

The background of the cover features a tall, brick-clad tower with a clock face at the top, set against a light blue sky. The foreground is filled with soft, out-of-focus pink cherry blossoms. A solid yellow vertical bar is on the left side, and a yellow and black abstract graphic is in the bottom left corner.

BOWDEN INVESTMENT GROUP ANNUAL REPORT

2023
EDITION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

- The History and Purpose of BIG
- Letter from the President
- Letter from the Advisors

Economic, Accounting, Industry, and ESG Analysis

- Economic Reflection and Outlook
- Portfolio Performance
- Industry Performance
- ESG Summary

Acknowledgements and Events

- Guest Speakers
- Competitions
- Travel and Firm Visits
- Dr. Delbert Goff Endowed Scholarship for Applied Investments

Stock Pitches and Appreciation

- Spring Pitches
 - Final Fall Pitches
 - Initial Fall Pitches
 - Member Testimonials
 - Final BIG Thank You
- 

The History and Purpose of BIG

The Bowden Investment Group's roots date back nearly 30 years to a small investment club called "The Mountaineer Investment Club." Over time, this club has grown and developed into the Bowden Investment Group we see today.

In the Fall of 1994, Dr. Don Cox and Dr. Delbert Goff set out to create a club where students who sought real-world investment opportunities could meet and obtain hands-on experience in the financial world. While the club was met with great enthusiasm from students, it also faced significant challenges as investment clubs were few and far between and there was little precedent as to how to solve many of the issues the club came across. Dr. Cox and Dr. Goff decided to reimagine the group and create the Elbert V. Bowden Student Managed Investment Fund which was named after Dr. Elbert V. Bowden, a passionate educator whose patronage helped to launch the group. While Dr. Bowden passed away in 2004, his legacy lives on through the fund.

Throughout its 24 years, the group has seen leadership changes. Dr. Cox left his role as faculty advisor in 2004 when he was appointed Associate Dean of the Walker College of Business. Dr. Goff filled Dr. Cox's role and devoted hours and hours to help build and grow the Bowden Investment Group into what it is today. It was also during Dr. Goff's time as faculty advisor that the group received its unofficial title of the "Bowden Investment Group."

In the Fall of 2010, Mr. David Thompson began his role as the Executive-in-Residence and dedicated his time and knowledge to the group for ten great years until departing in 2019. In 2018, the Bowden Investment Group was fortunate to gain Dr. Hadley and the current Executive-in-Residence, Mr. Shawn Poole. After contributing so much to both the school and the fund, Dr. Goff and Mr. Thompson both stepped into advisory roles in 2020 and handed the reins to Dr. Hadley and Mr. Poole. Together, Dr. Hadley and Mr. Poole have provided the Bowden Investment Group with invaluable knowledge on both financial analysis and how to be a young professional in today's world.

From a small investment club to one of Appalachian State's most prestigious and sought after student groups, the BIG class of 2023-2024 extends our sincerest thanks to everyone who has helped create and develop the group we all love.



Letter From the President

This year has been unforgettable – full of who, what, when, where, and lots of whys. A journey of twelve students evolving into hard-working analysts ready to conquer our careers and the challenges that lie ahead.

I cannot imagine where I would be without the Bowden Investment Group. As a freshman majoring in Exercise Science, I had no clue about my vision after college. After switching to Finance, I immersed myself in a fast-paced learning environment where you either sink or swim. Somehow, I learned how to swim and never looked back. After hearing about the Bowden Investment Group from previous member McKenzie Shail, I enjoyed reading about the group's history, seeing the success of prior classes, and ultimately gained the courage to apply and challenge myself. It has undoubtedly been one of the best decisions of my life, providing me with the opportunity to lead such a great group. After watching the class of 2023 debate about something called P/E multiples and how a makeup company should be in the portfolio, I knew the group would be challenging. Starting in the summer, the group was tasked with completing Wall Street Prep courses and building a financial model for Lowe's Company. After many expletives, hundreds of open tabs, and a few tears, we balanced the model. It was relieving to know that the rest of the class felt the same as I did. We are all convinced that the main driver behind this model was to unite us as a team, growing closer not only as college students but as friends. This friendship and teamwork ability translated into the fall semester as the group had the opportunity to attend multiple BIG days, embark on a journey to Chicago, and hold events outside of the classroom without parental guidance.



At the end of the fall semester, our group presented our stock pitch presentations that we built throughout the semester. I was very impressed with the professional development of our group in such a short period. Among the great pitches were MP Materials, Penn Entertainment, and FLEX, which were all added to the portfolio.

Apart from the fun, the knowledge and growth our team has gained this year is immeasurable. Starting as twelve individuals eager to build a portfolio, we have grown to be so much more than that. This would not have been possible without our faculty advisors, Dr. Hadley and Mr. Poole, who believe in our success inside and outside the classroom.

In conclusion, we express our sincere appreciation to our benevolent donors, to the esteemed alumni who have set us up for success, and to our dedicated faculty advisors whose profound impact on our lives is truly immeasurable. Your unwavering support has allowed us to turn dreams into reality, and we are forever grateful.

Go APP!

-Corbin Lammers



Letter From the Advisors

On behalf of the Bowden Investment Group, we are delighted to share the 2023 Annual Report, showcasing the accomplishments of the BIG Classes of 2023 and 2024. We are motivated by the exceptional growth, dedication, and pursuit of excellence demonstrated by the students, and we celebrate their resilience, hard work, and personal and professional development!

This year marked a significant milestone with all members of both the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 groups participating in competitions, highlighting the group's commitment to experiential learning. The 2022-2023 group engaged in the CFA Institute Research Challenge, the University of Georgia Stock Pitch Competition, and, for the first time, the McGill University Stock Pitch Competition. The 2023-2024 group also expanded its competitive horizon by participating in the CFA Institute Research Challenge, the University of Georgia Stock Pitch Competition, and the SMIFC (Student Managed Investment Fund Consortium Competition) for the first time. These engagements demonstrate our students' dedication to applying their knowledge in a variety of practical, competitive settings.

We are also pleased to report the successful career placements of the 2023 and 2024 Bowden Investment Group members. Our graduates have landed roles at excellent firms such as Bank of America, Dimensional, FORVIS, LPL Financial, Truist, USAA, Trane, and Wells Fargo. The selection for the 2024-2025 group is underway, and we look forward to another cycle of selection, potential, challenges, growth, maturity, and graduation.

In closing, our heartfelt thanks go to all the BIG supporters! Your backing is crucial to the Bowden Investment Group's ongoing success.

Thank you! As always, Go BIG!

Dr. Brandy Hadley, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
David A. Thompson
Distinguished Scholar of
Applied Investments



Mr. Shawn Poole, CPA
Executive in Residence





**ECONOMIC,
ACCOUNTING,
INDUSTRY,
AND ESG ANALYSIS**



Economic Reflection and Outlook

-Derek Mahato and Hudson Smith

Economic Overview:

In 2023, the economic landscape was marked by a combination of challenges and opportunities. Persistent inflationary pressures continued to shape monetary policy, while interest rates saw gradual increases (Figure 1). The Federal Reserve's commitment to combating inflation remained a central theme, impacting various sectors of the economy.

Inflation, Interest Rates, and Federal Funds Rate:

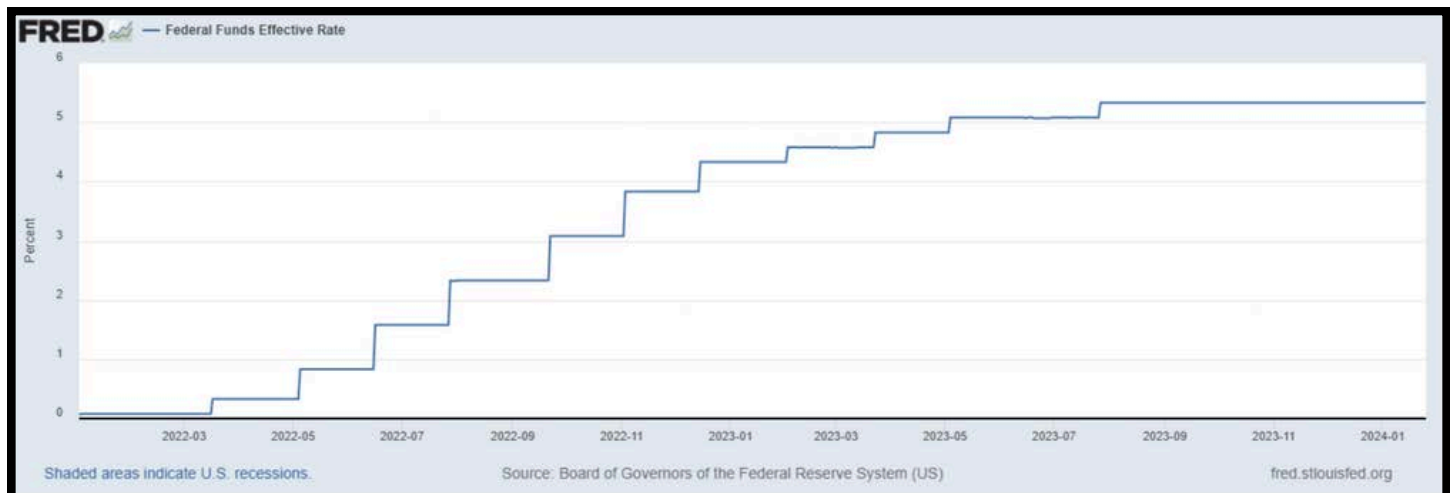
Throughout 2023, our group was concerned about rising inflation, with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) reflecting

This maneuver aimed to create a balance between slowing economic growth and taming price hikes. At this point, the Fed is on track to tame inflation and achieve a soft landing with inflation at 3.35% in December and unemployment staying relatively low.

Fixed Income:

The fixed-income market in 2023 exhibited mixed dynamics. Bond performance was influenced by the delicate interplay between rising interest rates and inflation. While the global economic recovery and low-interest rate environment initially deterred fixed-income investments, the specter

Figure 1: Federal Funds Rate (2022-2024)



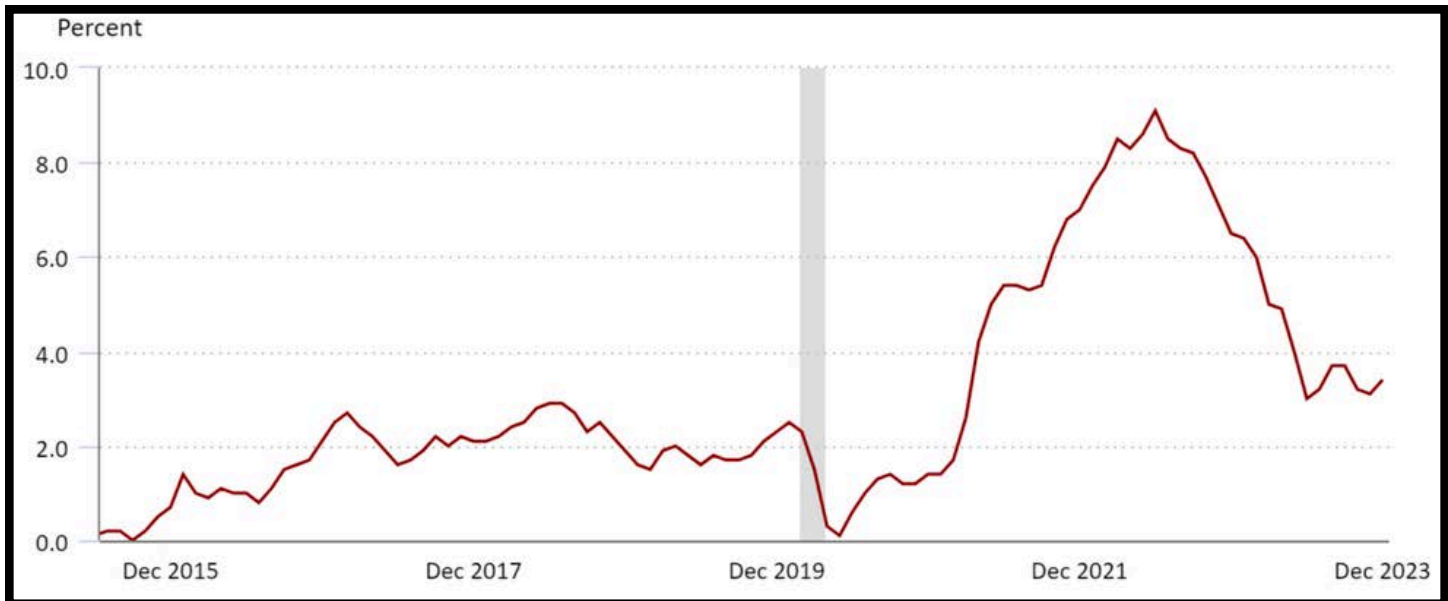
Source: fred.stlouisfed.org

sustained price increases (Figure 2). The year was subject to continued pressure on consumer goods and services prices, driven by factors such as rising energy costs and supply chain disruptions. The Federal Reserve increased interest rates to address the situation, making gradual adjustments to the Federal Funds Rate in an effort to manage inflation.

of central bank interest rate hikes loomed large. As a result, yields on government bonds fluctuated, impacting the attractiveness of bonds as an investment option (Figure 3). Rising sovereign debt levels in some countries added to market uncertainty, highlighting the risk associated with fixed-income investments.

Economic Reflection and Outlook

Figure 2: 12 Month Percentage Change, Consumer Price Index



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Commodities:

In 2023, commodities generally declined after the rebound witnessed in the previous year. According to the World Bank, the sharp drop was due to slower demand for base metals and the impact of the conflict in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Additionally, the redirection of key commodity exports from Russia and slower global growth were identified as contributing factors. The World Bank also highlighted that resurgent volatility in commodity markets posed economic challenges, with heightened instability affecting economic growth and inflation. Overall, these events collectively contributed to the decline in commodity prices in 2023, with gold as the outlier.

2024 Economic Outlook:

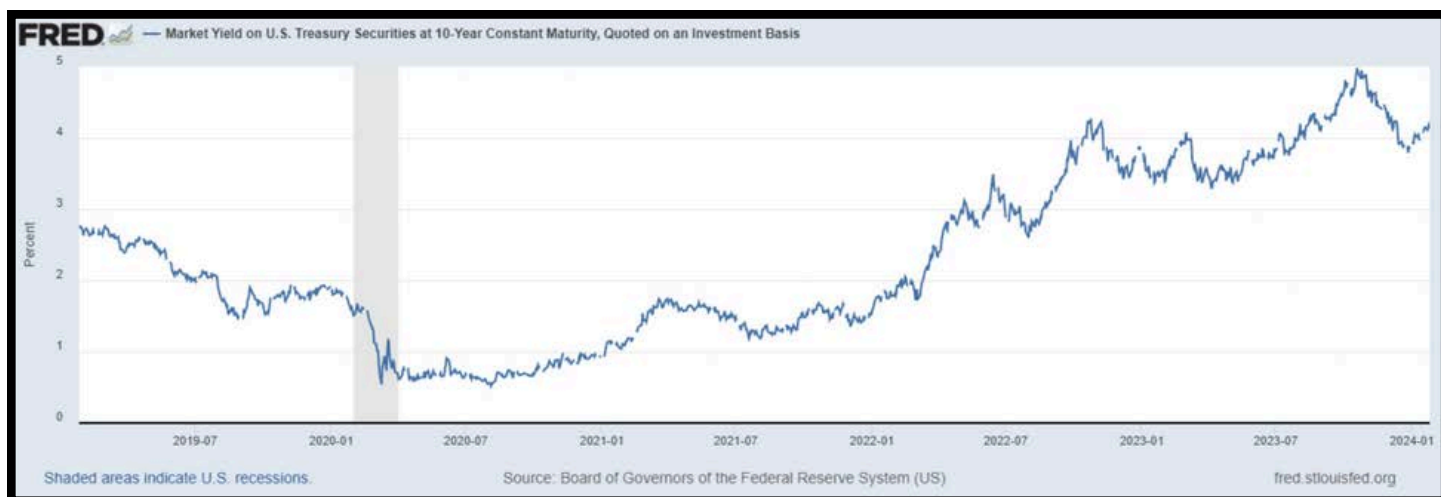
In 2024, we anticipate a nuanced economic landscape, shaped by lessons learned from the previous year. The Federal Reserve is expected to maintain its focus on taming inflation, although the pace of interest rate hikes is uncertain. Equity markets are projected to exhibit both strength and volatility, driven by factors such as corporate earnings, consumer spending, and revisions in economic indicators. The second half of 2024 could see economic challenges stemming from the delayed impact of rate hikes, potentially affecting consumer spending and corporate profits. Amidst these challenges, certain sectors are poised for growth. Commodity-driven industries, especially those linked to renewable energy and electric vehicles, are expected to thrive.

Economic Reflection and Outlook

Emerging markets may continue to outperform developed economies, driven by technological advancements and favorable growth prospects. As we navigate the economic landscape of 2024, we must remain vigilant and

adaptable, recognizing that uncertainties and opportunities will continue to shape our investment strategies.

Figure 3: Market Yield on U.S. Treasury Securities at a 10-Year Constant Maturity



Source: fred.stlouisfed.org

2023 Portfolio Performance

-Ashley Meacham and Victor Tovar

In 2023, the Bowden Investment Fund returned 16.93%, underperforming the benchmark (SP500TR, 26.3%) by 9.37%. This resulted in a nominal gain of \$39,553.28, with the largest nominal return coming from AMD (+\$7,898.28), and the largest nominal loss attributed to CHWY (-\$4,803.76) as displayed in Figures 4 and 5.

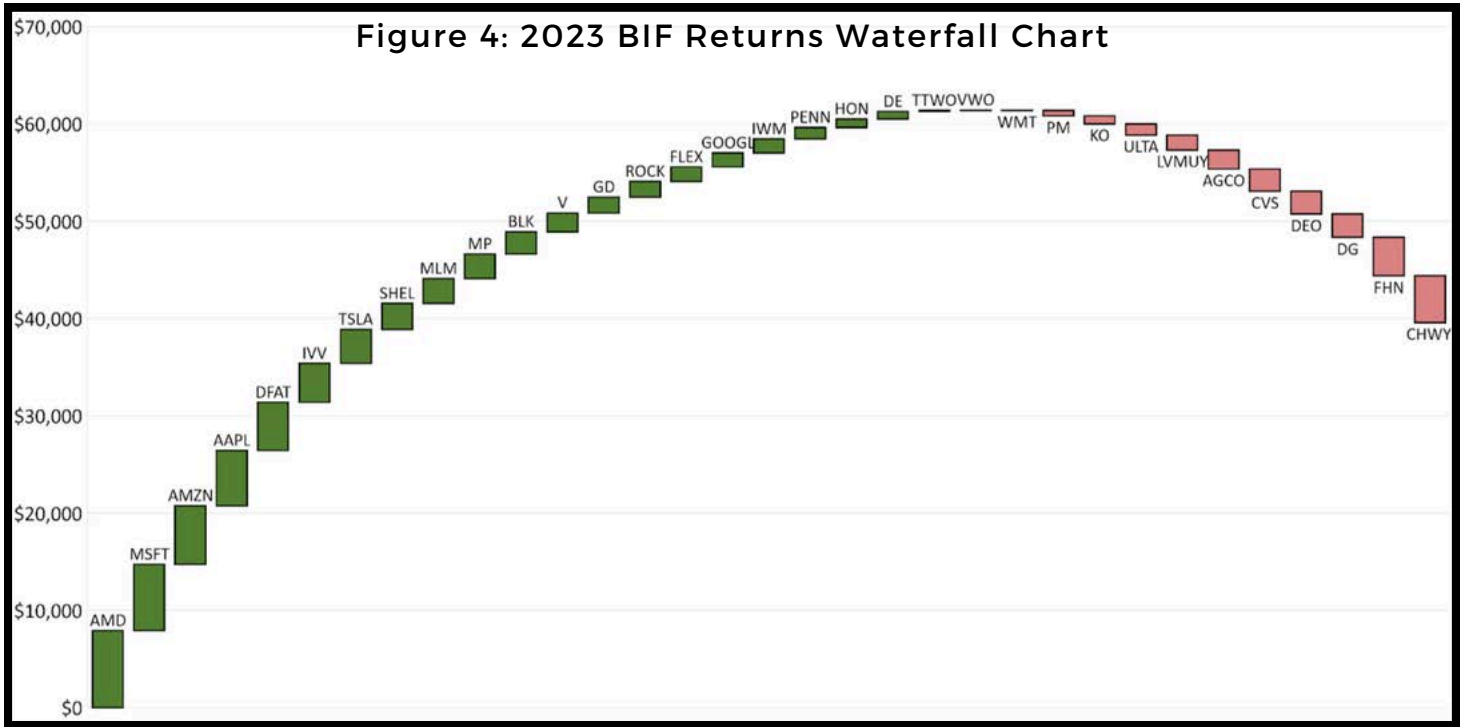
Our portfolio beat the benchmark in February, June, October, and December, with just 0.01% underperformance in July and September.

The Bowden Investment Fund's underperformance can largely be attributed to two holdings. FHN was

pitched with the thesis that it would be acquired by TD Bank, however, this acquisition had terrible timing and SVB failed just days before the transaction was complete. This caused regulators to halt the deal and sent FHN tumbling. This is where our large deviation from the market is seen in May. Our massive underperformance in August can be largely attributed to Chewy's 30% decline. This was driven by poor earnings and its market share being eroded by AMZN and WMT as demonstrated in Figure 6.

We lost conviction in Chewy due to its low and stagnant profit margins due in part to its fulfillment costs and made the decision to sell in October.

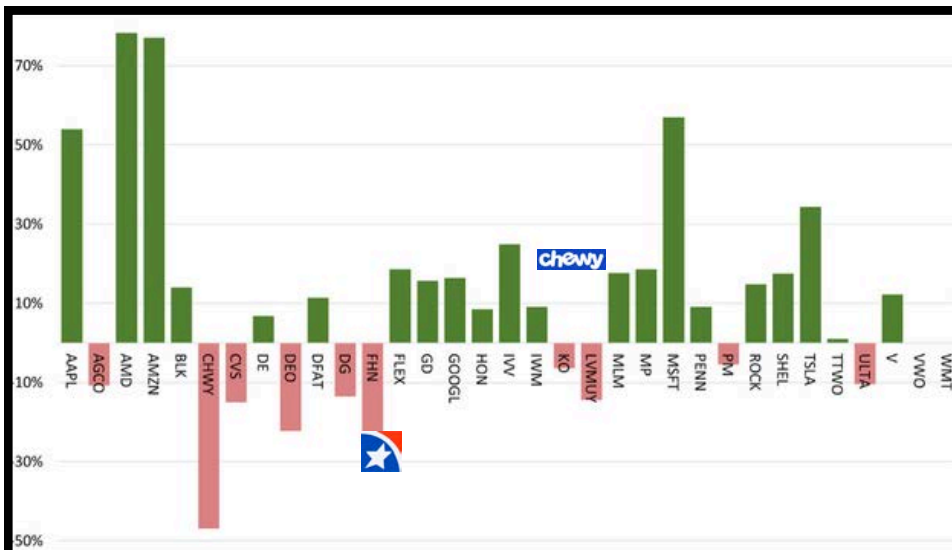
2023 Portfolio Performance



This year, the Bowden Investment Group purchased a staggering 19 different equities and ETFs as seen in Figures 7 and 8. Early in the year, most of these purchases were driven by a flight to safety as seen by purchases in the Industrials and Consumer Staples sectors, industries resilient to economic uncertainty. Purchases such as GD, HON, DE and DEO were defensive

investments designed to offset potential losses in the outcome of a recession. Most of our sells, shown in Figure 9, were results of that sudden shift into safe and conservative ETFs. With purchases of MP, FLEX, and PENN, we are slowly transitioning away from those defensive sectors. As a group, we strongly believe that interest rates will continue to decrease steadily.

Figure 5: BIF yearly returns



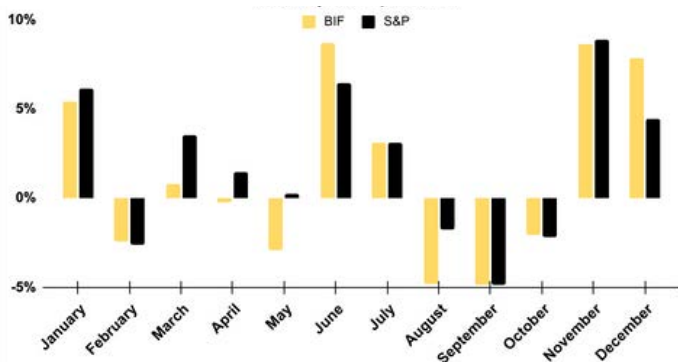
Our goal is to take on more risk by investing in sectors that we believe continue to have strong growth prospects, such as technology and communication services, both of which we are currently underweight in.

2023 Portfolio Performance

Developing a Theme

In the midst of developing a theme for the portfolio, we created a Morningstar Style Chart highlighting our current holdings. In Figure 10, you can see that the portfolio consists of 34.12% large-cap growth stocks. The companies that fall into this category are mainly from our Magnificent Seven holdings. Notable changes after our fall pitches include the sale of DFAT, which constituted over 16.5% of our portfolio, the purchase of MP, FLEX, PENN, and a Russell 2,000 ETF, IWM.

Figure 6: Monthly Bar Chart



These changes substantially decreased our small-cap holdings and increased our mid-cap core holdings. We are excited to create changes utilizing this style chart to better understand and visualize our thesis as a group going forward.

Tech Takeover: The Magnificent Seven

Throughout 2023, the returns of the U.S. stock market were taken over by seven dominant companies in the Technology sector as shown in Figure 11. Coined the "Magnificent Seven" for their amazing performance, these key players are Amazon, Apple, Google, Meta, Microsoft, Nvidia, and Tesla.

Figure 7: 2023 Buys

Transaction Date	Ticker	Purchase Price	Shares Purchased
2/10	VVO	\$41.07	506
3/10	AMD	\$82.67	84
4/12	HON	\$193.23	53
4/12	LVMUY	\$189.95	56
4/12	ROCK	\$47.92	226
4/12	CHWY	\$34.39	298
4/14	PM	\$99.48	105
4/14	TSLA	\$185.00	55
4/14	WMT	\$148.48	69
4/19	FHN	\$18.59	894
4/19	TTWO	\$123.35	85
4/24	GD	\$224.50	46
4/24	ULTA	\$547.40	20
4/26	DE	\$374.61	31
4/26	DEO	\$187.26	56
12/8	FLEX	\$18.83	430
12/8	IWM	\$186.80	86
12/8	MP	\$16.74	955
12/8	PENN	\$23.86	536

Figure 8: Portfolio Composition 12/31

Ticker	Shares Held	Price	Weight	Total Value
AAPL	84	\$192.53	4.92%	\$16,172.52
AMD	122	\$147.41	5.47%	\$17,984.02
AMZN	91	\$151.94	4.20%	\$13,826.54
BLK	23	\$811.80	5.68%	\$18,671.40
CVS	164	\$78.96	3.94%	\$12,949.44
DE	31	\$399.87	3.77%	\$12,395.97
DEO	56	\$145.66	2.48%	\$8,156.96
FHN	894	\$14.16	3.85%	\$12,659.04
FLEX	430	\$22.34	2.92%	\$9,606.20
GD	46	\$259.67	3.63%	\$11,944.82
HON	53	\$209.71	3.38%	\$11,114.63
IVV	42	\$477.63	6.10%	\$20,060.46
IWM	86	\$200.71	5.25%	\$17,261.06
KO	203	\$58.93	3.64%	\$11,962.79
LVMUY	56	\$162.45	2.77%	\$9,097.20
MP	955	\$19.85	5.76%	\$18,956.75
MSFT	50	\$376.04	5.72%	\$18,802.00
PENN	536	\$26.02	4.24%	\$13,946.72
PM	105	\$94.08	3.00%	\$9,878.40
SHEL	272	\$65.80	5.44%	\$17,897.60
TSLA	55	\$248.48	4.16%	\$13,666.40
ULTA	20	\$489.99	2.98%	\$9,799.80
VVO	506	\$41.10	6.32%	\$20,796.60
Cash		\$1,220.96	0.37%	\$1,220.96
Total:				\$328,828.28

Figure 9: 2023 Sells

Transaction Date	Ticker	Sale Price	Shares Sold
4/14	DG	\$218.24	72
4/24	V	\$232.46	56
4/26	GOOGL	\$106.96	100
4/26	AGCO	\$125.04	132
5/5	MLM	\$374.48	30
5/9	WMT	\$151.77	69
5/9	TTWO	\$120.40	85
5/9	ROCK	\$53.54	226
9/28	CHWY	\$17.92	298
12/8	DFAT	\$48.82	1084

2023 Portfolio Performance

Figure 10: BIF Holdings Style Box

	Value	Core	Growth
Large	19.16%	18.02%	34.25%
Mid	3.70%	17.63%	0.40%
Small	1.16%	1.45%	1.20%

Collectively, these stocks returned 107% on average in 2023, and comprised nearly a third of the S&P 500. The outstanding performance of these companies was driven by technological innovation, including the emergence and refinement of AI as well as their market and brand dominance and health financial positions.

Introduction to Artificial Intelligence

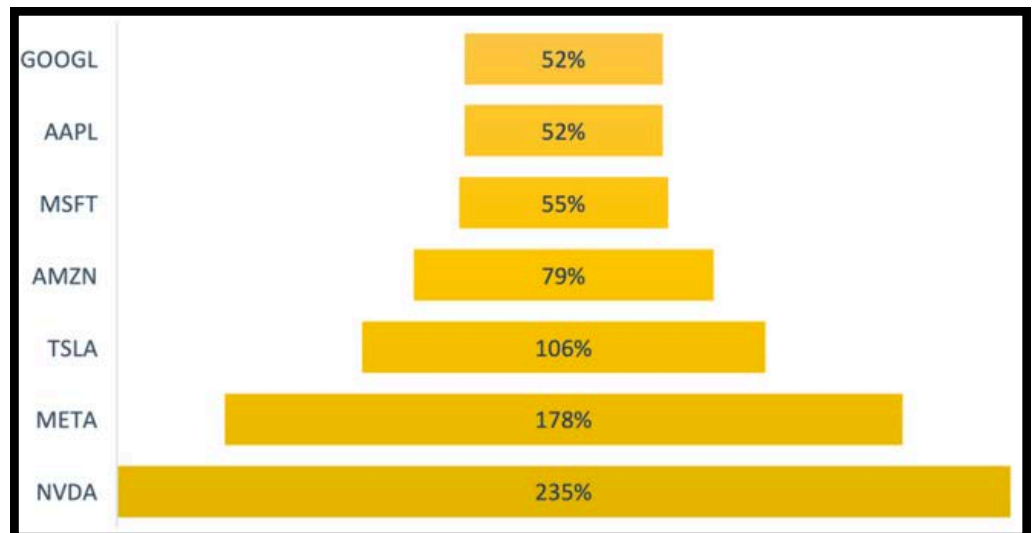
Artificial Intelligence, or AI, refers to the development of computer systems that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. These tasks include learning, reasoning, problem-solving, perception and understanding. The craze of AI is about creating machines or software that can mimic cognitive functions and perform tasks that normally require human abilities. This technological advancement has resulted in an AI race by major players mostly

composed of the Magnificent Seven. OpenAI has had a tremendous first mover advantage with the introduction of ChatGPT. Microsoft purchased a 49% stake in the company and has had great returns as a result.

2023's Best Performer

In the realm of Artificial Intelligence, the standout performer in our portfolio for 2023 was AMD (Advanced Micro Devices), a key player in semiconductor technology. As artificial intelligence continues advancing, the semiconductor

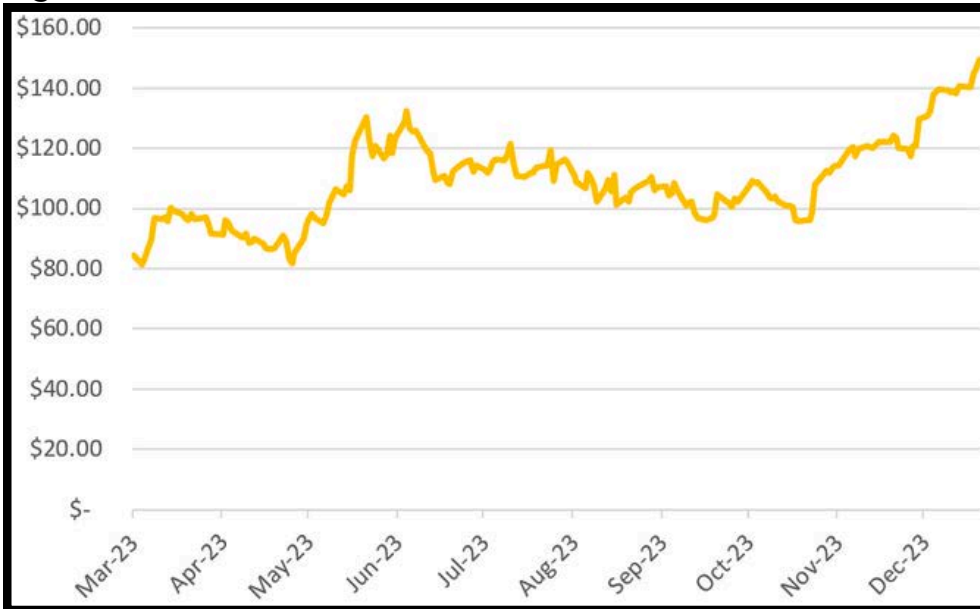
Figure 11: Magnificent Seven Returns



industry, including AMD, plays a crucial role in providing the necessary hardware for AI applications. AMD, with its semiconductor expertise, was pitched by the Class of 2023 and strategically added to the portfolio on March 10th, 2023. The rationale behind this purchase was not only to diversify the portfolio's exposure to the technology sector but also to position it favorably in the AI landscape. AMD's innovative advancements in semiconductor manufacturing are seen as key enablers

2023 Portfolio Performance

Figure 12: AMD Stock Price



We believe that Information Technology will continue to grow and we are excited to see what will come next in the AI and GPU landscape.

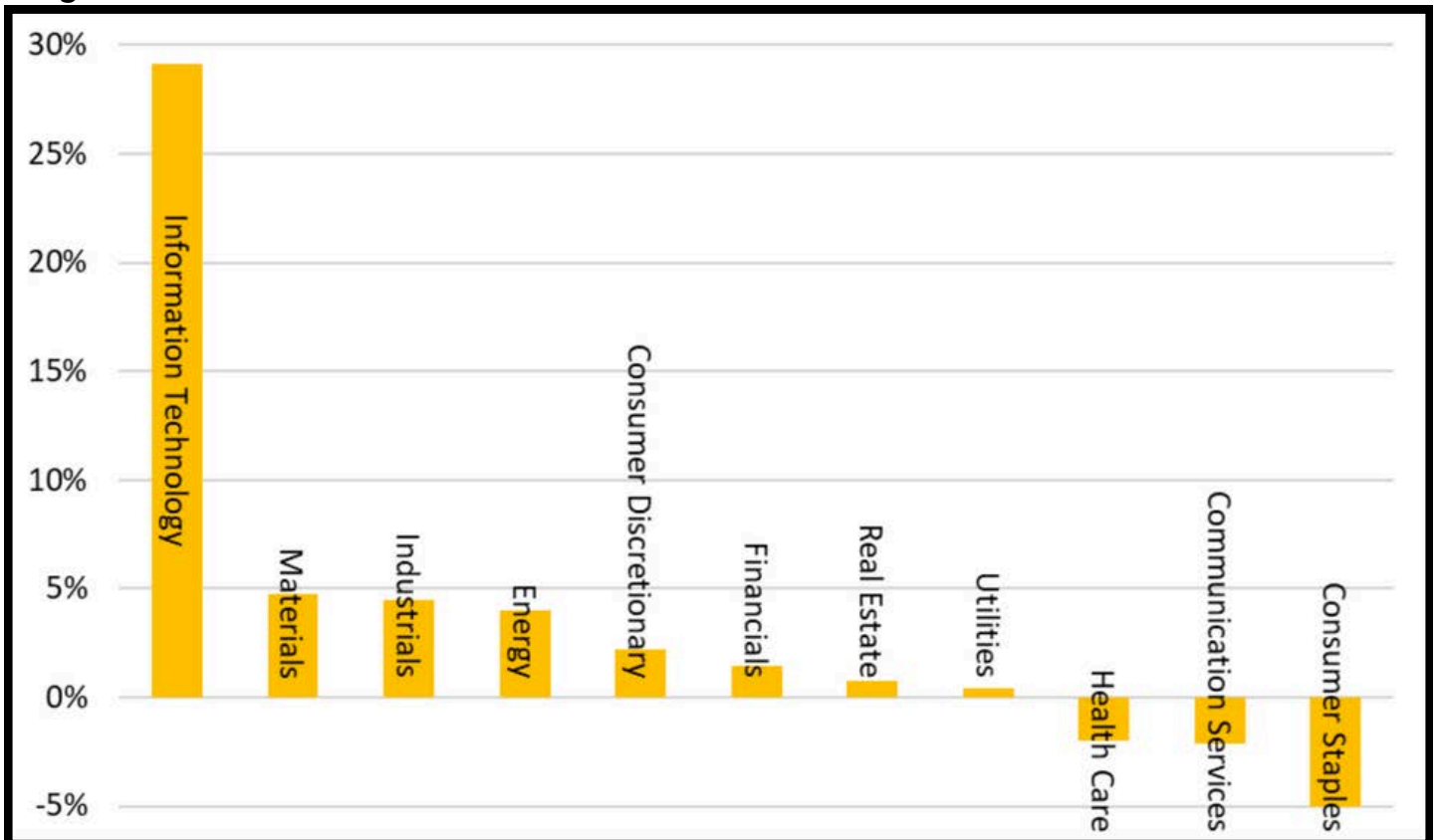
Implications for BIG

Consequently, the Bowden Investment Group remained watchful of the Magnificent Seven and analyzed the impact on the Bowden Investment fund of these

for the growing demands of AI infrastructure. AMD emerged as the star performer of 2023, delivering a remarkable return of 78.31% from March through December as seen in Figure 12.

seven companies on both our portfolio as well as our benchmark's performance. At end of-year, our portfolio held four of these stocks directly (AAPL, AMZN, MSFT, and TSLA), which accounted for 19% of the fund.

Figure 13: BIF Sector Returns



2023 Portfolio Performance

The fund recognized further exposure to all seven companies through our holding of IVV. Our overall underperformance of the benchmark can be partially attributed to the lack of direct exposure to the best-performing Mag 7 stocks, META and NVDA. We also sold GOOGL in April, further reducing our holdings in Magnificent Seven companies. We ended the year overall underweight in technology by about 7% as shown in Figure 13.

Moving forward, we expect to see increased amounts of buy recommendations for equities included in the Information Technology sector to gain exposure to these high-performing opportunities. We are excited to see what will come next in the AI landscape driven by the Magnificent Seven.

Industry Performance

-Parker Sciolino and Luciano Zito

Portfolio Sector Weights are shown in parentheses.

Healthcare - (3.82%)

The US is seeing an increase in healthcare costs mostly due to demographic and economic considerations. Medical service consumption is rising among the elderly population due to their growing medical needs. Access to healthcare providers is also made easier by expanding insurance coverage and growing earnings. Going forward, the primary driver of growing healthcare spending will still be demographic trends. However, rising demand and higher prices will put pressure on social services and healthcare providers to change the way they do business. As smaller providers join larger health organizations in an effort to receive greater insurance reimbursements, consolidation activity will increase. Because telehealth and digital tools can improve access to

patients in underserved areas, decrease costs, and boost capacity, they will become an integral aspect of healthcare delivery. The BIF has held CVS Health Corporation (CVS) for over a year and is planning to increase our weighting in healthcare. Overall, we issue an overweight recommendation for the healthcare industry due to tailwinds from key demographic trends.

Utilities - (11.94%)

Services, including steam supply, water supply, sewage removal, natural gas distribution, and electric power generation and transmission, are all included in the utility industry. Electric power generation and transmission were the main revenue drivers having accounted for around three-quarters of sector revenue in 2023. Offering 15.8% of sector income in 2023, the natural gas distribution sector is the next largest contributor.



Industry Performance

Changes in the price of materials needed to produce energy and the demand for electricity are the main factors influencing these businesses' trends. Over the next five years, the utilities industry is anticipated to continue growing, mostly as a result of rising electric power consumption nationwide. Electric power consumption will rise as a result of economic activity picking up after the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, despite significant investments being made in renewable energy sources like solar and wind power, the country is still working to lessen its reliance on fossil fuels like coal and natural gas. While the BIF currently only has utility holdings through IVV, VWO, and IWM, we issue an overweight recommendation for the utility industry due to its ability to grow with increased energy usage trends.

Consumer Staples - (0.53%)

Consumer Staples benefitted from a year of rising interest rates, increased consumer saving practices, and geopolitical fears impacting consumer spending habits. Due to these factors, the industry saw upticks in growth compared to the consumer discretionary industry. The BIF currently holds Philip Morris International (PM), Coca-Cola Consolidated (KO), and Diageo Plc (DEO). We issue an underweight recommendation due to the expectation of the Fed cutting rates, pushing people to spend rather than save.

Energy - (7.25%)

In 2023, the energy sector captured remarkable gains from technological advancements, environmental regulations, and increased demand for renewable energy. Total energy production has consistently grown YOY

since 1970, with a slight dip in 2020 due to COVID-19. Therefore, we issue an overweight recommendation for energy due to the use of technological advancements to further supply more renewable energy, and the belief that a growing population in urban areas will drive the energy sector to new levels in 2024. The BIF currently holds Shell PLC (SHEL) and has captured additional earnings from ETF exposure.

Materials - (1.8%)

In December, the group passed a vote to add MP Materials Corporation (MP) to the portfolio. Over the past year, commodities have decreased due to slower demand for base metals as well as conflicts in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. The Materials sector is heavily dependent on the overall state of the economy. Looking ahead to 2024, we issue an underweight recommendation due to declining real estate trends and fear of increased international trade regulations.

Industrials - (11.14%)

In 2023, the growth in the industrials industry was driven by built up inventories before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the easing of supply chain issues, and the improvement of working capital management through the implementation of AI. Current sector holdings in the Bowden portfolio include HON, GD, and DE, with additional exposure through our ETF holdings. We issue an underweight recommendation.

Consumer Discretionary - (25.09%)

In 2023, the consumer discretionary industry showed strong returns primarily due to strong consumer spending and lower inflation.



Industry Performance

Our current holdings in the sector are AMZN, ULTA, and LVMUY in which AMZN performed the best because of the acceleration of its sales growth. We issue an underweight recommendation because of the macroeconomic headwinds of still-high rates and high inflation.

Information Technology - (51.39%)

The information technology sector saw an inflow of investments in AI which boosted the performance of the industry and resulted in very large growth in 2023. The investments in generative AI also led to massive expansion in cloud computing and the continued need for cybersecurity from company data breaches and leaks, underscoring the importance of safeguarding sensitive information. We foresee a continued trend of investments and lowering of rates, so we issue an overweight recommendation. Our current holdings include AAPL, MSFT, TSLA, and our newest addition, FLEX Technologies.

Communication Services - (35.56%)

Although this sector struggled in 2022, it rebounded from the previous year of poor performance in 2023. 5G communication implementation grew generously and with only approximately 25% of sites having integrated 5G, we foresee future growth. Like the information technology sector, growth in communication services was fueled by AI enthusiasm and the end of the Fed's rate-hike cycle. Digital advertising and earnings recovery through the year were also factors in the growth of the industry. We foresee growth from AI as a continuing trend,

and because of this, we issue an overweight recommendation. We currently only have exposure through our ETFs which gives us a buying opportunity.

Financials - (7.18%)

In 2023, investors participated in a flight to safety to big banks because of increased credit risk and consumer deposits slowing. Another factor of the sluggish rebound were slowed commercial real estate loans since they usually make up around a fourth of most bank's assets. Commercial real estate has been declining since the beginning of COVID-19 and banks have suffered from this trend. Although rates are lowering, rates are still currently high and because of this, we recommend an underweight weighting in our portfolio. We currently have exposure through BLK, FHN, and our ETFs. As rates continue to lower and commercial real estate returns, the financials sector will become a more attractive investment.

Real Estate - (1.17%)

In the past, the real estate market has been fueled by cheap debt. Recently, higher interest rates have caused the real estate industry to decline. REITs and mortgages have suffered because of the high rates, which we believe will continue to contribute to stagnant growth within the industry in 2024. In 2023, there was an inventory shortage of real estate, which led to a decline in industry growth when paired with reduced affordability. Because of this, we issue an underweight recommendation. We only have real estate industry exposure through our ETF holdings.



ESG Summary

-Reece Fisher and Brianna Gilmore

This year, the ESG Analyst role has been expanded, creating additional ways for our analysts to explore ESG. Our ESG analysts, Reece Fisher and Brianna Gilmore, created the guidelines for the inaugural Appalachian State University ESG Stock Pitch Competition. Additionally, they played a pivotal role in refining the criteria for the holdings within the Bowden portfolio. The criteria modifications are outlined as follows:

Criteria 1:

Our holdings should have Refinitiv/LSEG and Sustainalytics Ratings that are better or on par with the industry and their competitors.

(The criteria underwent slight modifications following the loss of access to the previously utilized MSCI data. This adjustment received unanimous approval from the Bowden Investment Group.)

Criteria 2:

To ensure our holdings are committed to ESG awareness and improvement, each company must file an ESG or Sustainability Report annually. In the instance of no reporting, the class must justify the occurrence and compare with competitors.

Figure 14 provides a comprehensive display of the entrenchment index scores for the year-end of 2023.

Figure 14: Entrenchment Index

	Staggered/ Classified Board	Supermajority Requirement for Shareholder Bylaw Amendments	Supermajority Requirement for Charter Amendments	Supermajority Requirement for Mergers	Poison Pill	Golden Parachute	Total
AAPL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AMD	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
AMZN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BLK	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
CVS	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
DE	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
DEO	0	1	1	0	0	1	3
FHN	0	1	1	1	0	1	4
FLEX	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
GD	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
HON	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
KO	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
LVMUY	1	1	0	1	0	0	3
MP	1	1	1	1	0	1	5
MSFT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PENN	1	1	1	0	0	1	4
PM	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
SHEL	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
TSLA	1	1	1	1	0	0	4
ULTA	1	0	0	1	0	1	3



ESG Summary

Criteria 3: The Entrenchment Index analysis will be reported on each of our holdings. Each holding must have an entrenchment index of 4 or less, unless there is a discussion amongst the team, in which we can decide to buy a stock with a higher entrenchment index. This discussion took place for MP Materials and the class felt comfortable with the shareholder rights due to MP's structure as a new company.

Figure 15: ESG Ratings from Sustainalytics

AAPL	17.2
AMD	15
AMZN	30.6
BLK	19.1
CVS	22
DE	18.7
DEO	19.3
FHN	25.1
FLEX	9.2
GD	35.2
HON	28.6
KO	21.5
LVMUY	12
MP	53.8
MSFT	15.1
PENN	28.3
PM	28.4
SHEL	33.7
TSLA	25.2
ULTA	15.9

Figure 16: Refinitiv ESG Scores

	ESG Score	Enviornmental	Social	Governance
AAPL	80	66	79	93
AMD	67	70	69	62
AMZN	75	83	81	63
BLK	77	94	80	69
CVS	91	92	93	87
DE	69	85	79	38
DEO	77	80	91	46
FHN	56	34	59	61
FLEX	83	78	78	93
GD	67	48	66	83
HON	82	81	81	84
KO	79	72	86	76
LVMUY	74	91	82	51
MP	49	58	38	55
MSFT	88	78	87	93
PENN	52	31	40	89
PM	85	94	85	76
SHEL	93	92	94	94
TSLA	70	73	75	57
ULTA	52	44	62	44

Figure 15 displays each Bowden holding and its corresponding ESG Rating according to Sustainalytics. Because Sustainalytics scores companies with zero being better than one hundred, most of our holdings would be considered medium to low risk.

Figure 16 illustrates the Refinitiv scores of all holdings as of the year-end in 2023, with higher scores indicating better performance. It's noteworthy that all current holdings release a sustainability report on an annual bases making them viable for the portfolio.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND EVENTS

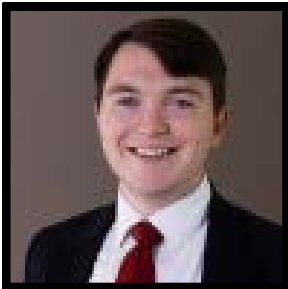
Guest Speakers



Tim Smith, CFA
Principal at FORVIS



Alan Hodgson, CFA
Managing Director at FORVIS



Daniel Sullivan
Manager, Forensics and Valuation Services at
FORVIS
Bowden Alumnus, c/o 2018

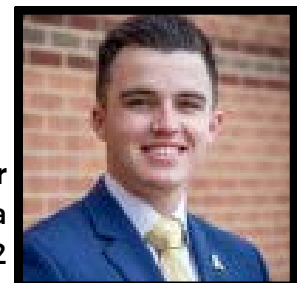


Ian White
Valuation Consultant at FORVIS
Bowden Alumnus, c/o 2023

We had the opportunity to meet with multiple members from the FORVIS team who shared how they use modeling techniques in their work. We also enjoyed learning about the FORVIS culture, the different roles each individual takes on, and how they utilize their analysis to serve clients. As a result of the meeting, multiple members of the group pursued opportunities to join the team at FORVIS.



Ashley Harvey
Managing Director, Reporting & Analytics Executive
at Bank of America
App Alumnus c/o 1999



Ryan Critcher
Global Expense Analyst (FMAP) at Bank of America
Bowden Alumnus, c/o 2022



Samantha Storey
FMAP at Bank of America
App Alumna, c/o 2022



Colton Woods
VP, Bank of America Management
App Alumnus, c/o 2010

We had the benefit of interacting with multiple guest speakers from Bank of America. These individuals all visited the Bowden Investment Group to discuss the possibilities at BofA. We had the opportunity to hear their personal experiences at Bank of America and what their professional work life is like. After speaking with them, multiple members pursued opportunities to join the team. It was particularly inspiring to hear from this group as all of these individuals graduated from Appalachian State.

Guest Speakers



Madie Ludwick
LPL Financial, AVP, FAR Program



Cooper Haynes
Corporate Development at LPL Financial
Bowden Alumnus, c/o 2019

We had the benefit of Madie and Cooper joining us to speak about the Financial Analyst Rotational Program at LPL Financial. Madie shared her experiences of starting this program and great tips about the recruiting process. This resulted in a job for a current Bowden member. Cooper gave us valuable insight on his experiences and navigating his network to make transitions into this institution. We gained a lot of valuable knowledge on working as a financial analyst and professional decorum.



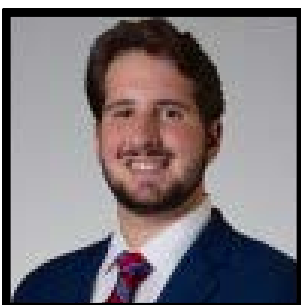
Delbert Goff, Ph.D.
Alumni Relations Coordinator & Former Lead Instructor
Professor Emeritus, Appalachian State

Dr. Goff educated the group on the importance of networking, as well as the skills it takes to be successful in the workplace. It was wonderful for us to be able to hear from one of the BIG's founders. We would also like to thank Dr. Goff for being a judge for our end of the semester stock pitches where we were provided with wise and knowledgeable feedback which we utilized in the spring semester and the competitions this year.

Brandy Crump
Associate Broker at AON
Bowden Alumna, c/o 2022



Brandy visited the group and shared advice on applying for jobs and what to look for when determining what you want to do in the future. We appreciated her timely insight as we continued our career searches and weighed our options for jobs and internships.



Matt Ramundo
Investment Banking Analyst at Wells Fargo Securities
Bowden Alumnus, c/o 2022

Matt joined the class during the fall semester to share advice on breaking into investment banking. He also helped the class better analyze our stock picks, providing us with helpful tips on making a convincing argument that would convey our story to the class.

Guest Speakers



Jonathan Allen, CPA, CFP®, CLU®

Financial Advisor, Allen Wealth Management

Mr. Allen provided us with insight into his personal career and educational experiences while walking us through the day-to-day of running a wealth management firm, highlighting the rewards and challenges. Mr. Allen also provided us with his long-term and short-term views of the market during a time of P/E expansion. At the end of speaking with Mr. Allen, the group was provided with important guidance for post-graduation where emphasis was placed on a healthy work-life balance and giving back to the community.



Chris Pavese

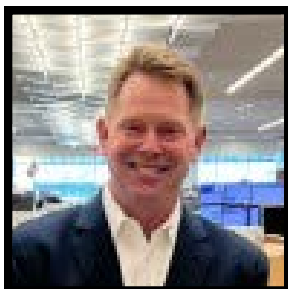
President and CIO, Broyhill Asset Management
Industry Mentor for the CFA Institute Research Challenge Team



Olivia Guillebeau

Investment Analyst, Broyhill Asset Management
Bowden Alumna, c/o 2021

Mr. Pavese and Ms. Guillebeau met with the group on multiple occasions throughout the year, sharing their opinions on long-term and short-term outlooks on the market as well as investment ideas such as temporary dislocation and supply side analysis. This was extremely beneficial as we heard from them just prior to the fall stock pitches, when we were selecting stocks to analyze and add to the portfolio. In addition, Mr. Pavese devoted his time to to be an advisor for the CFA Team, providing the Broyhill Fellows with valuable advice on supply side economics and presentation input.

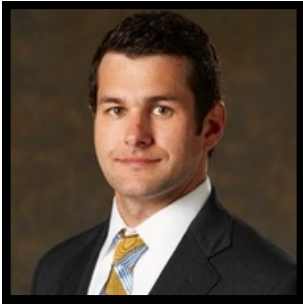


Sam Kaufman

Adjunct Professor of Finance, Appalachian State University

We were fortunate to hear from Mr. Kaufman during the fall semester. He provided us with aggressive strategies and unique ideas on maximizing our job search. He also shared stories about his time on Wall Street as a bond trader. This was great for the group as we were better prepared for looking for jobs through a difficult job market.

Guest Speakers

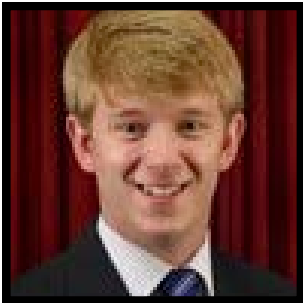


Mitch Lutz
Investment Banking VP at Bank of America
App Alumnus



Jonathan Josef
Investment Banking Associate at
Bank of America

The group welcomed Vice President Mitch Lutz and Investment Banking Associate Jonathan Josef from Bank of America in NYC, who shared the ins and outs of banking and gave invaluable career search advice. Their diverse pathways into investment banking helped us to understand potential career trajectories.



Reed Davis
Senior Human Capital Enablement Partner,
Senior Vice President at Truist
Bowden Alumnus, c/o 2002



Amy Odom
Executive Director of Business Career Services
at Appalachian State University

We were fortunate to hear from Mr. Davis and Ms. Odom at the second BIG Day. He helped us with practice interviews and gave us advice on how to better answer these questions using the STAR method. Mr. Davis also joined us for an etiquette lunch, given by Ms. Odom who shared valuable tips and instructions on professional dining.

Joshua Jarrett
Director of Research, Generalist at Morgan Stanley
Investment Management



The class thoroughly enjoyed listening to Mr. Jarrett discuss his professional background and how publishing his unique investment strategies on his Twitter (X) account allowed him to be noticed by the investment banking division of Morgan Stanley and to become a Director of Research on its Counterpoint Global team. He also shared his investment strategy and explained to the class how to find “the best companies, run by the best people, with the best runways for growth.”



Competitions

In 2023, the Bowden Investment Group participated in the CFA Institute Research Challenge, the University of Georgia Stock Pitch Competition, the Quinnipiac Global Asset Management Education (GAME) Forum, the McGill Investment Club Global Stock Pitch Competition, and the Student Managed Investment Fund Consortium in Chicago. Participating in these competitions allows our members to further develop their analytical and presentation skills while showcasing our group to other universities and groups.

The CFA Institute Research Challenge of 2023

In October of 2022, four members of Bowden, Charlotte Rice, Jimmy Said, Luis Lopez-Bautista, and McKenzie Shail, began the 2022-2023 CFA Institute Research Challenge. Through their deep analysis of Kontoor Brands and the denim industry, the team supported a buy recommendation with KTB's expansion into China as the main driver. After submitting their paper for judging and presenting their 70+ slide presentation, the team took home third place at the North Carolina level. This competition, with the help of Dr. Hadley, taught the team the importance of deep analysis, writing, and presentation skills.

UGA Stock Pick Competition

Two BIG teams submitted slide decks to the University of Georgia's Stock Pitch Competition. Luis Lopez-Bautista, Morgan Scott, and Ian White pitched Advanced Micro Devices, Inc. while Noah DeLucia, Jonathan Fogle, Jackson Norwood, and Steven Testa pitched Sturm, Ruger & Company, Inc. Unfortunately, our teams' submissions were not selected for presentation at the competition,

however, both teams continued to research and pitch their selected stock to the fund and we added AMD to the portfolio in the spring. The Bowden Investment Group is incredibly proud of the hard work put forth over winter break by these two groups.

The Quinnipiac Global Asset Management Education (GAME) Forum and Competition

In March, Jackson Norwood, Steven Testa, Jonathan Fogle, and Noah DeLucia represented Appalachian State at the Quinnipiac Global Asset Management Education (GAME) Forum and Competition in New York City by participating in a poster competition. This event is considered the world's largest student-run financial conference and showcased an extensive schedule of 30 panel discussions featuring more than 100 speakers from 77 distinct companies. This conference and competition were wonderful learning experiences, allowing members further insights into the world of finance.

The McGill Investment Club Global Stock Pitch Competition

We had two teams compete in the McGill Stock Pitch Competition. Jimmy Said, Charlotte Rice, and McKenzie Shail pitched Kontoor Brands (KTB), while Jackson Norwood, Jonathan Fogle, Steven Testa, and Noah DeLucia pitched Sturm, Ruger & Company (RGR). This additional opportunity allowed the class more practice building pitch decks and analyzing equities. While neither of our teams were invited to present their slide decks at the McGill Investment Competition, we are nonetheless proud of their work and research in representing the Bowden Investment Group.



Competitions

Student Managed Investment Fund Consortium, Chicago

In October 2023, the Bowden Investment Group proudly represented Appalachian State and its generous supporters at the SMIFC in Chicago for the first time ever. This event provided a unique opportunity to gain direct insights from financial experts on their investment strategies, economic outlooks, hedging strategies, and more.



Bowden Students at the SMIFC Competition in Chicago

Every member of the group had the opportunity to participate in a competition at the conference. First, four groups of three prepared papers and presentations representing unique and diverse portfolios before competing in class to decide on the two teams that would advance to the external stage of the SMIFC competition. Derek Mahato, Parker Sciolino, and Hudson Smith worked together to create a portfolio targeting opportunities from the deregulation and regulation of specific industries. Aaron Atwell, Corbin Lammers, and Maximus Pavone picked securities that would benefit from rising geopolitical tensions in the Pacific. David Chalmers, Victor Tovar, and Luciano Zito centered their portfolio around

American Industrials and capitalized on domestic growth opportunities. Finally, Reece Fisher, Brianna Gilmore, and Ashley Meacham collectively directed their focus toward constructing a highly diversified investment portfolio that strategically hedged securities to fortify their financial strategy. This was a wonderful time for the members to grow together and dive deeper into the world of finance outside of the classroom.

The CFA Institute Research Challenge of 2024

For the 2023-2024 CFA Institute Research Challenge, the Broyhill Fellows were tasked with conducting analysis on Nucor Corporation, a dominant player in the steel industry based in North Carolina. The team is composed of one of our accountants, Ashley Meacham; our president, Corbin Lammers; one of our economists, Derek Mahato; one of our ESG analysts, Brianna Gilmore; and one of our BIG update editors, Maximus Pavone. The group of five worked tirelessly over winter break under the guidance of Dr. Hadley who devoted her break to advancing the team and Mr. Pavese who helped point the team in the right direction.



The 2024 Broyhill Fellows

Charlotte Trips and Firm Visits

Charlotte Spring Firm Visits

The classes of 2023 and 2024 attended the annual BIG Alumni Dinner and made several firm visits in the Spring. On this trip, we visited Wedge Capital, Dimensional Fund Advisors, Sterling Capital Management, and Truist.

At Wedge Capital, we discussed the bond market and potential investments that the class was considering. Sitting in the back, the 2024 class learned how to conduct themselves during these visits and gained valuable insight from the questions that the 2023 class asked.

Afterward, we toured Dimensional Fund Advisors, where we learned about their factor investing strategies, and then joined our hosts on a tour of the building and trading floor. On the trading floor, we talked to the Director of Fixed Income Trading where we learned about how he was trading out on the yield curve. To wrap the tour up, we enjoyed some ice cream in the beautiful dining hall before heading to the hotel to prepare for the Alumni Dinner.



The classes of 2023 and 2024 at Dimensional Fund Advisors

We wrapped the day up with the annual Bowden Alumni Dinner, where we

reconnected with last year's class and groups from previous years, and presented about the year in Bowden.

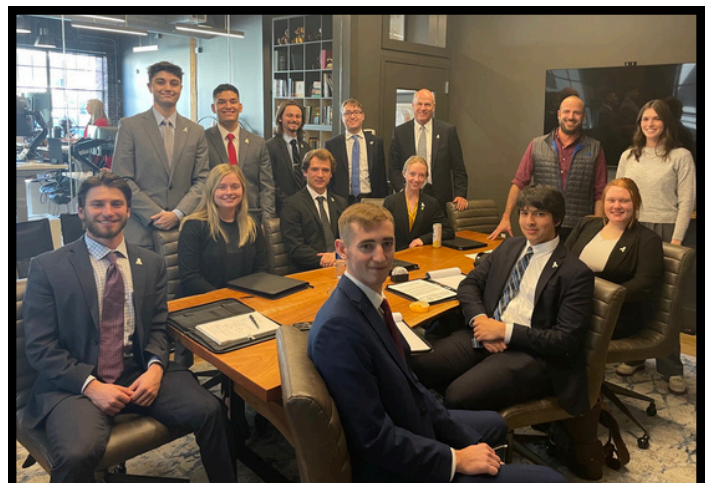
The next morning, we visited Sterling Capital. The discussion focused on the firm's unique approach to trading equities and fixed-income securities. We were excited to observe one of the firm's BUY presentations.

Finally, we had the opportunity to tour the Innovation Space at Truist and talk with the Truist Ventures team. It was very interesting to see how they were utilizing technology and thinking about future opportunities.

The trip concluded with team-building at Top Golf where we learned how to properly swing a club.

Charlotte Fall Firm Visits

We had the incredible opportunity to travel to Charlotte again for firm visits and a networking event in the Fall. We began our visits at Broyhill Asset Management, where we met with Mr. Pavese and Bowden Alumna Olivia Guillebeau. We discussed the fund's structure and how family offices function. This visit inspired us to conduct an in-depth analysis of our pitches and how they fit into the portfolio's theme.



The class of 2024 at the Broyhill Family Office

Charlotte Trips and Firm Visits

After leaving Broyhill, we were hosted by BIG Alumnus Sean James at the Bank of America Private Bank. Sean introduced us to several senior members of his team who talked to us about the importance of relationships in their roles. We heard from individuals in portfolio, trust, and relationship management. It was surprising how often managers act as psychologists for their clients.

We also visited Bank of America to speak with current employees of the FMAP program, where BIG Alumnus Ryan Critcher hosted us. This experience was

invaluable for our members who will be joining the program as they were able to ask questions about what to expect after graduation.

Finally, we ended the day with a Finance & Banking Alumni Gathering at Dimensional Fund Advisors. We were excited to connect and meet with many successful Bowden alumni. We greatly appreciate the ongoing support of our powerful alumni network. We are also immensely thankful for our other supporters and donors for making these experiential opportunities possible.

Dr. Delbert C. Goff Endowed Scholarship For Applied Investments

In April of 2023, the Bowden Investment Group held its Annual Alumni Dinner in Charlotte. This was a significant event for the class of 2023, as they presented to over 50 alumni and faculty. The group also gathered together to honor Dr. Delbert Goff. As the co-founder and long-time advisor, Dr. Goff has played a pivotal role in the group's design and development. For over 20 years, he led the group, inspiring, mentoring, and teaching hundreds of students.

The group also took this opportunity to announce the successful funding of the Delbert C. Goff Endowed Scholarship for Applied Investments, which aims to benefit many aspiring students in the years to come. Over the summer, over \$40,000 was raised in honor of Dr. Goff's contributions, which will provide an annual scholarship of approximately \$2,000 per year for Bowden students.



Dr. Delbert C. Goff Endowed Scholarship For Applied Investments

Executive in Residence, Mr. Shawn Poole generously agreed to match every gift up to an aggregate level of \$25,000.

In October 2023, the scholarship was awarded to six Bowden Students. This scholarship allows Dr. Goff's legacy to continue enriching and inspiring students for classes to come, in addition to his continuing work as our Advisor and Alumni Coordinator. Dr. Goff continues to support the group through this role, as well as continuing to meet with members at BIG Day and judge the fall stock pitches.

The Dr. Delbert C. Goff Endowed Scholarship for Applied Investments will allow many students the opportunity to participate in Bowden. This scholarship has already made a tremendous difference in the lives of many students, and the group urges anyone who is interested in contributing to visit [here](#) for more information and to donate.

As we advance the Bowden Investment Group and grow into the premier student-managed investment fund, we inevitably require additional funding. This year's group was the first to be afforded the amazing opportunity to attend the SMIFC in Chicago. This capital-intensive trip was an incredible learning opportunity and is just a small example of what is required for twelve students to travel and learn in multiple external destinations annually.



Dr. Goff and Mr. Poole at BIG day 2023 after giving the class a presentation on professionalism



Bowden students at the Walker Scholarship Reception

It is impossible for the group to travel to New York, Chicago, Charlotte, and other locations, without the gracious assistance of our alumni and donors. For this reason, we truly urge you to think about the impact that the Bowden Investment Group had on you and to consider [donating](#) towards the success of the group and the future students and classes that will follow in your footsteps.



STOCK PITCHES AND FINAL APPRECIATION

Spring Pitches

In the Spring semester, members of the group were required to pitch three stocks for the portfolio, with two of those pitches being individual and one being with a partner. The CFA team had that cut down to two pitches for a class total of twenty-four pitches.

ABNB (Jackson Norwood): Airbnb was seen as an intriguing prospect, having finally reached a reasonable valuation since its extravagant IPO. We foresaw secular growth over the next few years, driven by the exploration of new markets and evolving work and travel patterns.

AMT (David Price & Morgan Scott): The company was pitched to strategically capture exposure to the long-term, incredibly stable revenues of the cell tower industry. AMT is the largest and most diversified player, especially in emerging markets. As a REIT, the company is a component of the real estate sector of the S&P.

BRK.B (Jimmy Said & Ian White): Berkshire Hathaway's unparalleled reputation as an investment powerhouse is driven by its diversified portfolio and the visionary leadership of Warren Buffett. We felt that its long-term approach to value creation and stewardship of shareholder interests made this an attractive investment.

DAL (Steven Testa): Delta was pitched because of its significant presence in the airline industry. Its robust operational performance and strategic initiatives indicated resilience and adaptability even amidst industry challenges.

DE (David Price): Deere was pitched to capture growth from the booming farming economy- Deere is the biggest, most diversified (both in revenue segments and geographic penetration), and is poised to capture growth from future infrastructure investment with its acquisition of Wirtgen group.

DEO (Noah DeLucia & Steven Testa): Diageo was pitched as a compelling investment in the consumer staples sector. Known for its leading global brands in the spirits industry, such as Johnnie Walker and Guinness, Diageo benefits from strong brand equity, global distribution networks, and consistent demand for alcoholic beverages, providing stable and growing returns.

CHWY (Jonathan Fogle & Jackson Norwood): Chewy stood out as a compelling investment opportunity, due to its position in the online pet supply market. We saw potential for significant growth driven by the increasing trend of pet owners shifting towards online shopping. The company's strong brand presence, extensive product offerings, and exceptional customer service made it an attractive investment.

FHN (Ian White): First Horizon Corporation was pitched as a strong regional bank with the potential to be acquired, offering maximum upside potential to investors. Despite the speculation surrounding its acquisition, FHN's core strengths included its financial performance, diversified business lines, and solid market position in the banking industry.

GD (Morgan Scott): General Dynamics was pitched as a key player in the aerospace sector. The company's diverse portfolio of products and services, ranging from jet aviation to IT solutions, along with strong government contracts and a history of consistent performance, positioned it well for sustained growth and stability.



Spring Pitches

HON (Ian White): Honeywell was pitched due to its diversified technology and manufacturing lines and strong track record of innovation and long-term growth. With a focus on expanding its presence in high-growth industries and driving operational efficiency, Honeywell is well-positioned to continue delivering value to shareholders.

LULU (Steven Testa): Lululemon was pitched because of its strong position in the athletic apparel market. Its focus on innovation in product design and its loyal customer base were emphasized as drivers for future growth.

LVMUY (Charlotte Rice): LVMH was seen as a promising avenue for exponential growth and diversification. It is positioned as a visionary leader in strategic acquisitions, product development, and brand marketing. Its expansion into digital platforms, celebrity partnerships, and unparalleled customer loyalty bolstered its prospects.

MANU (Jimmy Said): Manchester United was pitched as a unique investment due to its global brand recognition and loyal fan base. The company's diversified revenue streams from broadcasting, commercial partnerships, and matchday sales, along with its strong potential for growth in emerging markets, made it an attractive investment.

MODG (Jonathan Fogle): Topgolf Callaway Brands Corp. was pitched for its strong presence in the golfing industry, combining traditional golf equipment sales with innovative entertainment venues. Its expansion into interactive golfing experiences and a growing global footprint were seen as key drivers for future growth.

MRK (Noah DeLucia): Merck was pitched as a leading pharmaceutical company with a robust pipeline of innovative drugs and vaccines. Its commitment to research and development, along with its proven track record of bringing successful treatments to market, positioned it well for sustained growth and long-term value creation.

PFE (Luis Lopez-Bautista, Charlotte Rice, & McKenzie Shail): Pfizer's reputation as a pharmaceutical leader was underscored by its groundbreaking innovations and global reach. Its commitment to healthcare solutions and research prowess reflect its significant impact beyond financial metrics.

PM (Jonathan Fogle): Philip Morris presented itself as an exceptionally stable investment option, particularly during times of economic uncertainty, offering a substantial dividend. Unlike many stable plays where the dividend comprises much of the return, Philip Morris stood out due to its strategic movement into the smoke-free industry. This shift was anticipated to disrupt the industry landscape.

ROCK (Morgan Scott): Gibraltar Industries Inc stock was pitched due to its strong financial performance, including consistent revenue growth and healthy profit margins. Additionally, the company's diversified business segments and focus on innovative building products were highlighted as factors contributing to its long-term growth potential.

TLH (Jimmy Said): The iShares 10-20 Year Treasury Bond ETF was pitched because of its appeal as a relatively safe investment option, offering exposure to U.S. Treasury bonds with maturities between 10 and 20 years. This ETF was favored for its potential to provide stable returns and act as a hedge against market volatility, especially during uncertain economic conditions.



Spring Pitches

TSLA (Jackson Norwood): Tesla was pitched as the dominant force in EVs, with future growth driven by autonomous driving monetization. We considered the security to be severely undervalued and its brand strength, technology, and market share made it an enticing investment.

TTWO (Noah DeLucia): Take-Two Interactive was pitched because of its standing as a leading player in the gaming industry. Its innovative approach to game development and strong franchises were highlighted as promising indicators for future growth.

ULTA (McKenzie Shail): Ulta Beauty was pitched for its strong market position in the beauty retail industry. Its unique business model, combining a wide range of beauty products with in-store salon services, and its loyalty program were seen as key factors driving customer engagement and growth.

VLO (Luis Lopez-Bautista): Valero, the world's largest independent petroleum refiner and marketer, was noted for its capacity to optimize operations through economies of scale. Its early foray into renewable energy, particularly through a joint venture with Diamond Ingredients, hinted at promising growth prospects.

WMT (Luis Lopez-Bautista): Walmart, the world's largest retailer, was seen as poised for growth due to its emphasis on innovation within its supply chain. This promised increased efficiency, cost reduction, and enhanced customer experiences. It also leveraged automation and big data to strengthen relationships with suppliers.



Final Fall Pitches

In August of 2023, the twelve new analysts chose stocks to model and present to the class in September. After presenting, those stocks were narrowed down to six for further analysis and to be pitched at the end of the fall semester to add to the portfolio. We've included brief descriptions and theses for the original proposals.

Pitched in December:

MASCO

(Ashley Meacham and Maximus Pavone)

MAS - Masco Corporation boasts a diverse brand portfolio that includes well-known names like Behr, Delta, Brizo, and Hansgrohe. These brands are associated with quality and reliability, offering a competitive advantage in the market. The company's expansion into international markets, particularly through the Hansgrohe plumbing brand in Europe, provides global opportunities for revenue growth. These strong business decisions and strategic shifts make MAS a potential investment with returns expected to be greater than the competition in the building supplies industry.

Final Recommendation - Our final recommendation for MAS was a hold based on the lack of a positive margin of safety. Market conditions in residential real estate and high borrowing costs have led to suppressed revenue and margins. Although we see growth in the future, we believe that MAS is not currently positioned to provide outsized returns under the short-term conditions.



(Derek Mahato and Aaron Atwell)

MP - MP Materials is a leading American mining and technology company, serving as the sole rare earth elements (REE) mine and refinery in North America. Recognized for its pivotal role in diversifying the global supply chain, MP Materials benefits from favorable regulations from the U.S. government. The company's strategic importance lies in reducing dependency on China as the primary REE provider. MP Materials is dedicated to sustainable practices and technological innovation, contributing to cleaner technologies and a resilient global supply chain.

Final Recommendation - We see growth for MP as it begins its own refinement of rare earth and moves away from China and towards domestic customers. We decided to Invest in MP Materials due to its strong position in the REE global supply chain and its pivotal role in sustainable industries.



Derek Mahato gives his practice presentation for MP

Final Fall Pitches

ACUSHNET COMPANY

(Reece Fisher and Luciano Zito)

GOLF - Acushnet Holdings Corporation is a leading global company in the design, development, manufacture, and distribution of golf products. Established in 1910, the company is renowned for its commitment to innovation and quality in the golf industry. Acushnet is widely recognized for its iconic golf brands, including Titleist, FootJoy, and Scotty Cameron, which are trusted by professional and amateur golfers alike. The company's diverse product portfolio encompasses golf balls, clubs, shoes, gloves, and accessories, catering to golf enthusiasts.

Final Recommendation: The class ultimately voted to not add GOLF to the portfolio. Although the company has a great product offering and R&D platform, the class saw challenges with a continued adoption of luxury golf apparel during a period of economic uncertainty.



(Hudson Smith and Brianna Gilmore)

PENN - Penn Entertainment is a casino and resort operator within North America that operates 43 properties spanning over 20 states. It also offers online sports betting and online casino services (iCasinos) under brands such as ESPN Bet and TheScore. Penn primarily targets regional markets, which limits potential competition and decreases cyclical risk. The thesis surrounding Penn was creating a safer way to bet on the casino & resort industry while providing exposure to the quickly growing online sports betting market. Last year, Penn signed a deal with ESPN to rebrand its sportsbook to ESPN Bet.

This came with the goal that ESPN could be used as a major marketing outlet. In 2023, ESPN Bet has launched in 17 states with more to come.

Final Recommendation - We added Penn to the Bowden portfolio as we believe the partnership with the top sports network in the United States presents an outstanding opportunity to capitalize on sports betting. The deregulation across the country provides additional markets for Penn to gain market share. The stable revenue from its physical properties will allow it to fund this growth easier than competitors which are solely online.



(David Chalmers and Corbin Lammers)

PFGC - Performance Food Group Company is an industry leader and one of the largest food and foodservice distribution companies in North America, with more than 150 locations in the U.S. and parts of Canada. What differentiates PFGC from competitors is its diverse revenue streams including foodservice, convenience, and vending. Driven by a complex backhaul network, fast-growing convenience and vending segments, and a very large geographic reach, PFGC has developed a sustainable competitive advantage. PFGC's commitment to boosting bottom-line growth, reducing leverage, and improving margins is evident in the financial data released after the industry-wide impact of COVID-19 and a global supply chain meltdown.

Final Recommendation - Falling short by a single vote, PFGC did not make it into the portfolio due to the stock increasing by 5% in the week prior to voting. Analysts Corbin and David still believe that PFGC is a good buy, with catalysts coming from rising convenience popularity in the United States and the diversified portfolio that PFGC has built through vertical integration.

Final Fall Pitches



Parker Sciolino's Flex Pitch



(Parker Sciolino and Victor Tovar)

FLEX - Flex has grown into a global powerhouse in the electronic manufacturing services (EMS) sector. Flex provides comprehensive design, engineering, manufacturing, and supply chain solutions to original equipment manufacturers (OEMs). Flex operates through multiple distinct business segments, each contributing to the company's diverse offerings and global impact. The Flex Agility Solutions (FAS) segment focuses on providing innovative solutions to meet the dynamic demands of various industries. The Flex Reliability Solutions (FRS) segment is dedicated to ensuring the reliability and efficiency of products. Flex has recently spun off NextTracker which is a leading provider of intelligent, integrated solar tracker and software solutions.

Final Recommendation: The analysts recommended a buy for FLEX with a margin of safety of 19.4 percent. Flex is in the information technology industry, so we believe it will be able to harness some of the current growth in the industry.

Additional Initial Fall Pitches



(Maximus Pavone)

MGP - MGP Ingredients is a leading producer of premium distilled spirits and food-grade ingredients. Its three business segments include food-grade wheat and pea-based proteins, branded spirits like Everclear Ezra Brooks, and contract distilling solutions for bourbon, whiskey, and ethyl alcohol. Its growth through acquisitions of branded spirits and investment into food ingredients used for vegan and vegetarian products was a driver for pitching MGP.

Final Recommendation: Our decision to not invest in MGP Ingredients was based on the lack of conviction in premium alcohol sales after the pandemic and the difficult margin pressure with the opening of a new facility.



(Aaron Atwell)

ROKU - Roku, Inc. is a leading American streaming technology company founded in 2002. Roku offers user-friendly streaming devices like Roku players and TVs, providing access to a vast selection of channels, including popular streaming services and exclusive content. Committed to delivering high-quality streaming experiences, Roku continues to evolve its technology, making it a trusted choice for millions of users seeking a reliable and feature-rich streaming solution. The thesis was that ROKU would benefit from the massive global expansion of streaming services in untapped markets such as Europe and Africa.

Initial Fall Pitches



Aaron Atwell's Roku Pitch

Final Recommendation: Our decision not to invest in ROKU was based on concerns that competitors, such as Apple and Amazon TVs, would eventually take over the industry.



(David Chalmers)

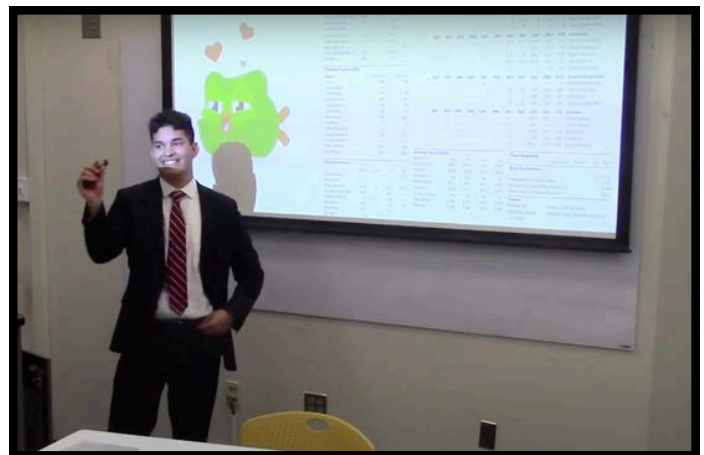
CROX - Crocs Inc. is a leading provider of footwear throughout the world. What started as a company offering a niche, clog styled rubber shoe in 2002 has developed into a multi-billion dollar company that delivers comfortable, affordable, and durable shoes in a variety of styles. Croc Inc. recently acquired HEYDude, an upscale comfort based shoe company. With its large variety of product offerings and extreme durability, Crocs has expanded into a reputable shoe company with a near cult following in many circles.

Final Recommendation: Our decision not to invest in CROX was based on our assessment of its future growth prospects. Despite the company's acquisition of the HEYDUDE shoe brand, we did not have sufficient conviction that CROX could continue to deliver sustainable growth and add significant value to the Bowden Investment Fund.



(Victor Tovar)

DUOL - Duolingo is a prominent language-learning platform that offers users the opportunity to learn over 40 different languages through an engaging platform. The company was founded in 2011 but IPOed in 2021. Duolingo Inc. stands out from its competitors by consistently enhancing its courses and providing learning catered towards users through the implementation of large language models. Duolingo's focus on innovation and user engagement has contributed to its market dominance. Duolingo makes most of its revenue through subscriptions, amassing a 60% subscription user increase since last quarter.



Victor Tovar gives his BUY presentation for DUOL

Final Recommendation: Our decision not to further research Duolingo was influenced by concerns related to its lack of profitability. Another concern was Duolingo's capital structure which

Initial Fall Pitches

consisted of 100% equity and substantial cash holdings making us weary of Duolingo's decision to opt out of leverage opportunities. Since then, Duolingo has grown tremendously and reached profitability in Q3 2023, far exceeding Victor's expectations. From September 1st to December 29th, 2023, Duolingo returned 52.33%.



(Brianna Gilmore)

MAT - Mattel is an American multinational toy company that produces numerous toy lines including Barbie, Hot Wheels, Fisher-Price, and American Girl. In addition to its core toy business, Mattel has expanded its offerings into digital content such as movies and television shows, notably with its recent Barbie movie. MAT also recently replaced its CEO which resulted in a renewed focus on stronger marketing, evidenced by the level of marketing for the Barbie movie.

Final Recommendation: After further analysis, it is clear that while Mattel has some strong qualities, there is no clear catalyst for continued growth. Our decision to not pursue MAT further came from a lack of growth opportunities and the already realized gains from the Barbie Movie. Therefore, the group decided to forgo any investment into the company.



(Reece Fisher)

DKS - DICK'S Sporting Goods, an American retail powerhouse established in 1948, stands as a premier destination for sports enthusiasts. Boasting a diverse array of sports equipment, apparel, footwear, and accessories, DICK'S caters to a broad spectrum of consumers, ensuring there's something for everyone. What sets DICK'S apart is its commitment to providing unique and personalized experiences for customers. Through specialized "specialty-stores," the company goes beyond the ordinary, offering expertly trained employees dedicated to specific sports and fitness categories. This tailored approach ensures that customers receive unparalleled guidance and support. At DICK'S Sporting Goods, it's not just about purchasing gear - it's about embarking on a journey fueled by passion and a commitment to excellence.

Final Recommendation: Our decision not to invest in DKS was due to the immense jump in price before the buy decision, exceeding the original target price of \$140 to around \$145. At the time of the original pitch, DKS was trading at \$111. It ended the year at \$148. After running up, the group no longer had conviction that DICK'S could add value to the Bowden Investment Fund.

Member Testimonials

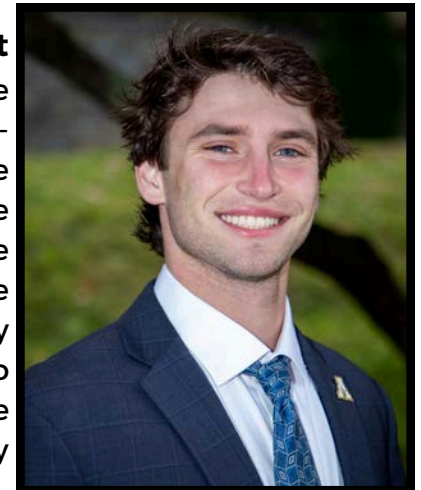


Corbin Lammers - President

The Bowden Investment Group has been an invaluable experience, fostering growth in both my personal and professional aspirations. From late nights working with Dr. Hadley on the CFA report to exploring new cities with colleagues, every moment within the group has been remarkably rewarding. My pride extends beyond individual achievements to the collective chemistry, growth, and professionalism we cultivated this year. Recently, I leveraged the expertise gained within the group to lead a resume and job search workshop for my fraternity, seizing a unique opportunity to give back. Looking forward, my passions lie in transmitting the valuable lessons learned and preserving the legacy of the Bowden Investment Group.

David Chalmers - Vice President

The Bowden investment Group has, by far, been one of the most rewarding experiences of my college career. The fast-paced and dynamic learning environment quickly won me over and helped define my work ethic. The ability to translate so much knowledge from the classroom into a real, active portfolio has provided me with a greater understanding of the stock market, and my major of finance and banking. One of my favorite parts of the Bowden Investment Group is our ability to have intellectual discussions and debates inside of the classroom. The collective drive and passion from every member of the group creates an incredibly exciting classroom and I come away from every class with new information. I am thrilled to look back on what we have accomplished as a group and excited for what the future holds.



Aaron Atwell - BIG Update Editor

When I look back on my time as a student at Appalachian State University, my time spent in the Bowden Investment Group will stand out as one of the most challenging and rewarding parts of my journey. Never before has a college class or group shown me the value of teamwork, professionalism, and dedication. In Bowden, good enough is never enough, and that pushed me to be the best student possible in the BIG, my other classes, and in my career search. I want to thank my classmates, the twelve students who quickly became some of my closest friends at App for the constant support and encouragement we gave each other this year. I also could not have succeeded in this program without our amazing advisors, Dr. Hadley, Mr. Poole, and Dr. Goff, who sacrificed their time and energy to mentor us throughout the year.

Member Testimonials

Maximus Pavone - BIG Update Editor

Being a part of the BIG has been a formative opportunity and the highlight of my college experience. From making eleven new, highly motivated friends, to having access to Dr. Hadley, Mr. Poole, and our amazing alumni base, I am so grateful that I was afforded this opportunity. Although these relationships have been fulfilling, it would be wrong not to mention the invaluable education that I have gained from a hands-on learning experience. Participating in the CFA Competition, researching my stock pitches, and helping to manage a fund has provided me with a far broader understanding of companies, financial reporting, and decision making. Being a BIG Update Editor and having the privilege to tell the story of our class has been an honor, and I hope that the work that we have done will continue to push future classes to continually strive for bigger and better.



Derek Mahato - Economist



When I first started at Appalachian State University, I had eagerly planned to join the Bowden Investment Group, and achieving this goal brought me immense satisfaction. This experience encouraged me to delve deep into research and evaluate potential investment opportunities. Being a part of the Bowden Investment Group presented the opportunity to participate in the CFA competition, a challenging endeavor that honed my research and writing skills. Throughout this journey, I acknowledge the unwavering support and mentorship of advisors Dr. Hadley, Mr. Poole, and Dr. Goff, who played a pivotal role in guiding me through this great experience. My time in the Bowden Investment Group not only fostered expertise but also nurtured qualities such as teamwork, professionalism, and dedication that will serve me well in my future career endeavors.

Hudson Smith - Economist

My experience within the Bowden Investment Group, while challenging, has been the best practical learning opportunity in my college career. Whether it was the long nights or important lessons learned, nothing could have prepared me better for entering the workforce. I was able to apply all the knowledge I learned within the school of business in a way that mimicked a professional environment. Both Dr. Hadley and Mr. Poole have an admirable commitment to wanting to see all students become a better version of themselves at the end of the course which proved to be invaluable. I will forever be grateful for this opportunity offered by Bowden and I am excited to see how our class continues to grow after graduation!



Member Testimonials



Ashley Meacham - Accountant

Becoming a member of the Bowden Investment Group has been the most pivotal and significant moment of my college career. I have never experienced as much challenge and growth as I have since joining this organization. The rewards are greater than I could have imagined, from successfully building financial models, to creating a positive network within the group, as well as the encouragement from Dr. Hadley and Mr. Poole and the special opportunities not found in the everyday classroom. Working closely with the other group members has been such a positive experience, characterized by dedicated teamwork within a high functioning team. I am grateful to all those who have supported me through this program, including Dr. Hadley and Mr. Poole, the rest of the class, my family, and all of the alumni who continue to make this group so impactful year after year.

Victor Tovar - Accountant

Becoming a part of the Bowden Investment Group has been one my proudest moments thus far in my college journey, bringing about incredible growth and personal discoveries through challenges that I never expected. The rewards have been beyond my wildest dreams, from successfully diving into financial modeling to competing in Chicago and forming genuine connections within the group. Dr. Goff, Dr. Hadley and Mr. Poole's support is what makes this group function as a developmental experience that has provided tools and guidance that will prepare me immensely when joining a firm or organization. Bowden has sharpened skills like professionalism, networking, and financial analysis. A massive thanks to guest speakers, firm visit hosts, mentors, and the highly involved alumni for allowing us students to develop our early careers and receive life-changing advice when we need it most.



Reece Fisher - ESG Analyst

Joining Bowden has proven to be a transformative and highly impactful decision in my life. Since becoming a part of this community, I've embraced challenges that have pushed me beyond my previous limits. The demanding workload has not only equipped me with practical skills but has also been a catalyst for personal growth. In navigating through this journey, I owe immense gratitude to individuals such as Dr. Hadley, Mr. Poole, Dr. Goff, and many others who have been instrumental in guiding and supporting me. Their unwavering assistance has been invaluable during this challenging yet immensely rewarding period of self-discovery and development.

Member Testimonials

Brianna Gilmore - ESG Analyst

Becoming a member of the Bowden Investment group has been the most important, life-changing aspect of my college career. I have learned so much so far and am eager to learn more as the semester comes to an end. Joining the CFA team was a highlight and pivotal moment for me throughout this process. All of the long hours and late nights working toward the end product made me realize how much I love what I am doing and sparked my passion for finance in a way that I was not expecting. Dr. Hadley and Mr. Poole have been instrumental in my growth and success throughout the year and I am eternally grateful for their support. I'm also grateful for the support of my peers. The friendships that I have made through Bowden are some of the most rewarding aspects of being in the group. I look forward to continuing to learn and grow alongside my friends with the support of Dr. Hadley and Mr. Poole.



Parker Sciolino - Industry Analyst

Becoming a part of Bowden was the best decision I have made in my academic career. I have seen so much growth in my knowledge, skills, and preparedness going into my professional career. This can be attributed to Dr. Hadley and Mr. Poole because not only do they act as our advisors, but they also act as great mentors who love to see the growth in every one of us in the group. With the many challenges of the class, they are very willing to give their thoughtful help and advice. Our group has become very tight-knit, and it is so great to see how much each person in the group has grown in professionalism and proficiency in the work that we do. I would also like to thank Dr. Goff and the vast network of alumni who actively support the group in many ways because the Bowden Investment Group would not be around without them.

Luciano Zito - Industry Analyst

Joining the Bowden Investment Group marks a transformative milestone in my college journey. Since becoming a member, I've encountered unprecedented challenges and witnessed unparalleled personal growth. The rewards have surpassed my expectations. Dr. Hadley and Mr. Poole's encouragement, coupled with unique opportunities outside the conventional classroom setting, have further enriched my experience. Collaborating closely with fellow group members has been exceptionally rewarding, characterized by dedicated teamwork within a highly efficient unit. I extend my gratitude to everyone who has supported me throughout this program, including Dr. Hadley, Mr. Poole, the entire class, and the impactful alumni who contribute to the group's legacy year in and year out.



Final BIG Thank You

We hope you have enjoyed this synopsis of the experiences, learning, and growth our dedicated students have been afforded. From visiting firms in Charlotte to late nights working on assignments and competitions, we are now nearing the end of our college careers.

We want to express our heartfelt gratitude to the incredible WCOB leadership, faculty, and staff for their unwavering support and dedication to students. Their commitment to fostering our growth and development has shaped us into the young talent we are today.

We recognize the amazing generosity of our donors who make this program possible by funding trips and enabling students to bear less financial burden. The impact of your contributions has allowed for boundless learning opportunities and friendships to be formed.

It is also important to recognize those who came before us and the paths they have created for us to follow. The time and commitment you have dedicated to networking calls and coffee chats may seem simple, but to us, it is an introduction to our future selves that drives us to continue pursuing better. We thank you all for this graciousness and look forward to the day when we can return the favor to students in similar positions to ours.



We also want to thank the friends and family who have supported us beyond our understanding, helping foster us into the successful students and professionals we are today. To our guardians, for your steadfast support and unwavering love, we truly thank you and understand that our accomplishments are not ours alone.

To our friends and partners who have joined us throughout college, we thank you for your friendships and relationships that we will not forget. To our knowledgeable speakers and guests who have donated your precious time to join us and enlighten us with your incredible experiences, we thank you. Your guidance helps point us down a path and accelerate us towards our goals.

Lastly, we want to thank our amazing advisors, Dr. Hadley, Mr. Poole, and Dr. Goff, once again. Your late nights of feedback and willingness to help us grow as individuals do not go unnoticed. We are grateful for the unprecedented wisdom you have bestowed upon us. This program would not be the same without your joy and passion for creating young professionals poised for any path that lies ahead.

For questions or information about the Bowden Investment Group, please contact:

Brandy Hadley, Ph.D.
Hadleybe@appstate.edu
(828) 262-6938

For Questions about the Annual Report, please contact the BIG Update Editors:

Maximus Pavone
Pavonemv@appstate.edu

Aaron Atwell
Aatwell@appstate.edu