

Three things you should know about Professor Frank Shuman

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1. He remembers everyone's name.
2. He genuinely wants you to succeed.
3. If you take his class, there's a decent chance you'll end up running around the room high-fiving classmates while watching a Sam Merrill buzzer beater.

After 34 years of teaching accounting at the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business at Utah State University, Shuman has become a bit of a legend among students. Not because accounting suddenly became everyone's favorite subject, (though he's probably gotten closer than most), but because students can tell he actually cares about them.

Like, really cares.

Every semester, Shuman memorizes every student's first and last name. Not just a handful. Every single one.

"It's got to be 100%," he says.

He's always been good with names, but over the course of his profession he's leaned into what that actually means for students. Shuman loves the old TV show Cheers — specifically the famous tagline about wanting to go someplace "where everybody knows your name."

That idea stuck with him.

"If you can say somebody's name, it changes the relationship," Shuman says.

So he stands at the door before class starts, greeting students by name as they walk in. He works to learn not just names, but little details about students' lives, hometowns, interests, or goals. To him, it's never just been about memorization. It's about making the classroom feel welcoming.

"The real thing that matters," he says, "is if they know you care."

That mindset shapes pretty much everything about how he teaches.

Accounting can be intimidating, especially for students convinced they're "not accounting people." Shuman gets that.

“My teaching philosophy is to help them realize they can do it,” he says. “I always tell them, ‘Come up. I’ll help you. We’ll work at this together.’”

And while he takes teaching seriously, he also thinks college should be memorable.

Which explains Aggie Spirit Day.

Students come dressed in Utah State gear. Shuman breaks down scores from national championship games. Someone wears a Sam Merrill jersey while the class rewatches Merrill’s famous 2020 Mountain West Championship shot. Then one student runs around high-fiving the entire room while everyone cheers.

“It’s time well spent,” Shuman says. “They’ll remember it.”

And they certainly do. In a recent social media post that featured Frank, students quickly responded.

They asked if he’s still using the “Shuman Corporation” test question, remarked at his amazing memory, and other former students flooded the comment section calling him “the best,” “the man,” and somehow both terrifying and lovable at the same time.

One student summed it up pretty well: “I feel like Frank was trying to take me out with accounting, but I’d still leave him a generous tip.”

But underneath all the traditions and stories is a pretty simple message Shuman hopes students carry with them long after graduation. At the end of every semester, his parting words are always the same: “Be positive. Be kind. Be helpful. Go out and do great things.”

And if Shuman could sit down with his students from the last 30 years and ask them one thing, it wouldn’t be about accounting formulas or career titles.

It would be this:

Have you been positive?

Have you been kind?

Have you been helpful?

That, more than anything else, is the legacy he hopes sticks.