

## FEATURED STORY **Business Leader of the Year**

The UAF School of Management will honor Joe Usibelli Jr. as its 44<sup>th</sup> Business Leader of the Year during a dinner and award ceremony at 6 p.m. on Saturday, April 18, in the Westmark Fairbanks Hotel's Gold Room.

A lifelong Alaskan, Joe Usibelli Jr. is the president of Usibelli Coal Mine, where he has worked for over 40 years. He graduated from the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 1981 with a degree in civil engineering and a minor in business. Joe worked at UCM while pursuing his education, and after graduation advanced through various positions with the company, including superintendent and vice president of operations. He became president in 1987 at the age of 28. Joe Jr. is only the third leader of UCM following his father, Joe Sr., and his grandfather, Emil.

UCM has flourished under Joe's leadership, producing many benefits for the Alaska economy. More than 500 jobs in Interior Alaska are connected with the mining, distribution, and consumption of Usibelli coal. UCM also spends over \$70 million annually with more than 400 different suppliers, service-providers, and organizations.

Joe has built a solid record for environmental stewardship at the mine. Nearly one million trees have been planted as part of UCM's effort to restore mine lands to natural habitat, a program the company started years before reclamation was required by law.

The safety of employees has been a top priority for Joe. In 2019, UCM surpassed all previous safety records when it achieved more than 1,000 consecutive days of operations without a single employee injury resulting in lost work time. This is a remarkable achievement for a company that operates heavy machinery 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in all weather conditions.

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*Joe Usibelli Jr.*

## **SIF Exchanges Ideas on Investing at Chicago Conference**

*Written by Joel Ballou, MBA student and SIF teaching assistant.*

One of the best parts of the School of Management is its strength at bridging the gap between learning in the classroom and the real world. The school offers numerous opportunities to attend conferences, competitions, and network with professionals. This fall, students in our Student Investment Fund class traveled to Chicago to attend the 7th annual Student Managed Investment Fund Consortium conference. It was wonderful to network with people from all types of backgrounds, learn about other student investment groups, and listen to best practices from industry experts. The complete list of SMIFC speakers can be found [online](#).



*SIF students pose at The Bean in Chicago, IL*

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# Alumni Focus - Jim Culley

*Jim Culley is Senior Vice President and Commercial Loan Officer at Mt. McKinley Bank. He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from UAF in 1993.*

## **What does it mean to you to be a UAF alumnus?**

It means being a part of a very large family. I am always amazed at the exceptional people I meet who have been impacted by UAF. I enjoy letting others know what a great university we have in Fairbanks.

## **Share with us an outstanding teacher or class.**

My favorite class was the Student Investment Fund when it was first getting started. I learned to analyze companies and try to decide if we wanted to invest in them or not. Then I presented this information to the class and tried to convince them why I was right. I use these tools every day now in my work as a commercial lender.

## **How do you stay involved with SOM?**

I love being involved with SOM and giving back to the program that helped make me successful. Whether serving on the Business Leader of the Year steering committee, participating in the Etiquette Seminar and Dinner, helping with the Arctic Innovation Competition, or engaging with the marketing class on their projects like the Roast and Boast, I enjoy working with the students.

## **What advice do you have for current students?**

Experience as much as you can as a student and then continue to explore in your professional life. You never know if you will ever get another chance to do some of the coolest things in the world here in Alaska, that many people would give their life savings to experience. Make the most of your time at UAF and embrace the journey.

Read more about [Jim](#).



*Jim Culley with his wife, Emily*

## **FAVORITE BREAKFAST FOOD?**

I love chicken fried steak and eggs with gravy. My doctor, not so much.

## **WHAT WOULD BE THE TITLE OF YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHY?**

Hold my Beer: Having fun doing (sometimes stupid) stuff in the Last Frontier.

## Student Organizations Short Take

Several SOM student organizations participated in UAF Pop-Con 2019. This event is a celebration of all things pop culture: gaming, entertainment, books, comics, and more! Pop-Con took over the Wood Center with hundreds of attendees for two days of tournaments, vendors, cosplay, workshops, and activities.

AIM used this opportunity to fundraise, selling 3D printed models of the customers' choice. SOLD also held a fundraiser selling "Walking Tacos" to raise funds for their upcoming service trip, Alternative Spring Break. This 2020 volunteer opportunity will take students to Northern California to help rebuild after the massive wild fire season. UAF Esports Club hosted a Super Smash Bros tournament. Esports redefines athletic culture by encouraging students of all races, abilities, and genders to compete in a space where their passion for play is the most prominent part of their identity as an athlete.



*Esports Club members at the Extra Life charity fundraiser event they hosted in November*

## SOM Student Organizations

- Active and Innovative Minds
- Associated Students of Business
- Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- Cadet Club
- Esports Club
- Great Alaskan Accounting People
- International Association of Emergency Managers
- Native Alaskan Business Leaders
- Society for Human Resource Management
- Students Offering Leadership Development



# Arctic Innovation Competition

The University of Alaska Fairbanks School of Management awarded \$30,000 in cash prizes after the 2019 Arctic Innovation Competition's final presentations Saturday, Oct. 19.

The competition, now in its 11th year, invites innovators to propose new, feasible and potentially profitable ideas for solving real-life problems and challenges.

The top prize of \$10,000 in the main division, for ages 18 and up, was awarded to Todd Krieg for Fish Wheel Salmon Selector. The selector improves on the classic fish wheel by safely returning coho and chinook salmon to the river to continue spawning while allowing other, more abundant species to be harvested. The process will allow Interior Alaska fishermen much longer fishing times and larger harvest numbers while still satisfying responsible management practices.

In the junior division for youth ages 13 to 17 years old, James Price took home the first prize of \$1,000 for Plug-Hug, a faceplate for electrical outlets. The device's snugly fitting shield makes accidental unplugging and weather damage less likely.

In the cub division for youth ages 12 and under, Aila Standlee-Strom won first place and \$500 for Here Kitty Cat, a cat harness with a locator connected to an app. The app gives walking directions for owners to find their cats.

Top prize and honorable mention winners in the three divisions came from communities across Alaska — Anchorage, Auke Bay, Ester, Fairbanks, North Pole, and Unalakleet — and from as far away as Hays, Kansas, and Hershey, Pennsylvania.



*Dr. Ping Lan, SOM Dean Mark Herrmann, Lisa Herbert of Usibelli Coal Mine, and UA Vice President Paul Layer pose with 2019 AIC Main Division First Prize Winner Todd Krieg (center)*

## Roast & Boast Showcases Local Businesses

Local coffee roasters, cafés, and chocolatiers showed off their specialty goods on Friday, Nov. 22, at the 2019 annual Roast and Boast, an event organized by students in the School of Management Principles of Marketing class taught by Tammy Tragis-McCook. For the eighth year, the School of Management joined Northrim Bank to host this community event, which featured delicious baked goods, organic kombuchas, award-winning teas, crafted chocolates and plenty of hot beverages.

Seven businesses showcased their creations at the event: Bagels & Brew, Diving Duck Locally Roasted Coffee, Lily and Mae, Little Owl Café, North Pole Coffee Roasting Co., Mama Bears Organic Kombucha and Sipping Streams Tea Co. All businesses donated gift certificates or baskets for the door prizes, and the first 100 attendees received VIP swag bags. About 230 people attended, which was the most ever recorded in the event's history.



*UAF marketing students and Tammy Tragis-McCook at the 2019 Roast and Boast*

Students in the Principles of Marketing class helped organize and market the event, gaining organizational management, social media development, budgeting, team building and event-planning experience.

"I never realized how much work there is behind the scenes for an event," said Myha Cortez, a senior business administration student working on the project. "My biggest takeaway is the importance of communication. It has been great to put what we learn in the classroom to use and see it all come together."

This year's student team expanded Roast and Boast to benefit those in need during the holiday season. Donations of nonperishable food items were collected at the event and over 300 pounds of food were donated to the Fairbanks Community Food Bank.





UAF School of Management  
201 Bunnell Building  
P.O. Box 756080  
Fairbanks, AK 99775-6080



## Scholarship Spotlight

*Ben Udden is a senior accounting major graduating in May. He has received the following scholarships: Cook & Haugeberg/Tom Bartlett • Spirit of Alaska FCU • Tote Maritime*

I took my first class at UAF in January of 2014, while serving in the army in Afghanistan. Though my schedule was very unpredictable, the professor and this university stood by me and helped me to complete the class on time and through it all, I earned an A. After my military service, I began attending the UAF School of Management full time.

Although the GI bill covers my tuition, it does not fully cover my other expenses. Scholarships pay for books and fees and I think even a parking pass! I also work part time at the The Lighthouse Church, where I do snow removal and finances.

I am really grateful for the privately-funded scholarships. In my thank you letters, I wrote that it is really cool when local businesses give to any student, but especially a student who is planning to stay in Fairbanks. It's like a direct investment in the community, even if it's just one student at a time.



*Ben Udden with his wife, Meryem, and their daughter*



Rather than incurring student loan debt, a scholarship could be the ticket to keep a student on the path to graduation. You can make a difference. Make a gift today that will change a student's future.

## Business Leader of the Year

Continued...

Joe cultivates a family-friendly workplace, allowing time for employees to care for sick family members and participate in activities during work hours, such as parent-teacher conferences and youth sports. One third of UCM's full-time employees belong to the second, third, and even fourth generations of their families who have worked at the company.

Support for education has been a hallmark of Joe's leadership, with a particular focus on UAF. More than \$6.5 million has been donated to support student scholarships, faculty incentives, capital projects, event sponsorships, and the Alaska Nanooks athletics program, among other programs.

Joe and his wife Marilyn are lifelong residents of Healy, along with their daughter, Lexi, who attends Tri-Valley School.

Read Joe's full [bio](#).

## SIF Exchanges Ideas on Investing...

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The panel discussion covered investment management strategies and how to prepare for a job in the finance industry. The panelists emphasized that oftentimes, employers place a greater importance on your extracurricular activities and how you make a difference in your community than on your grades. We also learned about the key traits they look for in employees, which are energy, determination to do well, problem solving with little information, and an outgoing personality.

Experiences of this caliber are not possible without funding support. Thank you to Northrim Bank for helping the SIF group travel to Chicago and bring home this wealth of information to share with the rest of the class.

Read the full [story](#).

SOM is one of only about 1.5% of colleges and universities in the world to hold the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation for both the School of Management and its Accounting program. UA is an AA/EO employer and educational institution and prohibits illegal discrimination against any individual: [www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination](http://www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination).

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