Department of Marketing: Administration

Wayne Slough, Ph.D., assistant professor, was named interim chair of the marketing department on July 1, 2016, upon the retirement of Michael Little, Ph.D. Slough has taught at the School of Business since 2010, bringing many years of industry experience to the classroom, with particular expertise in sales and sales management. “I am pleased to have the opportunity to serve the department, school and external community in this way,” says Slough.

Stephen Hamilton-Archer joined the VCU School of Business as marketing program coordinator in May 2016. He holds a B.S. in mass communications from VCU and a post-baccalaureate certificate in business administration. He is currently an M.B.A. candidate in the School of Business and will complete his degree in May 2017. “I’m really excited to serve in my role as the marketing coordinator, and I’ve learned so much about my position thus far. I enjoy working alongside the faculty in my department and look forward to having a successful school year,” he says.

For questions regarding the marketing department, please contact Wayne Slough, Ph.D., at sloughwm@vcu.edu or Stephen Hamilton-Archer at hamiltonarsa@vcu.edu.

Mandela Washington Fellows at VCU

Through the collaborative effort of the Global Education Office, L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs and the School of Business, VCU applied and was selected — for the second year in a row — to host a group of Mandela Washington Fellows this summer. Fifty fellows, who represented 30 African nations, arrived with diverse backgrounds, skills and professional experiences and were connected with either the School of Business or the Wilder School. The 25 fellows studying at the School of Business participated in a six-week intensive business and entrepreneurship program that introduced new topics weekly and concluded with a closing reception on July 29.

Brian Brown, Ph.D., and Van Wood, Ph.D., in the marketing department played significant roles in this program, as they facilitated lectures on brand strategy and globalization and sustainability. Outside of class, the fellows had a chance to explore Richmond and learn more about American culture.
The marketing department is excited to announce Suzanne Makarem, Ph.D., as the new director of creative initiatives, or “creativity czar.” In this role, she will be planning and organizing programs that spur creativity as part of the School of Business’ strategic plan known as EPIC, where the C stands for creative culture.

Makarem took some time to speak with us about the CREATE process and upcoming creative initiatives that help support the EPIC strategic plan.

**In your own words, can you explain what EPIC is and the CREATE process?**

EPIC is our strategic plan that focuses on the values and ideas we want to have in the School of Business. It’s comprised of experiential, hands-on learning for students; problem-solving activities; impactful research; and a creative culture.

Within EPIC, we have CREATE, a problem-solving structure where you start by asking questions that Clarify and Refine the issue, then Explore and Analyze possible solutions. Next, you Translate these solutions into actions that can then be Executed. We hope that by having one common process across subjects with an acronym that reminds students of the school’s vision to “drive the future of business through the power of creativity,” we will make this process memorable.

When students enter the job market and are given a project or case, they won’t need to stop and ask how do I get started. Instead, they’ll automatically think to CREATE or, even better, to creatively CREATE!

**Can you tell me a little about your role as the “creativity czar”?**

I am responsible for reaching out to faculty, staff and students to plan and organize activities that can foster a creative culture at the School of Business. These activities are a continuation of the work we’ve been doing at the school for the past three years, and this year we want to focus on seeing creativity at work by embracing and bringing a wider awareness of this essential part of our strategic plan to our internal and external constituents.

One way we are doing this is through the artist-in-residence program. With dynamic artwork installed right in the atrium, the School of Business will have a physical representation of the creative ideas and processes that are imbued throughout our programs. We know that within a creative environment, students can learn more, become more engaged and enjoy the learning process more, making them better prepared to tackle problems in an increasingly complex world.

**What plans/programs do you have for this upcoming year? Is there a calendar?**

We have a great lineup of activities. For the fall semester, faculty and staff are able to participate in improvisation classes to help enhance the creative process through different thinking perspectives, free generation of new ideas and comfort with uncertainty and failure. We also have creativity workshops focused on soliciting ideas from faculty, staff and students to help prioritize actions that we can take together as a school and as individuals to make our culture more creative.

We are able to train our minds to make decisions more strategically, as well as increase creativity and innovation through mindfulness and meditation. So, throughout the semester, we will offer workshops focused on these two areas. In addition, we will recommend Headspace, a meditation app for beginners, to faculty, staff and students.

We will resume our TenTenTalks (10 slides, 10 questions). Our guests are local entrepreneurs, leaders at local for-profit and nonprofit organizations and other creative members of the Richmond community. They will discuss how they approach their businesses through the lens of creativity, and how creativity plays a role in the decision-making process.

Beginning Oct. 1, students, faculty and staff can participate in the Creative Sprint, a 30-day initiative of short, daily activities designed to get the creative juices flowing. Noah Scalin, our artist-in-residence, will lead this initiative as he works on an interactive installation at the school. The Creative Sprint will culminate in an all-day event celebrating creativity at the School of Business on Oct. 31, when Scalin’s installation will be revealed.

For more information about these and other events throughout the academic year, please review the Creativity Initiatives calendar at goo.gl/9fjahq.
Alyssa Squitieri, Class of 2016  Account manager, C.H. Robinson

Since earning her Bachelor of Science in marketing from the VCU School of Business in May 2016, Alyssa Squitieri has landed an exciting position as an account manager at C.H. Robinson, a Fortune 500 company. Her responsibilities include building relationships with current customers and interacting with businesses to identify inefficiencies in their supply chain and offer customized solutions.

Squitieri discovered this job opportunity at the VCU School of Business Career Fair. “To prepare, I searched for open positions in sales or marketing offered by companies who would be in attendance,” she says. “As I read more about the history and operations of each business, I began to focus my attention on company mission statements. What attracted me to C.H. Robinson was its mission and commitment to empowering its employees and providing exceptional value to customers and suppliers.”

Squitieri utilized her personal-selling skills to explain why she would be the best candidate for the opening, and she credits her marketing background with helping her throughout the entire process. “I was really surprised by how much my education has helped me stand out in my role to both my management and my customers. Not only do I understand my company and industry better, but also I know how to interact with my customers and listen to their needs on a personal level to provide solutions they may not have even been aware of.” She recalled her new associate training exercises and says she felt most prepared in the group of new hires for the company.

“The best advice I can give to current marketing students would be to attend the fall or spring career fair. That was hands down one of the most beneficial things I ever did to advance my career goals. Also, don’t undervalue the resources the School of Business provides within the Career Center. Be sure to reach out to your professors, as they are very willing to help get you where you want to go. And lastly, network as much as possible. Anytime you have a chance to learn about someone, take the time to do it because you never know when you could be standing next to the person that can help you get ahead,” says Squitieri.

Read more at go.vcu.edu/mktg-alumni.

Hunter Jennings, Class of 2017  Marketing intern, WestRock

How did you land an internship with WestRock for the summer, and what tasks have you performed?

I first came into contact with WestRock regarding a summer internship after the fall 2015 career fair in Snead Hall. At the time, the company was unsure about offering an intern position in marketing, but I remained in contact and followed up with some of the their campus recruiters. I reintroduced myself to them during the spring 2016 career fair, and they remembered who I was. Eventually, I received an email that I was selected for a phone interview, and from there I was able to secure a spot in WestRock’s Home, Health and Beauty Department, which specializes in plastic consumer packaging.

Since receiving the internship, I’ve completed roughly seven projects that ranged from researching brands and market trends to analyzing consumer data to find potential growth opportunities for the business. This internship has been an incredibly rewarding and fulfilling experience for me. During my time there, I’ve been able to gain positive exposure to real marketing problems and challenges, which I know will benefit me in the future.

We understand you are the incoming president of VCU’s student chapter of the American Marketing Association. Why did you choose to serve in this role?

I chose to be the president of the American Marketing Association VCU Chapter because I have new ideas about how we can potentially run the club’s operations, rebrand ourselves and provide marketing students with skills and knowledge that branch out from the current marketing curriculum at VCU. Marketing is an incredibly fast-paced and competitive industry that has essentially transformed itself over the last decade or so. Anything that can give School of Business students an edge over the competition is something that I would like to learn about and share with the club.

As you look to graduation next May, how has the School of Business helped prepare you for your career?

Being a business student at VCU allows you access to incredibly knowledgeable professors and an amazingly vibrant urban community. It’s tremendously important to branch out beyond the classroom and go to events in Richmond to network and meet people. Having access to a city full of alumni and professionals who are eager to share their experiences has been incredibly important for my focus and growth as a marketing professional.

Read more at go.vcu.edu/mktg-alumni.
Summer 2016 marketing interns

For three months, 12 senior marketing students served as interns for 10 different organizations in the Richmond area. In addition to tackling real-world marketing challenges at their respective places of business, these students wrote weekly journal entries about their tasks, responsibilities and lessons learned. Their assignments ranged from app development and direct selling to public relations and social responsibility efforts. The group convened on Aug. 8 in Snead Hall where the students, many of them accompanied by their respective summer supervisors, gave formal presentations about their experiences. Students discussed how the internships not only complemented their classroom instruction, but also better prepared them for the workplace by providing them the opportunity to interact with professionals and customers in actual business settings. Students received college credit for completing not only the hours-worked requirement, but the academic requirements as well.

COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

VCU Sales Management Forum

Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2016, 5-7 p.m.
WestRock HQ, Richmond, Virginia

VCU Athletics: Managing the Sales Function
Ed McLaughlin, director of athletics/associate VP, Virginia Commonwealth University

Friday, Feb. 3, 2017, Noon-2:30 p.m.
Luncheon meeting, School of Business, Snead Hall

Successfully Selling to a Centralized Procurement Function

Friday, April 28, 2017, Noon-2:30 p.m.
Luncheon meeting, School of Business, Snead Hall

Elevating the Conversation: Selling to the C-suite

VCU Marketing Roundtable

Friday, Oct. 14, 2016, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Marketing RVA:
Attracting and Keeping Creative Talent
Conversation catalyst: Lucy Meade, marketing and development director, Venture Richmond

Friday, Jan. 27, 2017, 11:30 a.m-1:30 p.m.
Marketing RVA:
Expanding Economic Development
Conversation catalyst: Barry Matherly, president and CEO, Greater Richmond Partnership

For more information, contact Wayne Slough, Ph.D., by phone at (804) 828-7089 or by email at sloughwm@vcu.edu.