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Ouachita business students manage investment fund, attend New York forum



By Anna McCulloch and Jessica Stewart

April 07, 2014

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. -- A group of Ouachita Baptist University students attended the Global Asset Management Forum in New York City March 19-22. The students are members of the Eddie and Phyllis Ary Student Investment Fund management team at Ouachita.

The Ary Fund is a stock portfolio managed by senior finance students in the Hickingbotham School of Business. Each student involved in the fund becomes an analyst of an assigned sector of the economy.

"Our fund manages stocks with actual money. The entire experience has taught me more than I thought I was capable of," said Jonathan Curry, a senior accounting and business administration/finance major from Little Rock, Ark. "Following the market and my equities week by week for the fund has given me a better perspective of how the market works. I am developing skills that I will use my entire life."

Each student is responsible for following any stocks from their sector in the fund portfolio. The member presents stocks to the group that they think would be a good investment, and the group makes final decisions as a team. A portfolio manager, along with two assistant portfolio managers, oversee operations of the fund.

"I got to follow the stock market closely through the investment fund and make informed purchasing decisions for the first time," said Buck Schroeder, a senior accounting and business administration/finance major from Conway, Ark.

While at the forum, students had the opportunity to attend several breakout sessions led by Wall Street professionals and network with other student teams from across the nation.

"My favorite part of the trip was getting to hear from so many experts and their respective fields," said Schroeder. "It was such a unique opportunity to learn from so many bright minds in one place.

"It was awesome to see them speak about a topic they knew so well," he added. "My biggest takeaway from the trip was being inspired to be really good at something, even if it's just one thing."

The fund began when Eddie Ary and James Philpot, Ouachita finance professors, came up with the idea to establish a program to give students the opportunity to actively learn about investing. The fund took off in 1999 as the OBU Capital Student Investment Fund when Larry Root, Philpot and Ary donated \$8,300. Philpot continued to contribute annually until he left Ouachita in 2005. The Arys continue to contribute to the fund each year.

In 2012, the Hickingbotham School of Business faculty, Executive Advisory Board and Business Advisory Board changed the name of the fund to the Eddie and Phyllis Ary Student Investment Fund in honor of Ary's instrumental support of the project. Since Ary's retirement in 2012, Dr. Chris Brune has taken over as faculty advisor of the fund. The current balance of the fund is approximately \$125,000.

"It's a perfect way to apply the things we learn in class to a live portfolio," explained Dr. Chris Brune, assistant professor of finance. "Students learn to analyze stocks, but also learn how to present their recommendations and work together as a team."

"The Ary Fund has been a really great way for me to apply what I've learned in class in a controlled environment," added Kirstin Changose, a senior accounting and business administration/finance major from Little Rock. "We are able to make decisions based on the elements we've learned in class, but we can also receive guidance from Dr. Brune, which helps us learn by experience."

For more information, contact Dr. Chris Brune at brunec@obu.edu or (870) 245-4293.