



# Make It Happen!

**Volume 4 Issue 4**  
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# A Message From Senior Director

## Holiday Cheers & Big Moves

Happy holidays from CECD!

As the semester wraps, we're grateful for the mentors, partners, and colleagues who help our students turn ideas into action.

We're also excited to share that CECD will soon relocate to the new Milone Center for Academic & Career Success, a one-stop hub on the first floor of Legacy Library that brings together student-support teams in one collaborative space. This move will make our services easier to find and will spark new cross-campus programming with Education Abroad, the Academic Resource Center, and the Communication and Writing Centers, all designed to benefit students' success from day one through life after graduation.

Our refreshed emphasis on learning by doing continues to grow. This fall's Landmark Experience Day showcased how Pioneers lead, explore, create, and connect through hands-on projects, setting the tone for even more experiential opportunities this spring.

If you'd like to make a direct impact, consider serving as a mentor. Your experience and guidance help students navigate their next steps with confidence. To learn more or get involved, email me at [khorassj@marietta.edu](mailto:khorassj@marietta.edu).

Go Pios!

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Jac', is displayed on a light blue background.

Jacqueline Khorassani, Ph.D., Senior Director

Center for Entrepreneurship and Career  
Development, Marietta College

# How My Marietta Experience Built the Foundation for My Career

**Brett M. Burns '15, CPA, CGFM**

**Director of Assurance, Perry & Associates CPAs, A.C.**



Looking back on my time at Marietta College, some of the most meaningful experiences came from juggling academics with real-world work. I spent nearly my entire college career interning with the U.S. Department of the Treasury, which meant learning how to manage coursework while handling responsibilities that had real consequences. That experience strengthened my understanding of accounting and made my classes more relevant and practical.

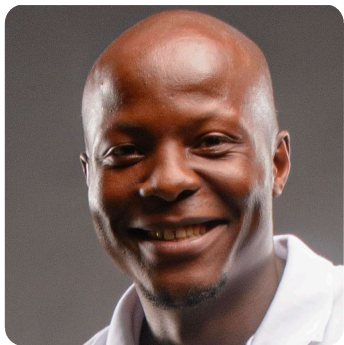
In the classroom, Professors **Johnson** and **Mead** played a major role in shaping my path. They pushed me technically and helped build the foundation that still supports my work today. Their enthusiasm for the profession is ultimately what encouraged me to pursue public accounting. After graduating, I stayed with the Treasury Department for a short time while constantly remembering the passion and skills they had instilled in me for a career in public accounting. Less than a year later, I made the move to a CPA firm to take on new challenges and grow as an auditor while completing the CPA exam. During my junior and senior years, I also had the chance to participate in several case-study team competitions, winning two of them. Those experiences gave me confidence that, even coming from a small liberal arts college in Appalachia, I could compete with students from much larger business programs in more developed areas. It reinforced the quality of the education I received at Marietta and the strength of the Marietta College Business & Economics Department.

Today, I serve as the Director of Assurance at Perry & Associates, CPAs, where I help lead our audit and advisory practices across Ohio, West Virginia, Maryland, and Tennessee. My work focuses on developing people, creating and leading vision and strategy, and building teams that can meet the demands of governmental and nonprofit auditing and accounting. Tools like CliftonStrengths have become a key part of how we support growth and leadership within the firm. Marietta provided me with more than technical accounting skills. It provided practical experience, strong mentors, and a foundation of confidence that's stayed with me throughout my career and has helped me develop from a technical professional into a strategic leader. I'm grateful for those years and for the opportunity to stay connected with the College and its students today through attending campus events, returning to mentor students, and serving on the Marietta College Alumni Association Council.

**The most growth we experience as students, professionals, and human beings is when we make ourselves uncomfortable.**

If your goal is to make yourself comfortable, then you're missing the challenges that, while difficult in the moment, catalyze your development. Marietta College gives you everything you need to achieve this, but you have to take advantage of it. Be curious, seek out experiences, and don't be afraid of hard things. They end up being the most valuable.

# Welcome New Mentors!



**Nick Kadima**

Co-Founder & Business Development  
Manager

KadiVia



**Cynthia Freedman**

Business Advisor

Minority Business Assistance Center  
(MBAC)

The Appalachian Center for Economic  
Networks, Inc.



**Daniel Spurgeon '23**

Financial Advisor

Commonwealth Financial Services LLC



**Michael Branch**

Senior Minister

Burnt Hill Community Church



# Summer

## Internship Highlights

In the 2025 Summer semester, nearly 100 Marietta College students completed credit-bearing internships. From Ohio to Pennsylvania, Texas to Tennessee, and even as far as Japan, Italy, and Brazil, our students gained valuable experience across the country and around the world.

Here are just a few highlights from our students' internship experiences.



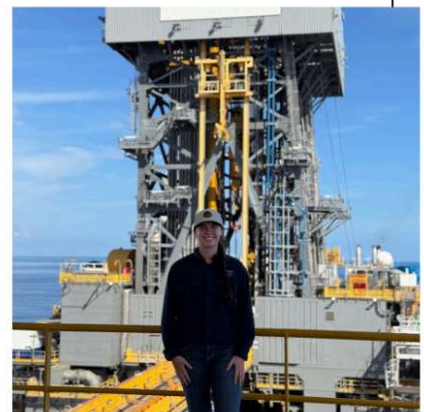
### Connor Rothandler '28 Environmental Science

Quito, Ecuador and at Universidad de San Francisco, shooting 11 hours of wedding coverage, with videography of the ceremony and a highlight video of the day. He compiled a full online gallery of 40 10x10 images.

### Abby Shartle '26 Petroleum Engineering & Geology

Wells intern (drilling) for Chevron's deep water assets.

"I was able to gain hands on experience and find my interest in possible career paths."





## Ethan Miller '26

### Petroleum Engineering

Reservoir engineering, dealing with shrink and retainage reports and forecasting in engineering softwares.

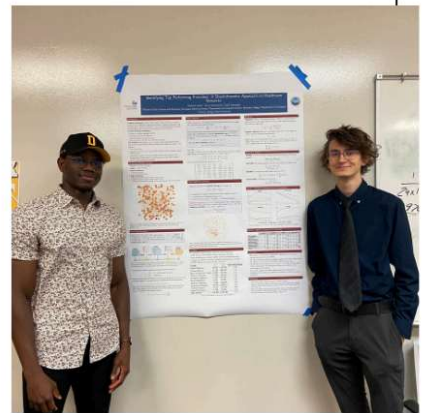
"I learned the complete process of a reservoir engineer and what they do in a day to day basis. Built my communication skills by working alongside my team this summer. Gained field experience

## Corey Verkouteren '27

### Computer Science

Developed a method of ranking healthcare providers based on their performance and impact within healthcare networks.

"I got in depth experience with multiple python packages, linear algebra, graph theory, data analysis, database management, professional research and writing, and of course got to meet a bunch of other people interested in research level computing over Korean BBQ, on hikes, and escaping Bigfoot!"



## William Linse '26

### Petroleum Engineering

Drilling engineering intern for Ovintiv.

"I gained a thorough understanding of how drilling works for an operator in the oil and gas industry. I also had the opportunity to gain valuable drilling field exposure in both the Anadarko and Permian basins respectively."



## Faith Schanks '28

### History

Interned at The Cockayne Farmstead in Glen Dale, WV, learning how to curate an exhibit, better my social media skills, give tours, support community programming, and archival research.

“My internship gave me hands-on experiences that strengthened both my personal and professional skills.”



## Hunter Bittinger '26

### Petroleum Engineering

Supported daily well servicing operations, ensuring safe and efficient work practices, operated and maintained rig equipment, and collaborated with crew members in challenging conditions.

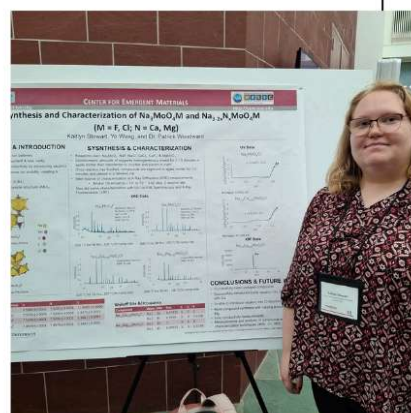
“I got hands on experience within the industry. Learning different problems and solutions that occur within the service side of the industry.”

## Kaitlyn Stewart '25

### Physics

Participated in the Center for Emergent Materials (CEM) internship at OSU. I worked in Dr. Woodward's chemistry lab synthesizing and characterizing  $\text{Na}_3\text{MoO}_4\text{M}$  and  $\text{Na}_{3-2x}\text{N}_x\text{MoO}_4\text{M}$  ( $\text{M} = \text{F}, \text{Cl}; \text{N} = \text{Ca}, \text{Mg}$ ).

“I learned how to work with people outside of my science discipline and had lab experience at a bigger school.”



## Maxwell King '26

### Biology & Entrepreneurship



“Education team” member and Counselor at the Wilds, spending a majority of his internship leading programs on the senses of animals or aquatic ecology. He was able to be a part of an American burying beetle release on the Wilds property. Most of the day was spent digging holes and filling them with rat carcasses and pairs of beetles.

“The most beneficial thing I gained from my summer internship was a long list of connections and friendships as well as skills and experiences in the animal management and science communication field.”

## Steven Rhodes '27

### Petroleum Engineering

Worked as a Frack Hand on a small hydraulic fracking company in southeastern Illinois.

“I learned the full process of fracking as well as small minor details that would not be learned unless it was hands on.”





# Fall 2025 Event Recap

Our professional development events help students prepare for life beyond college by developing the mindset and skills today's employers are looking for. From mock interviews and financial literacy workshops to innovation challenges and pitch competitions, these experiences are designed to sharpen your problem-solving, boost your adaptability, and set you apart in the job market. Explore what's ahead and take the next step on your path.

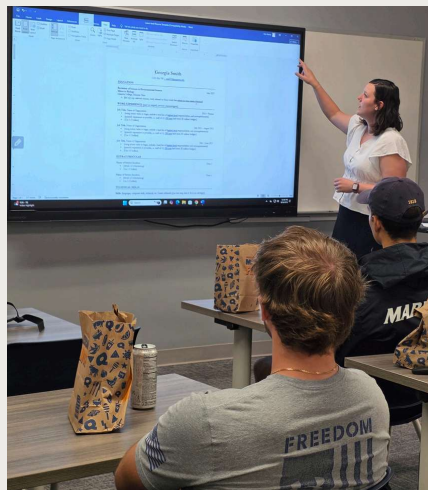
Below are a few of the Fall 2025 semesters events:



## **Kickstart Connections**

**September 4**

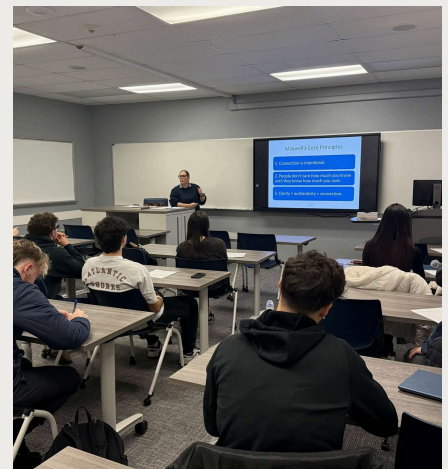
A dynamic networking event to connect students with faculty, staff, and mentors - offering meaningful conversations, mutual learning, and pathways to internships or employment.



## **Resume Revamp**

**September 16**

A workshop on do's and don'ts of resume writing led by Ricci Bailey, Assistant Directors, CECD,



## **Communication Excellence**

**November 12**

An event led by Professor Ann Nicely to polish email etiquette and sharpen all professional communications for Marietta College students.

# Landmark Experience Day Highlights

Landmark Experience Day 2025 - a signature component of a Marietta College education - offered students the chance to showcase their work, share their experiences, and discover even more opportunities to shape their futures! This year began with the *Power of Experience* alumni panel, where Jared Farnsworth '23, Alexis Sommers '24, Kaylie Ward '24, Melvin Shuler II '19, and Ross Keller '20 shared how their experiences at Marietta College has propelled them into fulfilling careers. Throughout the day, students, faculty, and staff participated in 24 concurrent sessions, spanning all academic disciplines, showcasing the skills and real world experiences that Marietta College students have received throughout their Marietta College career. The day continued with more than 150 poster and digital presentations, filling the DBRC with an abundance of student experiences, research, creative works, and reflections. Landmark Experience Day concluded with *Opportunity Connect*, a networking event featuring nearly 40 representatives from study abroad programs, graduate schools, and career organizations.





# PioBiz Round One: Problem/Solution



Round 1 of the PioBiz Competition involves identifying a problem worth solving and describing a new product or service that addresses the issue.

This year's competition was delivered in PowerPoint format. Each team of students had up to five minutes to pitch their idea and an additional five minutes to answer the judges' questions. The key components of the presentations were:

1. **Problem:** A clear description of the problem
2. **Solution:** Description of the good or service that solves the problem
3. **Customer Segment:** Who has this problem? Define the characteristics of your typical customer.
4. **Unique Advantages:** The degree to which the good/service has an advantage over the alternatives.
5. **Use of AI:** Description of how AI was utilized.
6. **Future Plans:** What needs to be done next?

The top five winners were selected by a panel of the following four judges

1. **Kristin Meeks:** Owner of WV Social Media Consultants
2. **Dr. Jeremy May:** Assistant Professor of Biology and Environmental Science at Marietta College
3. **Rocky Peck '88:** Owner of Rocky Peck Sales & Marketing LLC
4. **Suzanne Schultz:** Executive Director at Betsy Mills Club and Owner of Canvas Fine Arts

Judges selected Cupcakin' Around Inclusion (pictured above) – Bre Herrick '26 (Special & Elementary Education) and Connor Reed '26 (Finance) for the first place, \$200 award. In second place for \$180, SmartSort – Camryn Yoho '29 (Sports Medicine), Tyler Blackwell '29 (Computer Science), and Kam Sabree '29 (Undecided). And third place for \$160, TerraSole – Joseph Tenta '28 (Sport Management) and Bryce Simé '29 (Management).

In addition to the judges' selections, the audience also had a chance to vote for their favorite product. The crowd's support was evenly split between TerraSole and Chameleon Deck— created by Adam Flachbart '28 (Marketing), Andrew Stein '27 (Sport Management), and Taahir Sabree '26 (Management). As a result, the two teams shared the \$100 Audience Choice Award.



# Spring 2026 Events

## Ready, Set, Next: Spring 2026 Professional Development Lineup

CECD's spring schedule (below) brings hands-on workshops, competitions, and employer connections. Whether you're prepping for life after graduation, refining your pitch, or expanding your network, there's a place for you. (*Check CECD's website for updates.*)

- **Jan 29, 7:15–8:15 pm** — PioSolve Hackathon Info Session
- **Feb 4, 12:00–12:50 pm** — Life After Graduation #1: Managing Debt
- **Feb 11, 12:00–12:50 pm** — Life After Graduation #2: Budgeting
- **Feb 18, 12:00–12:50 pm** — Life After Graduation #3: Employment Documents
- **Feb 25, 9:30 am–1:30 pm** — Discover Entrepreneurship (High-School Outreach)
- **Mar 3, 7:15–8:15 pm** — PioBiz Info Session: Round 2 Proof of Concept
- **Mar 5, 4:00–6:00 pm** — Speed Mock Interviews
- **Mar 28, 8:00 am–6:00 pm** — PioSolve Hackathon Competition
- **Apr 2, 7:15–8:15 pm** — Job Talk -- an informal conversation with a panel of professionals whose careers include twists and pivots.
- **Apr 16, 3:00–5:00 pm** — Junior PioBiz — a problem/solution competition for high schoolers
- **Apr 23, 3:00–5:00 pm** — PioBiz Round 2 — All Scholars Day
- **May 2, 12:30–1:30 pm** — End-of-Year Awards & Networking

All students, alumni, faculty, staff, and community members are invited. Dates are subject to change—check the Center for Entrepreneurship & Career Development website for updates. Questions or want to get involved? Email [khorrassj@marietta.edu](mailto:khorrassj@marietta.edu).



# Thank You Sponsors!

It is, in part, due to the generosity of our sponsors that we can offer our co-curricular 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.](#)



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**QDOBA**  
MEXICAN EATS®

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Friends,



*This issue of Make It Happen! was created by senior English major, Haylyn Hiles '26*