between 18 and 26 undergraduate and graduate students each semester an opportunity to manage and administer an investment portfolio of carefully selected, high-quality securities and cash that has a net value of more than $470,000. Students are graded on their ability to learn and then apply investment theory, and provide written analysis and original research, among other criteria. The knowledge acquired in the class can give students a leg up when seeking professional employment.

“Over the years, numerous students have told me the class gave them an advantage in landing an interview, internship or job,” said Duane Stock, Michael F. Price Student Investment Fund Professor. “One student told the recruiter how the class was conducted and the recruiter was so impressed that he remarked, ‘You should list this class as work experience.’”

The Fixed Income Fund course exposes senior-level undergraduate and MBA students to the intricacies of managing portfolios that contain only bond-like financial instruments, which include the gamut of treasuries, mortgage-backed securities and corporate bonds, among others. Students learn the analytically intensive concepts and techniques that underlie fixed-income investments and markets, and use this knowledge to manage a $5 million portfolio funded by Bank of Oklahoma, which performs the fund’s trades based on student recommendations. State Farm donated an additional $75,000 for the class.

Yadav said students spend half the semester learning about the analytics of fixed-income investments and are graded on written exam performance of analytical content, peer review and group presentations, and their ability to research and defend investment decisions. He said OU’s Price College sets itself apart from other business schools by offering the Fixed Income Fund course as part of its curriculum.

“It’s very rare for students to manage a portfolio consisting of only bond-like financial instruments. This is a relatively unusual course among university offerings,” Yadav said.

Both classes also give students an opportunity to interact with professionals in the financial services industry. BOK employees, for instance, typically attend Fixed Income Fund students’ final presentations, alongside the finance professors at Price. For the Student Investment Fund class, OU alumnus Jim Barnes, senior vice president and wealth manager at Wells Nelson & Associates, serves as the broker of record and is charged with executing the buy/sell orders provided by students and maintaining the account positions and cost basis, among other duties. Additionally, Colin Wagner, assistant vice president in customer relations at Wells Nelson & Associates and a 2007 Price College accounting graduate, helps Barnes execute the trades. Barnes said a “vital part of the collective responsibilities students must experience in order to manage a portfolio is having a close working relationship with financial professionals.”

“Even though I am not a part of the actual investment process, I attend the end-of-semester presentations and provide analysis and insight on their presentations and investment processes. I enjoy talking to students and answering questions about my profession and what they can expect if they choose to work in the investment industry,” said Barnes, who noted that Price students have managed the Student Investment Fund with “impressive results.” “My involvement with the SIF has been one of the highlights of my 30-year investment career. Watching students get involved and excited about investing real money and being successful in doing so is very rewarding.”