

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS FOCUS



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OF WYOMING
New Thinking

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Editor, Shalee Turner

UW College of Business
 Dept. 3275, 1000 E. University Ave.
 Laramie, WY 82071
 (307) 766-4194

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College of Business

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MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

The era of *sustainable business practices* is upon us and UW's College of Business plans to be a leader in this field for the state and region. As you will see in the article on page 9 of this publication, the state of Wyoming has already made a considerable investment in order to help us launch this effort.

For those of you that are new to the concept, sustainable business practices take into account the interdependence of economic vitality, the environment, and social well being. In other words, sustainable business success is all about balancing the *three P's...people, planet, and profit.*

Spearheading this endeavor for the college will be professors Eric Arnould, Jose Rosa and Melea Press. Part of their mission is to facilitate the complete integration of socially responsible business practices into the college's curriculum with the objective of preparing the next generation of business executives.

Recently, Eric, Jose, and Melea were also charged



Dean Brent Hathaway

with briefing an academic/industry retreat designed to explore the various opportunities associated with this undertaking.

One of the outcomes from this day-long session was a definition of sustainable business practices from a College of Business perspective. The definition was subsequently presented to the college's advisory council for additional consideration. The suggestions/feedback we receive from these two bodies will be critical in helping the college launch this new initiative.

Needless to say, this is an exciting and appropriate time to be initiating this venture. We, the people of Wyoming, with our amazing natural wonders, as well as our tremendous energy assets, can be leading the

“Sustainable business success is all about balancing the three P's ... people, planet, and profit.”

way in this arena. Doing so will help insure the responsible use of our lands and the long-term financial interests of our people. In other words, the key to sustainability is being able to fulfill today's needs while protecting the natural world so that we can also fulfill the needs of tomorrow.

While this delicate balancing act can be a difficult one to achieve, it can and will be accomplished. In fact, tremendous opportunities lie ahead for those companies/individuals that develop innovative solutions to these economic, environmental, and social issues. Take a look around you...entrepreneurs and industry leaders are already making progress in these areas. However, much work remains to be done, and Wyoming's business school will be leading the way.

Initially, the concept of sustainability, and the college's commitment to it, will be on full display

with the \$54+ million renovation and expansion of our facility. To that end, the new building will achieve at least a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) silver certification from the US Green Building Council, and gold certification is still a possibility. The new College of Business will also be the first LEED-certified building on campus.

By constructing a building that displays the benefits of sustainable design and construction techniques, the college will also clearly convey its intention to “walk the talk” when it comes to practical examples of economic, environmental, and social responsibility.

As always, we want to thank you for all you do, and especially for your support of this critical undertaking. We hope to see you at the groundbreaking for the new building Wednesday, July 9th at 11 a.m. Thank you again, and have a great summer!

FOCUS ON GIVING

McMurry \$5 Million Gift Creates Historic College of Business Endowment at UW

Improved student experiences and stronger business school curriculum are just a few of the areas that will benefit from a \$5 million McMurry Foundation endowment gift to the University of Wyoming College of Business.

Wyoming Gov. Dave Freudenthal and UW President Tom Buchanan recently joined longtime UW benefactors and philanthropists Neil “Mick” McMurry and Susan “Susie” McMurry of Casper for the McMurry Foundation’s announcement at the College of Business.

“The McMurry Foundation is proud to be a part of all the resources required to make a good College of Business a great one,” says Mick McMurry.

“The philanthropy of Mick and Susie McMurry is extraordinary, and the University of Wyoming is fortunate to once again be on the receiving end of their generosity,” Buchanan says. “Mick and Susie only support efforts they believe in, and they believe the surest way to invest in the future of the state is in the education of its young people. This gift will make a difference to the UW College of Business and its students for years to come.”

The McMurrys’ gift to the College of Business matches the largest endowment contribution for an academic program in UW’s history. Last fall Jim Nielson created



President Tom Buchanan

a \$5 million endowment for the director of the UW School of Energy Resources.

The state of Wyoming will match the McMurry gift through its UW endowment challenge program to create a \$10 million endowment. Through the program, endowment gifts of \$50,000 or more to UW are matched dollar-for-dollar by the state.

College of Business Dean Brent Hathaway says the McMurry gift will help to improve student experiences, curriculum development, faculty recruiting and enhancement, and the college’s outreach efforts.

“The magnitude of this gift will help change the college,” Hathaway says. “Thanks to the incredible support of Gov. Dave Freudenthal, the Wyoming State Legislature, President Tom Buchanan, and senior UW administration members, the McMurrys’ generous commitment will be used to accelerate excellence in business education in Wyoming, not to build buildings.”

The endowment will be among the most highly valued and strategically useful private investments for the College of Business, Hathaway adds. The endowment will provide a steady stream of funding that enables the college to respond quickly to emerging opportunities and to pursue core initiatives. Additionally, the endowment will allow the college’s leadership team to invest in programs where the need is greatest and the potential for success is highest.

“Mick and Susie continue to transform our university,” says Ben Blalock, UW Foundation president. “Their total giving to UW will now surpass \$12 million. It is impossible to fully express to Mick and Susie the depth of gratitude that those of us who work here at UW, and our students, feel. The McMurrys’ historic generosity will continue to touch the lives of our faculty and students for future generations to come.” One of those opportunities will be the Susan K. McMurry Teaching Excellence Professorship which will be awarded to an existing faculty who shows an excellence in teaching. That faculty member will mentor other teachers and professors within the college.



Susie and Mick McMurry

The McMurrys’ generosity has already delivered UW \$5.7 million in state matching funds. After the gift to the College of Business is realized, the McMurrys’ philanthropy will provide more than \$22 million to UW in gifts and state matching funds.

The McMurrys’ gift tops off an impressive fund-raising period for the College of Business, Hathaway says. The Daniels Fund also recently awarded the College of Business \$3 million for the Bill Daniels Chair of Business Ethics, that with the UW endowment challenge program created a \$6 million endowment for the college.

For more information contact Kent Noble, UW College of Business assistant dean, at (307) 766-3043 or e-mail knoble@uwyo.edu.



Brent Hathaway, Mick McMurry, Susie McMurry and Ben Blalock

FOCUS ON ALUMNI

UW Alum Finds Success as an Entrepreneur

The ventures of UW graduates are just as diverse as the students that walk the campus. Kevin Schaff, founder and CEO of Thought Equity Motion, provided an intriguing example of this business enterprise diversity during his recent presentation to students from the College of Business and the Laramie community.

Schaff, a 1997 graduate from UW with a B.A. in Marketing Communications, leads Thought Equity Motion's corporate strategy, drives product direction and positioning, raises funds, and generates awareness for the company among industry analysts and potential partners. Schaff is a well-regarded entrepreneur who has successfully founded, financed, operated, and sold companies throughout his career.

While Thought Equity has offices in Denver, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Indianapolis, Sydney, and Tokyo, the main refinery is based right here in Laramie. Throughout his presentation, Schaff made it clear his loyalty runs deep to Wyoming and the University, "The University of Wyoming and the College of Business gave me my start in business by providing the educational foundation I needed to successfully build my companies. Because of that, I am extremely committed to giving back to the community and keeping business in Wyoming."

Thought Equity Motion is a "motion content agency," that provides online access to millions of hours of film and video footage to film, advertising, and new media production professionals, allowing them to repurpose top quality footage to successfully tell their stories. The company's approach to the business is unique, and has resulted in it being named the exclusive licensing agent for organizations such as Paramount Pictures, NBC News, HBO, National Geographic, Sony Pictures, and the NCAA.

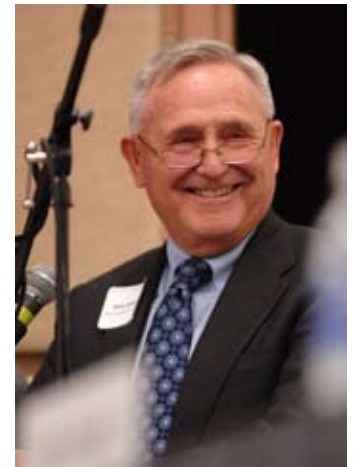


Schaff brings 11 years of experience to his position from the advertising, marketing, and business realms. His leadership accomplishments have been recognized by publications such as CIO, Small Business Computing, Advertising Review, Yahoo Magazine, and others.

For more information about Thought Equity Motion, visit <http://www.thoughtequity.com>.



FOCUS ON EXECUTIVES

*John Hay**Sherrill Shaffer**Mike Mathews**Dave Johnson*

Prominent Business Leaders Share their Expertise at the College of Business

The college has recently benefited from the real world expertise of many local and regional business professionals.

At the end of February, prominent area bankers gave their opinions on a wide range of topics, including economic development and new technologies, at a "Banking Panel" that was open to the University and the public.

The banking panel consisted of panelists from community banks and regional or statewide institutions. On the panel was Sherrod France, Bank of Commerce, Rawlins; John Hay, Rock Springs National Bank; Lyle Knight, First Interstate Bank, Billings, Mont.; Mike Mathews, Wells Fargo Bank, Casper; Dick Scarlett, Jackson State Bank and Trust; and Don Sturm, American National Bank, Denver. Dave Johnson from the Wyoming Bankers Association was the moderator for the panel discussion.

"We are very pleased to have hosted this distinguished group

of regional, state and community banking executives," says Brent Hathaway, UW College of Business dean. "The panel addressed topics ranging from economic development and business ethics to employee recruitment and new technologies. This was truly a valuable session for our students and the community at large."

The free public discussion was part of the college's Speaker Series and was sponsored by the Sandberg Speakers Fund.

More recently, in April, the Daniels Fund Ethics and Entrepreneurship panels were held.

The ethics panel members were Linda Childears, Daniels Fund president and CEO, Denver; David Emery, Black Hills Corporation chairman, president and CEO, Rapid City, S.D.; Mike Ceballos, Qwest Communications International Wyoming president, Cheyenne; Robert Jensen, Wyoming Business Council CEO, Cheyenne; Peter Johnson, Sinclair Oil president, Salt Lake City, Utah;

and Al Wolfe, U.S. Division, DDB Needham Worldwide retired president, Centennial, Wyoming and Sedona, Ariz.

Richard McGinity, the Bill Daniels Chair of Business Ethics in the UW College of Business, was the moderator.

"The program celebrated the life of Bill Daniels in three dimensions -- his accomplishments as a legendary entrepreneur, the extraordinary ethical standards he employed throughout his business life, and the generosity to Wyoming of the philanthropy that he created," McGinity says. "Our panels' goal was to explore how Bill's values are at work in Wyoming today."

The entrepreneurship panelists were Les Ball, Corral West Ranch and Work Wear former president and CEO, Cheyenne; Roy Cohee, C&Y Transportation Company owner and Wyoming House Speaker, Casper; Ron McCue, Silver Star Telephone president and COO, Star Valley; Carl Lee, Go Manage

CEO and business coach, Fort, Collins, Colo.; V. Frank Mendicino, Access Venture managing director, Westminster, Colo.; and Jim Willms, Unicover Corporation president and CEO, Cheyenne.

Roland Kidwell, UW College of Business associate professor was the panel moderator.

"The panelists had a great deal of experience in starting and growing new ventures and addressed a variety of entrepreneurial and ethical issues that are associated with economic development in the state and region," said Kidwell. "This was a valuable opportunity for the university and local community to learn more about the contributions that successful and ethical businesses make to our state and society."

The college is honored to have such outstanding individuals take time to contribute their knowledge and expertise to the university and surrounding community.

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FOCUS ON RECOGNITION

57th Annual recognition dinner



With construction slated to start on the new College of Business in May, the theme for the 57th annual recognition dinner seemed only appropriate: Construction Area. With a record breaking crowd of 450, it was a perfect moment to stop and consider all the monumental things that have happened over the past year and celebrate with all those who have contributed to the success.

Students, parents, alumni, faculty, staff, donors and friends of the college shared the incredible sense of accomplishment that was felt throughout the room as those being recognized walked across the stage. Dean Brent Hathaway along with Associate Deans Larry Weatherford and Penne Ainsworth, and each of the department chairs recognized the outstanding accomplishments and contributions of the students, faculty, staff, scholarship recipients, and donors.

While that alone was enough to celebrate, the evening culminated with the recognition

of two University of Wyoming graduates. Receiving the college's Distinguished Alumnus awards were Rita Meyer from Cheyenne, and Charles H. Brown III from Wheatland.

Meyer was elected in November 2006 to serve as Wyoming's 19th State Auditor. She was raised near the small ranching community of Johnstown, Nebraska, and moved to Centennial in 1977. She is a graduate of the University of Wyoming with degrees in education and finance. She also holds an MBA in International Business from Regis University in Denver, Colorado, and a Master's in National Resource Strategy from National Defense University in Washington, D.C.

Meyer is married to Dr. Charles Meyer, a retired dentist and native of Rawlins. They have one son, Charles, a Navy Lieutenant assigned to the Pentagon as a Flag Aide and a daughter-in-law, Emily, an export control attorney in Arlington, Virginia.

Brown graduated from Torrington High School in 1953, and after a year of college at the University of Wyoming, he decided to take care of his military obligation and also take advantage of the G. I. Bill to help pay for his college education. He served in the U. S. Army with the Army Security Agency and was stationed in Korea prior to his discharge. After returning home, he continued his education at Eastern Wyoming College, (then Goshen County Community College) in Torrington, graduating in 1958. He then returned to the University of Wyoming and graduated with a degree in Business Administration in 1962. While there, he met Katie Kugland, and they were married on July 23, 1961 in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Shortly after graduation, the newlyweds moved to Wheatland, which has been their home for 45 years, and where they reared their two daughters, Brenda and Kristi.

In the fall of 1968, Brown could no longer keep his entrepreneurial spirit in check, and he launched out "on his own" when he purchased a small feed store and acquired some short-line equipment franchises. The hours were long, the learning curve was immense, and the work was hard, but from these modest beginnings and using the family name because "nothing else was handy", the C. H. Brown Co. grew over the next three decades into a major retailer of agricultural equipment, animal feedstuffs, farm supplies, and vehicles, serving clientele throughout Wyoming and neighboring states.

In the early 1990's, the retail operations were sold, and in 1995, the family initiated a new venture. Today, the C.H. Brown Co. is a nationally recognized firm in the equipment finance business.

Chuck is actively involved with a number of community, state and national organizations.

FOCUS ON STUDENT EXPERIENCE

UW College of Business Students Find Real-Life Experiences in Investment Field

Being part of the NASDAQ closing bell ceremony was one of the highlights for two University of Wyoming College of Business students at a recent national conference.

Jacob Doss, Lexington, Ky., and Dan Jones, Longmont, Colo., were among a group of selected college students who stood on the podium when the button was pushed to signal the end of the day's trading. The special remote closing bell ceremony was held at the University of Dayton Arena.

Ten members of UW Professor Walt Werner's spring semester advanced investment class attended the NASDAQ closing bell ceremony during the eighth annual RISE (Redefining Investment Strategy Education) Global Student Investment Forum in Dayton, Ohio.

This is the fifth year that Werner, the Roy Chamberlain Distinguished Visiting Professor of Free Enterprise in the UW Department of Economics and Finance, has taken UW business students to the forum.

Also attending the RISE forum were UW business students Alicia Beedle, Sioux Falls, S.D.; Owen Brasington, Rock Springs; Blaine Christenson, Thermopolis; Sian Ciara, Pompeis Pillar, Mont.; Ron Fogel, Haifa, Israel; Ashley Jones, Gillette; Elizabeth Perry, Casper; and Nick Phillip, Green River.

Since RISE began seven years ago, it has become the world's largest student investment forum. Modeled after the World Economic Forum held annually in Switzerland, it gives students an opportunity to ask questions of some of the world's top professionals.

Werner says that "it was a big deal" for the UW students to witness the NASDAQ remote closing bell ceremony, especially for



Doss and Jones, who were selected to be on the podium when Christopher Gardner pushed the button. Gardner, owner and CEO of Christopher Gardner International Holdings, was the inspiration behind the Academy Award-nominated film "The Pursuit of Happiness," starring Will Smith.

NASDAQ opening and closing bell ceremonies occur daily from the stock market's studio in New York City's Times Square, but can be conducted remotely, symbolizing NASDAQ'S electronic market.

The UW contingent was among 2,400 participants representing 257 colleges, including 69 countries. The UW College of Business, the UW Foundation, along with private gifts funded the students' participation, Werner says.

The conference featured discussions on the economy; markets; the Federal Reserve perspective; corporate governance and responsibility; political, regulatory and legislative issues; and the leadership perspective.

The students attended specialized breakout sessions, workshops, networking receptions, a career strategies forum and an optional portfolio competition. During the three-day event, more than 125 professionals from 85 organizations participated as keynote speakers, judges, moderators and panelists.

Before the conference, the UW students visited a major distillery and a large horse racing operation in Lexington, Ky.

During the quarter that just ended, another advanced investment class turned a \$63,000 profit for the UW Foundation. It marks the third year that Werner's students have been successful investing money for the UW Foundation.

This year the students have invested in exchange-traded funds and also heavily in oil/gas stocks and fertilizer stocks, which have been profitable, Werner says.

"The UW students have done very well for themselves," Werner says.

Some of the students in the group that attended the RISE conference are also in Werner's second investment class. They are Owen Brasington, Rock Springs; Peter Campbell, Parker Lahti, Todd Lewis and Jennifer Peterson, all of Cheyenne; Ron Fogel, Haifa, Israel; Barbara Hobart, Casper; Ashley Jones, Gillette; Katrina Krutkramele, Latvia; John Murdock, Laramie; and Nick Phillip, Green River.

Phillip, a finance senior with a minor in accounting, placed second in a first-ever online student investment competition. UpDown's investment competition, started by Harvard business students, attracted 1,600 students representing 389 colleges.

Competing in the individual portfolio competition, Phillip focused on high volatility stocks and invested in solar industry alternative energy and mortgage related stocks.

By placing second in the three-month competition last semester, Phillip received \$1,000. He has been in Werner's advanced investment class two semesters.

"Taking Professor Werner's class definitely helped me learn about investing," Phillip says.

FOCUS ON COMMUNITY

Thanks to UW College of Business Students, Sierra Trading Post wins 2008 BBB Torch Award

Real world meets classroom each year when students at the University of Wyoming work on nominations of state businesses for the Better Business Bureau Torch Awards for Business Ethics.

The Torch Awards, in their 10th year, honor companies that demonstrate exemplary management practices, uphold high standards in relationships with customers, suppliers and shareholders, show honesty and integrity in marketing and advertising, and give back to their communities.

In Wyoming, it's up to Sean Valentine's Business Ethics students at UW to find businesses worthy of such an honor and to prepare the in-depth nominations. Students at Colorado State University and the University of Northern Colorado work on nominations for Colorado-based businesses.

"The Torch Awards provide realistic exposure to ethical problems and dilemmas and provide an opportunity for them to work with real companies," said Valentine. "They provide pro bono consulting and gain experience that they don't learn in a lecture format. I find this an enriching opportunity for students."

Sierra Trading Post, founded in 1986 by Keith Richardson, is the Wyoming recipient of the 2008 BBB Torch Awards for Business Ethics presented in April in Fort Collins. The company was nominated by Chris Gutierrez, business administration senior from Cheyenne, Michael Lucas, finance graduate from Laramie, Nicole Michel, business administration senior from Laramie, and A.J. Steen, business administration senior from Riverton.



Michael Lucas, Chris Gutierrez, Robert Koehler, Sierra Trading Post Director of Human Resources and Customer Service and Nicole Michel (not pictured A.J. Steen)

Sierra Trading Post, with retail stores in Cheyenne, Cody, Reno, Nev., and Meridian, Idaho, purchases name-brand overstocks and closeouts and passes savings on to customers via retail stores, the Internet and catalog sales.

The company employs about 766 people - 960 during the holidays - and mails more than 50 million catalogs a year in the United States. Telephone representatives take up to 200,000 calls monthly and the shipping department moves 5,500 to 7,500 orders daily.

Receiving the BBB Torch Award provides "confirmation of the things we try to instill in our employees," said Bob Koehler, human resource director and customer service director at Sierra Trading Post. "From our perspective, ethics is critical

to our success. Where retail is struggling right now, we haven't followed the same trends. We're showing healthy gains."

Koehler said the company's relationships with vendors, customers and employees are the reasons for that success. Vendors, for example, know that the company's "word is gold," he added, noting "we've positioned ourselves as a very reliable company."

And the company gives back big time to the community. Koehler said about a dozen organizations were helped substantially and another 30 to 40 received support at lower levels. Sierra Trading Post also is involved with Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce, Cheyenne LEADS, including the economic development initiative, Progress in Prosperity.

FOCUS ON FACULTY

Two New Faculty Members Join UW Sustainable Business Practices Program

Two recent additions in the College of Business will strengthen the Sustainable Business Practices program at the University of Wyoming.

Jose Antonio Rosa, professor, and Melea Press, an assistant professor, in the UW Department of Management and Marketing, are teaching a variety of marketing and sustainable business practices-related courses to graduate and undergraduate students.

They join Eric Arnould, UW's first Distinguished Professor of Sustainable Business Practices -- a position he accepted in fall 2007. Arnould is conducting research now while he and colleagues in the College of Business prepare revised graduate curricula that emphasizes sustainable business practices.

Two years ago, the Wyoming Legislature appropriated funds for three new faculty positions in the area of sustainable business practices.

"It is that funding we used to hire Eric, Jose and Melea," says Larry Weatherford, UW College of Business associate dean.

Rosa received his B.S. degree in industrial administration, marketing and organizational development from General Motors Institute, Flint, Mich.; an MBA from Amos Tuck School of Business Administration, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.; an M.A. in psychology



Jose Rosa

from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.; and a Ph.D. in both business administration and psychology from the University of Michigan.

Among his current research interests is a better understanding of the role played by body knowledge in creative imagination, both in the United States and among consumers in Latin American countries.

Rosa has studied how low-literacy and low-numeracy consumers navigate retail environments that are geared to medium to high levels of literacy and numeracy skills. He is currently involved in research into the use of coupons by ethnic minority groups and the life strategies applied by subsistence consumer merchants in Asia to manage the competing demands of family, customers and suppliers.

His research has been published in marketing and management journals, including *Marketing Science*, *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of the*



Melea Press

Academy of Marketing Science, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *Journal of Business Research*, and the *Academy of Management Journal*.

"Jose brings a wealth of complementary experience to bolster faculty expertise in the department. He draws on a deep reservoir of corporate know-how from his years working in the automobile industry which is coupled with outstanding doctoral training," Arnould says. "He has great passion for his current interests in sustainability issues that focus on what we call 'base-of-the-pyramid markets,' that is to say, markets in developing economies. Jose is a systems thinker, a man with a sharp focus on program implementation and with an eye for noticing the details others might neglect."

Press holds a B.A. degree in art history and German from Wellesley College and recently received her Ph.D. in business administration (marketing) from Pennsylvania State University.

Her research interests include values, communities and relationships. Press investigates ways that individuals develop and transform through their involvement with communities, specifically researching sustainable agriculture communities -- how they are marketed to consumers and differ from more mainstream shopping opportunities.

She plans to continue the work with local food groups that she started in Pennsylvania here in Wyoming and was recently elected to the Laramie Big Hollow Food Co-op board. Her research has been presented at the Association for Consumer Research, the Society for Macromarketing and the American Marketing Association conferences.

Press has been the co-owner of a consulting company in Seattle, Wash., and worked as a development coordinator/instructor for The Hope Project in New Delhi, India.

"Melea brings fresh perspectives to the department and is close to current theoretical debates in marketing," Arnould says. "Her focus has been on the agricultural side of sustainability issues in business, focusing on innovative value chains that link producers and consumers more closely together. Melea also brings a sense of aesthetics -- a sensitivity to the broader ethical and spiritual sides of the sustainability push in business."

FOCUS ON DEVELOPMENT

Planned Giving and the State Match

There are many exciting ways you can support the University of Wyoming, have your gift doubled, and still receive income for life.

Under the Wyoming State Legislature endowment challenge program, if you make a qualifying gift to any endowment at UW, you are eligible to have your gift matched dollar-for-dollar by the state.

The good news is that many types of gifts qualify for the state match, including planned gift opportunities such as charitable remainder trusts or gift annuities. With both

of these options, state matching funds can be secured when the value of the gift is at least \$50,000 and the UW Foundation is the irrevocable trustee of the charitable trust or annuity.

A charitable remainder trust, for example, allows you to give money, securities or other assets to a trust you create that will then pay you an income for life or for a period of years. Plus, you receive many tax benefits from a gift of this type, including income tax savings and capital gains tax avoidance.

Why is this a win-win for you and the university? When

you make your planned gift to UW, you will receive income and tax benefits and the university receives state matching funds immediately. Traditionally, the impact of planned gifts is not realized until well in the future. The state match makes it possible for your gift to go to work right now for the university and its many worthwhile programs including college or departmental excellence funds, professorships, graduate student fellowships, scholarships, technology and facilities.

A charitable remainder trust or gift annuity are just two



Assistant Dean Kent Noble

ways you can help our students, faculty, and outreach programs. To learn more about planned gifts, visit the UW Foundation planned giving website at <http://uwyo.giftlegacy.com>, or call Kent Noble at (307) 766-3043, or speak with your financial advisor.

FOCUS ON STUDENT PHILANTHROPY

UW Students Help Ease Tax Stress for Laramie Residents

The Albany County Public Library Foundation, in collaboration with the Internal Revenue Service and the University of Wyoming Department of Accounting, once again set up a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site at the local library. The mission of the program is to provide free income tax preparation for low and moderate income wage earners. The head of the program in Laramie, Paul Heimer, worked with the Department of Accounting to provide students with an exceptional service opportunity that serves both the university and the entire Laramie Community.



Students who volunteered for the VITA program received training and then gained first hand experience helping tax

payers file federal income tax returns. In all, forty university students participated in the program. Besides working with the Department of Accounting, Heimer also worked with Professor Delaney of the Law School, and with an AmeriCorps member assigned to the library by the Center for Volunteer Service who helped recruit students on campus. For accounting students, many of whom will go on to become certified public accountants and prepare federal tax returns for a living, this was an excellent opportunity to gain first hand experience with this aspect of their future profession.

Students seemed to both enjoy and benefit from the program. According to Penne Ainsworth, Chair of the Department of Accounting, many of the students took part in the VITA program last year and were delighted to be able to participate again this year. One student noted, "It is so cool to be able to help people and know that you have really learned something from your classes!"

Heimer estimated that a record 550 households, a 20% increase from 2007, filed their tax return through this program between January 26 and April 15, 2008.