Madeline Rogero, mayor of Knoxville, spoke to an all-female crowd of 30 students, staff, and faculty members as part of Haslam’s chapter of the National Association of Women MBAs’ Ladies Leading in Business speaker series.

Atish Jaiswal, a current MBA student, was featured in The VITAL Physician Executive’s podcast about the top 10 reasons to pursue a business degree.

A team of MBA students composed of Michelle Davis, Justin Matthews, Kate Kobza, and Ryan Stover, placed second in the Deloitte Supply Chain Challenge.

Tucker McLain, Abbey Rozanski, and Chuck Sharrett won first place at the second annual SEC Tax Case Competition. Alice Begovich, Tori Conklin, and Deanna McAllister placed third in the competition.

Maria Castañón Moats, PwC’s vice chairman and United States assurance leader, shared her insight with students during a guest speaking engagement.
Growing up in Oregon, Matt Towsley gazed out his car window at the massive Boeing complex. “Everybody has somewhat of an infatuation with rockets and airplanes,” says Towsley, superintendent of facilities and asset management at Boeing South Carolina in Charleston. “When I got the opportunity to be a part of something so alluring, I couldn’t pass it up.”

Towsley, though, took a winding path to the aerospace industry with stops in manufacturing and maintenance. He started his academic career as a marketing major and basketball player at Montana State University. After graduation, he worked in Canada for a year before joining Terex (Genie), a construction equipment manufacturer, as a maintenance manager in Redmond, Washington. “Being very lean-minded, I deployed new practices in maintenance and made significant improvements in cost,” he says. “I made a name for myself as a culture change leader.”

In 2010, Genie sent Towsley to recover their plant in Fort Mill, South Carolina, which was in danger of closure. With the implementation of a lean management system, he was able to double the plant’s capacity and achieve profitability. After four successful years, Towsley was ready for a new challenge. “My wife and I had always wanted to live in Charleston, so I joined Eaton Aerospace, managing the site that makes power control pieces such as hydraulics, landing gear, and other internal components.” Towsley applied his diverse skills to lower costs, increase production rates, and take the company from low 60’s to 98 percent on-time delivery.

Nearly two years later, a job posting from Boeing caught his eye. “I read it and thought, this is me to a T,” he said. “I applied and really liked the leader who interviewed me.”  

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Boeing hired Towsley in 2016 as senior manager at Boeing South Carolina, where he oversees equipment maintenance in the manufacture of the 787 Dreamliner. Recently, he was promoted to an enterprise-wide superintendent maintenance role. “My new role is to facilitate step level improvements in efficiencies and cost savings across the enterprise,” he says. “We’ll deploy pilot programs at Boeing South Carolina first, then spread them to our other sites.” He’s also involved in leading human capital resource development.

Currently, Towsley is a student in Haslam’s Aerospace and Defense Executive MBA program. “I found the program extremely appealing because I wanted to learn about the whole industry, not just earn an MBA,” he says. “I’m enjoying the chance to gain insight from my peers and industry experts, learning about different leadership styles, and capturing the big picture of aerospace.”

A time-saving surgical tool created by UT graduate student Lia Winter took home the top prize at the Anderson Center’s Vol Court Pitch Competition in a field of a record 23 competitors. Second-place winner Matthew Young pitched his technology-enabled mirror business, Smart Mirrors. Third place went to Quantum Lock, a technology that enhances the security of smart lock technology in private homes.

Lia Winter’s EasyWhip, a surgical tool, and Ryan Cunningham’s Campus Car, a ridesharing company, were selected from a group of eight student-business finalists and awarded a total of $25,000 in the fall 2017 Boyd Venture Challenge.

Grow Bioplastics, a startup by University of Tennessee, Knoxville, students Tony Bova and Jeff Beegle, received a $225,000 National Science Foundation (NSF) Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant. The award will fund research and development work on lignin-biomass-based biodegradable plastics for agricultural applications, specifically plastic mulches.

In With the Old, a startup by student Baker Donahue, was named a semifinalist in the national Student Startup Madness (SSM) competition. The social media-based clothing retailer was selected from more than 200 startups from universities nationwide.

Students in Delta Sigma Pi organized and executed the college’s first Student Leadership Conference. The one-day conference featured speakers from 10 companies and was attended by approximately 70 students.

Students from one of Russell Crook’s classes met marketing president, Dave Miller; senior vice president, Tiffany Gardner; and executive vice president, Jim Atchley; of First Tennessee Bank during a class tour.

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A group of students in Haslam’s Financial Management group met Warren Buffet, one of the world’s best financial minds.
This spring, freshmen Yuxin (Andrea) Guo and Robert Kaste shared their interest in business with a group of kindergartners at East Knox Elementary School. Guo and Kaste are volunteers with Junior Achievement of East Tennessee and members of Venture, a living-learning community at the Haslam College of Business. The pair traveled to the school to teach five weekly lessons on early money skills.

“It’s one of the most rewarding service experiences we’ll ever have because in a lot of ways, we’re the highlight of the day for these kids,” says Kaste. “At the same time, we’re teaching them valuable skills that they’ll use in the future, and that’s very satisfying.”

Venture is an optional community for business students, creating built-in support and friendships. “We’re open to any student in the college granted that they’re first-time freshmen,” says Brian Francis, Venture director and assistant director in undergraduate programs. “This year, we have about 40 participants. They all live on the same floor in the same residence hall and take three classes in the fall and three in the spring together.”
One of Venture’s goals is to encourage awareness of community needs and service. “One of the spring classes is our service learning class,” Francis says. “We take time to define service leadership and talk about why it’s such an effective way of leading, hitting on some of the human components of business.”

The course emphasizes the impact students can make on a community. “We want them to understand that their service matters, whether as an individual or part of a company,” Francis says. “It’s a side of business that doesn’t always get recognition but is very important.”

Each student has a chance to apply those principles outside the classroom by participating in 20 hours of service with one of Venture’s community partners.

Community Connections

Since its inception a decade ago, Venture has worked with a range of campus and community organizations, including the University of Tennessee Cancer Institute, the Salvation Army, UT Recycles, and the Community Action Center. This year, their community partners are the Humane Society of the Tennessee Valley and Junior Achievement of East Tennessee. “One of Junior Achievement’s goals is to educate elementary and intermediate students about basic business practices, specifically financial literacy,” says Venture co-director Marg Basehart. “Several of our Venture students participated in Junior Achievement when they were in elementary school, and chose to volunteer this year because of that past experience.”

For the Junior Achievement project, Venture students are put in pairs and connected with an area elementary school class. Then it’s up to them to coordinate lesson times with the teacher, prepare the lessons, and teach the classes. “Junior Achievement gives us kits with comprehensive lesson plans and supplies, but the students still need to do some work ahead of time to prepare,” Basehart says. “Each kit contains five lessons geared toward a particular grade level, from kindergarten to sixth grade.” Near the end of the semester, Venture students give presentations in the service learning class on what they’ve gleaned from their experiences.

Positive Impacts

Whether through volunteering with Junior Achievement or another community partner, Venture students are expanding their vision of service. “When they arrive, they often think community service means building something or going to another country,” Basehart says. “Instead, we want them to see that every community has a range of needs, and there are many ways to serve.”

Connecting Haslam students to community needs makes a positive impact on both sides. A freshman in supply chain management, Kaste chose to serve with Junior Achievement because he already enjoyed working with kids as a swim instructor. “I figured this was right up my alley,” he says, and he was right. “I love working with kindergartners. You can get them excited about just about anything.”

Kaste finds the experience rewarding. “I feel like I’m making a difference in each kid’s life, not just with the skills we’re teaching them, but by providing a positive role model,” he says. He’s inspired to keep giving back by working with Junior Achievement in the future. “I want to expand my service efforts on campus,” Kaste says. “I believe it’s important to pay it forward to a community that’s given so much to me, academically and socially.”

An international student from China, Guo also chose to partner with Junior Achievement because of past experience working with children at her church. She appreciates the professional development she’s gaining. “Teaching improves my public speaking and communication skills,” she says. “It’s a challenging, transforming experience.”
From yoga to international travel, Kaitlyn Hansen’s interests are all over the map. “Variety is essential in whatever I do,” she says. “I love new experiences.”

A senior in business marketing with an entrepreneurship collateral, Hansen graduates this summer after two years at the Haslam College of Business. She grew up in Knoxville and joined the United States Navy after high school, serving one term aboard the USS Ronald Reagan.

“I was the helmsman,” she says, “which means I drove the ship.” As she traversed the world, Hansen developed a love for exploring, finding her experiences with different cultures eye opening. “It made me realize I didn’t want to just live and build a business inside the US.”

When her time in the Navy ended, Hansen enrolled at a local college in San Diego to study business administration and management. Eager to pursue a bachelor’s degree, Hansen was accepted to several universities, but chose the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. “I have family here, the cost of living is so much better, and I’ve always loved UT,” she says. “When I was young, it was my big dream to play basketball for the Lady Vols.”

Hansen didn’t join the basketball team, but she quickly jumped into the game at Haslam. This spring, she participated in a professional sales competition, served as vice president of the American Marketing Association’s local chapter, and received several awards and scholarships. In her free time, she stays involved with campus veterans’ groups and volunteers at local nonprofits including The Love Kitchen and Legacy Housing Foundation.

In May, she traveled to Ireland to participate in a capstone study abroad opportunity. “After I’m done, I’ll continue traveling through Europe until the end of July,” she says. “I’ll meet up with friends along the way and explore the United Kingdom and continental Europe.”

When she returns, Hansen plans to pursue a business-to-business sales position. She feels the fast-paced environment and face time with customers will suit her well. Her future goals include opening a yoga studio, working with nonprofits, and staying involved in the community. “I definitely want to keep giving back,” she says. “That is something I’ll continue to do no matter where my journey takes me.”
More than 20 **students traveled to Argentina and Uruguay** to study international business with Kelly Hewett over spring break.

Twelve Haslam students took part in the college’s first professional sales competition. Students Wiley Stidham, Madison Barton, Will Carter, and Haley Anderson went on to represent Haslam at Florida State University’s Intercollegiate Sales Competition for the first time in 14 years.

**Selin Anıtsal** won Best in Consumer Behavior Marketing Research Track from the Atlantic Marketing Association for her research entitled, “A Sentiment Analysis of Air Passengers of Top Ten U.S. Based Airlines.”

Students raised more than $17,000 to support safe drinking water in India through the second Hands Across the Water walk on October 29. The event is a partnership with Procter & Gamble (P&G) and the Maharashtra Institute of Technology (MIT-SOM) in Pune, India.

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**BUSINESS ANALYTICS & STATISTICS**

The **UT Sports Analytics Club** held its second annual Sports Analytics Conference. About 100 students attended a roundtable question and answer session with panelists from across the country and the athletics industry, including Hao Meng, director of basketball strategy and analytics for the NBA.

The Office of the Provost enlisted the help of undergraduate business analytics students Bryce Curtsinger and Tanner Martin and graduate student Brady Gail to find a segment of at-risk first generation freshmen that were previously not receiving adequate support.

Multiple students from the **Master of Science in Business Analytics** attended the MIT Sloan Sports Analytics Conference, gaining the opportunity to meet Shane Battier, NBA veteran and director of basketball analytics and development for the Miami Heat.