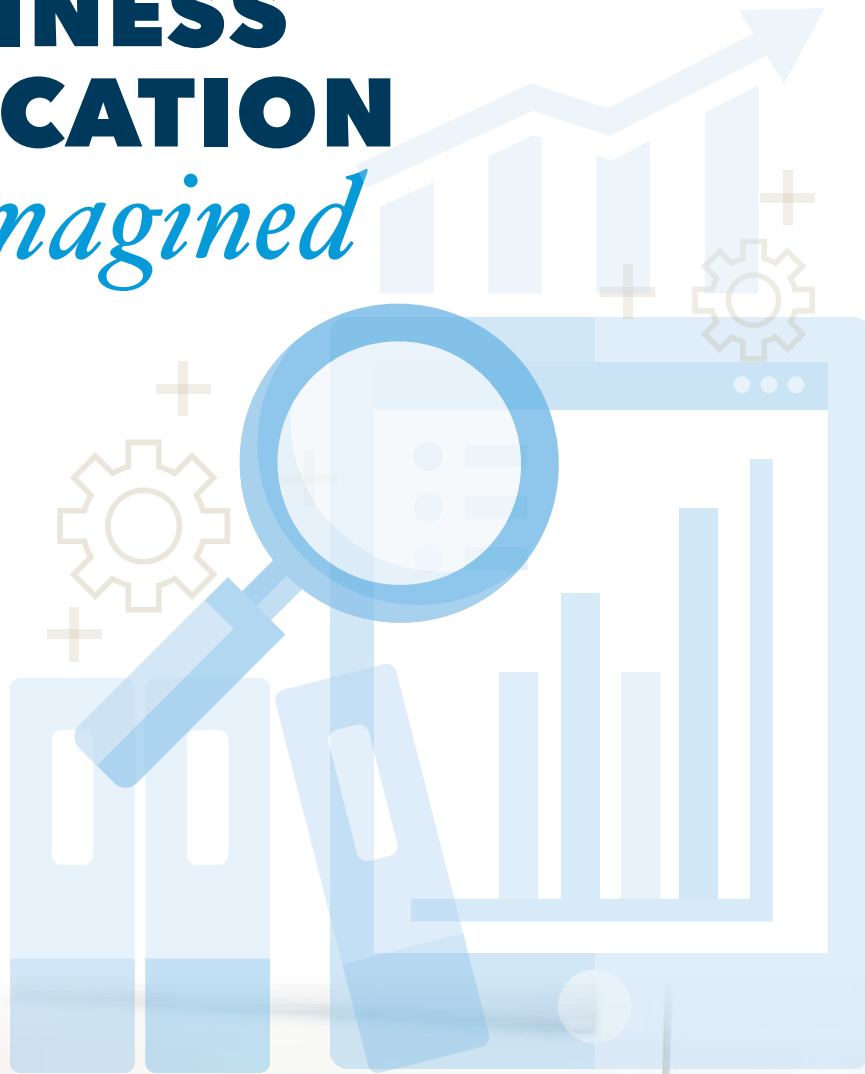


# GW BUSINESS

SPRING 2020

## **BUSINESS EDUCATION** *Reimagined*



BLOOMBERG TERMINALS

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
**SPRING 2020**

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Certificate programs have emerged as alternate way to fine-tune the talent pool that the business world requires... **read more on p. 28**

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#### MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

# DR. ANUJ MEHROTRA

*“Despite the challenges we all share during this time, we have not lost sight of our commitment to providing students with the knowledge and skills they need to compete and succeed in today’s highly competitive and rapidly evolving global business environment.”*

#### Dear GWSB Community,

This issue of *GWBusiness* magazine provides an overview of many of the qualities that make a George Washington University School of Business education a powerful asset for success. The articles in this issue – detailing some of the recent achievements of faculty, students, alumni, and staff – illustrate the reason for the School’s upward trajectory and growing reputation as a world-class business education institution.

You have often heard me talk about the GWSB S.P.I.R.I.T. – putting **Students** first; working to improve students’ **Placement** outcomes; **International** in people, programs, and practice; reputation for **Research**; educational **Innovation**; and achieving our mission **Together**. Given our accomplishments in the face of the historic challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, I believe the response of the entire GWSB community has exemplified that S.P.I.R.I.T. By working together, we have harnessed our expertise, mutual respect, and resilience as we persevere in this difficult time.

Despite the challenges we all share during this time, we have not lost sight of our commitment to providing students with the knowledge and skills they need to compete and succeed in today’s highly competitive and rapidly evolving global business environment.

We have introduced significant enhancements to both our undergraduate and MBA programs. These changes were guided by extensive input from all GWSB stakeholders: the Dean’s Advisory Council, faculty, staff, alumni, students, and parents — and especially from our partners in the business community, including the Dean’s Corporate Council. These enhancements have positioned us well for what may be the post-pandemic new-normal.

In recognition of the growing market demand for technology and business analytics, beginning in the fall 2020 semester, two new STEM degrees will be offered, a B.S. in Business Analytics and a B.S. in Information Systems. In addition, based on feedback indicating that students pursuing non-business degrees can improve their career placement prospects by having core business education, GWSB will also begin offering a business major for non-business students across the university and a selection of interdisciplinary joint-degree programs in cooperation with other GW schools. Our expanded portfolio of undergraduate business degrees will now feature Bachelor of Science degrees that also include accounting, finance, and marketing in addition to a B.S. in business. All our degrees will also have additional coursework in technology, enhancing the skills that are needed for success.

GWSB’s MBA programs have been enhanced to keep pace with — and in anticipation of — the changing demands of the market. New skill-building and experiential learning courses will be available in fall 2020, and students will be able to add at least one graduate business certificate to their degrees by taking certificate

courses as MBA electives. Our MBA programs will feature a STEM-enhanced core education, and starting in the Fall 2020 semester, GWSB will offer full-time MBA students the option of a **STEM designation** for their **Global MBA** and **Accelerated MBA** programs.

We have made every effort to address the demanding schedules of our MBA students by shortening the time to degree completion. We have also expanded opportunities for our graduate students to learn outside the classroom and build their professional networks through an impressive array of student engagement programs and events, including alumni meet-and-greets, industry roundtables, and online happy hours.

Leveraging our location in Washington, D.C., and a worldwide network of contacts, GWSB has hosted the second and third seasons in the **George Talks Business** interview webcast series with notable alumni and thought leaders from the business, government and nonprofit sectors. The series has adapted to the virtual format to provide the GWSB community with access to leading thinkers sharing expertise on a range of timely topics during these “new normal” times. I also invite you to watch our new George Talks Business Special Mini Series, which features faculty and alumni offering quick insights on current events.

The hard work and dedication of GWSB faculty and staff in our ongoing reimagining of business education has earned recognition in the form of this year’s significant improvements in our rankings in the annual college ratings published by some of the most respected sources, including the *Financial Times*, the *Princeton Review* and *U.S. News & World Report*. We are committed to continued innovation to position ourselves best for the days when the pandemic is behind us.

While we have demonstrated adaptability and resilience in overcoming our current circumstances, the challenges facing the GW Class of 2020 entering an uncertain job market remain. In recognition of this situation, I am proud to announce GWSB Grants for 2020 GW Graduates, which will provide special tuition grants of 25 to 50 percent on GWSB graduate business programs. The tuition grants can be applied to all GWSB specialized master’s degrees and credit-bearing graduate certificates. **Please see the GWSB Grants for 2020 Graduates page for details and FAQs.** I invite 2020 GW graduating seniors who are interested in pursuing a graduate business education to take advantage of this program and continue to learn with us in the fall semester.

Anuj Mehrotra, PhD  
Dean  
The George Washington University  
School of Business



Capital Markets Program fellows display their national flags. To date, the program has hosted program fellows from 40 countries.

EVENT

## Capital Markets Program Fellows Enjoy GWSB Holiday Reception

Capital Markets Program fellows from more than a dozen nations — as well as ambassadors and embassy personnel from their home countries — gathered on the 6th floor of Duquès Hall for a holiday reception at the end of the fall 2019 semester. The program brings financial professionals from banks, as well as capital markets and governments in developing

and emerging economies, around the world to study at GWSB.

A unique three-way partnership among GWSB, the International Finance Corporation and the Milken Institute, the program has drawn students from 40 different countries, including the 23 fellows in the current cohort.

“I am very pleased to report that in light

of the program’s success, we have added a second cohort, which began in spring 2020, and welcomed program fellows from Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia,” **Dean Anuj Mehrotra** said.



Dr. Ayman El Tarabishy with Ambassador Martín García Moritán, Argentine Argentina’s permanent representative to the UN..

HONOR

## Professor Wins UN Authorization for ‘International MSME Day’

The United Nations designated June 27, 2019, as “Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Day” as a result of a successful lobbying effort by GWSB’s **Ayman El Tarabishy**, professor of management and executive director of the International Center for Small Business (ICSB).

The UN proclaims International Days to educate the general public on issues of concern, to mobilize political will and resources to address global problems, and to celebrate

and reinforce the achievements of humanity. Member states can formally propose International Days, subject to the approval of the UN General Assembly.

Dr. El Tarabishy worked with Argentina’s permanent mission to the UN to draft and introduce the resolution proposing MSME Day. Dr. El Tarabishy is the first college professor credited with creating a UN International Day.

EVENT

## All About the Benjamin

As part of the annual GW Colonials Weekend celebration, Dean Anuj Mehrotra hosted a formal unveiling of a bust of founding father Benjamin Franklin, which came into GWSB’s possession at the end of a long journey that began in France more than 200 years ago.

The historic artwork, which dates to 1777, was created by Jean-Jacques Caffieri, court sculptor to Louis XVI, while Dr. Franklin

was in Paris representing the fledgling United States of America as ambassador to France. The bust came to the United States in 1949 as part of the “Merci Train,” 49 freight cars loaded with gifts from the French people in gratitude for U.S. relief aid following World War II. It was presented to Benjamin Franklin School of Accounting (which later became part of GWSB) in Washington, D.C. The statue came into

the George Washington University’s possession when the school merged with GW in 1987. Long held in storage, the Franklin bust is no on permanent public display in the Dean’s Lobby on the 6th floor of Duquès Hall.



EVENT

## George Talks Business – and Real Estate, and Technology, and Finance, and Higher Ed, and Government, and Fitness, and Baseball . . .

Since its premiere in 2018, “George Talks Business” — or GTB, for short — a series of 30-minute interviews has presented an impressive lineup of informative, thought-provoking and entertaining guests. It has featured a wide variety of notable GW alumni and respected thought leaders from the business, government and nonprofit arenas. GTB has drawn capacity “in-studio” audiences and thousands of online viewers who have logged on for the live webcast of the program. Topics covered have included technology, leadership, global developments, ethics and other timely areas of interest.

The second season of GTB featured a stellar guest roster, including: **David M. Rubenstein**, co-founder and co-executive chairman of The Carlyle Group; Washington Nationals principal owner **Mark Lerner**, whose ballclub won its first World Series title shortly after his GTB appearance (coincidence?); **Nelson A. Carbonell Jr.**, GW Board of Trustees chairman emeritus; and District of Columbia Mayor **Muriel Bowser**.

While George Talks Business sessions usually take place on the Foggy Bottom Campus, on several occasions the GTB team has gone on the road. On location sessions have unfolded nearby and halfway around the world. In 2019, George Talks Business went to New York City to host **Charles R. Bendit**, BBA ’75, co-chief executive officer of Taconic Investment Partners; to Cherry Hill, New Jersey, for a session with **Tom**



It’s an honor, your honor: Dean Anuj Mehrotra discusses the rewards and challenges of running a city government with Mayor Muriel Bowser. George mascot; Dean Mehrotra warms up for a GTB session with Peloton COO Tom Cortese. Below, left, George mascot; and right, Dean Mehrotra warms up for a GTB session with Peloton COO Tom Cortese.

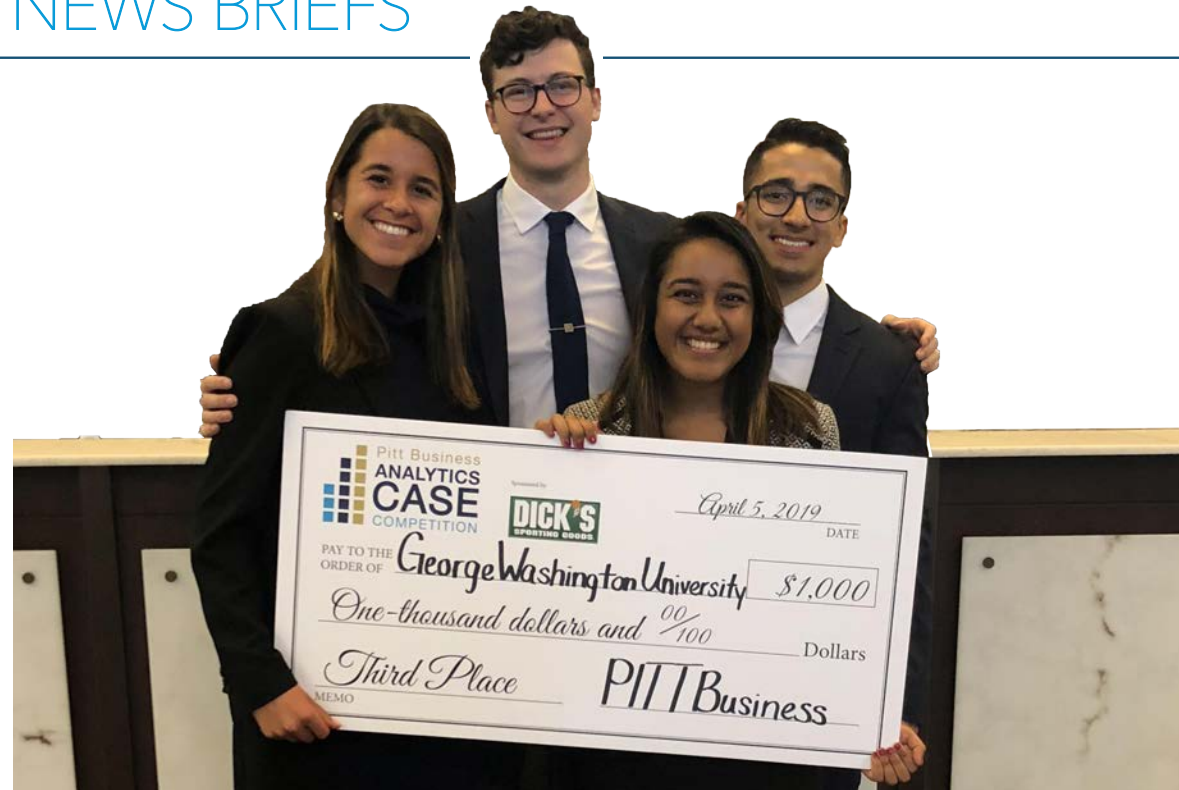
**Cortese**, BA ’02, co-founder, chief operating officer and head of product at popular fitness equipment and training company Peloton; and to Shanghai for the first international GTB session with **Dr. Xinya Vivian Wang**, founding partner of Beautiful Mind Capital (BMC), board trustee at Fudan University, board director at the School of Medical Science of Fudan University, and co-chairman of Fudan University China Financier Club.

Visit the GWSB website for a complete list of George Talks Business sessions and access to **webcasts**.



"I'd like to offer my personal congratulations to our student case competition teams... They've done GWSB proud – against some very tough competition."

**Dr. Anuj Mehrotra,**  
Dean of the GW School of Business



GWSB case competition contestants collect their winnings.

## COMPETITION

### GWSB Shines in Business Case Competitions

GWSB students impressed the judges — and the competition — with their business knowledge, strategic thinking and problem-solving ability, taking home prize money from business case competitions in Florida and Pennsylvania.

Team GW, GWSB MBA and GW Sustainable Urban Planning students **Ramzi Soueid, Jonathan Fuller, Jeannie Bellina and Fares Al Banna** finished third in the University of Miami's "Impact in Investing in Commercial Real Estate Case Competition."

GWSB students **Pablo Wenhammar, Apsara Sankar, Mustaga Ghasletwala and Isabel Meskers** also took third-place honors at the University of Pittsburgh and Dick's Sporting Goods' "Data Analytics Case Competition."

## EVENT

### Professor Leipziger Delivers Keynote at World Bank Conference

**Danny Leipziger**, professor of practice of international business and managing director of The Growth Dialogue, delivered the keynote address to 400 World Bank staffers from around the world at the 2019 Macroeconomics, Trade and Investment (MTI) Forum.

Dr. Leipziger's talk, "Development Challenges and the Role of World Bank Staff," was aimed at motivating World Bank MTI staff to adjust aspects of their advice to reflect changing global circumstances while engaging with developing country officials. Prior to joining the GWSB faculty, Dr. Leipziger was at the World Bank for 28 years and served as vice president for economic policy under three successive bank presidents.

## RESEARCH

### GFLEC-FINRA Financial Knowledge Study

When asked the "Big Three" financial literacy questions, **44% of active investors, 32% of workplace-only investors and 30% of the general population provided correct answers.**

A joint study conducted by GWSB's Global Financial Literacy Excellence Center (GFLEC) and the FINRA Investor Education Foundation, "New Evidence on the Financial Knowledge and Characteristics of Investors," found substantial differences in financial knowledge and awareness across different investor types.

When asked the "Big Three" financial literacy questions, 44 percent of active investors, 32 percent of workplace-only investors and 30 percent of the general population provided correct answers. The "Big Three" are used to gauge basic knowledge of financial literacy principles.

The study was co-authored by **Annamaria Lusardi**, Denit Trust Chair of Economics and Accountancy and GFLEC academic director.

## GRADUATE STUDENTS

### C-Suite: 'MBA Boot Camp'



Dean **Anuj Mehrotra** welcomes students during C-Suite 2019, GWSB's orientation for new GMBA students. The nine-day program included a student services fair, practical labs on resume writing and elevator pitches, an alumni roundtable, a case competition and several just-for-fun activities, including a cookout and a D.C. scavenger hunt.

## FACULTY

### Professors Win Best Paper Award

**Donna Hoffman** and **Thomas Novak**, professors of marketing and co-directors of the Center for the Connected Consumer, won the American Management Association's TechSIG (Technology and Interactivity Special Interest Group) Lazaridis Prize for the "Best Paper for Research on the Practice of Marketing as it Relates to Innovation, Technology and Interactivity." The article, "Consumer and Object Experience in the Internet of Things: An Assemblage Theory Approach," appeared in the *Journal of Consumer Research*.

## INTERNATIONAL

### GW Named UNWTO Affiliate Member

**Don Hawkins** (at left), professor emeritus of management and tourism studies, was in St. Petersburg, Russia, last fall to accept GW's appointment as first vice chair of the Board of Affiliate Members of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Pictured with Dr. Hawkins (from left to right) are: **Zurab Pololikashvili**, UNWTO secretary general; **Ana Larrañaga**, director, Exhibitions Business Unit (Spain) and UNWTO board chairwoman; and **Jens Thraenhart**, founding partner, Chameleon Strategies (Thailand) and UNWTO second vice chairman.



## COMPETITION

### GW Students Notch Impressive Second-Place Finish in Major Case Competition



The GW team celebrates its strong finish in the McDonough Business Challenge.

A team of GW students — including three from the School of Business — bested students from 20 other schools to finish second in the McDonough Business Strategy Challenge (MBSC), an annual case competition hosted by the Georgetown University McDonough School of Business.

The MBSC tasked student teams with providing a recommendation for "how can CARE International be transformed

and restructured to embrace and integrate more open platform models and new power structures to facilitate the organization's mission of achieving greater impact at scale?" The teams were given 36 hours to analyze the case and present unique and sustainable solutions.

The GW squad was the only one from a U.S. school (including host Georgetown) to advance to the final round. Congratulations to the team — **Jamie Cohen**, organizational science and economics, '21; **Kyle Farrell**, real estate and international business, '21; and **Avia Chaoyi Zhang**, international business and accounting, '20 — and their coach, **Milinda Balthrop**, manager, community of practice in consulting and adjunct lecturer.

## RANKINGS



### POINTS OF PRIDE: GWSB IN THE RANKINGS

The college and university rankings issued annually by respected publications are among the key measuring sticks for higher education. While criteria and metrics vary from source to source, these prominent rankings reflect the informed opinions of education journalists and peer institutions — and feedback provided by administrators, faculty, students and alumni.

The notable, positive rankings GWSB earned in 2019 represent something that we achieved together — something of which we can all be proud.

#### U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

The George Washington University School of Business was ranked **8th in the nation** among the "Best Undergraduate International Business Programs" in *U.S. News & World Report's* 2020 Best Colleges Rankings, maintaining its position in the top 10. The survey ranked **GWSB 43rd overall** among all undergraduate business programs.

#### ENTREPRENEUR MAGAZINE/ THE PRINCETON REVIEW

GWSB was ranked among the "Top 25 Best Graduate Schools for Entrepreneurs in 2020" by *Entrepreneur Magazine/The Princeton Review*.

GWSB also earned high marks in the 2021 *U.S. News & World Report* Best Graduate Schools Rankings, rising since last year's rankings in three key categories: #53 for its full-time MBA (up eight spots from #61 last year); #66 for its part-time MBA (up 33 spots from #99 last year); and #8 for international business (up three spots from #11 last year). GW was the only D.C. metro area university to be listed in the top 25.

#### POETS & QUANTS

GWSB came in at **#53** in Poets & Quants' 2019 ranking of MBA programs, up from #63 in the 2018 ranking. The Poets & Quants MBA rankings are based on a cumulative, weighted evaluation of rankings released by *Businessweek*, *The Economist*, the *Financial Times*, *Forbes* and *U.S. News & World Report*.

#### FINANCIAL TIMES

The GWSB MBA program was ranked **#36** among U.S. schools — and **#70 worldwide** — in the *Financial Times'* MBA ranking. GWSB improved by an impressive 20 spots from last year's FT worldwide rankings (#90 in 2019), and 10 spots among U.S. schools (#46 in 2019).



Professor Stuart Levy and Swizzler owner Jesse Konig serve up some gourmet frankfurters.

**FACULTY**

## Professor Addresses Summit in Egypt

**Salah S. Hassan**, professor of marketing strategic brand management and faculty director of the graduate certificate program in marketing and brand management, delivered a keynote address, “Building Sustainable Nation Brand Narrative to Achieve Top Ranking,” at the opening session of the 4th Narrative Summit, held in Cairo, Egypt. Other notable opening session speakers included Dr. Hala El Saeed, minister of planning, and Dr. Mahmoud Mohieldin, senior vice president of the World Bank Group.

This conference was presented under the auspices of Egypt’s President Abdel Fattah El Sisi, and in cooperation with the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union.

The Narrative Summit is the Middle East-North Africa region’s largest annual PR conference. This year’s event focused on sustainable development and nation branding, in conjunction with the League of Arab States’ Sustainable Development Week.

In his remarks, Dr. Hassan stressed that this is the right time for Egypt to strategically design and launch a “One Story” nation-branding strategy with an emphasis on sustainability to achieve a top ranking in the country branding index. Further, he stressed that nation branding is a multi-stakeholder concept that requires involving not only the government sector but also the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and the general public at large.

**AWARD**

## Student Awarded Scholarship to Take Part in SABR Conference



GWSB junior Justin Koehn (third from the left, above) at the 2019 Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) Baseball Analytics Conference.

**Justin Koehn**, a GWSB junior with a sports management concentration and a minor in statistics, was right in his element at the 2019 Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) Baseball Analytics Conference, held last spring in Phoenix. One of **Dr. Lisa Delpy Neirotti’s** students, Mr. Koehn

received a scholarship award to attend the event.

“Topics covered included the use of data, analytics in broadcasting, swing path analysis and pitch sequencing, among others,” Mr. Koehn said. “My favorite panel was a presentation on ‘liquid analytics’ by former major league first basemen Carlos Pena. In his presentation, Pena talked about the use of pitch tunneling and effective velocity. In addition to learning more about baseball analytics, I had the chance to meet and talk to famous baseball statisticians such as Jonathon Judge, as well as employees of Major League Baseball teams.”

**FACULTY**

## Professor Gives Keynote at Industry Conference

**Larry Yu**, professor of hospitality management and faculty director of the master of tourism administration (MTA) program, delivered a keynote presentation at the MarketHub Asia Conference held in Bali, Indonesia. The conference was sponsored by Hotelbeds, a leading b2b accommodation and travel ancillary services wholesaling platform.

Dr. Yu’s presentation, “Strategies for Growth,” focused on innovations in products, services and technology applications; talent development; and embodied experience for tourist consumption. Dr. Yu also



Professor Larry Yu in Bali, Indonesia.

moderated a panel discussion on traveler experience.

More than 400 delegates from travel services, airlines, destination management organizations and hotel companies in the Asia-Pacific region and Middle East attended the event. While at the conference, Dr. Yu had the opportunity to reconnect with two MTA alumni currently working at Hotelbeds in China.

**EVENT**

## Hot Dog! An Insider’s Guide to Success in the Food Truck Business

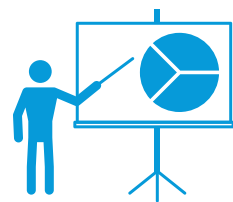
The new GW Entrepreneurship and Tourism Lunch-and-Learn Series hosted guest speaker Jesse Konig, co-founder of the popular food truck business Swizzler, who shared his insights about the food truck business. He also discussed what he has learned about the skills needed for success as a hospitality entrepreneur, including crowdfunding strategies, new concept development and team building.

Mr. Konig’s visit was the second in the GW Entrepreneurship and Tourism Lunch-and-Learn Series, which highlights event, hospitality and tourism entrepreneurship education, while building community among students and practitioners.

Special thanks to the GWSB Department of Management and the GW Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship for sponsoring the series.

**RESEARCH**

## GFLEC Launches Online Financial Education Resource



One in five students lacks basic financial literacy, according to leading academic research. The Global Financial Literacy Excellence Center (GFLEC) at the George

Washington University School of Business hopes to change that with “Fast Lane,” an online financial education resource. The site is funded by PwC US, one of the largest professional services firms in the United States whose partnership was instrumental in getting this initiative off the ground.

The resources offered through Fast Lane are

open to everyone but are tailored to high schools because available research allowed GFLEC to develop effective strategies for those grade levels. The site is designed for six audiences involved in financial education: teachers, parents and guardians, students, school administrators, policymakers and community members.

Fast Lane will teach users why financial education matters and offer evidence-based strategies and curricula. For those looking to advocate for financial literacy, Fast Lane offers tools and worksheets along with external resources on how to write a letter to policymakers and how to build a media campaign.

**COMPETITION**

## Students Take Gold and Silver in Case Competition



Student teams coached by **Anna Helm**, associate teaching professor of international business and director of GW-CIBER, and **David Ruda**,

GW-CIBER senior research aide, placed first and second in the 2019 International Business Ethics and Sustainability Case Competition hosted by Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.

GW-CIBER and the GWSB Office of Undergraduate Programs and Advising

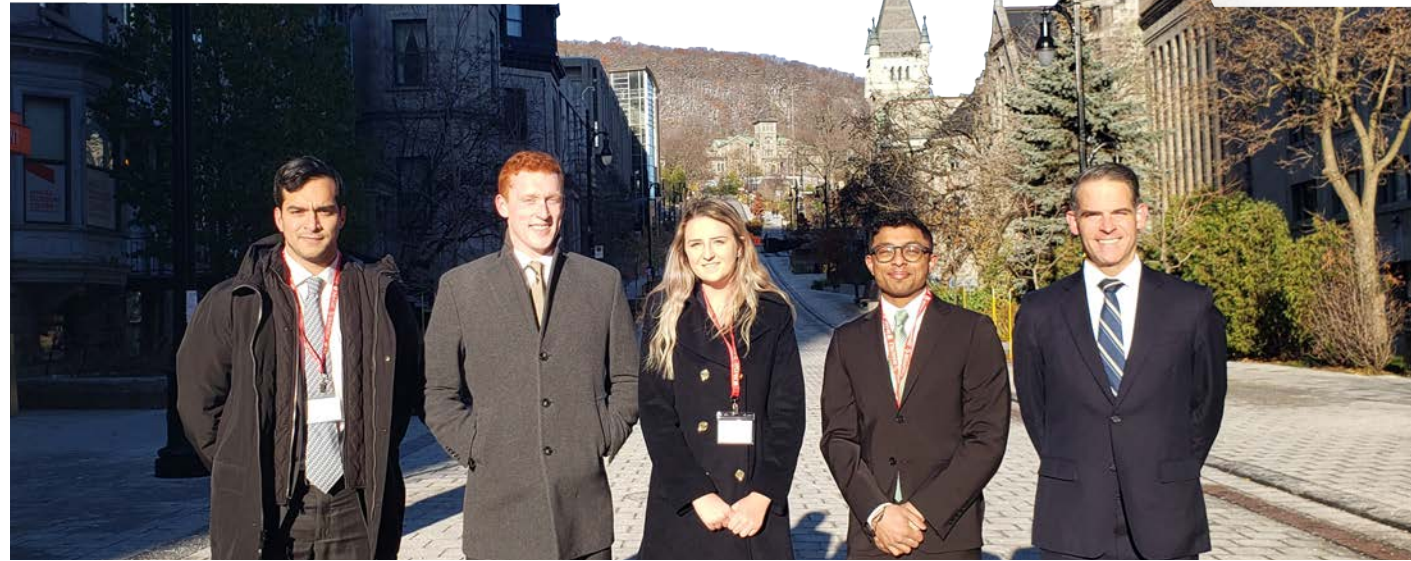
provided sponsorship for the two undergraduate teams. Team one, “Victoria’s Unsustainable Secret,” competed in the MBA division and won first place in the ethics competition. Team two, “Samsung: Putting Conflict in Your Hands,” competed in the undergraduate division and won second place in the ethics category.

Team one included Justin Dembowski (GWSB), Nicole Simos (ESIA), Lauren Lamar (ESIA), Max Leo (GWSB) and Olivia Morgan (ESIA). Team two was made up of Luis Otero-Bravo (GWSB), Will Desautels

(GWSB), Shelly Mishra (CCAS), Grace Wroblewski (GWSB) and Mikayla Brody (ESIA).

Each team presented three times during the competition: a 25-minute case overview and general presentation, a 10-minute ethics presentation and a 90-second sustainability pitch. During the trip to Los Angeles, students also participated in a mini career trek focused on sustainable fashion. It included site visits to Nature USA, a fair-trade clothing maker, and Christy Dawn, a sustainable fashion design house.





GWSB students and their faculty advisor Rodney Lake (right) in Montreal.

COMPETITION

## Undergrads Compete in North-of-the-Border Portfolio Challenge

The Office of Undergraduate Programs and Advising, along with the GW Investment Institute, recently sponsored a team of three GWSB undergraduate students to participate in the McGill International Portfolio Challenge (MIPC). GWSB team members were **Joseph McCluskey**, BBA '21, **Gabrielle Picard**, BSF '21, **Dinesh Prabakaran**, BBA '20, **Francisco Solorzano**, MBA '20 (advisor), and **Rodney Lake**, MBA '03, GW Investment Institute director and teaching instructor of finance (faculty advisor).

The McGill International Portfolio Challenge is the world's premier buy-side

university finance competition, hosted by McGill University in Montreal.

Approximately 340 participants comprising more than 100 teams from 87 universities participated in the first round. The 25 teams that made it to the semi-final round and were invited to the McGill University Desautels Faculty of Management to present their proposals to a panel of Canadian institutional asset management industry leaders.

The theme of this year's challenge, long-term environmental sustainability in buy-side finance, centered on a fictional Canadian province's asset manager's

challenge in devising an optimal portfolio allocation strategy. The strategy had to implement sustainable investment while accommodating the competing interests of the stakeholders involved and taking into consideration climate change risks.

MIPC runs the competition in partnership with Canada's leading institutional managers, including the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, PSP Investments, Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, CIBC Asset Management, BlackRock, the Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board, Société Générale, and Lombard Odier Group.

FACULTY

## Professor Re-elected to Bank Board

**William C. Handorf**, professor of finance, was re-elected to the board of directors of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta, which is a \$150 billion, SEC-registered wholesale institution.

EVENT

## I Scream, You Scream... GWSB Deans Dish Out Ice Cream!



GWSB students got a very nice back-to-school surprise at the start of the fall 2019 semester when they were greeted with free ice cream in the lobby of Duques Hall. Dean Anuj Mehrotra and Associate Deans Vanessa Perry and Liesl Riddle demonstrated their good humor in serving up the cold treats to students, staff and fellow faculty members.

FACULTY

## Professor Wins Top Reviewer Award

**Herman Aguinis**, Avram Tucker Distinguished Scholar and professor of management, was honored with three awards at the annual conference of the Academy of Management. Dr. Aguinis received the Responsible Research in Management Award and the best reviewer-of-the-year award from the journal *Academy of Management Learning and Education*. He also received runner-up recognition for the Saroj Parasuraman Outstanding Publication Award from the Academy of Management Gender and Diversity in Organizations Division for his *Journal of Applied Psychology* article, "Gender productivity gap among star performers in STEM and other scientific fields" (with co-author Young Yi).

INTERNATIONAL

## 2019 University of Chile-GWSB MBA Program



Graduates of the 2019 University of Chile-GWSB MBA Capstone Program are joined by GW Center for Latin American Issues Director **Kevin Kellbach** (bottom row, far left), Professor of International Affairs **Sheherazade Rehman** (to his right) and University of Chile Graduate School of Economics and Business Professor **Leslier Valenzuela Fernández** (to Rehman's right). Also present are **Dean Anuj Mehrotra** (bottom, far right) and Professor **Alejandra Haddad Bendekovic** (to his left), who is also on the faculty at the University of Chile.

RESEARCH

## Professor Receives National Science Foundation Grant

**Katina Sawyer**, assistant professor of management, received a \$185,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to study gender equity and inclusive workplace behaviors. The research will help organizational leaders understand the factors that lead to a gender equitable organization, inclusive behaviors and other positive workplace outcomes. Her

research includes interviewing both men and women who champion gender equity in their organizations. It also includes ethnographic case studies of gender equitable organizations. The study will help lead to measures and best practices that will drive large-scale, evidence-based changes in organizational systems to bring workplace inclusion.

EVENT

## Student Engagement



The GWSB Graduate Student Engagement team hosts an Industry Roundtable on the capital markets in the City View Room of the GW Elliott School of International Affairs.

The Office of Graduate Student Engagement provides students with a series of forums offering important academic and career-related information. These informative, valuable, outside-the-classroom events have proven to be very popular with GWSB grad students.

- **Meet-and-Greets** — morning (breakfast) or evening (dinner) events with accomplished GWSB alumni. The Meet-and-Greets provide students with the opportunity to meet and chat with former students and learn from their experiences on-campus and in the workplace in an informal setting.

- **Online Happy Hours** — fun, informal networking events. Participants log in to our online classroom system, Blackboard Collaborate, and interact using webcams and microphones. After an opening toast, participants are placed into virtual small groups for conversation. Following group introductions, discussions focus on a key business topic of the day.
- **Industry Roundtables** — designed to provide students the chance to go deeper in discussion with alumni, members of the board of advisors, employers, and industry leaders beyond a simple networking/meet-and-greet event. It is a chance for both discussion leaders and students to learn about each other, and for students to get an in-depth, insider's look at select industry sectors and potential career paths.



CONFERENCE

## Ready, Set, GROW!

**Dean Anuj Mehrotra** congratulates **Raagini Sarkar**, '21, vice president of professional development for Alpha Kappa Psi, and **Joseph Manzo**, '22, vice president of professional activities for Delta Sigma Pi, for their excellent work in organizing the "Ready, Set, Grow!" Career Conference. The annual student-run event, presented by the two business fraternities and sponsored by KPMG and the GW Student Association, attracted approximately 300 students for an afternoon of industry-specific panel presentations and the opportunity to meet with recruiters from leading companies.

# GWSB NEWS BRIEFS

## COMPETITION

### Record Turnout for 'Pitch George' Competition

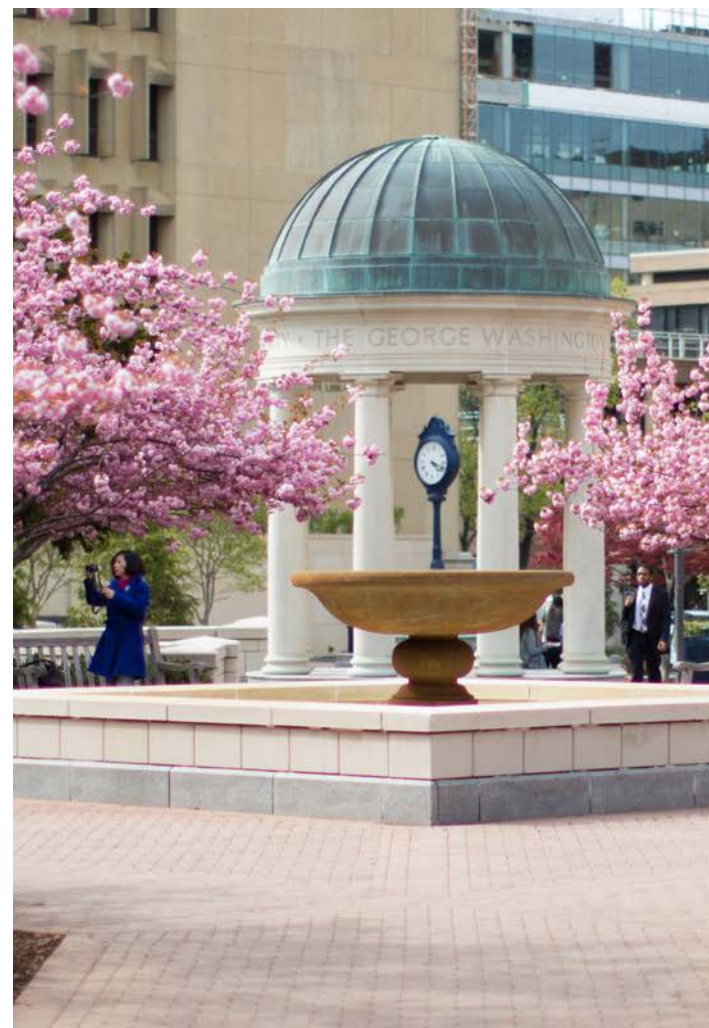
More than 200 students, alumni and staff gathered to participate in the 12th annual "Pitch George" Competition. Seventy-five student teams presented their pitches to more than 50 judges, and the top 15 teams were selected to compete in the final round. **George Solomon**, professor of management and director of the Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence, said this was the largest gathering in the history of the event.

**Dean Anuj Mehrotra** attended the final pitches and presented cash awards totaling over \$8,000 to the winning teams, who also

earned an opportunity to work with a mentor and compete in the GW New Venture Competition.

Dr. Solomon thanked Dean's Advisory Board members **Rich DiPippo** and **Ken Chaletzky**, and **Amy Millman**, president of Springboard Enterprises, for their invaluable support in making it possible for a record number of students to participate in the competition, as well as the judges who gave up their Saturday to officiate over the event.

*Final round contestants get ready to make one more pitch.*



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WASHINGTON, DC



# RESEARCH THAT MATTERS

By Herman Aguinis

Herman Aguinis is the Avram Tucker Distinguished Scholar, professor of management and chairperson of the Department of Management. In November 2019 he was ranked among the top 112 most influential business and economics researchers in the world. He has been elected president of the Academy of Management, the oldest and largest organization for management scholars and educators. More information, including many of his articles, is available at [www.hermanaguinis.com](http://www.hermanaguinis.com)





## Which are the best business schools in the world and why?

Of course, the best business schools have a lot of financial resources, nice buildings, and phenomenal IT infrastructure. Also, the best business schools attract the best professors, students and staff, and their loyal alumni remain engaged long after graduation. And, the best business schools have great global brands and reputations. **The question is “how did they get there?”** The answer is surprisingly simple and straight forward: **Research.**



In 2019, Dr. Herman Aguinis was ranked among the top 112 most influential business and economics researchers in the world.

The single most critical difference between the top business schools and the rest is that they not only disseminate knowledge, but they *create* knowledge. A business school that creates knowledge employs faculty who teach evidence-based information rather than opinion. Also, the research that they create is useful for managers and organizations to improve their performance and enhance employee well-being.

In fact, it is also useful for policymakers. And, it is the latest research that motivates alumni to remain engaged — precisely because they want to make sure their knowledge is current. This is why the best business schools are the best. They are not just brokers of knowledge that is produced elsewhere. They are the ones who produce the knowledge themselves — they are the engines of the 21st-century knowledge economy.

“The single most critical difference between the top business schools and the rest is that they not only disseminate knowledge, but they *create* knowledge.”

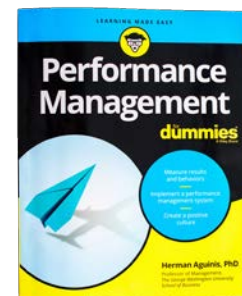
The George Washington University — and the George Washington University School of Business — are well aware of these facts and place significant value on academic research as a vital component in fulfilling their mission as leading educational institutions. Our faculty members receive enthusiastic encouragement and full support for their research from Dean Anuj Mehrotra and Associate Dean for Faculty and Research Vanessa Perry. And we have responded.

I am very proud of the research produced by my GWSB Department of Management colleagues. It’s a very long list and I apologize I cannot name all of them, but, consider research on leadership by James Bailey, Hochberg Professorial Fellow of Leadership Development and professor of management; on virtual teams by N. Sharon Hill, associate professor of management; on diversity and inclusion by Katina Sawyer, assistant professor of management; and

on top management teams by Margaret Ormiston, associate professor of management.

GWSB also supports academic research through more than a dozen research centers, each of which has contributed significantly to the greater good of business and society at large — as well as the reputation of GWSB — by producing and disseminating research that truly matters. Our research centers are world renowned as thought leaders in their respective disciplines. The Center for the Connected Consumer, headed jointly by Donna Hoffman, Louis Rosenfeld Distinguished Scholar and professor of marketing, and Thomas Novak, Denit Trust Distinguished Scholar and professor of marketing; the Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis (CREUA), directed by Christopher Leinberger, Louis Rosenfeld Distinguished Scholar; and the Global Financial Literacy Excellence Center (GFLEC), led by Annamaria Lusardi, Denit Trust Chair of Economics and Accountancy, have all earned international recognition for their groundbreaking research.

### RESEARCH: WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?



Performance Management for Dummies, by Herman Aguinis, Ph.D.

To me, being a researcher is not something I do, but who I am. It is a calling. The goal of our research, and I emphasize *our* research because it involves numerous GWSB students and colleagues, is to help improve

organizations and society while at the same time enhancing individual well-being. Also, the goal of our research is to create knowledge that is useful and actionable — that we share in the classroom and in organizations and society at large. In our research we use databases, data from surveys and interviews, experiments and computer simulations. We combine different types of research designs, measures and data with state-of-the art quantitative and qualitative



(Top photo, left to right) Dr. Herman Aguinis and his doctoral students: Isabel Villamor, Hannah Kremer, Kelly Gabriel, Rui Wang and Soolim Park. Dr. Aguinis’s doctoral students work closely with him and play an important role in his research. A number of them have co-authored published research papers with him.

data-analytic techniques. We publish results of our research in peer-reviewed journals (such as the *Journal of Management*) but also in publications accessible by thought leaders (such as *Business Horizons*), the popular press (such as *The Wall Street Journal*) and broadcast widely through social media.

Of course, our research is also published in books. I am particularly proud that my most recent book, *Performance Management for Dummies*, includes the latest research on the topic, but in a way that is widely accessible — thereby enhancing the

dissemination and impact of research generated at GWSB.

“The goal of our research, which involves numerous GWSB students and colleagues, is to help improve organizations and society and at the same time enhance individual well-being. Also, to create knowledge that is useful and actionable — that we share in the classroom and in organizations and society at large.”

## Some Intriguing Questions – and Research-based Answers

The goal of our most recent research is to answer the following questions:

1. How do employees find meaningfulness at work? What is the role of corporate social responsibility? How can organizations use corporate social responsibility as a way to engage their workforce and reduce turnover?
2. How can managers become innovation leaders? What do innovation leaders do to encourage employee behavior that results in innovation?
3. Are the top performing CEOs receiving the highest pay? How much better are the top performing CEOs compared to the rest?
4. What is most important for top performance, abilities or motivation? How do abilities and motivation combine in leading to top performance?
5. Is there a gender gap for star performers in STEM and other fields? How big is the gap? What are the reasons?
6. What makes the best leaders the best? What do the best leaders do to influence and inspire people in their organizations?
7. How can we link individual, team, and firm goals with the purpose of achieving a firm’s strategy?



Are you intrigued? On the next page, I will provide brief summaries of what we found and emphasize how our research informs practices.



Herman Aguinis, Avram Tucker Distinguished Scholar, professor of management, and chairperson of the GWSB Department of Management

#### WANT TO BECOME AN INNOVATION LEADER? HERE'S HOW

["Innovation leadership: Best-practice recommendations for promoting employee creativity, voice, and knowledge sharing"](#) – Hannah Kremer, Isabel Villamor and Herman Aguinis, *Business Horizons*, February 2019

Innovation — the implementation of creative ideas — is one of the most important factors of competitive advantage in 21st century organizations. Yet, leaders do not always encourage employee behaviors that are critical for innovation. In this paper, two GWSB doctoral students and I integrate existing literature on critical factors that serve as antecedents of creativity and innovation, and offer evidence-based recommendations for managers to become innovation leaders.

#### HOW TO USE CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO DO GOOD AND DO WELL

["On Corporate Social Responsibility, Sensemaking, and the Search for Meaningfulness through Work"](#) – Herman Aguinis and Ante Glavas,

*Journal of Management*, March 2019

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) focuses on many types of stakeholders and outcomes, including stakeholders outside of the organization and outcomes that go far beyond financial results. CSR expands the notion of work to go beyond a task, job, intraindividual, intra-organizational and profit perspective, and provides an ideal conduit for individuals to seek and find meaningfulness through work.


#### HOW TO BE THE TYPE OF LEADER THAT BRINGS THE BEST PERFORMANCE OUT OF YOUR EMPLOYEES

["Leadership behaviors and follower performance: Deductive and inductive examination of theoretical rationales and underlying mechanism"](#) – Ryan K. Gottfredson and Herman Aguinis, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, May 2017

There are competing theories and explanations for why the impact of leader behavior is stronger or weaker on follower performance. We conducted a large-scale study involving more than 900,000 people to clarify the leadership behaviors-follower

performance relation by pitting various theoretical rationales and mechanisms against each other. The main finding? As a leader, it is critically important that you have a very good relationship with your followers — and this is even more important than your ability to provide them with resources and rewards.

#### CONCLUSIONS

In an age when so many people talk about "fake news," implementing organizational practices based on research rather than opinion is more important than ever. The best business schools are those that not only disseminate knowledge, but more importantly create knowledge. I am incredibly fortunate to be part of the GWSB family, which allows me to work with talented colleagues, students and alumni in identifying challenging questions and then providing research-based answers that we use to teach our classes and also inform practices and policies with the goals of enhancing individual and firm performance as well as individual well-being. 

## GWSB ALUMNI PROFILES

# ANNA N'JIE-KONTE

MBA '14



## HELPING YOUNG INVESTORS DARE TO DREAM

By Mary A. Dempsey

Anna N'Jie-Konte, MBA '14, always liked her work as a certified financial planner, advising people with net worth between \$5 million and \$20 million on how to build their portfolios. When she was ready to launch her own firm, she stayed in the wealth management arena but set her sights on a demographic she felt was underserved: younger workers.

"I want to help first-generation wealth builders — 30- to 40-somethings," said Ms. N'Jie-Konte. "Traditionally, big firms work with older people who already have wealth and want to grow it more. The fees they charge are a percentage of your assets so they are most interested in already-wealthy people."

In August 2019, Ms. N'Jie-Konte opened Dare to Dream Financial Planning "to work with people like me, who are the first in their families to be educated for a profession, people who are trying to find the best way to structure their finances and become the first in their families to build wealth."

Much of her expanding client base has come from personal recommendations. Rather than a brick-and-mortar operation, she interacts with clients virtually.

Ms. N'Jie-Konte, who grew up in New York City, enrolled in GWSB's Accelerated MBA program in 2012 with an eye on international business. Owning a business interested her even then, but her focus wasn't on wealth management. Rather, she was looking at business and investment in Africa.

She became president of the GW African Business Association. Ms. N'Jie-Konte, who speaks English, Spanish, French and some Portuguese, was also president of the National Black MBA Association.

Family connections to Africa — both her father and father-in-law grew up in The Gambia — made her and her husband consider ways to build ties to west Africa. (Her mother is Puerto Rican.) Ms. N'Jie-Konte's husband works for the U.S. Department of State and frequently travels to Africa.

"We have African roots and we have three young daughters and we'd like them to have a connection to Africa," Ms. N'Jie-Konte said. "That was a huge motivator for me to want to start my own business that would allow me to work remotely anywhere in the world."

She currently lives in the D.C. area, but her husband is likely to have a temporary posting in Nigeria later this year. When that happens, the family will move to Abuja.

"As an undergraduate, I was a literature major and I never took a single business class. So it was in the MBA program that I learned everything I needed to manage a business, front to back," she explained. "I learned how to structure a business, market myself, create a brand."

Ms. N'Jie-Konte said "the biggest plus" from her time at GWSB came in the form of the lasting relationships she built, among them her ongoing friendship with Assiatou Diallo, MBA '14.

"I met Anna in in 2014 when we were in

the same class," said Ms. Diallo. "We were all full-time working people so our classes were in the evenings and on Saturdays. She and I connected because we both have ties to Africa — I am from Guinea — and she spoke French."

Ms. Diallo described her classmate and friend as "extremely smart, driven and ambitious." She noted that Ms. N'Jie-Konte remained dedicated to her classwork even through a pregnancy.

"She was in every class. She did her midterms, delivered her baby girl a week later and then came back to class so she wouldn't lose the semester," said Ms. Diallo, vice president of Mid-Cap Financial. "She might have made up a class or two in the summer but she walked across the stage at commencement with the rest of us."

In addition to her new company, Ms. N'Jie-Konte in February debuted a podcast, First-Gen Realness, that addresses the experiences of first-generation Americans. She hoped GWSB students are among those who identify with some of its messages.

Portfolio management for people with student loans is one of Ms. N'jie-Konte's special interests. She said it became part of her repertoire when a clients came to her with a "staggering" level of student loan debt. She began talking about how student loans affect future wealth and is working on getting that message to GWSB students.

"I see it as a way to give back, by talking to graduate students about setting themselves up for success with their student loans," she said.

Ultimately, the renovated career center will serve as a **hub for collaboration and innovation**. But the recent changes...go far beyond interior design.

# THE **NEW** F. DAVID FOWLER **CAREER CENTER**

By Brian Citizen,  
Assistant Director, Employer Relations,  
F. David Fowler Career Center

GWSB's F. David Fowler Career Center (FDFCC) has undergone an impressive makeover. The center's extensive physical renovation was designed to focus on openness and collaboration. Private offices that once faced the hallway now face inward. Walls that separated the career consulting team from the employer relations team have given way to pods and standing desks designed to spark impromptu meetings and brainstorming sessions. A spacious conference room will allow career consultants to provide students with group coaching, in addition to individual coaching.

Ultimately, the renovated career center will serve as a hub for collaboration and innovation.

But the recent changes at the FDFCC go far beyond interior design. The career center has developed a new approach to fulfilling its mission of helping GWSB students achieve their career goals. Building on the solid foundation left by FDFCC founder and former Executive Director Gil Yancey, Mark Strassman, the center's new executive director, and his team have put together a comprehensive strategy to deliver "red carpet" career management guidance.

## FINDING OUT WHAT STUDENTS WANT AND NEED FROM THE CAREER CENTER

Mr. Strassman spent his first weeks at GWSB meeting with students and collecting feedback on what students wanted — and needed — from the career center. On a Monday afternoon during the 2019 fall semester, a finance course was interrupted for an off-subject presentation. Professor Rodney Lake introduced Mr. Strassman to his students. The introduction alone would have helped students get connected to the career center, but Mr. Strassman took it a step further and shared a presentation, conveying his vision for helping students, staff and employers partner to achieve better employment outcomes.

What Mr. Strassman discovered during this and similar stops on his "listening tour" was that there were students who weren't aware of the services the career center offered and hadn't begun to map out a career plan. This needed to change. Students needed to know that the career center was there for them — and they needed a "road map" to guide them in how they could best make use of its services.

## THE CAREER ACTION PLAN

Mr. Strassman and his team launched an in-house publicity campaign aimed at increasing student — as well as faculty, staff and alumni — awareness of the F. David Fowler Career Center and set to work drawing up that road map. The result was the Career Action Plan, which is the core of the Fowler Center's new approach to comprehensive career management services. The plan allows students to track their career search activities on the path to employment, while providing the center's career consultants and employer relations team with a blueprint to assist students in reaching their goals.

The Career Action Plan consists of seven steps:

1. Self-Assessment and Visioning
2. Research
3. Resume and Cover Letter Writing
4. Personal Brand and Reputation Building
5. Network Development and Networking
6. Interview Preparation
7. Managing the Offer Process

The seven steps serve as building blocks designed to help students identify and pursue a promising career path. Students receive testing early in their freshman year to give them a sense of their career direction and choice. The self-assessment and visioning step of the career action plan is fluid and accounts for changes in preferences as students come into their own. It takes account of who they are, what they want to do, how they see themselves and how they see themselves using their skills.

Once the students have a better understanding of who they are and what they want to do, they then work with the career consultant to research and discover how their current choices align with that path.



The career center remained open for business throughout its extensive physical renovation



Brian Citizen, assistant director, employer relations, F. David Fowler Career Center

The key is a foundation of collaboration... a culture that emphasizes mission over task, breaking down job-function silos and encouraging collaborative opportunities.

The research step involves a coordinated effort to examine industries, employers and mentors who can help students find a strategic match. Once students have made strides in the practical research step, they can put the finishing touches on resumes and cover letters to appeal to a very specific audience — potential employers in their chosen area of career interest.

Students aren't the only ones researching. Employers have more tools than at any point in history to learn about job candidates. As employers evaluate resumes and cover letters, they are doing their due diligence by also perusing candidates' social media profiles.

The fourth step in the career action plan helps students put their best foot forward and build a professional brand and reputation to be reflected not just in person, but on numerous professional social media platforms as well.

Once branded, students are ready to start building a network and sharing their stories via online and offline channels. Students participate in a series of seminars and hands-on tutorials to help them better understand the intricacies of building and properly accessing a network. If the preceding steps are executed well, students will begin receiving interviews.

The Fowler Career Center career consultants engage the students in a series of mock interviews of all types to prepare them for their opportunities, no matter the industry. Behavioral, case study, online and in-person team and individual interviews are all reviewed. This inevitably leads to the seventh and final step where students are prepared to manage the offer process to ensure they are maximizing compensation, training and transition opportunities. The plan, in its totality, allows the career center to build a relationship with students early on in their journey, providing clarity at every step.

In addition to the Career Action Plan, Mr. Strassman wanted to ensure that the career center was committed to pursuing its goals and fulfilling its mission guided by positive energy, collaboration, innovation and access for all — while exemplifying Dean Anuj

Mehrotra's first principle of always putting students' interests first. "We are constantly asking the question, 'Is this better for the students?'" said Mr. Strassman. "If the answer is yes, then we do it."

### COLLABORATION: THE KEY TO MAKING THE PLAN WORK

Serving a population of more than 3,000 graduate and undergraduate students can seem like an overwhelming challenge for the relatively small F. David Fowler Career Center staff, but Mr. Strassman believes his team is more than up to it. The key is a foundation of collaboration.

Mr. Strassman has encouraged a culture that emphasizes mission over task, breaking down job-function silos and encouraging collaborative opportunities. "If you have a job, and it's your sole responsibility to do that job, you're lonely and siloed," said Mr. Strassman. "One plus one ordinarily equals more than two. I've often found that there is strength in teams and numbers."

The employer relations and student coaching teams still "own" their jobs, but they are not alone. This philosophy has reshaped the career center's environment, generating positive energy through the spirit of collaboration.

### BUILDING A TEAM

In Mr. Strassman's view, collaboration should lead to innovation. He knew that in order to innovate he needed experienced partners who naturally espoused a positive and collaborative spirit.

He found a kindred spirit in Kathleen Duffy, who was recently promoted to senior director of graduate and undergraduate career development. Ms. Duffy's passion for innovation and mentorship initially drew her to the career center, where she taps her experience in building teams in start-up environments, leadership development and coaching. She was initially recruited to launch career services for GWSB's undergraduate population. Now, she plays a key role in stewarding successful strategies for undergraduate students while developing new ones for the graduate students.



(Clockwise from top left) F. David Fowler Career Center Executive Director Mark Strassman conducts a staff meeting in the FDFCC's new conference room; Kathleen Duffy, FDFCC senior director of graduate and undergraduate career development, and Mark Strassman go over the Career Development Plan; FDFCC Senior Career Consultant Lawrence Lo (right) provides one-on-one career counseling.

"Relationships take years to build. Over the years we have built relationships with students, alumni and employers while priding ourselves on red carpet service," she said. "It's important to carry that into the future."

In Mr. Strassman's view, collaboration should lead to innovation. He knew that in order to innovate he needed experienced partners who naturally espoused a positive and collaborative spirit.

One of Mr. Strassman's first searches to complete the career services team was for a senior career consultant to help serve GWSB's growing international population. He found the perfect candidate in Lawrence Lo, who spent the past 16 years in China providing corporate training and education for Chinese professionals seeking to interact with Western culture. "For a lot of the international students, they already have an extra hurdle while looking for jobs in the market," Mr. Lo said. "I am trying to help them have a level playing field."

### ACCESS: ELITE, NOT ELITIST

Since joining GWSB, Mr. Strassman has focused building upon the work of his predecessor, and he has readily recognized the value of many of the center's existing programs. Rather than replacing them, he has been committed to taking what has worked well for GWSB students and making it work even better.

Take for example the Consulting Community of Practice (CoP), a rigorous two-year program in which students gain interview and career readiness through immersive experiences. Previously, admission to the program had been highly competitive and highly selective. Mr. Strassman wanted a program that was inclusive, not exclusive. Elite, not elitist. Now, every GWSB student has access to the program, although each must perform at an elite level to maintain access. Mr. Strassman likens the process to every student starting a class with an A grade — and being required to work hard to maintain it over the course of a semester.

The CoP's dedication to inclusivity extends beyond student eligibility. The program represents a shared commitment among students, alumni, faculty and staff

to equip students with skills needed for success in today's marketplace. Alumni are an especially critical component of the CoP's blueprint. Alumni share industry specific knowledge with students in three ways: skills-training workshops, one-on-one mentorship, and sponsoring real world pro bono consulting engagements.

"The CoP is a great opportunity for alumni to give back and elevate our brand in the marketplaces," said Milinda Balthrop, manager of the Consulting Community of Practice program. "Through the program, our alumni become a part of a self-sustaining community in which they help students succeed and those students return as mentors upon graduation."

### THE "NEW" F. DAVID FOWLER CAREER CENTER IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

With its all-new physical appearance and layout — and a new approach to its mission — GWSB's F. David Fowler Career Center is ready to serve the career management needs of its diverse student body. You can read about the center and its programs online at <https://business.gwu.edu/career-center>, or if you're on campus, please stop by and visit. **GW5B**

# BHUJIT SAINI

BS '18



# SHEJAL DESAI CARPENTER

BBA '98



## FROM GWSB TO WELLS FARGO By Mary A. Dempsey

Some days at the GW School of Business, it felt like Bhujit Saini had a twin — because she seemed to be everywhere.

She might be in her School of Business classes or working in the F. David Fowler Career Center. Then again, she could be at a meeting of the Delta Sigma Pi professional fraternity or the GW Women in Finance group. That would be, of course, when she wasn't guiding campus tours, volunteering at Colonials Weekend, preparing for a national advertising competition or heading off to an internship at the International Monetary Fund.

"When I got to D.C., I didn't have a lot of friends yet and I was far away from home. If I hadn't met people and become involved in all these activities, I would have been lonely," Ms. Saini explained.

Today Ms. Saini, BS '18, is a Wells Fargo real estate financial analyst focused on balance-sheet lending with a range of investors.

Ms. Saini is driven by a quest for new experiences. That's why she left Los Angeles to study at a university on the other side of the country.

"I love California but I wanted to try something different," she said. "I picked GW because of the location and the internship opportunities." She also liked the fact that she could pursue two undergraduate degrees at once. She graduated with Bachelor of Science degrees in both finance and economics.

At first, however, she wasn't sure how she wanted to focus her studies except that she knew she was interested in business. Once she decided on finance, she was able to home in

on a specialty area. "I decided that I wanted to be in banking. Eventually I also focused on real estate," Ms. Saini explained.

Still, her first encounter with finance concepts — in an introductory finance course — was rocky. She said Professor Senan Uyanik, who Ms. Saini described as "one of the nicest teachers on the planet," encouraged her. It was smooth sailing after that and Ms. Saini later ended up tutoring a student taking the course.

In some ways, Ms. Saini's extracurricular activities were as important as her in-classroom experiences. She joined Delta Sigma Pi in her freshman year. By the time she was a senior, she was the fraternity president. She also was a founding member of GWSB's Women in Finance group.

Hannah Sassi, BBA '17, came up with the idea for Women in Finance, but she was a senior and wouldn't be at GWSB long enough to make it a reality. She rounded up freshmen and sophomore students, led by Saini, to see if they would make it happen.

"I wanted to find out more about the field and the different career paths within finance," said Ms. Sassi, who had a concentration in finance with a minor in economics. After crossing paths in Sigma Delta Pi and working together at the F. David Fowler Career Center, she and Ms. Saini had become friends.

"I knew Bhujit could juggle many things at once. I talked to her about Women in Finance and she was enthusiastic," Ms. Sassi said.

Ms. Sassi called Ms. Bhujit a "charismatic" leader who embraced the idea of a small

organization with discussion forums, how-to sessions and other skill-building activities to help women prepare for successful careers in the field.

"Finance is such a broad word and I felt that career discussions were focusing on the areas that get the most headlines, like wealth management, where there are so many other jobs to think about," Ms. Sassi said.

Ms. Saini nabbed a Wells Fargo internship in Los Angeles in the summer of her junior year and received a job offer from the bank by the time she was a senior. "I had a decent understanding of the basic real estate concepts thanks to opportunities I had received at GWSB," she said.

The job offer was in Los Angeles, but Ms. Saini — not surprisingly — wanted to try something new. She asked for an assignment in New York.

Ms. Saini remains deeply connected to the School of Business. She sits on its Alumni in Finance Industry Leadership Council and is part of the young leaders group associated with the school's Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis. Last year, she hosted a GWSB student career trek visit to Wells Fargo.

Ms. Saini said she worked hard at GWSB. But she also credited GW's location in the nation's capital and the opportunities that presented themselves. She remains in touch with classmates and her New York social life includes several GWSB alumnae.

"That's one of the other great things about GW," she said. "You develop lifelong friends."

## SWITCHING CAREERS – WITH A BIG ASSIST FROM GWSB By Mary A. Dempsey

Shejal Desai Carpenter, BBA '98, is a career changer. She credits the GW School of Business for giving her the foundation she needed to nimbly reshape her professional path and take risks when necessary.

After graduating from GWSB, Ms. Desai Carpenter worked as a business and IT consultant, as a law clerk and lawyer, in senior management at a government-contracting company, and in small business. In her most recent career move, she became licensed to sell commercial real estate in California, where she and her husband moved in 2018. In preparation for that job jump, she got in touch with the Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis (CREUA) at the School of Business.

"We get a lot of calls from alumni who are career changers," said CREUA Director Rob Valero. "We're one of the few major universities which now have an undergraduate real estate major — and a real estate minor — but we didn't when she was a student."

Ms. Desai Carpenter said the GW Alumni Association helped her connect to Mr. Valero, who coached her on opportunities to consider in the real estate arena given her experience and values. Not only was the interaction with Mr. Valero useful professionally, but it reconnected her to GW.

"Even so many years after my graduation, GW wants me, as an alum, to feel a part of the university," she said. "It's really impressive."

CREUA offers services to both students and alumni, and Mr. Valero noted that GWSB has a strong network of alumni in real estate. He said many alumni who switch into real

estate have, like Ms. Desai Carpenter, degrees in finance.

"They want to apply their financial skills to real estate," he said. "And we try to help them make connections and determine a game plan in order to pivot towards a career in real estate."

Ms. Desai Carpenter grew up in the D.C. suburb of Silver Spring, Maryland, and had her eye on being in the heart of the nation's capital when she applied to GWSB.

"I was accepted, received financial aid and work study, and thought I'd focus on international business and marketing," she said. However, by the time she graduated, the job market was shifting and the biggest opportunities were in consulting and technology.

She'd already had a junior-year internship with PricewaterhouseCoopers, now PwC, and she landed a business consulting job with Accenture when she graduated.

"It was an amazing experience working with Accenture," she said. "I went abroad to London and had the opportunity to work on interesting telecommunications projects." But then came the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the job market shifted again.

"At that point, I was evaluating whether I should get my MBA or my Juris Doctor in law," she said. "In high school, I had done moot court and a mock trial and that had been a passion of mine."

"I thought my business background would be great for whatever job, and I liked the idea of being able to counsel business clients, so I decided to see where a law

degree would take me."

She studied at law school at George Mason University, clerked for a federal judge in Savannah and then worked for a short time at a large firm. She then shifted in-house to her family-owned businesses in IT government contracting and commercial real estate.

That was followed by a break to reassess her career and to have her son, now 3.

Although temporarily out of the formal job market with an infant, she was busy getting yoga certification and also stepping up her volunteer engagement with nonprofits that assist people who have been incarcerated, affected by substance abuse or struggling with mental health challenges. Those experiences helped build her passion as an advocate of work environments where all employees thrive and mental health issues are not stigmatized or hidden.

"Take depression, anxiety, absenteeism, for example. If you have a management that understands these components you can have healthier and more productive workplaces," she said. "A big part of it is reducing the stigma."

Thinking of her own career path, Ms. Desai Carpenter has advice for today's GWSB students.

"Know — from someone who didn't have a trajectory that is completely linear — that it's OK to think resilience and learning that you pick up on each step of your career can also be a measure of success," she said. "I've had interesting work opportunities and I've also been able to give back to the community."

# THE *Master* OF *Tourism* *Administration* PROGRAM

AT  
**45**

The Secret to Success: Project-Based  
Short-Term Study-Abroad Programs

**By Stuart Levy**

*Professor of Management  
and Tourism Studies*

The George Washington University Master of Tourism Administration celebrated its 45th anniversary this past December, feted as the oldest, most preeminent graduate degree program in tourism administration. **One of the secrets to the success and longevity of the MTA program** can be found in its focus on experiential short-term study abroad courses. According to the Association of Experiential Education, **experiential learning** is “a philosophy that informs many methodologies in which educators **purposefully engage** with learners **in direct experience and focused reflection** in order to **increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values and develop people's capacity to contribute to their communities.**”



"Even with the fast growth in online education, I am convinced that short-term study abroad programs for both on-campus and distance learning students allow for the space and time to build community, to develop real-world skills outside of the classroom, to interact personally with clients and consumers, to contribute to communities..."

*Stuart Levy,  
Professor of Management  
and Tourism Studies*

These project-based courses provide the best of both worlds — affording students the opportunity to gain practical experience by acquiring applied, real-world experiences with high-level clients — while enhancing quality tourism development in communities around the world. The very first MTA project-based study-abroad program was led in 2001 by MTA program founder and Emeritus Professor Donald Hawkins in Bulgaria. Students worked with the consulting company Associates for Rural Development (ARD) on the Biodiversity Conservation and Economic Growth Project. Using two weeks of extensive research and interviews, the student consulting team compiled its findings and presented them to a group of key local stakeholders and representatives of the World Bank, USAID and ARD. Since that time, the experiential programs have taken place in destinations around the world, among them Belize, Brazil, China, Cuba, Indonesia, Morocco and Portugal.

The MTA program offers study-abroad courses in each of its major concentration areas: event and meeting management, hospitality management, and sustainable destination management. The following descriptions of three recent study-abroad programs illustrate the variety, depth and educational value of the MTA student experience.



Behind-the-scenes tour of Junkanoo parade during the 2019 Bahamas course

**December 2018/January 2019: Customer Experience Analysis in Event and Hospitality Management: Client-Based Fieldwork in the Bahamas**

During this 10-day consulting course in Nassau, Bahamas, over winter break, students evaluated visitor experiences

including hotels, attractions, restaurants, beaches and the world-famous Junkanoo cultural festival. Students implemented a multi-method customer experience evaluation process I developed as a GWSB professor of management and tourism studies. This approach utilized techniques including user experience (UX) heuristic evaluations, participant observations, online review sentiment analyses, and peak experience interviews in order to substantiate their project analyses and recommendations.

Cultural and sociological context, as well as an “insider-only” tour of the Junkanoo, was provided by guest lecturers from the University of the Bahamas. The hands-on customer experience work was supplemented by guest lectures from students to Bahamas Ministry of Tourism executives on ways to enhance the visitor experience for future international travelers to the country.

*Students implemented a multi-method customer experience evaluation process... utilized techniques including user experience (UX) heuristic evaluations, participant observations, online review sentiment analyses, and peak experience interviews in order to substantiate their project analyses and recommendations.*

Charlotte Lewis, a GW event management student, mentioned “how important and beneficial participant observation is when doing this type of research.” She noted that being able to experience each attraction, restaurant, tour, and the destination as a whole, gave the findings more power.

“When we spoke to our clients from the Ministry of Tourism about our findings, they knew our experience was credible because we were feeling just like any other tourist. We represented the clientele that they try to cater to, so our highs and lows were authentic. This also showed how essential hands-on, real world experiences and research are when studying an industry related to tourism, events and hospitality.”



Bandung, Indonesia 2018

**June 2017: Business Strategy, Talent Development in China**

This short-term consulting abroad program led by GWSB Professor of Hospitality Management Larry Yu engaged students to work with Chinese hospitality and tourism companies in Shenzhen. The clients included Shenzhen Air International Hotel and East Overseas Chinese Town Theme Parks and Resorts. By working with these Chinese companies, students learned and gained deeper understanding of tourism development and management in a broader economic, cultural, technological, legal and political context.

Students worked on four projects with the two companies. The first involved strategy for increasing hotel sales to international visitors and talent development at the Shenzhen Air International Hotel. The second focused on sustainability management and talent development for East Overseas Chinese Town Parks and Resorts.

*By working with these Chinese companies, students learned and gained deeper understanding of tourism development and management in a broader economic, cultural, technological, legal and political context.*

Through these practical projects, which included interviews and surveys with Chinese companies and consumers, benchmarking the competitions, students had the opportunity to hone their consulting skills in management functional areas of strategy, marketing, talent development and sustainability. Students had the opportunity to visit some of the major tech companies

at site visits, such as Fliggy, a pre-travel e-commerce platform launched in 2019 by Alibaba Group, as well as Tencent’s WeChat mini programs for travel.

Moreover, students also benefited professionally from a dynamic team experience in a cultural context that values personal trust and relationships. In addition to professional engagement with Chinese companies, students were able to immerse themselves in cultural activities and social



Campo Imperatore, Italy, 2019

**June 2019: Global Business Project: Celebrating and Promoting Ecotourism in Italy**

The juxtaposition of the sea and mountains makes for an ideal travel destination anywhere in the world. But in Abruzzo, Italy, this natural beauty is combined with world-class cuisine and wine, and a rich historical and cultural context. During the summer, 14 students from the George Washington University traveled to Abruzzo for a two-week consulting project conducted in collaboration with the local D’Annunzio University of Chieti-Pescara and DestiMed, an initiative of the IUCN Center for Mediterranean Cooperation, which is a nonprofit working to promote sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean.

As Seleni Matus, executive director of GW’s International Institute of Tourism Studies explains, “the summer practicum provides Masters of Tourism Administration students with a unique opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge and to see for themselves the actual challenges and opportunities associated with sustainable tourism.” Ms. Matus, who organized and led the trip, has taken GW students to Cuba, Mexico and Indonesia during prior years.

The student-consultants were paired with three local Italian students and tasked with researching the region’s tourism landscape. Their primary focus was on developing ecotourism-related products and services, exploring market opportunities and evaluating the local and national governance structure in terms of tourism.

Presentations from area experts and professors, one-on-one interviews and site visits to local attractions — including several national parks — provided students with an understanding of and insights into this relatively unknown part of Europe.

Fred Baldassarro, a second-year MTA candidate, summed up the experience this way: “Abruzzo gave us a chance to put all of our education and theory into practice through real-world encounters and experiences. The project also allowed us to contribute to a region that is using tourism for economic development and improving the lives of people living there.”

*The student-consultants’...focus was on developing ecotourism-related products and services, exploring market opportunities and evaluating the local and national governance structure in terms of tourism.*

Applied experiential learning opportunities in destinations around the world will continue to serve as the heart and soul of the MTA program for students, hopefully for the next 45 years. Even with the fast growth in online education, I am convinced that short-term study abroad programs for both on-campus and distance learning students allow for the space and time to build community, to develop real-world skills outside of the classroom, to interact personally with clients and consumers, to contribute to communities we work with, and — last but certainly not least — to enjoy a meaningful experience in a memorable destination with one another. These courses make memories and friendships that last a lifetime. **GW**



# CUSTOMIZING SKILLS FOR PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS

By Mary A. Dempsey

ACROSS THE COUNTRY, BUSINESS SCHOOLS ARE REMAKING THEMSELVES IN RESPONSE TO FAST-CHANGING EMPLOYMENT MARKETS AND WORKING PROFESSIONALS' DEMAND FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO UP-SKILL. CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS HAVE EMERGED AS ALTERNATE WAY TO FINE-TUNE THE TALENT POOL THAT THE BUSINESS WORLD REQUIRES.







**"We have everything from certificates in traditional functional areas like management leadership and finance to niche programs like corporate responsibility and government and nonprofit accounting to skill-building areas like artificial intelligence, business analytics, cloud applications and project management..."**

**Liesl Riddle,**  
*GWSB associate dean for graduate programs*

**W**hen it comes to her career, Lori Kartchner keeps an eye on the horizon. That is why Kartchner, a curator at the George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum, began to consider how a business degree might strengthen her professional portfolio.

"I already had a graduate degree in museum education that I completed in 2013. Then I started working at The Textile Museum," Ms. Kartchner said. "I wondered what it would be like to shape my career with a business approach.

"I was considering something that provided skill-building for nonprofit management."



**"If you're thinking about going for a full MBA, a certificate is a great way to start. The credits will apply to the MBA and even if you don't go for the full degree, you still have the certificate... The certificate program gave me a flavor for what GW's MBA program is like, what its faculty is like, what its courses are like..."**

*— Lori Kartchner, curator at the George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum*

She found the answer in the Graduate Certificate Program at the GW School of Business (GWSB). The school's 24 for-credit "stackable" certificates can be acquired as stand-alone credentials, can be snapped onto in-progress MBA or Master of Science degrees to add a specialization, or, as happened with Ms. Kartchner, they can be used to test the waters on a full degree — especially after several years away from the classroom.

"We have everything from certificates in traditional functional areas like management leadership and finance to niche programs like corporate responsibility and government and nonprofit accounting to skill-building areas like artificial intelligence, business analytics, cloud applications and project management," said Liesl Riddle, GWSB

associate dean of for graduate programs.

From 2018 to 2019, Ms. Kartchner worked on a Business Foundations Certificate designed for students who do not have a business degree. It offers a grounding in accounting, marketing, finance, organizational behavior and human resource management.

After completing it, Ms. Kartchner decided to enroll in GW's online MBA program.

"If you're thinking about going for a full MBA, a certificate is a great way to start. The credits will apply to the MBA and even if you don't go for the full degree, you still have the certificate," she said. "The certificate program gave me a flavor for what GW's MBA program is like, what its faculty is like, what its courses are like.

"It let me dip my toes into the water to see if another degree was right for me," she added.

Across the country, business schools are remaking themselves in response to fast-changing employment markets, concerns about the costs of higher education and working professionals' demand for opportunities to up-skill. However, it is neither simple nor speedy for universities to change degree curricula. Certificate programs have emerged as alternate way to fine-tune the talent pool that the business world requires.

"People are longing for the skill sets needed in a changing economy, skills that may not be found in a traditional degree," said GWSB Dean Anuj Mehrotra. "A career-relevant certificate program lets you approach the highly competitive job market with a solid skill set that can lead to higher paying jobs, career advancement or a totally different professional role."

The dean acknowledged there is intense competition among business schools offering certificate programs, but he said GWSB has already distinguished itself among competitors.

"The advantage we have is that GW had already begun to understand the benefit of these certificates before other schools. Our faculty saw the need early," said Dean Mehrotra. "Not only are we further down the road in offering certificates, but we also have more of them than other schools."

A student can stack a certificate — or multiple certificates — on top of a graduate degree to customize their education. Dr. Riddle called GWSB's certificate program "the most customizable and flexible"

available while emphasizing that all of the certificate programs carry the rigor of a degree program.

"Certificate programs in most other schools are non-credit bearing. They're shorter," she said. "Ours go deeper. Our certificate students sit in the same classes as the MBA and Master of Science students and learn from the same faculty teaching in those programs."

Students in the certificate program also have access to the same services as students seeking degrees. That includes career counseling and other professional development services offered through the F. David Fowler Career Center. They also include events designed to help students broaden their professional networks, such as discussion roundtables, meet-and-greet breakfasts and dinners, and online happy hours.

"The networking opportunities inside the classroom are also exciting. People have gotten jobs because of the people they've met in their class," Dr. Riddle said. "You are in class with people who are just starting out, with people who are already in their profession, with people in a profession but who are switching over to a different one."

Some professionals also find that the company-subsidized educational benefits stretch further with certificates.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN WITHIN NEW AND CHANGING DISCIPLINES**

GW is one of the rare universities in the country offering a Graduate Certificate in Human Capital, which is focused on human resources leadership.

"It's a big differentiator for us," said D. Christopher Kayes, professor of management and director of the Master of Human Capital Management Program. "We've been teaching HR at GW for over 20 years, but this is just the second year you can get a full certificate and a full degree in human capital.

"It's a growing area. People need the management and leadership expertise to make it to the next step in their careers," he added.

Dr. Kayes said in markets like the D.C. metropolitan area, where a lot of people have advanced degrees, certificates can set apart professionals seeking promotions or new employers.

Beyond its two dozen for-credit graduate certificates, GWSB offers six professional-development certificate programs through

its research centers and institutes. Several are focused on tourism or sport management, including a Sports Philanthropy Executive Certificate. The Minerva Program certificate is designed for Latin American public and private-sector executives interested in market economics. Like the for-credit certificates, they serve a single purpose: to match knowledge to career aspirations.

GWSB has also pioneered a Master of Interdisciplinary Business Studies degree in which students complete two certificate programs and two elective courses. The electives do not necessarily have to be in the School of Business, allowing students to tailor their degrees to their interests and needs.

**"All of the students are in the class for different reasons. My classes include students in the workforce who are coming back to retool as well as students who aim to switch careers... It's exciting to open the classrooms to different perspectives and different experiences... This diversity enriches the learning experience for everyone."**

*— Susan Kulp, professor of accountancy and the faculty director of the MBA Program*

Susan Kulp, a professor of accountancy and the faculty director of the MBA Program, said the wide-ranging interests of the students pursuing certificates is changing GWSB's student enrollment in ways that deepen the peer-learning experience. Dr. Kulp teaches core courses taken by a mix of full-time MBAs, part-time MBAs, health care MBAs and certificate students.

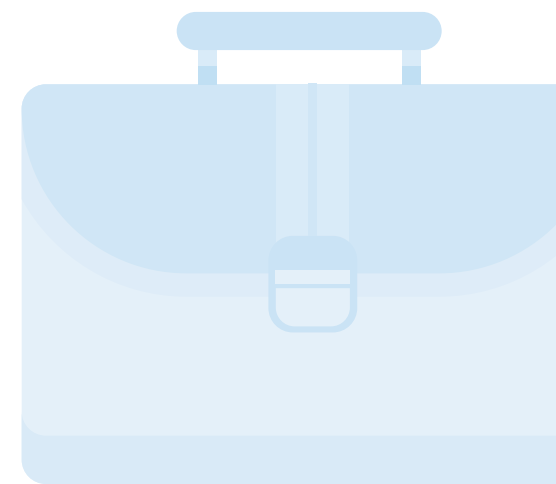
"All of the students are in the class for different reasons. My classes include students in the workforce who are coming back to retool as well as students who aim to switch careers," she said. "Even among the health care students there is diversity. Our student base includes people on the business side of health care who are working for a pharmaceutical company and research scientists who want business knowledge to run their own practices.

"It's exciting to open the classrooms to different perspectives and different experiences," she added. "This diversity enriches the learning experience for everyone."

Professors with certificate students said there is often more class engagement and the student diversity, especially by age,

**"People are longing for the skill sets needed in a changing economy, skills that may not be found in a traditional degree... A career-relevant certificate program lets you approach the highly competitive job market with a solid skill set that can lead to higher paying jobs, career advancement or a totally different professional role."**

**Dr. Anuj Mehrotra,**  
*GWSB dean*



The dean also underscored that the classrooms are changed by the certificate program... "It allows us to bring in different types of students, such as alumni who missed out on business analytics or artificial intelligence or people who find that what they learned years ago is now obsolete... Certificates give them a chance to reskill and upskill"

**Dr. Anuj Mehrotra,**  
GWSB dean

better replicates the workplace.

Panisara Pummalee, who goes by the name Min, said her interactions with other students are one of the best things about her graduate studies.



"I've always been interested in entrepreneurship"... Her goal was to build skills that might allow her to help her parents with some functions of their business while also preparing her to launch her own firm in the future.

– **Panisara Pummalee**, Master of Science in Information Systems Technology (MSIST)

In May, she will complete an Master of Science in Information Systems Technology (MSIST) with a certificate in Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship. As part of her academic work, she worked on a team in GW's New Venture Competition, where students, faculty and alumni bring entrepreneurial ideas to the table and vie for \$500,000 worth of prizes and other support.

"I've always been interested in entrepreneurship," said Ms. Pummalee, whose parents own and operate a construction chemicals business in Thailand. Her goal was to build skills that might allow her to help her parents with some functions of their business while also preparing her to launch her own firm in the future.

For the near term, she wants to deepen her work experience, "so the certificate will be a good boost on my resume," she said

The dean also underscored that the classrooms are changed by the certificate program.

"It allows us to bring in different types of students, such as alumni who missed out on business analytics or artificial intelligence or people who find that what they learned years ago is now obsolete," the dean said. "Certificates give them a chance to reskill and upskill."

He said longer lifespans mean people will be in the workforce more years, and fast-changing technology is making lifelong

learning increasingly common. "The data tells us that we need to reimagine business education beyond traditional graduate students looking for a specialty area. Certificates are part of that new thinking," he said.

The certificate program is open to any student or professional who already has a bachelor's degree. International students cannot obtain student visas for certificate programs, but they can enroll in them and study from their home countries.

For five years after the certificate is earned, its credits can be applied toward a graduate degree at GWSB. There are no tuition scholarships for graduate certificates.

However, tuition paid during a certificate program can be applied to the cost of a master's degree if a student decides to continue with a full degree.

The certificate program is open to any student or professional who already has a bachelor's degree. International students ... can enroll in them and study from their home countries.

The certificate programs were originally set up with online and face-to-face classes, allowing students to mix and match according to their needs and schedules. By the end of 2019, six of the certificates were slated to be online-only. Teaching changes precipitated by the novel coronavirus pushed all the certificate courses, as well as all other GWSB classes, online in March.

Dean Mehrotra said the next step may be partnerships with corporations seeking specific customized certificates for their employees. There is also discussion of interdisciplinary certificates in conjunction with other schools within the universities. Over time, some certificates may disappear, others may emerge.

"As we reimagine business education beyond traditional graduate programs, the certificates are designed to offer students the knowledge, skills and abilities that the market is demanding now... It's exciting to open the classrooms to different perspectives and different experiences... The main advantage of the stackable certificates is that you can combine them ... to create your own path."

– **Dr. Liesl Riddle**, GWSB associate dean for graduate programs

"Everything is moving so quickly. Our graduate certificate offerings are informed by input from GWSB's Board of Advisors, the Dean's Corporate Council and other employers," Dr. Riddle said. "As we reimagine business education beyond traditional graduate programs, the certificates are designed to offer students the knowledge, skills and abilities that the market is demanding now."

In deciding whether to pursue a certificate, and which one is best, Dr. Kayes said students should make the same considerations they would for a degree program.

"You want to think about where you want to end up and work backwards to see which program gets you there," he said. "The main advantage of the stackable certificates is that you can combine them ... to create your own path."



"After a few years in project management, I saw that there was a lot of need in IT and it felt that it was time to go back and get the IT skill set that I didn't have... professionally I have gained flexibility. I can go back into management in construction, but with a better skillset and more tools, or I can go into IT consulting."

– **Carlos Machado**, Master of Science in Engineering Management 2012

Carlos Machado did just that. Mr. Machado graduated from GW in 2012 with a Master of Science in Engineering Management and was hired as operations and logistics manager at Trayma Ingenieros, an engineering company in Nicaragua.

"After a few years in project management, I saw that there was a lot of need in IT and it felt that it was time to go back and get the IT skill set that I didn't have," Mr. Machado said. In 2018, he enrolled in the MSIST program — then snapped a Graduate Certificate in Artificial Intelligence on top of it.

"The good thing is that the four classes we need for the certificate also count as electives in our degree program," he said. "And professionally I have gained flexibility. I can go back into management in construction, but with a better skillset and more tools, or I can go into IT consulting."

"[With the Graduate Certificate in Artificial Intelligence], I am now using software and programs for statistics that might never have been in my portfolio otherwise. I've acquired knowledge with tangible skills."

– **Carlos Machado**, Master of Science in Engineering Management 2012

Mr. Machado said interviews with job recruiters have borne out his belief that the certificates carry weight in the workplace.

"It's important to know that with the certificates, you're not learning soft skills or managerial skills," Mr. Machado said. "In my case, for example, I am now using software and programs for statistics that might never have been in my portfolio otherwise. I've acquired knowledge with tangible skills." **GWSB**

"You want to think about where you want to end up and work backwards to see which program gets you there... The main advantage of the stackable certificates is that you can combine them ... to create your own path."

**Dr. Christopher Kayes,**  
GWSB director of management



## PASSION FOR MARKETING LEADS TO CAREER SUCCESS

By Mary A. Dempsey

*Ms. Pena chose GW because she liked that the city was a manageable size while its cultural and work opportunities – including internships – mirrored those of a much bigger metropolitan area.*

Katherine Pena — she goes by “Kate” — credits two GW experiences for disproportionately influencing her successful career in marketing. One was an advertising class at the School of Business. The other was good guidance from the F. David Fowler Career Center.

Ms. Pena, BBA '14, works on social media strategy for Hilton Worldwide. She is part of a small, dynamic team focused on hotel brands within the Hilton group. When Hilton relocated her to D.C. from New York in November, it felt like a homecoming.

“It’s great to be back in D.C. The four years I spent here in college are special to me,” said Ms. Pena. The move brought not only Ms. Pena back to the nation’s capital but also another GW alumnus, her boyfriend Ryan Gillis, BBA '14.

Back in 2010, when making a final decision on college, Ms. Pena chose GW in part because it was a reasonable distance from her family on Long Island. Mostly, though, she liked that the city was a manageable size while its cultural and work opportunities — including internships

— mirrored those of a much bigger metropolitan area. She also was thrilled that her degree allowed her to pursue a concentration in marketing.

“When younger, I was very interested in business early on with a particular focus on marketing. The reasons behind what drove people to purchase have always intrigued me,” she said. “With the advent of social media, there was so much white space on how to use those platforms and I very much became fixated on that.

“That carried into my career, allowing me to figure out how to best use social as a catalyst for businesses,” she added.

**“I was very interested in business early... with a particular focus on marketing... The reasons behind what drove people to purchase have always intrigued me ... That carried into my career, allowing me to figure out how to best use social as a catalyst for businesses.”**

— Kate Pena, BBA '14

Ms. Pena said Professor Lynda Maddox’s advanced advertising class during the spring

semester of her senior year sealed the deal on pursuit of a career in marketing. “That class shaped the rest of my life and helped put me where I am now with work experience,” she said.

It was in Dr. Maddox’s class that she met Mr. Gillis.

Ms. Pena said she initially balked at taking Dr. Maddox’s class, which students had described as “grueling” because of the intensity of the work involved. But the idea of helping a known brand name company manage a challenge appealed to her. The course culminated with student teams vying for recognition in the New York City round of the National Student Advertising Competition sponsored annually by the American Advertising Federation.

**“That class [Professor Lynda Maddox’s advanced advertising class] shaped the rest of my life and helped put me where I am now with work experience...”**

— Kate Pena, BBA '14

Students in Ms. Pena’s work group designed an advertising campaign for Mary Kay Cosmetics that integrated social media, website and other online marketing with more traditional marketing tools.

“They were trying to make their products more appealing to a younger generation and to capture them through social media marketing,” Ms. Pena said. “So our group was essentially the target. That allowed us to use our own habits to develop a strong marketing plan.”

The students won first place in New York for their presentation and advertising plan. That enabled them to go on to the final competition in Phoenix. Although they did not win in Arizona, the undertaking carried weight with employers.

“It gave me invaluable, tangible experience in advertising and marketing. That is how I landed my first job with an agency,” Ms. Pena said.

That first job happened to be at global advertising network McCann. Ms. Pena spent three years with the company’s social media team, working for clients that included MGM Resorts, Chick-fil-A, Jose Cuervo tequila and Coca-Cola. She then moved on to public relations and marketing consultancy Edelman, where she was involved on the Samsung account. Following that, she went to Giant Spoon, another ad agency, to work on a financial services account.

“The agency life is great and you learn a lot at a fast pace, but the work-life balance is challenging,” Ms. Pena said. “I thought about where I wanted to be in terms of geography and work-life balance and that led me to Hilton.”

In addition to the advertising class at GWWSB, Ms. Pena points to the F. David Career Center as a powerful resource that she tapped as much as she could as a student. She said the job application cover letter she wrote for practice in her freshman year, with guidance from the career center, is the same template she uses today. She also praised career counselors for encouraging students to always have an updated resume ready.

**“The agency life is great and you learn a lot at a fast pace, but the work-life balance is challenging. I thought about where I wanted to be in terms of geography and work-life balance and that led me to Hilton.”**

— Kate Pena, BBA '14

Ms. Pena said the rigor of the practice interviews she underwent, as well as the quality of the internships that the career center helped her land, set a strong foundation for career success. Networking

also provided a valuable leg up.

In fact, Ms. Pena is an active advocate for how alumni can support a strong network that helps open job opportunities through internship and permanent employment.

“She built relationships through us and benefited from the support she was getting. She saw the opportunities in the career center and went for them,” said Kathleen Duffy, senior director of graduate and undergraduate career management. “But it went beyond that. We benefited from her.”

Ms. Duffy’s philosophy has always been that GW needs to get the voice of the students and alumni in the career center. Ms. Pena became the embodiment of that.

“I’ve known Kate since 2014 when she was a graduating senior looking for career-planning ideas. In all those years — from 2014 until the present — she has always taken the initiative, stayed in touch and volunteered as an alumna,” Ms. Duffy said. “Literally the year she graduated, she was reaching out to students she was willing to mentor. It’s inspiring to have a student stay so engaged.”

Ms. Pena also helped the career center with activities and events in New York, including student visits to the firms where she worked.



Hilton Worldwide offices, Washington, D.C.



#GWCW19



Kate Pena and her boyfriend Ryan Gillis, BBA '14, at Colonials Weekend 2019

"I've known Kate since 2014 when she was a graduating senior looking for career-planning ideas. In all those years – from 2014 until the present – she has always taken the initiative, stayed in touch and volunteered as an alumna... Literally the year she graduated, she was reaching out to students she was willing to mentor. It's inspiring to have a student stay so engaged."

– Kathleen Duffy,  
Senior director of graduate and  
undergraduate career management

"Every year, the F. David Fowler Career Center goes in on a collaborative event called Summer in the City for students interning in New York," Ms. Duffy said. "We collaborate with [the Office of] Alumni Relations, the Office of Undergraduate Programs, the Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis and the GW Center for Career Services to create this event, which

has grown bigger and bigger every year.

"In 2018, Kate showed up to help us," Ms. Duffy noted.

Ms. Pena's skill at networking and volunteer service was already in full evidence as a student. As president of Epsilon Sigma Alpha, she saw the community service sorority double its membership. She was also one of the founding members of Colonial Ambassadors, a group designed to bridge the gap between alumni and current students.

After graduation, she served on the committee that organized the fifth reunion of her GW School of Business class and had a role in the university's Young Alumni network. She also connected GWSB grads with jobs and chaired the Marketing and Advertising Industry Leadership Council.

"I've hired a few GW grads at past jobs and always reach out to my GW network when I come across a vacancy," Ms. Pena said. "I was just talking to another GW

alumni last week about how you always knew you were going to get the best interns from GW."

"I've hired a few GW grads at past jobs and always reach out to my GW network when I come across a vacancy... I was just talking to another GW alumni last week about how you always knew you were going to get the best interns from GW."

– Kate Pena, BBA '14

Now back in D.C., Ms. Pena said she'd like to ramp up her engagement with GW even as she re-learns her way around a "city that has changed so much that I no longer know what is cool." She'll have to tuck that among the other things she likes to do outside of work.

"My boyfriend and I love to travel, so working with Hilton is a great perk," Ms. Pena said. She loves checking out concerts around D.C. and enjoys hanging out with friends, many of whom are GW alumni. She also claims to make an impressive chocolate chip cookie from scratch.

Ms. Duffy predicted Ms. Pena will have no trouble building a life back in D.C.

"Kate is a very authentic person," Duffy said. "She's one of those people who makes you feel like you're the only person in the room. She gives you her full attention."

In thinking back on her GWSB days, Ms. Pena offered advice for current students: Take full advantage of what the School of Business has to offer.

**"Take full advantage of what the School of Business has to offer... The network is so big and there are so many interesting people who are doing incredible things... Reach out and make connections with them."**

– Kate Pena, BBA '14

"The network is so big and there are so many interesting people who are doing incredible things," she said. "Reach out and make connections with them." **GWSB**

## GWSB ALUMNI PROFILES

# JOSH GERBEN

BBA '03



## TAKING ADVANTAGE OF EVERYTHING D.C. HAS TO OFFER

By Mary A. Dempsey

Josh Gerben took a two-pronged approach to his career. He had a plan, but he also stayed open to opportunities as they arose. That playbook explains how Mr. Gerben, BBA '03, ended up as a trademark attorney with his own law firm.

When Mr. Gerben enrolled at the GW School of Business, he planned to join his father's company, which ran automotive repair centers in the Philadelphia area.

"My intention was to go into business with him. I was interested in marketing so that's what I focused on in my undergraduate degree," Mr. Gerben explained. "But then when I got to the end of college, I started thinking about what else I could bring to the company. That's when I decided maybe I could work as its corporate counsel."

After earning an undergraduate degree, he was accepted into law school at American University where he admits to "focusing on making the grades" rather than directing himself toward a particular area of the law. By the time he finished his degree, his father's company was being tossed by the waves of the recession and Mr. Gerben realized he'd have to find work elsewhere.

He spent two years at a small law firm that focused on concessions and leases at airports. When he confided to his boss that he aspired to set up his own firm, she offered to let him work as a contract attorney and use her office space while he got established on his own.

"I was only 27 or 28 at the time, and she provided a safe base for me to get started," he said. Today Gerben Law Firm, PLLC, has

five attorneys and three full-time paralegals covering clients in all 50 states and 25 countries. His firm handles trademark and copyright issues for companies that range from small startups to \$100-million-plus multinationals.

Interestingly, the attorneys at the firm work virtually, mostly from home offices in three states. The law firm has a small brick-and-mortar location in Pennsylvania, and Mr. Gerben travels to D.C. for meetings every month or two.

Mr. Gerben's willingness to step off the traditional path and switch gears — the strategy that shaped his career path — was already evident when he was studying at GWSB. For example, in the second semester of his freshman year, he responded to a Craigslist ad seeking student volunteers to help prepare and deliver the daily press report at the White House. It wouldn't give him business experience, per se, but it sounded intriguing.

"It was an opportunity to show up at 4:30 in the morning, read the newspapers and any reports that mentioned President Clinton or his administration," Mr. Gerben said. "We'd photocopy those items and put them into a morning book. That would go to the printing shop in the basement of the Old Executive Building and then we'd take the final reports — sometimes 100 pages long — and walk them all over the White House to distribute them every morning."

He did the work for a year — dashing back to Foggy Bottom each morning in time for his first classes — and even took part in

the White House Easter Egg Roll.

Later at GW, he had an internship at the Department of Justice and another at Wiley law firm, which was then Wiley Rein & Fielding. "I worked in Wiley's marketing department. I started to see law and business coming together for me," he said. "Now with my own firm, trademark is all about marketing so it all ties back to GW."

Mr. Gerben is often quoted by news outlets giving his opinion on high-profile trademark cases, such as the decisions by Baltimore Raven Lamar Jackson and Seattle Seahawk Marshawn Lynch to seek trademark protection for phrases and expressions they commonly use or Kylie Jenner's trademark applications for the terms "Kylie Con," "Kylie Kon" and "Kylie Museum."

"We don't represent those folks but we watch interesting trademark filings," Mr. Gerben said.

He pointed to the trademark implications of Brexit and a rise in fake trademark applications from China as areas of concern in his field.

When he's not at work, Mr. Gerben said he's doing "kid stuff" with his wife and his children, aged 6, 4 and nearly 2.


Mr. Gerben looks back fondly on his time at GWSB — and offers a bit of advice to current students.


"I had the opportunity to learn the basics of business as an undergraduate. Plus taking advantage of being in the city was something that was hugely impactful in my life," he said. "If you're a student at GW, you should take advantage of everything the city has to offer."

# GWSB CLASS NOTES


## '70s


 **John D. Klinedinst, MBA '75**, received the 2019 Most Admired CEO Award presented by the *San Diego Business Journal*.


 **Paul Ried, MBA '78**, was named one of *Forbes* "Top Wealth Advisors for 2018." Mr. Ried is the president and CEO of Paul R. Ried Financial Group, LLC, in Bellevue, Wash.


 A tech CEO by day, **Chris Formant, MBA '79**, published his second book, *Saving Washington: The Forgotten Story of the Maryland 400 and the Battle of Brooklyn*, a historical novel told from the perspective of two teenagers.


## '80s

 **Josh Kuriloff, BBA '81**, a member of the GW Board of Advisors and board of the Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis, was named Cushman & Wakefield's number one leasing broker globally this past spring. Mr. Kuriloff, who serves as executive vice chairman at Cushman, was also named to the *Commercial Observer's* "Power 100" earlier this year.

 **Thomas Sherman, MBA '81**, received the Five Star Wealth Manager award for the seventh consecutive year. Of the 3,000-plus advisers in Westchester County, N.Y., considered for the award, fewer than 100 receive this honor. Mr. Sherman also received the 2018 Top Wealth Adviser award from Westfair Communications, publisher of the business journals for Westchester and Fairfield (Conn.) counties. The award was given to 40 individuals among all advisers who live or work in the two counties.


 **Lee Hurwitz, MBA '82**, was interviewed by Bill Fletcher on the WPFW radio (89.3 FM) program "Arise" about his novel *Capital City*.


 **Toya L. (Atkinson) Evans, BBA '85**, is launching her first Tropical Smoothie Cafe franchise. She and her partners (who are also her daughters) are working to bring multiple units to Prince George's County, Md.


 **Kenny Emson, BAcy '89**, was named COO of the National Multifamily Housing Council, a D.C.-based trade association representing the apartment industry.


## '90s

 **Dan Simons, BBA '92**, was honored with the Don Hawkins Tourism Innovation Award at the annual GW Tourism Colloquium. Mr. Simons, the founder and co-owner of Farmers Restaurant Group, was unanimously selected for the award by the Master of Tourism Administration (MTA) faculty for his leadership and support of GWSB and the MTA program.


 **Frank Cilluffo, ESIA '93**, was hired by Auburn University to lead its cybersecurity institute. Mr. Cilluffo is a former Homeland Security official who directed GW's Center for Cyber and Homeland Security and worked with GWSB to launch the World Executive MBA in cybersecurity.


 **Christopher Capece, BBA '95**, joined Heatherwood Luxury Rentals as president, overseeing development and operations for the Heatherwood portfolio.


 **Neli Loewenthal, MBA '98, PhD '16**, joined the GWSB faculty as a visiting teaching assistant professor of international business.

 **Kathy Warden, MBA '99**, was named chief executive of Fortune 500 company Northrop Grumman, having previously served as the company's president and chief operating officer.


## '00s


 **Sabrina Ashjian, BBA '01**, was appointed by former Governor Jerry Brown of California to serve on the Cannabis Control Appeals Panel and has been elected as chair of this panel.


 **Bridget Dooling, BBA '01**, returned to GW as a research professor with the GW Regulatory Studies Center and is thrilled to be back.


 **Jeanelle (James) Johnson, BBA '01**, was admitted to the partnership at PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP in the firm's D.C. office, in the deals business.


 **Dean Sonderegger, MBA '02**, was appointed vice president and general manager for legal and regulatory at Wolters Kluwer. Mr. Sonderegger will continue to spearhead the company's focus on customer-focused innovation, with a strong emphasis on the rapid development of advanced digital products and services to enhance legal professionals' efficiencies and workflows.


 **Will Sparks, PhD '02**, wrote a new book, *Actualized Leadership: Meeting Your Shadow & Maximizing Your Potential*, published by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). The book draws on over 20 years of research into the psychology of leadership and emphasizes the impact that the late GW Professor Emeritus of Management Jerry B. Harvey had on Mr. Spark's research and writing.


 **Gregory Sanda, MBA '03**, was named partner at Schiller, Knapp, Lefkowitz & Hertz, LLP, where he has worked for the past five years.


 **Karen Kline, GWSB '04, LAW '08**, was one of 22 attorneys that the Florida Bar honored for pro bono work. Ms. Kline is a partner at Duane Morris in Boca Raton, Fla., where she has increased participation on the company's Pro Bono Committee from 46 to 100 percent, takes on pro bono clients, and volunteers with the Girls Educational & Mentoring Services organization.

 **Russell Fugett, MS '07**, published *Patience Perseverance Prayer: A Devotional for Entrepreneurs*, which is now available at Amazon.


 The Forte Foundation recently recognized **Titilola Harley, BBA '07, MBA '09**, as an "MBA on the move." Ms. Harley and her husband Kiyon welcomed their son Caleb into the world in January 2017. He was followed by sister Chloe in October 2018.


 **Jessica Brown, BBA '08**, founded advertising agency Joy Riot in Virginia in 2017 and was recently named one of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce's 40 Under 40 honorees.


 **Jenny Abreau, MTA '09**, discussed the ways in which businesses can better incorporate diversity and inclusion in their event planning in a recent PCMA video.


 **Graham Quinn, MBA '09**, was named Philly311's executive director. Mr. Quinn has been with Philly311 since 2012, working with the organization's customer relationship management system. He was instrumental in launching the organization's first mobile app.


## '10s


 **Sabina Puppo, EMBA '10**, and her husband are living in Uruguay while pursuing a lifelong dream of living off the land and growing their own food. She has also rediscovered her passion for painting. Her oil paintings and engobe pottery celebrate the rural landscape in Pueblo Edén where she currently lives. Other paintings show life in New England, where she lived for decades.


 **Laura Jaffee and Charles Weisman, BA '10**, were married July 20, 2019.


 **Anthony Shop, MBA '11**, was featured in the *Washington Business Journal's* "new guard list" of influential leaders in the region in honor of his work with Social Driver, for which he serves as chief strategy officer.


 **Colleen Koenig, BBA '12**, is entering the senior home health care industry with her new company, eCaregivers. The online platform connects care seekers and care providers for direct hire care, which can be provided at home or wherever the senior chooses to live. eCaregivers helps families find and manage care that is affordable, flexible, connected and transparent. Now operating in over 18 states on the East Coast with over 5,000 providers, eCaregivers is seeking expansion and partnership opportunities to go nationwide and help all Americans find the best senior care available, on their terms.

 **Karla Patricia Perez and Jason De Los Reyes, MS '12**, were married December 12, 2019, in Santiago, Spain.

 March of Dimes recently named **Cindy Rahman, MBA '12**, its senior vice president and chief marketing officer. Ms. Rahman, who has 15 years of integrated communications experience, joins the organization from BRG Communication, where she served as senior vice president.

 **Adam Richelieu, MTA '16**, salary cap manager for the NFL Players Association, was recently named to the *Forbes* "30 Under 30 List – Sports."

 **Inesh Singh, MBA '17**, became the first chief sustainability officer of Sula Vineyards in India. Mr. Singh previously interned with PepsiCo's North America unit.

 **Edward Kuczynski, BBA '18, MS '19**, appeared on a "Wheel of Fortune" episode that aired on January 3, 2020.



# ALICIA L'ESPERANCE

**BBA '09, MBA '17**



## GWSB MBA: TEACHING DISCIPLINE AND DRIVE

By Mary A. Dempsey

Alicia L'Esperance, BBA '09, MBA '17, readily admits that corporate and product branding is her passion, and she is energized by her job as senior associate of brand marketing at Sony Corporation of America.

"My job is to help boost Sony's U.S. brand recognition within the entertainment space and build a consistent brand experience across all of our digital marketing channels," she explained.

But there's another subject she's equally enthusiastic about: the empowerment of women in business. It is the driver of her continued connection with the GW School of Business. Last fall, she was a featured speaker in New York at the alumni networking dinner of GW Women in Business (GWWIB). In late February, Ms. L'Esperance returned to campus to take part in a roundtable with MBA students.

"We're at an interesting time in the world where women are more and more being empowered to have a voice, to be leaders of industries and organizations," Ms. L'Esperance said. "It's a big part of who I am and what I want my legacy to be, to empower younger women."

She also volunteers as a mentor to girls in high school through Junior Achievement.

"I try to convey to them that there is no dream that's too big and there's nothing you can't achieve if you put in the hard work and you're true to yourself," L'Esperance said.

At GW, Ms. L'Esperance was also co-founder and chief operating officer of the Alpha Kappa Psi professional business fraternity and co-chair and vice president

of membership development for GWWIB. And to think that GW wasn't originally even part of her plan.

"GW wasn't one of the universities I was considering," she explained. "After a tour with my mom at the University of Virginia, we had a tour scheduled at American University the next afternoon. So we drove to D.C. to the hotel we had booked. Over breakfast we heard some people talking about GW and realized our hotel was at Foggy Bottom."

On a whim, they joined a guided tour of the GW campus.

"I fell in love with the campus. I loved being right in the heart of the city," she said. A Presidential Academic Scholarship from GW sealed the deal. And it probably helped that D.C. wasn't too far from her family in New Jersey.

When she graduated in 2009, a recession was underway and people were scrambling for jobs. She learned through a friend about an internship at an advertising company in New Jersey. After a few months, she was hired full time.

"I got a feel for what it was like to create an advertisement from start to finish and what it was like to work with a large brand on the agency side," she said. From there, she moved to a media-buying agency in New York where she worked for a year on the General Motors account. She said it was glamorous life jammed with the kind of New York City moments she had dreamed about as a student.

However she wanted to learn more about the field. So she moved to a publishing

company then decided, if she was to advance in the area of brand management, she'd need an MBA.

GW had just launched a distance-learning MBA program designed for working professionals who wanted to stay in their jobs while pursuing a degree full time. She liked GW and thought the business school was strong, so she applied.

"It took three years with a lot of hard work and long nights," she said. "I was engaged and planning a wedding, just starting a new job and getting an MBA all at the same time."

Her husband, Fritz L'Esperance, CCAS BS '09, has a chemistry degree from GW and works as an account director for GE Healthcare. The couple met as freshmen in the same dorm, and they both had part-time jobs at Marvin Center, where Alicia L'Esperance worked in the scheduling office. In addition to her schoolwork at GW, Ms. L'Esperance was a Colonials cheerleader for a year. She later turned that into a professional cheerleading assignment with the National Football League.

"I cheered for the New York Jets. It was right before I went to get my MBA," she said. "It certainly kept me busy, but it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I would not trade for the world."

"It definitely taught me discipline and drive — and I used both when I worked full time while getting my MBA," she added.



### 2020 GW GRADUATES: CONTINUE TO LEARN WITH US THIS FALL

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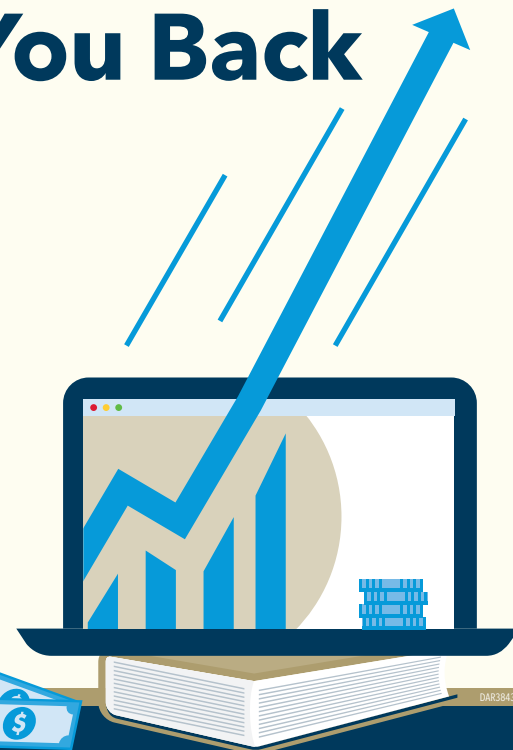
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