We are the Koch Center for Family Enterprise, a research center at WashU Olin Business School. As our name indicates, our focus is singular—the family enterprise. Yet our output is multifaceted. We bring to light learnings pertinent to closely held businesses and the investment and philanthropic activity of families through productive engagement with enterprise leaders, rigorous scholarship on key issues and facilitating student learning in and out of the classroom.

We understand the business and relational complexity of growing a closely held enterprise at all life stages of business. Zooming out from the core business, we also understand that a family’s priorities extend beyond the core operations of the enterprise; for many, this purpose extends into investment and philanthropy. By engaging with family enterprises locally, nationally and globally, and bringing the rigors of academic scholarship to bear on these issues, the center works to identify best practices to keep pace with the evolving business landscape.

8th annual symposium event in 2024
4 to 6 student cocurricular events a year, and 1 student club on Entrepreneurship through Acquisition

Representative Board Members:
Spencer Burke, Michael Dierberg, Susan Fitzpatrick, Chris Hoffmann, Katie Hopkins, Clay Hunter, Paul Koch, Dave Peacock and John Thee

200+ annual attendees at center symposiums from 2017-2023
Previous enterprise leaders from Kohler, Conti, Bacardi, Tata, BDT Capital, NASCAR

3 Targeted Classroom Opportunities
Ownership Insights, Entrepreneurship through Acquisition, Small Business Initiative

3 areas of focus
Closely Held Business, Family Investment, Family Philanthropy

Family Enterprise Scholars Annually
8

Cohort Executive Programs:
Strategic Ownership and Philanthropy Forward

olin.wustl.edu/kochcenter
Engage with the center and enterprise leaders. We delve into topics that impact family businesses through special events, symposiums and seminars, including larger audience symposiums and smaller, more intimate engagements. Our immersive events include our annual Family Enterprise Symposium, now in its ninth year.

We publish a bimonthly newsletter and develop executive education courses, including Growing Strategic Ownership and Philanthropy Forward. The center is also working with the Brookings Institution on a national policy initiative titled Main Street’s Tidal Waves of Transition.

Find out more about engaging with the Koch Center. Contact Program Manager Jennifer Wintzer at wintzer@wustl.edu or 314-935-2047.

Develop students in class and through experiential learning. Family business analysis is woven throughout Olin’s curriculum. Beyond the inclusion of closely held business cases throughout the curriculum, family enterprises are also spotlighted through experiential learning outside the classroom.

Courses focused explicitly on family enterprise include Ownership Insights: The Competitive Advantage of Family and Employee-Owned Firms, Entrepreneurship through Acquisition, and the Small Business Initiative, run through Olin’s Center for Experiential Learning.

In 2023–24, Koch designed and hosted Olin’s first national case competition, focused directly on the balance of purpose and performance of the Taylor family through their investment in the city’s MLS expansion team and hope for economic development of the region.

Learn more about Koch’s involvement in family enterprise curricula at olin.wustl.edu/kochcenter or contact us at familyenterprise@wustl.edu.

Support the center’s scholarship and research. Family enterprise drives 64% of the US economy, yet there isn’t a trusted resource for research-formed insights in this area. The Koch Center fills that role, bringing new knowledge to leaders of family organizations to support enhanced professionalism, nuanced sophistication of long-term perspective, and wisdom in how these leaders balance family and business purposes. In addition to the center directors, distinguished faculty fellows and faculty affiliates contributing to family enterprise scholarship, the center supports students as Family Enterprise Scholars.

Please help us continue to grow by supporting the Koch Center. Contact Director of Advancement Sarah Nangle at nangle@wustl.edu to discuss levels of giving.

Alumni.wustl.edu/kochcenter