Broad women connect with the Committee of 200

How to ace the evaluative interview during the admission process

First years face off in BvB Case Competition

...and more!
This fall, women in the Broad MBA Program had a chance to meet and network with some of the most powerful women in business during the Committee of 200 (C200) Conference at MSU.

C200 is a professional organization whose members are some of the world’s most successful businesswomen, with more than 400 members representing more than 100 industries around the world.

“It’s important for women to recognize the potential available to them and also the challenges they’ll face throughout their career,” says Cheri DeClercq, director of the Broad Weekend MBA Program. “This shows them it can be done, and it certainly is done.”

DeClercq adds that the corporate business leaders and entrepreneurs who attended the conference demonstrated many ways of being successful while balancing a career with other responsibilities.

The conference was held November 17 and 18 at the Henry Center on campus and featured a panel of speakers who addressed topics including career-life balance and building an authentic life. Speakers included Ann Drake, chairperson and
CEO of DSC Logistics; Julie Fasone Holder, founder and principal of JFH Insights LLC-Management Advising; and Mindi Fynke, president and CEO of EHIM Inc, a pharmacy benefit manager firm.

During the conference, three MBA students who had submitted applications were selected as C200 Scholars. The three second-year recipients are Shannon Blakely, Nandhini Rangan, and Jenifer Fleury.

“I was very humbled to win considering how amazing each one of my classmates is,” says Blakely. “It’s important that women are supportive of each other. We aren’t going to make it in business if we aren’t.”

The scholarship winners received $10,000 each and were invited to attend the next C200 conference to be held in Chicago. They also were invited to join the C200 scholar network, where they can connect online with other scholars around the world.

“The scholar network gives you the chance to learn from other people and share your experience,” says Blakely. “Even if you’ve had a completely different experience, you learn from people who have different perspectives on what you’re thinking about.”

Visit c200.org to learn more about the Committee of 200.
First-year MBAs go HEAD-TO-HEAD in Broad v. Broad Case Competition

The 11th annual Broad v. Broad Internal Case Competition tested the mettle of 76 first-year students from the Full-Time MBA Program who presented their cases to judges from some of the nation’s most respected corporations.

The competition, held at the James B. Henry Center for Executive Development on Saturday, January 28, called for the teams to develop a business strategy for InterfaceRAISE, a sustainability consulting firm that is a subsidiary of Interface Inc., a global carpet manufacturer. Participants were tasked with developing a strategy for the firm that would grow sales, market share, and profitability.

“The competition was very close,” says Dale Wilson, professor of marketing and faculty coordinator of case competitions at Broad. “The judges were really impressed by all four final teams. It was a narrow victory.”

The panel of 21 judges scored the teams on six-point scales based on content and presentation. The MBA teams, which had 24 hours to prepare analyses, presented their cases to representatives from such companies as Nike, Chrysler LLC, Whirlpool Corporation, Deloitte Consulting, ConAgra Foods, and Microsoft.

The Broad v. Broad competition is more than a test of knowledge, serving as preparation for external case competitions as well as the business world.

“Our alums tell us the case competitions really stand out as giving them valuable background,” says Wilson. “It’s fast-paced and requires quick thinking and strategizing. It forces them to analyze, present, and answer tough questions and work well with their teammates. It’s a great simulation.”

Marketing professor, Dale Wilson, enjoys a break during lunch.

First-year MBA student, Sean Harness and Itai Shemesh prepare for their case competition presentations together.
The first-year MBAs got some help preparing for the competition from their more experienced peers. Second-year students Muralidharan Kandasamy, Priya Mohan, and David Studley—who competed in the 2011 Big Ten MBA Case Competition—gave a presentation about what to expect to the teams participating in Broad v. Broad.

Broad MBAs can look forward to upcoming external competitions, including the 2012 Big Ten Case Competition. Renamed this year as the Fisher Invitational, the event will take place April 12-14 at Ohio State University’s Fisher College of Business.

**Broad v. Broad Top Performing Teams**

**First place:** Sourav Adhikari, Megan Brody, Peter Hosken, Brett Neller

**Second place:** Lucas Balcerzak, Kelly Fletcher, James Hill, Stephanie Todd

**Third place:** Dave Helstowski, Kyle Hool, Sivaram Murthy, Cristen Rinderknecht

**Fourth place:** Jeff Brown, Emily Dickinson, Chris Kirwin, Rachal Snider

**Individual Awards**

- **Best Communicator:** Nikhil Fotedar, James Hill, Chris Kirwin, Veronica Stewart
- **Best Presenter:** Dave Helstowski
- **Best Q&A:** Kyle Hool

For more information about case competitions at Broad, visit mba.broad.msu.edu/academics/experiential/cases
**Q:** Why did you choose to pursue an MBA at the Broad College?

**A:** I was originally drawn to Broad by the program’s high rankings, particularly those of the Supply Chain Management Program. As I researched the program further, I discovered more and more that appealed to me. The small class size, the collaborative learning environment, but most of all the interaction with Broad staff and students. I also found the collaborative learning environment to be very applicable to real-world business problems. But most of all, from interacting with Broad staff and students.

**Q:** What is a typical day like for you?

**A:** Busy! I wake up pretty early in the morning, probably around 5 a.m., and finish any studying or reading that I didn’t complete the night before. Class starts at 8:30 a.m. and goes until about 2 p.m. From there, I either head to work as a Graduate Assistant, to a team meeting, or to the library to study. I typically arrive home between 6 and 7 p.m., which allows me to have dinner and spend time with my wife and 4-month-old son.

**Q:** You come from a military background. Could you talk about your experience?

**A:** Before Broad I served as a Marine Officer. My specialty in the Marine Corps is that of a Logistics Officer and I was stationed at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. I deployed to Iraq from September 2008 to March 2009 and Afghanistan from November 2009 to April 2010. On deployment, I had the privilege to serve as Platoon Commander for Motor Transport platoons leading logistics convoys. After returning beginning the process of organizing a new student group for students who are veterans of the U.S. military.

**Q:** What kinds of activities/groups are you involved with at Broad?

**A:** Net Impact, Graduate Supply Chain Management Association, and the MBA Association. I am also beginning the process of organizing a new student group for students who are veterans of the U.S. military.
from overseas, I had the opportunity to work at a training center preparing Marines for deployment. There I was able to gain experience in procurement, working on a variety of long- and short-term services contracts.

**Q:** How do you balance having a family and going to school?

**A:** My wife, Kelsey, is incredible. She works very hard taking care of a newborn, so family support is a must. It is very important to communicate in advance with your spouse regarding your schedule so he or she knows what nights you will be at school late. But really it just comes down to prioritization, both academically and personally. You have to know when you can put down the books for a night and help with the baby, or enjoy a date night with your spouse.

**Q:** You live in Old Town in Lansing. What do you like about the area?

**A:** Old Town is small but great. It is a safe area and has many boutique shops and art galleries that my family and I like to explore. The Lansing River Trail runs through Old Town on its way and runs right to Michigan State’s campus. There are also several festivals there during the summer, as well as weekly farmers’ markets. If you are looking for more variety in places to eat or nightlife, downtown Lansing is less than a mile walk away.

**Q:** What are your plans after you finish the MBA program?

**A:** Through on-campus recruiting sponsored by the Career Services Center, I received and accepted an offer from Intel for a summer internship. I hope to go to Portland, Oregon this summer, convert my internship into a full-time offer, and start my career!

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**DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THE TEAM EFFECTIVENSS LAB?**

The MSU Team Effectiveness Laboratory, co-directed by Eli Broad Professor of Management John Hollenbeck and John A. Hannah Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Management Daniel R. Ilgen, opened its doors in 1990 thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Defense. It was established to examine basic psychological issues related to how teams make decisions under stress. Over the last 12 years, the Team Lab staff has run more than 1,000 teams and published 30 research papers. In addition to its research aspects, this lab has been utilized for team-skill-development purposes in Full-Time MBA curriculum. Through the combination of traditional lecture-based classes and the team simulation, students are able to gain greater insight into both leadership and team processes. In fact, Michigan State University’s Broad School is the only non-military institution that is using the such a simulated activity for both teaching and research purposes.

To learn more go to: http://management.broad.msu.edu/lab/
Despite its small size, East Lansing and its surrounding communities offer a diverse range of living experiences that cater to MBA students, whether they are single, have families, or have moved here from another country. The diverse population of residents in the community provides a range of living options, schools, restaurants, and entertainment, and the central location makes it easy for MBAs to explore what other Michigan cities have to offer.

David Helstowski is a first-year student who lives in Owen Graduate Hall on campus. “It was a no-brainer to live on campus,” says Helstowski. “I can park here, all my classes are less than five minutes away, and I can always run back to my room if I need to grab a book or a bite to eat or change into a suit.”

Prior to starting the MBA program, Helstowski, originally from Brighton, Michigan, worked for a law firm. He says he didn’t want to rent an apartment in East Lansing because his fiancé currently lives in Chicago. Despite living in a smaller city, Helstowski takes advantage of what the area has to offer graduate students, including hanging out at the Peanut Barrel or heading to Oktoberfest and other seasonal festivals in Lansing. He also loves staying active and taking trips to the Upper Peninsula, where he is planning a visit with some fellow MBA students from India. In the winter, Helstowski travels north to ski and ride snow mobiles, and in the spring he takes advantage of good weather up north to canoe, fish, hunt, and camp.

Shannon Blakely, a second-year student from Boston, lives in a one-bedroom apartment right off Grand River Avenue behind a Biggby Coffee shop. She says there are lots of different living options in East Lansing, Lansing, and Okemos, so students should decide what kind of living experience is best for them and take time to check out different options in person. Blakely likes her apartment’s proximity to campus and to the multitude of food options nearby. “I try to get to the gym a few times per week,” says Blakely. “We go out to eat a lot, since it’s very affordable in East Lansing. Los Tres Amigos, SanSu Sushi, No Thai, and Crunchy’s are all favorites for dinner. In the fall, people take trips to the cider mills around Michigan.
and in the winter we will have a ski trip up north. In the fall, most of our free time is spent attending football Saturdays. Blakely recommends visiting cities outside East Lansing for a change of pace. “There are a lot of people who take weekend trips to Chicago,” says Blakely. “Detroit isn’t too far away either, and the MBA Association sponsors a trip to a Red Wings game every year.”

For international MBA students with families, East Lansing has much to offer. Erkan Kocas, a second-year student from Istanbul, Turkey, lives in an apartment on Lake Lansing Road with his wife, Aybige, and 4-year-old son, Arda. With children, the Kocas family often attends weekend events with other group members.

Kocas says the toughest part of transitioning to life in the United States was watching his son struggle to learn English and interact with other students at his school. “Everything is easier now,” says Kocas. “The first-year of the MBA program was very intense. It’s important to get involved with the community. There are a lot of events and volunteer opportunities and things become easier if you get to know other students in the program.”

“We like the area,” says Kocas. “It’s very secure and has nice walking paths. In the winter, we try to visit the nearby parks and pull our son on a sled and play in the snow. Last summer, we went to the jazz festival downtown and my son loved it. He loves to dance.”

The Kocas’ have struck up relationships with other local couples with children and are members of the group Student Parents on a Mission at MSU. The group provides networking opportunities and resources to students.
HR CASE COMPETITION PITS BROAD MBAS AGAINST TOP B-SCHOOLS

Broad MBA students are no strangers to case competitions. This fall, a team of five Broad students took their skills on the road, setting off for Tennessee to compete against top schools in the Human Capital Case Competition. The competition, sponsored by Deloitte Consulting and General Electric, took place October 27 to 29 at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. This was the first year Broad participated. The Broad team—one of 12 selected from a pool of 35—competed against teams that represented universities around the country, including the University of North Carolina, University of California-Berkeley, and Emory University.

The Broad College’s Nick Fischer, a second-year MBA student with a concentration in human resources management and the president of the Human Resources Association, spearheaded the effort of putting together a team to enter the case competition. He first recruited second-year students, Joe Sidor, finance, and Farris Bukhari, human resource management. They then observed first year students, Angela Pope and Kalenda Pembamoto, during the Breakthrough 2 Broad case competition to round out the required five-member team.

“You have to get a team you can work well with. You spend a lot of time together and you want to enjoy the experience.”

The team received its case a week in advance of the competition. The case involved the North Atlantic Hospital, a teaching hospital that faced a poor retention rate and ambiguity about the roles of its three types of physicians it employed and the criteria for promotion. The team hashed out the case together for several hours and divided the work into sections among members. Each team member brought back a deeper analysis and came together to discuss risks and financials and finalized a concrete plan for the hospital to better track employee promotion and evaluation.

On to Nashville. The competition began with a surprise when the judges threw a curveball at the teams that had to be incorporated into their presentation. Despite not placing in the top three, the Broad team received positive feedback from the director of Deloitte.
“The director told us our analysis and solution were elegantly simple,” says Sidor. “It was very understandable and the judges said they could see it being implemented. They just would’ve liked to see us spend more time on specific challenges and risks to our plan.”

The competition wasn’t all work. The Broad students had a chance to experience Nashville by going to a western bar that featured line dancing and attended a reception with sponsors and other team members from the competition.

It wasn’t all about winning either. The team had multiple chances to network with fellow b-school students and talk with representatives from Deloitte and GE. Sidor says having judges offer feedback helped him set a personal benchmark for his own performance.

“It’s cool to pit your school against other top schools,” says Sidor. “It’s kind of about school pride and showing how good MSU is.”

To learn more about the case competition, visit humancapitalcasecompetition.com.

Joe Sidor, Farris Bukhari, Nick Fischer, Angie Pope and Kalenga Pembamoto at the entrance of Owen Graduate School of Management at Vanderbilt University.
Assistant Professor of Marketing Clay Voorhees and his MBA students have been partnering with Deloitte Consulting on the Deloitte Generation Y Automotive Survey for the past four years. The project, for which MSU has become the lead academic partner, provides students with a unique, hands-on experience. It also showcases the Broad College’s Marketing faculty and their expertise. “We were asked to partner with them based on the reputation of our Marketing MBA program as an applied program with service-learning and executive-level deliveries,” notes Voorhees.

MBA students volunteer to take part in the project, which entails conducting primary and secondary research on consumer attitudes in the automotive industry, turning the results into executive-level findings, and ultimately presenting the results of their analysis to automotive executives at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, Michigan. The students recently presented in front of an audience of executives in a town hall forum of approximately 100 people, including a Q&A session with Mark Fields, Executive Vice President and President, The Americas for Ford Motor Company, Joe Vitale, Global Automotive Sector Leader for Deloitte, and Phil LeBeau, Automotive and Airline industry reporter for CNBC. Voorhees believes that this gives MBA students a chance to not only provide insight to Deloitte Consulting, but also to impact the future of the automotive industry and Michigan’s economy through application of their survey results.

MSU alumnus Ron Goldsberry, an Automotive Consultant for Deloitte and former Vice President of Global Service Business Strategy for Ford Motor
Company, has been involved with coaching the student teams. As Voorhees explains, “It’s a rare chance to have a seasoned automotive executive come back and work with students to help shape their presentations.”

For these MBA students, the project offers connections and experience beyond the classroom, preparing them for their future careers. “The project gives students a chance to contribute and connect with others in the industry and get real-world experience . . . it’s not an everyday opportunity,” says first-year Marketing MBA Shelley Szalay. “Any time you get an opportunity to get in front of industry executives and network, validate what you are doing in the classroom, and find out it has real-world value, it’s a worthwhile experience,” adds Chris Kirwin, also a first-year Marketing MBA.

Often, Voorhees and his students work with Deloitte Consulting to take the findings directly to the automotive industry, including past visits to Honda’s North American Headquarters, Chrysler, Ford, and General Motors where they have attended VP-level meetings. “These visits allow students to be the voice of Gen Y directly to the executives and provide great international and national exposure for the program alongside a world-class consulting team with Deloitte Consulting,” says Voorhees.

This is one of many projects at the Broad College where students are going out of the classroom to apply their learning, impacting more than their grades. ▲

For more information, including the actual survey results, please visit www.deloitte.com/us/geny or broad.msu.edu.

MBAA MAKING AN IMPACT IN THE LANSING AREA

As the largest MBA student organization at Broad, the MBA Association (MBAA) provides opportunities for students to build personal and professional relationships beyond the classroom through social outings and networking events. During the holiday season, they sponsored a Toys for Tots holiday party where admission was to bring a new toy and to get in the spirit of the season with a holiday sweater. A large amount of toys were collected and everyone who participated was extremely generous with their donation. All toys were donated to the Toys for Tots in Lansing, MI who was thrilled to see the generosity of the MSU MBA students! ▲
Applying to an MBA program is like applying for a job. That’s how prospective students should approach the evaluative interview of the application process to Broad’s Full-Time MBA Program. The interview gives Broad Admission Officers the ability to determine whether prospective students will be competitive in the classroom, present themselves well to employers, and be a good overall fit with the program.

“We want to interact with you,” says Kate Goedde, associate director of admissions. “We’re looking for professional demeanor, the ability to articulate ideas, and a clear picture of where you’ve been and where you want to go.”

Beyond answering questions, the evaluative interview is the best way for applicants to differentiate themselves. “This is a pitch for yourself,” says Goedde. “It’s your chance to show us your personal brand and why you want to come to MSU.”

Interviews take 30 to 40 minutes and are conducted after each round of applications. Applicants typically receive a response from the Broad College four to six weeks after their interview.

Paul North, director of admissions for the Full-Time MBA Program, suggests applicants go beyond researching programs online when deciding what schools would be a good fit.

“Take it a step further by talking to different constituents like alumni of the program, a current student, or an admissions officer and really pick their brain,” says North.

In preparation for the interview, North suggests applicants prepare stories they can talk about with interviewers that touch on areas such as leadership, negotiation, and conflict resolution.

“We want to know what their goals are, what kinds of skills they bring, and that they’ve progressed in their career,” says North. “We also want to see whether an applicant is coachable if they lack certain skill sets.”

North also recommends applicants consider answering interview questions using the STAR technique. When answering a question, the applicant would discuss the Situation or Task they needed to accomplish, the Action they took, and the Result they achieved.

And no matter how much preparation an applicant does, it’s important to go with the flow.

“Be flexible, spontaneous, and think on your feet,” says Goedde.

Learn more about the evaluative interview by visiting mba.broad.msu.edu/admissions/criteria/evaluative-interview.
Broad MBA alumni work in some of the most visible positions in their fields. Visit any grocery store in America and you’ll see the efforts of Kelly Jordan, a 2008 alumna, who is a brand manager at Kellogg in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Jordan, who interned with Kellogg in 2007, works in wholesome snacks innovation and is responsible for launching new snack products for Nutrigrain and Fiber Plus brands.

“I’m marketing things that are found in peoples’ homes on a daily basis,” says Jordan. “It’s cool to be in a store or watching TV and see our products. I’m doing something new every day.”

Prior to her recent promotion to the Nutrigrain and Fiber Plus brands, Jordan marketed Kiebler cookies products. She says one of her proudest professional moments was launching a packaging redesign of Kiebler cookies with a TV commercial campaign that had a higher—and sweeter—purpose. The company partnered with the Red Cross to be the exclusive cookie donor to the organization’s blood drives with its “Be a good cookie, get a good cookie” effort.

Before pursuing her MBA at the Broad College, Jordan earned a bachelor’s degree in communications from the University of Michigan. It was while working at RedPeg Marketing in Washington, DC, that Jordan realized she wanted to explore a career as a brand manager.

According to Jordan, the most relevant part of her experience in the MBA program was working as part of a team.

“Working cross-functionally with different personalities toward the same goal is really important,” says Jordan. “I got a great perspective on the business world.”

Reflecting on her time as an MBA student, Jordan says the best part of the Broad program is its people. She stays in touch with many of her classmates, who have found success at top companies around the country, and remembers her professors taking an active interest in her success.

She still gets back to campus for visits—mostly during MBA tailgates during football season. Jordan attended the Kellogg-sponsored tailgate earlier this season to speak with current students and faculty.

And she has a bit of advice for current students. “It’s up to you to make the most out of your experience,” says Jordan. “Get involved early on and network because it goes by really fast.”