

# UPDATE

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SPRING 2018

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**WISCONSIN**  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

TOGETHER  
FORWARD®





**ABOUT  
BARRY GERHART**

Barry Gerhart has been a member of the WSB faculty since 2000. He has served as chair of the Department of Management and Human Resources and was founding director of the Strategic Human Resource Management specialization in the Wisconsin Full-Time MBA Program.

He will serve as interim dean until a permanent dean is identified by a search that will begin in September. To learn more about Barry, visit [go.wisc.edu/wsb-gerhart](http://go.wisc.edu/wsb-gerhart)

When I was in the Ph.D. program at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, I was always struck by how faculty and staff went out of their way to make everyone feel at home and helped create a connection I knew would last a lifetime.

As the interim Albert O. Nicholas Dean of the Wisconsin School of Business, I understand the interest you and thousands of other alumni have about what we do here and our plans for the future. You're invested in the place that helped you become who you are.

Our vision is to be a premier broad-based business school and we are moving forward to develop and execute a strategy that considers the changing landscape of business education. At the same time, this strategy aims to build on our many strengths to innovate and provide cutting-edge research while preparing the next generations of Business Badgers. Our strategic initiatives align with UW–Madison strategic priorities for 2015–2019: enhancing the educational

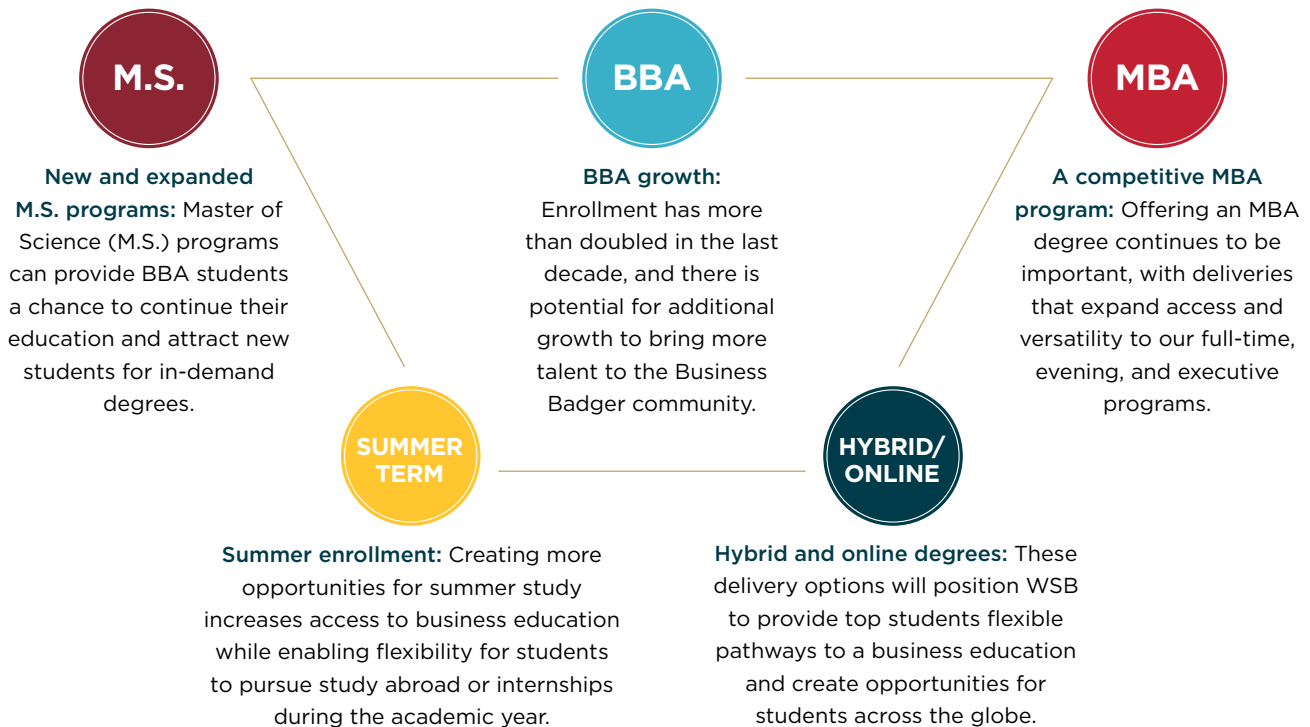
experience, improving student access and opportunities, maintaining and growing faculty excellence, and expanding and improving research.

We're already doing significant work to enhance business students' educational experience, such as expanding applied learning opportunities, incorporating interdisciplinary content into our curricula, and opening the Learning Commons. Our faculty continue to deliver transformative research that drives excellence in our Ph.D. program and informs industry decisions. Their focus on educational innovation, through the support provided by the Inspired Learning Chairs and Professorship, has transformed our classroom environments to the benefit of all students.

Fundamental to our vision is providing the opportunity to obtain a world-class business education in a way that works best for students. Improving access is where real potential for growth and innovation lies. On the next page, our strategic initiatives outline this theme.

# Wisconsin School of Business STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

To enhance and build on our existing portfolio of programs



These initiatives will require an increase in resources, including growing the size of our faculty to support more students and new degree offerings. We are collaborating with campus leadership to reach agreement on how much to grow the faculty and how to fund this growth.

As we work to distinguish ourselves in the changing landscape of higher education, be assured that everything we do will be true to WSB's long-held values and the tradition of shared governance at UW-Madison and WSB. A key part of our strategy process is an ongoing conversation with our faculty, staff, students, partners, and alumni. We're also benchmarking against peer and aspirational schools to identify which areas of study hold the most promise and determine how to

design and deliver programs in those areas.

We're already doing many things that set us apart, and I hope you will enjoy reading about some of these exciting initiatives in the pages that follow.

Our alumni continue to be key partners in what our School has been and what we will be. I look forward to working with you as we move into the future and communicating as our strategic initiatives progress.

Together Forward,

—Barry Gerhart, Ph.D. '85

Interim Albert O. Nicholas Dean

Professor of Management and Human Resources

Bruce R. Ellig Distinguished Chair in Pay & Organizational Effectiveness



**Interested in learning more about the Wisconsin School of Business Strategic Initiatives?**

We are committed to creating a transparent approach to our strategy development and implementation. If you would like to learn more or share your thoughts, please visit [go.wisc.edu/wsb-update-survey](https://go.wisc.edu/wsb-update-survey)



## » News you can use

It was a familiar voice if not a familiar face that came to the Wisconsin School of Business this spring when David Brancaccio, host and senior editor of public radio's *Marketplace Morning Report*, served as the School's business writer in residence. Brancaccio spoke with students, learned from faculty about their research, and moderated three discussions about contemporary topics—health care reform, tax care, and a forward-looking conversation with six faculty members called “What We Talk About When We Talk About Cryptocurrency, Blockchain, and the Internet of Things.” Of his three days at WSB, Brancaccio says, “This was an opportunity for me to steep myself in ideas, where others were sharing things that they thought were important to them—students and faculty.” »»



# UPDATE

SPRING 2018

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**WISCONSIN**  
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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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A Look Back at Learning Spaces for Generations of Business Badgers

# » NOW YOU KNOW

New WSB research that answers important questions

BY JANE BURNS



## » Q: Will financial incentives get people to the gym more often?

If someone is already motivated to go to the gym to improve their health, earning a financial incentive to do so is a gimme, right?

Well, not so much.

Research by Justin Sydnor, the Leslie P. Schultz Professor in Risk Management and Insurance and associate professor of risk and insurance at the Wisconsin School of Business, shows that motivation and modest financial incentives aren't enough to overcome the likely culprit keeping people from a new workout routine: overconfidence.

The researchers offered 836 new gym members varied incentives valued between \$30 and \$60 to visit the gym nine times in the first six weeks of their membership. As new members, they already had invested in a plan to work out regardless of an incentive.

Yet, they didn't. Ninety-five percent of participants in the study indicated they expected to hit the gym an average of once a week; only 63% did in the first month and it dropped to 34% by the third.

The research, reported on widely by national media including the *Wall Street Journal* and *Men's Health*, suggests that incentives won't even help people already motivated to change. What might be more effective, Sydnor says, is helping people set realistic goals that don't just consider time and money, but also overconfidence. That might prove be the healthiest choice of all.



## » Q: Do in-store samples boost product sales?

Shoppers who stop for that sample of ice cream or pizza aren't just getting a free snack, they're helping a company build long-term sales.

That's one of the conclusions WSB Associate Professor of Marketing Qing Liu discovered about in-store sampling after she and her research partners noticed a proliferation of it. As an experiential (and sometimes tasty) method of promotion, sampling long has proved popular. But is it effective?

The research looked at samples in four product categories and included new and existing products as well as national and private-label brands. It yielded a number of findings that retailers can use to their advantage.

Besides a short-term product boost, sampling also provides a lift in sales that is sustained for two to eight weeks afterward. Also, the sampling of one brand has a positive impact on other brands within the same category. Instead of a sale that might persuade a customer to buy Product A over Product B, sampling brings customers to all the category's brands. Sampling also provides a brand loyalty that sales or displays do not.

Further research can explore details such as optimal times or products, but in the meantime there is a simple conclusion to draw from in-store sampling: It works.



## » Q: Have legal marijuana sales had an impact on home prices?

As lawmakers' discussions of recreational marijuana legislation throughout the U.S. center on health and enforcement, another piece of the debate has emerged: property values.

Research by Moussa Diop, WSB assistant professor of real estate and urban land economics, found that property values increased in the vicinity of Denver's newly legal retail marijuana establishments since the law took effect in January 2014.

Diop and his research partners chose to study the immediate vicinity of retailers in Denver, where the new law only applied to establishments that had been medical marijuana dispensaries. They compared data from the year before the law took effect and the year after. They found that single-family residences within a tenth of a mile of retail establishments increased in value by 8.4%, or an average of \$27,000 per house.

Diop and his researchers didn't propose explanations, but offered insights into what neighbors might think about such businesses being nearby. Residents could vote with their feet and leave, driving down house prices. They haven't done so, providing a quiet way to measure reaction to the law. »»



Want more business insights you can trust? Read the latest research at [go.wisc.edu/WSBresearch](http://go.wisc.edu/WSBresearch)





## » *WHAT INSPIRES YOU?*

“The Wisconsin School of Business gave me the skills and confidence necessary to fuel my career at General Mills. As a result, I was inspired to establish and lead the General Mills UW–Madison Alumni Team. This experience allows me to stay connected to the university, mentor current and future Badger leaders, and give back to the institution that continues to support me. On, Wisconsin!”

**—ALLI JONES (BBA '07)**

Global Sourcing Marketing Manager in Nyon, Switzerland, General Mills

# » Making the Pitch

An alumnus's idea for a sales workshop becomes a collaboration of Business Badgers

BY JANE BURNS | PHOTOS BY PAUL L. NEWBY II

**C**ameron Rowe (BBA '18) never planned to take a sales job or to learn what one might entail.

Between an internship and a job lined up after graduation, he'd been steering his education to stay on track for the finance career he planned all along.

Then, it occurred to him that maybe there was one necessary skill he lacked as he was about to head into the work world: sales.

"I realized the jobs I was pursuing were client-facing," Rowe says. "And in general it's good to know how to convey a message to management. You're selling an idea to people—what you're selling is yourself."

Rowe gained those skills through a sales workshop held at the Wisconsin School of Business last fall. Students in a variety of majors dived in to learn sales tactics, as well as communication and negotiation skills.

"People traditionally think of sales as a low-end job but when you look at leaders—think of

politicians, think of CEOs, think of the chancellor—their job is really about selling," says Noah Lim, professor of marketing and the John P. Morgridge Distinguished Chair in Business, who organized the workshop with Kevin Chung, an assistant professor of marketing. "If you are in a leadership role you have to communicate value and you have to communicate strategy—and that's selling."

## A head start for students

The interactive workshop was proposed and generously sponsored by Dan Sobic (BBA '77), who also participated. It brought together all elements of the Business Badger network—alumni, faculty, students, and WSB's educational innovation team.

"Sales is an extremely important skill set in business globally," says Sobic, who retired as executive vice president of PACCAR Inc., in 2016.

"Even engineering, finance, and marketing jobs are sales. A lot of companies hire from the university

and I thought this workshop would help give the students a head start in a very competitive world."

Sobic was not just a sponsor of the workshop, he helped shape its curriculum, Lim said. Sobic's lessons to students went beyond sales tips—he told them about honesty and authenticity, about learning from other cultures, and the importance of taking care of themselves when they have a demanding schedule.

"He gave a keynote speech, he coached the students, he shared his experience," Lim says. "He asked the students what they wanted to hear—he's a good sales guy, right? He developed a keen sense of what would benefit the students."



**"If you are in a leadership role you have to communicate value and you have to communicate strategy—and that's selling."**

—NOAH LIM, PROFESSOR OF MARKETING AND THE JOHN P. MORGRIDGE DISTINGUISHED CHAIR IN BUSINESS





(From left) Allee Peterson (BBA '18) makes her sales pitch to Alan Scher (BBA '99), who has taken on the role of a client as part of the interactive sales workshop held on campus during the fall semester. Also participating are Cameron Rowe (BBA '18), who also made a sales pitch, and Michelle Hudson (BBA '14), who helped provide feedback to the students.



Dan Sobic (BBA '77), retired executive vice president of PACCAR Inc., took a hands-on role in the creation of a new sales workshop at the Wisconsin School of Business. He spoke with students during the event, gave a keynote speech, and worked with faculty and staff on the workshop curriculum.

### Much more than sales

The workshop was a commitment on the part of the students, too, with challenging role-playing exercises and peer critiques.

"When I saw this workshop, I thought it looked fun and I knew it would put me outside my comfort zone," said Allee Peterson (BBA '18). "I thought it was going to be sales-focused but this was about creating personal connections and building relationships, not about a hard sell."

Students took on sales roles with tough clients—roles played by industry partners, many of them alumni and/or recruiters for their companies. Students met the "client," negotiated with them, and then closed the sale. The "clients" were instructed to be tough on the students, to make a few demands, and even be stubborn if they had to be.

"This had to be interactive," Lim says. "The only way you can learn is by doing. You have to make mistakes."

In the three-part "transaction,"

students played the role of a hotel's sales agent. Their customer, played by the industry partner, was looking to reserve meeting space. They negotiated details from room size to food to WiFi access.

"The industry people were tough but they didn't make it too tough on the students," says Peterson, who wants to go into a sales-related field after she graduates as a marketing major.

### Feedback from professionals

The industry partners provided immediate feedback—what students did well, what they could do better, what approaches they could take to work through roadblocks. Other students learned from that feedback, too.

The students' biggest eye-opener was watching themselves. The sessions were recorded, then viewed together at the end of the workshop. Students received a copy of the video so they could watch and learn some more.

"People don't like to view their

own videos but it's important to do," Lim says. "If you can just cut out three things you should not be doing you can be so much more effective. Maybe you nod too much. Maybe you have mannerisms you're not aware of."

Peterson discovered that she says "um" too much, something that wasn't part of her feedback but she noticed on her own.

"I was playing it back in my room laughing at myself and my roommate saw it," she says. "She's a journalism major and said, 'We need that.'"

The workshop will be offered annually. Details will be tweaked as it moves forward, Lim says, but its impact will only grow.

"This is a great example of our alumni, our industry partners, a donor, faculty, students, and staff coming together to create something that really benefits our students," he says. "It's everyone working together, and it's hard to find a better example of it." »»



» Meet eight  
Wisconsin School  
of Business  
graduates making  
an impact on their  
industries

BY JANE BURNS AND SIRI PAIRIN  
PHOTOS BY PAUL L. NEWBY II



## » Sarah Van Caster (MBA '13)

Sarah Van Caster (MBA '13) loves working in the startup world. The Wisconsin native describes her day-to-day life with San Francisco-based company Anaplan as fast-paced, constantly evolving, and always interesting.

"In the startup world, your job title is more or less irrelevant," she says. "You come to work asking, 'What is the task at hand and how do I deliver?' It takes a certain type

of crazy to be willing to live in that kind of environment every day."

Van Caster completed her undergraduate degree at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, and came to the Wisconsin School of Business to pursue her MBA in operations and technology management for what she describes as one of the best times of life. Her time at WSB allowed her to dive into the world of entrepreneurship, working with startups and incubators in Madison and Milwaukee.

As the senior product marketing

manager, Van Caster leads all strategic marketing for Anaplan's sales and marketing solutions.

"In the tech world, there's no ability to stay stagnant," she says. "It's very motivating to know that in order to progress in my career and excel at my job I need to continue to learn and evolve my skill set.

"I love it because things are always changing," she says. "It keeps you honest; it keeps you on your toes."

Van Caster continues to use the skills she learned at WSB in her career. She recalls a particular



## » Laura Beussman (MBA '11)

**“It’s very motivating to know that in order to progress in my career and excel at my job I need to continue to learn and evolve my skill set.”**

—SARAH VAN CASTER  
SENIOR PRODUCT MARKETING  
MANAGER, ANAPLAN

change management course that taught her invaluable skills.

“I learned that, at any company, if you’re not managing change from a human behavior standpoint, you’re not going to be successful,” she says. “I still go back to that, even now with the launch of our new software. The skills I learned in that change management course have been applicable in any circumstance I’ve been in professionally.”

The MBA program made Van Caster realize she’s never been afraid of failure.

“It gave me the confidence to pursue whatever it is professionally that intrigues me because if I work hard and I’m passionate about it, it’s going to be successful for me,” she says.

Using the skills she has collected over the years and the knowledge from her experience in the startup industry, Van Caster hopes to one day own a startup of her own. Until then, she strives to keep learning as much as she can.

“Professionally, my continual goal is continuous learning,” she says. “I aim to be constantly learning not just about industry and external things, but also learning about myself.”

Laura Beussman’s passion for the arts world brought her to the Wisconsin School of Business, but it was her dedication to driving change that eventually landed her at Blackbaud as the director of product marketing for fundraising solutions.

Born and raised in Bryan, Texas, Beussman was in dance at age 4, piano at age 7, and was always singing. Her interest in the arts continued to wield influence well into the start of her career. After completing her undergraduate degree at Texas A&M, Beussman worked in nonprofit arts, primarily in accounting and finance. She soon realized, however, that what she really wanted to do was drive strategy in an organization, and came to Wisconsin to get her MBA in arts administration.

“What’s great about education and my MBA is that it’s a foundation that can’t go away,” she says. “Companies grow and shrink. Industries change and decline. There are going to be changes in how things move forward in the business world, but having that foundation is mine forever.”

From industry experience to a tight-knit cohort, Beussman recalls her time at WSB fondly. She even

sang in a cover band made up of fellow MBA students called “Statistically Irrelevant.”

Beussman joined Blackbaud, a company dedicated to powering nonprofit organizations and their technology needs, in Austin, Texas in 2013 as a product marketer in the arts and culture vertical. There, she was able to combine her interest in the arts with her dedication to the nonprofit world.

“Getting excited about the work I was doing and energized about the impact it was having helped me grow my career and really drive it forward,” she says. “I’m passionate about what I’m doing and how it can impact other people.”

Beussman recently became director of product marketing for fundraising solutions.

“It’s very customer focused, which is great because I’m passionate about our customers and what our customers do,” she says. “Our customers are mission-driven organizations. We get to talk to them, hear what their challenges are, and what they need help to be able to do. Our technology helps them do more and serve more people, which is extremely rewarding. We’re not just marketing anything; we’re helping people change the world.”





## » Peter Olesen (BBA '09)

Peter Olesen (BBA '09) always knew he could make a lot of dough when he grew up. Layers and layers of it, in fact, sometimes filled with pecans, cherries, or cream cheese.

Olesen is vice president of O&H Danish Bakery, which is nationally known for its signature item, kringle. The fourth-generation business was founded by Olesen's great-grandfather in Racine, Wisconsin, where O&H is still based and growing.

"We've been good about teaching our team members how to bake," he says. "Now we are teaching them how to lead and to build a strong company."

Kringle, a circular Danish pastry that folds various fillings into its 36 thin layers, has fans throughout the U.S. The flaky treat was named Wisconsin's official state pastry in 2013, was featured on *CBS Sunday Morning*, and has loyal fans who order it online or buy stacks of it in person. During the busy holiday season, O&H makes 6,000 kringles a day at its 44,000-square-foot baking center that opened in 2016.

The company long had an established fan base and mail-order business. As foodie culture and social media emerged, demand for unique items grew, and so did O&H. That prompted greater focus on marketing, which is also in the family; Olesen's brother-in-law Matt Horton (BBA '05) is vice president of marketing.

"We don't just sell bakery," Olesen says. "Our customers invite us into their lives to celebrate their most special occasions and we weren't really telling that story. We do now."

Olesen majored in finance and real estate, and considered a real estate investing career. He began his career as a consultant for Blue Stone International in Chicago. The kringle was always calling, though, and in 2012 when an uncle retired, Olesen came home.

His real estate and finance background is instrumental in helping to lead the company's growth and strategy as its popularity grows. His experience in every job at the company from sweeping floors to running a cash register comes in handy during busy times.

"Every day I'm thankful for the opportunity to serve our customers and put out a product that we are all proud of making," he says. "I can't imagine not doing that. It's in my blood."





## » Margaret Ntambi (BBA '14)

Margaret Ntambi (BBA '14) is a maximizer. She sees talents and strengths in others, and encourages them to push the boundaries of their own potential. Excellence is her personal measure and continued pursuit. She credits her Ugandan parents, who moved to Baltimore in 1980 to pursue their medical careers, with imprinting this value on her at an early age.

"I work hard because I understand how much they sacrificed to be where they are," she says. "Even when their funds were tight, investing in education for their children was never compromised. They ensured that I would be successful and be comfortable in life."

Ntambi pays her parents' efforts forward every chance she gets. Her first internship was with the U.S. Department of State in Swaziland as a diplomatic intern with the foreign service. She went on to intern at Procter & Gamble twice before the company offered her a full-time position as a financial analyst. While at P&G, Ntambi also served as the diversity recruiting lead for UW-Madison.

"Growing up as a Ugandan girl in Madison had its challenges," she says. "My cultural experience was different than most of my peers."

Ntambi's parents upheld their cultural ideals and her friends didn't always understand the importance of those customs or her parents' expectations for her.

Her desire for acceptance was difficult to balance, she says, but after gaining more confidence and shedding insecurities, she feels more comfortable in all aspects of her life.

"I felt quite alone as I struggled to find where I truly belonged," she says. "The spiritual journey I've pushed through to find my happiness has made me very conscious of others who may feel alone or as though they don't belong. I've naturally become an advocate for people in this position by being a maximizer. I strive to uplift others from a place self-doubt to a place of self-assurance so that they can reach their full potential."

Ntambi now works in Washington, D.C., as a corporate development transaction services (CDTS) analyst at Accenture. There, she serves on several leadership teams, working with company leaders to optimize team members' interpersonal experiences. On teams that largely focus on technical mastery, she helps to figure out how members can learn material more quickly and work more confidently.

"If I see a weakness or strength in someone, I try to help them focus on things that make them feel powerful so that they're confident in what they do," she says. "Everything I do has to do with being inclusive and finding ways to make people feel their best."



## » **Kimberly Cozza** (BBA '01)

Recently named one of *Commercial Property Executive's* "2018 Stars to Watch," Kimberly Cozza (BBA '01) is living up to her title—and her childhood dreams—with a flourishing career and industry success to prove it.

Born in a suburb of Milwaukee, Cozza dreamed of becoming a successful businesswoman.

"I grew up in the '80s and Melanie Griffith's character in *Working Girl* was a huge inspiration to me," says Cozza. "I had that dream of being in a power suit in a high-rise corner office overlooking a big city."

Cozza works at Berkadia in Chicago, where she started as the direct liaison for Fannie Mae, responsible for a third of the company's mortgage banking network. In her first five years there, she helped grow the firm's Fannie Mae volume tenfold. Now, Cozza is a managing director responsible for training, development, and production strategy in Berkadia's Multifamily GSE Debt Origination department, a new position for the company.

"Moving into this new role, it's more strategic," she says. "The overall mission of growing production is defined, but the path to get there and to achieve that goal was completely left up to me."

Cozza has also been instrumental in developing talent in the company's international office. In 2016, she flew to India for a week to train the production operations team on multifamily and commercial real estate finance.

**"Every position I've ever held it's been completely essential to be able to work well with others, whether they're colleagues or clients or superiors."**

—KIMBERLY COZZA  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, BERKADIA

"It was obviously a culture shock," she says, "but it was such a great experience to be able to work with people from a completely different background and still recognize the universal similarities."

Cozza learned to value teamwork during her time at the Wisconsin School of Business, where she majored in finance and real estate. Most of her classes required it, which somewhat clashed with Cozza's Type A personality and work style at the time. Now, however, she sees the value in learning to work in teams.

"Every position I've ever held it's been completely essential to be able to work well with others, whether they're colleagues or clients or superiors," she says. "Growing up, I never wanted to rely on anyone to get the A or to ace the test, but the reality is life isn't like that. That's the best thing I learned from WSB."



## » Larry Phillips (BBA '13)

Larry Phillips (BBA '13) wastes no time. In the four years since he graduated from the Wisconsin School of Business, the Chicago native has played a key role in creating Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.'s new diversity and inclusion strategy. The risk and insurance firm, based in the Chicago area, recently dedicated an entire team to support several of its top priorities: creating strategies to increase diversity within its workforce and building a strategic alliance with diverse trading partners.

"This is a great opportunity for Gallagher to be more client-centric and to bring in innovative ideas by bringing in diverse individuals," he says.

Two years into his first role at the company, Phillips approached the director of talent management and acquisition, offering to help with recruiting efforts in addition to his regular responsibilities. At the time, the firm had no formalized diversity recruiting strategy. Before long, Phillips and several others at the firm gave the initiative an official platform.

Phillips grew up in Cabrini-Green, a public housing project in Chicago, surrounded by violence, crime, and gang activity. As a teen, Phillips became involved with Boys Hope Girls Hope, a program that provides scholarship opportunities to at-risk Chicago youth. The program helped shield Phillips from his neighborhood's negative influences and provided him a family-like atmosphere.

His background fuels his passion for recruiting from diverse student populations, particularly at schools his company hadn't traditionally visited.

"I share my story with them and say, 'Look, the insurance business is not rocket science. If I can do it given all of the adversity I've been through, any of you can do it,'" Phillips says.

Phillips is now president of the junior board of Boys Hope Girls Hope and is still involved with the program. He also mentors five seventh-graders on the south side of Chicago through an organization called The Big Shoulders Fund.

"Having a good job and a good title is great, but when you die, you can't take any of that with you," he says. "What inspires me are the people who have made so many sacrifices before me or during my lifetime to make this world better for me and other people. I want to pay that forward and say, 'Okay, what can I do?'"



**"What inspires me are the people who have made so many sacrifices before me or during my lifetime to make this world better for me and other people. I want to pay that forward and say, 'Okay, what can I do?'"**

—LARRY PHILLIPS  
ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT, CULTURE AND INCLUSION,  
ARTHUR J. GALLAGHER & CO.



## » Aaron Habriga (BBA '09)

Sometimes the best path to success is an unconventional one. Aaron Habriga (BBA '09), who went from a machine gunner in Iraq to principal in a Los Angeles private equity firm, knows that more than most people.

And it's that unconventional path that has made him a good fit for his chosen field, spending the last seven years within private equity, predominantly focused on investing within the health care services sector.

"People are increasingly looking for less of a cookie-cutter background in our world," says Habriga, whose Los Angeles office overlooks Beverly Hills and offers a peek at the famed Hollywood sign. "More people are looking for a breadth of thought and experience."

Habriga, a native of Plymouth, Wisconsin, is from a career military family whose service dates to World War I. He enlisted in the Marine Corps at age 17 and was soon an infantry team leader serving in Yusufiyah, Iraq, walking into town on a mission for which he and his unit were told to pack for three to 30 days, but stayed seven months.

Four months after returning to the U.S., he was on campus in Madison, using his knack for math and finance to pursue a business degree. In 2008, he was back in Iraq on a scout sniper team, working in the dark of night conducting surveillance and gathering intelligence.

"I actually miss it a bit," he says. "It's obviously more exciting than sitting behind a desk but also slightly more dangerous than working in private equity."

He cut his teeth within private equity at his first job out of college, as an analyst with Pflugsten Partners. He then made job moves within Chicago and then to New York, with a stopover at Harvard Business School to pursue his MBA. But California had called since basic training and he returned to join Varsity Healthcare Partners, an emerging health care-focused private equity fund.

Habriga enjoys doing a deep dive into everything he sees, from observing inefficiencies in daily life to asking about software his own health care provider uses.

"The military, for better or worse, makes you hyper-aware," he says. "Combine that with business school training and it's either the worst of both or the best. It can drive other people nuts."





## » Erin Strepy (MBA '15)

As a young girl, Erin Strepy (MBA '15) didn't have much time for dolls. She was busy climbing trees, riding her skateboard, and tinkering with creative projects.

Now in her 30s, she plays with dolls every day because that's her job. Strepy works for Mattel as global brand manager for Barbie, the iconic doll with a busy life as a fashion icon, chef, paleontologist, or any number of other endeavors.

"It's a brand that's under constant scrutiny," says Strepy, who works in Mattel's headquarters in El Segundo, California. "If Barbie does something, the media picks up on it. There are a lot of talented people working to make sure we stay within the guardrails of what Barbie is and what she isn't."

Strepy joined Mattel in early 2017 after starting her career working in agencies. One agency job had as its client a popular consumer brand with a team that included Wisconsin School of Business alumni, and the seed was planted for her to pursue an MBA with a brand focus and a goal of moving to the client side. She took a job with Unilever after earning her MBA.

"The Wisconsin School of Business was definitely two of the best years of my life," says Strepy, who enjoys talking to prospective and current WSB students about her MBA experience and career. "I still have dreams about the Terrace."

At Mattel, Strepy works with everyone from toy

**"It's like you're the conductor of the orchestra. Everyone else is very talented, very creative and you get to seek out all of those different strengths to turn it into something bigger."**

—ERIN STREPY  
GLOBAL BRAND MANAGER, MATTEL

inventors to retailers as Barbie goes from the idea stage to the store shelf.

"It's like you're the conductor of the orchestra," she says. "Everyone else is very talented, very creative and you get to seek out all of those different strengths to turn it into something bigger."

Strepy works with about 200 items including dolls, clothing, houses, and with a new line of Barbies that features different body sizes and ethnicities. Customers are responding emotionally to a Barbie who resembles them, Strepy says, and she and her colleagues are building on that for next year's line.

Barbie continues to evolve not just with the times but because the entire toy space is seeking ways to promote imagination in a digital world.

"I'm still learning a lot," Strepy says. "You learn very quickly about the world around you when you work with Barbie." »»



(From left) Megan Allen (BBA '18, MAcc '19) and Derek Matzke (BBA '01, MAcc '02) talk taxes as the season kicks into full gear at BDO's Madison office, giving Allen valuable experience during her internship.



# » Value-Added Degree

The IMacc Program's unique approach gives accounting students a strong foundation BY JANE BURNS | PHOTO BY PAUL L. NEWBY II

**W**hen Derek Matzke (BBA '01, MAcc '02), represents BDO at intern recruiting events for Wisconsin School of Business accounting students, he knows he just can't sit at a table and wait for them to come to him.

"These are 100, 125 students who are the best of the best," says Matzke, a partner at the public accounting firm's Madison office. "It's competitive among the firms to get them. You have to seek them out and distinguish your firm because there are a lot of good students everyone wants."

WSB students rise to the top because of a unique program that sets them apart from other business schools—the Integrated Master of Accountancy (IMacc).

As part of the overall Master of Accountancy Program (MAcc), the IMacc is a five-year program that offers what's known as a 4+1 degree that combines a bachelor's and a master's.

"It really sets up the students well for their careers," says Terry Warfield, PwC Professor in Accounting and Richard J. Johnson Chair of the Department of Accounting and Information Systems. "Our graduates advance quicker and are a little more successful once they start their careers. To us, that's validation that our fifth year adds something."

The goal of the program is to prepare students for their professional lives and the Certified Public Accounting (CPA) exam. One of its hallmarks is an internship

during the spring semester of the fourth year—the busiest time of the year for the public accounting firms—ensuring students a solid head start to their career.

"Students are thrown into the fire to really experience in eight to 12 weeks what you might experience in four to six months in the slower season," says Kristen Fuhremann (BBA '99, MAcc '00), director of the Wisconsin MAcc Program. "They get this really good internship experience while they are still an undergrad."

The MAcc program also has another path to a master's: the Graduate Master of Accountancy (GMacc), which is a two-year program that targets students who did not earn an undergraduate degree in accounting. It provides



more fundamental accounting education in its first year, then a second year that mirrors the graduate year in the IMacc program.

#### **100% placement rate**

WSB's distinctive approach works. The School consistently ranks in the top five in the U.S. for the CPA exam pass rates, and has a 100% placement rate within three months of graduation.

The School created the MAcc program in reaction to a change in educational requirements for CPA certification, an increase from 120 hours to 150 in 1999. Faculty and staff saw the change as an opportunity to do more than add accounting classes. Instead, they could enhance the skills students need to become good business professionals—writing, speaking, teamwork, ethics, global mindset, and broad business knowledge.

"Some programs looked at it as something they needed to get their students to 150 hours," Warfield says. "That wasn't our only goal. We wanted those hours to be a true value-add."

That was the appeal for Megan Allen (BBA '18, MAcc '19) to enter the program.

"They work on developing the full person and not just learning accounting," says Allen, whose spring internship was at BDO in Madison. "I'd heard positive things from students ahead of me as to how the program doesn't just want you to churn out numbers, it wants you to know how to carry yourself professionally."

## **TOP 5** **in the U.S.** **for the CPA exam** **pass rates**

## **100%** **placement rate** **within three months** **of graduation**

#### **Learning by teaching**

The accounting department created partnerships with firms that needed interns. It also created a teaching assistant (TA) program for fifth-year students to teach introductory accounting classes. Fifty-one of the 140 MAcc students were TAs in 2017-18.

"The internship and the TA position were the absolute best parts of the program for me," says Kim Fleissner (BBA '01, MAcc '02), CFO and COO of Shopbop, an Amazon subsidiary. "The classes are obviously a foundation but as an intern you learn so much that you bring back for a fifth year, and in a TA position you have to be able to

speak to an audience and become the subject matter expert. That prepares you so well for the work world."

A benefit of the internship, Fleissner said, was being able to take a risk since it was temporary. She interned at PwC in New York and got a sense of if she would like living there (she did, and returned to the firm after graduating). She also was uncertain of what she wanted to do in business, but knew accounting would help steer her toward her goals.

Most MAcc graduates start their careers in public accounting, developing a strong foundation in accounting and business. Alumni work as CFOs, controllers, partners, C-Suite executives, and more in a variety of industries.

"The accounting degree is one degree and 360 degrees of opportunity," Warfield says. "It provides a great foundation and a great springboard."

Whatever career path graduates choose, they have the best preparation for it. When students return from their internship, they take a three-week professional issues class that serves as a bridge connecting what they learned in their internship and preparing to be graduate students.

"When we see them before they leave for their internship and fast-forward to the end of the three-week class, it's almost like they're different people," Fuhremann says. "They come back as mature, business professionals who are ready for graduate school." >>>

### **From Grainger Hall to the Olympic stage**

The MAcc program at the Wisconsin School of Business has another path its students have taken beyond the accounting world—as Olympians.

Gwen Jorgensen (BBA '08, MAcc '09) won a gold medal in the triathlon at Rio in 2016. She had run track while at UW-Madison, and had begun her accounting career with EY in Milwaukee when she was recruited to try triathlon. She is now training as a marathoner.

In Pyeongchang, South Korea in February, hockey player Ann-Renée Desbiens (BBA '17, MAcc '19) helped lead Canada to the silver medal after her team lost to the U.S. in a match filled with former Badgers on both teams. Desbiens earned her bachelor's degree last spring and will return for her master's year through the IMacc program next fall.





# » *An Eyewitness to History*

Roger Ervin shares his experiences on the world stage in the classroom and beyond

BY JANE BURNS | PHOTOS BY PAUL L. NEWBY II





**I**f you want to know the arc of Roger Ervin's career, you don't need his résumé. You just need to watch some movies.

Ervin (MBA '09) witnessed the genocidal horrors of *Hotel Rwanda* in real life. He was in the midst of the events in Somalia that resulted in *Black Hawk Down* and helped negotiate the end of U.S. involvement there. He designed the U.S. response to the political transition in South Africa and helped provide training for the security forces that protected its new President Nelson Mandela and were prominent characters in *Invictus*. In West Africa he dealt with warlords and mercenaries similar to the characters in *Blood Diamond*.

His work now plays out more on a smaller screen, with TV reports of refugee crises throughout the world. Ervin is CEO and president of Blumont, Inc., a nonprofit organization that provides international development and humanitarian assistance in 40 countries. The position, which Ervin began in 2015, is the culmination of an extensive career working in the public and private sectors in areas ranging from diplomacy to finance.

"I've seen it all, the good and the bad," Ervin says. "I've seen the ugly side of humans as well as the wonderful side."

It's a perspective that he shares in myriad ways at the Wisconsin School of Business, including serving on the Dean's Advisory Board. He earned his degree in the executive MBA program, and has been a lecturer in the program for nine years, teaching managerial communications.

"Students can connect with Roger because this is someone who is on the front lines; he is living a case study every day," says Leslie Petty, WSB's assistant dean of the Wisconsin Evening and Executive MBA Programs. "It's a case study based on ethics, leadership, team-building, how to step in and turn an organization around, what it's like to work with an organization that works internationally. He can bring all of that to the table."

#### **Working around the globe**

On any given day, Ervin might be in Madison, where Blumont moved its headquarters in 2016, or the nonprofit's other locations in Washington, D.C., and Amman, Jordan. There's also a good chance he might be on site in any number of the countries with Blumont projects (he traveled to 15 of them in 2017).





Roger Ervin (MBA '09) visits a camp for displaced people in Iraq. Ervin is CEO and president of Blumont, Inc., a nonprofit organization that provides international development and humanitarian assistance in 40 countries.

The organization works around the globe, including the Middle East, South America, Asia, and Africa. Blumont manages projects for governmental entities such as the U.S., Britain, the World Bank, and the United Nations in the most challenging countries and desperate communities in the world.

"It's everything from delivering goods into war zones to rebuilding war-torn communities while conflicts continue to rage," says Ervin, who lives just outside Madison in Middleton, Wisconsin. "We are the largest refugee camp manager for the U.N. High Commission on Refugees, and at the same time we use our engineering capabilities to provide support in more stable communities like the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank or Jordan."

A key area for Blumont is Syria, which has been in the midst of a civil war that has killed 400,000 people and displaced another 11 million since 2011.

It's all a far cry from the career he originally planned when he was a biology major at Tulane University. He was offered a job at Procter &

## **"Students can connect with Roger because this is someone who is on the front lines; he is living a case study every day."**

—LESLIE PETTY

ASSISTANT DEAN OF THE EVENING AND EXECUTIVE MBA PROGRAMS

Gamble after graduation and saw his career path take a turn when a friend's mother, who was an advisor to then-Gov. Bill Clinton, thought Ervin's college political activism might make him suited for a different kind of work.

"She said, 'I know a couple members of Congress, you should think about talking to them,'" he said. "So I did."

### **A career in diplomacy**

Ervin took a job working for Sen. Joe Biden on the Senate Judiciary Committee and went on to work in the House of Representatives, where he served on the Banking and Foreign Affairs committees. From there he began a career in diplomacy, working in the State Department as senior advisor in the Africa bureau during a tumultuous

time for the continent. His time there coincided with civil wars in Angola, Somalia, and Rwanda, and Mandela's presidential election in South Africa. He helped craft part of three State of the Union addresses for President Clinton.

"I was there the day the genocide started in Rwanda and we pulled all the Americans out," he says of events in 1994 in which an estimated 800,000 people died in 100 days of ethnic cleansing. "I went back the day we opened the embassy and there were still bodies everywhere. For a 31-, 32-year-old that was all very challenging. Imagine looking into the eyes of the worst people in history like Mobutu in Zaire, Gaddafi in Libya or the genocidal killers in Rwanda. It gives one a unique perspective."

It was good preparation for what



**“I’ve seen it all, the good and the bad. I’ve seen the ugly side of humans as well as the wonderful side.”**

—ROGER ERVIN (MBA '09)

was to come. Upon returning to the U.S., Ervin founded an international consulting firm that was acquired by Foley & Lardner LLP, a move that brought him to Wisconsin. He became secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Revenue and found himself in the midst of a maelstrom: a data breach that resulted in taxpayers’ Social Security numbers being printed on mailing labels for their tax forms. It was a public relations disaster but a chance to implement changes that transformed and modernized the department.

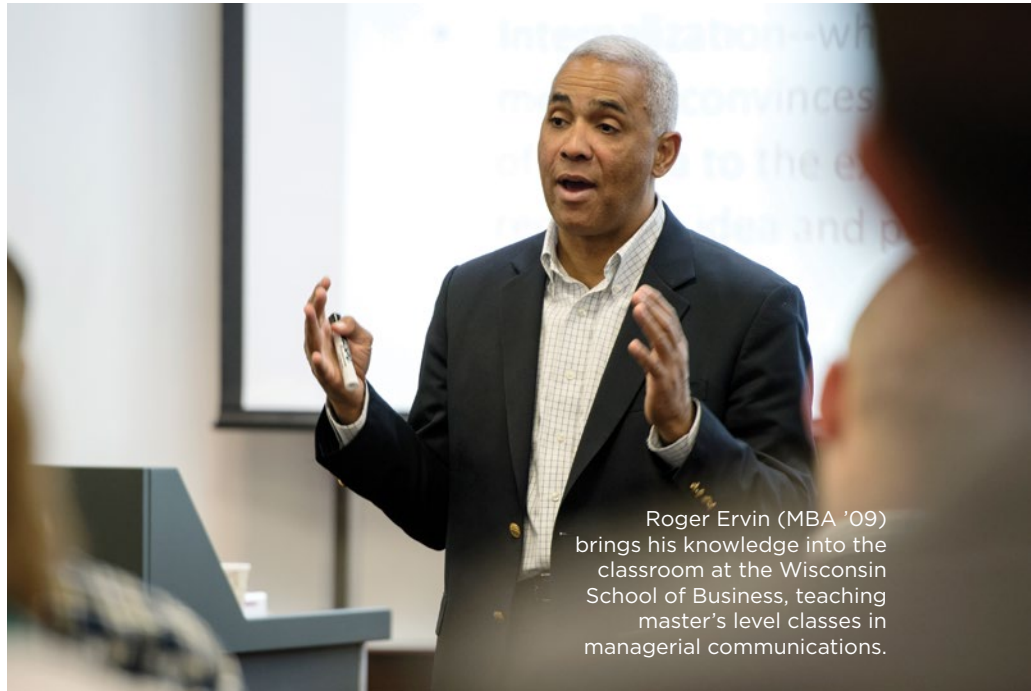
“You don’t waste a crisis,” he says. “You try to make something of it.”

While serving as revenue secretary, Ervin made something else happen—a long-desired MBA. Family and career obligations had made it a challenge in the past, but now he was in a city with a strong public university and he chose to dive into WSB’s executive MBA program.

“There were a lot of things I didn’t know or didn’t think about,” he says about pursuing an MBA. “The good thing about the executive program is it brings together your experiences and focuses on where you have gaps and where you have strengths.”

#### **A worldview for MBA students**

Since 2009, he has shared what he has gleaned through his



Roger Ervin (MBA '09) brings his knowledge into the classroom at the Wisconsin School of Business, teaching master's level classes in managerial communications.

professional experiences and in the classroom with the Evening and Executive Programs as a lecturer.

“I’m sure the way he teaches is very similar to the way he leads,” Petty says. “I can see him being very poised, very steady. He shares so many stories and so much information. He leaves students craving more.”

Ervin has scaled back his teaching because of his worldwide commitments since taking over at Blumont in 2015. He came on board when it was International Relief and Development, the U.S. government’s largest contractor in Iraq and Afghanistan. Prior to Ervin’s arrival, IRD had been investigated and suspended by the U.S. Agency for International Development for alleged financial misconduct. Under Ervin’s leadership, the organization eventually took the U.S. government to court over the matter and won a landmark case that voided the suspension and put the organization back in good standing with the U.S. and all of its clients.

From there, Ervin’s task was to rebrand and restructure the organization. Blumont has instituted more accountability standards and implemented new

project management systems that use mobile technology to create transparency, efficiency, and language solutions for a worldwide workforce. He moved Blumont’s headquarters to Madison, where he believed the organization could take advantage of partnerships with the university as well as tap into its research.

“We take a private sector approach to this business, which makes us different than others working in this space,” he says. “We don’t want to reinvent the wheel but instead look to private sector innovations and adapt appropriate methodologies or products for us to work with in developing countries.”

With a life of airports, refugee camps, and crisis management throughout the globe, Ervin doesn’t have to seek adventure, it just comes to him. That makes being home with his family that much sweeter, and his connection to Wisconsin and the university so meaningful.

“These things are hard to take, they’re hard to see,” he says of his work. “People are living under dire circumstances. It’s motivating to be involved in an organization that is making an impact.” >>>



"I am in the process of starting a fine charcuterie company called Driftless Provisions—we take the finest organic hogs and create tasty dry-cured sausages. Growing up on a farm in rural Wisconsin taught me about the relationships that are developed with the land around us. If we don't take care of the land and the animals, we are not taking care of ourselves. I moved to the Driftless Region, the heart of small family farming, in order to grow closer to my food chain and develop a product that I could create here and distribute all over the world. It is easy as a business owner to purchase the cheaper products and hold onto some of the thin margins that exist in the food industry. Balancing morals, consumer demands and elasticity, food costs, and resources is extremely difficult. Driftless Provisions will celebrate the relationships we share with the land, farmers, and animals."

—RYAN WAGNER (B.S. '13, MBA '17)

## » *Business Badgers Who...* **ARE FOODIES**

**"I have shared countless meals with Business Badgers who enjoy good food. It is honestly the best way to network and make new friends."**

—JONATHAN WEERTS (BBA '00)



**"Cooking is a process of discovery. Once fundamentals are mastered, one is free to iterate around recipes and composition. In many ways, it becomes a journey akin to entrepreneurship."**

—JOHN PHILOSOPHOS (BBA '79)



**"Food opens you to new cultures and experiences that feed constant curiosity and learning. Being open to new food experiences has cultivated a sense of risk-taking and willingness to learn in business and a personal openness to new opportunities."**

—ALYSON KIM (MBA '08)



"I've traveled the world sampling and reviewing many different kinds of chocolate milk. I've learned lots about various chocolate milk trends and individual market idiosyncrasies, including packaging, popular ingredients, availability, flavors, and other factors that can differ significantly based on the location. My experiences with chocolate milk worldwide have taught me a lot about website development, brand building, digital content creation, and other newly acquired skills that have been built and/or strengthened through my chocolate milk passion."

—PERRY ARGIROPOULOS (BBA '01)

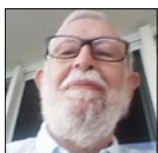
**"I love the combination of food and science—it makes for amazing dishes. For example, both molecular gastronomy and sous vide are passions of mine. When I cook for friends and family, they are amazed at the way food can be presented and enjoyed. I love giving people new experiences and the unexpected when dining."**

—HETHE HENRICKSON (MBA '17)

» In the next issue: **Business Badger Book Club**  
Share your book recommendations at  
[go.wisc.edu/wsb-badgerbooks](http://go.wisc.edu/wsb-badgerbooks)

## 1950–1959

**Eugene Shapiro (BBA '52)** and his wife, Marlene, celebrated their 65<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on February 14, 2018. He is retired and has lived in Arizona for 33 years. The Shapiros still enjoy playing golf and traveling. They have four children, eight grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.



**Alfred Watterson (BBA '58)** attended the Orange Bowl and the pre-game huddle, and wonders if any other Business

Badgers from his class were there also. Watterson was a member and vice president of Alpha Kappa Psi from 1956 to 1958.

## 1970–1979

**Harvey Fein (MBA '72)** is now retired after working for more than 12 years at Molina Healthcare. He was the company's first CFO. Fein is happily married and he and his wife celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in February.

**John Henderson (BBA '75)** is in the process of completing his 40<sup>th</sup> year of practicing law in Colorado in the area of natural resources. Henderson is deeply involved in the process of attempting to determine how 43 years went by without being more closely watched prior to their escape. Henderson was a former debater at UW-Madison and a past president of the Hoofers Riding Club.



**Fredrick "Fritz" Jacobi (BBA '76)** was awarded the Grand Prytanis Award by Tau

Kappa Epsilon Fraternity in November 2017. The award is given to a fraternity member who has rendered the most valuable services to the fraternity as a whole. Jacobi was recognized for the past eight years of service as a member of the TKE International Board of Directors as well as his previous seven years of service on the TKE Educational Foundation Board.



**Barbara Feldman (BBA '78)** retired in 2017 after 38 years in HR, organization development, and learning. Her career spanned UW-Oshkosh, Corning Inc., and GE. She and her husband live on a farm in Valley Falls, New York. This year for fun, they ventured to China, Vietnam, Norway, and Denmark. They visit family and friends in Wisconsin often and attend one Badger football game each year. She is loving her next chapter and even caught her first muskie!

## 1980–1989

**Michael Culhane (BBA '84)** was named executive vice president and CFO of The Bon-Ton Stores, Inc. in January 2018. He is responsible for accounting, treasury, tax, credit, investor relations, legal, and internal audit. Culhane was most recently president and co-founder of TMAG, Inc., providing CFO consulting services. Prior to TMAG, Inc., he served as CFO at Hudson's Bay Company and also has held various executive roles with Lord & Taylor and May Department Store Group.



**Mark Olson (BBA '79, MS '88)** recently accepted a position with Integrity Appraisal

in Menasha, Wisconsin, as senior commercial appraiser.

**Leroy Kemp (BBA '79, MBA '83)** shares insights he discovered on his path to success as a wrestler in his new book, *Winning Gold: Success Secrets of a World Champion*.



**Paul Kaufhold (MBA '80)** is supervising the Financial Investigation Unit for the

Marijuana Enforcement Division in Colorado. He recently received his CFE (Certified Fraud Examiner) and moved from the role of controller to investigator.

**Terry Thul (MBA '81)** received NAMI Southeast Minnesota's Volunteer of the Year award at the organization's December awards dinner for his work in the office, and for giving talks to community groups on NAMI and his experiences with bipolar disorder.



**Ron Kral (BBA '83)** co-founded Kral Ussery LLC last year through a merger of Candela Solutions and Pt. Platinum Consulting, which is headquartered

in the Dallas metropolitan area and has an additional office in Las Vegas. Kral Ussery is a public accounting firm delivering advisory services, litigation support, and internal audit to U.S. public and private companies to protect and grow shareholder value.

**Robert Schnese (BBA '83)** wants to thank WSB for giving him a great educational experience and enabling

## » ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

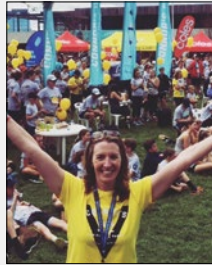


**BRUCE ELLIG (BBA '59, MBA '60)**

established the Bruce R. Ellig Scholarship Fund for outstanding undergraduate students. He previously funded the Bruce R. Ellig Distinguished Chair in Pay and Organizational Effectiveness.



## » ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



### LIZ (MILLER) DAWES (BBA '85)

and her husband founded a foundation in both the U.S. and Australia in 2013 after their 18-year-old son Connor lost his life to brain cancer. In just over four years, they have raised over \$2.5 million and have created the largest event for pediatric brain cancer in Australia, "Connor's Run." In the U.S., "Connor's Erg" is a virtual event between UW-Madison and Stanford crew teams (Connor was keen to row at one of these schools). All money raised at UW-Madison supports the university's neuroscience department.

him to use his talents to enjoy a 33-year career with the company that provided his initial interview in Madison. Schnese is proud to be a Business Badger. He hopes all his brothers and sisters have enjoyed the same experience. On, Wisconsin!

**Dave Rosen (BBA '84)** is enjoying a new challenge down in San Antonio, Texas with an appointment to president of FLEXcon Industrial. He is cheering on the Badgers with his two daughters Melia '14 and Sonya '17. On, Wisconsin!

**Jeff Thomas (BBA '84)** recently opened a new brewery in the Denver area. Stop by FanDraught Sports Brewery to say hi and enjoy some craft beer and sports. Cheers!



**Todd Taylor (MBA '84)** retired five years ago from Kraft Foods after a 32-year career, with leadership positions in finance and information

technology. In retirement he has done some IT management consulting but mostly he has been enjoying life on Lake Wisconsin and traveling the world. Recently, Taylor became a board of directors member for the UW-La Crosse Foundation, as well as the Sauk Prairie Area Food Pantry.



**Stephen Wagner (M.S. '86)** published a textbook in October 2017, entitled *Fundamentals of*

*Medical Practice Management*. It was published by Health Administration Press.

**Steven Strye (BBA '87)** switched careers in 2017 after practicing law for 27 years and now owns and manages rental properties in West Allis, Wisconsin. He also co-owns/co-manages several farms in Grant County, Wisconsin. While these farms are leased to farmers, his family, siblings, and friends utilize the recreational land for hunting, fishing, and ATV riding. Strye remains married to his wonderful wife of 20 years. Their daughter will attend UW-Madison in 2018 and their son is a freshman in high school.



**Scott Lingren (BBA '88)**, CEO and global managing director of Xycarb Technologies Inc., has been named to the company's board of directors.

## 1990–1999



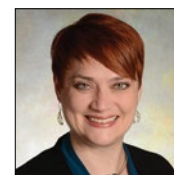
**Charles Liedtke (MBA '90, Ph.D. '97)** presented his latest research paper on big data in Hoshin Kanri at the Asian Network for Quality Congress in Kathmandu, Nepal in September 2017. Hoshin Kanri is a Japanese strategic planning system. Over 400 people from 18 countries attended the event.

Liedtke is the founder and president of the management consultancy Strategic Improvement Systems, LLC.



**Michelle Kullmann (BBA '90)** recently joined Overture Center for the Arts in Madison as director of corporate development. She is thrilled to represent this world-class facility and work with local businesses on their donations and sponsorship of Frostiball, Broadway, Overture Presents, and community programming.

**Steve Hoffman (M.A. '92)** is executive director of Centre College's Norton Center for the Arts, which was given the Community Arts Award by Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin in February 2018 as part of the 2017 Governor's Awards in the Arts. The Norton Center for the Arts has a rich history of providing important, world-renowned artists to Kentucky's Bluegrass Region.



**Laura Halferty (BBA '92)**, a partner at Stinson Leonard Street LLP Minneapolis, was recently named chair of the firm's

Tax, Trusts & Estates Division. She was also appointed a member of the firm's board of directors. In addition to her new roles, Halferty maintains a full-time practice representing families, individuals, and businesses with estate planning matters.

**Ellyn Davidson (BBA '93)** recently purchased Brogan & Partners, a full-service advertising and marketing communications firm located in Birmingham, Michigan. Davidson started her career at the firm 24 years ago as an intern.

**Gowri Sriskandarajah (BBA '94)** is the newest member of Independent Living, Inc.'s board of directors. Independent Living, Inc. is a local nonprofit multiservice agency assisting seniors and adults with disabilities in Dane County. Sriskandarajah retired in September 2016 as senior financial analyst at American Family Insurance, where she had worked since 2007. A licensed CPA, she previously worked for Madison Metropolitan School District, Legislative Audit Bureau and McNally CPAs and Family Business Consultants.



**Torrey Jaeckle (BBA '95)** is co-owner of Jaeckle Distributors, a Madison-based third-generation family-owned business that

distributes flooring and surfacing products throughout the Midwest. He recently completed five years of service on the board of the North American Association of Floor Covering Distributors (NAFCD), including serving as president in 2016. Jaeckle also currently serves on the board of Once City Early Learning Centers in Madison.

**Rita Chen (MBA '97)** moved back home to Chicago in 2010 after spending nine years in Los Angeles. For the past two years, she has been working at Choose Chicago, the city's official destination marketing organization. She could not be more proud to be a brand ambassador for the city and show the world what Chicago has to offer.



**Kurt Kauffman (BBA '98)** was named partner in the law firm Krauskopf Kauffman, P.C. in

Chicago. He advises entrepreneurs, professionals, and family-owned and privately held businesses on corporate and transactional matters, from

formation and day-to-day operations through exit strategies and succession planning. Kauffman is licensed in Wisconsin and Illinois. He and his wife, Laura, have two children, Avett and Sienna, and a dog, Cody.



**Jay Ebben (MBA '99, Ph.D. '03)** had his first novel, *Painted Hives*, published in May 2017. The story was inspired by the five months he

and his family lived in Slovenia in 2011, when he received a Fulbright Scholarship to teach at the University of Ljubljana. Jay is currently an associate professor of entrepreneurship at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he lives with his wife and three children.



**Mandy Lewis (BBA '99)** and Jean Jourdain (B.A. '99) got engaged on November 25, 2017 and have

planned a destination wedding for 2018. Jourdain played football for the Badgers and lived in the same dorm as Lewis their freshman year, but they never met until 2017.

## 2000–2009



**Parham Eftekhari (BBA '02)** co-founded the Institute for Critical Infrastructure Technology (ICIT),

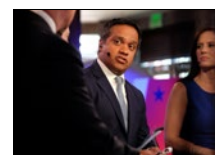
which offers objective nonpartisan research and advisory to Congress, the executive branch, and public/private sector cybersecurity leaders around the world. ICIT recently introduced the Center for Cyber-Influence Operations Studies (CCISO), which will study the weaponization of digital applications by nation states for influence operations.



**Andrew "Drew" Petersen (MBA '02)** was recently elevated to the position of senior vice president at

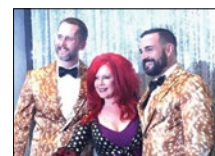
TDS Telecommunications Corp., which is headquartered in Madison. He has

been with the company in various leadership roles since 1997. In addition, Petersen serves on the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents. Appointed by Gov. Scott Walker in 2013, Petersen is now vice president of the board. He is also a director at Park Bank.



**Manu Raju (BBA '02)** was named one of Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni

Association's 2018 Forward Under 40 award recipients. Raju is CNN's senior congressional correspondent and has been breaking news on Capitol Hill for 15 years. He has reported for Inside Washington Publishers, *Congressional Quarterly*, and *The Hill*; and he was *Politico*'s senior Capitol Hill correspondent for seven years. He's also often shared his insights with viewers of NBC, CBS, and PBS, where he has a regular guest for political talk shows. Raju's introduction to the journalism world was through the UW-Madison student newspaper, the *Badger Herald*.



**Bernard (Benny) Vanden Avond (BBA '05)** and Nathan Garcia were married May 18, 2017 by

Kate Pierson of the B-52s before the band's concert at ACL Live in Austin, Texas. The couple's "first dance" was onstage as the band performed "Love Shack." The couple renewed their vows with family and friends present on May 27, 2017.



**Kurt Kober (MBA '07)** launched his campaign for lieutenant governor of Wisconsin in January 2018. He'll

run as a Democrat. He spent much of 2017 talking to Wisconsinites around the state and country asking them, "What would it take to make you move back to your hometown?"



**Paul Meier (BBA '07)** joined the investment team at M25 Group, a venture capital firm



## » ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



### CARRIANNE BASLER (BBA '91)

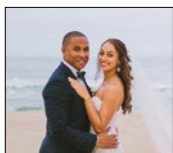
was recognized at the WSB Department of Accounting & Information Systems's 49<sup>th</sup> annual awards banquet in October 2017 as a distinguished alumna. Basler is a managing director with the global consulting firm AlixPartners LLC. She is a Certified Public Accountant and a Certified

Insolvency and Reorganization Advisor. She is also the vice chair of the International Women's Insolvency and Reorganization Confederation, a member of the American Bankruptcy Institute (ABI), the Turnaround Management Association, and the Association of Insolvency and Restructuring Advisors. Carrienne has published numerous articles on turnaround management and reorganization matters as a contributing editor of the *ABI Journal*.

headquartered in Chicago, investing solely in companies headquartered in the Midwest. M25 Group is the Midwest's most active early-stage new-venture investor, building a portfolio that in many ways resembles an index of early stage startups in the Midwest.

**Nicole Belisle (BBA '09)** wrote two episodes of Season 5 for DreamWorks Animation TV's *All Hail King Julien*, which dropped on Netflix December 1, 2017.

## 2010–2015



**Jessica Brostowicz (BBA '13)** and Kellen Wallace Benjamin were married on October 14, 2017 in Bridgehampton,

New York, surrounded by many family and friends from Boston, New York City, Wisconsin, California, and Chicago. Kellen and Jess were introduced four years ago by a mutual friend at an industry event. They live on New York City's Upper East Side.



**Brace Clement (MBA '13)** and his wife welcomed into the world a healthy baby boy by the name of Broyce Chanon Clement. He was

born in Seattle, Washington.



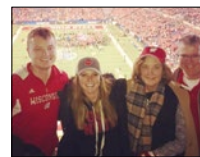
**Joseph Henry (BBA '14)** has been hired as sales and marketing manager for J. Henry & Sons Wisconsin Straight Bourbon. His family farm

diversified into bourbon production in 2009 and came to market in 2015. Joe is responsible for sales and market development in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota. J. Henry bourbons have won national and international acclaim and there are three expressions available. Henry sold his first barrel to the Palmer House Hilton. The company is based in Dane, Wisconsin, where there is a tasting room as well as tours.

**Carlos Nunez (MBA '14)** was promoted to CFO of Massachusetts-based N12 Technologies. The startup is a manufacturer of NanoStitch, an additive that strengthens and prevents delamination in carbon fiber composites used in consumer products and aviation markets. Prior to joining N12, Nunez was an investment banking associate with Cleary Gull.



**Todd Pilcher (MBA '14)** and his wife, Corrine, welcomed their fourth child into the world on December 23, 2017. Baby Calvin is happy and growing quickly.



**Peter Geppert (BBA '15)** is currently pursuing his master's in Healthcare System Administration at

the University of Michigan School of Public Health. He also holds a student research position with the university's Center for Value-Based Insurance Design, where he studied possible innovations to the nation's health care payment system. Upon completing his graduate degree in 2019, he hopes to pursue a fellowship at a leading health services provider.



**Elly Pirman (BBA '17)** thought the impending "real world" seemed both thrilling and terrifying

after graduation. Luckily, Team TT1 (Techtronic Industries) has made these first few months of adulthood absolutely awesome. If you ever pass a big, red Ford truck covered with Milwaukee Tool logos (they're hard to miss), be sure to wave. There's a good chance the driver is one of many former Business Badgers working for TT1! »»



Read more Class Notes at  
[bus.wisc.edu/Update](http://bus.wisc.edu/Update)



# » A STUDY IN SPACES

Formal or informal, Business Badger students have always found places of their own to hit the books

Photos courtesy of University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives and by Paul L. Newby II







The unveiling of the new Learning Commons at the Wisconsin School of Business this spring offers an opportunity to celebrate the spaces where Business Badgers have gone for decades to find a quiet place to work alone or collaborate with classmates. While there have been formal spaces such as a computer lab at the Commerce Building or the Business Library at Grainger Hall, students have always found their own nooks and crannies to cram for exams or finalize a project. The three-level Learning Commons, which opened in May, provides the entire WSB community something bigger and brighter—just like the futures of the students who will study there.

Top row (from left): Commerce Building study room, 1958; School of Commerce accounting lab, 1951; Grainger Hall Business Library, 1993; Grainger Hall's Capital Café, 2016; Grainger Hall atrium, 2016.

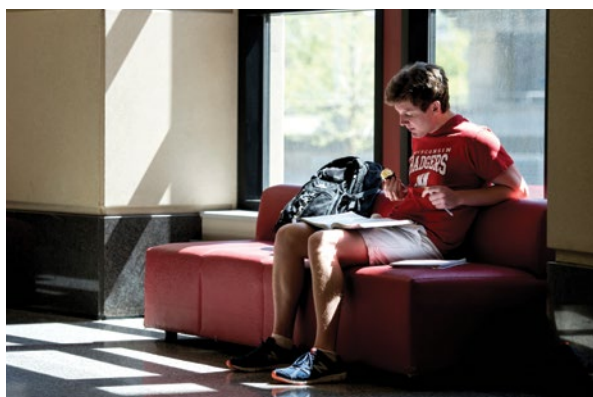
Center (from left): Commerce Building, now Ingraham Hall, circa 1960; Grainger Hall (current).

Bottom row: (from left) Commerce Building entryway, circa 1956; Commerce Building computer lab, circa 1980; watching financial news online, circa 1996; Grainger Hall entryway, 2016; accounting students collaborate, 2015.



Learn more about the Learning Commons at [bus.wisc.edu/learning-commons](https://bus.wisc.edu/learning-commons).

Look for photos of the finished space in the Fall issue of *Update*.

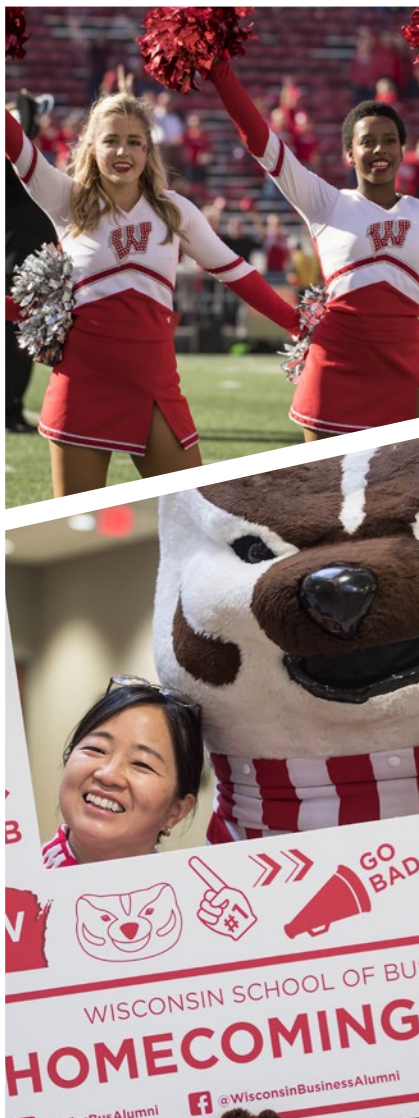
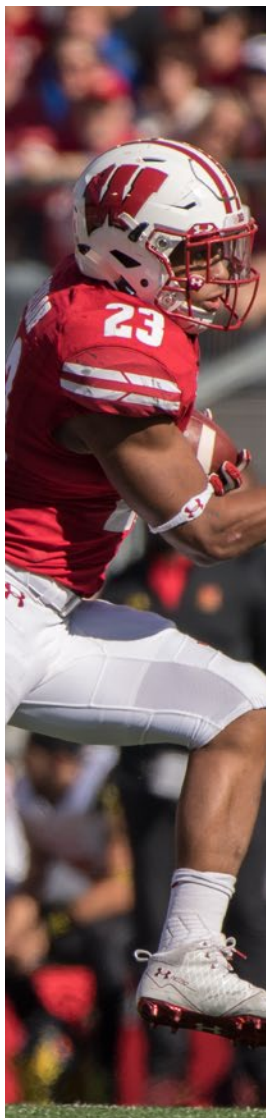




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**HOMECOMING  
BASH**  
**OCTOBER 20**  
**2018**

Make lasting memories with your  
Business Badger family this fall.

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