



UW MBA Executive Leadership Speaker Series – Scott Macdonald

A strong emphasis throughout the MBA program at the University of Wyoming is placed on providing students with real-world experience. Throughout the year, the program hosts a Friday Leadership Speaker Series comprised of experienced business professionals and executives.

Steve Farkas, Director of the MBA program commented, "I encourage our guest speakers to share as much real-world experience with our students as possible. Speakers will share a variety of topics with students from industry trends, strategic challenges, management styles, career management, and networking."

On Friday, October 4th the MBA students met with Scott Macdonald. Macdonald is a UW College of Business graduate (B.S. accounting) and currently serves as the chief financial officer of Starz, LLC. Macdonald and his team are responsible for the accounting, budgeting, planning and internal/external reporting activities across the family of Starz companies.

While visiting with students, Macdonald introduced them to his industry by providing a history of Starz, explaining how movies and shows are selected and financed, and describing the process for establishing overarching goals for the growth and success of the company. In addition, Macdonald also shared tips for success as students leave college and enter the workplace.

Valentin Schwarz, second year MBA student, shared, "My biggest take away from Mr. Macdonald's presentation was that no matter what your job entails, even if it's just making copies all day, you should do it without complaining and with a smile on your face. In addition, he shared that while you might not start in your dream job or industry, hard work and perseverance pay off in the long run which was a good reminder."

In addition, given his role as CFO, Macdonald was able to provide students an inside view on the financial aspects of Starz including a business case focusing on financial responsibility and the potential negative outcomes when one does not act ethically.

Finally, Macdonald shared new marketing strategies used by Starz, which involves letting viewers watch pilot episodes for free online. While the cost of producing premium shows has increased drastically in the past few years,

providing free episodes has helped Starz increase subscriptions and DVD/BlueRay sales.

For Jennifer Tracey, first year MBA student, "One of the most interesting things (she) learned during Mr. Macdonald's presentation was how Starz selects shows. Mr. Macdonald explained that developing a sizable library of quality original programming is a primary goal for Starz. To that end, Starz currently has about 100 shows that have been pitched and have potential to be produced. It was fascinating to hear about how forecasting, intuition, and sheer luck work together in selecting a successful show. After strategically selecting a show, the company waits to see if they get lucky with a hit."

To continue the Executive Leadership Speaker Series, this Friday the class will hear from Rita C. Meyer, former Wyoming state auditor and Joe Drew, Owner/President of Drew Auto Center in La Mesa, California.