

SNC's Center for Business and Economic Analysis called a win-win for students, community

BY RICK COHLER
CORRESPONDENT

DE PERE – When leaders at the Green Bay Botanical Garden began planning a grand garden with a performance amphitheater, organizers turned to St. Norbert College (SNC) to determine its economic impact on Greater Green Bay.

Garden Executive Director Susan Garot said the grand garden increased its economic impact from \$2 million dollars to \$5 million dollars, and credits the analysis and advice provided by the college's Center for Business and Economic Analysis (CBEA) for helping bring that dream to reality.

"It's an economic exercise to create your impact," She said. "Once we know what components go into creating our economic impact, we can update it every year, because we know where to find the data. It's helpful for our donors to know that they're making a wise investment."

Garot said the addition of a new children's garden is expected to increase the economic input to close to \$10 million.

Dr. Sandra Odorzynski, SNC economics professor, and former SNC student Nicole Kozlovsky took on the task of the garden's impact study, and, as is often said, the rest was history.

Center for Business and Economic Analysis

CBEA was officially formed in 2014 by econom-



Dr. Marc Schaffer formed St. Norbert College's Center for Business and Economic Analysis in 2014. Submitted Photo

ics professor Dr. Marc Schaffer.

He said it provides a variety of services to businesses, nonprofits and government entities, including: Economic-impact studies, leading-indicator analysis, market research and site-selection analysis, statistical modeling and forecasting, data analysis, data visualization and automation, economic commentary and speaking engagements.

Through the CBEA, Schneider School faculty, staff and students work hand-in-hand with leaders in the local business and nonprofit communities, providing information, problem-solving, networking and collaboration.

And though community clients benefit from the CBEA, Schaffer said its

main goal is to teach students how to be successful.

"It's about the students and real-world applications," he said. "Classroom teaching is important, but a student sitting down with a business executive showing off their skills is something that can't be replicated in the classroom."

For example, Schaffer said a student was participating in a statewide economic webinar and the governor joined the conference to listen.

"Just imagine being a college student and having the governor listen to your presentation," he said.

Amy Kunding came on board as director of Business Engagement in 2015, and though her position typically centered around scholarships and funding from a business perspective to the college, she said

she now looks at her job as something much broader.

"Working with Marc has brought my job to the next level," Kunding said.

She said the experiential learning the CBEA provides students is a differentiator.

"You get to learn about these economic principles in real time and deliver them to the business community," she said. "I'm trying to think about how to engage the business (community) to further invest in these opportunities to further provide more students with these kinds of experiences, so that they're ready to take their businesses to the next iteration of what's going to keep you viable."

Kunding said the CBEA is a win-win-win from the perspective of the student experience – the

community partner (business, non-profit, local government) gets quality research and analysis and St. Norbert is able to support the community.

Schaffer said it's a win-win – local and regional businesses are getting data and analysis they can use to better their company, while students are getting great experience working with and presenting to business executives.

State of the Economy event

One of those opportunities is the CBEA's State of the Economy events.

What initially started as a boutique-style event held for a small audience of about 20 people, Kunding said has now flourished into an opportunity for business and community leaders to learn about the current state of the global and national economy from the students.

The event is designed both for area professionals looking for more economic data ahead of executing their business planning and for individuals who are generally interested in the state of the country's economy.

Student success

Schaffer said the business relationships students make through the CBEA can, and have, provided future career opportunities.

Peyton Jack is a recent SNC graduate who has turned his work with the CBEA into a job.

"It was a project for

Breakthrough (a Green Bay firm that specializes in innovative transportation technology and market insights), which led to an internship, then a job," Jack said. "Now I'm working for them full-time and absolutely loving it."

SNC alum Andy Martinielli also works for Breakthrough as its director of data science.

"What we rely on from the CBEA is their expertise on statistical modeling, so it can help us leverage and build on the techniques we have," Martinielli said. "It provides Breakthrough with another channel for skill sets we don't see as prevalent here, and gives us a pipeline into potential new employees. There aren't a whole lot of programs that can do what professors and students at the CBEA can do."

Schaffer and Kunding said they see a busy and bright future for the CBEA.

Schaffer said the CBEA has an ongoing relationship with a large Chicago company, which releases annual reports and thought pieces for its large national market.

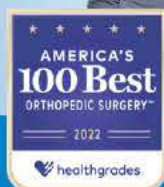
He said SNC students ghostwrite the accompanying articles on the firm's website.

Schaffer said he also looks forward to more collaborations with communities in the region and supporting local policymakers as they make the decisions to keep Northeastern Wisconsin a key part of the state's economy.

CAN WE HELP YOU RECOVER FROM A FOOT OR ANKLE INJURY?

O! YES.

When it hurts to walk, lean on our Foot and Ankle Team. Here, O! stands for elite Orthopedic care. Bellin's orthopedic surgeons don't just operate—from surgical to non-surgical options, they treat your injury so you can get back to the things you love to do. Call for an appointment to get started. *It's how you get from "Oh, that smarts," to O! That's smart!*



920.430.4888

The Foot and Ankle Team

bellin.org/footankle

bellinhealth | Titletown Sports Medicine & Orthopedics

