



## The Office of Academic Innovation 2017 Innovation in Teaching Award



Office of  
Academic Innovation

### Congratulations to the Winners!

#### About the Award

The Innovation in Teaching Award honors faculty who have implemented outstanding innovative teaching approaches shown to increase student learning and success. Innovative teaching may include the use of new instructional technologies, the use of traditional technologies in creative ways, novel approaches to instruction, and new ways to engage students in the learning process.

This year's award focused on projects created by interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary faculty groups in recognition of their importance to Towson's continued success.

In judging each award, a campus-wide Award Review Committee also asked:

1. To what extent did each project demonstrate a positive impact(s) on teaching effectiveness, student learning, supporting diverse student learners, student readiness, and/or retention rates?
2. To what extent did each project address current teaching and learning trends, research, practices, issues, and/or University goals?



### OAI Innovation in Teaching Award-Winning Projects

Look for winning project summaries listed on the Innovating in Teaching Award website: [www.towson.edu/innovationaward](http://www.towson.edu/innovationaward). Award winners will also be featured in video vignettes this Spring.

#### CBE Strategic Management Live Case Competition

**Dr. Lori Ellison**  
Assistant Professor  
*Management*

**Dr. Manoj (Thomas) Basuray**  
Chairperson and Professor  
*Management*

**Dr. David Brannon**  
Assistant Professor  
*Management*

**Ms. Shana Gass**  
*Research & Instruction*  
Librarian  
*Cook Library*

**Dr. Donald Kopka**  
Assistant Professor  
*Management*

**Dr. Mariana Lebron**  
Assistant Professor  
*Management*

**Mr. Wayne Paul**  
Adjunct Faculty  
*Management*

**Dr. Doug Ross**  
Professor  
*Management*

**Dr. Doug Sanford**  
Professor  
*Management*

**Dr. Precha Thavikulwat**  
Professor  
*Management*

#### Using Online Video Tools to Model, Unpack, and Assess the Work of Teaching

**Dr. Lisa M. Barker**  
Assistant Professor  
*Secondary and Middle School  
Education*

**Dr. Marie Heath**  
Clinical Assistant Professor/  
Director of MAT Programs  
*Educational Technology and  
Literacy*

**Dr. Kimberly McCormick**  
Assistant Professor  
*Early Childhood Education*

**Dr. Patricia Rice Doran**  
Assistant Professor  
*Special Education*

**Dr. Vicki McQuitty**  
Assistant Professor  
*Elementary Education*

#### Electronic Media and Film & Theatre Actor Auditions

**Mr. Joseph Kraemer**  
Professor  
*Electronic Media and Film*

**Mr. Peter Wray**  
Professor  
*Theatre Arts*

## **Integrating the T. Rowe Price Finance Lab into the Finance Curriculum**

**Dr. Babu Baradwaj**  
Professor  
*Finance*

**Dr. Michaël Dewally**  
Associate Professor  
*Finance*

**Dr. Lijing Du**  
Assistant Professor  
*Finance*

**Dr. Susan Flaherty**  
Professor  
*Finance*

**Dr. Moon Rhee**  
Associate Professor  
*Finance*

**Dr. Jian Huang**  
Assistant Professor  
*Finance*

**Dr. Bharat Jain**  
Professor  
*Finance*

**Dr. Yingying Shao**  
Associate Professor  
*Finance*

**Dr. Dan Singer**  
Finance  
*Awarded Posthumously*

**Mr. Francis Rugemer**  
Lecturer  
*Finance*

**Mr. Steve Jaworski**  
Lecturer  
*Finance*

## **Dance On Bones: A Multidisciplinary Theatrical Experiment**

**Dr. David White**  
Associate Professor  
*Theatre Arts*

**Mr. David Ballou**  
Professor  
*Music*

**Mr. Thomas Cascella**  
Professor of Theatre Arts  
*Theatre Arts*

**Dr. Thomas Ciufu**  
Assistant Professor  
*Music*

**Mr. Daniel Ettinger**  
Professor of Theatre Arts  
*Theatre Arts*

**Mr. Joseph Kraemer**  
Assistant Professor  
*Electronic Media and Film*

**Ms. Elsa Lankford**  
Associate Professor  
*Electronic Media and Film*

**Mr. Ryan Murray**  
Associate Professor  
*Electronic Media and Film*

**Dr. David Reiss**  
Associate Professor  
*Electronic Media & Film Dept.  
and WMJF.TV*

**Ms. Lynn Tomlinson**  
Assistant Professor  
*Electronic Media and Film*

**Mr. Vincent Thomas**  
Professor  
*Dance*

**Mr. Peter Wray**  
Professor  
*Theatre Arts*

## **2017 OAI Innovation in Teaching Award Committee Members**

**Dr. Jane E. Neapolitan, Committee Chairperson**  
Assistant Provost, Office of Academic Innovation

**Dr. Philippe Duverger**  
Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Programs in  
Marketing Intelligence and Interactive Marketing

**Dr. Christopher Jensen**  
Director of Civic Engagement & Leadership

**Dr. Molly Mee**  
Associate Professor, Secondary & Middle School Education

**Dr. Abby L. Mello**  
Assistant Professor, Psychology

**Mr. Daniel Mydlack**  
Associate Professor, Electronic Media & Film

**Ms. Laksamee Putnam**  
Research and Instruction Librarian

# College of Business and Economics

## Strategic Management Live Case Competition

### *Project*

The Strategic Management Case Competition is an interdisciplinary endeavor embedded in the MNGT 481 Strategic Management course. Each term, approximately 400 senior-level students representing all undergraduate majors and concentrations within CBE spread across about 12 sections of the course analyze a “live” case presented by a partnering company. The interdisciplinary nature of the assigned case spans all disciplines in the college (management, accounting, economics, finance, supply chain, marketing and e-business and technology management). Moreover, administering competition itself takes intense collaboration between multiple college and university units as well as off-campus business partners. The result is a dynamic learning experience for students, strengthened inter-campus networks and deeper connections to business partners.

Each semester, our faculty partners with a company to develop a current live case emanating from the partner business. The case assignment and evaluation criteria are standardized across sections and account for 25 percent of students’ grades. The case requires students to evaluate diverse stakeholders in the presenting case company’s external environment. Student teams employ strategic tools to research and develop solutions for the business that balance alternatives and long-term versus short-term stakeholder perspectives. Throughout the semester, faculty members work with company executives to maintain a comprehensive Blackboard site devoted solely to the administration of the case competition. Through the site, students utilize research tools at Cook Library and interact directly with the partner company to conduct interviews and utilize company resources and data.

Student teams give a formal, professional presentation of their findings in their respective classes. Faculty members select the top team from each section to present at the culminating live case competition to a panel of corporate judges who ultimately select the winning proposals.

With this deeply innovative and interdisciplinary competition as a course component, students gain the benefit of experiential learning by working on a project that has “real world” application. Business partners benefit from working collaboratively with our students and TU community members and receive useful proposals to address real questions and challenges they face.

### *Innovative Approach*

This live case approach is entirely novel in that it requires students and faculty to work directly with business community leaders to learn about and research an organization and a real-world problem that the organization is facing. The challenge is to put to good use current knowledge, all the while exploring the limits of current research knowledge to ‘raise the bar’ and apply integrative, systematic, rational, and convergent thinking to propose solutions.

The innovation of this approach is inherent to the live nature of the case. That is, there are no certain ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers in live situations. Thus, faculty, students, and members of the business

community are challenged to recognize and manage diverse, often competing, stakeholder perspectives and uncertainty.

To implement and standardize the case, faculty work with business partners each semester to develop a new case challenge that is then standardized for all capstone students and administered via a live Blackboard course site that was developed solely for the case competition. Through the site, students access live information and interact with the partner business and Cook Library to conduct research.

### *Impact*

We have included research results that were presented this summer at an international conference. Research indicates that this live case method is a highly effective means of addressing our capstone course learning goals. In addition, each semester, the ties between the partner businesses and our students and faculty grows. This semester, plans are in the works to offer winning students consulting employment opportunities in the organization following the conclusion of the semester. In so doing, students will directly work to evaluate and/or actually implement their winning proposals. Through these opportunities, students will not only build long-lasting networks and relationships with each other and the business community, but will also ensure the continuation and impact of their semester research. The ripple effects of these collaborations are immense as students across the college and members of the broader university community may feel proud to see the tangible impact that capstone students make each semester with partner businesses.

### *Connection with Current Teaching and Learning Trends, Research, and University Goals*

The relevance and ethics of business school education continues to fall under scrutiny. Critics argue that business schools focus too much on a shareholder wealth maximization paradigm at the expense of community needs. This project demonstrates in tangible ways all the great positive impacts that can be made when business school players (especially students) collaborate with local businesses regarding real problems. The beauty of this project is that, in addressing student learning goals with this innovative, timely means, students are required to view business problems in a broader light and to think about the real world impact of business activities on their own local community and the diverse stakeholders within it. We have enclosed research which indicates that this project addresses well our course and college learning goals.

# Using Online Video Tools to Model, Unpack, and Assess the Work of Teaching

## *Project*

In an effort to support the clinical preparation of pre-service teachers at Towson University, a faculty collaboration was started in the spring of 2016 to explore how teacher candidates' competencies can be heightened by integrating into coursework a focus on “high-leverage practices” (HLPs) – visible skills such as leading discussion, assessing student learning, and managing group work that are fundamental to good teaching across subjects and grade levels. This collaboration utilized innovative technology to model, unpack, and assess teacher candidates' instructional skills in multiple departments in the College of Education.

This innovative collaboration was piloted in three undergraduate courses in spring of 2016 by weaving existing course content with specific HLPs. Faculty explicitly modeled HLPs with candidates, used readings and discussions to demystify these practices, and then had students engage in videotaped teaching 'rehearsals' using the innovative technology Edthena. This video capture system allowed students to upload videos of their instruction, and allowed users (instructors, students) to comment on videos as a way to self-assess and give feedback on others' instruction. Seeing multiple examples of HLPs helps prospective teachers develop a professional vision for what these practices look like in action.

The collaboration continues in fall of 2016 with the addition of more faculty and courses. Work also expanded to include an alternative video capture system called Swivl, a robotic platform used to videotape instruction; a unique affordance of Swivl is its ability to pivot in order to follow the teacher being videotaped as s/he moves through a classroom. This working group has also provided a space for faculty to reflect on their teaching and their students' teaching, and delve into a study of the pedagogy surrounding the teaching of HLPs. The work group will be engaged in research on how to support prospective teachers in becoming skilled in HLPs, and how online video-based platforms can serve this work.

## *Innovative Approach*

This project has been implemented in a three-phase sequence. Each of these phases utilized innovative video technology to engage students in learning about HLPs and how to enact them, and to share our pedagogy of teacher education among a cross-departmental team of faculty.

In Phase I, during 2015-2016, a core group of faculty across departments met and completed introductory training on the use of Edthena, a video analysis and reflection tool. Dean Mullen secured grant funding to support use of Edthena across multiple courses in three departments. Working together, this faculty group identified and implemented changes to syllabi so that clinical practice activities (based on HLPs) and video reflection and analysis were incorporated into each identified course. This collaboration marks the first time that video reflection and analysis has been incorporated systematically into teacher preparation coursework across departments as part of a coherent framework to improve practice. These courses included: ECED 428/429 (Reading and Language Arts Assessment: Principles and Practice), ELED 323 (Principles & Practices of Reading & Language Arts),

MSED 367 (Teaching Language Arts in the Middle School), SCED 357 (Teaching English in the Secondary School), SPED 441 (Curriculum and Methods of Instruction for Students with Disabilities, K-12), and SPED 430 (Informal Tests and Measurements for Students with Disabilities, K-12).

In Phase II, the College of Education instituted ongoing supports for faculty development related to HLPs and clinical practice. These included a Professional Learning Community (PLC) focused on HLPs, led by two of the collaborators on this project, and an ongoing working group composed of the faculty implementing HLPs in 2016-2017 courses. This working group has continued to take a collaborative approach, sharing promising strategies for embedding video recording, analysis and reflection in classes. In another innovation, faculty involved in this effort have met informally throughout the year to share syllabi, exchange ideas and review video from one another's classes to improve our shared understanding. By doing so, we have strengthened our own 'clinical practices' and capacity for reflection even as we seek to build those attributes in our students. Moreover, we have met to discuss our work with key scholars in the field, such as Dr. Deborah Loewenberg Ball, a professor and former dean of education at the University of Michigan, founding director of TeachingWorks, and the president-elect of the American Educational Research Association.

In Phase III, the College of Education will begin to make programmatic changes based on the faculty development and broader research related to HLPs. The Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program is currently analyzing the curricular scope and sequence of its teacher preparation program. The scope and sequence analysis and redesign will include iterative opportunities for representations of practice, decomposition of practice, and approximation of practice. The MAT program will serve as a pilot program to implement the HLPs.

## *Impact*

This project has led to positive outcomes in terms of teaching effectiveness, student learning, student readiness, and students' sense of self-efficacy (their belief in their ability to enact HLPs), which can play a major role in how our students approach teaching in the field.

Impact on teaching effectiveness: This project has led to improvements in teaching effectiveness for the collaborators as measured by course evaluations, self-reflection, and qualitative anecdotal feedback. Moreover, 88% of students who responded to a survey said there was a distinct difference between rehearsing instruction among colleagues in person and rehearsing instruction among colleagues in person on camera. In other words, they saw unique affordances in having their teaching videotaped, as opposed to having their teaching merely observed. Students described the experience of being in front of the camera as "more authentic," "less rushed," and more valuable in terms of reflection because they can go back and watch themselves later. They said their reflections on their own teaching are more rigorous because they can see video "data," rather than "relying on memory."

Impact on student learning and readiness: Among students who responded to a survey, 88% said that watching and commenting on their own videos made them learn something about teaching that they hadn't thought of before. For example, they "realized that presence is key," and they were able to identify areas for improvement (e.g., "I need to be more straight to the point [when I'm explaining content] because it could be confusing for students."). Among students who responded to a survey, 86% said that watching and commenting on others' videos made them learn something about teaching that they hadn't thought of before. Students particularly appreciated seeing how their "peers applied the

same knowledge in different ways,” and how colleagues’ noticings and dislikes did not always match theirs. Among students who responded to a survey, 75% said that reading colleagues’ comments on their videos made them learn something that they hadn’t thought of before. It helped them see the value of constructive criticism, notice things they may have missed, and acquire through colleagues’ comments “a well-rounded picture of what [they] can improve on” in their teaching.

Qualitative feedback has suggested strongly that integration of these innovative practices have improved student readiness for actual classroom instruction and the likelihood they will succeed in internships. For example, one student who participated in the pilot last year sought out his professor this year, after his formal student teaching observations went successfully. He stated that he prepared for those observations by reviewing his spring 2016 practice teaching experience, and the associated feedback from his instructor, focused on HLPs and felt this was a significant factor in his success in the actual classroom setting. In sum, one student commented: “Edthena is easy to navigate and very interactive. I am astounded at how much it has helped me.”

Students’ sense of self-efficacy: Data suggests students feel better prepared and perceive themselves as more likely to be successful in student teaching and work experiences. When asked how they felt about the targeted HLPs after using the technology, students commented: “I feel more confident with what is meant by ‘modeling.’ I never really realized what really went into it, and by watching myself do it, I am better able to understand how important it is to be specific.” “I feel way more confident in my ability to model intellectual work in front of students.” “I feel more confident with HLPs in the field after analyzing my own through Edthena.” “It gave me a good sense of what I should look out for when I’m observed by administrators as a teacher.”

## *Connection with Current Teaching and Learning Trends, Research, and University Goals*

Grossman (2005) called for a more robust research program on the pedagogy of teacher education – the classroom instruction, interactions, tasks, and assignments in a teacher preparation setting. Scholars have advocated for organizing teacher preparation around a set of instructional practices (Ball, Sleep, Boerst, & Bass, 2009; Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009), and for supporting novices in learning about these practices in the context of university coursework (Ball & Forzani, 2009). Grossman, Compton, Igra, Ronfeldt, Shahan, and Williamson (2009) offered a framework for understanding pedagogies of practice including three concepts: representations, decomposition, and approximations of practice – or how teacher educators structure opportunities for pre-service teachers to observe, unpack, and try out aspects of instruction as part of their professional learning.

This project aligns with this shifting landscape in teacher education. We have collaborated to organize our courses around HLPs, and we have used Edthena and Swivl as tools to represent, decompose, and approximate the targeted HLPs. For example, we have videotaped ourselves demonstrating various HLPs (leading discussion, modeling, explaining content) and have uploaded these representations, or examples, to the online platforms. We gave students guidelines for how to analyze these representations via time-stamped commenting functions, and these comments serve as a kind of decomposition – a naming of the constituent parts of a given HLP (e.g., “Notice here how the discussion facilitator offers several seconds of wait time so that students can think about her question.”). Finally, we required students to videotape themselves enacting these same HLPs (an approximation), upload

and share these videos (which then become representations of practice for colleagues), self-reflect, and give feedback to others (kinds of decomposition).

This work supports Towson University's "Institutional Identity" by promoting intellectual skills essential for communicating effectively (to one another via online commenting, to future students by improving their HLPs), gathering and evaluating information (they have to ground their online analyses in the "data" provided by the videos), thinking critically and meaningfully, using technology effectively (students acquire new digital literacy skills through their interaction with these recording devices and online platforms), appreciating diversity and commonalities (across the videos they view, they can see how teachers enact HLPs differently), and making informed ethical choices (our students must decide what to comment on; whether that comment should be praise, a question, or a suggestion; and how to phrase that comment so that it's understandable and actionable by their colleagues) (Mission and Strategic Plan, 2016).

## *References*

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Grossman, P., Compton, C., Igra, D., Ronfeldt, M., Shahan, E., & Williamson, P. (2009). Teaching practice: A cross-professional perspective. *Teachers College Record*, 111(9), 2055-2100.

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# Electronic Media and Film & Theatre Actor Auditions

## *Project*

The EMF-Theatre Actor Auditions is an interdisciplinary project wherein acting students in the Theatre program meet with and audition for upcoming films written and directed by Electronic Media and Film students. By focusing on the shared objectives and natural synergy between the acting curriculum and the narrative film production curriculum of these two departments, this audition helps to foster interdisciplinary relationships between students that last beyond the coursework of a single semester. What results are greatly improved films and student outcomes due to the influx of acting talent, as well as a special experience in collaboration for both film and acting students, which is an essential part of each discipline's craft.

The EMF-Theatre Actor Auditions is a multi-day event wherein actors are invited to come in and read a monologue, or prepared dramatic speech, which is videotaped and observed by EMF students. The actor also provides a headshot and resume – two essential documents for evaluating actors for film roles. This audition process closely approximates the professional casting environment both film and acting students will encounter in the real-world professional world, including film, television, and commercial work. The headshots, resumes and videotaped auditions of each actor are stored in a special database that is then made available to the entire EMF student film population, in order to help students find the most talented and suitable actors for their film projects.

This project is organized each year by Assistant Professor Joseph Kraemer of the Electronic Media and Film Department, and Professor Peter Wray, who coordinates the Acting program in the Theatre Department. The audition is run by students within Prof. Kraemer's advanced film production class, Seminar in Narrative Film, who then invite in Theatre students interested in gaining experience in acting for the camera. This event brings in over 60 actors from the community and also collects the headshots and resumes of an additional 100 actors for the EMF students to cast for their films and collaborate with. The auditions are open to all students within both programs, to benefit both student populations and in order to maximize exposure.

## *Innovative Approach*

By organizing and hosting the EMF-Theatre Actor Auditions, Professors Kraemer and Wray brought together the students from two COFAC departments that share inherent synergy in their educational objectives, yet traditionally have not shared many opportunities for collaboration and interaction. The technique of running this interdisciplinary audition changed all of that for the better, by breaking down barriers and bridging students in different programs. By facilitating the interaction and collaboration of these two traditionally disconnected groups of students – theatre actors and filmmakers – the Actor Auditions project results in improving the quality of student work and creating important networking and professional development opportunities for the students.

Furthermore, the EMF-Theatre Actor Auditions project is an innovative technique in interdisciplinary teaching because it shifts student learning away from traditional classroom instruction and towards experiential learning, where students participate in hands-on activities that directly impact the quality of their own personal coursework, which in this case are student films. EMF students audition professionally trained actors for their films and, by doing so, get to apply their skills in directing and

casting, while Theatre students get to practice their skills in auditioning for roles and working with trained directors. This cross-pollination promotes increased “ownership” over their coursework, resulting in improved outcomes and better retention of key concepts, as students see the principles from the curriculum put into practice in real-world situations, where they experience firsthand the impact of their own decisions have on the quality of the final product.

This innovation results in a student-centered learning environment that focuses on building a sense of community within the classroom and beyond, where each student becomes accountable to each other as they work as a team to run this complex and professional audition bringing together over 60 actors and 36 filmmakers each semester. The objective is to enable students to learn through their own participation and engagement with the course materials, with the goal of fostering greater media literacy and the development of a personal creative vision and worldview. The project strives to incorporate student interaction into as many aspects of the audition and related coursework as possible, including directing and interacting with the auditioning actors, and working with new media tools and technologies, including digital cinema software and equipment, to learn technical skills as well. Ultimately, the classroom becomes an incubator for creative ideas in this environment created by the EMF-Theatre Actor Auditions project, helping to build greater creativity and free expression within each student that serves to empower them for their future careers and life choices.

## *Impact*

The EMF-Theatre Actor Auditions was a project initially created to address a very simple problem: how to improve the quality of student work, specifically student films, within the Electronic Media and Film Department. In order to do that, this project seeks to address the need for high quality, professionally trained actors in EMF student films. Additionally, the Audition seeks to provide Theatre students with more experience in acting for the camera to supplement the curriculum that favors acting for the stage. On all fronts, the EMF-Theatre Actor Auditions, now running for two years in a row, has been a success, as student film projects have improved in quality while increasing student learning and promoting interdisciplinary and interdepartmental collaboration.

Since the launch of the project, over 180 EMF student filmmakers have had access to the Actor Auditions database when casting for their short films. Meanwhile, the Actor Audition database has featured approximately 50 Theatre students, as well as dozens of other actors from the greater Baltimore acting community.

Anecdotal, qualitative examples of student success resulting from the EMF-Theatre Actor Auditions include student film projects that found success at peer-reviewed exhibition channels, such as film festivals after utilizing the auditions. For example, EMF student Max Radbill’s senior thesis film 'Movie Palace,' which utilized the auditions to feature a cast of four talented Theatre students, was awarded first prize in the Student Film Award at the Rehoboth Beach Film Festival, one of the Mid-Atlantic’s premiere film festivals. Another example is EMF student Aimee Schubert’s senior thesis film 'When A Wave Comes,' which, due to its strong female led cast of Theatre students and its powerful feminist story, received 207% of its original funding goal on crowdfunding campaign platform IndieGoGo, as well as notable press in Towson’s own Towerlight newspaper (“Female Trio Makes Waves,” Apr. 4, 2016). These collaborative relationships continue beyond the classroom as filmmakers and actors continue to work together on professional projects after graduating from Towson University.

## *Connection with Current Teaching and Learning Trends, Research, and University Goals*

The EMF-Actor Auditions project aligns with many of the objectives of the Towson University Master Plan and larger trends in pedagogy within academia, including increased emphasis on experiential learning, teaching entrepreneurship, promoting diversity, and bridging Towson University with the larger Baltimore community. The project places heavy emphasis on shifting student learning from traditional classroom instruction towards experiential learning, where students get to work hands-on in the running of the audition and casting for their films. This promotes greater student ownership over their coursework, because they see firsthand how their problem-solving and creative decision making will directly impact to the quality of their own personal coursework, which in this case are student films. EMF students audition professionally trained actors for their films and by doing so, get to apply their skills in directing and casting, while Theatre students get to practice their skills in auditioning for roles and working with trained directors. This is a powerful experience because it teaches them real-world professional skills that directly relate to the skills needed once they enter the workforce.

Relatedly, the project also teaches students to become self-starters and entrepreneurs as they learn first-hand how to build community awareness and engagement around their film projects as they work to organize and promote this very complex event bringing together many student filmmakers and actors. Additionally, the project bridges the Towson University community with the greater Baltimore-area creative community, as professional actors from the theatre and film and television industry also participate, including actors who have been featured in such prestigious shows as House of Cards, The Wire, VEEP and Deadly Affairs, among others. These relationships are essential to helping to transition students from the classroom to the workforce.

Finally, the EMF-Theatre Actor Auditions help promote increased diversity in the student film projects because it empowers students to consider and cast actors from underrepresented communities to act in their films. One key objective with the Actor Auditions is to bring in actors representing diversity in regards to gender, race, ethnicity, disability, and sexuality, and thus students gain exposure to diverse voices and backgrounds which help lend more real-world character to their films.

# Incorporating the T. Rowe Price Finance Lab into the Finance Curriculum

## *Project*

When the T. Rowe Price Finance Lab was first initiated in 2011, the Finance Department made full use of it to enhance the existing curriculum to take full advantage of the lab facilities. First, they integrated Microsoft Excel into all of the finance courses to better equip students to handle job requirements and address employer feedback. Second, investment courses were revised to build in Bloomberg functionality. Third, the StockTrak trading simulator was integrated into the introductory core course in finance to give all CBE students early exposure to the stock market. In 2014-2015, the entire finance curriculum was overhauled and added tracks in investments and financial planning to augment the existing finance concentration, which has more of a corporate focus. This resulted in a new course in portfolio management (FIN 433), where the lab facilities will be used extensively. The revision of the CBE core curriculum also integrated the Bloomberg Essentials Certification in Equities into the introductory finance course (FIN 331) to better benefit all CBE majors. The software packages have been extensively integrated into a multitude of courses in the CBE curriculum.

The innovative features of incorporating finance lab extend across discipline and even go beyond the campus and into the community. Several initiatives have been developed to introduce high school students and families to the uses of the lab and to increase financial literacy in the region. Initiatives include school visits, stock market game training, financial literacy institute, and volunteer tax preparation.

**Stock Market Game Training:** The lab also trains the trainers by hosting workshops for educators on how to teach their students to research industries/companies on the web, use Stock Screener to increase the breadth of research, and access and use the Stock Market Game website. Workshops are typically offered in the summer and fall.

**Financial Literacy Institute:** The TU Economics Society, the Maryland Coalition for Financial Literacy, and MCEE have offered Personal Finance workshops to Maryland educators and Towson University alumni to develop the economics and personal finance skills to teach in their classrooms.

**Volunteer Income Tax Preparation Workshop & Training:** The TU Economics Society, the MD Coalition for Financial Literacy, and CBE's Department of Economics supports a workshop as part of their Tax Preparation Services program, which offers free federal and Maryland state income tax preparation services to low income individuals and families. Workshops are typically held every weekend in January.

**School Visits:** Since 2012, K-12 (elementary, middle, and high school) students from across the state including Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, Harford County, and Howard County have made the voyage to the T. Rowe Price Finance Lab. In collaboration with the Maryland Council on Economic Education (MCEE), students are introduced to the software and equipment in the lab by CBE before engaging in a workshop on the Stock Market Game. The College of Business & Economics then provides a tour of the campus and lunch for the students in one of its dining halls to give the students a first-hand college experience.

Past participants have included:

Carroll County High  
Fallstaff Elementary/Middle  
Garrison Forest  
Homestead-Wakefield  
Elementary

National Academy  
Foundation School  
Old Mill High  
Overlea High (Academy of  
Finance)

Pointers Run Elementary  
Thomas Johnson Middle  
Waverly Elementary/Middle

## *Impact*

The lab differentiates Towson's finance curriculum as an innovative leader in the design, management, and delivery of applied business education and experiential learning. It facilitates a broad array of teaching, research, and outreach initiatives. Our objectives for the lab continue to influence its use and impact.

- **Teaching:** To elevate the quality of undergraduate and graduate curricula in order to better equip students for success in business.
- **Research & Activities:** To provide an environment for faculty and students to conduct original research activities.

## **Teaching**

Since its stock ticker began scrolling, the lab has enhanced the education of business students by introducing them to the Bloomberg terminal technology used by financial professionals. Fully equipped with Bloomberg terminal software, Finance Pro, and StockTrak Simulation, the lab strengthens students' applied skills, while teaching them how to aggregate research. Bridging coursework and financial theory with its application, students are able to view financial scenarios in the same context as a Wall Street research analyst or trader. Once physical, the Bloomberg terminal represents a software connection with a distinct keyboard that streams news, price quotes, analyst coverage, historical data, and charts for all asset classes. The trading platform allows users to monitor real-time data to conduct analysis and to take market positions.

In order for students to be successful, innovative, and to perform at a high level immediately after graduation they must be trained in industry standards. For business majors, a familiarity with financial data and its uses is necessary for both professional and personal reasons. For students concentrating in finance, Bloomberg experience is a must. It is important to note that these functionalities are not available elsewhere either for free online or from other resources hosted by the Cook Library. They offer a stronger and meaningful learning environment to our students.

All Towson business school students are required to attain some level of Bloomberg certification through Bloomberg Essentials Online Training (BESS). BESS training introduces users to basic Bloomberg terminal functionality as well as a Market Sector Program covering equities, fixed income, foreign exchange, and commodities. The certification helps users negotiate this dense information system and how to find data and market information. Beginning in fall 2015, finance students are now required to take the Bloomberg Markets Course (BMC) in addition to BESS. The BMC focuses less on functionality

and more on primary market data and analyses used by finance professionals. This course covers economics, currencies, fixed income, and equity.

### **Student Research & Activities**

While the lab accommodates many class sections, all CBE students and faculty are still able to take advantage of open lab hours to work on various projects, research, and scholarship. Students have used the lab to take part in local and international competitions. Towson students participate annually in the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Institute's Research Challenge, which requires participants to research and analyze a publicly traded company and work with a CFA charterholder. Last year, Towson University was able to take first place against local competitors from University of Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, Loyola, Maryland, American, and Georgetown. (See the [news report](#).)

The Towson University Investment Group (TUIG) has also come to call the lab home during their weekly meetings where they manage the student investment fund endowed by TU Foundation. TUIG has used the space to host a various guest speakers and their own workshops for the Towson University community. The group created the "TUIG Library," a display in Cook Library with finance books selected to improve the financial literacy of students, as well as increase awareness of the group. They also partnered with Bluewater Baltimore to adopt a stream in the Towson area to improve water quality and eliminate litter. TUIG members have taken trips across state lines, as well, to visit with financial organizations and for competitions. In addition to their initiatives, TUIG members continue to earn Bloomberg certifications in different categories to enhance their usage of the Bloomberg Terminals in preparation for the job market.

### *Connection with Current Teaching and Learning Trends, Research, and University Goals*

On top of the hill at 8000 York Road in Towson, MD stands the historic Stephens Hall—home of the Towson University's College of Business & Economics (CBE). Throughout its halls the mantra "invest in yourself" is displayed as a reminder on the importance of scholastic dedication. In the finance department and curriculum, it also symbolizes an attitude toward investment itself, whether it be financial or personal. The department faculty members' focus on investment is given prominence by the stock ticker that scrolls above the T. Rowe Price Finance Laboratory on the first floor of Stephens Hall.

Since its inception in July 2012, the T. Rowe Price Finance Laboratory has been a cornerstone of the Finance Department's academic curriculum, extracurricular activities, and community outreach. The state-of-the-art facility replicates the functionality of Wall Street's top trading firms, providing an advanced teaching and research environment. It gives students the ability to value complex securities and investment opportunities in real-time, using the latest numerical algorithms powered by Bloomberg, a global leader in business and financial information.

Students have used the lab for class work, outside projects, and research. This has given them an appreciation for the applied focus and the integration of technology and theory. Chi Hou Chan, a recent graduate, commented that, "I used the Bloomberg terminal for the projects in classes. I found it very useful as it provided much more detailed information than websites, and it gave me a very good experience because it was the software that most professionals use." He also noted that it was beneficial to link what he was learning to the real world through lab software.

The classroom has been transformed into a Bloomberg Financial Markets Lab, equipped with the Bloomberg Professional service, and has connected over 2,000 students to-date to a network of 2.5 million financial professional users. Through its unmatched breadth and depth of information, the lab has made CBE a premier player in financial literacy in the Greater Baltimore-Washington area.

While the finance department has been incorporating finance lab into the curriculum for only three years, it has had a significant impact on both students and faculty. The lab provides an essential experience to students and provides better-trained employees to the regional business community. Students have developed enhanced applied skills, and faculty have benefited through the advancement of their research by using lab data.

# ***Dance On Bones: A Multidisciplinary Theatrical Experiment***

## *Project*

Beginning in spring 2015 and continuing through fall 2015 and into the spring 2016 semester, faculty members from Dance, EMF, Music, and Theatre Arts collaborated to produce the multi-disciplinary experience of *Dance On Bones*, the College of Fine Arts and Communication's Signature Event for Towson University's sesquicentennial celebration. This goal of this project was to showcase the talents of students from across the college in a unified production that was written, directed, and mentored by Towson faculty; this would allow us to find moments to feature each discipline and other moments to integrate the disciplines and harness the power of multidisciplinary storytelling. Working under the charge of the College of Fine Arts and Communication 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee and with director Peter Wray and playwright Dave White, these faculty members mentored students to create a unique artistic celebration of Towson University's 150th anniversary presented on the Department of Theatre Arts Mainstage Theatre March 3 – 5, 2016.

*Dance On Bones* presents prophetic vision of a dystopian world populated by propaganda "Adverts" and packs of dogs roaming the street; a world devastated by environmental forces where music, art, and a female trumpet player named Gavri provide the hope and salvation for humanity against the omnipresent Man of Steel. The nature of the script and the vision of director Peter Wray allowed for individual departments, classes, and students to focus their attention on one particular storyline within the larger narrative.

The process of working on *Dance On Bones* gave students the chance to work on a new play that was undergoing revisions, showcase their artistic skills, collaborate across disciplines with colleagues and faculty members, and examine and discuss the potentially devastating effects of climate change. Coordinated by the team of director Peter Wray and playwright Dave White, the multidisciplinary team combined classroom experiences with independent studies and cross-disciplinary student-faculty meetings and mentorship to open doors between departments and push students to realize their storytelling potential through the fields of art, music, dance, film and theatre. This approach involved an array of student artists including: composers, filmmakers, choreographers, dancers, graphic artists/illustrators, actors, production crew members, digital animators, and both live and recorded musicians. In addition to theatre faculty members attending other department's meetings and classes, faculty members from other departments attended production meetings and technical rehearsals in the Theatre Department before the final production. Additionally, students from music, dance, and theatre all attended rehearsals with the playwright present through the spring semester, deepening the cross-disciplinary approach for students.

With the production in early March, each of these components had to be integrated and honed to present a unified vision for the audience: from animation and filmed materials generated in classes in the fall semester; to the casting, production, and editing of the films; to the compositions recorded by musicians in the weeks leading up to the production; to graphic designs mentored through the theatre design program; to the use of the new mapping projector that allows three simultaneous projection screens to show the triptych digital animation sequences. As the classroom experience evolved into the

laboratory of production, faculty worked with students to understand both the benefits and compromises demanded by collaboration. Under the mentorship of the faculty both in and out of the classroom, students from film, dance, music, and theatre came to understand each other's processes and see how the various disciplines combined to create a unique collaborative experience for the artists and the audience.

Supported by the extensive mentorship and teaching of the rehearsal and generative process behind *Dance On Bones*, the final production showcased nine student actors working from the script in several languages; two dancers presenting their original choreography; three musicians performing a live, improvised score; animations, experimental films, a graphic novel, a children's book and adverts all projected to help tell the story; several original compositions with recorded music and live singing; and all of this supported by a playwright/scenic/costume/lighting/sound design team composed of faculty and instructors from theatre and dance.

The final production of *Dance On Bones* was then shared with the larger Towson and an international community via livestreaming on WMJF.TV. This collaboration provided an exciting template for future inter/multi-disciplinary collaborations among the faculty involved and prepares students to reach across the disciplines and collaborate.

## *Innovative Approach*

From the beginning, the approach to *Dance On Bones* was innovative in form, content, process, and production. Coordinating a project that involves so many different participants from across the college required finding the right project that would allow each discipline to fully engage their artistic practices while also offering a unifying structure for the production, and identifying the right teachers from each discipline to help mentor the student collaborators.

The script, written by Theatre Arts faculty member Dave White, is steeped in oral tradition and folk lore and is itself an innovative approach to theatre storytelling. Using the ancient form of oral tradition, the script of *Dance On Bones* is based in image, network, and association more than narrative, character, and action; each page of the script is a complete unit, even though individual "Pages" may be connected to other units; in fact the entire script can be thrown in the air in performed in any order in which it lands. This flexibility of form is what allowed for this project to be tackled with a multidisciplinary approach that gave each of the storylines a particular aesthetic, i.e. "The Floods Parts 1, 2, and 3" were all produced by the Visual Effects class, although they were not presented as a unit or even in numerical order. Written more as choreopoem than a traditional theatre script, approaching *Dance On Bones* proved challenging to theatre acting students, and at times seemed more foreign to them than an EMF student filmmaker who is used to responding to the visual images in screenplays. By working from an innovative and evocative script, steeped in forms even more ancient than theatre, we were able to use theatre in an innovative way to share an experience and showcase student work.

In order to have an innovative product, we needed an innovative teaching approach. After Peter Wray and Dave White presented their ideas and approach for *Dance On Bones* at each of the department in the college's faculty retreat, collaborators contacted us and we developed an interdisciplinary classroom approach utilizing various classroom experiences involving guest teachers Wray and White, as well as independent studies to generate the artwork for the production.

The classroom experiences occurred in several settings. In the fall of 2015, Dave White visited Ryan Murray's Experimental Film course to discuss the ideas and images that were located in the pages for which the students would be creating films: one based on the page "Antics," one of which was an "Advert," and the other which was the shortest of the pages, simply reading "Gavri Plays." Each of these projects utilized the work of numerous students in Murray's course. For example, numerous students created short works responding to the "Advert," which were then edited into a larger work. Murray's students also demonstrated their analytic abilities by exploring the many different ideas behind the word "play" in "Gavri Plays." These films were mentored through production by Professor Murray then integrated into the production in spring of 2016.

Also in the Fall 2015 semester, Dave White made several visits as a guest instructor to Lynn Tomlinson's Visual Effects II course. Students in this course were creating digital animations responding to three pages: "The Floods Parts 1, 2, and 3." These animations were created as triptychs, with animated aspects from one panel connecting to and even journeying from one panel to another. Professor White worked with Professor Tomlinson and her students from initial ideas to feedback on the final products. One student, Artem Bank, took on the role of shepherding the projects from the classroom to the stage. Artem worked with Elsa Lankford on the sound production for the animations. He then worked through the final technical rehearsals to integrate the animations with the new projector and sound system in the theatre, which involved mapping the images to three distinct projection surfaces on the stage, as well as with the live actors who would be performing narratives alongside the animations. The process of working with new collaborators to hone projects that had been completed for months was an enlightening process for the students involved in these classes.

Classroom experiences also occur in the rehearsal hall. In this process, the actors were joined in rehearsal by two students from dance and three student musicians. The environment created by Wray encouraged student participation by validating their contributions and welcoming their diverse perspectives, creating a process in which the musicians and dancers were not required to attend all of the rehearsals that they did, but showed up each evening eager to be a part of the project. Outside of rehearsal, these dancers and musicians were mentored by faculty in their respective departments, Vincent Thomas in Dance and Dave Ballou in Music, but in rehearsal they received instruction and feedback from Peter Wray and were integrated into the ensemble for the show. Students from diverse disciplines receiving feedback from teacher in another discipline aided students in seeing where our disciplines intersect as well as how they are unique.

These classroom experiences were integral in creating the animations and experimental films, but many other elements of *Dance On Bones* were created through both formal and informal independent studies. Working with Joseph Kraemer in EMF, Laura Gede created a black and white film that utilized full production crew and over a dozen actors. Gede, who was away on study abroad in the Czech Republic in the spring, then coordinated with Kraemer and Wray internationally to complete a final edit of her film for the production.

Composition students John Roman and Kandi Wong worked with Ballou, Ciufo, Wray and White to compose and record three original pieces of music based around "The Importance of Trees Parts 1, 2, and 3" that would be accompanied by live singing. These pieces were developed when the composers would visit rehearsals and work with the actors on the music; the process of developing new music in the room with composers and actors was an interdisciplinary chance for both composers and actors to participate sneak a peek behind the scenes into another aspect of the process of developing new works for the stage. The music was then recorded in the recording studio in the Music Department using

student musicians and supervised by Professor Thomas Ciufu. Wong and Roman worked with the actors and Wray during the technical rehearsals to pair their compositions with live singing by actors.

Students and faculty applied skills from one discipline to another when the theatre design students worked with scenic design Professor Daniel Ettinger to adapt their scenic design skills to produce comic book images and propaganda images. By applying these skills across the disciplines the students worked on analysis and the distillation of images, and then how their skills would translate into a two-dimensional medium, rather than a 3-D one. Students also had to work to make their work conform to the aspect ratios that were determined by the needs of the film projects. Professor Ettinger helped these students arrive at creative solutions to sharing their work within constraints imposed from other artists, such as using a zoom to highlight details lost when an image intended for the page was suddenly projected above the stage.

This process of taking student work from the classroom (or the conversation) to the stage takes students through the process of taking their work from the theoretical to the practical. What worked in the classroom might not work the same way when brought together with the other elements of production. By combining a network of faculty mentors and a variety of student experiences with the innovative structure of the script for *Dance On Bones*, this team was able to craft an innovative educational experience for the dozens of students involved and a unified production for the audience members that attended the production.

## *Impact*

Collaboration can bring out the best in a creative team, but collaboration often comes with a cost to the individual's vision. Navigating this journey with students and their art is at the heart of our educational journey with *Dance On Bones*. And while this proposal speaks to the macrocosm of the multi-disciplinary project, a similar journey surely happened during the creation of each film, recording session, and dance rehearsal. Since the final project of *Dance On Bones* was not a formal course, the project was not evaluated in a traditional student evaluation format, but there are several examples that exemplify teaching effectiveness, student readiness, and diverse learning.

One of the best demonstrations of teaching effectiveness was the successful completion of the numerous elements needed to present *Dance On Bones*. Additionally, the presence of both students and faculty mentors at the production reinforced the collaborative and participatory spirit of both students and faculty. During the post-show reception, students and faculty were discussing what worked and didn't work in the production. For example, during the technical rehearsals, the decision was made to cut some of the narration that had been created by the EMF students, which in the rehearsal process was disappointing to the EMF student; but after seeing the production, the same student remarked on how the choice of pairing the animation with a live narration created as striking effect of bringing the animation into the room that would have been lost with the pre-recorded narration. The open conversations regarding the final presentations demonstrate students who are comfortable sharing with and receiving feedback from their faculty members. The opportunity to have these conversations and receive feedback from mentors after a class or project is complete shows the dedication felt by both faculty and students for this learning experience.

This project demonstrated the faculty's ability to teach students the fundamental skills of analysis needed to succeed as a creative artist. Students' demonstrated this knowledge as they tackled the text, distilled images, and created original works inspired by them that still stayed true to the dystopian world of the play. Students showed their understanding of tone, content, and audience as they brought their analysis to life and then shared those results with the audience.

In the world of student readiness, giving and receiving feedback across disciplines prepares students for working in a professional environment. Rarely are students creating work in a vacuum. Learning to create and discuss across the disciplines is essential to being a creative artist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: it's not enough to have an excellent theatre production, you have to also have an excellent video with which to promote it. The conversations that generated films and musical compositions for *Dance On Bones* are similar to how an employer might pitch a commercial or a jingle to a creative consultant.

Disseminating *Dance On Bones* via WMJF.TV in addition to the live performance allowed us to reach a larger group of students and community members. Laura Gede watched the production from her study abroad in Prague. Family members and students who could not attend the campus event, for whatever reason, were allowed to participate in this event, which keeps our students involved in educational experiences even when they cannot be physically present.

Wray's work in the rehearsal hall embraced diverse learning across the disciplines (as noted above) and around the world. Recognizing the diverse kinds of learners that can occur in any company of actors is a necessary skill for any director. Working to incorporate dancers and musicians into the ensemble means working with artists whose primary medium is not theatre. This requires an openness and flexibility of approach, not just to communicate with, but to inspire and empower those artists and their choices. In casting the performers for the production, Wray also embraced geographic diversity by casting three student actors whose first languages were Serbian, Egyptian, and Spanish. Wray encouraged these students to translate key portions of the text into their primary languages and incorporated those translations into the production. For each of these students this opened the work up in unexpected ways and made the project take on a deeper resonance and a musicality that was echoed by the multidisciplinary approach to the project as a whole.

### *Connection with Current Teaching and Learning Trends, Research, and University Goals*

In preparing for the future workforce, regardless of discipline, the qualities of collaboration, creative thinking, and continued/independent research are indicated as critical to the quickly evolving career landscape. As noted above, our approach for *Dance On Bones* embraced student-led and student-centric work that empowered students to hone their analytic and research skills, work in a collaborative environment, and see their creative ideas realized. This approach demanded that they pursue creative and scholarly research drawing from online, interview/conversation, and creative research.

This approach also highlighted another aspect of today's educational and professional environment: teaching and learning over a distance. From Laura Gede's work on her film while in the Czech Republic to the various projects completed under faculty mentorship across campus and then honed with Wray and White during technical rehearsals, this project underscored the trust, communication, and dedication that it takes to simultaneously work independently as well as part of a whole.

This approach reinforced Towson's values of "intellectual inquiry and critical thinking preparing graduates who will serve as effective, ethical leaders and engaged citizens." The subject matter of *Dance On Bones* caused students to think about issues that are facing our planet and how their art might be harnessed to make an impact on those changes. By empowering student ideas and visions, collaborative projects like this one create an environment in which students can become engaged citizens who believe that their voices can create change. The innovative form of the script pushed theatre students out of their comfort zones and made room for the students in other disciplines, who might not have participated in theatre, to invest in the project with equal footing.

Expanding the collaborative approach of theatre to encompass and feature the work of the students and faculty throughout in the College of Fine Arts and Communication created a community that will continue to develop and resonate for years to come. By finding like-minded collaborators in the faculty of other departments, we were able to effectively connect students across the departments. Actors would marvel at the skills of the music composition student as that same composition student marveled at the actor's ability to be onstage. Skills that seemed innate became extraordinary as we shared our work with the Towson community and the world at large. As discussed above, throughout this process students and faculty demonstrated the very qualities that Towson University wants its students to graduate with "the vision, creativity and adaptability to craft solutions that enrich the culture, society, economy, and environment of Maryland, the region, and beyond." This innovative, interdisciplinary approach to multidisciplinary work in which the individual vision and creativity of each student is honed and integrated to create a cohesive whole will empower the students of today to be the artists and leaders of tomorrow.