

Roger Williams University

DOCS@RWU

Featured News Story

The Week at Roger

5-3-2021

CAFE Alumni Give Back to Create Two New Student Investment Funds

Roger Williams University

Follow this and additional works at: https://docs.rwu.edu/weekatroger_featured_news



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

BRISTOL, R.I. – In November 2020, Center for Advanced Financial Education (CAFE) Founding Director and Professor of Finance Michael “Doc” Melton met with the CAFE Alumni Advisory Board and various alumni with the goal of further strengthening CAFE’s leadership in portfolio management education. The result was a call to establish two additional investment funds that would make Roger Williams University the only university to have a total of four funds available to student investors.

The ensuing fundraising campaign quickly raised support sufficient to establish the CAFE Alumni ESG (Environmental, Social & Corporate Governance) Fund and the Dr. Michael Melton Founder Fund. Adding the two new funds to the already established CAFE Growth Fund and the Gabelli Value Fund enhances and expands the number of fund objectives that allow the student fund managers to research, strategize and execute differing investment methodologies. This distinction better prepares graduates with a broader range of experiences and skills, providing enhancements to the already excellent foundation for successful careers after graduation that CAFE provides.

“We are grateful for this gift from our CAFE alumni, who remain deeply engaged and who give back in all capacities, ranging from providing internships and

employment opportunities, to mentorships, advisory board membership, participation in seminars, and significant financial support to our program. Further, I am humbled and truly honored that my alumni chose to name a fund in my honor,” said Melton.

“The success of the CAFE portfolio management program has been a function of replicating industry in every aspect and incorporating different investment approaches to better prepare our graduates for successful careers,” Melton added. “Having an opportunity to construct and manage multiple funds, student fund managers are provided a foundation of knowledge, work ethic, and desire that has culminated in success stories for our graduates across a multitude of professions.”

After working together so closely throughout the program, many CAFE graduates continue to foster their bonds through maintaining an extensive professional network around the globe, as well as staying in touch with Melton and current students. The family-oriented alumni network that Melton has deliberately created over the nearly two decades of the program’s existence is evident in the commitment and participation of CAFE alumni.

“What makes the two new funds so special is that their creation was driven by CAFE alumni – over 50 percent of all CAFE alumni contributed financially to

establishing these funds. It's our way of paying forward our return on the investment made in our education by contributing to the education of the next generation of student fund managers," said Meaghan Bishop '17, co-chair of the CAFE Advisory Board and Analyst at Fidelity Investments. "Doc has made lifelong impacts on hundreds of people by simply doing what he loves. Anyone that knows him knows how special the CAFE is to him. He truly deserves to have a fund named in his honor."

"The new funds both have unique objectives, reflective of the Gabelli School's values of social and corporate responsibility, sustainability, and fostering continuous innovation," said Susan McTiernan, Dean of the Gabelli School. "The CAFE Alumni ESG Fund represents an objective that is focused on environmental, social and corporate governance such as factors measuring sustainability and societal impact of an investment, and the Dr. Michael Melton Founder Fund is tied to the concept of 'best ideas' investing, providing the student investment fund managers enhanced learning opportunities with respect to a diverse group of equities. The CAFE program is an excellent example of the Gabelli School's distinctive mission to provide experiential learning opportunities that develop graduates who are prepared to succeed and thrive in a dynamic, complex and global workplace."

“Experience and expertise in socially responsible investing is something students will be able to articulate to potential employers that can truly set them apart,” said CAFE Advisory Board Member Eric Rollo '08, Senior Vice President of Sales at William Raveis Real Estate. “What’s more, the ESG objective represents Doc’s desire to keep students current in industry and societal trends, showcasing the need for keeping civic responsibility at the forefront of graduates’ professional and personal lives.”

CAFE Advisory Board Member Guthrie Carpenter '15, who works as a Multisector Institutional Portfolio Analyst at AllianceBernstein, added, “The ‘best ideas’ objective will allow students to make investment decisions to purchase assets that may not fit the objectives of the other funds. This innovative portfolio will offer student fund managers the opportunity to further diversify their investment knowledge base and exemplifies Doc’s willingness to advance the program to meet the needs of industry today.”

The evolving strategy of the portfolio management program has also attracted the financial support of the namesake of the Gabelli School, Mario Gabelli, as well as continuing support from Hans Christensen, CEO of MJX Asset Management, who has provided a long-standing commitment to the CAFE program’s unique international travel opportunities. Under

normal, non-COVID times, CAFE students regularly travel to countries around the world to learn more about global investing and to share their own insights with both practitioners and academics.

“Although two new funds mean twice the work, it speaks volumes to the drive, ambition and determination of the CAFE participants that they welcome the opportunity with enthusiasm,” Melton said. “I am indebted to all of our CAFE alumni and other supporters who have helped to realize the dream of expanding our family of funds in such a progressive and socially responsible way.”