

THE *Executive* Scholar

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BUSINESS



PH.D. *in* BUSINESS
for EXECUTIVES

AT SPEARS BUSINESS

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Greetings,

Welcome to the Summer 2018 issue of *The Executive Scholar*, the newsletter for our PhD in Business for Executives program. Our executive PhD program continues to grow in both its success and popularity. At the time of this publication, we have conferred 41 PhD degrees with eight more students in the dissertation stages. Also, we have matriculated 13 new students who are currently in their first year of classes. The program has attracted executive students from all across the world, including Brazil, Canada, Malaysia, Mexico, and The Netherlands, and from 27 states.

Oklahoma State University's Executive PhD program was the first AACSB accredited PhD in business to be offered in an executive format. The course work is extremely rigorous and compares favorably to traditional PhD programs. We designed the program to attract professionals who want to learn the skills to make data-driven, evidence-based decisions in their organizations. Our students come from a wide variety of industries including aerospace, banking, energy, financial services, agriculture, education, entertainment, retail, construction & engineering, manufacturing, health care & pharmaceuticals, and technology. Recent applicants have come from organizations such as American Airlines, Bank of America, BASF, Chesapeake Energy, Citigroup, Deloitte, Dell, Frontier Airlines, G.E., HEB, IBM, the Internal Revenue Service, Microsoft, Niagara Bottling, Pfizer, PwC, Sprint, Walmart and Wells Fargo, as well as entrepreneurial startups.

Over the past four years, research universities have recognized the research skills of our students and have been recruiting and hiring our alumni. We have seen our students take positions at a number of universities, including Harvard University, the University of Notre Dame, Missouri State University, Texas Christian University, The University of Texas, Weber State University and many other prominent schools. Several of our alumni have already authored books or started new businesses based on their research.

Since the inception of the program, our focus has been and remains research output - whether it's theoretical, applied or even pedagogical. With the outstanding researchers at OSU partnering with renowned global scholars from other research universities and our exceptional practitioner students, that triumvirate of research potential will continue to flourish. For more information on how to become a member of the 2019 class, go to the Ph.D. in Business for Executives website: <http://business.okstate.edu/phdexec>



Jim Pappas, PhD

Head, Department of Management
Spears School of Business
Oklahoma State University

Staff Profiles



Toby Joplin, CPA, PhD, is the Director of the Executive Doctoral Programs and a clinical professor at Oklahoma State University. He teaches management courses in OSU's MBA program. He is the founder of the TaxAlmanac website which was named one of the Top 50 Uses of the Web in 2005 by *Bloomberg Business Week* magazine and has been recognized by many other publications including *Time*, *Forbes*, and *Harvard Business*

Review. Oklahoma State University named Toby one of 50 distinguished MBA alumni of the last 50 years. He speaks frequently to professional and student groups and consults with organizations on a variety of management topics.



Donna Lamson is the Program Coordinator for the Ph.D. in Business for Executives program. Lamson had a successful 27-year career as a major account technology sales consultant with Xerox Corporation before transitioning to the world of academia and OSU's Executive PhD program in 2012. She is the focal point to set-up, coordinate and facilitate all monthly residencies and special events. In addition, she is the point person for the Exec PhD

students and faculty chair/members activities required during the dissertation process and graduation process.

From the Desk of the Director

This issue of *The Executive Scholar* provides an excellent contrast. The cover of the previous issue had a picture of a snowy Old Central. Old Central was the first permanent building on the campus of Oklahoma State University. Completed in 1894 at a cost of just \$25,000, Old Central still stands on campus today, housing the university's Honors College. As you can see, the cover of this issue of *The Executive Scholar* shows our brand new business building which was dedicated on April 13 of this year. The new Business building is nearly 150,000 square feet and was constructed at a cost of \$72 million. It is a beautiful, state-of-the-art facility that will allow us to better serve you and all of our business students.

Similarly, our PhD *in Business for Executives* program has made great strides over the past year. We have completed our first year of holding our monthly residencies on the Stillwater campus. Our executive students appreciate being housed on this campus, which of course is the "mother ship" and the home for most OSU resources. Students are able to reserve a hotel room in the very same building where many of our classes have been held. Our students are just a short two-minute walk from the offices of the approximately one hundred Spears School of Business faculty, making it easy for students to develop relationships and explore research opportunities with our faculty.

Last August we admitted our sixth cohort, which may be our most impressive group of PhD candidates yet. This cohort includes a wide variety of business professionals with impressive credentials, and a real hunger for research; i.e. to discover "the best practices of the future." You can view those students in this

issue. Also, last August we offered our first Dissertation Workshop for third-year PhD students. Those who attended raved about how the workshop accelerated their progress on their dissertations and we are making the Dissertation Workshop an ongoing part of our students' plans of study. This year we will also hold our very first reunion of our Executive PhD alumni. Our reunion speakers are headlined by Adam Galinsky and Adrian Ward.

As I pen this column, we are reviewing the applications for our seventh cohort. I am struck by how both the number and quality of our applicants go up each year. It is no surprise that the number and quality of our student and alumni research publications also are increasing. Our graduates are equipping their organizations to better make evidence-based, data-driven decisions and are in great demand by research universities searching for faculty who have the unique combination of 20-plus years of experience and an earned PhD from an AACSB accredited university. I truly believe the best is yet to come!



Toby Joplin, CPA, PhD

Director of Executive Doctoral Programs
Spears School of Business
Oklahoma State University



Stacia Enns is an Administrative Support Specialist for the PhD *in Business for Executives* program and also provides support to the Spears School's Department of Management. She handles a variety of campus matters for the Executive PhD students and faculty, and various administrative requests for the Management Department faculty. Stacia was previously employed by the Armand Hammer Foundation, working in Dallas, Grand Cayman,

and Los Angeles. She earned her bachelor's degree from East Central University in Fashion Merchandising with a concentration in Marketing.



Brandy Kennedy is an Administrative Support Specialist for the Spears School's Department of Management. She previously was employed at the Oklahoma State Capitol where she was a legislative assistant to State Rep. Michael Rogers during the 55th Legislative session. Brandy earned her master's degree from OSU after teaching in Ukraine as a Peace Corps volunteer. She received her bachelor's degree from Texas State University while majoring in International Studies.

Sixth cohort includes students from across United States

By Terry Tush

Attracting business leaders from across the United States to participate in Oklahoma State University's innovative doctoral program for executives is becoming common. The sixth cohort of the Ph.D. in Business for Executives features 13 participants from seven different states.

The three-year doctoral program in OSU's Spears School of Business kicked off in August with an orientation session at the Student Union on the Stillwater campus. The sixth cohort joins 78 participants from across the world who have already taken part in the Ph.D. in Business for Executives program.

"We are very excited to welcome our sixth cohort to the executive doctoral program," said Ken Eastman, dean of the Spears School of Business. "The program is making a significant impact and continues to attract the quality and diversity of individuals we expected including representatives from such companies as American Airlines, Bank of America, Citigroup, Deloitte, Dell, Pfizer, Sprint, Walmart, and Wells Fargo. The program has a very good reputation and it shows in the quality of individuals who are admitted."

"I was looking for a PhD program that is research-based but also takes into account the practical aspects of my career. This program was perfect for me," said Stephanie Phipps, Vice President, Human Resources for Oklahoma City-based Mustang Fuel Corporation.

"I wanted the opportunity to go to a program that is rigorous, that is well respected, and that is AACSB accredited. And yet I didn't want to take five years away from my career to accomplish this. Oklahoma State University checked all the boxes," said Henry Kirn, founder and principal consultant of BeyondIR Consulting Services in Dallas/Fort Worth. "I can work full time in my business and still pursue my degree. I looked at a number of different executive doctoral programs. What differentiated OSU was the rigorous nature of the program. Walking out with a degree is one thing. Walking out with a degree that is well respected is a completely different thing."

"The reason that I selected the PhD in Business for Executives program at Oklahoma State University is because I was looking for an AACSB-accredited PhD program that is tailored for working professionals. I had the opportunity during the application process to visit one of the residencies. I was able to meet the faculty, students, staff, and the administration. I was immediately impressed," said Julie Ravenscraft, accounting instructor at Missouri State University in Springfield, Mo.

The cohort includes CEOs, CFOs, senior level executives, owners, and managers from well-known and respected



organizations across the United States as well as faculty from esteemed universities. The cohort consists of individuals representing California, Colorado, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas and Utah.

"Several faculty have remarked that our sixth cohort could be our most impressive group yet, and I would agree," said Toby Joplin, director of Executive Doctoral Programs. "OSU was the first and is still one of the few universities to offer an AACSB-accredited PhD in business in an executive format. Our students are attracted by the opportunity to work with some of the finest business research faculty in the world. Our students aren't simply applying known best practices, they are creating the best practices of the future."

These students are from industries such as energy, banking and financial, higher education, manufacturing, construction, aerospace/airlines, state government, health care, non-profits, telecommunications, transportation, bioscience, entertainment, information technology and engineering.

The doctoral program has graduated 41 students from the first four cohorts. The program has attracted executive students from all across the world, including Brazil, Canada, Malaysia, Mexico, and The Netherlands, and from 27 states.

The original stated goal of the program was to enable executives to better make data-driven decisions to make their organizations more successful. But over the past four years, research universities have discovered the quality of our graduates and our students have accepted positions at universities like Harvard University, the University of Notre Dame, The University of Texas, Texas Christian University, Marshall University, St. Edward's University, Weber State University, Tulane University and the list continues to grow.



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Samuel Bass
Accounting Instructor, Missouri State University
Property Manager, B&B Rental and Real Estate
Springfield, Missouri

2017 Participants | Cohort VI



Michael Caston
Associate Professor of Industrial Design, Metropolitan State University of Denver
Partner at CAMIC designs, LLC.
Denver, Colorado



Nefretiri Cooley-Broughton
Executive Director, Marketing and Communications
University of the Pacific
Stockton, California



Rick Desgroseilliers
Chief Financial Officer
Eyefinity
Rancho Cordova, California



Nicole Flink
Adjunct Faculty, Department of Professional Sales
Weber State University
Ogden, Utah



Lee Grumbles
Vice President, Commercial Banking
Trustmark National Bank
Houston, Texas



Henry Kirm
Founder and Principal Consultant
BeyondIR Consulting Services
Irving, Texas



Edward (Ed) McCabe
Owner
McCabe Energy Company
Midland, Texas



Stephanie Phipps
Vice President, Human Resources
Mustang Fuel Corporation
Nichols Hills, Oklahoma



Clint Purtell
Sr. Consultant and Entrepreneurial Executive
Mastech, Inc. (Southwest Airlines) and TES, Inc.
Frisco, Texas



Julie Ravenscraft
Accounting Instructor
Missouri State University
Springfield, Missouri



Kourtenay Schley
Director of Human Resources
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
Moabridge, South Dakota



Dung Vu
President
MEP Green Design & Build PLLC
Houston, Texas

Graduates now excelling in academia

The PhD *in Business for Executives* program at the Spears School of Business not only helps those in industry but also students in academia. We asked graduates currently involved in academia to share their thoughts about the program and how the program has benefitted their career.



Jonathan Butler (Cohort I)
Clinical Assistant Professor
in Entrepreneurship
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma

■ What attracted you to the Executive PhD program at Oklahoma State University?

I fell in love with research as an undergrad. So, after starting my MBA in 2004, I heavily considered going on to get my PhD. When I learned that OSU was launching a PhD program that would allow me to be able to obtain my PhD and still support my family, I jumped at the chance. OSU made my dream a reality by allowing me to still earn a living while pursuing my PhD.

■ What impressed you about the program?

The faculty and staff of the ExecPhD program at OSU is second to none. Not only are they among the top researchers in their respective fields, they are genuinely nice people that I enjoyed learning from and being around. However, the most impressive thing I experienced was the dedication of my dissertation committee. These professors made sure that I gave them my very best.

■ What is/are your research interest(s)?

While my dissertation was on the relationships of entrepreneurs with dark personality characteristics (Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy) to employee creativity and productivity, what I find most interesting is the “fuzzy front end” of the creative cognition process. Currently, I’m working on a

theoretical paper about that as well as gathering data (I’ve already collected 1,200 surveys) to support the theory.

■ How has the program helped you and your organization?

The OSU Exec PhD program has been a tremendous help as I’ve pursued a career in academia. I set my face like flint to make it as a professor from my first month. I then was offered a position at Rogers State University where I taught statistics in the summer of 2014. While at Rogers State, I interviewed at four universities, eventually accepting a full-time, tenure-track position at Marshall University starting in the fall of 2014. While at Marshall University, I proposed and designed an entrepreneurship major, designing the curriculum from the ground up. I designed and introduced eight new courses. I was promoted to division coordinator as well as appointed Dean of the Inaugural Governor’s School of Entrepreneurship by the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts.

Now, here at Oklahoma State University I get to teach three large sections of “EEE 2023: Introduction to Entrepreneurship” with over 400 students each semester.

■ Did the program change the way you view and solve problems or capitalize on opportunities in your organization?

More than viewing and solving problems, the Exec PhD program changed the way I think in general. I approach the world with a focus on understanding how it works. For many areas of life, there are theories that help us to make sense of what’s going on. The experience helped me to be more mindful of root causes and generalizability of possible explanations.



Justin Keeler (Cohort II)
Assistant Professor
Ouachita Baptist University
Arkadelphia, Arkansas

■ What attracted you to the Executive PhD program at Oklahoma State University?

Several things attracted me to this program, specifically it being AACSB accredited, the element of flexibility for working professionals and such a program being offered under the Oklahoma State University education umbrella.

■ What impressed you about the program?

I was most impressed by the scholarly expectations in this

program. In this program, much is demanded; however, much is rewarded for one’s efforts. The curriculum is built to have rigor along with high standards to define mastery and understanding of the subject matter.

■ What is/are your research interest(s)?

My primary area of interest revolves around predicting, explaining and enhancing employee performance and efficiency at individual and group levels by integrating theories of person-organization fit, motivation, stress and compassion fatigue.

■ What research projects are you currently working on?

Currently, I am working on several evidence-based research projects. One project is concerned with understanding how a social responsibility mission of an up and coming restaurant chain plays a role in organizational attitudes and meaningful

Justin Keeler (continued)

work. Another project I am working on involves work-life balance comparisons between two career paths, executives and university faculty

■ **How has the program helped you and your organization?**

This program helped me reach a personal “career” dream to teach and research at a university. It prepared me to think like a scholar and process information from a different lens. Something special about this program is through my cohort, it connected me to a unique group of business leaders. Importantly, being in a program like this with business leaders with like-mindedness that choose to broaden their education while also being mindful and willing to learning from each other is a recipe for synergistic and dynamic learning. In essence, beyond the high caliber faculty of this program, my cohort members helped me to experience learning in a way that is often described as “iron sharpening iron.” Many of these individuals I now call dear friends, and several are lifelong mentors.

■ **Did the program change the way you view and solve problems or capitalize on opportunities in your organization?**

This program helped me to become more empirical in my problem solving. Obviously not all problems can be solved quantitatively; however, applying a measurement to something when possible, is a way to remove personal bias in decision making. Another area of problem solving I learned from a combination of people in this program, i.e. my colleagues and professors, is “experienced” mindfulness and collaboration.



Alex Lawrence (Cohort III)
Assistant Professor
Weber State University
Kaysville, Utah

■ **What attracted you to the Executive PhD program at Oklahoma State University?**

The quality of the program. It’s a “real” PhD, not watered down at all. Highly respected and very rigorous.

■ **What impressed you about the program?**

The level of support. The team is all about helping you manage a busy professional life with the demands of a doctoral program.

■ **What is/are your research interest(s)?**

Sales related (Business) and technology oriented (apps/e-commerce).

■ **What research projects are you currently working on?**

Two papers around sales (flow and grit, specifically).

■ **How will what you have learned in the program help you and your organization in the future?**

My experience in this program is best described as learning how to have an intellectual adventure in academia and(or) a corporate setting. For me, earning a PhD was about getting equipped and prepared with knowledge tools for a career transition. This program delivered and provided the formal program I desired to conduct research and to also experience how to be effective in the classroom.

■ **Are there any other comments you would like to add about the EPhD program?**

The EPhD program at OSU is a unique educational program that has played a significant role for me to have a new career as a college professor after being in the corporate world for over 15 years.

This program was about undergoing an intellectual transformation experience. Participating in a program with other individuals that had a common interest to stretch their imaginations via self-discovery while also being ambitious to obtain unique scholarly skill sets is attributed to the EPhD program. It essentially creates the space for people and knowledge to come together so that students and graduates can be effective difference makers in their respective organizations, corporate or academia.

■ **How has the program helped you and your organization?**

I was able to secure a full-time, tenure-track faculty position in large part due to the quality and completion of my OSU PhD.

■ **Did the program change the way you view and solve problems or capitalize on opportunities in your organization?**

Absolutely. I am much more data-driven and interested in the research behind topics of interest.

■ **How will what you have learned in the program help you and your organization in the future?**

I am conducting a number of research studies. Without my statistics and other PhD courses I would be ill equipped to handle such work.

■ **Are there any other comments you would like to add about the EPhD program?**

It is the hardest thing I have ever chosen to do in my life. Many times I thought about quitting. It is intensely difficult but absolutely worth it. I am so grateful to the program for helping me complete a lifelong dream.

Graduates making a difference in industry

The students in the Spears School's PhD *in Business for Executives* program are discovering new knowledge and using that knowledge to create best practices to benefit their company or organization. We asked several graduates to share the impact the program has had on their careers and the benefits for their company.



Thomas Totten (Cohort I)
Chief Executive Officer
Nyhart
Indianapolis, Indiana

■ What attracted you to the Executive PhD program at Oklahoma State University?

While sitting two seats away from Troyal Brooks (better known by his middle name Garth) in the initial recruiting session should have been a large enticement, I embarrassingly didn't realize who he was. However, meeting Gary Trennepohl and Joel Harper at the beginning and realizing their research interests included retirement plans was a sign from above that told me that this was the right program. I already had in my mind my research interests and they understood it completely from a very practical viewpoint. I was sold.

■ What impressed you about the program?

I would rate equally important the faculty and my classmates. Every faculty member taught me new ideas based in research that in fact changed the way my mind operated. Also, I would say that my classmates made coming to Oklahoma a destination, rather than a chore. I would like to especially call out Tom Bennett as he taught me so much about business and real life that I cannot repay him.

■ What is/are your research interest(s)?

As a pension actuary, retirement has always been a core interest. I really wonder why people try to solve a binary problem without pooling their risk. The binary problem is that they are either alive or dead and will not know when that happens. So, most people absorb that risk and don't offload it. Prospect theory shows that people are risk averse on winnings and risk seekers on losing. Finding inventive ways to share that risk is where I have spent my time.

■ What research projects are you currently working on?

I am currently working on a collaborative paper with a gentleman that is well known in the Chartered Financial Analysts society. We should be submitting the paper by summer and its premise is about sharing longevity risk. Yes, that's right, the risk of living too long and running out of money.

■ How has the program helped you and your organization?

The basis of the program was to teach evidence-based decision making. Using that as a motto, we have forced tighter decisions throughout the organization. While I can't state a metric that shows we performed better, I do believe it helps on the process side. A big change however, we used the techniques that Dr. (Tracy) Suter taught us regarding innovation and spun off a fintech startup that is now in revenue stage. The company is called Votaire (a portmanteau meaning your actuary in French) and uses the results of my dissertation for the algorithms. We are now finally pushing hard to generate sales.

■ Did the program change the way you view and solve problems or capitalize on opportunities in your organization?

I would say that the readings of Predictably Irrational, recommended by Dr. (Todd) Arnold, The Innovators Dilemma introduced by Dr. Suter and Made to Stick recommended by Dr. (Tom) Brown have had large impacts on my thinking and were applied in many sorts of ways within the company. We have changed our consulting techniques based on this.

■ How will what you have learned in the program help you and your organization in the future?

The latest opportunity for me is to use my PhD in a university setting. I wasn't originally planning to get into teaching, but the University of Notre Dame called, and I had to answer. I am retiring from my CEO spot and will be teaching a new generation of actuaries. What I learned at OSU will carry on.

■ Are there any other comments you would like to add about the EPhD program?

The program is very demanding in a different way than I experienced in an industry setting. It is also very rewarding. What you may have come into the program expecting may not at all be the results that you will earn. It will be better than any expectation. It was for me.



Warren Dyer (Cohort I)
Chief Visionary Officer
AOE Science
Dallas, Texas

■ **What attracted you to the Executive PhD program at Oklahoma State University?**

It was an opportunity to become part of an elite group, an executive with a Ph.D. The program's location, professors and cohort are the reason I was able to graduate. I liked the idea of closing the gap between the executive and new science/knowledge of the university.

■ **What impressed you about the program?**

The professors and the administrative group, they made me feel welcome and reduced the pressure of trying to understand a new way of thinking. As the first cohort, they spoiled us, having all the reading material out for us for the first few semesters. Allowing me time to get into the groove of reading ~ ten papers a week.

■ **What is/are your research interest(s)?**

One of my interests for research is in climate/culture and to create fit within an organization. I am also interested in researching mind-set in athletics and the correlation to personality "type" and succeeding when staying within their style or type.

■ **How has the program helped you and your organization?**

The program has opened various opportunities, allowing me the

possibilities to change or expand my career. I have been able to apply what I have learned and create the culture that we don't know, and we need to research. With an abundant amount of information that most companies do not use or even believe in creates an advantage. The program has given me the edge to exploit this knowledge by way of understanding where it exists. Possibly most important is the networking and life-long friends I have made.

■ **Did the program change the way you view and solve problems or capitalize on opportunities in your organization?**

Yes, having access to the latest research conversations have helped dramatically.

■ **How will what you have learned in the program help you and your organization in the future?**

One of my goals is to push executive education within my organization and leverage my network gained during the program.

■ **Are there any other comments you would like to add about the EPhD program?**

I also believe the program needs to view the cohort not only as researchers but also as a path to the next student. Research may not be on the forefront for all alumni. Once you leave that world, it is difficult to re-enter the conversation.



Steven Wilson (Cohort II)
Founder and Managing Partner
Steven L. Wilson & Associates,
Certified Public Accountants, LLP
Tulsa, Oklahoma

■ **What attracted you to the Executive PhD program at Oklahoma State University?**

My story may be a bit different. I was not looking for a program per se, but I was looking for another challenge. I saw an article about the initial class and visited with one of the participants (Tom Bennett). My wife and I then met Tom and his wife for dinner and learned more about the program. I had enjoyed some earlier work as an adjunct, I love to learn, and I was looking for a challenge. Also, in my case, this was a challenge I could attempt without taking time to travel.

■ **What impressed you about the program?**

I think I was most impressed that it was a PhD program, an opportunity to learn to be a researcher.

■ **What is/are your research interest(s)?**

I am interested in small business succession, whether a transfer from one generation to the next within a family, or to a non-family member.

■ **How has the program helped you and your organization?**

I am much more evidence based in my approach to business and to working with my clients.

■ **How will what you have learned in the program help you and your organization in the future?**

Again, I refer to evidenced based. That is evidenced-based management and applying the same to client issues.

■ **Are there any other comments you would like to add about the EPhD program?**

I had a fantastic time, I learned more than I ever expected, and it led to the opportunity to be an instructor in graduate level courses (I have since stepped back from that as my travel schedule was interfering with my teaching obligations.)



Angela Reddix (Cohort IV)
President & CEO
ARDX
and Founder
Envision Lead Grow
Virginia Beach, Virginia

■ **What attracted you to the Executive PhD program at Oklahoma State University?**

As a business owner with a responsibility for implementing regulations that support some of the nation's most critical health care systems, I was continually faced with the challenge of identifying, acquiring and retaining top talent. After seven years of attempting to build solutions independently, I was in search of a Ph.D. program with the rigor and respect of a traditional program, but offering the flexibility I needed to continue growing my thriving business. I was also yearning to be surrounded by other business leaders that could serve as sounding boards when attempting to translate theory into practice. Oklahoma State University was the only program that I found that met these needs.

■ **What impressed you about the program?**

I continued to be impressed with the caliber of professors that we were exposed to during the program. Not only those who were on staff at OSU, but those who presented during the residencies, due to the vast network of the OSU professors.

■ **What is/are your research interest(s)?**

My research interest is female entrepreneurship in underserved communities.

■ **What research projects are you currently working on?**

I am continuing to study the deliberate practice model to build entrepreneurial expertise with middle school girls in underserved communities.

■ **How has the program helped you and your organization?**

I noticed a gap in the entrepreneurship literature – there was very little that represented my story. The story of an African-American girl born into poverty, who later built a successful firm employing over 100 individuals. Through the program, I learned the value of contributing to literature to close the gaps; therefore, I launched Envision Lead Grow, a nonprofit organization designed to empower middle school girls living below the poverty level through entrepreneurship. In 2017, Envision Lead Grow impacted 414 girls and our goal is to grow to 1,000 girls by 2020. For more information, visit www.envisionleadgrow.org.

■ **Did the program change the way you view and solve problems or capitalize on opportunities in your organization?**

Absolutely! I have created a stronger data collection process to use both qualitative and quantitative methods to drive business decisions. By using the methods, I learned during the program, our healthcare management consulting firm achieved CMMI Level 5 status, which fewer than three percent of the small businesses in the United States have attained.

■ **How will what you have learned in the program help you and your organization in the future?**

I will continue to study the impact of the Envision Lead Grow program on the girls through high school. The OSU EPhD program created awareness for me regarding the value of longitudinal studies.

■ **Are there any other comments you would like to add about the EPhD program?**

At times, receiving the Ph.D. seemed like an impossible dream. I don't believe I have ever worked as hard for anything in my life. For every ounce of pain, I have seen the reward. This program transformed the way I process information and ignited a fire for researching and publishing as method to improve the lives of our girls, our communities and our world.



Faculty Spotlight: Bryan Edwards

By Terry Tush

On any given weekend, Bryan Edwards will be found coaching one of his three children's basketball, soccer or baseball teams. While he wouldn't trade his time guiding his kids' youth league teams, one of his other passions is helping business professionals in OSU's PhD in Business for Executives program find their true calling.

Associate professor of management and holder of the Joe Synar Chair in the Spears School of Business, Edwards has taught several classes since the program's inception six years ago. Designed to attract working professionals, the fully AACSB-accredited program has had remarkable success since 2012, attracting executives from all across the world, including Brazil, Canada, Malaysia, Mexico, and The Netherlands, and 27 states.

Edwards says collaborating with CEOs, CFOs and executives who make the trip to OSU's Stillwater campus for residencies each month is different than lecturing undergraduate students.

"The Exec PhDs are far more engaged than undergraduates. They are more motivated to do the work and to do it well," he said. "I really enjoy seeing them embrace the scientific method to answer their very practical questions. Because of their experience in the corporate world, they bring a wealth of knowledge to help improve management science."

Edwards shares a memory from teaching his "How to Measure Variables" class to the third cohort in 2014. Upon learning that they would have a mid-term and final exam, some of the new students began to panic.

"For many of them it's the first time they were asked to take a school exam in 20 years and it was freaking them out," Edwards said. "They didn't want to take a multiple-choice, short-answer type exam. So I said, 'This is a measurement class. As a group, let's come up with a better way to measure knowledge, and I'll use that measure as your mid-term.'"

"We debated for nearly three hours about the best way to measure knowledge and at the end of it we came all the way back around to multiple-choice, short-answer exam as the best measurement. It was a fantastic exercise. We learned a lot about measurement, and about how to select the best measurement for different types of variables.

Graduates of the program say Edwards is a difference maker in helping them fulfill a life-long goal of earning their doctorate degree.

"Dr. Edwards is well-organized, engaging and extremely knowledgeable," said Durand Crosby, Chief of Staff and Chief Operating Officer for the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. "He is an expert in explaining how to conduct scientific research and how to relate these methods to real-world situations that make it easier to understand and relevant for the participants in the program.

"Dr. Edwards played a crucial role in my doctoral research. He helped me transition from a practitioner that solved problems based upon instinct and experience to an academic researcher. As the chair of my dissertation committee, Dr. Edwards was a learned mentor who provided wisdom and inspiration that helped me stay on course and achieve my goal – a Ph.D!"

The 44-year-old Edwards says his role is often that of a moderator while the Executive PhD students engage in meaningful discussion, sharing instances they face every day in their roles as business leaders.

"I really enjoy learning from them," Edwards said. "It's a connection to the business world. So whenever I teach them principles of science they really do a good job of helping make the connection, of how this is relevant in the business world. I enjoy their enthusiasm. I love the fact that they enjoy being here, (and) they love learning."

Soheila Rostami, Chief Executive Officer and founder of WithinCare, says Edwards is more than just a professor to her and others in the program.

"Dr. Edwards demonstrated a genuine interest in helping students like me who flew from Canada to meet dissertation deadlines despite time and geographical constraints," said Rostami, who earned her PhD in 2015. "He spent the entire Labor Day weekend in Tulsa to help me with interpretation of the data in my research. His generosity in giving me his family time is unforgettable, something that I am forever grateful for.

"He was with me all the way to my dissertation defense, helping me with shaping my question, model, methods to test it and refining the results. Besides his deep knowledge and understanding of analytics and methods in research, Dr. Edwards is an expert in helping students get to the bottom of their research inquiry. Dr Edwards is a fully engaged teacher. A true example of what a teacher should be."

The success of Oklahoma State University's Ph.D. *in Business for Executives* has been profound since the program's inception in 2012. The list of graduates is impressive.



**PH.D. *in* BUSINESS
for EXECUTIVES**

AT SPEARS BUSINESS



Cohort I (2012-14)

David Altounian, PhD
St Edward's University

Scott Anderson, PhD
CRI Feeders of Guymon, LLC

Tom Bennett Jr., PhD
First Oklahoma Bank

Jonathan Butler, PhD
Oklahoma State University

Fred Cleveland, PhD
PwC

Durand Crosby, PhD
*Oklahoma Department of Mental
Health and Abuse Services*

Warren Dyer, PhD
AOE Science

Toby Joplin, PhD
Oklahoma State University

Patti Jordan, PhD
Texas Christian University

Philip McMahan, PhD
Formerly First National Bank in Altus

Dessie Nash, PhD
US Trust / Bank of America

Tom Totten, PhD
Nyhart/Notre Dame

Cohort II (2013-15)

Harlan T. Beverly, PhD
University of Texas at Austin

Michiel Bosman, PhD
Dokter Bosman & Open Forest

Akshay Gehlot, PhD
GE Energy Financial Services

Shane Goodwin, PhD
Harvard University

Justin Keeler, PhD
Ouachita Baptist University

Greg Miller, PhD
CrossCom National

Bob Reid, PhD
J.F Maddox Foundation

Soheila Rostami, PhD
WithinCare

Walter Slipetz, PhD
WBSlipetz Consulting

Zack Varughese, PhD
Oklahoma State University

Steven Wilson, PhD
*Steven L. Wilson & Associates,
CPA's, LLP*

Cohort III (2014-16)

Abdel Ben-Mohamed, PhD
Mercy College

Tim L. Coomer, PhD
SIGMA Actuarial Consulting Group, Inc.

Luis Faura, PhD
C&F Foods, Inc.

Lina George, PhD
Grady Health Systems

Nathan Higdon, PhD
L 'Espace Motorcoach, Inc.

Maribeth Kuzmeski, PhD
Red Zone Marketing

Alex Lawrence, PhD
Weber State University

Bill Periman, PhD
Waddell & Reed

Cohort IV (2015-17)

Matthew Kolakowski
TLK Human Capital Consulting, LLC

Bhargava Konkayala
UCB Inc.

Joseph Nketia
University of Texas at Dallas

Janice Pittman
Aerial Strategic Enterprises

Angela Reddix
ARDX

Daniela Ruiz Massieu
*Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de
México (ITAM)*

Ed Scott
Point Park University

Jim Utlej
Niagara Bottling