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10-4-2022

### Finding inspiration, opportunity and friendship in the Hickingbotham School of Business

Michaelyn Ferrell

*Ouachita Baptist University*

Ouachita News Bureau

*Ouachita Baptist University*

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#### Recommended Citation

Ferrell, Michaelyn and Ouachita News Bureau, "Finding inspiration, opportunity and friendship in the Hickingbotham School of Business" (2022). *Press Releases*. 1153.

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**Finding inspiration, opportunity and friendship in the Hickingbotham School of Business**



*By Michaelyn Ferrell*

October 04, 2022

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Attending Ouachita after high school graduation was my dream for as long as I can remember. I have grown up listening to my mom talk about her Ouachita college days, and I watched as my brother, Chandler, fell in love with the school too.

Chandler became a finance major, and my mom was asked to be on the Hickingbotham School of Business Executive Advisory Board due to her successful career as a small business owner. Because my family was so involved in the School of Business, it only seemed natural that I would also choose a major in Hickingbotham Hall, but what I didn't know at the time was how much the School of Business would eventually mean to me.

Within Hickingbotham, I have found professors and a dean who invest wholeheartedly in students and their success rather than simply teaching classes. Office doors are open, and students always feel welcome. Faculty and staff members are constantly working to help students make connections, get interviews and take the next step toward a career. Although the School of Business is not a sure step to

automatically getting a job or internship, many faculty members have strong connections with alumni and business professionals who are willing to meet students before they graduate.

First Friday is another example of the way that the Hickingbotham School believes in investing in students. One Friday a month, Dean Bryan McKinney invites a business professional to speak during lunch. These business leaders are from various careers and simply talk about their experiences and give advice for students; the speakers are meant to help students find a career and learn about professional culture. A First Friday speaker from a marketing firm in Little Rock was my inspiration to add a communications & media major and to focus more on advertising classes. It is encouraging as a student to hear from professionals who were in our shoes and have now become successful, and to learn about various careers and what they entail.

Along with a compassionate faculty and professional guest speakers, the School of Business has generous donors who provide the opportunity for us to go on a business trip every year. For example, the freshman trip to Memphis allows students to visit a financial firm, attend a Grizzlies basketball game and tour Graceland (Elvis Presley's home) as well as a rock and roll museum. This trip gave me the opportunity to connect with other freshman business majors, learn from current business executives and simply make memories that I will never forget. Our sophomore business trip was cancelled due to COVID-19, but we had planned to travel to northwest Arkansas to visit Walmart, J.B. Hunt and several other corporate headquarters.

Although these trips are meant to teach us about corporate culture, they also are a fun way to make friends and strengthen relationships.

Business trips were not the reason I chose a business major, but they are a very big perk to being part of the Hickingbotham School of Business! It was a natural choice for me, and it has become a place full of my mentors and friends.

*Lead photo by Levi Dade*