Progress continues on Crawford Hall as seen from Main Street in Kent in August 2023. The new home for the college will open in 2024.
Donald S. and Johnna F. Grant

Featured Spaces in Crawford Hall

ASPIRE: The Life of an American Entrepreneur

ASPIRE Entrepreneurial Workshop Series

Points of Distinction

College Reaffirmed for Dual AACSB Accreditation

Scholarship Highlights

Responsible Leadership Initiative

Awards and Achievements

MVP Faculty

Faculty Highlights

Media Highlights

Michael D. Solomon Entrepreneurship Speaker Series

Alumni Updates

John S. and Marlene J. Brinzo Center for Entrepreneurship

Student Achievements

Academic Program Highlights
A Year of Continued Progress

While the last academic year brought milestone moments that included groundbreaking for Crawford Hall and the naming of the Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship, this academic year our work focused on building the future of the college.

The construction site for Crawford Hall has been an almost daily attraction as students, faculty, staff, alumni and members of the community have driven by the site or followed the construction progress online via live streaming shown on the college's website.

Another milestone in the construction process occurred this spring when a signed steel beam was placed atop Crawford Hall. This topping out event represented a long-standing tradition among iron workers to raise a signed, white beam to the highest point of the building, along with a small evergreen tree and an American flag on opposite ends, signifying that the structural frame was nearing completion. Ceremonies during the spring included opportunities for donors, National Advisory Board members, Foundation Board members, Board of Trustees members and university and college leaders to sign the beam memorializing this milestone.

In addition to the progress made on Crawford Hall, the college launched a new podcast, “ASPIRE: The Life of an American Entrepreneur,” featuring Ambassador Edward F. Crawford. The 14-episode podcast tells the story of Ambassador Crawford’s entrepreneurial journey in his own words. The podcast is featured on the college’s website.

The college also completed the work to expand its academic departments this year by dividing the Department of Management and Information Systems (M&IS) into two departments – The Department of Management and The Department of Information Systems and Business Analytics. The M&IS department had experienced substantial growth over the years and the expansion allowed the college to better highlight each of these disciplines and provided the opportunity to feature the growing business analytics discipline within a department name. The new structure better aligns with the structure of other business colleges in the state.

This year marked the 20th anniversary of the Michael D. Solomon Entrepreneurship Speaker Series, currently the longest-running speaker series in the college. This year’s talk featured Michael D. Solomon who reflected on his 50 years in entrepreneurship. This was also a remarkable year for faculty, with many being recognized by student-athletes at the university as Most Valuable Professors (MVP) and others receiving awards and recognitions from their disciplines.

This past academic year was one of continued progress in all areas – we invite you to learn about these achievements in the pages that follow.

Deborah F. Spake, Ph.D.
Dean, Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship

Beam Signing Ceremony

In April 2023, a beam signing ceremony allowed donors, Kent State University leaders and the Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship’s National Advisory Board to sign a beam which was placed atop Crawford Hall in June.

During the commemorative event, Kent State President Todd Diacon, Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship Dean Deborah Spake and Ambassador Edward F. Crawford provided remarks.

“All of us are beaming today because of the Ambassador’s generosity, all of your generosity and all of your leadership and of course, the leadership of Dean Spake,” Diacon said.

Crawford Hall will include modern teaching and research spaces including active learning classrooms, an entrepreneurship lab, a business analytics lab, behavioral research hub, sales labs, trading lab, global forum, business theatre and a student success center. Crawford Hall will be one of the largest buildings on any Kent State campus to house academic programs and will provide approximately 50% more square footage than the existing structure.
Donald S. and Johnna F. Grant

Don Grant graduated from Kent State in 1970 with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree with a major in economics and earned an MBA from Santa Clara University in 1976. Johnna graduated from the University of San Diego with a degree in accounting.

Don is a Founder and Co-Managing Partner of IHP Capital Partners with primary responsibility for the selection and structuring of builder/developer transactions, asset management and banking relationships. He also serves as a member of IHP’s Investment Committee. Previously, he was Chief Executive Officer of The O’Donnell Group. Prior to joining The O’Donnell Group, Don spent 12 years in the real estate group of Wells Fargo Bank, where he was Senior Vice President responsible for the bank’s construction lending to commercial developers and home builders based in southern California.

Don was a student on the Kent State campus during the events of May 4, 1970. After leaving campus, Don and four of his Delta Upsilon (DU) fraternity brothers headed to Washington, D.C. wanting to tell the story of what happened on campus from the students’ point of view. Through a series of meetings, Don and five other Kent State students ended up meeting with President Richard Nixon in the Oval Office where they discussed the Vietnam War and the May 4 shootings. After their conversation with President Nixon, Grant and his fellow students were invited to participate in a press conference on Capital Hill about the May 4 shooting.

Don was prompted to donate to Crawford Hall by the amount of time and funding that has been put into making a new building possible. In recognition of their gifts, the Donald S. and Johnna F. Grant Atrium and the Donald S. Grant Donor Recognition Lounge were named.

“The donation from Ambassador Crawford was spectacular and will make the Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship and Kent State University appear on the radar as a fast-growing business school that will continue attracting high-quality faculty and companies,” Don said.
Featured Spaces in Crawford Hall

Donald S. and Johnna F. Grant Atrium and Donald S. Grant Donor Recognition Lounge

Don was an early and generous supporter of the Crawford Hall building project. In recognition of his $150,000 gift, the Kent State Board of Trustees named the Donor Recognition Lounge in his honor. In recognition of their additional gift of $1 million, the Donald S. and Johnna F. Grant Atrium was named.

A rendering of the Donald S. and Johnna F. Grant Atrium in Crawford Hall.

A rendering of the Donald S. Grant Donor Recognition Lounge.
ASPIRE: The Life of an American Entrepreneur

College Launches “ASPIRE: The Life of an American Entrepreneur” Podcast

In spring 2023, the Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship launched “ASPIRE: The Life of an American Entrepreneur,” a podcast featuring Ambassador Edward F. Crawford.

Throughout the 14-episode podcast series, ASPIRE presents a vivid picture of an American entrepreneur, providing insights on business, strategy, success and failure, as well as Crawford’s life experiences. Episodes span topics such as Crawford’s family’s journey from rural Ireland to the United States; dealing with rejection as an entrepreneur; Crawford’s journey to becoming an entrepreneur; strategies in the boardroom that served Crawford well and Crawford’s sports interests. The podcast is hosted by bestselling author and award-winning journalist Thomas Kelly.

The son of Irish immigrants, Ambassador Crawford began his career as an entrepreneur in 1962, starting his first manufacturing business while attending college classes at night. Beginning in 1992, he built Park-Ohio Holdings Corp. through a series of more than 100 transactions, growing it from a small local manufacturer into a successful international corporation. Under his leadership as Chairman and CEO, Park-Ohio became a publicly traded $1.6 billion industrial supply chain logistics and diversified manufacturing business, employing more than 7,000 people in 125 locations worldwide. After serving the country as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Ireland from 2019-2021, he returned to America in his current roles as Chairman of Crawford United Corporation, CEO of The Crawford Group and Director of Park-Ohio.

Ambassador Crawford provided the largest single gift in Kent State history to complete the capital campaign for the construction of a new business building on the university’s Kent campus. In recognition of the generosity of Ambassador Crawford and his family, the college was named the Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship, and the new building, expected to open in 2024, was named Crawford Hall.

Listen to episodes at kent.edu/business/aspire-podcast.
Mario J. Gabelli ASPIRE Entrepreneurial Workshop Series Speaker

Mario J. Gabelli, Chairman and CEO of GAMCO Investors, Inc. (NYSE: GLB) and LICT Corp., as well as Executive Chairman of Associated Capital Group, Inc., was the featured speaker for the Spring 2023 ASPIRE Entrepreneurial Workshop Series. The event, held in April, was attended by hundreds of students, faculty, staff and community guests.

During the event, radio personality Thomas Kelly engaged in a moderated discussion with Gabelli and Ambassador Edward F. Crawford.

Gabelli is a member of the Board of Overseers of Columbia University Graduate School of Business, the Board of Trustees of Roger Williams University and is a Trustee Associate of Boston College. Additionally, Gabelli is a member of the Board of Directors of the Foreign Policy Association, American-Italian Cancer Foundation and the Foundation for Italian Art & Culture. He is also a Trustee of the Winston Churchill Foundation of the United States and the E.L. Wiegand Foundation.

Gabelli was a Summa Cum Laude graduate of Fordham University, an MBA graduate from the Columbia University School of Business and earned Honorary Doctorate Degrees from Roger Williams University and Fordham University.

The ASPIRE Entrepreneurial Workshop Series features notable speakers who share their experiences in business. The ASPIRE Entrepreneurial Workshop Series was launched by Ambassador Edward F. Crawford while serving as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Ireland from 2019 to 2021. The first ASPIRE event at Kent State was held in Fall 2021.
Points of Distinction

**R1 Designation**

Kent State achieved R1 research designation by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education in December 2021. The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education named Kent State an R1 (or very high research) institution, the highest research ranking that Carnegie designates. This makes Kent State one of the top 146 research universities in the U.S.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>#12</th>
<th>Best Online MBA with a Business Analytics concentration</th>
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<td>Best Online MBA Program in the Midwest</td>
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<td>#23</td>
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- Recognized as a Best Business School by The Princeton Review
- Among the Best Online MBA Programs in 2023
- Among the best Online Graduate Business Programs in 2023
- Master of Business Analytics program ranked 36th
- Master of Arts in Economics program ranked 57th
- Master of Arts in Accounting program ranked 85th
College Reaffirmed for Dual AACSB Accreditation

The College is among a small group of institutions to achieve dual accreditation in business and accounting by AACSB International and was reaffirmed for accreditation in 2023.

The Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship is one of 965 institutions across 60 countries and territories to earn AACSB accreditation. In addition, 194 institutions hold specialized AACSB accreditation for their accounting programs, placing Kent State among fewer than 1 percent of business colleges worldwide to hold dual accreditation.

This is the 58th year that the College has held AACSB accreditation. The standards require excellence in AACSB accreditation standards in areas relating to strategic management and innovation; student, faculty, and staff as active participants; learning and teaching; and academic and professional engagement.

Quality Matters™ Certifications

The Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship's Online MBA program is currently the only MBA program in the nation to hold Quality Matters™ (QM) Program Design Certification. In 2022, the MBA program also earned Quality Matters™ Learner Success Certification. In 2023, the Master of Science in Business Analytics (MSBA) program received Program Design Certification.

40 College Courses Now QM Certified
Courses Receiving QM Certification in 2022-23

- MIS 64060 – Fundamentals of Machine Learning
- MIS 64037 – Advanced Data Mining and Predictive Analytics
- MIS 60438 - Analytics in Practice
- ACCT 63038 - Managerial Accounting for Decision Making (re-certified in 2023)
Scholarship Highlights

$527,981
awarded in scholarships during the 2022-23 Academic Year

- $173,250  Accounting scholarships
- $61,994  Emergency scholarships
- $34,500  Graduate Student scholarships
- $36,682  Marketing scholarships
- $26,700  First-year students/freshmen scholarships
- $17,000  Center for Information Systems scholarships
- $10,005  Career Clothes Closet scholarships
- $43,250  Entrepreneurship scholarships
- $18,700  Economics scholarships
- $51,400  Finance scholarships
- $1,000  International Business scholarships
- $8,100  Business Management scholarships
- $45,400  Study Abroad scholarships

Meonske Conference Provides $30,000 to Accounting Students in 2023

Thanks to the Meonske Professional Development Conference, $30,000 was donated to support Kent State accounting students in spring 2023.

Kent State Professor Emeritus Norm Meonske, who joined the Kent State accounting faculty in 1972, founded the prestigious Accounting Leadership Conference (now the Meonske Professional Development Conference) in 1974. The annual conference provides attendees with an opportunity to learn and network with other accounting and finance professionals. In 2007, former students of Meonske founded the Normal R. Meonske endowed scholarship fund.

During his tenure as an accounting professor at Kent State, Meonske taught thousands of accounting students. In addition to his work in the classroom, he also advised the accounting student professional society Beta Alpha Psi. He was active professionally with the Ohio Society of CPAs and the Institute of Management Accountants.
57% of faculty publications in 2022-23 addressed at least one Sustainable Development Goal

The most frequent Sustainable Development Goals within faculty research are

**GOAL 8** – Decent Work and Economic Growth and **GOAL 9** – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

A Selection of Research Related to Sustainable Development Goals Published by Faculty in 2022-23

- Lindsay Baran, Ph.D. and Tony Via, Ph.D., "Dual Class Share Structure and Innovation," published in *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*.
- Deepraj Mukherjee, Ph.D., "What Restricts SMEs from Adopting Sophisticated Capital Budgeting Practices?" published in *Small Business Economics*.
Awards and Achievements

Asli Arikan, Ph.D., Chairs Strategic Management Society Annual Conference
Asli Arikan, Ph.D., associate professor of management, was named Chair of the 2024 Strategic Management Society Annual Conference to be held in Istanbul.

Ilgaz Arikan, Ph.D., Leads Strategic Management Society Global Strategy Special Interest Group
Ilgaz Arikan, Ph.D., associate professor of management, was elected to the leadership of the Global Strategy Interest Group within the Strategic Management Society, a three-year engagement. He will serve as associate program chair the first year, program chair the second year and division chair the third year.

Pratim Datta, Ph.D., Invited to Speak on Cybersecurity in Denmark and Ireland
Pratim Datta, Ph.D., professor of information systems, presented “No Bread? Let Them Eat Cake – Market Failure and the Rise of DeFi and FinTech” and “Unpacking Cybersecurity Compliance: The Security Privacy Tension” at the IT University of Copenhagen in Denmark in 2022.

Datta presented “Cybersecurity: A Brave New World” at the Whitaker Institute for Innovation & Societal Change at the University of Galway in Ireland in 2022.

Shunlan Fang, Ph.D., Receives 2023 Dean’s Distinguished Scholar Award
Shunlan Fang, Ph.D., associate professor of accounting, was named the 2023 Dean’s Distinguished Scholar Award Winner for the College based on her research, “Charitable Employers, Happy Employees? Corporate Philanthropy and Employee Perceptions.”

Amy Grinewicz, Ph.D., Receives Directors’ Award for Exceptional Service to QM
Amy Grinewicz, Ph.D., Director of instructional design, received the Directors’ Award for Exceptional Service to Quality Matters™ (QM). QM is an international, faculty-centric, nonprofit focused on improving design and certifying the quality of online and hybrid courses. The award is presented to members of the QM community who have gone above and beyond common service to the organization and made extraordinary contributions to QM’s quality assurance efforts with online and/or blended education at institutions, and for learners.
Awards and Achievements

Jeremiah Harris, Ph.D., Receives Financial Review Best Paper Award
Jeremiah Harris, Ph.D., assistant professor of finance, and co-author William O’Brien received the Financial Review Best Paper Award for 2022 for their work “Do U.S. Firms Disguise Acquisitions to Avoid Taxes?”

Dong-Heon (Austin) Kwak, Ph.D., Ranked by Journal of the Association for Information Systems (JAIS)
Dong-Heon (Austin) Kwak, Ph.D., associate professor of information systems, was ranked the #1 author in 2019 and #2 author for 2019-2021 by the Journal of the Association for Information Systems (JAIS).

Catrina Johnson, Ph.D., Receives Research Grant from Anti-Racism and Equity Institute
Catrina Johnson, Ph.D., assistant professor of management, and Kristenne Robson, Ph.D., received the Anti-Racism and Equity Institute (AREI) 2023 Research Grant for their research, “Pledge to Practice: Examining Organization’s Commitment to Hiring and Retaining Individuals with Criminal Records.”

Kelly Knapp Blay Wins the Kent State MAC Outstanding Faculty for Student Success Award
Kelly Knapp Blay, lecturer of marketing, was selected as the 2023 Kent State University – Mid-American Conference Outstanding Faculty for Student Success Award winner.

Luda Leontieva, Ph.D., Receives Circular Economy Professional Certification
Luda Leontieva, Ph.D., assistant professor of economics at the Geauga campus, received Circular Economy Professional Certification from the Circular Economy Research Center.
**Awards and Achievements**

**Julia Levashina, Ph.D., has Top Downloaded Paper**
A paper written by Julia Levashina, Ph.D., professor of management, “Should DEI Statements be Included in Faculty Selection? Exploring Legal, Diversity, and Validity Issues” is listed #9 on the SSRN Top Ten Downloads for the category of Other Sustainability Research & Policy.

**Kun (Carl) Liu, Ph.D., Receives Summer 2023 Research Appointment**
Kun (Carl) Liu, Ph.D., associate professor of marketing, received a 2023 Summer Research and Creative Activity Appointment through the University Research Council.

**Serena Loftus, Ph.D., and R.Z. Zhang, Ph.D., Speak at Brookings Institute Conference**
Serena Loftus, Ph.D., and R.Z. Zhang, Ph.D., both assistant professors of accounting, along with colleague Sarah Shonka McCoy, Ph.D., assistant professor of accounting at the University of New Mexico’s Anderson School of Management, presented their research, “Native American Governments’ Borrowing Costs: Evidence from Municipal Bond Markets,” at the 11th Annual Municipal Finance Conference hosted by the Brookings Institute.

**Deepraj Mukherjee, Ph.D., Receives Honorary Fellowship from Centre for Business and Economic Research**
Deepraj Mukherjee, Ph.D., professor of economics at the Stark campus, received an Honorary Fellowship from the Centre for Business & Economic Research (CBER) while attending the 11th International Conference on Restructuring the Global Economy at the University of Oxford.

**Haithem Zourrig, Ph.D., Receives Best Paper Award**
Haithem Zourrig, Ph.D., associate professor of marketing at the Stark campus, received the Best Paper Award in the Retailing Track at the 2022 Society for Marketing Advances Annual Conference for his paper, “The Differential Effects of Self Congruity and Functional Congruity on Shoppers’ Well Being: An Empirical Study.”
Awards and Achievements

C. Lockwood Reynolds, Ph.D., Named Beta Gamma Sigma Professor of the Year
C. Lockwood Reynolds, Ph.D., professor of economics, was named the 2023 Beta Gamma Sigma Professor of the Year for the College.

Murali Shanker, Ph.D., Selected as the Recipient of the 2023 College Teaching Award Winner
Murali Shanker, Ph.D., professor of information systems, received the 2023 College Teaching Award.

Wendy Tietz, Ph.D., CPA, CMA Publishes Book, Wins Numerous Teaching Awards
Wendy Tietz, Ph.D., CPA, CMA, professor of accounting, published the book *Teaching with Microsoft Teams: Student Engagement Strategies* to help educators better engage with students when teaching online.

She also received the 2022 IMA R. Lee Brummet Exemplary Educator Award at the IMA Annual Conference, the 2022 Bea Sanders/AICPA Teaching Innovation Award and a Winebrenner Professional Development Excellence Award from Kent State.

Mark Whitmore, Ph.D., Publishes Book Chapter

Cherrie Reger-Watson Receives Staff Service Excellence Award
Cherrie Reger-Watson, administrative secretary for the Department of Accounting, was named the 2023 Staff Service Excellence Award Winner for the College.
Numerous Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship faculty members were selected by Kent State student-athletes as Most Valuable Professor (MVP) in academic year 2022-2023.

**Selected by Men’s Golf Student-Athletes**
- **Kelly Knapp Blay**
  - Lecturer, Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship
- **Tony Via, Ph.D.**
  - Assistant Professor, Department of Finance
- **David Pelleg**
  - Lecturer, Department of Finance
- **Bill Billik, Ph.D.**
  - Assistant Professor, Department of Finance
- **Wendy Tietz, Ph.D., CPA, CMA**
  - Professor, Department of Accounting
- **Tuo Wang, Ph.D.**
  - Associate Professor, Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship

**Selected by Wrestling Student-Athletes**
- **Mary Heidler**
  - Associate Lecturer, Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship
- **Kelly Knapp Blay**
  - Lecturer, Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship

**Selected by a Baseball Student-Athlete**
- **Mostafa K. Ardakani, Ph.D.**
  - Associate Professor, Department of Management and Information Systems

**Selected by a Field Hockey Student-Athlete**
- **C. Lockwood Reynolds, Ph.D.**
  - Professor, Department of Economics
MVP Faculty

Selected by Soccer Student-Athletes

Wendy Tietz, Ph.D., CMA, CPA
Professor, Department of Accounting

Lois Beier, J.D.
Professor, Department of Finance

Lindsay Baran, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Department of Finance

Shawn Rohlin, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Economics
Director, John S. and Marlene J. Brinzo Center for Entrepreneurship

Selected by Lacrosse Student-Athletes

Joni Bowen
Instructor, Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship

Eric Kennerk
Instructor, Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship

Kelly Knapp Blay
Lecturer, Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship
Faculty Highlights

104,000+ Faculty Citations (lifetime)

45,339 Faculty Citations (last five years)

12 articles published in A+ or A level academic journals in 2022-23

Faculty served on editorial boards of 12 leading academic journals in 2022-23

A+ Journal Publications

Ilgaz Arikan, Ph.D., associate professor of management

"Neglected Elements: What we Should Cover More of in International Business Research," *Journal of International Business Studies*

Lei Jia, Ph.D., assistant professor of marketing


Serena Loftus, Ph.D., assistant professor of accounting

"To Read or to Listen? Does Disclosure Delivery Mode Impact Investors’ Reactions to Managers’ Tone Language?" *Contemporary Accounting Research*
**Media Highlights**

### 14 Million
2022-23 Media Views for College News

### 90 Million
2022-23 Media Views for Faculty News

### National Media Coverage

**The Wall Street Journal**

- Omid Bagheri, Ph.D.’s research was cited in a story on “Should the U.S. Expand the H-1B Visa Program?”

**Entrepreneur**

- Pratim Datta, Ph.D., was interviewed for the article “Why In-Office Work is the Real Threat to Cybersecurity.”

**The Hill**

- Chris Groening, Ph.D., and colleague Ahmad Al Asady published an editorial piece, “How Brands in the Spotlight can Navigate Boycotts,” in The Hill.

- Lei Jia, Ph.D., assistant professor of marketing, was featured in the Wall Street Journal for his research on pet ownership as an influence on consumer behavior. This research was published in the Journal of Marketing.

### Regional Media Coverage

- Mike Ellis, Ph.D., was interviewed by WAKR on the topic of whether the United States is in a recession.

- Omid Bagheri, Ph.D., was interviewed by WFMJ on the impact of U.S. debt on senior citizens; whether bank failures signal a recession and the diesel shortage’s impact on the economy.

- Vaneet Kaur, Ph.D., was featured in The Canton Repository for her students’ performance in the pitch competition, Stark Shark Tank.

- David Pelleg discussed FTX cryptocurrency collapse and bank failures on WAKR.

- Felecia Urbanek was interviewed on how the MBA degree assists with leadership skills by Cleveland Jewish News.
20th Anniversary Celebration Featured Michael D. Solomon

Michael D. Solomon, technology executive, investor, and advisor, was the featured speaker for the Kent State Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship’s 20th anniversary celebration of the Michael D. Solomon Entrepreneurship Speaker Series.

Michael spoke about “50 Years of Technology History and Why I am Still Having so Much Fun Being an Entrepreneur” during the April event.

Michael graduated from Kent State University with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in 1974. He recently graduated from the Academy of Intuition Medicine with a Masters of Intuition Medicine degree. He was previously a member of the Kent State Board of Trustees from 2011 to 2020, the Foundation Board from 2004 to 2011 and currently serves on the Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship’s National Advisory Board. Michael endowed the Michael D. Solomon Entrepreneurship Speaker Series in 2002, the Jerry M. Lewis Speaker Series in 2022 and the Alan Canfora Scholarship Program in Activism in 2021.

Michael began his career in Columbus, Ohio, where he worked with Apple Computers, Inc. to set up the company’s original dealer network when they were a $100 million company. He then moved to Seattle where he ran sales and marketing for Aldus Corp, which created desktop publishing software. He then moved to California in 1990 and has since worked in Silicon Valley as an executive, venture capitalist, entrepreneur, board member and advisor. He recently served as the Board Chairman of Within3 Corporation, a Cleveland-based medical industry software company, from 2010 to its successful takeout financing with Insight Partners, a leading private equity firm, in 2020.

The Michael D. Solomon Entrepreneurship Speaker Series brings experienced entrepreneurs and educators to campus to share professional insights and wisdom with students and community members. The Michael D. Solomon Entrepreneurship Speaker Series is presented by the College’s John S. and Marlene J. Brinzo Center for Entrepreneurship.

Michael D. Solomon delivered the 20th anniversary Michael D. Solomon Entrepreneurship Speaker Series talk in April 2023.
John Karakadas Joins College’s National Advisory Board
The Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship’s National Advisory Board welcomed John Karakadas, Kent State graduate and founder and managing member of Aesion, LLC, an investment management firm, in spring 2023.

Karakadas holds a degree in industrial management from Kent State University and an executive finance post-graduate diploma from the London Business School.

Karakadas has a 35-year track record of creating value in demanding situations across a number of industries and geographies. His experience spans the aviation, technology, consumer packaged goods, retail, real estate and shipping sectors in Europe, Asia-Pacific and North America. He has held executive positions at companies including Olympic Air, Procter & Gamble, PepsiCo, Barilla, Burger King and Europe’s largest retailer, Tchibo GmbH.

Pawan Verma Speaks with Executive MBA Students
Kent State alumnus Pawan Verma MBA ’08, EVP and Global Chief Information Officer at MetLife, reflected on his career and discussed future opportunities and challenges for business leaders during the Executive MBA Speaker Series in November 2022.

The event, held at the Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship, provided current Executive MBA students and guests with an opportunity to engage with Verma and learn from his experience as a CIO.

Verma oversees a team of more than 11,000 technologists and is responsible for leading software development, digital customer experience, technology strategy, architecture and shared technology platforms to drive remarkable customer experiences that differentiate MetLife. He sees technology solutions through the eyes of customers, recognizing the need to balance high-tech and human touch to enable commercial success.
Students Take Home $20,000 in Cash Prizes at Spring Pitch
Eight student finalists competed in the John S. and Marlene J. Brinzo Center for Entrepreneurship’s annual Spring Pitch competition on April 19 for a share of $20,000 in cash prizes.

Winners were Bradley Smith, a junior finance major, who took first place with Finlit; Sophia Edmunds, a fashion merchandising major who took second place with REVEIL and Cliford Fumbui, a senior computer engineering major who took third place with Jollof Box.

The annual Spring Pitch helps Kent State entrepreneurship students launch and grow their startup companies and earn funds to support them. During the event, finalists pitched their business ideas to a panel of executive judges.

Judges for the event were Michael Capellas, founder and CEO of Capellas Partners; Veronica Cook-Euell, founder of Euell Construction and Consulting Group; Michael D. Solomon, a Silicon Valley executive, venture capitalist, entrepreneur, board member and advisor; James Unger, chairman of the board of advisors of Miller Transfer and Sandra Volpe, director, Board of Directors of Republic Services (NYSE: RSG).
10 Finalists Participate in Idea Pitch Competition
Ten finalists competed in the John S. and Marlene J. Brinzo Center for Entrepreneurship’s Idea Pitch competition in December 2022.

Winners were Sophia Edmunds, a fashion merchandising major, who took first place with REVEIL; Adison Colin, a senior entrepreneurship major who took second place with Make Change; Cedrick Kelly, a senior paralegal studies major who took third place with Sckramble; Lefonda Steward, a sophomore fashion design major who took fourth place with Handmii and Kaitlyn Phillips, a senior entrepreneurship major who took fifth place with Technicollar.

The Idea Pitch competition helps Kent State students develop their startup companies and pitch their business ideas to a panel of executive judges to win cash prizes.

Judges for the event were Joelle Brock, Co-Founder, President & CEO, Leading EDJE; Tom Haag, President KYOCERA SGS Precision Tools; Bill Baumel, Managing Director, Ohio Innovation Fund; Sandra Volpe, Director, Board of Directors of Republic Services (NYSE: RSG) and Jason Morris, Venture Capitalist.

Students Attend Rice Business Plan Competition
A group of eight business students attended the Rice Business Plan Competition and explored Austin’s entrepreneurial ecosystem in April 2023.

The 2023 Rice Business Plan Competition was hosted by the Rice Alliance for Technology and Entrepreneurship. The event provides a platform for collegiate entrepreneurs to showcase their startups, refine their business strategies, and gain insights into launching successful companies. While in Texas, students also visited Interplay Learning, a leader in Virtual Reality (VR) training and education for the skilled trades, and The Kendra Scott Women’s Entrepreneurial Leadership Institute.
Golden Flash Asset Management Team Takes Third Place in Competition
The Kent State Golden Flash Asset Management (GFAM) Team took third place in both the Global Portfolio category (Graduate) and the Fixed Income Portfolio category (Undergraduate) at the 2023 GAME Forum held in New York City.

Student team members who participated in the competition included MBA student Jorge Astorga; senior finance major Minung Chung; MBA student Chase Holland; senior finance major Cameron Brooks and senior finance major Zachary Manzella.

“With the 2023 awards, the team has now won a total of eight awards at this global event since first entering the competition in 2019. The team has won multiple awards three years in a row, competing with 110-120 schools annually,” said William Billik, Ph.D., undergraduate GFAM advisor. “The efforts of our current and past student members have given Kent State the recognition of being one of the best student-managed investment funds in the nation.”

The GAME Forum is hosted by Quinnipiac University. The event offers participants the opportunity to discuss and debate financial best practices with world-renowned industry leaders and compete in a Global Portfolio Competition.

Students Win Cash Prizes in 2023 Hometown Bank/Kent State Investment Challenge
Kent State business students Brian Nofer, Cameron Miller, Nathan Pfeiffer and John Mohr took home cash prizes in the 2023 Hometown Bank/Kent State Investment Challenge. The contest allowed students to manage a simulated portfolio of investable assets. Students watched videos on personal finance and the basics of investing and learned how to make investment decisions. They applied this learning to a simulated investment account and the top performers received cash prizes. First place received $1,000, second received $500, third received $300 and fourth received $200.
Pi Sigma Epsilon Sales Fraternity Wins Awards at National Convention
Nine Kent State business students spent spring break in Norfolk, VA, where they represented the Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship and took home prestigious awards from the Pi Sigma Epsilon (PSE) National Convention.

Accompanied by PSE advisors Ellen Daniels and Kelly Knapp Blay, Kent State University’s Zeta Xi chapter took home the prestigious Arno Kleimenhagen Award for Sustained Excellence for the sixth consecutive year. This award highlights the team’s consistent excellence in sales, marketing and management.

The Zeta Xi chapter also earned finalist positions in three categories: the Lewis F. Gordon Top Gold Chapter, Top Management Team and Top Professional Development Program.

Individual members were recognized for their efforts. Rave’onne Henderson won the National Convention Perfect Attendance Award, while Grace Bergert became a semi-finalist in the National Convention Pro-Am Sell-a-Thon®. Jackie Lin secured a tie for second place in the Sports Selling Competition.

Several members of the Zeta Xi chapter were awarded scholarships from the National Educational Foundation Scholarship Program. Olivia Webb received the Apex Systems Scholarship, Jana Stone was awarded the Future Leaders Scholarship and the TForce Freight Scholarship, Angelina DiCola won the KEYENCE Corporation Scholarship, and Matthew Brown took home the Vector Marketing Scholarship.

Sales Team Students Place in Competitions
The Kent State Sales Team participated in the 2023 Invitational Collegiate Sales Competition at the University of Toledo. Competitors Hannah Keil and Jana Stone, both marketing majors, were Gold Finalists, placing first in their rooms. Kent State ranked fifth overall in the competition that featured 50 universities from across the country. The 2022 Kent State Sales Team and coaches also participated in the International Collegiate Sales Competition held in Orlando with multiple students placing in the competition. In addition, students interviewed with companies such as Dell, Qualtrics and Gartner during the event.
Dual Degree Offerings Added
With the addition of five new dual degree options over the last two years, the Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship now offers 12 dual degree options which allow students to pursue two master’s degrees simultaneously. Dual degree options include:

- MBA dual degree with Master of Architecture (M.Arch.)
- MBA dual degree with Master of Science (M.S.) in Aviation Management and Logistics (added in 2022)
- MBA dual degree with Master of Arts (M.A.) in Communication Studies
- MBA dual degree with Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Higher Education Administration and Student Affairs (added in 2022)
- MBA dual degree with Master of Science (M.S.) in Hospitality and Tourism Management (added in 2022)
- MBA dual degree with Master of Science (M.S.) in Knowledge Management (added in 2023)
- MBA dual degree with Master of Library and Information Science (M.L.I.S.)
- MBA dual degree with Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.)
- MBA dual degree with Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (D.P.M.)
- MBA dual degree with Master in Public Health (M.P.H.) (added in 2023)
- MBA dual degree with Master of Arts (M.A.) in Sport Administration
- MBA dual degree with Master of Arts (M.A.) in Translation

Ambassador Crawford College Partners with University of Akron Law School to Offer 3+3 Program
In 2022, Kent State University and the University of Akron School of Law (Akron Law) finalized a Juris Doctor degree partnership program to create a seamless, sequential system for students to obtain a bachelor’s degree from Kent State and a Juris Doctor degree from Akron Law in only six years. Kent State offers degree pathways for 11 majors including the Bachelor of Business Administration in Economics and the Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance.

The collaborative program, commonly referred to as a three-plus-three degree program (3+3 program), offers broader educational opportunities for eligible students, allowing them to complete both degrees in a shorter time period than might otherwise be possible and at a lower cost.

This is the second 3+3 program partnership established by Kent State with an area law school. In 2022, Kent State announced a 3+3 agreement with Cleveland State University’s Cleveland-Marshall College of Law.
Academic Program Highlights

College Enrollment

3,105 Undergraduate Students (Fall 2022)
379 Graduate Students (Fall 2022)

Kent State’s graduate business enrollment has seen a 40% growth over the past five years.

Business Graduate Programs Enrollment Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pictured are Master of Science in Business Analytics (MSBA) graduate students with Rouzbeh Razavi, Ph.D., associate professor of information systems and business analytics and director of the MSBA program.