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Around the Columns

Forensic accounting series focuses on fraud

The WorldCom scandal, home mortgage crisis and Bernie Madoff Ponzi schemes exposed more than corruption on Wall Street. They also raised the profile of forensic accounting. Through the Dawdy Speaker Series at Mizzou, students can hear from leading fraud investigators and learn about careers in this growing field.

“This lecture series is a way to introduce students to the topic and show them that fraud examination is one way they can use their accounting skills,” says Jay Dawdy, BS Acc ’89, who has funded the program.

Dawdy, president of Gryphon Investigations in White Plains, N.Y., built his career in corporate investigations, litigation support and fraud investigations. When he returned to Mizzou in 2008 as professor for a day, he hatched the idea for a lecture series that would touch on forensic accounting, regulatory issues and legal matters.

“We wanted to give students exposure to those industries, and on a broader level, we wanted to expose them to dynamic, high-level professionals,” he says.






Jay Dawdy, BS Acc '89, is helping introduce Mizzou students to forensic accounting through a campus lecture series. Photo by Rob Hill

In fall 2009, Dawdy worked with Vairam Arunachalam, director of the School of Accountancy, to organize the first talk, which featured Jim Ratley, president of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners. Arunachalam says the series has made a significant impact in a short time and is now feeding on its own success by attracting renowned speakers.

In December 2010, the series presented Kenneth Feinberg, who has handled claims for the victims of Sept. 11, the Virginia Tech shootings and BP's Gulf oil spill. Other lecturers have included white-collar criminologist William Black, Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster, and Inspector General of the Securities and Exchange Commission H. David Kotz.

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