were business majors, I was so excited to see more evidence that our students are not only developing leadership skills, but are putting them to great use.”

Vice President Locke became interested in student government her junior year. The involvement has paid off.

“I’ve honed my leadership skills, and my public speaking has improved,” she said.

Locke is wrapping up her five-year Bachelor of Business Administration/

Master of Professional Accountancy program. She is probably headed back to Dallas, where she hopes to go into audit and work for one of the Big Four accounting firms – Deloitte, PwC, Ernst and Young, and KPMG – or a medium-sized firm.

Locke has made the President’s Honor Roll for five semesters, has been a member of business honor society Beta Gamma Sigma since 2016, has a 3.75 graduate GPA, and has participated in voter registration drives since 2018.

The SGA is divided into three branches: legislative, executive and judicial. Key concerns for SGA are student affairs, academic affairs, public affairs and civil affairs.

ACCOUNTING STANDOUT LANDS MAJOR SCHOLARSHIP, CPA ON THE WAY

One accounting student doesn't have to worry about paying for the review courses and registration fees associated with the four-part Uniform CPA Examination she'll take this year.

Nicole Phifer, a graduate student in accountancy at the Rusche College of Business, received an important windfall – a \$10,000 scholarship from the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board, a nonprofit established through the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 to oversee the audits of public companies.

The agency's scholarships are funded through fines assessed on accounting firms across the world. For Phifer, a 21-year-old graduate student from Rusk, the scholarship meant she could focus on maintaining her 4.0 GPA, finishing out her coursework, and ramping up her CPA prep. Considering that the CPA cycle can cost in excess of \$3,000 – in addition to fall and spring tuition – the scholarship was not just an accolade, but an essential, enabling element of Phifer's five-year Bachelor of Business Administration/Master of Professional Accountancy program at SFA.

"I didn't think I was going to get it," said Phifer, one of 234 students nationwide who received the honor.

Phifer was nominated for the award by Dr. Kelly Noe, director of SFA's Schlieff School of Accountancy.

"She saw potential in me," Phifer said. "She sees potential in students that they might not see in themselves."

With Phifer, the potential was not hard to find. She took an accounting course during the fall semester of her first year in 2017 and never looked back. Along with the 4.0 GPA, Phifer worked at University Finance and Administration as a student assistant, is president of accounting honors group Beta Alpha Psi, is a member of business honors society Beta Gamma Sigma, and was a graduate assistant at the business college.



Nicole Phifer, a graduate student in the Schlieff School of Accountancy, won a \$10,000 scholarship from the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board. Phifer is on schedule to finish the five-year Bachelor of Business Administration/Master of Professional Accountancy program this spring in four years and is currently completing her internship in Tyler.

Phifer is now at her internship at Henry & Peters in Tyler, a blue-chip regional accounting firm founded in 1929. If the firm makes an offer for permanent employment, Phifer, who has yet to decide on whether her focus will be on tax or audit, will oblige.

"People talk about going to Dallas or Houston, but Tyler is big enough for me," she said, noting that her family would be just 40 miles down the road.

According to PCAOB, since 2011 the organization has issued \$13.7 million in scholarships to 1,370 students at 473 institutions. The nonprofit reports that women and minority recipients have been on the rise since 2017.

In some instances, the fines that pay for the scholarships are enormous, as was the case last year when a Mexico-based firm and its associates were assessed \$530,000. While many settlements involve U.S. companies, plenty include registered firms based in places like Canada, Colombia, Hong Kong, India and South Korea. If the proceeds from an auditing penalty out of Seoul can end up in a place like Nacogdoches, then that's something Phifer can accept.

"Whoever came up with that idea knew what they were doing," she said.

United Way



Nacogdoches Area United Way

UNDERGRADS RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS FOR NACOGDOCHES AREA UNITED WAY



Dr. Marcus Cox

For the second year in a row, seniors in business policy and strategy, the capstone strategic management class, worked with the Nacogdoches Area United Way to analyze the nonprofit's operations and find areas for improvement.

The summer course was taught by Dr. Marcus Cox, associate professor of management. He organized the United Way review with Gary Lee Ashcraft, NAUW president and CEO, Caroline Garner, NAUW executive vice president, board members Wendy Buchanan and Sherry Morgan, and Dr. Tim Bisping, dean of the college of business.

"I'm especially proud of the work done by our students in support of this important cause," Bisping said. "We also look to support the Nacogdoches Area United Way further during our State Employees Charitable Campaign on campus this fall."

Implemented as a case competition with four teams, the review encompassed the organization, the three-county region it serves – Nacogdoches, Shelby and San Augustine – and resulted in recommendations on a new strategic vision that included additional sources of funding, critical analysis of the organization's online presence and usage of various social media platforms, and additional ways to tap into the students and resources at SFA.

The first and second place team in the case competition received a \$500 and \$300 scholarship, respectively. Presentations were delivered via Zoom.

"It's very fulfilling for me personally to see our students end their college experiences on a strong note, and I am excited for them as they now launch their careers," Cox said.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP MAJOR INTRODUCED IN THE FALL

A new entrepreneurship major began in the fall semester as a response to high demand and the growing need to prepare students with versatile skills that are transferable across many industries. The goal of the program is to equip students with learning tools they can use during times of economic success or in times of uncertainty.

While the entrepreneurship major is a new program, a minor in entrepreneurship has been available and is offered to all SFA students. Dr. Matthew Lindsey, chair of the Department of Management and Marketing, believes the entrepreneurship major will be an excellent opportunity for students who have been seeking that degree, while the existing entrepreneurship minor will appeal to a variety of academic disciplines.

“For the past several years, students interested in management and marketing

have inquired about two subjects, sports business and entrepreneurship,” Lindsey said. “We are looking forward to fulfilling that demand. I also think the minor is a valuable asset for non-business students across campus who are studying something they love, like music, and want to incorporate that passion into a business. It will equip them with the ability to think through the fundamental business elements needed to produce a viable venture.”

Two new faculty members were hired to help establish the entrepreneurship program: Dr. Raymond Jones, who began in fall 2019, holds a Ph.D. in management with an emphasis on strategy and entrepreneurship; and Dr. Brian Nagy, who earned his Ph.D. in management strategy.

Jones has already taken an active role in the local business community by serving on several panel discussions with the

Nacogdoches Economic Development Corporation. He is utilizing those connections to help establish relationships between the university and local businesses.

“The intention of the entrepreneurship program is two-fold: It will prepare our students with a strong skill set for life after college while serving as a resource for local businesses and startups in the community,” Jones said. “Collaboration is important. We are also looking forward to identifying sponsorship opportunities to allow for entrepreneurial competitions on campus.”

Lindsey is optimistic about the program and believes it will be an asset to many students.

“We have a thriving sports business program that was just recently established, and we are excited to be able to launch and grow the entrepreneurship program as well,” he said.

LEGAL SCHOLARS BLOUNT AND SHREWSBURY PUBLISHED IN IVY LEAGUE JOURNAL

A research article co-authored by a pair of professors in the Department of Business Communication and Legal Studies was featured in the prestigious University of Pennsylvania Journal of Business Law, an Ivy League publication that’s read around the world.

Drs. Justin Blount and Stephen Shrewsbury posit that poor corporate behavior – sexual harassment, insider trading, securities fraud and price collusion – is difficult to punish with the patchwork mechanisms of governance and compliance currently in place.

Corporate self-regulation of its own ethics is clearly not working well. A federal Office of Corporate Ethics is needed so that the ethical behavior of CEOs and corporate officers at publicly held companies can be more effectively monitored and individuals held personally accountable for ethical violations.



Dr. Justin Blount teaches a course during the fall semester.

The paper, “The U.S. Office of Corporate Ethics: Enhancing Officer and Director Accountability in Publicly

Held Corporations,” represents months of collaboration between Blount and Shrewsbury. And with its publication in a

scholarly journal that's had over 80,000 downloads in the past year alone, it has a chance to be cited by other academics – and even read by an important lawmaker with an office in Washington.

“I'm hoping that someone who makes policy picks it up,” Blount said. “You hope someone reads it and finds interest in it.”

From the outset, Shrewsbury's intent was clear.

“When I write a paper, I do it to effect change,” he said.

Shrewsbury said that the paper will probably not be well received by some, as it will likely be seen – and wrongly so – as a push for big-government oversight of the freewheeling world of capitalism, a world that, Blount and Shrewsbury admit, requires aggressive risk-taking that can oftentimes skirt the line between right and wrong. But if it engenders opposition, it would be a good thing.

“I hope it is criticized because that always generates further discussion,” Shrewsbury said.

Within the passages of the article itself, Blount and Shrewsbury anticipate the headwinds the argument is bound to face and acknowledge the fortitude it

would take to create policy out of their research.

“It is always easier to continue the status quo,” they write. “There is little doubt this proposal will be met with resistance. Substantial political will is going to be necessary.”

Blount, who has a research interest in corporate governance, did the heavy lifting on the securities side of the paper, while Shrewsbury, who had a 30-year legal career in the Air Force, addressed the ethics end. The paper proposes a U.S. Office of Corporate Ethics, modeled after the Office of Government Ethics, which exists to train, oversee and regulate ethics within the executive branch. It's conceived as a self-funded, nonpartisan agency with ethics advisors appointed within publicly held corporations.

Their article appeared in Volume 22, Issue 4 of the journal.

Blount plans to next look at the U.S. Supreme Court's decision on *Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia*, in which the court ruled 6-3 that an employer cannot fire someone for being gay or transgender. Doing so violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed workplace discrimination on

the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. Blount will focus on how the ruling could affect dress codes and appearance standards in the workplace.

Making the case will take plenty of effort, but it's all part of Blount's academic life.

“I publish more than I have to because I enjoy it,” he said.

Shrewsbury will research legal issues involving the intense wildfires that have broken out over the last decade. According to the National Interagency Fire Center, since 2009 there have been an average of nearly 70,000 wildfires per year that burn about 7 million acres. These fires are difficult to contain and have caused an untold number of problems. Shrewsbury's research will review the hodgepodge approaches to the problem and consider the creation of a national firefighting service.

While it might seem like an enormous pivot from corporate ethics to wildfires, for Shrewsbury it's more about the scope of an idea, and what captures his attention, than it is about the consistency of the topic.

“I'm a big picture guy, and I like to lay out big concepts,” he said.

RUSCHE TRIO IN LEADERSHIP ROLES WITH MANAGEMENT GROUP



Three professors in the Department of Management and Marketing are serving in leadership roles with the Southwest Decision Sciences Institute, an organization focused on various aspects of largescale business management. Dr. Gina Harden, left, is a council member; Dr. Matthew Lindsey, center, is president of SWDSI; and Dr. Pam Rogers is vice president of participation. Lindsey is the first professor from SFA to hold the presidency of the nonprofit's board. Due to COVID-19, DSI operations were put on pause until March. That pause included postponement of the annual conference to March 2022 in New Orleans. The terms for all the officers were extended for a year due to the postponement. Southwest DSI, like its parent organization DSI, focuses on innovation and new product development, logistics and transportation management, manufacturing management, organizational behavior and human resource management, purchasing and supply management, and project management.

OLD-SCHOOL PROF TRANSITIONED TO NEW REALITY



Using D2L and Zoom, Dr. Joe Ballenger teaches a summer course on international marketing to 18 business students. In his decades of teaching prior to COVID-19, Ballenger had never used online tools for classroom instruction.

Marketing professor Dr. Joe Ballenger is about as old-school as you get. He still believes in the phone call, a firm handshake and a square look in the eye. And until recently, he had never taught an online course.

Zoom and D2L? That was for other professors. In Ballenger's world, face-to-face instruction was the only way to go. And for a teaching career that has spanned decades, the brick-and-mortar classroom had always been enough.

And then came COVID-19. The entire college, including Ballenger, rallied in response to the emergency.

"What impressed me was how willing our faculty were to help teach the new technology," said Dr. Matthew Lindsey, chair of the Department of Management and Marketing. "Many people have been patient and very free with their knowledge. As the department's chair, it's been great to see our faculty come together to take care of our students."

For Ballenger, the transition was difficult. And how could it not have been? A Baby Boomer, he remembers his expenses during college in Denton in the late '60s: \$32.50 a month in rent – with all bills paid – and \$50 a month on his car note. His first big job out of college was in the late '60s, when he covered a five-state territory logging 1,500 road miles per week checking inventories at farm equipment

dealers. Talk about yesteryear, and in the formative stage of life, too.

But the fast-forward pandemic didn't wait for anyone, even a tenured professor like Ballenger. On the heels of a tumultuous spring 2020 semester, for summer and fall he taught courses using Zoom and D2L.

Ballenger insisted on offering his course from a classroom in the McGee Business Building, not his home or his office. Even as his methods evolve – and as he receives an assist from people like graduate assistant and MBA student Milad Chizari – he remains loyal to the traditional standards.

Ballenger wasn't sure he could pull all this off. He relied, over and over, on the "it takes a village" mentality among his peers to figure out what was what.

"One thing about the College of Business, we're pretty collegial," he said. "Almost every day I asked a question. The technical part – I knew nothing about it."

While his fears of using technology didn't go away overnight – for a while he still wasn't sure of what buttons he needed to push – he's confident he'll master the use of D2L.

Instead of eyeing retirement, which at this point is both possible and reasonable, the old dog has decided to stick around and learn new tricks. Ballenger likes his chances.

"I'm an optimist," he said.

Online degree programs being converted to eight-week format

All online business degree programs will be converted to an eight-week format by the end of the spring semester. Last year the college started the process of moving classes to the new model, which will replace the traditional 16-week schedule.

"The advantage with the eight-week course format is that it offers our online students more flexibility within their academic schedules," said Dr. Tim Bisping. "They can focus on a couple of classes at a time and still be full-time students. It also provides options for students who may need to temporarily stop and restart their program of study due to unforeseen circumstances. Many college students today balance work, family and other issues while pursuing their degree. We want to make sure that our course offering structure is not an obstacle, but an asset to students as they seek flexible ways to complete their degree."

Beginning in spring semester, the college hosted three undergraduate degree programs in the new format – General Business, Sports Business, and Business Communication and Corporate Education. While flexible options are the goal, research also indicates that shorter course delivery may improve student outcomes.



Dr. Drew Thornley, assistant professor in the Rusche College of Business.

FOOTBALL, CRAFT BEER, BOOKS AND GRAFFITI: THORNLEY AT HOME WITH THE HEADLINES

Looking at the landscape of college football, Dr. Drew Thornley saw a land of shattered dreams. Due to the disruptions of COVID-19, gridiron titans like the University of Alabama had opted for condensed, conference-only schedules, dumping games with non-conference schools like Georgia State, Kent State and the University of Tennessee at Martin.

While it made sense for teams like Alabama, it was heartbreaking – and financially ruinous – for the Georgia States of the world, which rely on paid road games against name brand teams to fill the coffers of their athletic departments. So, as the season unfolded, and as the economic realities of COVID-19 increasingly emerged, Thornley expected a tsunami of lawsuits, many of them revolving around force majeure – a provision that pertains to unforeseen circumstances that prevent fulfillment of a contract.

It's a big national topic and one with entrenched interest, and Thornley was eager to lead the discussion.

"I want to be the first one, or one of the first ones, to write about that," Thornley said.

Even as Thornley contemplated the pandemic's cataclysmic effect on college football's network of game-day contracts, he was also thinking about craft beer, and how that industry, exchanging its collegial culture for a business-oriented one, has undergone profound changes of its own.

Based on the strength of his craft beer industry article, "Litigation, Not Collaboration: The Changing Landscape of Trademark Disputes in the Craft-Beer Industry," published in 2017 in the *Marquette Intellectual Property Law Review*, the editor at *The University of the Pacific Law Review* had asked Thornley to pen another article for an upcoming special edition dedicated to beer. Though Thornley had yet to determine exactly what he'd write about, he'd planned on writing something for the publication.

Indeed, last fall it was football and beer, a classic combination. But in Thornley's case,

it was about the academics, not just the big-screen TV and the primetime kickoff at the Sugar Bowl.

"People want to read about things that they find interesting," he said.

In terms of Thornley's tenure-track career as a researcher and writer, fall was an important moment. And it also served as a fitting end to a strong calendar year.

In spring 2020, his article, "The Copyright Act's Mandatory-Deposit Requirement: Unnecessary and Unconstitutional," appeared in the *Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review*. The article centered on the plight of Virginia-based Valancourt Books, which specializes in the recovery and re-release of rare and out-of-print fiction, as well as gothic, horror, supernatural fiction and LGBT-interest titles.

The United States Copyright Office contacted Valancourt in 2018 to notify the publisher that it was not in compliance with the regulation that two physical copies of a book be deposited with the federal government within three months of the

publication date. For Valancourt, which does print-on-demand only and has more than 400 titles in its catalogue, meeting the regulation would have been disruptive and cost prohibitive. Rather than comply, Valancourt sued in federal court.

In his paper, Thornley argued that the Copyright Act's mandatory-deposit requirement is unconstitutional and unnecessary on three grounds: it violates the Fifth Amendment's Takings Clause and Due Process Clause along with freedom of speech enshrined in the First Amendment.

"Publishers are not treated equally under the law when they are forced to speak, while certain others are not," Thornley wrote. "The disparate treatment – the unequal protection under the law – of publishers is clear. What is left to decide is whether such unequal protection is constitutionally

permissible, under strict-scrutiny review. It is not."

Blessed with the academic freedom to pursue his interests, and not a specified framework of topics, Thornley writes about what catches his eye. And one such case, originating in New York City, did just that.

In a 2019 piece in the *Cleveland State Law Review*, "The Visual Artists Rights Act's 'Recognized Stature' Provision: A Case for Repeal," Thornley argued that the "recognized stature" clause, as it relates to paintings, drawings, prints and sculptures, should be repealed because the term is exceedingly subjective, hard to define and, perhaps most importantly, can be used to override a property owner's rights.

The article is based on the extraordinary saga that unfolded through the '90s and early 2000s. The owner of an old factory known

as 5Pointz allowed a renowned graffiti artist to coordinate the spray-painting of many murals by an assortment of artists on the building's walls – and ended up paying some of those aerosol artists a combined \$6.75 million in damages because the court said he whitewashed graffiti of "recognized stature" before demolishing the building.

In a blunt assessment of what happened at 5Pointz, Thornley wrote, "Nothing about this outcome comports with traditional rules of property law or contract law."

While Thornley, a Harvard Law School graduate in his sixth year at SFA, writes about a wide range of issues, his articles are all related in that they focus primarily on property rights and contract rights – and the need to protect them.

"I'm a big fan of fundamental freedoms," he said.

ROSS TOOK LONG ROAD HOME TO ACCOUNTING DOCTORATE

Newly minted accounting PhD Stephanie Ross feels right at home in the Rusche College of Business. Surrounded by supportive colleagues and enamored with the small-town vibe of Nacogdoches, Ross entered the fall semester after a much-needed sigh of relief.

In early July, the Houston native defended her dissertation at the University of Texas at San Antonio. She started the doctoral program in 2014, after nearly 15 years working as an accountant and controller in the private sector. She came to SFA as an assistant professor in fall 2019.

"I took the long road home," she said, referring to the last two decades of work and school.

Her dissertation, "Corporate Governance and Executive Compensation in Firms with Clawback Provisions," examined the inclusion of clawback in compensation contracts and the increase in risk imposed on the executive.

The term clawback refers to executive compensation and benefits that must be returned in the event of fraud. Enshrined in legislation like the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 and the Dodd-Frank Act of 2010, clawback applies to publicly traded

companies and the executives who run them.

In Ross' research, she found that top-level executives with clawback provisions in their employment contracts typically ask for higher compensation and incentives to offset any losses they might incur.

"Clawback imposes a risk on their wealth, so they mitigate the risk," Ross said. "What they are saying is, 'If I'm going to be dinged for something that may happen in the future, then I need to be compensated for that ding.'"

In reality, Ross said, very few instances of corporate wrongdoing are punished with clawback, and for many publicly traded companies, contractual clawback provisions serve more or less as "window dressing."

Ross, a certified public accountant, earned a bachelor's in economics and finance, a Master of Science in accounting and an MBA from the University of Texas at Dallas. She currently teaches Intermediate Accounting and Auditing Principles. Before entering academia, Ross worked in Dallas as a senior accountant, auditor and controller in public accounting and



Dr. Stephanie Ross recently earned her PhD in accounting from the University of Texas at San Antonio. She started the doctoral program in 2014, after nearly 15 years working as an accountant and controller in the private sector. She came to SFA as an assistant professor in fall 2019.

industry, and has a background across an array of accounting practices.

Dr. Kelly Noe, director of the Schlieff School of Accountancy, was succinct in her summation of Ross' value to the department.

"She brings real-world experience to the students," Noe said.

BUSINESS STUDENTS WIN, EARN HONORS AT NATIONAL PHI BETA LAMBDA COMPETITION

Faculty sponsor Manny Guerrero has led the campus chapter of Phi Beta Lambda since becoming a lecturer in 2017. He said PBL is great for students because it's not department-specific. Instead, PBL encompasses the entirety of the college's academics – accounting, ethics and law, economic analysis, financial analysis and decision making, marketing, management,

and sports management and marketing, among others. The SFA chapter, among nine in Texas, has nearly 40 members. By placing in the top three at the annual state level event – as an individual, team or chapter – students qualify for the national meet. At the collegiate level nationwide, there are 350 chapters with more than 10,000 students.

AT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN SUMMER 2020, SFA STUDENTS PLACED IN FOUR AREAS:

FIRST PLACE: SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGE:

JOHANNA BRUHN AND
BRITTNEY UPSTILL



SECOND PLACE: WEBSITE DESIGN:

OLIVIA ESCOBEDO AND
ASHLEY RODRIGUEZ

THIRD PLACE: ECONOMIC ANALYSIS AND DECISION MAKING:

LEAH SALAZAR AND
MAXWELL REYNOLDS



SEVENTH PLACE: HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT:

SANDRA RAMOS AND
ERIKA QUEME



Rusche's Executive Advisory Board met on campus and through Zoom conferencing for its semiannual meeting this fall. Due to COVID-19, last spring's meeting was canceled. From left to right, back row: Dee Williams, Korbin Pate, Timothy Bisping, Norman Schippers, Gregory Price, Cory Beasley, Elton Scifres and Marsha Bayless. Front row: Lou Ann Richardson, Mike Parham, Kirk Phillips, Wendy Buchanan, Rick Baby, Justin Blount, Joe Booth and Mitch Fralick.



Fred Poston, a Rusche alum, gave the summer commencement address.

TV EXEC ALUM GIVES SUMMER COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Rusche alum and TV executive Fred Poston was the commencement speaker for the virtual summer graduation ceremony in August with more than 400 students.

Poston earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in 1992 and soon departed the state to begin his career in the entertainment industry.

Poston set plenty of milestones for himself and met them all: a member of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, vice president by 30, senior vice president by 40. Now vice president for operations services for the CBS division of the ViacomCBS Corporation, Poston has played a role in the network origination of more than 100 channels in more than 40 countries and in 20 languages.

Poston's work has taken him to California, Miami, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and Singapore, among many other places.

"It's been an incredible journey," he said. "I've thoroughly enjoyed the things I've been involved with and the many talented people and projects I have had the fortune to be a part of, while always making it a priority to make a difference and give back in everything I do."

To watch Poston's commencement address, visit sfasu.edu/commencement.