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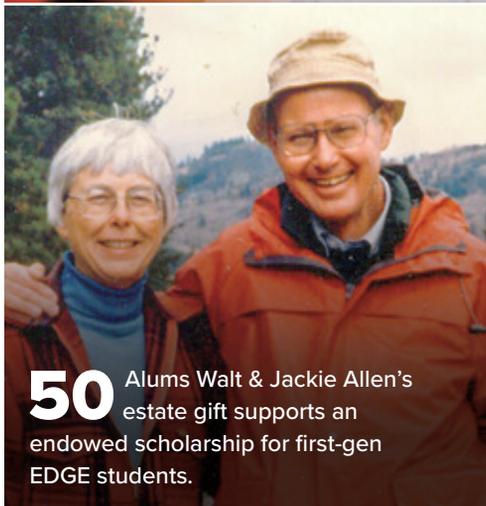


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A MESSAGE

FROM THE INTERIM DEAN

Dear friends,

I'm excited to introduce "Business Education: A Key to Thriving Societies" as the theme of this issue of *Dividend*. The Carson College of Business strategy has always included a desired societal impact. It is both a privilege and a challenge to continually create relevant opportunities through our business programs and scholarship that benefit society. We engage with many communities in our state, the Pacific Northwest, and across the world to achieve this mission.

Perhaps no one understands this better than philanthropists Phyllis ('73 Busi. Admin.) and Bill ('69 Civ. Eng.) Campbell, who recently established the Phyllis J. Campbell Endowed Deanship in the college. The deanship is the second of its kind at WSU. It's impossible to enumerate all the ways this unparalleled gift will support our programs, but in short, it will provide a sustainable base of support for innovation and excellence in our college. You can learn more about this transformational investment in our cover story on page 2.

The study of business has a unique role in creating practical applications for an ever-evolving world. As a college, we've strategically focused on programs, scholarship, and research that promote economic growth and productive, meaningful work, which aligns with the United Nations' sustainable development goal of "decent work and economic growth." Our societal impact efforts align with several other UN goals listed below:

- No poverty
- Good health and well-being
- Gender equality
- Industry innovation and infrastructure
- Responsible consumption and production
- Peace, justice, and strong institutions

Our features showcase the variety of ways our programs and people touch these UN goals and other advancements affecting society, such as the rapid growth of generative AI that is driving new challenges in business as well as in the classroom. For example, you'll learn about how our faculty are teaching students how to ethically use ChatGPT and other AI tools to be prepared for a new level of employer expectations.

Other features illustrate our efforts to teach future policy leaders to think critically about addressing social problems through marketing and taxation. You'll learn how we work



with other WSU colleges to offer professional certificates for anyone seeking new skills or wanting to level up in health care, hospitality, and technology fields as they evolve. We invite industry leaders and employers to help us deliver relevant curriculum, as you'll see in our features about WSU Everett's SOAR program and WSU Vancouver's Business Growth Mentor and Analysis Program. Both programs pair student teams with industry professionals to practice real-world business strategies.

It's imperative that we work collectively to bring renewed focus to the value of a Carson College Business degree that will prepare our graduates to solve some of society's most pressing issues. I am thankful for each and every one of you for the difference you make in the lives of our students and the contributions you make to support the Carson College of Business.

Go Cougs!

Debbie Compeau
Debbie Compeau



Phyllis J. Campbell

“The more we invest
in students, the more
we benefit the world.”



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Phyllis J. Campbell

Endows Deanship Supporting Business Education

By Sue McMurray



The Carson College of Business is poised to push the frontiers of academic scholarship, research, and innovation because of a generous gift from Phyllis ('73 Busi. Admin.) and Bill ('69 Civ. Eng.) Campbell of Issaquah.

The Phyllis J. Campbell Endowed Deanship is only the second to be established in WSU's history. It promises to have a tremendous impact on Carson College programs and faculty and provide a sustainable base of support for opportunity and excellence.

"The Carson College of Business is extremely grateful to Phyllis and Bill Campbell for their extraordinary commitment and generosity to advance the leadership of the college," says Interim Dean Debbie Compeau. "I am proud the Carson College deanship will carry the name of such a strong and dedicated business leader as Phyllis and look forward to being able to direct this unparalleled investment toward the highest priorities of the college."

Compeau says the college could use the deanship to reward high-performing faculty, promote strong enrollment, support student programming, and improve facilities—all of which tie into the college's comprehensive efforts to positively impact the state of Washington, the Pacific Northwest, and the world.

Life-changing scholarship cultivates future philanthropy

The Campbells' motivation stems from support Phyllis experienced when applying to WSU. Her father made a modest living as a dry cleaner in Spokane and had limited capacity to pay for college. Phyllis's business education became possible when she received a generous check from a woman who established a scholarship at WSU.

Phyllis and Bill met as undergraduates and married not long after Phyllis graduated. Phyllis went on to become a successful bank executive, philanthropist, and civic leader. But she never forgot that scholarship and other WSU resources that allowed her to earn her degree and launch a prolific, trailblazing banking career in the Pacific Northwest—first in Spokane and ultimately in Seattle.

"When we were approached about making this gift, Bill and I really thought about what Washington State University afforded us and the doors that had opened," Phyllis says. "We thought this was a way to pay it forward and support amazing programs for current students but also opportunities in research."

Carving a path to leadership

Officially, the gift comes from both Phyllis and Bill. The fund honors Phyllis's name as a nod not only to her longtime business influence in the Pacific Northwest but also her achievements as a woman in a traditionally male industry.

"It was really hard to find a job back then, especially for women," Phyllis says. "I wanted to work for Old National Bank in Spokane. They weren't hiring. They were skeptical of hiring women back then for whatever reason. So, I had to call them—every day.

"I share this story of persistence with students. I called the bank every day for 20-some days straight; I think they got so tired of me pestering them. I did get hired in their management training program. That was the start of my banking career."

Phyllis was the first woman to lead one of Washington's larger banks when she was named president and CEO of US Bank of Washington in the early 1990s. After 40 years of executive experience and extensive board participation, she is renowned for her ability to foster a high-performance climate.

Throughout her career and life, she has been deeply committed to investing in WSU and in the Carson College, participating in Power Breakfasts, on various dean's advisory councils, and guest lecturing on campus, along with other forms of service to the university. She also served as a WSU Regent from 1991 to 2003. Among her professional distinctions are honorary doctorates from Whitworth College and Gonzaga University as well as the Regents' Distinguished Alumni Award in 2006, WSU's highest honor.

Now retired, she and Bill continue to carry out their philosophy on giving: the more you give, the more you get back.

"The Carson College curriculum will evolve students' future-oriented skills, maximizing the intellectual engagement necessary for an increasingly diverse workforce," Phyllis says. "The more we invest in students, the more we benefit the world."

The couple has also made gifts supporting WSU athletics and engineering programs.

"An endowed deanship at WSU's Carson College of Business in the name of Phyllis J. Campbell is fitting for so many reasons," says Kirk Schulz, WSU system president. "Not only has Phyllis done her alma mater proud by way of a distinguished business career, but she and Bill—a fellow Cougar—have paid it forward in spades with a philanthropic spirit that is sure to impact business students, faculty, and staff at WSU for generations to come. On behalf of the entire WSU system, I extend my utmost gratitude to the Campbells for their continued generosity and foresight." 

Excerpts taken from "Phyllis J. Campbell Endows Deanship at WSU's Carson College of Business" by Bryan Boyle, published April 25, 2024, in the *WSU Insider*.

Let's ChatGPT

Working Professionals Say AI Training Is Critical within Higher Ed

By Sue McMurray

Artificial intelligence (AI)—this rapidly evolving technology strikes apprehension in the hearts of some and excitement in others. While traditional AI models are designed for specific tasks, a subset called “generative AI” can create images, text, video, audio, and software code. Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT hold the allure of creating compelling content within seconds but pose a risk of being indistinguishable from human work to the untrained eye.

Higher education institutions are facing a dilemma of how to deal with the disruption to traditional teaching methods, as it's nearly impossible to tell when students are using generative AI to complete course work. From serious concerns about plagiarism and inaccuracy to unease about potential biases and cybersecurity risk, it's understandable why some institutions and faculty are slow to accept generative AI or incorporate it into their teaching methods.

Yet the Carson College of Business's 2024 report *AI & Business Readiness* revealed half the professional workforce is concerned they will be left behind in their careers if they aren't prepared to use AI and its various forms in the workplace.



Business report reveals higher ed's critical role in AI readiness

The report's key findings are shaping the college's perspective on the impact of AI in the workplace, the critical role higher education plays in AI readiness, gender gaps in AI usage, and the degree to which senior workforce leaders are engaged with AI.

According to the report, over half of American professionals say they use AI in their jobs to analyze data and predict trends, produce content or communications, and more. A majority agree today's college graduates should be prepared to use AI upon entering the workforce and see a critical role for higher education in preparing future graduates to use AI. Professionals also believe higher education can do more, including educating students on AI risks such as accuracy and privacy.

While women and men shared many views on AI in the workplace and higher education's role in preparing graduates, the survey revealed notable gender gaps in access, usage, and optimism. Fewer women than men have received AI resources or use AI at work. Men are more generally optimistic about AI's potential, and more value creative thinking as a key AI skill. However, both men and women widely agree college graduates should be prepared to use AI in the workforce and that colleges and universities should educate about the dangers of AI, not just the practical uses.

The survey found most senior professionals are more engaged in using and learning AI and more optimistic about its potential at work. More senior-level leaders have been provided AI resources at work and information about using AI in their roles. Senior professionals also believe the US will become less competitive than other countries if colleges don't provide dedicated AI training.

To mitigate concerns about business professionals being unprepared to use AI, Interim Dean Debbie Compeau challenged Carson faculty to integrate AI into their teaching methods, specifically generative AI.

Preparing students to excel in an AI-driven future

"When we embrace the potential of the broad field of AI to create value and transform

work—while also addressing ethical concerns—we allow our students to excel in an AI-driven future," Compeau says. "As we create learning opportunities, we also strive to align with the United Nation's sustainable development goals, such as the promotion of economic growth, productive employment, and decent work for all."

A faculty working group led by Professor Robert Crossler, chair of the Department of Management, Information Systems, and Entrepreneurship, meets regularly to develop ways to integrate generative AI into existing programs and create policy.

"We need to be proactive because it's where the world is going," Crossler says. "Students feel ill prepared to enter the workplace, and this training will give them confidence. This is an opportunity for students to challenge themselves and become leaders who can provide insights and value to society."

Faculty are also rising to the challenge (Read more on pp. 6–9). As one example, Professor Joe Compeau created Emerging Technologies: Generative AI & Business, a senior-level information systems elective. The goal is to develop business professionals who can investigate and make recommendations regarding emerging technologies.

"We can no longer use traditional methods of evaluation," he says. "Students can use generative AI, and you can't tell. You have to recognize this, have more discussion, and change your expectations. A lot of students need to change their perception that using generative AI is a substitute for work. Instead, they need to view it as a collaborative tool that can support their learning."

Andrew Perkins, professor and chair of the Department of Marketing and International Business, is heavily incorporating generative AI into his senior-level Marketing Management course. Students use generative AI to develop marketing campaigns and are allowed to use ChatGPT—within guidelines—on assignments to access information, clarify concepts, and bolster arguments.

"Familiarity with large language models like ChatGPT will not only aid students in completing assignments but also empower them to explore diverse research topics and communicate effectively in a digital workforce and world," Perkins says. 

Emerging Technologies Class Introduces the Game-Changing Power of AI

By Sue McMurray

Though he has plenty to say when it comes to information systems training and the adoption of new technologies, Professor Joe Compeau's classes never feel like a lecture, according to his students—especially those taking his new senior-level course Emerging Technologies: Generative AI & Business.

Compeau developed the course quickly in response to the Carson College's efforts to integrate generative artificial intelligence (AI) into existing programs and create ethical use policy. The course teaches undergraduates studying business how to assess emerging AI technologies and make user recommendations.

"Every student must be trained on AI to be prepared for the professional workforce—we can't wait around for others to tell us how to use it in our classrooms. The Carson College is way ahead of the game," Compeau says.

Compeau's course is fast-paced and requires substantial research and writing as students learn about emerging technologies including core AI, machine learning, and the application of generative AI in business contexts. Generative AI is a subset that can create images, text, video, audio, and software code.

AI experience empowers confidence

"I chose this class because I had reservations and worries about generative AI but also realized how game-changing it was. I had to know more," Lucas Soto ('24 Mgmt. Info. Sys.) says. "I worked at an accounting firm that used ChatGPT to outsource time-consuming tasks. I wanted to learn and be on the right side of this massive technological development."

Some students admit struggling with experimenting with AI tools and taking risks.

"I got very stuck on how to make a website prototype. Then I remembered Professor Compeau said to ask ChatGPT when we have questions and treat it like a human assistant," Hayle Kiblinger ('24 Accounting, Mgmt. Info. Sys.) says. "It taught me to utilize Chat for overall learning before giving up or relying on the professor."

Ciaragh Thompson ('24 Accounting, Mgmt. Info. Sys.) says learning to be creative was most challenging: "I often

found myself at a standstill when trying to prompt AI in order to produce something for an assignment. I followed class guidelines and bounced my ideas off of my peers and the AI tool in order to generate more ideas."

Strategic assignments inspire creativity and job readiness

Compeau's students work individually and in groups to create images, videos, websites, and presentations that help them develop their technical and analytical skills and a managerial point of view. For example, students made Super Bowl advertisements for a product of their choice and created a web page with parameters generated by Bing AI and HTML code generated by ChatGPT.

"I like how open-ended the assignments are. They are not rigid, and the floor is ours to create things we want to continue transforming into something better and more useful," Soto says. "Professor Compeau always pushes us further in the development of the project we are creating rather than just settling for a rubric."

The idea is to show students how they can use AI for storyboarding and create their ideas more accurately. But they also have to do research because AI doesn't always interpret information accurately, Compeau says.

Group projects hold more weight than the final exam. Students work in teams to write an analysis on an AI technology of their choice and its impact on industry. Then they develop a professional class presentation suitable to put before managers of an organization as defined by the group.

The final exam is open book and may ask students to compare different cases, reargue a point from case discussions, assess a recent technology, and reflect on class learning.

"This is my favorite class. Professor Compeau makes it exciting, and we get so much hands-on practice. You can tell he is clearly passionate about emerging AI, and it only encourages us to be as well," Kiblinger says. "Before I start my work as an auditor with Ernst & Young, I'll be studying for the CPA exam. I plan to use my AI skills to set study schedules and at EY to enhance my work and help my coworkers." 



Joe Compeau

“Every student must be trained on AI to be prepared for the professional workforce—we can’t wait around for others to tell us how to use it in our classrooms. The Carson College is way ahead of the game.”

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ChatGPT Tools Are an AI Opener for Marketing Students

By Sue McMurray

To resist using artificial intelligence tools in the classroom is like fighting against a tidal wave—there's no way to stop it and no way to catch it, according to marketing Professor Andrew Perkins.

While he has colleagues at other universities who make AI tools illegal or use outdated technology to catch students using ChatGPT, Perkins is one of several Carson College of Business faculty to proactively integrate new technologies into the classroom under the premise they will make students more competitive in the workforce.

His senior capstone class Marketing Management uses large language models like ChatGPT to enhance students' academic performance and ability to communicate effectively in a digital world.

"These tools level the playing field for everybody and have a huge societal component. The combination of an internet connection and access to AI, even a free version, allows anyone to leverage their skill set up to 100 times over what they would be able to do by themselves," Perkins says. "That allows anybody anywhere in the world to educate themselves and to start a business, get hired, or build skills."

Perkins says AI allows him to be more creative as a teacher and more efficient with time, freeing him up to work on engagement, discussion, teamwork, and assessment instead of spending hours writing a case study or classroom activity.

AI has changed a lot about the way Perkins teaches, but not everything.

No matter the topic or grade level, Perkins strives to put students at ease while challenging them to use AI tools. In his classroom, students listen to classical jazz in the background, play games, and earn prizes. Don't think for a moment that a fourth-year student is too old to be excited about getting a toy for good work. The look of joy on Lucas Smith's face said it all when he chose a yo-yo from a grab bag as a reward for a logo creation.

"The real-life economy projects we've worked on over the semester are my favorite and have been a super-fun experience. You can tell Professor Perkins cares about us a lot and wants us to succeed after we graduate," Smith says. "Using ChatGPT really expanded my outlook on what the

future workforce is going to look like and how our future employers will expect us to use AI models."

Simulated business settings enhance learning

Perkins uses Marketplace Simulations, an online learning resource, to illustrate marketing concepts. In one simulation, student teams developed a brand, product, budget, communication strategies, and market segments for 3D-printed bicycles. At the conclusion of the simulation, each group wrote papers to discuss their results and recommendations and created a final presentation summarizing the last two quarters of the simulation and team performance.

In a different exercise, students used AI to characterize customer profiles for one of Tesla's electric vehicle, battery storage, or solar power markets. They predicted how Tesla customers would change over time and how Tesla should adapt communication strategies and products for optimum customer appeal and retention.

Students also used ChatGPT image generation to design prototypes and logos for fictitious companies they created and for real entities such as the WSU Granger Cobb Institute for Senior Living. They designed a marketing plan for the institute that included a T-shirt and tagline to make senior-living industry careers appealing to college students.



Perkins infuses financial literacy into the curriculum through a game focusing on the importance of cash flow and the role of banks. Students formed teams simulating a bank, three companies, and employees. Equipped with a box of coins, teams learned to pay rent and wage expenses, practice lending money, invest in assets, and charge interest to generate income.

Freedom and variety ramp up classroom engagement

In class, McKenna Cato appreciated the freedom to experiment and Perkins's emphasis on AI as a tool rather than something that takes away from the learning environment.

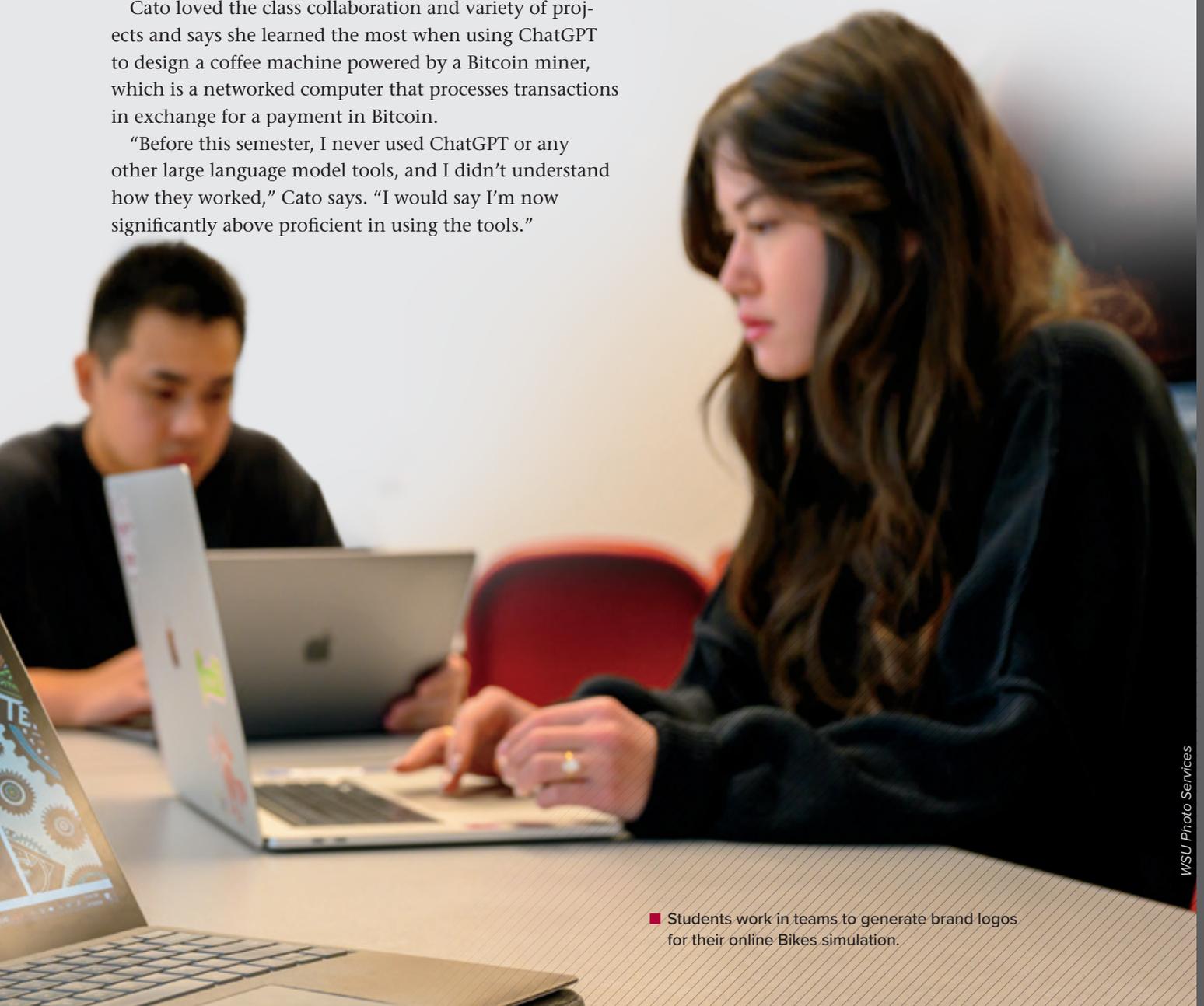
Cato loved the class collaboration and variety of projects and says she learned the most when using ChatGPT to design a coffee machine powered by a Bitcoin miner, which is a networked computer that processes transactions in exchange for a payment in Bitcoin.

"Before this semester, I never used ChatGPT or any other large language model tools, and I didn't understand how they worked," Cato says. "I would say I'm now significantly above proficient in using the tools."

She's already used her new AI skills to create custom GPTs for her dad's company and an accounting/finance study guide.

Perkins says one of the most rewarding things about incorporating AI into the classroom is that students learn about the tools they'll use professionally for the rest of their lives. Students are happy, and class attendance is nearly 100 percent.

"I've seen an incredible transformation in how students engage in class," he says. "I can look into their faces, and most of the time they are right there, super engaged—much more so than before I started integrating AI into the classroom." 



■ Students work in teams to generate brand logos for their online Bikes simulation.

Teaching Taxation for Social Change



By Scott Jackson

Traditionally, classes centered on taxation tend to be focused on the technical details of a system. However, in the case of the Carson College accounting class *Taxing Ourselves*, the hope is to bring the future leaders of society together to think critically about how they can help solve the world's ills.

In the class, students work in groups to discuss how they might address a social problem like climate change or health care through taxation.

While the class was originally envisioned for US students, accounting Professor Jeff Gramlich, who created the class, says it also gained a good deal of interest from students in Ukraine.

"It's not a technical course; it's about how you want your tax system to work," Gramlich says. "It's going to be ideal for Ukraine because hopefully someday they're going to go back and reconstruct a new country."

A harrowing start

The class was first offered online to Ukrainian students in the spring of 2022 in partnership with Kyiv

National Economic University (KNEU), Gramlich says. Neither he nor his students could have known the class would be derailed when Russia invaded the country about a week later.

"We had our first class on February 17, and we were supposed to have our second class on the 24th—that was the date of the invasion," Gramlich says. "Three weeks went

Maryna Stepura

“These skills are crucial for Ukraine’s post-war reconstruction, as well as for building harmonious relationships and contributing positively to society.”

by, and they contacted me and said, ‘We want to finish this.’ The students didn’t want Putin to control their education.”

Gramlich, who also directs the Hoops Tax Institute, has taught the course three times at WSU and three times at KNEU. Taxing Ourselves is now an elective regularly taught in WSU’s Global Campus accounting curriculum. It aligns with the institute’s mission to disseminate tax knowledge to benefit students, tax practitioners, policymakers, and academics. Without prerequisites, the course is open to any WSU student with junior or above standing.

When Maryna Stepura and Hanna Kotina, associate professors and twin sisters who helped start the program at KNEU, contacted Gramlich with the hope of continuing through the final three sessions of the remote classes, he was very moved. Considering the circumstances of a country under siege, he says the class

may be somewhat timelier than it would have been otherwise. When the war concludes, students may find themselves mulling questions discussed in class about how taxation figures into the framework—or in this case, the reconstruction—of a society.

Stepura and Kotina say the class challenges students’ assumptions and hones skills related to communication, critical thinking, adaptability, and digital literacy that will be important to business professionals in a post-war Ukraine.

“By participating in joint courses, offering original ideas, nonstandard views, and approaches to societal problems, students form the basis that will contribute to the recovery of a united Ukraine,” Stepura says. “These skills are crucial for Ukraine’s post-war reconstruction, as well as for building harmonious relationships and contributing positively to society.”

Civil discussions are a key to success

Groups are assigned to develop solutions to important social issues. For example, they identify a need that requires government spending and figure out how to pay for it. Usually, this means imposing a tax. Then, questions arise about who should pay, what tax base should be used, and what intended and unintended effects the tax will likely have on individual behaviors.

“We learned a lot about the role of taxation in the world and its impact on various spheres of life,” says KNEU student Oksana Pimonenko. “I found the format of discussion to be very interesting. Working in groups and sharing opinions was very useful.”

Students must learn to discuss issues with others who may have opposing views, Gramlich says.

“It was another angle on taxes and a new experience for me,” says Andriy Kryvun, a KNEU student.

Topics range from those familiar in the US like gun violence and wealth disparity, to issues more central to healing a war-torn Ukraine, like financing the rebuilding of roadways, hospitals, and other civic infrastructure.

“The main goal is to get people to start talking about difficult issues,” Gramlich says. “This course is successful if people can sit down and have a civil conversation about a difficult topic with somebody they disagree with and understand a little bit more about the other person’s perspective.” 

Senator **Noel Frame** Discusses Washington State's Tax Challenges

By Sue McMurray

While Washington state no longer holds the title for the nation's most regressive tax code, the absence of income tax and reliance on excise taxes—sales tax, business and occupation tax (B&O), and others—puts a much greater share of income from Washington's low- and middle-income families than from wealthy families, according to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy's January 2024 report *Who Pays?* (seventh edition).

"Washington state has a proud history of progressive social and economic policy, yet we're the same state that taxes poor people the most," says Senator Noel Frame, keynote speaker at the 2024 spring Hoops Tax Forum. "There's a mismatch there in terms of values, and I want to talk about why that is."

In her address "Making Strides to Increase Fairness in the Washington State Tax System," Frame discussed trying to narrow these inequities through her work in legislative tax policy, a passion that sparked when she was in high school.

Volunteerism develops interest in tax policy

Frame became interested in tax policy when her school district in Battle Ground, Washington, continually failed to pass property tax levies. Before the passage of the *McCleary v. State of Washington* decision in 2012 in which the Supreme Court ordered the state to fully fund K-12 public schools, Frame, a self-proclaimed tax nerd, experienced the effects of budget cuts to sports and library programs.

"I felt it in real time," she says. "That was my introduction to the connection between my education and taxes."

After graduating from George Washington University in Washington, DC, her interest in tax policy grew when she volunteered on the 2007 campaign to approve the constitutional amendment contained within House Joint Resolution 4204, which allowed school districts to approve property tax levies with a simple majority vote.

"Because of this and other experiences, I made it my mission to know about tax policy and take on some of the toughest challenges in our state," Frame says.

In 2016, she became the state representative of Washington's 36th district, and in 2023, she became a state senator. Frame is also the owner and partner of Uncommon Bridges, an organizational development, community engagement, and policy consulting firm in Seattle.



Exploring a better tax code

During her keynote, Frame drew on examples from nearly 25 years' experience working in nonprofit, private, public, and political sectors, including her community legwork that helped inform legislative policy concepts. In 2018, she and then– State Representative Terry Nealey led four town halls across the state to learn what people thought about the tax code.

“Basically, people hated it but didn’t have ideas for improving it,” Frame says.

Frame helped reauthorize the Tax Structure Work Group, which developed four proposals aimed at improving the state tax code and that were ultimately introduced to the legislature: the margin tax (SB 5482), a 3 percent property tax growth limit (HB 1670), tax credits for homeowners and renters (SB 5495), and a property tax on financial assets (SB 5486).



■ During her keynote at the Hoops Tax Institute spring forum, Senator Noel Frame talked about her work to influence Washington’s tax code.

While Frame’s civic leadership serves as an example of how one person can create change through societal commitment, her work is not without controversy. For example, some assert the capital gains tax may chase away Washington’s wealthiest taxpayers, such as Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, who recently moved out of state.

Frame attributes the latter sentiment to speculation unsupported by research.

“Research tells us the best thing we can do for long-term economic growth and entrepreneurship is to tax the people who have realized their wealth,” Frame says.

“We could invest those taxes back into things that attract people to our state, such as education and infrastructure.”

Frame reminded participants that tax reform takes time and bipartisanship. She says she would love to see an interstate compact where states work together on tax policy.

Forum advances students’ understanding of tax policy and advocacy

The point of the forum was to inspire critical thinking and discussion around taxation, government regulations, and the importance of voting. It is one of the ways the Hoops Tax Institute bridges disciplines and engages students with top taxation researchers and experts. Other academic symposia, workshops, and seminars are offered throughout the year.

“The opportunity to engage with a state senator actively involved in tax policy aligns perfectly with the mission of the institute,” says Jeff Gramlich, Hoops Tax Institute director. “The chief lesson we want WSU students to grasp is that they too can and should make our city, state, or country a better place to live, and tax policy is a place to start.” 



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TEACHING SOCIETAL IMPACT THROUGH

MARKET

By Scott Jackson

Since 2016, Professor Kunter Gunasti has been teaching a marketing class demonstrating how Carson students can leverage their training for the common good. Originally called Public Policy and Marketing, the class has been renamed Societal Marketing, and Gunasti says it aims to teach strategies for influencing consumer behavior in a way that benefits individuals and humanity.

“In most marketing classes, we’re teaching how to sell stuff, how to get consumers to buy something, or how to make companies better,” he says. “In this class, it’s about how to come up with policies and interventions to help people, the environment, and society to become wealthier and healthier.”

NUDGE

“NUDGES” AND INFLUENCING BEHAVIOR

Gunasti says influencing public behavior often begins with education—teaching people how an activity like buckling a seat belt is beneficial. Other strategies include policy changes that directly affect those decisions, such as taxing harmful items like cigarettes or creating laws that disallow or limit certain behaviors.

However, social marketing offers another useful strategy in the form of “nudges,” Gunasti says. First introduced by behavioral economists Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein in the book *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness*, nudges

are a more discreet way to highlight desirable choices while deemphasizing less desirable options.

For example, Gunasti described a strategy deployed in Denmark to help cut down on litter where officials stamped green footprints on the ground in public areas that led to the nearest trash can.

“You don’t force people to do stuff, you just make small changes in the environment,” he says. “We all have our own biases, so we’re trying to exploit those biases to help people behave in a way that’s going to benefit themselves and society.”

CHANGING

OPEN MINDSET

ENCOURAGING OPEN-MINDED DISCUSSION

The course begins with lectures to introduce students to social marketing concepts but quickly moves on to group projects and discussion. Students form teams and choose an issue facing society like the drinking age, self-driving cars, or saving the environment, and discuss different perspectives surrounding the issue. Once they decide what kind of behavior they want to encourage, they develop strategies to help push people in the right direction, be that through policy interventions or nudges.

“I’m not going to grade based on their idea. I’m going to grade based on how they talk about the pros and cons, and how open they are to discussing it,” Gunasti says. “I think the number one benefit of this class is learning to be respectful to others, open-minded, and able to discuss an issue.”

He says the exercise can be a potent way to address internal biases. Even when discussing familiar perspectives, there’s a chance students may hear a side of the conversation they’d never considered before.

“It’s an eye-opening class that will broaden your perspective on how decisions made by the government and others influence our actions,” says Zenna Glaser (’23 Intl. Busi., Mktg.). “The class primes students to think about things like social responsibility and the idea that governments and some businesses should be looking out for consumers’ best interests.”

IMPACT

VERSATILE CAREER APPLICATIONS

Gunasti says the skills associated with social marketing are particularly valuable for students’ future careers. He notes social marketers can find work in a wide swath of professional settings including government, for-profit industry, as well as in nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations.

“Marketing is literally everywhere, and it’s not just businesses trying to sell you something. It overlaps into social issues like government and politics,” says Lauren Russell (’24 Intl. Busi.). “For every social campaign, there’s a lot that goes into it that you wouldn’t expect.”

The benefit of acquiring these skills extends beyond the professional sphere, Gunasti says.

“In general, being open-minded, not only in business, but in your life, is going to be quite valuable because we live together with all these people from diverse backgrounds,” he says. “Ultimately, you realize there are some commonalities, like everyone does want the best for themselves and society but in their own ways.” 

Lauren Russell

“Marketing is literally everywhere, and it’s not just businesses trying to sell you something. It overlaps into social issues like government and politics.”

SKILLS

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

LEADER

Professional **Certificate Programs** Offer a Competitive Edge

By Sue McMurray

In rapidly evolving fields such as health care, senior living, and technology, professional certificates are cost-effective options for anyone seeking new or enhanced skills. The Carson College of Business is proactive when it comes to professional development and workforce training programs for learners in a variety of career stages. Carson leaders strive to work across WSU colleges to provide business education to anyone who would seek and benefit from it.

“With WSU being a land-grant university, the college is embracing a lead role in being the education partner for lifelong learning,” says Joan Giese, WSU Tri-Cities career-track associate professor of marketing. “For businesses, investing in such programs is a strategic move that pays dividends in enhancing efficiency and maintaining a competitive edge in the market.”

The college offers several noncredit courses and certificates open to all WSU majors. Some certificates, like the

Granger Cobb Professional Development Certificate and the Business of Biomedicine Certificate, are tailored for a specific industry. Others, like the Sustainable Organizational Leadership Certificate and the Business of Art Certificate, are broader with the intent to help students develop cross-functional expertise in a variety of careers.

“It’s crucial to recognize the evolving landscape of education and workforce development,” says Cheryl Oliver, associate dean for professional programs. “We’ve made some gains in this area and are poised to reach a broader number of learners at scale by leveraging our knowledgeable faculty and expertise in online learning.”

The following certificate offerings provide participants with training that enhances their professional roles, leading to increased job satisfaction, lower turnover rates, and a more dynamic, skilled workforce.

Cheryl Oliver

“It’s crucial to recognize the evolving landscape of education and workforce development.”

Granger Cobb Professional Development Certificate

The Granger Cobb Professional Development Certificate is offered online and on demand by the WSU School of Hospitality Business Management and is geared toward nondegree-seeking professionals interested in the senior-living industry.

“This noncredit certificate benefits those who want a better understanding of the industry, to assess their existing knowledge and skills to transfer into the industry, move up within their current organizations, or earn continuing education credits,” says Nancy Swanger, Granger Cobb Institute founder and director.

The certificate offers 10 key modules of senior-living business including foundations of senior living; care and services; operations and management; financial management; risk and regulation; sales and marketing; leadership; buildings, systems, and maintenance; technology; and professional development.

Each module requires 10 to 15 hours and may be taken separately or in any order. Students must successfully pass each course module to earn the certificate.

🔗 Visit go.wsu.edu/seniorlivingmanagement to learn more.

Business of Biomedicine Certificate

The Business of Biomedicine Certificate, offered in partnership with the College of Veterinary Medicine’s Department of Integrative Physiology and Neuroscience, is a differentiator for WSU students wanting to enter medical, dental, or veterinary school.

“Understanding the business aspects of biomedicine can enhance future health care providers’ ability to advocate for patients, engage in policy discussions, and contribute to decisions related to medical technologies and treatment,” says Marie Mayes, Carson academic director of the WSU Center for Entrepreneurship and associate professor of management, information systems, and entrepreneurship.

Students complete 16 credits and may customize their learning experiences through accounting, finance, entrepreneurship, communication, neuroscience, and microbiology electives or other advisor-approved alternatives.

“Overall, the certificate addresses the need for biomedical professionals who can integrate scientific knowledge with business acumen,” says Samantha Gizerian, associate professor of integrative physiology and neuroscience in WSU’s College of Veterinary Medicine.

🔗 Visit go.wsu.edu/businessofbiomedicine to learn more.

Sustainable Organizational Leadership Certificate

The Carson College and the WSU Department of Sociology recently launched the Sustainable Organizational Leadership Certificate because interest in sustainability has ramped up, creating new opportunities in business, government, and nonprofit sectors.

Students from any major may earn 15 credits while developing cross-functional skills and expertise in financial, environmental, and social areas to better address an organization’s environmental and resource sustainability goals. Students may customize their experience with a variety of elective options that match their goals.

“Environmental and resource sustainability is an important social problem,” says Jennifer Schwartz, WSU Department of Sociology’s director of undergraduate studies. “The certificate is uniquely responsive to the need for organizational leaders who are attentive to environmental, equity, and economic concerns across diverse contexts.”

🔗 Visit go.wsu.edu/sustainableorgleadership to learn more.

Business of Art Certificate

The Business of Art Certificate is a joint offering of the WSU Department of Art, Center for Entrepreneurship, and the Carson College Department of Management, Information Systems, and Entrepreneurship.

The 15-credit certificate is open to all WSU majors seeking ways to integrate art and entrepreneurship to further their professional careers as creative innovators, marketers, and entrepreneurs. Students who complete the certificate may be better prepared to operate small-business ventures on Etsy and Instagram or launch a brick-and-mortar space, for example.

“Artists gain the practical skills and applications to navigate the entrepreneurial side of their artistic career, learning how to brand and market themselves in contemporary environments,” says WSU Professor Reza Safavi, digital media coordinator, and one of the collaborators who helped launch the certificate. “Business students acquire the visual literacy and creative edge of artists.” 

🔗 Visit go.wsu.edu/businessofart to learn more.

BG MAP Program

Feeds Millions of Dollars into Southwest Washington Economy

By Kerby Boschee



■ Business Growth MAP students helped entrepreneur Zach Hein with marketing solutions for his Range Meal Bar business.

Courtesy Zach Hein

The Business Growth Mentor and Analysis Program (BG MAP) capstone experience for WSU Vancouver students has helped more than 375 small businesses and nonprofit organizations become more successful since its inception in 2011.

BG MAP pairs business clients with student consultants who suggest innovative strategies for increased revenue, marketing and operational

efficiencies, growth trajectory predictions, and more. Each student team works with a mentor—someone who has experience in the business world and guides the project through its various phases.

The goal of the program is twofold: to positively contribute to regional economic development while providing educational opportunities for students.

“The collaborative team environment encourages innovation and provides unique solutions for each client we work with,” says Kerby Boschee, senior manager for experiential learning and community engagement, who oversees BG MAP at WSU Vancouver. “Approximately 165,000 hours of pro bono consulting services have positively impacted our local communities, driving economic growth and development in our region and across the state.”

An estimated \$17 million in new revenues has fueled the region’s economy since the program’s inception.

Student recommendations lead to food business success

Recently, two food-related businesses reported tangible gains after working with BG MAP students.

In 2023, BG MAP students helped Zach Hein with marketing challenges for his company, Range Meal Bars. The BG MAP team recommended several solutions including contracting with a third party to facilitate order fulfillment, reducing website load speed, and implementing an email onboarding sequence that nearly doubled customer orders.

The team also recommended Hein invest in events and high-quality marketing materials to boost overall market awareness. Upon receiving this advice, Hein developed a YouTube and theater documentary on local climber Andrew Okerlund, the youngest and second-fastest climber to summit all of Washington’s 100 tallest peaks in a single season.

In another case, BG MAP students worked with Dee Chow and Laramie Dorris, owners of Small Eats, a Taiwanese breakfast and street food stall in Vancouver's Farmers' Market. Chow and Dorris wanted to increase market visibility, customer reach, sales, and revenue.

Students suggested adding a large sign above the Small Eats stall at the market, which increased new customers by 5 percent and revenue by more than 10 percent in a few months. The team also recommended selling branded shirts, displaying higher-quality pictures of menu items, and opening a pop-up shop at a storefront in downtown Vancouver. The new space allows Chow and Dorris to be more creative and share more of their Taiwanese flavors with the community.

"The team gave us short-range solutions we could act on immediately and a road map for additional solutions down the road," Chow says.

Clients report 100 percent implementation

At the end of each program cycle, clients complete a survey about their experience and how likely they are to implement the student consultancy teams' solutions.

A one-year follow-up survey allows the program to check in with clients about how things have been going in the year since they participated in the program, Boschee says.

Of the responses received in fall 2023 from client participants, 100 percent reported they implemented the solutions suggested by the student teams.

"According to WSU's Office of Institutional Research, 95 percent of



Courtesy Dee Chow

Dee Chow

"The team gave us short-range solutions we could act on immediately and a road map for additional solutions down the road."

WSU Vancouver alumni remain in the area after graduation," Boschee says. "By giving our graduates experiential learning opportunities, we are ensuring they are well equipped

to address complex business challenges when they enter the job market, whether in southwest Washington or elsewhere in the world." 

Interdisciplinary **SOAR** Program Inspires Innovation

By Scott Jackson

Since its inception in 2019, WSU's Stem-Oriented Alliance for Research, or SOAR, has helped senior students obtain the interdisciplinary skills and outlook necessary to thrive in a professional business environment.

Through team projects sponsored by industry partners like Boeing and Fluke, students from communications, business, and engineering colleges come together to solve complex problems plaguing industry professionals. The program challenges students to build strong teamwork, communication, and leadership skills.

"Engineering students know how to speak to each other, but when they talk to business and communications students, they have to find another way to explain what they're working on," says Soobin Seo, associate professor of hospitality business management at WSU Everett, who is helping lead the program. "It's the same for business and communication students—I want them to be out of their comfort zones."

Successful beginnings

SOAR was conceived by Jacob Murray, Lucrezia Paxson, and Seo, all WSU Everett faculty within WSU's LIFT Faculty Fellowship program, which is designed to increase classroom engagement. However, Seo says inspiration for the program came from the WSU Boeing Scholars team project that took first place at the 2018 Carson College's Business Plan Competition.

The team helped resolve an issue affecting the assembly process of the carbon wings on Boeing's 777 aircraft. When the huge tools used to place the carbon fiber material onto the wing component lifted away, a sticky residue remained on the tool that engineers would then spend hours scrubbing off by hand. The team's novel solution was a Roomba-like robot that automated the scrubbing and dispensed a clear coating that prepares the tool for the next build. After the team won first place, they gave a presentation to Boeing engineers and executives, who were immediately interested.

"The students did their presentation, and then the guys with the briefcases came out and said, 'We really like your

project; we have patent agreements we'd like to offer you,'" says Mark Beattie, WSU Everett scholarly assistant professor of hospitality business management, who collaborates with the program.

Cross-disciplinary student projects broaden skill sets

This year, a SOAR team is working on a track-mounted camera that will scan planes with lidar to detect mechanical flaws, and another team sponsored by the Department of Energy is designing an offshore Lake Michigan wind farm.



Other projects ranged from attempting to grow coral as a carbon offset strategy to creating portable solutions for collecting wind energy in disaster zones.

Samantha Menzimer ('18 Integ. Strat. Comm.), a member of the initial Boeing Scholars team that inspired the program, says her work on the project was one of the most rigorous and rewarding experiences in her college career.

"A project like this helps introduce you to people who work in different fields. It broadens your perspective outside of the classes you take for your specific major," Menzimer says. "It also helps to open your eyes to a world of future career possibilities."

Amy Johnson ('20 Integ. Strat. Comm.), who participated in SOAR in 2020, agrees and says the program also helps students access a more diverse range of career prospects. Johnson, now a marketing manager for Basta Boatlifts, says she wouldn't have applied for her current position if it weren't for her participation in SOAR.

"It helped me gain the confidence to come into a room where there are a lot of engineers or other smart people and actually contribute to the conversation," Johnson says. "My job is not science-oriented, but what

I have to say on the communications and business side of things matters."

In some cases, participants in the program were offered jobs directly because of their involvement in a SOAR project.

"When I graduated, the Washington Hospitality Association's CEO called me and said, 'I'm not sure if you have a job lined up yet, but if you don't, I've got a job for you,'" says Kyle Galvin ('22 Software Eng.), who worked on a data-oriented project for the association when he was a student. "Today, I'm working for the association as a data analyst."

Establishing a growth mindset

Beattie says these projects not only challenge students to develop skills necessary for working with a diverse team but also require them to understand the different facets of the project being managed by their teammates.

"It's a way of thinking. When we talk with these interdisciplinary teams we say, 'Okay, engineers, you've got brilliant ideas. You're going to change the world we live in,'" Beattie says. "But unless you have a business student who can make a concept sustainable for the market, and a communication student who can tell the world about it, that brilliant idea is going to languish forever in obscurity."

While students come to campus knowing they'll be working in teams for the SOAR capstone class, their reactions range from excitement about the process to anxiety about shared responsibilities with people outside their majors.

"It really requires students to embrace a growth mindset in which successes and failures are part of the learning experience," says Beattie. "The interdisciplinary nature of SOAR is who we are as a society—engineers, business leaders, and communicators working together to create value." 



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- One of six campuses in the Washington State University system, WSU Everett offers all the advantages of a WSU degree, including a bachelor's in business administration and a bachelor's in hospitality business management.



Courtesy Mark Beattie

- The 2024 SOAR project kickoff event engaged students from the Murrow College of Communication and the Carson College of Business in an icebreaker exercise.

Bella Pretlow

Leverages Business Training to Elevate Washington Wine

By Scott Jackson

When Bella Pretlow ('24) first moved from Anchorage, Alaska, to attend WSU Tri-Cities, she knew little about wine or her new home state. However, after earning her degree in wine and beverage business management in the spring, she's determined to help elevate Washington wine to the acclaim it deserves.

"My main goal when picking a degree was something that was niche but stable," Pretlow says. "I had no history in it, no prior knowledge, nothing, but it sounded interesting, and wine is not going away anytime soon."

Pretlow earned college credits through the Running Start program at Richland High School. During her senior year in 2019, she moved to the Tri-Cities to attend WSU.

Because she helps care for her stepfather who is a disabled veteran, her WSU tuition was waived through a Washington state legislature provision. She has since come to be recognized by her instructors as one of their most focused and engaged students.

"Bella is universally recognized among our faculty as being one of our most hardworking and dedicated students ever," says Tim Baker, academic director at WSU Tri-Cities. "She is totally committed to a long-term career in the wine industry."

Campus engagement fuels wine passion

Despite her initial unfamiliarity with the industry, Pretlow has become an outspoken champion of Washington wine since she started her degree.

"I think Washington is a very underrated area for wine," Pretlow says. "I went to California recently for a conference, and I got to taste some California wines. I get the hype, but I think Washington is somewhat on par with California."

During her time as an undergrad, Pretlow was also active in the campus community. In addition to taking on the role of communications officer for the Cougar Wine Society, she was also copresident of the Black Student Union at WSU Tri-Cities and had a hand in their project installing a portrait and plaque of former WSU President Elson S. Floyd in the campus building named for him.

"There wasn't really anything in the building to tell people who Elson S. Floyd was," she says. "I had been there two years, not even knowing the man was Black."

Pretlow says one of the most impactful experiences she had at WSU was when she participated in a study-abroad trip to one of the oldest and most famous wine-growing regions in the world—Florence, Italy.

Aiming to advance inclusivity in the wine industry

Pretlow says she's grateful for the opportunities and experiences afforded her in her time at WSU Tri-Cities and is looking forward to seeing the wine and beverage business management program expanded in the future.

"I would also like to see more awareness about the degree," she says. "A lot of people would know I was doing wine business, but they couldn't name the degree. There are people who still think I'm doing viticulture and enology."

Thanks in part to the knowledge and experience she gleaned as a member of the Cougar Wine Society, Pretlow secured a job working in the tasting room at Wautoma Springs Winery, where she has been working since July 2023. Following graduation, she applied to multiple internships and to a master's program in strategic communications but speculates she'll probably continue to work for Wautoma Springs for the foreseeable future.

Because of her WSU education, Pretlow has built a passion for the hospitality community. Even if she were accepted into a master's program, she says she would continue working in the hospitality sector and make sure her graduate work was relevant to her career goals.

Ultimately, Pretlow says she would like to spend her career working to uplift Washington wine.

"Less than 1 percent of wineries in the US are Black-owned," she says, quoting an oft-cited figure from the Association of African American Vintners. "Currently, the only wineries that I know of that are even owned by people of color are Frichette and Palencia. I would like to bring more awareness to the lack of diversity in the wine community and work to increase it." 

Bella Pretlow

“I think Washington is a very underrated area for wine. I went to California recently for a conference, and I got to taste some California wines. I get the hype, but I think Washington is somewhat on par with California.”



■ Bella Pretlow preparing wine flights for customers at Wautoma Springs Tasting Room in Prosser, Washington.

Courtesy Bella Pretlow



Chris Green

Broadens His International Business Perspective

By Scott Jackson

Chris Green

“The experience was an incredibly transformative journey for me. It not only broadened my academic horizons but also enriched my cultural perspective profoundly.”

■ Chris Green visits the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates.

When planning his study-abroad option to fulfill his international business degree, Chris Green originally planned to spend a semester in Spain, a country he'd visited before. However, he realized he might benefit from a less familiar travel experience after a life-changing trip to Dubai in the spring of 2021.

Green ('24 Finance, Intl. Busi.) spent 10 days of spring break in the country touring cultural centers, hearing lectures by industry professionals, and visiting major businesses like some of Dubai's famous five-star hotels. He says it was a complete learning experience from both a cultural and business perspective.

"It was a total culture shock, but I learned so much from it. When I planned my full semester abroad, I decided I wanted a similar challenge in the sense of stepping out of my comfort zone," Green says. "That's what made me choose to go to Seoul, South Korea, and I ended up just loving it."

First impressions, lasting impact

When he arrived in Seoul in January of 2023, Green describes his first five hours in the country as "terrifying," as he tried to navigate a city where he didn't speak the language. Once he reached his dorm and connected with his dorm-mates, some of whom were fluent in Korean, things became a little less difficult. He still thinks of those first five hours as a transformative experience that taught him perseverance and how to weather other stressful situations.

"You build a lot of confidence. Coming back, I felt a lot less scared of things, like doing a presentation for instance," he says.

Once he was settled, Green quickly fell in love with the country and culture. He said just attending a school in a new country with different social norms helped him to adopt a more global mindset, but

he was also taking classes in Korean history and culture.

"You learn a totally different perspective you can never learn in a classroom," Green says. "You can always read about Korean history and language and their norms, but to experience it firsthand brings home that global aspect that's really necessary, especially for going into international business."

Learning cultural competency in business

Green says a major lesson learned in his time in Dubai and Seoul was just how important it is to prepare carefully before doing business with another country and culture. Without working to understand the culture and potential social pitfalls—for example, using the wrong honorific when addressing a prospective business partner—it's possible to jeopardize the whole business deal.

"You start to understand that things that work here in the US don't necessarily work in other places," he says. "Even if I learn how to do business in Korea, if I were to go to Japan, things could be completely different."

Green is working as a financial associate for Gallo Winery, but he hopes to one day earn a place in their international business unit. Green's dream job would be to help businesses like Gallo to move into new markets, and he says the skills he developed during his international experience have primed him to help bridge cultural divides in a professional setting.

"The experience was an incredibly transformative journey for me. It not only broadened my academic horizons but also enriched my cultural perspective profoundly," Green says. "This trip served as a pivotal moment, fostering independence, adaptability, and a deeper appreciation for diverse perspectives, shaping me into a more globally aware and empathetic individual." 



Courtesy Lilia Gahard

Aging Business Management Graduate **Lilia Gahard** **Serves Society**

By Sue McMurray



Nancy Swanger

“To finally have our first aging business management graduate—a semester early and from the Global Campus—makes my heart so happy.”

When you meet Lilia Gahard ('24), you can't help but notice her positive energy and vibrant smile. An upbeat person, she carries on a conversation effortlessly and makes you feel like you've known her forever, even on a Zoom call. One could see why she would be well suited to study through WSU's Global Campus.

It's one thing to be able to project charisma and engagement online when you can turn it off once class is over. But it's another to bring a high level of vitality all day, every day, to a senior-living community, where Gahard has chosen to launch her career serving society.

Gahard is the first graduate of the aging business management (formerly senior-living management) program in the WSU School of Hospitality Business Management (SHBM). The senior-living initiative began around 2010. A natural focus for hospitality, it made sense for SHBM to partner with senior-living experts to establish the Granger Cobb Institute for Senior Living focusing on research, service, and developing a workforce.

Idea of purposeful work takes root

Being from a family of Cougar graduates, the novelty of the aging business management major, and a close relationship with her grandmother influenced Gahard's academic path at WSU.

“I had a special relationship with my Nana, and even when she was ill and unable to communicate, I visited and talked to her,” Gahard says. “When she was in a medical rehabilitation facility, I noticed other people there had no visitors. These observations made me realize I could touch others through a career in senior living.”



Courtesy Amy Alonzo

■ From left, Darcie Bagott, Jodie Levy, Lilia Gahard, and Nancy Swanger celebrate graduation in Los Angeles.

Gahard says a class lecture from Tana Gall, president of Merrill Gardens, a Seattle senior-living company, solidified her decision to be of service to others. “Tana spoke about her love for doing purposeful work every day,” Gahard says. “That stayed with me.”

Gahard also recalls being influenced by a video of a nonverbal Alzheimer's patient in her 90s who smiled and sang because of human touch and music therapy.

She credits Granger Cobb Institute Director Nancy Swanger and Program Specialist Darcie Bagott for their leadership during her program.

“To finally have our first graduate of the aging business management major—a semester early and from the Global Campus—makes my heart so happy,” Swanger says. “I'm so proud of Lilia; she will do great things as the world ages!”

Human factor can't be replaced

Gahard now works as the resident engagement director at Brookdale Chatsworth in California, where she manages events, programming, and transportation. Her work includes accommodating residents' daily needs and being present in their most vulnerable moments.

Gahard's training aligns well with industry trends to reduce the stigma of aging within society, for example, replacing the word “facility” with “community” and combatting seniors' isolation.

“I'm excited about the opportunity to innovate senior-living care through artificial intelligence and technology like virtual reality headsets that help Alzheimer's and dementia patients,” Gahard says. “But it brings me comfort that AI will never replace human touch or emotional intelligence.” 



Crimson Compass

Hailey James Follows Path to WSU Leadership Career

By Sue McMurray

Courtesy Hailey James



When Hailey James ('11) was in eighth grade attending the only school in Colton, Washington, her mother finally let her dye her hair pink. James recalls it was a transformational moment in terms of self-expression, a freedom she craved but kept cloaked under the lens of her small-town peers.

Just that small step affirmed that James's inner voice would not be silenced by conformity—a voice that urged her to care about social issues outside of her insular community and seek an education that aligned with her core values.

After high school, she attended Gonzaga University for a semester before transferring to WSU. She explored several majors before deciding to double major in business administration and management operations in the Carson College of Business.

"I really found myself at WSU and felt like I could pursue a career path here without any limitations. At WSU, you are loved just for being you," she says. "It doesn't matter if your hair is pink or you have a full sleeve of tattoos."

James says she didn't realize the value of her degree until she started her own horse training and lesson business and had to develop her brand and website. She also helped her sister Chelsea Whitney develop a business plan to launch Poppy, an ecofriendly salon and spa in downtown Pullman.

James developed valuable career experience working in a variety of business sectors including health care, engineering, and corporate marketing, but none were the right fit for the long term, she says.

Leveling up her skills

An event position at the WSU Foundation caught her eye in 2014, and she was hired. Over the next seven years, James elevated her marketing and communication skills and levels of responsibility in several positions at the foundation, culminating in the role of director of campaign communications.

"Along the way, I learned I loved communications and marketing and working on teams," James says. "I decided to grow my career in this niche."

James also earned an online master's degree in strategic communications from WSU during that time. These experiences and continuing education efforts were part of her strategy to integrate into a leadership position at the university.

Her skill development efforts paid off. When COVID-19 caused universities to rapidly move to distance education, James was hired as the WSU emergency operations project manager/deputy chief of staff in charge of developing the university's pandemic response plan.

"During COVID, I was not prepared for how little I knew," James admits. "But I soon learned the power of communication and the importance of informing people."

She planned the COVID-19 town halls and implemented "COVID Chronicles," a weekly email update for WSU employees. She also built a network of COVID-19 communicators across WSU colleges and worked with WSU leadership to create greater transparency around COVID-19 policy.

After a year in that role, James became the deputy chief of staff for the inaugural WSU Pullman Chancellor's Office, working on

Hailey James

"I really found myself at WSU and felt like I could pursue a career path here without any limitations."

high-priority projects and initiatives designed to achieve the WSU Pullman campus's mission and strategic vision, and she helped managed daily operations on campus.

Moving the needle on inclusivity

Today, James is the chief of staff in the WSU Pullman Chancellor's Office, where she oversees the office's communications, community relations, events, finance, development, and facilities operations. The newly established office is one of the most rewarding yet challenging spaces she's worked in, James says.

"There's no typical day here; we're building the plane as we fly it, so to speak," she says. "But that is what I love about it. The vision of the Chancellor's Office is that everyone finds their place and sense of belonging at WSU. My goal is to move that forward."

The broadness of James's degrees allowed her to have a wider scope in career options, she says. "I wouldn't be in the position I'm in without the college path I chose." 

Fostering Trust in the Digital Age

Reviewer Badges May Be Sending Mixed Messages

By Eric Hollenbeck

In an era dominated by digital transactions, trust becomes the foundation upon which the internet marketplace stands. WSU Assistant **Professor Long Nguyen's** investigation into the impact of reviewer badges—those small symbols that signal a reviewer's credibility on platforms like Amazon, Newegg, and Steam—reveals a nuanced understanding of how these markers influence consumer trust.

His findings highlight straightforward yet insightful truths: not all reviews or their accompanying badges exert the same impact on consumer trust. Additionally, having more badges isn't always more effective in building trust, particularly when the badges convey conflicting messages about their significance.

The dual edges of reviewer badges

Nguyen's study centers on the intriguing world of reviewer badges used in online marketplaces. A verified purchase badge, for instance, enhances trust by confirming the authenticity of the reviewer's experience.

Conversely, incentive badges, which indicate compensation for reviews, potentially dilute trust because of perceived bias. When these badges coexist, consumers engage more deeply with the content of the reviews, looking beyond the badges and diving deeper into analyzing the value of the feedback. However, as Nguyen notes, when only a single badge exists, consumers tend to ignore the content of the review and instead develop trust solely on the badge.

"We observed that consumers become more skeptical of the reviewer when more badges are displayed, specifically when what the badges convey seems contradictory—such as the case with verified purchase

badges versus incentive badges,” Nguyen says. The result of this increase in consumer doubt usually triggers a closer, more critical analysis of the actual content of the review.

Inspiration from everyday digital interactions

Nguyen’s journey into the complexities of online consumer trust began from a personal vantage point—a blend of his experiences as an avid online shopper and gamer.

“Platforms like Amazon use a few badges to quickly communicate the trustworthiness of reviewers, but on Steam, myriad badges per person led to confusion,” Nguyen says.

This discrepancy in badge systems across platforms sparked Nguyen’s curiosity, driving him to delve into how these digital markers influence consumer trust and behavior.

Shaping the future of digital commerce

Understanding the mechanics of trust in digital marketplaces holds implications for both the business community and society at large. It not only sheds light on the importance of presenting reviewer information in a clear and straightforward manner but also highlights the critical role of content over mere endorsements. For businesses, understanding these dynamics is key to fostering a more trustworthy and engaging online presence. For consumers, it provides a road map for navigating online reviews with a more discerning eye, empowering them to make more informed decisions.

“Presenting two or more badges with slightly mixed messages can cause the consumer to become skeptical of the reviewer, leading them to spend more time reading the review texts more thoroughly,” Nguyen says.

A balanced approach in presenting reviewer information is an invaluable strategy for businesses striving to foster a trustworthy online presence and for consumers seeking to navigate the digital marketplace more effectively, he says.

Enhancing consumer trust through transparency

As digital marketplaces continue to evolve, the insights from Nguyen’s study offer a foundation for building stronger, more trustworthy relationships between businesses and consumers. Practitioners can apply these



WSU Photo Services



Understanding the nuances of online reviews and the badges that accompany them can significantly enhance the shopping experience, benefiting both consumers and businesses.”

—Professor Long Nguyen

insights about individual and joint effects of badges in designing platform review display features. For example, a featured review algorithm could be tailored to prioritize reviews with only a verified badge over those with both badges or only an incentive badge, similar to approaches currently used by platforms like Amazon, Nguyen says.

“Understanding the nuances of online reviews and the badges that accompany them can significantly enhance the shopping experience, benefiting both consumers and businesses,” Nguyen says. “It’s about creating an environment where trust is built on transparency and authenticity.” 

Granger Cobb Institute

Helps Engineering Researchers Improve Senior Housing

By Tina Hilding

It's a story that has become increasingly familiar around the country: a frail parent falls and can no longer live on their own. Adult children are soon sifting through memories while packing up the longtime family home.

After the difficult decision is made to move mom or dad into a senior-living community, they are struggling—the microwave doesn't work right, or the apartment is too hot or cold. The microwave, the thermostat, or lost hearing aids are suddenly a crisis as everyone tries to adjust to new surroundings.

"The sense that you can't control your environment when you already have lost control of a lot of the things around you—it's a loss of agency that we hear from a lot of folks," says Shelby Ruiz, research associate in WSU's Integrated Design and Construction Laboratory (ID+CL). "They don't have control over their environment, and if they're uncomfortable, they don't really know what to do."

Granger Cobb Institute for Senior Living grant contributes to engineering research

Ruiz met with more than 65 seniors living in nine Pacific Northwest assisted-living communities over a two-year period to study their experiences in senior-living housing. The work was supported by a seed grant from the Granger Cobb Institute for Senior Living (GCISL).

The institute focuses on academic programs, industry partnerships, and research to build the future senior-living workforce.

"Working in partnership with other WSU units to advance education that benefits communities is an integral function of the Granger Cobb Institute in the Carson College of Business," says Nancy Swanger, GCISL founder and director. "We are excited to see the results of this project that will address real problems in real senior-living communities."

As part of the project, Ruiz and Julia Day, ID+CL director and associate professor in the School of Design and Construction, studied how seniors interact with their buildings, technology, peers, and community.

"This study has really been about figuring out what does and doesn't work for seniors in their living environments," Ruiz says. "Our main question was how can we build better buildings for older folks. Our answer is that you have to do it *with* them."

In-depth interviews about seniors' daily challenges provided valuable information.

For instance, one resident said the progression of her macular degeneration and vision loss meant she couldn't find anything on her speckled granite countertop because it was visually overstimulating. In another facility, residents were unsettled after hearing about a senior injured by an automated fire door that closed during a power outage. Residents struggled with their microwaves or thermostats that are difficult to read or use. Something as simple as the way a door opens in an apartment can impact their lives and day-to-day comfort.

"If we had done a survey and people filled in bubbles, you wouldn't get the same picture or stories," Day says. "With further research, understanding, design, and policy, we can roll this information into new ways of doing things. I feel like this demographic hasn't had a chance to be heard in this way before."

Building design and function affect everybody

In the project, the researchers focused on how the buildings work in terms of improving energy efficiency, health and safety, and residents' well-being. They also looked at technology and residents' technology literacy as well as equity issues.

Senior-living residents often find themselves in a place that isn't well designed for them, creating more stress for those already having a hard time.

"It's counterintuitive to the whole point of design," Ruiz says. "We're looking to design better buildings for people, but a lot of findings pointed to the need for the redesign of spaces, revisiting how they function for the people who will be using them."

During her visits with seniors, Ruiz talked with many who didn't have indoor plumbing when they were young



Julia Day

“I feel like this demographic hasn’t had a chance to be heard in this way before.”



■ Something as simple as the way a door opens or adjusting a thermostat in an apartment can affect seniors’ daily lives and comfort.

or who struggled during the Depression or World War II years. They provided unique experiences and valuable perspectives on how the built environment has changed over their lifetimes, she says.

“When I started this, I thought it was just going to be an interesting inquiry, but I realized this is actually very important. It affects everybody,” she says. “The more we can understand, the better we can make these communities for our parents, friends, or family one day—that’s why I care about this so much.”

The researchers have presented their work at conferences around the world, including at the Healthy Buildings conference in Germany, the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, and the Interior Design Educators Council. They hope to receive additional funding, whether private or public, to continue the work.

“We have a duty to design these buildings in ways that are not only equitable, safe, and accessible,” Ruiz says, “but also considerate of the fact these are people, and their lives and stories matter.” 

PhD Corner

Dear friends,

Upon earning a bachelor's degree in finance, I immediately began working for a national phone company that provided local service to mostly rural areas of the country. It was a great job for someone fresh out of college. I loved being able to actually use some of the tools I had learned in college, and my extensive use of spreadsheets has kept me motivated to pass on this skill to current Cougs.

However, after three years and two promotions, the company merged with GTE (now Verizon). I was offered a job, but I would have had to move, and my new position with the larger firm would have had fewer responsibilities. More generally, I took that opportunity to reflect on my life's trajectory. It was a good job, but it cramped my lifestyle (e.g., no chance to play golf on a sunny weekday).

I began asking myself, "Could I do more?" I found a future faculty role attractive because I could create new knowledge to make the world a better place, and I could help train future leaders of our country and the world.

That started my PhD journey, and after six painful years, WSU hired me. Twenty-seven years later, I hope I've done my part to help society both with new knowledge creation and well-trained Coug graduates who enhance organizations throughout the Pacific Northwest and the world.

A great feature about research as a PhD student and later as a faculty member is the ability to study whatever one is passionate about. Our students' entries in the 2024 Three-Minute Thesis competition reflect direct links between their interests and several United Nations sustainable development goals the Carson College aims to contribute to, such as responsible consumption and production; climate action; peace, justice, and strong institutions; industry, innovation, and infrastructure; sustainable cities and communities; reduced inequalities; and good health and well-being.

Several of our students have a personal motive driving their research topics and activities. For example, Amir Moadab's research on using drones for humanitarian response after a crisis stems from his own experience surviving two severe earthquakes as a child. Shirin Shahsavand combines her own clothing use with a passion to fight climate change, examining ways companies can take back used clothing. Pingping Tang was recently named one of WSU's Women* of Distinction for combining her accounting background with a desire to



help fellow international students by providing free tax assistance in the spring.

Behind many Carson PhD projects lies a desire to generate new knowledge to improve the world. Our work published in reputable journals is particularly important nowadays with the plethora of misinformation flowing freely on the internet, social media, and AI platforms. Meanwhile, in the classroom and labs, our PhD students directly impact society by preparing the next generation of adults for an increasingly uncertain world. I would argue the value of a college education is higher now than ever, and our PhD students provide critical service in delivering that education.

Chuck Munson

Chuck Munson, PhD Program Director



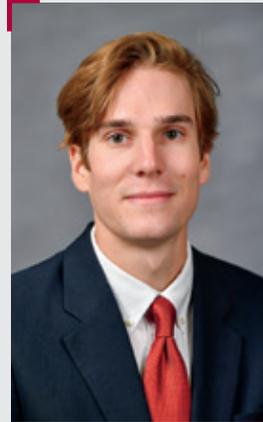
JT BATES
MANAGEMENT

BS, Westminster University
MBA, Weber State University

DISSERTATION
Motivations of Unethical Behavior

MAJOR ADVISOR
Hannah Johnson

PLACEMENT
Rutgers University



BEN PHIFER
MARKETING

BS, Clemson University
MSBA, Washington State University

DISSERTATION
How Political Orientation Shapes
Sugar Consumption and Resistance
to Sugar-Reducing Nudges

MAJOR ADVISOR
Jeff Joireman

PLACEMENT
Weber State University



HUI-HENG (MARK) CHENG
FINANCE

BBA, National Taiwan University
MS, National Chengchi University
MSBA, Washington State University

DISSERTATION
Essays on Dual-Class Structure and
Corporate Governance: Exploring
the Impact on Firm Performance,
Innovation, and Compensation

MAJOR ADVISORS
George Jiang and Michael
McNamara

PLACEMENT
Southwest Minnesota State
University



JULIA STACHOFSKY
MANAGEMENT
INFORMATION SYSTEMS

BS, University of Idaho
BSBus, University of Idaho
MSBA, Washington State University

DISSERTATION
Vestige of the Present:
Socio-Technical Factors in
the Construction of Legacy
Perceptions of Information
Systems Artifacts

MAJOR ADVISOR
Michelle Carter

PLACEMENT
Western Michigan University



XUEMEI HUANG
MANAGEMENT
INFORMATION SYSTEMS

BS, Beijing Foreign Studies
University • MS, Beijing Foreign
Studies University
MSBA, Washington State University

DISSERTATION
Algorithmic Control and Dignity
among Gig Workers

MAJOR ADVISORS
Debbie Compeau and Michelle
Carter

PLACEMENT
Central Michigan University



SHAZZAD SIKDAR
MANAGEMENT

BBA, University of Dhaka
MBA, Eastern Illinois University
MSBA, Washington State
University

DISSERTATION
Crisis Management Strategies and
Their Implications for Corporate
Performance

MAJOR ADVISOR
Arvin Sahaym

PLACEMENT
Colorado Mesa University

Madeline Koval

Gives Back While Pursuing Her MBA

By Lauren Lesmeister

In her senior year of undergraduate studies at Central Washington University, Madeline Koval ('26 MBA) had just taken the Medical College Admission Test when she realized she no longer wanted to be a physician.

Koval began serving in student government in 2020, at the height of the pandemic. During this time, there was a high need for student services because of the shutdowns. Her role was to build a bridge between the students and university resources. This experience helped Koval realize her passion for service work.

"At some point you have to stop waiting for other people to do the work," she says. "My life has a greater purpose outside of myself, and I want to do work within my community, regardless if I'm helping one person or 10."

Switching paths

After graduating with her bachelor's in biomedical sciences, Koval began working as a leadership engagement and annual giving officer for the Central Washington University Foundation. She learned a lot in her role, but realized there was a gap in her business knowledge.

Koval thoughtfully researched MBA programs with a desire to keep her tuition dollars within Washington state. She also needed a flexible online program. As she compared different options, WSU stood out.

"When I spoke to the WSU team, the alignment in philosophy was there," Koval says.

Giving back with Cocoon House

Today, Koval works for Cocoon House as the engagement and operations coordinator, a role created specifically for her, while pursuing her online MBA through the Carson College of Business.

Cocoon House is a nonprofit organization in Everett, Washington, that serves people aged 12–24 experiencing home instability or homelessness. The house offers several programs and services within its three pillars of housing, outreach, and prevention. In 2023, more than 434 families were served.



Courtesy Madeline Koval

Koval's myriad duties include recruiting new employees, coordinating volunteers, assisting with board management, working on strategic framework, and helping with events, just to name a few. She originally applied for a fund-raising position, and after meeting with the team, they created the role of engagement and operations coordinator for her, capitalizing on her strengths. Koval is a problem solver and thinks of herself as a "utility player," doing a little bit of everything.

"I enjoy supporting the team internally so they can do the external work supporting youth and young adults," she says.

Applying her WSU MBA training

Koval is eagerly applying every lesson she can from her MBA classes to her work. In her economics class, she worked on a project where she had to profile Cocoon House. During this project, she identified ways the company can save money, which will ultimately result in more support for the youth and young adults served.

"I am looking forward to learning more lessons on how I can be more useful to organizations and my community," she says. 

The Sweet Science of Choice

Exploring the Impact of Political Beliefs on Health Decisions



WSU Photo Services

By Eric Hollenbeck

Ben Phifer's ('24 PhD) research at the Carson College of Business explores how political views can significantly influence health decisions. This research sheds new light on public policy and marketing strategies that encourage consumers to make healthier food choices.

A Clemson University alumnus, with both bachelor's and master's degrees, Phifer was propelled by his interest in the psychological elements of marketing to pursue deeper research at WSU.

His WSU PhD dissertation focuses on “nudges”—subtle environmental cues designed to encourage healthier choices without overt persuasion. These tactics include placing fruits at eye level in grocery stores to more sophisticated psychological techniques aimed at influencing consumer behavior.

“When fruits are positioned prominently before the candy section, it nudges shoppers toward making a healthier choice subtly yet effectively,” Phifer says.

Political ideologies and health perceptions

Phifer's research specifically investigates how different political ideologies perceive and react to these nudges, particularly in terms of sugar consumption.

The findings highlight distinct perspectives.

“Liberals tend to view nudges as beneficial health tips, whereas conservatives might see them as overly intrusive, even encroaching on personal freedoms,” he says.

This research provides essential insights for crafting public health initiatives and marketing strategies that respect cultural and political differences.

“Our objective is to bolster public health campaigns in a manner that upholds individual autonomy,” Phifer says.

Academic praise and future applications

Phifer's approach and findings have earned high praise from his academic mentors.

“Ben's academic excellence and unique personality made a lasting impression on the WSU community,” says Chadwick Miller, associate professor of marketing at WSU, “and he enriched the experiences of both faculty and fellow doctoral students.”

Throughout his doctoral studies, Phifer benefited from the support of Miller and other faculty mentors such as Andrew Perkins and Elizabeth Howlett. “Their guidance and support were instrumental in directing my research efforts,” Phifer says.

Now an assistant professor of marketing at Weber State University, Phifer reflects on his five years at WSU with appreciation and eagerness.

“I am excited to implement the strategies I developed at WSU in my new role, aiming to influence future generations of marketers and policymakers,” he says.

Phifer's work not only contributes to greater understanding of consumer behavior but also demonstrates how nuanced interventions can foster healthier community behaviors. His career continues to build on the insights from WSU, influencing public health and marketing strategies to ensure that healthy choices are accessible and appealing across diverse populations. 



Courtesy Nick Dobrzelecki



Impacting the World with Executive MBA Skills

By Lauren Lesmeister



Nick Dobrzelecki

“My company is in health care, and it is our duty to have influence, take positions, and speak loudly on health care issues. The EMBA program reinforced that for me.”

Nick Dobrzelecki's ('22 EMBA) passion for accessible and quality health care was sparked while he was deployed as a medical-surgical nurse in Bosnia. After witnessing the health care system there, he thought to himself, "How can I help?"

After his military service, Dobrzelecki actively sought opportunities to drive change and fill health care gaps, which led him to roles such as performance improvement coordinator and director. He says he never planned on becoming an entrepreneur. He "stumbled" into the business world when he launched his first company in 2008. He founded Daymarck, a remote coding and clinical documentation review solution for the home health care and hospice industry, and later served as senior vice president of Corridor Group, a health care consulting company.

Today, he is the cofounder and managing partner of Titan Health Corporation, a company created to address health care gaps across the globe.

"Despite my expertise in my field, I realized the lack of formal knowledge in business strategy, management, and finance limited my opportunities," he says.

He considered getting an executive MBA throughout his career, but it wasn't until he left his job and started Titan Health Corporation that the time was right. Washington State University's online Executive MBA emerged as the perfect fit.

Earning a WSU Executive MBA

Over the years, Dobrzelecki had researched online MBA programs. He sought a program that offered a blend of entrepreneurship and international focus. While the Carson College of Business does not offer a specific concentration on entrepreneurship, he recognized the college's commitment to fostering entrepreneurship through the Center for Entrepreneurship on the Pullman campus.

Another selling point for Dobrzelecki was the program's recognition for supporting veterans.

"As a proud US Army veteran, the university's high rankings in this regard instilled confidence in me that I would receive the necessary support and resources to excel in my academic pursuits," he says.

Dobrzelecki also needed a program to help him advance beyond the basic skills he had already learned as a successful business owner yet flexible to accommodate his travel schedule. WSU's online Executive MBA offered the rigor and flexibility he was looking for.

Applying EMBA lessons to business

In 2021, Dobrzelecki partnered with Dr. Antony Chu to develop Titan Health Corporation, a conglomerate that encompasses several companies and ventures, to tackle

the inefficiencies plaguing health care. Their flagship project, the Learnery, launched in 2022. The Learnery is a micro-learning platform designed to help professionals retain essential information for their long-term memory.

Throughout his career as a nurse, Dobrzelecki observed health care workers studying for recertifications every two years. He questioned the system and why they spent so much time working toward recertifications when they were supposed to be competent in their knowledge all the time. The Learnery was created to fill that gap.

Recently, Dobrzelecki and his team integrated multi-lingual support to the platform and secured a multiyear contract with United Hatzalah, the world's largest emergency medical services (EMS) nongovernmental organization (NGO) based in Israel. The partnership will help educate volunteers in Israel who answer more than 2,000 calls per day and respond to disasters around the world, such as the earthquake in Morocco in 2023 and the building collapse in Seaside, Florida, in 2021.

The agreement includes a reseller clause, which grants his team access to United Hatzalah's vast international network of EMS organizations across six continents. Dobrzelecki credits skills gained during his EMBA program for successful negotiations.

"An assignment in my international marketing management course was pivotal in honing my skills in international business and strategic decision-making," he says. "It directly influenced my ability to effectively negotiate a reseller agreement with a major EMS NGO by applying the market entry strategies and considerations learned in class."

Merging business and ethics

Prior to his EMBA program experience, Dobrzelecki grappled with where business fit in responding to certain societal issues. While he knew he had a personal ethical duty, he wasn't sure where companies had influence and responsibility. The program taught him that businesses should take stances and affect change where they can.

"My company is in health care, and it is our duty to have influence, take positions, and speak loudly on health care issues," he says. "The EMBA program reinforced that for me."

Titan Health Corporation's mission aligns with this idea, working to positively contribute to society with innovative solutions in the health care industry. The Learnery and its partnership in Israel is just one example of the work Dobrzelecki and his team are doing. Together, they are using their influence to make an impact far beyond their local communities. 

Military Veterans Offer Unique Perspectives on AI in the Workplace

By Matt Beer

The Carson MBA Veterans program helps military-affiliated students understand their value and enhance their professional career development. Veterans from across the country with military service spanning more than 50 years gathered at this year's Carson College Military All Call panel to explore the business of artificial intelligence (AI). While attendees joined to gain insight on risks, impacts, and misconceptions around AI, they also left with a stronger sense of community.



■ Veteran Scott Carson ('72 Busi. Admin.), standing, visited the Pullman campus to engage with MBA students participating in the Military All Call event.

WSU Photo Services

Courtesy Jennifer Trou



Jennifer Trou ('23 EMBA), head of marketing for KUNGFU.AI, delivered a brief keynote on how AI is changing the landscape of the industry. Her insights stem from 20 years in marketing and public relations and her current role at KUNGFU.AI, a professional services firm helping companies lead in the new AI economy. Trou emphasized the need for corporate leaders to think holistically about emerging technologies and stay rooted in sound business strategies.

"I've been a storyteller all my life," Trou says, "and the growth in the use of artificial intelligence has highlighted the need for human creativity and strategic thinking."

Participants also explored some of the fears and concerns around the accelerated use of AI. As a former US Army officer with 30 years of experience in information technology and national cybersecurity policy and operations, **Ken Haynes ('21 EMBA)**, a customer service executive with Cisco, offered a unique perspective. Haynes reminded participants there are real concerns about the amount of energy and water required to meet the expected soaring demands for AI. He also reframed widespread fears that AI will make it harder for veterans to find employment.

"For those worried that AI is going to take their job, I'll say AI isn't going to take your job, but someone who understands how to leverage AI may take your job," Haynes says.



Courtesy Ken Haynes

Courtesy John Howerton



John Howerton ('22 MBA) shared his journey from mechanical engineer to cofounder of Cord Analytics. He acknowledged the need for entrepreneurial spirit as well as transparency in his company's quest to create financial models for investors and analysts.

"For me, it's about knowing the right questions and also how to ask them," Howerton says.

US Air Force veteran Donald Allen ('18 MBA) rounded out the panel.

Allen is a senior manager of reliability for Cruise, a company dedicated to self-driving technology. He provided insights on how veterans can translate their military experiences and business education into influential careers. Asked how his MBA affected his post-military career, Allen smiled and says, "Like a rocket. I was able to share my 'war stories' using the language of business and program management. My experience became much more relatable to teams looking to hire me."

Allen's journey has taken him to companies like Microsoft, Google, and Astra in addition to his current role with Cruise. Whether it's charting their post-military career or tackling tough problems with new technology, Allen offered veterans two pieces of advice: "First, know and be true to your values," he says. "Second, don't plan things too rigidly, and be open to new opportunities you might not have considered."



Courtesy Donald Allen

DEVELOP [HER]

Founder Lauren Hasson Offers Tools to Combat Salary Inequity

By Sue McMurray



■ Lauren Hasson, DevelopHer founder, says creating a sense of competition and knowing when to walk away are sources of power during job negotiation.

“Believe you’re worth it.”

This simple clause was the crux of Lauren Hasson’s seminar on how people, especially women in tech, can permanently change their lives with strategic salary negotiation skills.

Hasson, founder of DevelopHer, a career development platform, shared insights with Carson College of Business students about how she developed a comprehensive strategy to communicate her value to employers and successfully negotiate salaries she deserved.

“It’s possible,” she says. “I went from nothing to a software engineering director for a top Silicon Valley

payments company. I changed the trajectory of my life forever.”

Communicate your worth based on research

Hasson began by researching market databases, reports, and salary calculators to figure out how much employers were paying people in her role. She leveraged data to determine the pain points—what factors and costs hurt the company—and how she could address them. She also looked at timing, for example, researching when companies would need to be hiring, and when possible, ascertaining how many people in the candidate pool she was up against.

Hasson also prepared strategic questions and scripts before meeting with company executives.

“I knew I would get pushback, and I did. One male executive referenced a salary report and offered me 70 percent of what I knew the market value to be. I knew it wasn’t accurate because I had read the same report,” she says.

In another instance where she advanced to an offer stage, she discovered she was offered a lower title that was less than market value.

“I was told the title I wanted wasn’t official and didn’t exist,” Hasson says. “I declined the offer and said I would entertain other competitive offers. I was confident in my worth and prepared to walk away. The company came back with an official title, \$25,000 more in salary, and a fast track to promotion.

Ultimately, she walked away.

Danica Benson ('16 MBA)

“Women—particularly young women—need this information. When applied, this is the kind of knowledge that will help students achieve an impressive ROI on their degree.”

Tips for job negotiation

Hasson says creating a sense of competition and knowing when to walk away are sources of power when it comes to job negotiation.

This advice prompted several questions from the audience.

What do you do when the hiring manager can’t go over a set budget? Hasson says negotiate the intangibles: “Things like stocks, bonuses, and vacation days can all be brainstormed to help get you a ‘yes.’”

What if you get to an offer that’s not as low as your walk away—is it a bad precedent to take it? Hasson says no; sometimes you have to take it, and there’s no shame

in accepting an offer slightly above your walk away. The key, she says, is to prepare numbers in advance and create a business case for why you deserve to be at the high end of the salary range.

“It’s not all about money,” Hasson says. “It’s how you define success.”

In the interview process, when do you bring up salary negotiation? Hasson recommends pushing it to the end of the interview when you have more information on the role.

How do you combat age discrimination in the job market? Find something you uniquely offer, Hasson says, for example education, executive experience, and marketable skills. Newly minted undergraduates can highlight their fresh ideas and cutting-edge technical skills, she says.

Coaching provides tools for job seekers and managers

To further empower Carson online MBA students and alumni entering the job market or striving to be fair and equitable leaders in their organizations, the Carson College offered a year’s access to Hasson’s online negotiations course and quarterly office hours. More than 170 participants have taken advantage of this opportunity spearheaded by Cheryl Oliver, associate dean for professional programs.

“Offering students a complete education is more than theory and experiential learning. We also must give them tools to recognize their value to organizations and negotiate for career opportunities long after they graduate,” Oliver says. “It has been a pleasure working with Lauren and inspirational to see our students and alumni leaning into her lessons.”

Danica Benson ('16 MBA), a senior product marketing manager, will be putting these lessons to work in her upcoming job search. “I’ve found Lauren’s negotiation program to be exceptional, especially given that it’s catered to women,” she says. “Women—particularly young women—need this information. When applied, this is the kind of knowledge that will help students achieve an impressive ROI on their degree.”

Wendy Brant ('19 MBA), a human resources consultant, says the DevelopHer program reinforces what she constantly seeks to execute in her human resources roles, whether internal to organizations or as a consultant. “Conversely, I’ll apply this knowledge toward selling myself when seeking opportunities,” she says. 

CARSON COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

By Scott Jackson

Outstanding Faculty Research Award



Kunter Gunasti,
Department of Marketing
and International Business
Since joining the Carson College
in 2016, Gunasti has established
himself as a prolific researcher,
publishing highly regarded
work in the *Journal of Consumer
Research*, the *Journal of Marketing
Research*, and the *Journal of
Consumer Psychology*. His research
spans several fields including

numerical cognition, consumer experiences, and branding. In 2023, his research was published in top journals, including the *Journal of Consumer Research* and the *Journal of Business Ethics*, underscoring his reputation as a leading scholar in consumer behavior.

Outstanding Faculty Teaching Award



Mesut Cicek,
Department of Marketing
and International Business
Cicek is honored for his role as
an engaging and caring professor
who provides immense value
to his students and the Carson
College of Business. In 2023,
Cicek taught more than 700
students across six courses.
Even while managing large
classes, Cicek excels in fostering

personal connections with his students. He also serves as faculty advisor for the International Business Club, among other mentorship roles. His commitment to student success and innovative teaching approaches exemplifies excellence in faculty instruction.

Outstanding Faculty Service Award



Chuck Munson,
Department of Finance
and Management Science
Munson is recognized for his
significant contributions to
education and academic devel-
opment. He serves as director
of the PhD program, where he
guides aspiring educators and
chairs numerous dissertation
committees. Munson is com-
mitted to advancing teaching

methodologies through workshops and actively participates in university committees. He serves on five editorial boards, showcasing his dedication to fostering educational excellence and engagement.

Outstanding Staff for Student Engagement Award



Dan Kennedy,
Carson Center for
Student Success
Kennedy personifies dedication
to student success. Under his
leadership, the Carson College's
mentorship program grew from
80 to 150 pairs of mentors
and mentees in just two years.
Kennedy meticulously oversees
the matching process, ensuring
meaningful connections that

benefit students and mentors alike. He collaborates with stakeholders, including employers and alumni, to market and enhance the program's reputation. His efforts have significantly influenced students' success, helping them secure internships and job opportunities after college.



ANNUAL AWARDS

Outstanding Staff for Faculty Engagement Award



Melissa Painter,
School of Hospitality
Business Management

Painter is a crucial support figure in the School of Hospitality Business Management. Despite staffing challenges, she works hard to ensure smooth departmental operations while managing events and addressing technical challenges with grace, even while recovering from a

broken leg. Her commitment and resilience showcase her exceptional contributions to supporting faculty engagement.

Outstanding Staff for College Engagement Award



Lisa Baden,
WSU Vancouver

Baden's commitment to students, staff, and faculty is evident through her strategic problem-solving and innovative approach to departmental operations. Baden not only oversees administrative functions but also contributes to teaching professional development courses, demonstrating her impact on

student career readiness. She manages staff, student workers, and teaching assistants, ensuring the college runs smoothly and exceeds expectations at every level.

Outstanding Doctoral Student Research Award



JT Bates,
Department of Management,
Information Systems, and
Entrepreneurship

Bates has achieved remarkable success in research during his tenure. Notably, he coauthored a peer-reviewed paper accepted at the prestigious *Academy of Management Journal*. He is also lead author on another paper accepted by the *Journal of Business*

Ethics. His extensive contributions to data analysis, study execution, and scholarly writing demonstrate his dedication and proficiency as a researcher. Bates's research portfolio, including multiple manuscripts under review and ongoing projects, underscores his outstanding contributions to the field.

Outstanding Doctoral Student Teaching Assistant Award



Wayne Xu,
School of Hospitality Business
Management

Xu has excelled as a teaching assistant for more than two years, having received outstanding evaluation scores. His dedication is reflected in student feedback praising his responsiveness, support, and engaging teaching style. Xu's proactive approach extends beyond teaching, ensuring

smooth classroom operations and invaluable assistance to faculty. His enthusiasm for hospitality education and commitment to student success are exemplary.

Outstanding Doctoral Student Teaching Award



Shirin Shahsavand,
Department of Finance
and Management Science

Shahsavand's teaching consistently garners high marks in course evaluations and praise from her students. She continuously seeks feedback to refine her teaching strategies. Shahsavand's dedication to improving her instructional methods reflects her commitment to student success

and academic excellence. Her thoroughness, engaging delivery, and genuine care for her students contribute to a positive and enriching classroom experience.

YEAR IN REVIEW

■ **Former Carson College Marketing Professor Julie Nelsen and Gautham Rao**, former REI executive, were panelists at the 2023 Power Breakfast, along with industry experts Brad Johnson ('88) from PACCAR Parts and Lisa Young from the Seattle Seahawks.



■ **Professor Chuck Munson with PhD student Pingping Tang**, who received a 2024 WSU Women* of Distinction Award.



■ **The annual Executive MBA Leadership Conference** provided professional development and networking for current and former EMBA students.



■ **Cordoba venture team** won the Herbert B. Jones Foundation \$15,000 grand prize at the 2024 Business Plan Competition for developing an AI plug-in for 3D modeling in architecture.





■ **Accounting students Nathan Feistner, left, and Tanner Giesy** at the Beta Alpha Psi spring celebration. The event brought together around 200 CCB students and 50 professionals in a mixer-style networking opportunity. *Courtesy Makenna Van Duyn*



■ **Andrew Pirie from Slalom** was a panelist at the 2024 Business Technology Symposium "Information Systems: The Backbone of Business," moderated by Professor Robert Crossler, left.



■ **December graduate Kristin Parker** celebrated her MBA degree at the Carson College graduation party.



■ **Students gained professional experience** at the Career Networking Night sponsored by the Burtenshaw family.

STENZEME

CARSON COLLEGE OF BUSINESS CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2024-2025

The Carson College of Business offers more than 200 engagement and professional development events each year for our students, alumni, and donors at our Everett, Global, Pullman, Tri-Cities, and Vancouver campuses. Please visit the following for the most up-to-date event information at each location:

WSU Everett Campus

go.wsu.edu/everettevents

WSU Global Campus

go.wsu.edu/globalcevents

WSU Pullman Campus/ Carson College of Business

go.wsu.edu/ccbevents

WSU Tri-Cities Campus

go.wsu.edu/tricitiesevents

WSU Vancouver Campus

go.wsu.edu/vancevents

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From left, Debbie Compeau, CCB interim dean; Kirk Schulz, WSU system president; alums Bill and Phyllis Campbell; and Mike Connell, WSU Foundation CEO, announced the newly established Phyllis J. Campbell Endowed Deanship that will provide a sustainable base of support for opportunity and excellence in the Carson College of Business.

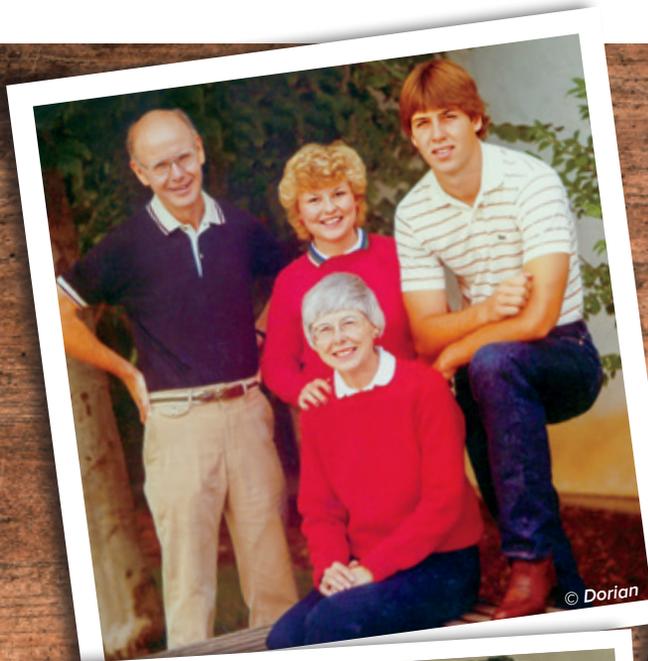


WSU Photo Services

Participating in career networking opportunities is one of the ways students can fulfill the Career Amplifier program's professionalism requirements for graduation.

Strong Ties to WSU Inspire Philanthropists Walt and Jackie Allen

By Sue McMurray



Alums Walt and Jackie Allen recently made an estate gift to the Carson College of Business. At a young age, Walt learned the value of a dollar and the importance of uplifting others.

Growing up in the Great Depression, Walt moved around a lot while his father sought work before landing a job at a dairy in Ithaca, New York. His father bought a radio and invited neighbors to listen in. In turn, one of the neighbors had access to newspapers and kept everyone on the block informed. Walt recalls hearing the neighborhood men marvel at the thought of anyone making it to age 65 so they could benefit from President Roosevelt's new Social Security program.

Sadly, only one of the men in the group made it to that milestone birthday. Walt's father also passed away at 53, shortly after the Pearl Harbor attack.

During wartime, Walt's work ethic developed as his family labored to make ends meet. The family eventually purchased a house and turned it into a tourist home, renting rooms by the night. They built a successful business serving mostly military people who had begun to travel after the war ended.

When Walt finished high school, he joined the military to beat the draft and was soon stationed in Japan with the army of occupation. Because of his work ethic, intelligence, and inquisitive nature, he was usually the one in his unit sent to any educational opportunities that arose.

Suggestion to attend Washington State College takes root

In 1950, Walt was deployed to fight in the Korean War. One day while resting alongside a trail with a couple of his comrades awaiting orders to slow the advance of nearby North Korean fighters, Walt said, "If we make it through all this, let's try to find something else to do for a living."

Someone proposed they all go to college. His friend Maurice, who was from Anacortes, Washington, suggested Washington State College, a foreshadowing of what would become Walt's 72-year connection to what is now Washington State University.

Though he temporarily lost track of Maurice after the Korean War, attending WSU stayed in Walt's mind. Using the GI Bill, he enrolled in the business program in 1952. He flew into Spokane and took a train to Pullman.

"For the first time, I enjoyed school," he says.

Walt studied business administration and became a Boeing intern. He never stopped searching for Maurice until one day they unexpectedly met at a Boeing internship picnic. Maurice was attending school in Oregon with his wife. The two veterans remained in contact until Boeing transferred Maurice to Mississippi.

While at WSU, Walt met Jackie, who majored in physical education and became a teacher. They were married in Seattle the same week they graduated in 1956.

Walt Allen

"While at WSU, I tried to take as many courses as possible outside the field of business. This gave me more flexibility when I entered the business world, especially while we lived in Peru."

Business skills open door to executive-level work

The Allens moved to San Jose, California, where they both worked but soon grew tired of the bustle of so many people in the city. Jackie suggested they look for work abroad.

Soon they moved to Peru where Walt was an accounting executive at Cerro de Pasco Corp., a mining company operating in the Andes Mountains. Jackie taught school at one of the mine sites where they lived.

"While at WSU, I tried to take as many courses as possible outside the field of business. This gave me more flexibility when I entered the business world, especially while we lived in Peru," Walt says. "But my business courses got my foot in the door. I started as an assistant camp accountant and was No. 3 in the financial pecking order by the time we left."

The couple lived in Peru for six years and had a daughter, Cheryl, who struggled with the region's high altitude. Ultimately, the family opted to move back to the US. Walt worked at WSU for a year as the payroll supervisor before moving to the Tri-Cities, where he worked as a senior budget analyst for Battelle until his retirement in 1993. He and Jackie still live in Richland. Cheryl, and their son, Clyde as well as two grandchildren have graduated from WSU, and one grandchild is a current student.

A legacy of philanthropy

The Allens became philanthropic with WSU around the late 1950s, and their support continues today. This year, they decided to direct their estate gift toward supporting an endowed scholarship benefiting students in the college's Expanding Diverse Group Experiences (EDGE) program. The program addresses financial needs and barriers of low socioeconomic, first-generation students pursuing business education.

"WSU gave us both a direction in life, especially me," Walt says. "Until then, I was adrift, with no goals. We both benefited in securing a forward vision of what we wanted to do. We got so much from our WSU experience that we wanted to pay it back." 

Hospitality Department Names Jerry Burtenshaw Memorial Conference Room

By Sue McMurray



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■ From left: Trina Burtenshaw Freatman, Calvin Freatman, Arielle Van Peurse, Melody Van Peurse, and Bradley Van Peurse toast Jerry Burtenshaw's legacy during the naming ceremony.

There's no mistaking the kindly expression of Jerry Burtenshaw on the newly installed signage in the Department of Hospitality Business Management's conference room. Family members, faculty, staff, and students of the Carson College of Business recently gathered to celebrate officially naming the space the Jerry Burtenshaw Memorial Conference Room.

The naming recognizes Jerry ('56) and Angelina Burtenshaw's lengthy service to accelerate transformational hospitality education and experiences at WSU.

"Jerry Burtenshaw was a founding member of the School of Hospitality Business Management Advisory



WSU Photo Services

■ Burtenshaw family members Melody Van Peurse, Arielle Van Peurse, and Calvin Freatman reminisce about Jerry and Angelina Burtenshaw's involvement with the School of Hospitality Business Management reflected on the new signage.

JERRY BURTENSHAW

DeVere Jerry Burtenshaw (October 18, 1934–September 2, 2021), a 1956 graduate of Hotel & Restaurant Administration at WSU, learned the restaurant business from his parents and opened several restaurants throughout the Pacific Northwest. He later founded ABC Services Inc. and Alpine-Burtco, an international catering and concessions company that was the concessionaire for the Kingdome, the Tacoma Dome, and Husky Stadium.

In 1981 Jerry and his wife Angelina created an endowment with WSU to sponsor the renowned Burtenshaw Lecture Series and the Burtenshaw Hospitality Career Night. They also created the Calvin Brett Burtenshaw Memorial Scholarship in honor of their son Calvin Brett, who died tragically as a teen in 1978.

Jerry was president of the National Restaurant Association for several years and the 2017 recipient of the WSU SHBM Hall of Fame Award.

Jerry's impact through his commitment to WSU and the hospitality industry will be felt for years to come through this generous endowment.



WSU Photo Services



■ The School of Hospitality Business Management created signage memorializing the legacy of Jerry and Angelina Burtenshaw's commitment to hospitality education.

Board and continued to serve up until his death—nearly 50 years,” says Nancy Swanger, director of the Granger Cobb Institute for Senior Living, who had a close working relationship with him. “Everything of significance in the hospitality school today is here because of the Burtenshaws’ generosity and deep love for hospitality.”

Hundreds of students benefit from Burtenshaw generosity

The Burtenshaws established several endowments in the hospitality school to memorialize their son, Calvin Brett, who had planned to attend WSU but was tragically lost in a traffic accident. Over the last 40 years, hundreds of students have benefited from the Burtenshaw Distinguished Lecture Series, Hospitality Career Night, Online Hospitality Career Night, and scholarships.

“Jerry Burtenshaw was a Cougar down to his core. It has been a great honor for our entire family to see his legacy and contributions to the

hospitality program honored through the naming of the hospitality conference room,” says Calvin Freatman, Jerry and Angelina’s grandson. “WSU was in the fabric of what made Jerry, Jerry. He will live on forever in the place that he loved so much. Our family would like to thank WSU, the School of Hospitality Business Management, and all of the amazing staff who have celebrated and honored his legacy with us.”

Jerry’s legacy of excellence

Jerry earned a WSU degree in hotel and restaurant administration. Over the years, he built a successful concessions business, Alpine-Burtco Company, which led to contracts at all the major stadiums in the state: the Kingdome, Husky Stadium, the Tacoma Dome, and Spokane’s Joe Albi Stadium.

He earned numerous honors from the industry and his peers, including induction into the College of Diplomates by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation,

Bob Harrington

“The Burtenshaws have impacted students’ lives professionally and personally.”

Washington Hospitality Association Hospitality Man of the Year, WSU Alumni Achievement Award, Carson College Dean’s Distinguished Leadership Award, and induction into the School of Hospitality Business Management Hall of Fame.

“The Burtenshaws have impacted students’ lives professionally and personally,” says Bob Harrington, former director of the hospitality school.

“Jerry and Angelina continue to inspire others through their generosity and have created a culture of giving back that will continue long into the future.” 



Corporate Partnership Enriches Risk Management and Insurance Education

By Sue McMurray

The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that over the next 15 years, about 50 percent of those currently employed in the insurance industry will retire. As the products offered are commonly viewed as necessities, there will be great opportunities for those wishing to enter the field.

WSU is one of the few schools in the Pacific Northwest offering course work in risk management and insurance to fill this talent gap.

Mike McNamara, Carson College of Business professor of finance and management science, leads the college's risk management and insurance program. The program offers three courses: Risk and Insurance, an introduction to the insurance

industry, regulation, and company operations; Risk Management, which focuses on risk assessment and solutions for businesses and nonprofit organizations; and Life Insurance and Financial Planning, which analyzes personal risk, such as premature death and poor health, and delves into risk solutions.

In addition to course work, McNamara's teaching strategies include inviting corporate executives to campus to share industry knowledge and career insights with students.

"The opportunity to interact with industry professionals reinforces the relevance of material discussed in class," McNamara says.

Avista and Starbucks professionals provide real-world examples

Bob Brandkamp, Avista Corporation risk manager, has been a guest speaker for the college's Insurance Industry Night and Walton Lecture, and most recently, a class lecture and networking lunch with students and faculty.

During his class lecture, Brandkamp shared how interconnected utility companies are in supplying energy in the US power grid. His comments were prophetic, McNamara notes, as two weeks after his visit, a Pullman farmer severed a gas pipeline owned by an Oklahoma company that furnished natural gas to part of Avista's service territory. This resulted in the

Courtesy Bob Brandkamp



Being the person that can develop a network of other professionals to find solutions to difficult problems will set you up to be a trusted resource and advisor to those you serve.”

—Bob Brandkamp

largest natural gas outage in Avista’s history, affecting approximately 37,000 customers. Avista worked with mutual aid partners to restore gas service within a few days after the pipeline was repaired.

“Being the person that can develop a network of other professionals to find solutions to difficult problems will set you up to be a trusted resource and advisor to those you serve,” Brandkamp says. “This will take you far in this exciting and dynamic field.”

McNamara also invited Anthony Spacciante (’99 Busi. Admin.), Starbucks director of risk management, to campus for a dinner with college leadership and advisory board members, informal breakfast and lunch with students, and guest lecture in classes.

“Students often feel more comfortable and understand concepts better when they have the opportunity to engage with an industry expert in person,” McNamara says.

McNamara’s students had been discussing trending topics in risk management and insurance such as social inflation, which is a broad term referring to sharp increases in claim costs attributable to large verdicts, the expanding scope of legal liability, more class action lawsuits, general inflation, and other factors. During his remarks, Spacciante touched on social inflation issues as well as the difficult litigation environment for large corporates.

He advised students to develop their intellectual curiosity, extracurricular activities, technology skills, and networking to prepare for successful careers in risk management.

“I’m excited about the future of the industry with the skill sets of this upcoming generation,” he says. “Starbucks has been working with the college since the late 1990s to hire WSU business graduates.”

Brandkamp’s and Spacciante’s advice aligned in that future risk managers will be expected to find new and unique ways of providing economical insurance coverage for both consumers and businesses. Quantitative skills along with communication, the ability to build trusting relationships, teamwork, and problem-solving are essential for career success, Brandkamp says. He says future professionals will need to be prepared to face challenges such as the increasing frequency of wind- and hailstorms, along with wildfire events, which are causing significant premium increases and insurers to leave certain markets.

Spencer educational funds support risk management learning opportunities

While interaction with industry professionals is essential to the WSU risk management and insurance program, it’s often difficult to host them in Pullman because of



Courtesy Anthony Spacciante



I’m excited about the future of the industry with the skill sets of this upcoming generation.”

—Anthony Spacciante

distance and budget limitations. McNamara received funds from the Spencer Educational Foundation’s Risk Manager on Campus program to support the breakfast and luncheon activities during Brandkamp’s and Spacciante’s visits. The program offers funding to universities and colleges in the US and Canada to host a practicing risk manager on campus for a one- to three-day residency.

“The Carson College risk management and insurance program informs students about the vital role risk management plays for individuals, families, and businesses and exposes them to potential career opportunities,” McNamara says. “We are grateful to our corporate partners who enhance our ability to provide students with a real-world curriculum as well as summer internships, job shadowing, hosting company visits, and jobs. Their willingness to help students prepare for the workforce is critical.” 

The Carson College is becoming the top choice for business education in the Pacific Northwest.

1,404

GRADUATE STUDENTS

3,096

BUSINESS
UNDERGRADUATES

1,696

TOTAL DEGREES
CONFERRED

BACHELOR'S 1,150

MASTER'S 534

DOCTORAL 12

(Subject to change as 2024 degree processing continues.)

ACROSS WSU CAMPUSES



357

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

\$1,057,656 TOTAL SCHOLARSHIP
DOLLARS AWARDED

31%

OF CARSON COUGS
ARE FIRST-GENERATION

2023 JOB SALARY DATA

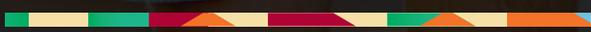
\$70,000

AVERAGE SALARY FOR WSU
BUSINESS GRADUATES

(Source: WSU Undergraduate Placement Survey)

\$64,250 AVERAGE SALARY FOR
BUSINESS UNDERGRADUATES IN THE US

(Source: National Association of Colleges and Employers)



Scholarships Power **Anna Mitre's** Academic Success

By Scott Jackson

Anna Mitre

“Being first-gen, you kind of start at a different point than other students do. EDGE really helps you try and make up for that gap and excel as a student and as a professional.”

When it comes to navigating the complexities of higher education, Anna Mitre's academic journey demonstrates the transformative power of collegiate support programs and scholarships. These opportunities not only eased her path through college but also empowered her to fully engage in her studies and career aspirations.

Scholarships change lives

Throughout high school, Mitre worked fast-food and service industry jobs to help support her family. When she entered WSU, she received the Carson College of Business

Claude Drumhiller Memorial, EDGE, and Brelsford Housing scholarships.

She says the financial freedom from scholarships and other support programs at WSU was life-changing and allowed her to focus on her studies and simply experience college.

Having spent time homeless growing up, Mitre says the Brelsford Scholarship, which awards students a year of rent-free lodging with two other recipients, was particularly meaningful. She hopes to one day give back to WSU students and perhaps have a scholarship in her name.

“I am genuinely grateful for the opportunity they provided me,

and I'm fully committed to making the most of it,” Mitre says. “Their generosity will stick with me my whole life.”

WSU support programs enhance student success

Mitre credits the college's EDGE and Career Amplifier programs as major contributors to her success as a student.

Coming from a low-income family, she says the financial assistance WSU offered was a big part of what allowed her to attend college. She was particularly grateful to the EDGE program, which supports



WSU Photo Services

low-income, first-generation business students with resources like mentorship and a \$3,000 scholarship for up to three years.

“Being first-generation, you kind of start at a different point than other students do,” Mitre says. “EDGE really helps you try and make up for that gap and excel as a student and as a professional.”

Mitre says the Carson Amplifier program, which helps students develop career readiness, was a great complement to the EDGE support.

“I would not have gotten those opportunities if I had gone to any other school, because WSU is very

much Cougs first,” she says. “Even when you’re a professional in the industry, you still want to come back and support Cougs. I feel this is something you cannot get anywhere else.”

Inspiring change through financial education

Mitre chose to double major in accounting and economic sciences. When she graduates in 2025, she plans to go into governmental accounting and someday teach high school accounting or finance.

“One of my biggest dreams is to improve financial literacy in rural and underrepresented areas,” she says.

A high school accounting class played a significant role in inspiring Mitre to pursue her degree in the subject. As the class progressed, she and her classmates improved their spending habits and began to make financial decisions that could benefit them in the long term.

“Just seeing that change really motivated me to want to help students escape generational poverty that’s really common where I’m from,” she says. “If we give them these skills at a young age and continue to reinforce them as they grow up, it will make a big difference in their lives.” 



New Regents Professor a Leading Figure in Hospitality Research

By Scott Jackson

After more than two decades with Washington State University's School of Hospitality Business Management, Dogan Gursoy can add yet another title to his name: Regents Professor.

Only 30 faculty members at WSU may hold the position at a given time, and each college may nominate only two of their faculty for the honor per year. Promotion to the rank requires at least seven years of service at WSU and attainment of the highest level of professional achievement.

"We are looking forward to continued excellence and leadership from Professor Gursoy with this recent elevation," says School of Hospitality Business Management Interim Director Mario Reyes.

Endowments support excellence, acclaim

No stranger to acclaim, Gursoy holds the Taco Bell Distinguished Professorship, an endowment established in 1989 that fuels his research and scholarly work with annual funds.

Gursoy says researchers must often piece together funding from a variety

of sources, making endowed professorships like the Taco Bell position all the more critical for supporting their work.

For the third consecutive year, Gursoy is recognized as one of the world's most cited researchers in his field by the analytics company Clarivate. Those on the list must have authored multiple papers ranking in the top 1 percent of citations in their field. Gursoy has published more than 200 research publications in refereed journals and 12 books.

The cutting edge of AI in hospitality

Gursoy's work has focused on diverse topics including sustainability, services management, and hospitality and tourism marketing.

"Over the years, my research evolved," he says. "At first, it focused on consumers' information searches and their decisions. At the same time, I did some studies on tourism impacts from mega events. Right now, we are working on artificial intelligence."

Gursoy is quick to clarify his research concerns consumer behavior and its relationship to AI rather than

creating or improving the technology itself. He says when he first started studying the use of AI in service roles in 2019, few took him seriously because the technology wasn't quite what it is today. In the years since, AI technology has improved significantly, and that early research is now among the most highly cited in the field.

In some of his most recent research, Gursoy is investigating consumer behaviors in response to AI and AI-supported chatbots deployed in service delivery roles. He's also researched whether consumers respond favorably to the word "AI" in product descriptions.

"We are looking at the positive side of AI and what motivates people to use it, but we are also trying to figure out what kind of negative effect it has on people," Gursoy says. "What we're trying to find is what type of technology is going to help people, make their lives easier, and improve their well-being and quality of life." 

 **To learn more about establishing an endowment, email ccb.development@wsu.edu.**

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