MBAA Family,

As the spring semester winds down, I would like to reflect on a great year for the MBA Association. The past year has seen the MBAA reach new levels in many aspects. I would once again like to thank all of the second year officers for all their diligent work in making this association an integral part of the MBA program here at LSU, and wish them the best of luck as they head into the exciting, yet frightening, “real world”. I believe their experience in the LSU MBA program has prepared them well and I am confident they will uphold the reputation of LSU MBAs in the workforce. I would also like to congratulate all of the first years for a great year. We have made strides over the past year, but are far from satisfied. Next year will be a banner year for the MBAA, in terms of participation, professionalism, community involvement, and another very important element – fun. I look forward to welcoming the Class of 2005 and can’t wait to get started with our various projects. Thanks for a great year and lets all work on making next year even better.

Greg Determann
MBAA President

Director’s Message

This is the last newsletter that the MBA Class of 2003 will ever read as active students. Graduation is in three weeks, and soon you will be Flores MBA Alumni. The number of you with job offers is disappointingly small of course. That’s true of top MBA programs around the world, as well as here at LSU, but I have confidence that each of you will all find an appropriate position eventually.

In the meantime, remember that you will always be members of the Flores MBA family. Don’t forget about the LSU MBA Alumni Association. We’d like to see you at every event!

The Class of 2004 will become MBA Seniors at the end of the month. Please remember that you inherit the same responsibilities as the Class of 2003 did last year, to be effective mentors and good examples for the incoming class.

Thank you, Class 2003, for all of your hard work and dedication over the last two years to improve the MBA experience at LSU. Particularly, we are looking forward to your joining us at the MBA Launch, which takes place on August 19-22.

Have a wonderful summer.

David Shields
Director, Flores MBA Program

In this issue:

- Interview with Dr. Ed Watson
- Steven Latuso Awarded Scholarship
- Loan Consolidation
- Tips on Buying a House
- Cohorts Corner

Announcement:

Congratulations to Georges Sonny who put a lot of time and efforts in designing several logos for the newsletter. Georges, we are glad to announce that you have been awarded a $20 gift certificate to the Mellow Mushroom. Thank you very much and keep the good work!
Upcoming Events

May 2 – EMBA & PMBA Information Session
May 12 – Ourso College Hall of Distinction
May 23 – 3rd Annual MBAA Charity Golf Tournament

Loan Consolidation

Many of us graduating have loans that can greatly be reduced by the consolidation of interest. Loans can be consolidated after a student has graduated. The government changes the rate of consolidation each July 1st and the current consolidation rate is presumably the lowest it is going to get, so students graduating should start the process immediately after graduation to make the July 1st deadline. Many companies offer payback incentives that can provide further interest cuts to your loan. For example, Sallie Mae offers a 0.25% off the interest for agreeing to an automatic withdrawal from your account to pay the monthly payments. Sallie Mae offers an additional 1% off the interest when you make your payments on-time for 48 straight months. This program should be compared to other companies such as Collegiate Funding Service who offer the same interest cuts, however offer the 1% off after 38 months instead of 48 months, nearly one year sooner! Researching the different companies and their available programs is beneficial and can save you a lot of money.

Below is a list of the different funding services along with their websites and phone numbers:

**SallieMae:**
http://www.salliemae.com /1-800-448-3533

**Nellie Mae:**
http://www.nelliemae.org /1-800-988-4846

**Citibank:**
http://studentloan.citibank.com /1-800-934-1900

**Direct Loan:**
http://www.ed.gov/directloan / 1-800-557-7392

**Collegiate Funding Service:**
http://www.2cfs.com / 1-877-262-6591

**SunTech Loans:**
http://www.suntechloans.com /1-800-489-5002

**SunTrust:**
http://www.suntrusteducation.com / 1-800-552-3006

**Wells Fargo:**
http://www.wellsfargo.com /1-800-658-3567

Lynlea Roussel
MBA Class 2003

Tips on Buying a House

Buying your first home can be a very exciting, but very overwhelming experience. Many individuals are purchasing or refinancing homes to take advantage of the low interest rates. Many aspects of home purchasing have changed, offering many advantages and incentives to first-time home buyers, including urban development programs, tax breaks, zero-to-low down payments requirements, and more. Several steps must be taken prior to choosing your home, such as identifying your price range and pre-qualification, and you can begin learning what your options are now, so that you are prepared when you find the home you want. You also must purchase insurance, choose a title attorney, and get your home inspected prior to closing on your home: knowing your options can save you time and money. I offer the following links to you as good resources for first-time home buyers, and also for anyone interested in refinancing or selling your home.

**Quicken.com.** Check out the “Home Buying Center.” You will find a section called “Tips and Articles” which offers great information. I recommend that you visit this page first:

**TurboTax.com.** Offers insight into tax planning, which can help you save significantly on your taxes the year you purchase a home.
http://www.turbotax.com/planning/life_events/buy_home.html

**SayPlanning.com:** “7 Step Home Buying Plan.”

**HUD.com:** “Common Questions of First Time Home Buyers.”
http://www.hud.gov/buying/index.cfm

**NEA.com:** “There’s No Time Like The Present For First-Time Home Buyers.”

**RealEstateABC.com.** Home Buying Articles and Advice.
http://www.realestateabc.com/homebuying/

Allison Bridgewater
Assistant Director, Flores MBA Programs
Steven Latuso Awarded Scholarship

Steven Latuso, first-year MBA student just received the "2004-05 Louis J. Capozzoli Endowed American Heritage Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholarship". The scholarship amount is $25,000 and must be used to live and study in Italy for a full academic year at an Italian university. The Rotary Foundation supports several scholarships each year for students interested in studying abroad. However, the Capozzoli scholarship is specifically for students wishing to study in Italy.

Steven, when did you apply for the scholarship?

I applied for the scholarship in January 2003. The application process was very lengthy and included writing several essays in Italian. I interviewed in February with a selection committee from the Sunrise Rotary Club of Baton Rouge, the local club who recommended my application to the district office. I interviewed in April with the Rotary District 6200 scholarship selection committee and was selected by the committee later that day.

How did you learn about the scholarship?

I learned about the scholarship from Dr. Joseph Ricapito, chair of the Italian department at LSU. Once I learned that the scholarship was sponsored by the Rotary Foundation, I then discovered that my former Italian teacher, Julien Carriere, had also been a Rotary scholar in Italy. Both Julien and Dr. Ricapito were very helpful and supportive during the application process.

Do you speak Italian?

I speak some Italian, but there is always room for improvement. As a foreign language teacher, I have very high standards for my language learning. Certainly my experience teaching Latin and studying Italian has been helpful, but the only way to master a modern language is through immersion in the language and culture. I attended an intensive Italian language immersion school in Sicily the summer after graduating from LSU, but I hope to achieve a greater level of language proficiency after spending a full year in Italy.

What made you decide to apply?

I became interested in continuing my education abroad after participating in an LSU International Student Exchange Program. I studied at the University of North London during the Spring semester of my junior year. I had such a good experience that I began searching for a way to finance an entire year abroad. The Rotary Scholarship not only provides funding for an academic year abroad, it gives me the opportunity to pursue my academic interests as well.

When do you plan to go? What classes do you intend to take?

The scholarship award is for the 2004-2005 academic year, and I plan to take graduate courses in Medieval Studies. The Middle Ages saw the decline of Latin as a spoken language and the rise of vernacular Italian. I plan to combine several of my academic interests with courses in Latin, Italian, history, and literature.

Do you already know which University you are going to study at?

At this time I do not know exactly which university I will be attending. The application process is very lengthy, and it takes almost two years to iron out all the details before departure. My top five choices are the Universities of Palermo, Roma, Napoli, Venezia, and Bologna, in that order. All of these universities have excellent programs in Classical and Medieval studies.

How do you feel about this whole experience?

Obviously I am very excited to have this opportunity. Italy is a beautiful country, and I feel very privileged to be able to experience another culture for a year. The hardest part for me has been containing my excitement and concentrating on my MBA classes.

What do you think it will bring you? What do you want to do afterwards?

The opportunity to live in another culture is priceless. Studying abroad gives you the chance to experience another culture as a local, rather than a tourist. It will give me a greater appreciation of both European culture as well as my own back in Louisiana. When I return to the states, I plan to pursue a career in university academics and administration. At some point I would like to get a Ph.D., but I am not sure if I want to enter an academic discipline or a practitioner's program such as Higher Education Administration. Who knows? I may fall so in love with Italy that I return to get my Ph.D. in Italian!

Steven, thank you very much for responding to our interview. Congratulations for this great award. Studying abroad is a wonderful opportunity and I wish you to get the best out of it.
"Get to know your Faculty: Dr. Ed Watson, Associate Professor in ISDS"

Dr. Watson received his Ph. D. in Industrial Engineering focusing on manufacturing systems and manufacturing planning from Pennsylvania State University. He has been at LSU since 1994, and is currently teaching in the P-MBA program. Dr. Watson and his wife Christine have three children ages 7 (Alex), 5 (Kayla), and 3 (Nicholas). He enjoys traveling and exploring new places with his family. His personal favorites are downhill skiing, golf, tennis and water sports. Dr. Watson gladly agreed to answer a few questions for the MBA newsletter.

Dr Watson, how long have you been teaching at the LSU College of Business? Could you talk about your experience teaching MBA students?

I started teaching at LSU in 1994. Previously I had been an instructor at Penn State and since 1994 I have been an adjunct at Temple University and University of Kansas in their MBA program. I enjoy teaching in the MBA program in general because the students are quite diverse and mature. It is most enjoyable when we incorporate their work experiences into the class discussion. Everyone has a story! I think LSU students are as good as the best. The program has improved since 1994 and this change is exciting to watch.

Why did you become a university Professor?

Until I was a Master’s student the notion was foreign to me. While working on my Master’s I learned a great deal about the academic world particularly research and education. I found myself immersed in this stuff and I made many friendships with other graduate and PhD students. I learned more about the life as a faculty and I learned that this type of work was appealing. Also as an American, I was strongly encouraged by faculty. So here I am.

At which others institutions have you taught?

I started as an instructor at Penn State. LSU was my first full-time teaching gig but I have also taught as an adjunct at Temple University (last year I was on academic leave, working for SAP in Philadelphia) and Kansas University (I have taught in their International MBA program on their Asolo, Italy campus).

Did you have another profession before you began teaching?

Well, summers as a construction worker helped pay my room and board through college. My first “real” job was at Harrison Radiator Division of General Motors in Buffalo. Shortly after I graduated with my B.S. (like, one week after graduation) I started there as a manufacturing engineer and worked for 1.5 years. I then returned to grad school as I did not see a future in factory work. In grad school I did an Intern with AT&T in their market research group in Baskin Ridge, New Jersey. I ended up leaving Penn State with ABD status (all but dissertation) and worked for 4.5 years as a computer simulation engineer and consultant for a company in Pittsburgh that has since become a part of Rockwell Software. There I finished my dissertation. LSU was my first academic position. Since I started here I spent a summer at Deloitte Consulting in Houston and Atlanta, and a year at SAP in Philly. It has been a great experience.

Please describe some of your research interests, and comment on how you see these areas of research most significantly impacting your field of interest?

From when I started the PhD program at LSU to my first few years at LSU I have been primarily studying issues related to performance analysis of complex systems. In this field we utilize math and computer modeling to study production systems and determine ways in which to improve productivity. This area afforded me the opportunity to work closely with engineers and scientists from Xerox, PPG, Whirlpool and from many other successful manufacturers. As an Industrial Engineer I was responsible for bringing together systems, technologies, people, and assets in the most optimal manner.

Over the years as information systems and technologies have become a more prevalent force in business and society, my interests have evolved quite a bit also. In the mid-1990s I started to look at the opportunities associated with technology-enabled change in business environments and particularly with this relatively new area of packaged enterprise-wide information systems. Today my research interests focus on the impact of information technology in facilitating a variety of organizational behaviors and on organizational efforts involves with planning, managing, and diffusing information technology throughout an organization.

For instance, one topic I have been fascinated in is Enterprise Integration. Collectively, the Fortune 500 companies are spending billions in their attempt to “integrate” their systems. Yet, none of them can agree on what this means, nor on how integration should be measured. Another topic I have been involved in is application service provision, the ASP model. This model has many characteristics similar to traditional IS outsourcing but it also has many unique features. We are interested in establishing, and showing through an empirical study what these common and differentiating factors are. An area that recently caught my interest is referred to as knowledge integration. The assumption is that the strategically most important resource of the firm is knowledge, and if knowledge resides in specialized form among individual organizational members, then the essence of organizational capability is the integration of individuals’ specialized
knowledge. We are currently looking at characteristics of the social relations, business processes, and information systems that facilitate and enhance the knowledge integration process.

What advances do you predict in your field of research in the next decade?

In a nutshell, my interests revolve around how organizations use technologies, particularly information systems, for competitive advantage. As organizations, technologies, and management theory itself evolves, so does this field of research. The greatest advances we see will be in how society utilizes technology to redefine who they are, how they work, and how they play. Technology is used in new and innovative ways each year. I can’t begin to imagine where we will be in 10 years. But I do feel confident that although we will experience great leaps in technological advances, the core challenge of integrating technology into our work and lives, and of education ourselves, our leaders and our world as a whole, will be evolutionary.

Anything else you would like for us to know about you?

We are running a pretty neat ASP at LSU through the Enterprise Systems program. I am the Director of the SAP UCC program where we deliver SAP solutions for academic use. Our clients include schools in Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Florida and Ohio. We have close relations with other UCC around the world including those in Germany, Australia, and Japan.

Dr. Watson, thank you very much for your time, students don’t often know that much about their faculty. I am sure this interview will give them valuable thoughts and insights.

### Cothots Corner:

#### Red 2003

Congratulations to Chih-hang Wang and Xueping Xiong for passing the Certified MBA (CMBA) exam from the International Certification Institute (ICI) in Greensboro, NC. Upon graduation Chih-hang Wand and Xueping Xiong will be among the first group of MBAs to earn the CMBA distinction!

The CMBA is the only professional certification designed to confirm a student’s grasp on core business knowledge necessary for today’s business leaders. Since its introduction last year, the CMBA has been anticipated by the MBA community. For more information about the CMBA or the ICI, visit www.certifiedmba.com, or call 1-888-664-CMBA.

#### Green 2004

Congratulations to the following students who were offered internship positions for this summer:

- Denis Arauz, Halliburton, Houston, TX
- Thomas Brouillard, Schering - Plough, Madison, NJ
- Diego Lara, LSU Health Sciences, Baton Rouge, LA
- Florence Orji, Prime Medical, Austin, TX

#### Blue 2004

Congratulations to the following students who were offered internship positions for this summer:

- Clayton Brooks, LWCC, Baton Rouge, LA
- Anthony Plakidas, The Shaw Group, Baton Rouge, LA

#### Red 2004

In the continuing quest for a good time, The Red Cohort was spotted in various areas of Florida for Spring Break 2003. Members D.J. Ashy, Trey Daniel, April Leonpacher, and Joanne Wimprine were spotted on the beaches and clubs of Destin. (Pictures available on http://www.andrewisanerd.com, stories aren't).

Congratulations to the following students who were offered internship positions for this summer:

- Douglas Ashy, Doug Ashy Lumber Company, Lafayette, LA
- Gregory Determann, The Shaw Group, Baton Rouge, LA
- Annessa Ouñac, Tech Systems, Kenner, LA
- Christopher Shearer, General Electric, Erie, PA

#### Green 2004

Congratulations to the following students who were offered internship positions for this summer:

- Ricky Gill, Prime Medical, Austin, TX
- Stacy McGlothin, Prime Medical, Austin, TX
- Jonathan Wicker Isle of Capri Casinos, Lake Charles/Bossier City, LA
- Stacey Yandell, Philip Morris USA

#### Blue 2004

Congratulations to the following students who were offered internship positions for this summer:

- Clayton Brooks, LWCC, Baton Rouge, LA
- Anthony Plakidas, The Shaw Group, Baton Rouge, LA

#### Green 2004

Congratulations to the following students who were offered internship positions for this summer:

- Ricky Gill, Prime Medical, Austin, TX
- Stacy McGlothin, Prime Medical, Austin, TX
- Jonathan Wicker Isle of Capri Casinos, Lake Charles/Bossier City, LA
- Stacey Yandell, Philip Morris USA

#### Note from the Editor:

Please send articles, suggestions, and comments to abridg2@lsu.edu or fnave1@lsu.edu by the 25th of the month