

Meet the Prof: Robert Kunkel

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The following faculty Q&A was submitted by the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Faculty Advocacy Committee, a committee of the Faculty Senate. George Philip, professor of information systems, wrote the introduction.

It is a pleasure for me to introduce my colleague, Dr. Robert Kunkel, professor of finance in the College of Business. Bob joined the University in 1999 with several years of practical experience in commercial lending and five degrees, including a Ph.D. in finance. He is a dedicated teacher who is enthusiastic about sharing his expertise with students as well as with the community, including offering seminars and providing advice to local organizations on investment.

Bob is a tireless researcher as well. He has written extensive studies on the financial impacts of government regulations on businesses and on the performance of stock markets in the U.S., Ukraine and other countries. Somehow Bob also finds time to travel all over the world. His interests and expertise even goes further — he might be able to give you some tips on eating healthy, in case you are interested.

What is your background, and how did you find your way to UW Oshkosh?

I enjoyed growing up in northern Illinois on a farm with six brothers and sisters. I played sports and showed dairy cattle at the fairs. After graduating from the University of Illinois, I spent seven years as a commercial lender with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. I then embarked on a journey to the University of Tennessee, where I received my doctorate in finance. After teaching in Illinois and North Dakota for five years, I joined the College of Business at the UW Oshkosh.

Why did you choose to go into your field?

I became friends with several professors while working in the financial industry at Macomb, Ill., and had a chance to visit with them about their careers. I had also completed my MBA degree from Western Illinois University, so the Ph.D. program was the next step.

What is your favorite thing about UW Oshkosh?

I love working with college students. College is an important time in students' lives, and to have a chance to help them accomplish their goals is most fulfilling. Also, as the faculty advisor to the Finance Club, I get to interact with students not only in the classroom, but also outside the classroom, which provides an opportunity to learn about their lives.

What is the professional accomplishment of which you are most proud?

I have earned five college degrees, including three graduate degrees: an MBA, an MA in economics and a

Ph.D. in finance. I definitely consider earning my Ph.D. in finance as my greatest professional accomplishment. I learned that I had the ability to accomplish things I would have never dreamed possible when I was an undergraduate student.

What leadership or service activities, including service to the community, are you involved in?

My University and community service activities include various leadership roles and committees. I have chaired the asset-liability committee (ALCO) for the UW Oshkosh Credit Union since 2000. I currently serve on three different investment committees, including the Investment Advisory Committee of the Lutheran Homes of Oshkosh and the UW System TSA Review Committee. The UW System TSA program has over \$1 billion in assets.

I also served as the chair of the Finance and Business Law Department for three years and currently serve on the editorial boards of two academic journals. At the University level, my service includes the Graduate Council and chairing the Intercollegiate Athletic Committee. I have also served on numerous college committees.

What is the most common misperception about what you do?

Many people think that all I do as a professor is teach students. They do not realize that I spend as much time on research and service activities as on teaching.

What is the most exciting project you are working on right now?

I am currently working on a research paper that analyzes the impact of the Credit Card Act of 2009 on retailers. This paper will be presented at an international conference in Chicago. I am also working on a research paper with an MBA student who is interested in becoming a professor. Thus, she is learning what is involved in doing research at a university. Research is always challenging and exciting because you have the opportunity to learn new things.

Describe some ways your department serves northeastern Wisconsin.

We currently offer finance and law classes for traditional and nontraditional students. We also offer classes at Stevens Point, Green Bay and Oshkosh, in addition to online classes. Students can concentrate on banking, corporate finance, insurance, investments or real estate. Our faculty serve on various boards and committees of non-profits and for-profits and offer seminars on various financial and legal issues.

Tell us about your family.

I met Erin, my wife, in the MBA program, and we have been married for over 20 years. We have twin boys, David and Ryan, who are 11 years old. I spend almost all my free time with Erin and the boys. We enjoy vacations to Door County, Wisconsin Dells, Michigan and Illinois. This past summer, we visited numerous Abraham Lincoln sites in Illinois, and the Presidential Museum was just fantastic. In the future, my family and I look forward to traveling in the United States.

What are your hobbies?

I participate in various sports, including fishing, football, basketball and golf. I also love to read and watch NFL football, especially the Packers. I like to work out regularly, as we have a complete exercise room with treadmill, elliptical machine, recumbent bike and weight machine.

Lastly, I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to travel. In Europe, I have skied in the Alps, eaten dinner in the Eiffel Tower, wandered through the Roman Coliseum, strolled down the canals of Venice and had a good time at the Oktoberfest in Munich. In Africa, I experienced the grueling heat and sand of the Sahara desert and came within a few hours of Timbuktu. In South America, I hiked the great Andes Mountains and explored the ruins of Machu Picchu.

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