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Barton School launches Executive-in-Residence program, names Spirit AeroSystems CEO as first executive

By WSU Strategic Communications



Spirit AeroSystems president and CEO Tom Gentile will serve as the first resident of the W. Frank Barton School of Business Executive-in-Residence program.

- The Executive-in-Residence program brings industry leaders to campus to mentor students and exchange ideas with faculty.
- The program fits well with Wichita State's emphasis on applied learning opportunities for students.
- Tom Gentile was appointed president and CEO at Spirit AeroSystems in 2016.

The W. Frank Barton School of Business at Wichita State University has launched its Executive-in-Residence program. This program will provide Barton School students, faculty and the Wichita community with vital perspectives and knowledge from industry leaders. Tom Gentile, president and CEO of Spirit AeroSystems, will serve as the program's first resident for the fall 2021 semester.

"The wisdom of industry leaders is so vast and inspirational," said Dr. Larisa Genin, dean of the Barton School of Business at Wichita State. "This program will tap into that knowledge. We're honored to have Spirit AeroSystems CEO Tom Gentile as our first resident. His insights will be an unprecedented and valuable resource to our students and faculty."

Gentile was appointed president and chief executive officer of Spirit AeroSystems in 2016. Prior to Spirit, he served as president and chief operating officer of GE Capital. Before that role, Gentile was president and CEO of GE Healthcare Systems, a \$14 billion diagnostic imaging and medical device business. He also served as president and CEO of GE Aviation Services, a \$7 billion global enterprise providing maintenance, repair, and overhaul as well as spare parts to GE Aviation's global fleet of jet engines for commercial airlines. Gentile began his career at GE in 1998, holding a succession of leadership roles in the U.S., France and Australia. He earned his bachelor's degree in economics magna cum laude and MBA from Harvard University, and studied international relations at the London School of Economics.

"For the past five years, I've seen how important Wichita State University and the Barton School is to the Wichita community and the region," said Gentile. "It's important to continue to amplify their educational offerings. I look forward to strengthening Spirit's partnership with WSU and supporting the university's important mission to serve the Wichita community."

Each Executive-in-Residence will provide mentorship opportunities to students, exchange ideas with Barton School faculty and work with business leaders to shape the future of business education in alignment with the future of work.

"Tom is the leader of the largest first-tier aerostructures manufacturer in the world," said Clark Bastian, chairman of the Barton School Dean's Advisory Board and chairman of Fidelity Bank. "This is a rare opportunity for students, faculty and our community to collaborate with a global visionary."

This program, along with the recently announced Entrepreneur-in-Residence program, are a few of the many initiatives the Barton School has launched to become one of the premier business schools in the world. It also aligns with the vision of the university as a whole.

“We are an applied learning university. The Executive-in-Residence program at the Barton School is the perfect mix of academia and application,” said Dr. Rick Muma, interim president of Wichita State. “It will help create a stronger connection between us and the outside business world. And by learning from these leaders, our students will be better prepared to enter the workforce and eventually become leaders themselves.”

“I believe that the Barton School’s Executive-in-Residence and Entrepreneur-in-Residence programs are not only going to shape our students’ lives, but will also positively impact our community,” said Shirley Lefever, interim executive vice president and provost at Wichita State. “The businesses in Wichita and around the world will see long-term benefits from our students because of opportunities like this.”

For more information on the Barton School, visit www.wichita.edu/business.