

# THE LUMPKIN LETTER

A PUBLICATION OF THE LUMPKIN COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY



Dr. Austin Cheney  
Dean and Professor  
EIU Lumpkin College of  
Business and Technology

## MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

In the midst of unprecedented challenges in our nation and across the world since 2020, Lumpkin College has maintained a focus on engaging our students and developing them into leaders that make a positive impact on the world around them. Many of our efforts during that time have involved bringing together our faculty and staff to discuss what Lumpkin College strives to be and chart a path toward a sustainable future. Prior to the pandemic changing our lives in March 2020, we were able to have two one-day workshops that crystallized our purpose, mission, vision, and values. This clarity has served us well during the coronavirus crisis and throughout our strategic planning process, which has resulted in a formal set of goals and objectives for the coming years.

We'll share the renewed emphasis on external advisory boards, including the creation of two new groups that will help ensure Lumpkin College continues to thrive in the coming years.

You'll notice the significant emphasis on engagement in this update. While this has long been a hallmark of the Lumpkin College experience, we believe in raising the bar. Extremely high levels of engagement, both within and external to the institution, will further distinguish the college and allow us to invest more significantly in connecting

our faculty, staff, and students with business and industry partners, the surrounding community, and our alumni. In addition to the engagement-related content included throughout this issue, I want to mention an additional opportunity for you to become more engaged. Beginning in October 2020, we launched a monthly Virtual Coffee with the Dean series, held on the third Friday of each month from September through May at 1 PM CST, where alumni can reconnect with each other and your college. I invite you to take part in these sessions!

Lumpkin College values the strength inherent in our diversity. It is through the breadth of ideas and perspectives that we become better, individually and collectively. I welcome your participation as a stakeholder in Lumpkin College. Our future success depends on your involvement.

We achieve more together!

Warm Regards,



Austin C. Cheney  
Dean and Professor  
EIU Lumpkin College of Business and  
Technology

## COLLEGE TO CAREER PANEL HOSTED ON CAMPUS

This past semester, the Construction Club of the School of Technology played host to a discussion focusing on the ever important transition from college studies to the professional world.

The panel, College to Career and How to Prepare for the Transition, featured speakers representing numerous construction companies including F.H.

Paschen, Clune Construction and Bulley & Andrews.

The event was well received, and many students were in attendance to hear from industry professionals about how to prepare for what comes next.

Rhonda Rogers '22, then a School of Technology senior, moderated the event.



**PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT** Student Moderator Rhonda Rogers '22, Michael Campbell '21, F.H. Paschen; Connor Farrell and Donovan Dean, Clune Construction; and Antonia Winfrey '05, Bulley & Andrews

## WELCOME TO THE HUB



*The Hub provides services to EIU students enrolled in the School of Business and School of Technology.*

Lumpkin College introduced a new centralized location for student advising this past year – the Hub for Engagement, Leadership, & Professionalism.

The Hub is located just inside the main entrance of Lumpkin Hall and has three Academic Advisers and a newly created position – Engagement Coordinator.

The advisers deliver valuable academic guidance and assistance to our students as they progress through their college careers. The Engagement Coordinator serves a key role by providing students with opportunities to develop academically and professionally. They assist students with internships, share information on professional development activities, and act as a central resource to guide them through their transition from college to career.

## ROBOTICS TEAM PLACES SECOND



**PICTURED HERE:** Two EIU students preparing the SumoBot for competition.

The EIU Robotics Team represented the School of Technology in the Sumo-Robot and Micromouse Contests at the National Robotics Competition Marion, Ohio this past Spring. They took home a second place.

The autonomous robots were explicitly built for this competition and gave students a unique chance to learn about robotics and control systems outside of the classrooms

In the Sumo-Robot Contest, the goal of each competitor was to sense its opponent's position and then push it out of the ring – like

sumo. EIU took home second place for their efforts.

In the Micromouse Contest, robots were given 10 minutes to work their way from the corner of a 10-foot by 10-foot maze to its center within 10 minutes. Despite a strong showing, EIU was unable to place.

**FACULTY ADVISORS:** Dr. Wutthigrai Boonsuk (Sumo-Robot) and Dr. Toqeer Israr (Micromouse)

**TEAM MICROMOUSE:** Jason Dunhamell, Sri Sai Balu Rocharla and Breydon Brennan

**TEAM SUMOBOT:** Aleigh Crowder, Caden Miller and Srilekha Poli



# FREE TO FLY

By Rhonda Rogers '22

Please take the time to read the following short story from one of our recent Spring graduates, Rhonda Rogers. It was originally written as a class assignment this past semester. It is a beautiful story of her experience here at EIU and specifically within the Construction Management Major at the School of Technology and what it has meant to her.

As the fall semester of my sophomore year was nearing an end, I had given up. As I lay in bed staring at the ceiling, I asked myself, "why did I come to college?" Suddenly I remembered my dreams of using higher education to provoke change in various communities back home in Chicago. It was then that I decided to find a different major. As I began my search, I came across a promotion video on the Construction Management web page. It featured a project manager who was an African-American woman. Instead of her, I saw myself leading that job site overlooking the City of Chicago, wearing my hard hat and safety glasses. I was so inspired that I emailed the program coordinator and set up a meeting. Just as we were about to sit, he asked, "what do you want to know?". I responded, "I don't know; I'm just here." Then he hopped out of his chair and said, "let's go for a walk," and proceeded to take me on a tour of all the classrooms and labs as he explained everything the program had to offer. He also introduced me to a young lady who would become my partner in crime and dearest friend. I was sold and knew I had found my home.

Once I joined the School of Technology family, I quickly learned that each "yes" opened a new door, a new opportunity to lead, connect, and engage with others. I was introduced to many industry professionals who all told me I needed to

join the Construction Club, so I did. At my first Construction Club meeting, I somehow wound up agreeing to be the secretary. A few weeks later, I was invited to be a team lead for a construction competition. I went and made a connection with someone who offered me an internship. This amazing internship experience then led to a full-time job offer after graduation. I did it, afraid. I did it, hesitating. I did it, unsure of myself. I did it with no experience, and sometimes, I even did it wrong. But I still did it.

As I prepare to enter my post-college career, I am looking forward to starting my sentences with "well, when I was in college...". I now understand the value of sharing with others what I went through, what I was able to overcome, and what wonderful experiences I had during my undergraduate studies that truly transformed me into who I am today. Fear, doubt, and anxiety will always be there to remind me of how invisible I once felt. However, those negative thoughts do not have the final say; I do. And you do too!

Now when people ask, "if you could have any superpower, what would it be?" I say, "I want to fly because I am as free as a bird, and I see life from the highest perspective."

## SCHOOL OF TECHNOLOGY GOLF OUTING

The School of Technology hosted the **2022 DR. TOM WASKOM GOLF OUTING** on Friday, April 29, at the Meadowview Golf Course in Mattoon. We had 55 participants at this year's outing. We want to thank all of our amazing sponsors and invite everyone to support the School of Technology at next year's outing. We will provide details about the 2023 golf outing in future newsletters and social media posts.



# ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK 2022



The week of Monday, April 11, was a busy one at the School of Business.

They hosted several events as part of their annual Entrepreneurship Week that included: Social Innovation Workshop, Networking Meet-Up, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Like Kings, and Skeens New Venture Plan Competition.

The Networking Meet-Up was held at Elevate CCIC, Inc. in Mattoon, Illinois. Alex Melvin, CEO of Rural King, and Rural King Vice President of Business Development Brock Ashley gave excellent presentations at the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Like Kings event at Roberson Auditorium in Lumpkin Hall.

The capstone event for the week was the Skeens Venture Competition, sponsored by William (Bill) Skeens '77. It was a great success with five excellent pitches this year – from social media to boat detailing.

Plus, a special thanks to Distinguished Professor of Entrepreneurship Dr. Marko Grunhagen and Instructor and Faculty Advisor for the EIU Entrepreneurship Club Evan Kubicek for all their hard work planning and organizing such outstanding events.



*The week truly marked a "return to normalcy," as all events were held in-person.*

# PROMISING BUSINESS SCHOLARS RECEIVE RECOGNITION FROM EIU

Faculty and staff were in attendance at a reception in April to honor those achieving the status of Promising Business Scholar. Let's say congratulations to these nine excellent EIU School of Business students in Lumpkin College for earning the recognition of Promising Business Scholars.

## THE CRITERIA ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Business major (including pre-business)
- Native or transfer sophomore (30-59 hrs) or transfer juniors (60-89 hrs) with  $\leq 18$  semester hours completed at EIU
- EIU cumulative GPA  $\geq 3.5$
- Completed at least 12 hours at EIU
- Completed at least two BUS courses (in addition to BUS 1000 if they took BUS 1000) or business major courses at EIU
- Grade of B or better in all business tool courses completed (at EIU or at transfer institution)



## WOMEN EXPLORING BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY HOSTS PANEL



**PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT** CEO of Dau Consulting Jeanne Dau, Senior Audit Analyst Rachel Grunloh, and Senior Software Developer Laura Campbell

Women Exploring Business and Technology (WEB@), a Lumpkin College student organization, hosted a panel discussion in support of Women's History Month. The speakers talked about their experiences in their workplace and how they were able to find a footing in their careers.

## 2022 EIU PROFESSIONAL SALES COMPETITION DEEMED A SUCCESS



The EIU School of Business played host to a number of in-person events this past semester, including our annual sales competition.

The 2022 EIU Professional Sales Competition, held on-campus in the Lumpkin Hall Student Lounge, was a huge success thanks to the support of our outstanding faculty and industry partners: State Farm, Enterprise, Rural King Farm and Home Store, Fastenal Company, All American Realty, and Impact Networking.

# LUMPKIN COLLEGE FORMS TWO NEW ADVISORY BOARDS

Derek Pierce '18 approached Dean Cheney in the summer of 2019 with the idea of forming a young alumni advisory board. After a year of discussions, the **GRADUATES OF THE LAST DECADE (GOLD) ADVISORY BOARD** was created. Two key goals of this new group are to: (1) engage newer alumni to invest in their professional development and network, and (2) provide mentorship and other support for current students in making a smoother school-to-work transition. A pilot mentorship program started this summer!

We also recognized the need for a seasoned group of business and industry leaders to provide feedback on our strategic

direction and expand the Lumpkin College network and visibility, with the idea of better supporting our students and alumni.

**LUMPKIN EXECUTIVE ADVISORS TO THE DEAN (LEAD)** was formed and held its first meeting in October 2021. The group is made up of successful Lumpkin College alumni and regional industry leaders and is already making a significant impact on our future success!

Scan the QR codes to the right or visit [go.eiu.edu/lumpkindean](https://go.eiu.edu/lumpkindean) for more information.



GO.EIU.EDU/GOLD



GO.EIU.EDU/LEAD

## BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD RETURNS

In April, we were able to host our first in-person Business Advisory Board meeting in over two years. Members of the board were happy to be able to get back together in person and were especially excited about their classroom visits. We look forward to having the board back on campus in the Fall.

## ENDSLEY RETIRES AFTER YEARS OF SERVICE



The Lumpkin College of Business and Technology would like to give thanks to Debbie Endsley, Assistant to the Dean for Administration, for her nearly 30 years of service and dedication to EIU! We are especially grateful for the past nine years of service in Lumpkin Hall.

## LOOKING FORWARD WITH A POSITIVE OUTLOOK

Thanks to a number of positive trends, we are very optimistic about the upcoming Fall semester.

**KEY TO THIS OUTLOOK ARE OUR ENROLLMENT NUMBERS AND THE CONTINUED RETURN TO IN-PERSON EVENTS.**

The enrollment numbers for Lumpkin College, an expected 15 - 20% growth from last Fall, are looking very promising.

We also had several on-campus events near the end of the semester that had not been able to happen over the last few years.

We are thrilled to announce even more in-person events in the near future.

- + **ACCOUNTING DAY**  
TUESDAY, SEPT 27
- + **ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS**  
FRIDAY, OCT 14
- + **HOMECOMING WEEKEND**  
FRIDAY-SATURDAY, OCT 14-15

Homecoming has always been a time of celebration and we would love to see as many of you "in-person" as possible.

**GO PANTHERS!**



## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2022!

The School of Business had 69 undergraduates, and the School of Technology had 39 undergraduates for a total of 108 Lumpkin College undergraduates picking up their diplomas at Spring Commencement. It was a beautiful day to celebrate such a major accomplishment in the lives of our students.

These students could not have the traditional college experience and faced many challenges and changes due to the pandemic during their time at EIU. We are so proud of them and look forward to seeing all the great things they will go on to accomplish.



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