Student Org Spotlight: Impact Investing Club

There’s a new student organization on campus, and what makes it special isn’t just the fact that members can invest $100K of simulated money or get connected to network and scholarship opportunities, but that it was all started by transfer students.

Founder and President of Impact Investing Club Antonio Petrazzuolo started the organization in November 2018 after learning about the discipline of impact investing. Petrazzuolo worked at UBS, a Swiss multinational investment bank, and discovered he could combine his passion for finances with sustainability to create a more diverse and intentional community of young investors.

“Our objectives are exposing the community to what impact investing is and topics relating to it, and secondly and most importantly outreach to people,” Petrazzuolo said.

Impact investing, according to the junior economics and applied mathematics major from New Jersey, is a sphere of investment that seeks to allocate money more consciously to sustainable leaders in various industries. This type of investment is less common, but it’s a new way of promoting social change.

“Moving capital is one of the biggest ways of making change,” Petrazzuolo said. “The best way of doing things is to move capital? ideas are ideas.”
Alongside Dean Nadler, also a junior economics major and statistics minor from Florida, Petrazzuolo presents the study body with a student organization that combines the basics of investment banking and multinational economics with concentrated efforts to advance pioneers in environmentally or socially informed businesses.

"The only real reason why people will do something for economic incentive," Nadler said. "The multidisciplinary part is huge."

But according to the two, using capital to both quantify and collateralize social change isn’t a bad thing. For them and the rest of their executive board, it’s about boosting awareness and understanding that this kind of strategy exists.

"There’s nothing wrong with profit motive," Petrazzuolo said. "There’s nothing wrong with the fact that we live in a capitalist society."

When asked how Petrazzuolo got the idea for the club, he said he went to his ECON 410 class and asked students what they knew about impact investing. He said only a handful raised their hands, so the need to communicate this sector of the finance world is crucial.

To help, Nadler crafts a newsletter that gets sent to members about announcements for the next meeting, relevant information from the industry and even a few cheesy investment jokes to keep the club fun and engaging.

The club as a whole sets itself apart not just in terms of its original platform, but also in terms of its integration to the UNC-Chapel Hill transfer student community. Nadler and Petrazzuolo both transferred to UNC during the 2018-2019 school year for fall semester. Nadler transferred from Miami Dade College and Petrazzuolo transferred from Bergen Community College.

Nadler cited the formation of Impact Investing Club as a good way for him to get involved in campus activities outside of class. Nadler also said that it’s not just for business students; the strength of this kind of investing comes from blending industry initiatives that are ultimately fed by purposeful investment and long-term sustainability goals.

Going forward, the club seeks to involve guests speakers, connect students with internship opportunities in the profit and non-profit space and even offer a scholarship to students interested in pursuing this career avenue long term.

"We don’t want to have a subspace," Petrazzuolo said. "We rather it just be part of every day."