The University of South Alabama Financial Management Association

Chapter Spotlight

In this issue of the Student E-Newsletter, we are recognizing a local FMA chapter for outstanding service, accomplishment and leadership.

University of South Alabama (USA) FMA Chapter

The University of South Alabama FMA chapter was established in 1984. This chapter has been established for almost 26 years and is one of our oldest and yet still active chapters! The USA FMA chapter has achieved the Superior Chapter designation several times over the years. The current student leaders are Brian Fiore (President), Joel Ponce (Vice President), Zue Farmer (Secretary) and Megan Mohler (Treasurer).

The faculty advisor is Professor Ross Dickens. Dr. Dickens has been the advisor since 2001. Dr. Dickens received his BS from Presbyterian College, his MBA from The University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill and his PhD from The University of Tennessee - Knoxville. Dr. Dickens research interests include dividend policy and financial regulatory issues. Dr. Dickens is also a member of the FMA Student Chapter Committee.

Speaker Recruitment

The University of South Alabama FMA chapter primarily recruits speakers via faculty members who meet other professionals while attending various events. Faculty members will then correspond with these professionals asking if they are willing and/or available to speak at meetings. A general list of speakers is compiled in the various areas of finance such as investments, banking, insurance, etc. When FMA chapter members express an interest in a given area, the list is used to find a speaker for that meeting. USA FMA chapter members also help in the recruitment of speakers through introductions made to local business contacts they have met at different events, or at conferences, on the job or through family members.

Program Activities

Last year the FMA chapter held 14 speaker meetings. This year, in addition to speaker meetings, USA FMA is participating in a RBC Distinguished Lecturer presentation in October. The chapter will be providing workers for BayFest, a 3-day outdoor concert festival, where day-of-event tickets are sold by the chapter (see fundraising for more information). Some FMA chapter members are involved in Junior Achievement and are teaching at local schools. The chapter hosts an end-of-year banquet to thank outgoing officers and to elect next year's officers. Additionally, the chapter plans to attend two "away from campus" events in addition to the FMA Leaders' Conference in NYC next March. The first event is the "Coastal Economy Outlook". Sheila Bair is the featured speaker. The second is a visit to a local business (last year USA FMA visited DTI, a firm that teaches investment trading).
**Membership Recruitment**

The best way to get students to attend FMA meetings is through an invitation coming from other students. The second best way is through a faculty member who emphasizes attendance during their classes. Big events and/or topical speakers can impact attendance as well. So far this year USA FMA has already participated in "JagFest". This is the opening day recruitment fair for new students when they move onto campus at the start of the semester. The chapter plans to participate in "Get on Board Day" which is aimed at all USA students and hopes to attract additional freshmen and sophomore students as most members do not join until their junior or senior year. Additionally, chapter officers plan to contact all current finance majors via email to personally invite them to join FMA in hopes of recruiting those who originally overlooked the organization.

**Membership Involvement**

To keep the membership interested and involved, the chapter strives to bring in quality speakers who will be of interest to the student members and by participating in events such as BayFest which attracts large crowds. To ensure members are aware of FMA chapter activities, the chapter posts fliers in the College of Business, makes announcements in classes (finance and economics) with the help of professors, sends emails to all business majors (usually for the first couple of meetings each semester) and sends emails to all economics and finance majors for all scheduled meetings during the semester. The chapter will also send emails to chapter members and those requesting updates on a more frequent basis. USA FMA chapter does have a Facebook site; however, it is rarely used as it hasn't worked well to date.

**Fundraising**

The University of South Alabama FMA chapter currently has three planned activities for fundraising:

1. **BayFest** is the chapter’s first fundraising activity and was mentioned earlier in this article. For this event, the chapter supplies 35-50 workers (depending on BayFest’s requests) to sell day-of-event tickets to the concert festival. The USA FMA chapter receives $750 which is used to help defray the costs for our students attending the FMA Finance Leaders’ Conference (flight and hotel expenses). The chapter tries to help all students interested in attending the conference with the financial burden as much as possible.

2. A **Krispy Kreme doughnut coupon sale** is the second fundraising activity. It is a good fundraiser as it does not require much money upfront--a booklet of 50 coupons costs $125 or $2.50 a coupon for a dozen doughnuts. The chapter decides on the selling price for a coupon for a dozen doughnuts and each student has the ability to raise as much money as he/she is willing to put forth the effort to sell.

3. The third fundraising activity is currently in the planning stages. A **finance and economics alumni and faculty dinner** is in the works. The FMA chapter is hoping this would promote alumni and student networking and networking among the alumni in attendance. The chapter hopes this will then create numerous opportunities for FMA student members with internships and even future employment. The FMA chapter is hoping to raise money by charging admission
and hosting a silent auction. The funds raised here would help defray the expenses to attend the FMA Finance Leaders' Conference. The USA FMA chapter would like to make this into an annual event.

**Advice to New FMA Chapters**

The University of South Alabama FMA Chapter feels that the two most important ingredients for a successful chapter are the students who want to get involved and therefore encourage other students to join and get involved. The second ingredient is the faculty are willing to support the students and the FMA chapter. It is vital that every member feels like they are a part of the organization. In order for this to happen, they must participate in the process. To keep members involved, chapter officers must take the initiative to find ways to make the FMA experience a quality one. Membership in FMA should enrich each member's college experience and enable them to build networks which will be beneficial later on. The FMA Chapter is a good place to invite recent graduates/alumni back to campus to speak on a variety of topics, for example, job searching techniques. This relationship should encourage current students to get involved after they graduate and "give back" or "pay it forward". It can be a win/win situation for all involved.

Congratulations to the USA FMA chapter for a great year and for earning the Superior Chapter Award once again this year!