



Dr. Paul Grimes

Late last Fall, demolition work got underway in downtown Pittsburg preparing the construction site for the new home of the Kelce College of Business, the centerpiece of Pitt State's Gorilla Rising Project. Learn more about the new building and its location in the front page story of this newsletter!

As we focus on our future move, we are developing new academic programs and outreach initiatives that will complement our new downtown location. These include a new bachelor's degree in Supply Chain Management and a strengthened internship program. The supply chain program was developed in partnership with the Crossland College of Technology which will offer a new degree in Industrial Distribution.

Over the past year, all of our internship courses were revised and refined to allow students greater access to work opportunities that provide real-world professional experiences prior to graduation.

In addition, we are happy to share the news that the Human Resource Development programs will relocate next fall from the Crossland College of Technology to the Kelce College of Business. Both the undergraduate and graduate HRD programs will enhance our already strong portfolio of educational programs.

Learn about these exciting initiatives and catch up on the latest news in this edition of the Kelce Connection!



KELCE  
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS  
Pittsburg State University

# Kelce Connection

[pittstate.edu/business](http://pittstate.edu/business) • WINTER 2024-2025 NEWSLETTER

## Building the Future: Kelce College of Business Releases Building Update on New Facility

The Kelce College of Business is taking a bold step into the future by establishing a new downtown facility. This cutting-edge space is designed to cultivate innovation, collaboration, and leadership. Located in the heart of Pittsburg, the new building represents a transformative milestone for the college and the community it serves.

“Our journey to this milestone event was marked by numerous unexpected twists and turns during 2024. Most significantly, we were unable to secure our originally proposed site and as a result, the Colonial Fox Theater will not be incorporated into the project at this time,” said Dr. Grimes, Dean of Kelce College of Business. “However, a new location for the College was identified and the property donated to the university is just one block south of our current Block 22 facilities. The new building will sit on the southeast corner of Broadway and Third Street with ample parking for students and visitors.”

Kelce faculty and staff are excited to embark on this new journey and look forward to contributing to the advancement it makes in the Kelce College of Business as a whole. The new facility is not just a place for academic learning, but a hub where the future of business is being built.

Demolition has officially started on the old bank building, which sits on the lot where the Kelce College of Business is building its new facility. The new building is tentatively scheduled for a move-in date of July 2026.

Learn more information about the new downtown facility in the Spring edition of the Kelce Connection or on the Pittsburg State University website.





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## Kelce Picnic

The Kelce Picnic, a beloved tradition held every September and April, is a highlight of the college's calendar. Each picnic typically sees more than 200 students enjoying the free meal and the spirit of community. On the front lawn of Kelce, faculty members take charge of grilling hotdogs, which are served to students alongside chips and bananas. This festive event is a way for the college to express its gratitude for the hard work of both students and staff. The highlight of the picnic this year was simply getting the opportunity to make students smile and gather together.



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## Inaugural Internship Reception

The Kelce College of Business hosted its first annual internship reception, organized by Internship and Career Readiness Coordinator, Melissa Weed. This event occurred on Monday, November 4, 2024. The Chamber of Commerce sponsored the event as well to get the community involved and assist in the ribbon cutting.

Four business students presented their internships, discussing how their experience has benefited their education. The four students were Luke Perry, Ravin Cawthon, Lexi Merando, and Lauren Forbes.



## Kelce Golf Tournament

The 15th Annual Kelce Golf Tournament took place on October 7, 2024, in Overland Park at the Brookridge Golf Club. Out of the 15 corporate sponsors this year, 7 of them have been sponsors every year since the first tournament. Five of the sponsors this year were first-time sponsors.

This year's tournament had a record number of sponsors and golfers, with 26 teams participating. All proceeds from the tournament go directly to the Kelce Golf Tournament scholarship fund. To date, there have been 14 scholarships awarded to Kelce students from this fund, set up as an endowment so that the scholarship money will be available to students far into the future.

"It's a great course in a great location. The staff at Brookridge has been great to work with and we look forward to holding the tournament there again in 2025," said Jeff Ney.

The tournament is hosted every year on the first Monday in October in Overland Park. It has been held at Brookridge Golf Club since 2014. Next year's tournament will be held at Brookridge on Monday, October 6th.

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## MBA Students at Cross Country Nationals

On November 23, 2024, three MBA students went to Sacramento, CA for the DII National Cross Country meet. In the men's race, Matthew Oglesby placed 16th, earning his third All-American finish, and Braden Zaner placed 150th out of 162 athletes. In the women's race, Marissa Dick placed 80th out of 161 athletes.







## Meet the Firms

Meet the Firms is a networking event that targets students in several different areas of academic study such as Finance, Accounting, Business Economics, Data Science and Information Systems. Seth Hartman, MBA student, went to Meet the Firms and shares how the experience impacted his academic/career journey.

“Every year the snack and refreshments table seem to grow and the employers seem to get nicer and nicer,” Hartman said. “It really was a relief that a majority of the companies there seek to hire gorillas over other Universities due to the success our University has had creating well developed and key players in our finance and accounting industries.”

## Fall Career Fair



Students with diverse ranges of degrees gathered at Pittsburg State University this fall for the Career Fair, connecting with over 100 employers across different industries. With job opportunities in fields ranging from technology to healthcare, attendees had the chance to network with recruiters and learn about internships and full-time positions.

Kelce student Claire Martin enjoyed attending the Career Fair, stating that one of her favorite parts was getting to know the employers.

“I saw a few recruiters I had met at the previous career fair and some even recognized me so it was nice to get to catch up with them. Making connections with employers even if you are not necessarily interested in that particular company is good because they may have connections or recommendations of where to find internships/jobs” said Martin.

## Institute of International Auditors Student Chapter attends Conference

Five members of the Institute of Internal Auditors Student Chapter (IIASC), Kayley Hartman, Spencer Grillot, Shakira Agunbiade, Konnar Davenport and Taylor Pratt, along with the IIASC Faculty Advisor, Gail Yarick, attended the 2024 Institute of Internal Auditors Global Student Conference April 27-30 in Orlando, Florida.

While at the conference, the students met their IIA District Representatives and the IIA President and CEO, Anthony Pugliese, networked with many other students from around the world that are also interested in Internal Auditing, and heard from many great speakers on relevant topics such as AI and the Future Internal Auditor, State of the Internal Audit Profession, Behind the Curtain: The CEO Unplugged, Master the Art of Storytelling, Speed Networking, Internal Audit: Vision 2035, and Heros of Emerging Industries.

Additionally, students at the conference were divided into thirteen teams to complete a case competition. The purpose of the case competition was to provide students with an opportunity to practice their project management, presentation, organization, team building, negotiation, influence, and leadership skills. The teams worked together throughout the conference to document controls in transportation and then prepared a presentation they gave on the last day of the conference. Hartman’s group won 2nd place and Agunbiade’s won 3rd place in the competition.

This amazing opportunity for these students was made possible, in part, through an Internal Auditing Education Partnership (IAEP) Program Grant supported by the Internal Audit Foundation’s Academic Fund and the PSU Foundation for Student Academic Support.



## Kelce Student Spotlight

### Baylie Pitts

Baylie Pitts is a finance major and anticipates graduating in May 2026. Pitts was born in Pittsburg, KS but around age five moved and grew up in

Adrian, MO. Both of her parents and brother went to Pittsburg State University. Pitts chose to attend Pittsburg State University because the community made her feel at home, and she loved the campus. She also noted that the business program was highly rated and affordable, making Pitt State an even greater choice.

“I absolutely love everything about the Kelce College of Business. The professors have been amazing, and I’ve built strong connections with my classmates. Being a business student is allowing me to get a deeper understanding of financial principles which is building a foundation for me to advance in my career,” Pitts said.

Outside of academics, Pitts enjoys staying active in multiple organizations including Women@Work and a college ministry at FLAG Church called Counter Culture.

“Women@Work has been a great way to connect with other dedicated women, enhancing my networking and professional skills,” Pitts said.

Additionally, Pitts obtained the Kansas Insurance Certificate to expand her knowledge in the field of business. After graduating high school, she earned her Property and Casualty license in both Missouri and Kansas.

“I believe that adding this certification complements my majors and future goals, strengthening my credentials,” Pitts said.

After college, Pitts’ goal is to open her own insurance agency. For three years now, she has been working for Kellie Davidson State Farm where she is building her experience to reach that goal.



## International Student Spotlight

### Xiangjie (Jack) Qu

MBA Student, Xiangjie (Jack) Qu is an international student from Mainland China. He chose Pittsburg State University to further

his education because it provided an environment where he could explore and discover himself in various dimensions—academically, culturally, and professionally.

“It has given me the platform to continuously develop my skills and prepare myself for the future, allowing me to grow both personally and professionally,” Qu said.

Outside of school, Qu enjoys hiking and photography, especially in natural environments.

“I have completed several major hiking trails in places such as Lassen Volcanic National Park, Redwood National Park, Crater Lake National Park, Mt. Hood National Forest, Mount Rainier National Park, and Olympic National Park,” Qu said.

Qu’s favorite part about Pittsburg State University has been the faculty and the supportive community. He thinks they are the most valuable resources at the university, helping students discover themselves and always offering guidance and support.

“The biggest thing I’ve learned here is to persist and continually prepare, approaching everything I’m passionate about with hope and enthusiasm. I truly love Pitt State University,” Qu said.

Qu will be graduating in December and his plans after graduation are to pursue a career in consulting, specifically focusing on business digital transformation consulting and study abroad consulting. He wants to help more Chinese students gain opportunities for global education.

## FBLA/MBAA Host Guest Speaker

On Tuesday, November 12, 2024, Scott Wedge, Senior Quality Manager - Home Products for Walmart Headquarters, came to speak about Professional Careers and Leadership. Both undergraduate and graduate Kelce students were invited to the presentation and had the opportunity to participate in a Q&A afterwards. This event was co-hosted by FBLA and the MBAA student organizations.





## Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Sang-Heui Lee

Dr. Sang-Heui Lee started teaching at Kelce as an Assistant Professor in August 2010, making this his 15th year at Pittsburg State University. His favorite thing about Kelce is the strong sense of community among faculty, students, and staff.

“There is not only a collaborative spirit that fosters academic excellence, but also a great support system for personal growth. This environment creates a sense of value and support for everyone, making the educational experience and societal impact truly enriching,” Lee said.

Lee is the co-chair of the 2024-2025 Faculty and Staff Campaign. This campaign means a lot to him because he believes that supporting students and the university through financial gifts not only assists them but also nurtures the growth of the university.

“I am truly honored to have been selected as a co-chair of the campaign. Teaching and investing in students’ futures represents a form of both personal and communal growth. It’s a positive cycle of giving and receiving,” Lee said.

Lee will hold his position as co-chair for one year. However, even without a title, he plans on continuing to contribute to the organization just as he has since his first year part of the organization.

“I have heard many appreciative stories from students who overcame financial difficulties during their school years, thanks to the generous scholarships provided by the college and university,” Lee said.

For more information about giving or the organization, visit [www.pittstate.edu/facultystaffcampaign](http://www.pittstate.edu/facultystaffcampaign), or contact University Development at 112 Russ Hall or by calling 620-235-4768.

## Welcoming the First Online MBA Healthcare Emphasis Graduates

This December, Kelce College of Business graduated its first group of Online MBA students with an emphasis in Healthcare Administration. Brian Martin, one of the graduate recipients, began his academic studies at Pittsburg State University in 2009 before graduating with a Doctorate of Pharmacy from the University of Kansas in 2015. He now is a part of the first MBA graduate cohort with a Healthcare Administration Emphasis at Pittsburg State University.

“It only made sense to further my education where it all began, Pittsburg State,” Martin said.

Martin’s professional career as a pharmacist has been in Pittsburg, KS since graduating from the University of Kansas School of Pharmacy. He has worked in various roles including management of a grocery store pharmacy before his current role as Specialty Pharmacy Manager for Apothecare Select, a specialty pharmacy within the Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas. Moreover, Martin decided it was time to further his education.

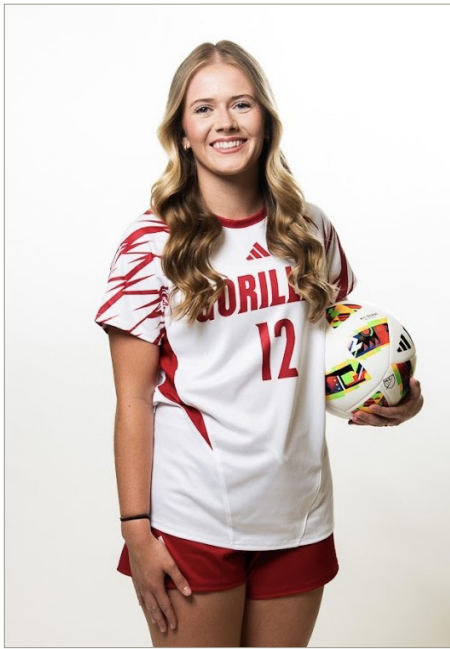
“I am a firm believer in the constant pursuit of lifelong learning. We can always better ourselves and as I prepared for the launch of the specialty pharmacy, the furthering of my business knowledge seemed to be the logical next step,” Martin said.

The online format of this program was challenging and robust according to Martin, but it allowed flexibility for his schedule and other priorities.

“The ability to adapt to my current schedule was integral to success in the program; I was able to operate the pharmacy and continue to be engaged as a father to my three young children,” Martin said.

The MBA program with a Healthcare Administration emphasis allowed Martin to network with and learn from distinguished professors and peers. He received valuable insight from academia and industry and developed lasting relationships.





## Women's Soccer Spotlight

### Karsen Lynch

Lynch is a junior management student from Sand Spring, OK. "The reason I chose to come to Pitt State is because last Fall, I was trying to decide to get in the transfer portal and I had noticed Pitt State was starting a Women's Soccer team and it just so happened that the head coach they had hired was my old club coach, Wes Branstetter, who had coached me for around 9

years. Having him here was a no brainer in choosing Pitt. Also, one of my friends, Ty Pennington, played quarterback on the football team the past two years and always said nothing but great things about this school, so I just knew that Pitt was for me. Pittsburg is such a unique town.

The way everyone here is so supportive is probably my favorite thing about being here. Just knowing that you are being looked after is such a great feeling," said Lynch.

## Men's Golf Spotlight

### Theo Juhl

Juhl is a junior management student from Garden City, KS. "I heard that Pitt was starting a program again after 10 years of not having one. This made me want to rebuild this gold program from the ground up. When I look back years from now it will be cool to say I was part of the team that put Pitt State on the map. Pitt state has such a supporting community and alumni that it was too good of an opportunity to pass up," said Juhl.



## INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT



### Lauren Forbes

Lauren Forbes is a marketing and management double major graduating in December 2025. Forbes is currently working as a marketing intern at Tank Connection in Parsons, KS. She does a variety of different tasks every day.

"I create content for social media, I help plan and take part in different events that Tank Connection hosts and is involved with, and I have had the chance to do a few radio ads," Forbes said.

Her experience with Tank Connection has made a positive impact on her academic and professional career journey. She is confident in her choice of major.

"Being an intern has made me realize that I made the right decision when choosing a career path. Without actually doing the work and getting the knowledge and experience, I would still be questioning whether or not I want to do this after college," Forbes said.

Forbes would highly recommend this internship to other Kelce students. She thinks that Tank Connection has a great internship program and great company culture. Additionally, Forbes suggests other Kelce students apply for internships and get experience in the career field they are studying.

For more information about internships, contact Melissa Weed @ kelceinternships@pittstate.edu or stop by her office Kelce 220.



## NEW FACULTY

*Jennifer Pursley*



“I chose to work at Pittsburg State University because it has always felt like home. As a student, I spent countless hours in the mathematics and finance departments, where I truly felt like part of a family. I’ve now been with the university for eight wonderful years and can’t imagine being anywhere else. As I begin my first-year teaching in the College of Business, I’m excited to get back into the classroom and work directly with students.”

*Dr. Dezhi Jiang*



“I chose to work at PSU because I got my bachelor’s degrees from EIU, a mid-size public university in a small college town in the middle of Illinois, just like PSU. So, even though PSU is not my Alma Mater, I feel homey here. Plus, the balance of teaching and research here at PSU is right on the spot for me. Last but not least, like the weather, people are warm here, and I love both.”

*Dr. Will Huffman*



“I chose Pitt State for several reasons. I’m an alumnus and OAGAAG! The culture at Pitt State is so much better than other universities I have known. There is wonderful campus spirit here. Not only are the students excited to be part of such a great institution, but the faculty and staff are excited to be here and support the students and the university in so many ways. The only university I even considered applying for a position was Pitt State.”

## Fall Commencement



Kelce faculty members celebrated the 2024 Fall Commencement. Faculty members listed from left to right: Dr. Lynn Murray, Holly Kent, Melissa Weed, Dr. William Huffman, Dr. Alex Binder, Lisa Paterni, Dr. Kristen Maceli, Dr. Larry Woodward, Dwight Strong, and Dr. Mary Jo Goedeke.

## Kelce Board of Advisors Spotlight



*Ben Burns*

Ben Burns is the Executive Vice President & CFO at Leggett & Platt. Burns has been a Kelce board member since 2018. “Pitt State has been and continues to be a special place to me. During my time there, I got a great education that has propelled me to a successful career in business. In addition, I made many life-long friends that I still see on a regular basis over 20 years later. Some of us now have kids at Pitt State! My experiences during my college years have led to so many personal and professional blessings. I contribute some of my time to give back to the Kelce College of Business and Pitt State overall, because I believe it to be an extraordinary place that creates opportunities for students to thrive and I want to see that tradition continue,” said Burns.

## Online MBA Program Update

The online MBA program is excited to launch a new Data Science & Information Systems (DSIS) emphasis in 2025. The fully online program continues to accept applications from students with at least three years in a managerial role or a recent bachelor's degree in a business-related field. No prerequisites or leveling courses are required regardless of your undergraduate degree specialization. According to a recent employment data survey conducted by Career Services, approximately 99% of graduates have job placements.



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TOTAL TUITION



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## Kelce GAs Present AI to Faculty



The Kelce Graduate School of Business hosted a Graduate Assistant (GA)-led initiative to explore the integration of Artificial

Intelligence (AI) in higher education. Through research, collaboration, and presentations, GAs introduced faculty to cutting-edge AI tools that enhance teaching effectiveness and promote ethical usage. They also gained insights into responsible AI use, helping prevent cheating and plagiarism. This project aimed to develop GA skills while fostering faculty awareness of AI's potential in education. Faculty learned about AI tools for course design, student engagement, and career readiness. The initiative marked a significant step in integrating AI into academic practices at The Kelce College of Business.

## MBA Fall Reception

MBA graduate Stephanie Cooper (right) stands with her daughter Madison Barnett (left) at the Fall MBA Reception. Cooper was happy that Pitt State offered the online MBA program so she could finish her degree in the evenings and on the weekends. She hopes that with this degree she can move up into a corporate position. Barnett also graduated from Pitt State in the fall with a degree in Healthcare Innovations.



## Please keep us informed

Stay in touch by sending your contact information and news updates to: [cob@pittstate.edu](mailto:cob@pittstate.edu)

If you are an alumni of Kelce we would love to have one of your business cards!

Please address them to Kelce College of Business 1701 South Broadway Street, Pittsburg KS, 66762

## Stay Connected!

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## Your gift makes a difference

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*Thank you for your support.*

