



Marietta College

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND  
CAREER DEVELOPMENT



**Make It Happen!**

Volume 2 Issue 4

December 2023

Dear Friend,

Have you heard? Marietta College's placement rate has soared from 91% within six months of graduation in May 2022 to an outstanding 97% within just four months of graduation in May 2023. As we set our sights on May 2024 and beyond, our goal is to sustain and elevate this upward trajectory, aiming for not only increased placement rates but also a boost in the starting salaries of our graduates.



To propel this initiative forward, we piloted the Career Preparation Across the Curriculum (CPAC) initiative this fall. Our goal was to integrate career-related topics into a number of targeted courses. We also conducted evening workshops on career-related subjects, while continuing to offer personalized assistance to students. Our aim is to inspire a forward-thinking perspective, encouraging students to envision and prepare for life after college.

In this edition of *Make It Happen*, three esteemed alumni graciously share insights into their professional journeys post-graduation. Their stories offer valuable perspectives and guidance for our current students. Additionally, you'll find highlights from our dynamic Fall 2023 programming.

As we approach the year's end, Ricci Bailey, the Assistant Director of the CECD, and I will be dedicating the last few weeks of December and the first week of January to finalize our list of stand-alone career-related workshops, and we could use your help. If you would like to share your career-related expertise and experiences with our students, whether in person or virtually, we invite you to reach out to us at [cc@marietta.edu](mailto:cc@marietta.edu) to let us know.

Furthermore, if your firm is actively seeking interns or permanent employees, we would be delighted to showcase any job or internship opportunities you have within our student community.

Wishing you a joyous and healthy New Year,

Senior Director of Entrepreneurship and Career Development  
Jacqueline Khorassani, Ph.D.  
Marietta College

## FLEXIBILITY IS THE KEY!

**By: John D. Foster '74**

During my last year at Marietta, and like most aspiring graduates, I was evaluating options going forward. I was graduating as a Business and Economics major with a minor in Psychology and Sociology. I had also served as the resident manager and dining steward at the DU fraternity house for two years along with a past as a banquet service worker. I mention this because I was seriously thinking of pursuing a career in hotel and restaurant management and actually applied for and was accepted for post-graduate studies at Cornell and Michigan State, the two best master's programs in the country in this field. At the same time, I had been working with Marietta's Career Placement Office taking interviews with several tier-one companies that Marietta was so good at attracting. Anita Ballard was the Career Office Director at the time. One that stood out for me was Jones and Laughlin Steel (J&L) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania which was the third-largest steel producer in the country at the time. Both pursuits would have drawn upon what I felt were personal skills developed at MC such as dealing positively with people and problems, be it the customer service work required in the hotel and restaurant realm or sales and marketing in the industrial sector.



It was here that some important decision-making had to occur - 2 or 3 more years in the academic world or jump into the business world to make a paycheck. For better or worse, I chose the latter and embarked upon what turned out to be a very satisfying career in one of the mainstay industries in the United States. Needless to say, the story here was only beginning, and flexibility at the ripe old age of 21 and beyond was a key element.

My first 6 months were spent training in Pittsburgh and then being transferred to Detroit for 6 more months of hands-on training in the field. At the end of that stint, I was again transferred, this time to Houston, Texas to sell and market the company's steel products in that very challenging market. In fact, the United States steel industry, in general, was challenged in the late 70-s and early 80s and it was three years later when J&L merged with another struggling steel company from Youngstown, Ohio which transferred me back to Detroit. That office was a bright star for J&L but they were already considering buying another struggling steel company from Cleveland and my concern began to grow about their long-term viability. I expressed my concern to senior management and they made several promises regarding my career path. These promises did not materialize however and I was attracted to another more specialized steel company in Colorado. So, after a year and a half in Detroit, I accepted the steel marketing job in Pueblo, Colorado.

Flexibility again came into play since after 3 months of basic training with that mill's product lines, I was sent to Chicago to introduce them to that market. A great place for a young person to live but indeed a marketing challenge for a supplier 1500 miles away. The assignment went well, however, to the point that I was brought back to the Colorado operation as a product manager. Two years into that assignment I was promoted to a regional manager based in Los Angeles, California where I enjoyed three years of West Coast living and building further on my career resume. Then it was back to Colorado and managing three of the company's five major product groups. As well as it was going, the difficulties of the steel industry malaise were being felt here as well. I loved the steel industry but again had concerns about whether the domestic mill management mentality was effectively dealing with the reality of the malaise.

It was then that I was offered a position by a German trading company in the international steel trading sector with a division in San Francisco which, by definition, was well beyond the domestic industry sector. So, it was here where I was charged with growing their sales revenue albeit by way of importing foreign steel into the United States. It turned out to be a very exciting 5 years of global travel and customer relations building that caught the eye of the German senior management. And it was then they chose to transfer me back to their headquarters in Houston, Texas where over 20 years I rose from a product manager to Group Vice President, to EVP, then COO of US operations, and finally CEO of the US and Canadian divisions and COO of all the Americas.

This all made for a happy semi-retirement after almost 50 years and a reason to maintain my own little one-man trading and consulting company as I wind down a varied and broad-based career. Perhaps the key word is indeed flexibility but my time at Marietta set a great foundation where I learned discipline and dedication from my football and rowing extracurriculars as well as the critical thinking dynamics I learned by way of the MC academics platform.

My time at Marietta set a great foundation where I learned discipline, dedication, and critical thinking ...

John Foster is the Founder and President of Partners in Steel International Inc., a consulting, marketing, and financial services firm for international steel trading organizations.

## THE INGREDIENTS FOR A FULFILLING AND IMPACTFUL CAREER

**By: Pamela Lankford '89**

My journey with a passion for entrepreneurship began the moment I was born, although, of course, I didn't know it. My grandfather had started a machine shop in 1948 and after my father finished his Air Force service, he had also joined the business. By the time I was born, my parents had taken the sole proprietorship and turned it into a corporation, where I would spend most of my summer days and after-school time. When I was very young, it was a lot of fun to interact with customers, help (mainly by watching of course) the employees, and be given office tasks to accomplish. I'm sure helping with the bookkeeping is where my love of numbers today evolved. Of course, the older I got, the more I wanted to be like other kids who got to play in their neighborhood during the summers and after school, so it wasn't always as fun. However, the older I got the more responsibility I got to take on and I can still remember with pride the first sale I made on my own at a very young age because no one else was available.



My dad was also very civic-minded and a proponent of making the community as business-friendly as possible and often advocated with local, state, and federal legislators with ways to accomplish this. He also was involved in initiatives to attract and grow businesses in the area; what I would later learn was called economic development. As I graduated from high school, my family also purchased an old gas station which was in dire need of renovations. Helping navigate through the governmental maze of this sparked in me a desire to help other businesses.

Marietta College had an entrepreneurship program that at the time was very focused on business fundamentals so I had classes in accounting, management, marketing, economics, and my favorite, Small Business Consulting. In this class, we worked with a small business for a semester as consultants and provided them with recommendations on a specific problem. This, along with getting to know the staff at the Marietta College Business Resource Center, cemented my desire to work with and help small businesses.

Luckily for me, about a year after graduation, the McDonough Center for Leadership and Business received a grant from the Ohio Department of Development to establish a Small Business Development Center, a program of the U.S. Small Business Administration. Although only a part-time position was available, I excitedly accepted the opportunity to get to work with small businesses. But I also had my own wedding consulting business and stayed actively involved in the two family businesses which gave me insight into the challenges business owners face.

Luckily for me, the position evolved into a full-time position and I spent the next 26 years getting to work with small businesses in a four-county region. Along the way I knew that to provide the best service to my clients, furthering my education would be beneficial so I obtained my MBA from Ohio University and got to do a small business consulting project in Hungary.

It was an incredibly fulfilling role to play in economic development as small businesses are crucial to our economy. I got to work with over 3600 clients, assisting in the creation of 1300 jobs, securing \$30 million in capital infusion, helping companies increase sales by \$64 million, and helping to start 375 new businesses. To be able to drive around the area and see businesses still thriving and growing or to hear how my encouragement helped a budding entrepreneur is incredibly meaningful to me.

Currently, I am fortunate to still encourage entrepreneurship through my oversight of the Building Bridges to Careers Small Business Incubator, teaching Entrepreneurship 302 - Feasibility and Planning, and working with students in area schools to gain awareness of entrepreneurial mindset. Following my dad's example, I have always been active in my community which has led to a deep engagement with others who are working to make the Mid-Ohio Valley a thriving community. So many lessons were learned along the way, such as taking the opportunity to do what you love even though the circumstances might not be ideal, following through on what you say you will do and the rewards will follow, being an advocate for your profession, for those you serve, and your organization's mission, and lastly share your passion and support your community. To me, these have been the ingredients for a fulfilling and impactful career promoting entrepreneurship and giving back to the area I love.

Follow through on what you say you will do and the rewards will follow!

Pamela Lankford is the Director of Logistics and Epicenter at [Building Bridges to Careers](#) and an adjunct Instructor at Marietta College.

## BEING RELENTLESS AND ALL IN

**By: Eric Dowler '07**

I graduated in 2007 with a BA in Human Resources Management and a minor in Sports Management. Growing up in the Parkersburg, WV area, I always had my sights set on working at "Public Debt" which later became the [Bureau of the Fiscal Service](#) (a Dept. of the U.S. Treasury). That said, landing a gig at Public Debt was VERY rare back then.

As I continued my efforts in applying to Public Debt, my professional career started as a 4:00 a.m. Package Dispatch Supervisor at the local UPS facility. I was hired in with one other person as part of a team bringing automation via technology to the facility. This part-time, low salary, and way too early in the morning job, ultimately became a springboard to where I am today.



Fast forward nearly 15 years and I'm now a Solution Consultant for the most epic enterprise software company in the world, ServiceNow. The journey has been filled with many ups and downs, awesome people, and a laser focus on civil service and being a contributing member of society.

Let's take a step back to the beginning. After a few years of hustling applications, I finally landed a gig at Fiscal Service. Fellow MC classmate, David Bright '07, is ultimately who I have to thank for getting me across the finish line and being my mentor. I started my federal career as an entry-level HR Specialist focused on classification and staffing. Kickstarted by my time at UPS, I kept leaning into the technology, or lack of technology, used to manage day-to-day operations. As I grinded away at learning the business I kept myself at the table by figuring out new and more innovative ways to manage work always with a focus on saving effort, time, and money.

Community involvement has been just as important along the way. Coming off a pretty intense but rewarding rowing career at MC, I coached [rowing at Marietta High School](#) for several years. Being intertwined into a community through coaching has opened up other opportunities including my involvement with [Marietta Main Street](#), becoming the Director of the [Rivers, Trails & Ales](#) Festival, and residing as President of the Harmar Rowing Club.

I kept myself at the table by figuring out new and more innovative ways to manage work always with a focus on saving effort, time, and money.

To conclude, I encourage people to take full advantage of every situation. You never know when it'll be something that kicks off an epic journey for your career and life. And be mindful of the people part of that journey. I hope you find your David who'll mentor and help you take on the next step. Now get out there and get after it with every ounce you have!

*Eric Dowler graduated from Marietta College with a BA in HR Management. He is a Federal Solution Consultant with ServiceNow in addition to his roles as President of the Harmar Rowing Club and Director of the Rivers, Trails & Ales Festival. You may contact Eric at [eric.dowler@servicenow.com](mailto:eric.dowler@servicenow.com).*

## A SAMPLE OF FALL 2023 WORKSHOPS, EVENTS & CLASS ACTIVITIES

### September 14, 2023: Speed Networking



**Nearly 70 students, faculty, staff, mentors and advisory board members participated in this event.**

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### October 2, 2023: The BIG Workshop

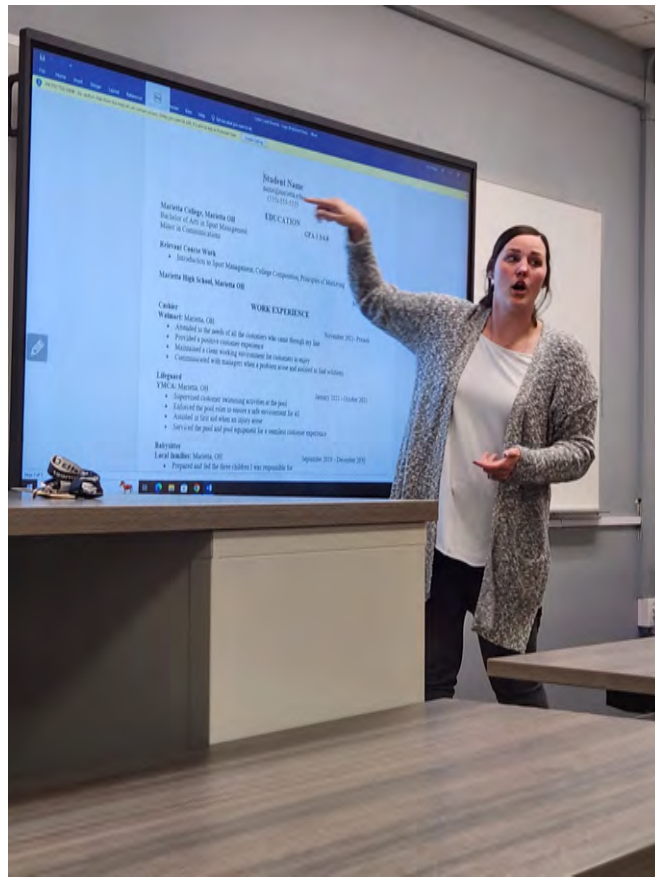


**Over 200 entrepreneurs, resource providers, college and high school students and faculty participated in the BIG Workshop.**

**Pictured: Keynote speaker, Julie Wilkes '98.**

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## Career Preparation Workshops



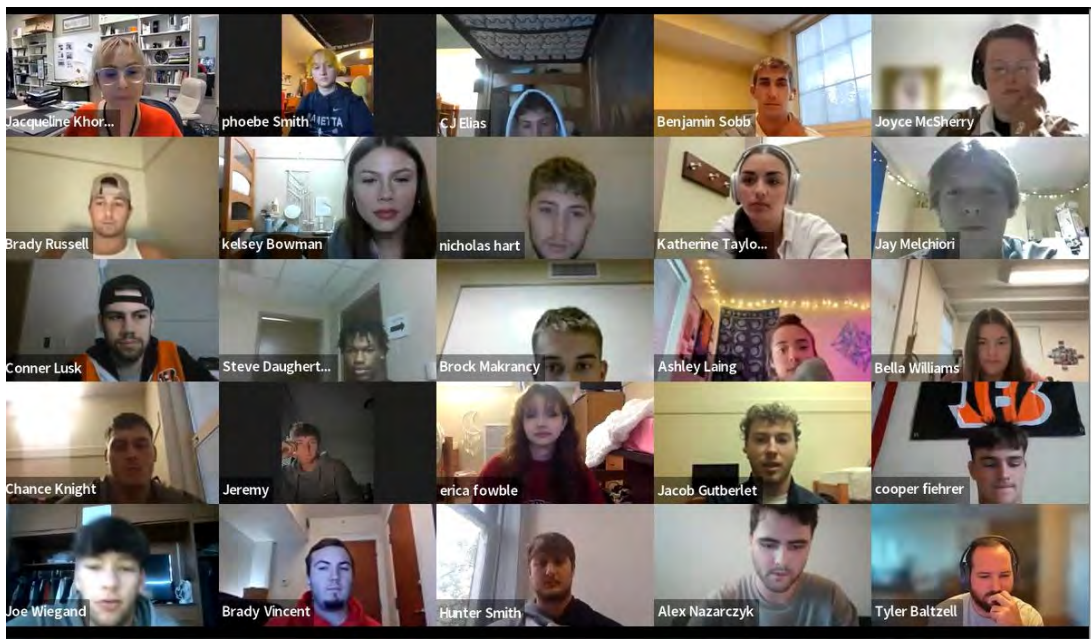
**Pictured: Ricci Bailey, Assistant Director of CECD, is conducting a workshop on resume writing.**

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## Fall 2023 Entrepreneurial Mindset Class



**Above: We don't sit behind our desks all the time!  
Below: Sometimes we have a virtual meeting with our mentors. (With Tyler Blatzell '15)**



## November 30, 2023: PioBiz Competition Round 1: Problem/Solution

Pictured below: The top ten award winners

Row one, left to right Alexis Sommers (first place), Olivia Martin (second place), Conner Wright (fifth place), Jacob Stern (seventh place), Loreena Williams & Gavin Ray (tenth place)  
Row two: Jared Farnsworth (third place), Jayden Austermiller (fourth place), Gabriel Torres (sixth place), Kelsey Bowman (eight place), Tanner Hurst & Jarrett Parks (ninth place).



**Pictured Below: Olivia Martin, Jared Farnsworth, and Tanner Hurst & Jarrett Parks next to their posters.**





### **Big Blue Thrift Store is now a Practicum**

**The [Big Blue Practicum](#) is a laboratory for students who would like to put their business-related skills into practice and acquire new skills while maintaining a high-functioning non-profit business organization.**



**Big Blue weekly staff meeting**



# THANK YOU SPONSORS!

## JOIN US AS A SPONSOR

It is, in part, due to the generosity of our sponsors that we can offer our cocurricular and extracurricular events and workshops to the community either free of charge or at a discount. We do this because our goal is to build a network of young and seasoned entrepreneurs that together create economic, social, and environmental values through collaboration and cooperation. [Read More.](#)

### Platinum



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### Gold



## Silver



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## Bronze



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## Special Thanks to Our Community Partners



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