



## Message from the Dean

The Holzschuh College of Business Administration continues to grow in exciting and meaningful ways. This year, we proudly launched two new majors—supply chain management and food industry

management—that strengthen our commitment to preparing students for the complex and connected global economy. These programs build on Niagara’s strong foundation of applied, values-based learning. These initiatives reflect our ongoing mission to educate business leaders who think critically, act ethically, and make a difference in their communities.

We are also thrilled to announce that the Scott Bieler Institute for Business Ethics is now complete and ready to host programs, panels, and collaborative activities that promote integrity, innovation, and responsible leadership. Across the college, our students are engaging in extraordinary experiential learning—from supply chain tours at Rosina Foods, Upstate Niagara Cooperative, and Speed Global Services, to competing in international case competitions and earning professional certifications through our Supply Chain Certificate Program. These experiences, along with our dedicated faculty and strong partnerships, are what make the Holzschuh College such a dynamic place to learn and grow. I could not be prouder of all that we are achieving together!

Dr. Mark Frascatore  
Dean, Holzschuh College of Business Administration

## SCM Certificate Program

In January 2025, the Supply Chain Center of Excellence hosted the certificate program in supply chain management. These practical workshops, which have been held 23 times, are designed for new supply chain professionals and those seeking to broaden their career knowledge and skills in the field.

Nine Niagara University supply chain students and eight managers from local companies attended this year’s session, which was led by Niagara University faculty and managers of local and regional supply chain companies. We highlight and express gratitude to our guest speakers Joe Berti from Speed Global, Jerry Hoban from JB Hunt, and Debbie Alessi from Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

The supply chain program offered four modules over four days, covering four main topics:

- Operations and Supply Chain Management
- Inventory and Warehousing Management
- Purchasing and Supplier Management
- Transportation and Freight Management

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### Websites

[www.niagara.edu/supplychain](http://www.niagara.edu/supplychain)  
[www.niagara.edu/admissions](http://www.niagara.edu/admissions)

# Niagara University Students Get Real-World Insights from On-Site Visits to Area Businesses

Experiential learning is a hallmark of the Holzschuh College of Business Administration. Students regularly engage with the business community through site visits, coordinated by Phil Catanese, director of centers and college outreach, such as these:

## **Upstate Niagara Cooperative**

On Nov. 5, 2024, 22 students got a firsthand look at the production facilities at Upstate Niagara Cooperative, a farmer-owned food and beverage company in West Seneca, N.Y., which has been producing award-winning, high-quality dairy products since 1971.

The students, many of whom were international students from the U.K., Pakistan, Vietnam, France, South Korea, and Canada, were part of Dr. Fernando Naranjo's food industry supply chain management and international management courses.

Accompanied by several faculty members, the students learned about the cooperative's "Farm to Fridge" process through presentations, a tour, and tastings of some of the items it produces.

The students also enjoyed lunch with Upstate employees, including NU alumni Madison Lindsay, '19, MBA'20, assistant marketing manager, and Kelly (Timm) Wells, '97, chief human resources officer, as well as Marty Hurley, senior vice president of supply chain, and Mark Serling, senior vice president, branded milk sales.

"Hearing about the steps taken to ensure freshness and safety from farm to table was very interesting," said Dean Taylor, a junior management major from Oshawa, Ontario. "This visit gave me a much deeper appreciation for the dairy industry and the role of cooperatives in supporting local farmers."

"This tour illustrated the concepts discussed in our agrifood supply chain class specific to the dairy sector and cultured dairy products, so our students observed pasteurization,



**Students got a firsthand look at the production facilities at Upstate Niagara Cooperative in November 2024.**

homogenization, fermentation, flavoring, and packaging processes in action," said Dr. Fernando Naranjo, assistant professor of management.

## **Speed Global Services**

Ten undergraduate students learned about operations at Speed Global Services, a full-service supply chain

solution for domestic and global companies, during a visit to its Buffalo, N.Y., warehouse in January. The visit capped off a five-day accelerated course in supply chain management.

The Niagara group was greeted by Joe Berti, president of the organization and a member of NU's supply chain management advisory



**NU students learned about supply chain operations and workplace safety during a visit to Speed Global Services.**



**NU's business students experienced the sights, sounds, and tastes at Rosina Food Products during a site visit in April 2025.**

board, who gave an overview of Speed Global's overall business operations, including logistics, pick and pack, and storage. They also learned about the complexities of inbound and outbound freight, and the critical importance the company places on worker safety.

"The sprawling warehouse had a section of pick-n-pack services for e-commerce, a Free Trade Zone, thousands of square feet dedicated to bulk storage sacks of sugar and many other products," said Dr. James Kling, associate professor of management.

"What impressed me most when visiting Speed Global was the friendliness of the employees and their keenness on safety in the workplace," said student Alice Nguyen.

## **Rosina Food Products**

Rosina Food Products hosted 33 students for a tour of its West Seneca production plant in April. The students saw how the company's pasta and meatballs were made, learned more about the business, and were able to try samples of the food.

Rosina representatives explained food sourcing, quality assurance/control, logistics of making the products, and shipping procedures during the tour. The students also heard from Russell Corigliano, president and CEO of Rosina Foods, John Zimmerman, senior advisor, and several NU alums regarding Rosina's operations, growth potential, and the benefits of working as a member of the Rosina team.

"The team from Rosina was super enthusiastic, and I appreciate them allowing us to actually look into their manufacturing floor, where we saw firsthand how these products are produced," said senior management student Nathan Dragon.

"The visit allowed our students to see firsthand the application of multiple concepts learned in our Operations Management course, such as capacity management, production planning, and quality assurance," said Dr. Fernando Naranjo, who helped facilitate the tour. "These site visits have enriched the high quality of business education offered by Niagara University and have become an integral component of our experiential learning offerings."

## **ISM Dinner**

On Feb. 19, Niagara University students had an incredible opportunity to attend a networking dinner jointly hosted by the Niagara University Supply Chain Center of Excellence and the Institute for Supply Management on campus.

The evening featured insightful discussions, valuable career advice, and meaningful industry connections between students and supply chain professionals.

Dan Coleman, founder of Excelsior Learning and a leading authority on deliberate creativity, consultative selling, and negotiation, delivered an engaging keynote presentation.

Students in professor Yaz Sarkees' procurement and supplier management course gained hands-on experience through an interactive negotiation exercise led by Coleman.

"It was inspiring to see Niagara students and business professionals collaborating side by side to apply real-world negotiation models in an experiential learning environment," said Sarkees.



## **Supply Chain Center Meet & Greet**



**On Sept. 4, 2025, supply chain students were invited to learn more about the Supply Chain Center of Excellence (site visits, guest speakers, SC certificate program, ISM dinner, case competition, simulation competition).**



## Meet Our Newest Faculty Member: Dr. Bassel Kassem

Dr. Bassel Kassem has joined Niagara University in Ontario's MBA program in the Holzschuh College of Business Administration. He teaches strategic supply chain management, decision modeling & analytics, and international management at the Vaughan campus.

Dr. Kassem received his Ph.D. in management engineering from Politecnico di Milano, a top 100 school worldwide. He also earned the Lean Specialist title and completed the executive course in "Digital Lean Six Sigma for Manufacturing and Service Companies" from the prestigious Polimi Graduate School of Management.

Dr. Kassem was born in North Lebanon, in a district named Koura. He speaks four languages fluently (Arabic, English, Italian, and French) and is currently adding Spanish as his fifth language. He is an avid reader and a fan of Agatha Christie's crime novels and political biographies. He recently moved to Canada after spending two years in Dubai, where he taught similar topics and created innovation forums where students could pitch business ideas in front of international investors.

He has presented at international conferences such as POMS (Production and Operations Management Society). He has also been a reviewer for top-tier journals such as the International Journal of Production Research and has published in numerous journals in the field of operations management.

## Dr. Jim Kling Retires



After a distinguished 35-year career as one of Niagara University's most respected professors, Dr. Jim Kling retired in May 2025. Throughout his tenure, Dr. Kling taught a wide range of courses in transportation, logistics, supply chain management, global trade, and management principles, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Dr. Kling was instrumental in the establishment of the Center for Supply Chain Excellence in 2000, as its principal founder with the support of Keith Miller, who was dean of the college at that time. For over two decades, together with Gerry Catalano and Jack Ampuja, Dr. Kling served as its main leader and helped shape the center into a thriving institution that successfully bridges academia and industry.

Many students may also recall Dr. Kling as their teacher in freshman sections of BUS 120/MGT 160, principles of business/management. From 1995 to 2015, Dr. Kling coordinated the freshman business experience, including coursework and retreats at Camp Kenan until 2007 and on campus from 2008 until 2015.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for Dr. Kling's visionary leadership, dedication, and lasting contributions to Niagara University and the Center for Supply Chain Excellence. His legacy will continue to inspire future generations of students and professionals.



**Brett Verrall, Nathan Dragon, Fajr Hafeez, and Avante Walker competed in the 2025 International Case Competition, hosted by the World Trade Center Buffalo Niagara at the University at Buffalo on March 7, 2025.**

## Students Participate in Case Competition

A team of business students competed in the 2025 International Case Competition, hosted by the World Trade Center Buffalo Niagara and held at the University at Buffalo on March 7. The students competed against teams from Niagara College, Brock University, Canisius University, and the University at Buffalo.

Teams were challenged with proposing an AI-driven solution for Niagara Bolt, a fictional business headquartered in Fort Erie, Ontario, which specializes in manufacturing essential materials for electric vehicle batteries. Their proposals were required to address the company's immediate supply chain challenges while aligning with its long-term growth and market objectives.

"The participation of Niagara University in case competitions allows us to increase the visibility and prestige of our institution and to show the great skills of our students," said Dr. Fernando Naranjo, assistant professor of management, who coached the team.

"Participating in the 2025 World Trade Center Buffalo Niagara Case Contest was an incredibly rewarding and insightful experience," said senior Avante Walker. "The 24-hour time limit challenged me to think critically under pressure while strengthening my leadership and collaboration skills. I learned the importance of active listening and building on my teammates' ideas, which will be invaluable in my future career."