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Clint Hill

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## Alum's capital idea provides seed money for new Furman program

When Michele Camp graduated from Furman in 2006 with a degree in business administration, she knew she wanted to pursue a job in the investment field in her home state of Texas.

Acting on a tip from a Furman friend, she called Bridgeway Capital Management in Houston — and was quickly impressed by the company's commitment to donating half its profits to charity through its corporate foundation. As its mission statement says, "Bridgeway Corporate Foundation is a catalyst for hope and reconciliation throughout the world, working towards the prevention of oppression, genocide, and human rights violations."

"This is the kind of company I would like to work for," Camp thought. Once she landed an interview, she was even more impressed by the quality of the people at Bridgeway and their interest in giving back to their community. Bridgeway was equally impressed with Camp and hired her as an equity trader.

When she arrived, she learned that all partners at Bridgeway serve on committees that help determine how foundation funds are to be distributed. Her committee's focus: higher education.

Camp took special interest in a program that Bridgeway had helped fund at Washington & Lee University. According to the school's Web site, the Shepherd Program "endeavors to inform students about poverty and what can be done to foster human capabilities for communities and individuals who have been left behind in domestic and international development."

The W&L program gave Camp an idea: Why not something similar at Furman? She contacted Thomas Kaze, Furman's provost and executive vice president, to tell him about Bridgeway's philanthropic mindset — and her idea.

Kaze forwarded her note to religion professor John Shelley and to psychology professor Elaine Nocks, director of Furman's Lilly Center



for Theological Exploration of Vocation. Both had expressed a desire to establish an academic concentration in poverty studies. Camp's inquiry helped bring the idea to fruition.

In October of 2007, Camp visited Furman with Dick Cancelmo, a Bridgeway colleague, and Harlan Beckley, director of the Shepherd Program at Washington & Lee. Says Shelley, "Their interest, advice and excitement were crucial in nudging us forward."

The result: Furman is the beneficiary of a \$150,000 grant from the Bridgeway Corporate Foundation. The grant provides seed money to establish the concentration, support faculty development and fund 10 summer internships in the field. The introductory poverty course is being taught for the first time this spring by Shelley and philosophy professor David Gandolfo.

The concentration will build on current courses and programs to help Furman expand its commitment to social justice and civic responsibility. In addition to the introductory

course, students will complete an internship addressing a specific area of poverty and take at least five other courses from a range of offerings by the departments of economics, education, history, languages, philosophy, political science, religion and sociology.

Says Camp, "I hope the Furman program will truly raise awareness of community poverty. Students should have the opportunity to realize that a little bit can go a long way.

"Furman students graduate and become successful and even powerful citizens in their respective communities. I want them to know that they can use their individual passions to give back. Take it from an equity trader. You don't have to be a social worker to make a difference."

To learn more, visit [www.bridgewayfunds.com](http://www.bridgewayfunds.com).

— CLINT HILL

*The author, a 2003 graduate, is a development officer at Furman.*