



## Willamette MBA in the World

Leaders in business, government,  
and non-profit organizations



**Both the Early Career Career Change (full-time) program and the MBA for Professionals (part-time) program at the Atkinson Graduate School of Management (Willamette MBA) are accredited by AACSB for business. The Early Career Career Change program is one of only two programs in the world accredited by both NASPAA for public administration and AACSB.**

Our graduates chose a Willamette MBA education because they want to make an impact as leaders in business, government, and non-profit organizations.

Willamette MBA is the #1 MBA program in Oregon and #2 in the Pacific Northwest. Businessweek ranks Willamette MBA #48 in entrepreneurship. It is no wonder that many of our graduates become entrepreneurs who achieve their own dreams, create jobs, and build communities.

The stories featured in this booklet will let you know what types of opportunities a Willamette MBA will create for you.

**We look forward to becoming your lifelong partner in your career and success.**



# Matt Dakopolos

MBA'16



## Before Willamette MBA-P

Director of Scheduling, Events and Conferences at Willamette University

**Any entrepreneur who has started their own business knows that freedom and uncertainty go hand-in-hand, a tightrope to walk that's simultaneously tantalizing and alarming.**

Fortunately for Matt Dakopolos MBA'16 this is a tightrope he's not walking alone. Originally from Salem, he's a co-owner of Xicha Brewing Co., a Latinx brewery that serves up delicious beer and food all while seeking to push social and culinary boundaries.

Yet, the road to opening a brewery wasn't his goal from the outset. Following the completion of his undergraduate studies at University of Portland, he returned

## After Willamette MBA-P

Co-owner and Head Brewer at Xicha Brewing Co.

home to Salem and began working in Willamette University's auxiliary services department. Scheduling events with groups both within and outside of Willamette, he became well-versed in understanding university procedures, priorities of different groups, and allocating limited resources. Keen on professional development, he enrolled in the Willamette MBA for Professionals program (MBA-P).

During the MBA-P program, he met fellow cohort member Ben Mendoza MBA'16 and interesting conversations slowly turned from "what do you do when you're not here?" to "maybe this could be a real thing." Homebrewing had been a great escape from a hectic work and school schedule for Matt but never something he

took too seriously. Towards the end of their MBA-P career, the two decided to investigate their potential future brewery idea further in their final **IMAP Capstone Course\***. The coursework helped them explore what their competitive advantage might be in the fiercely competitive beer and restaurant industry. This analysis became the initial pitch when seeking funding for their new venture post-graduation. He noted that it allowed him to "take lessons learned in the classroom and apply them immediately to the real-world."

In this analysis, they uncovered two key gaps: first, a lack of diversity in the craft brewing industry; and second, few other breweries focused on pairing food and Latin American culture. With these in mind, they grappled with the question "how do we create a brand that will speak to the people in our community in a way that speaks to us personally?"

The answer came with the addition of Ricardo and Maggie Antunez to the team and a focus on taking well-known culinary concepts and or historical dishes and adding a twist to them. In Matt's words, "Ultimately the brands that have staying power are the brands that create experiences. We try to offer something that you know but not how you know it. We hope that when people are engaging with our brand, the kind of experience they have at the start may not be familiar but then begins to become more familiar over time. We're trying to make people stretch just far enough to be open to new ideas — not force those who don't want to make that jump to do so but to give people a taste. Then, if they want more we'll give them more."

His single biggest piece of advice to others who have an interest in entering the

brewing industry is to identify a strong team. He credits others on his team, a shared trust among them and each individual's expertise in their own functional area as critical to Xicha's success. In the end, what the team realized is that perhaps its greatest contribution to the community is a space to connect. He happily recounted his favorite part of the day as being when he's trying to head out the door but can't because so many people want to have a conversation. He sees that happening to him, to customers, and loves witnessing the power of connectivity through shared stories and meals.



Today, Xicha thrives by way of its transcendent guiding tagline "cerveza, comida, culture" (beer, food, culture) and a commitment to creating an authentic food and beverage experience. While the future of the restaurant industry remains uncertain and constantly shifting, Matt optimistically noted "uncertainty helps us become the best version of ourselves as a company."

*\*The IMAP (Integrative Management Project) Capstone Course for MBA Professional provides a learning platform for students to strengthen and apply an integrated understanding of management theory and practice by completing a project.*

## Tara Marshall



Tara currently works as a Project Manager, EPMO at Moda Health.

### What has surprised you most about your experience at Willamette MBA?

I've been most surprised about subjects that I really have been drawn to like accounting. I never thought I would be interested in it, but I enjoy organizing and I look at it as organizing numbers. Accounting has been really fun for me. I loved **Romana Autrey's** class. She's fantastic. I can even speak the lingo to the accounting people at my work.

### Can you tell me how the MBA experience has impacted your career?

I've been able to sharpen some of the skills I already have and add new ones to it, like negotiating and looking at things from a fiscal or financial standpoint. These have been the biggest skills I've been able to

## MBA'20

bring to my work.

### Who has been your favorite professor and why?

This is a really hard question, but Ramona definitely has been my favorite professor as far as a subject that was pretty new to me, accounting. She was really patient with me and really built our confidence. **Ashley Nixon** is another one of my favorite professors because I've been able to use the negotiations skills right away\*. I like the way she gave us feedback—you knew she saw you as an individual and let you know what your strengths are and what you needed to work on.

### What do you like about the cohort model at Willamette MBA?

I really like the cohort model, having a shared experience with a group of people. We've all grown together and gotten to know each other. I like having different views from different industries, hearing about different experiences and seeing everyone's perspective as we went through the subjects and what they took out of the courses.

And we really made friends. I hope we all stay in touch. And just having people have your back, if you couldn't make class, people are really good about taking notes for you and catching you up.

### Do you have any advice for professionals who are considering returning to school?

I wouldn't return to school until you're ready. It took me a while. I'm in the upper half in my cohort, age wise. But I think you know when you're ready. There's no specific age. Make sure from a professional and mental standpoint that you're ready to go in and truly learn.

### How do you think this education will affect your career?

Learning how to make decisions that are outside the scope of my work will help me grow, especially in a corporate setting. And these days if you want to get to the C-suite, I mean you have to have an MBA. It's just the minimal requirement for it.

*\*Associate Professor of HR Management and Organizational Behavior Ashley Nixon teaches LEAD: Leadership Effectiveness and Development in the MBA-P program.*

Willamette MBA's Portland Center in the Pearl District (right). The Salem cohorts of the MBA-P program take their classes at Willamette University's Ford Hall (below).



## Lily Burnett



### Before Willamette MBA-P

Operations Manager & Board Liaison  
at 1000 Friends of Oregon

### After Willamette MBA-P

Director of Operations  
at 1000 Friends of Oregon

**Who is your favorite professor and why? And maybe can you give an example of a professor who has gone above and beyond and how that helps students?**

Sure, so I have actually thoroughly enjoyed all of the professors that my cohort has had the pleasure of working with. But one who really stuck out to me is **Robert Walker** for **Data Analysis**. He was teaching a subject that I had very little background

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in and I was not familiar with coding or R studio, or any sort of tools we were using. He made it so animated and accessible, that even someone with a theatre undergraduate degree, learned how to process data, visualize data, and put it in some sort of format that is digestible for others.

I was able to use my final project at work to visualize some donor data year-over-year that was really helpful. About three months ago when we were doing our annual voluntary demographic survey at work, I had some questions about which questions to include on a demographic survey that would glean the best results in the most respectful way.

I reached out to Robert because I know he has so much experience collecting data. Not only did he get back to me with this long email explaining exactly how he felt about my question and with empirical reasons for why, but he also scheduled a follow-up phone call with me just to talk through and make sure I understood what he was talking about, see if I agreed, and encouraged me to get feedback. I will continue to reach out to him when I have questions like that through the rest of my career. I definitely feel he is an accessible resource for me. I mean he makes himself so available to students. It's so clear he really cares about what we are doing.

And he can nerd out.

**How has the MBA experience impacted your career?**

The MBA for Professionals experience impacted my career right away. For me, it signaled to my employers that I was really taking my professional development and my education seriously. I was able to move

forward on a track toward promotion earlier than we originally scheduled because of the commitment that I made to complete the MBA. My employer saw that as really valuable.

**What do you think has really surprised you about the MBA experience at Willamette?**

I've been most surprised by how much I enjoy the cohort model. I already knew that I was a group-oriented person. I like working in teams, but I was not expecting to also form such deep friendships with people, and to have an opportunity to really develop friendships and professional networks with people who are different from me. Working in the non-profit sector, I have my typical non-profit, fairly liberal bubble; it's very Portland centric. I mean those are my people, I love them, but it's been really great to get to meet people from different backgrounds, different sectors, different types of businesses, and independent business owners. That's been

the most valuable thing for me, building a network with people outside of my sector.

**What makes you glad to be a Willamette MBA for Professionals student?**

The thing that makes me the most glad to be an MBA student at Willamette is having access to the professors. Going into the program, I did not realize we were going to have access to and learn from professors with such high caliber. They come from such interesting professional backgrounds, and it was interesting to see how many of them had backgrounds outside of teaching. Some of them have had these long careers working in different sectors and different fields. I think that's been the thing that makes me most glad is the access to the professors.

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*For me, it signaled to my employers that I was really taking my professional development seriously. I was able to move forward on a track toward promotion earlier than we originally scheduled.*

## Patrick Tran



Patrick currently works as a Development/Field Director at Boy Scouts of America, Cascade Pacific Council

### How has the MBA for Professionals program impacted your career?

The Willamette MBA for Professionals program has really helped me in my career as a development director for a national non-profit.

What I found in every class, in every lecture, is that all the things that the professors taught us are directly applicable to the different industries my classmates and I are in. I don't think there has been a day or a week that has gone by that I haven't thought of a lesson or critical thinking skill that I could directly apply at work. So for that, I am really thankful for having joined the Willamette MBA-P program.

### What is the most valuable skill set that you have gained so far?

If I had to pick a most valuable skill set that I've gained from the Willamette MBA for

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Professionals program, it would have to be data analysis. I found that course really refreshing because my gut reaction when I saw that course was that it wouldn't be very applicable to my industry of non-profit management. During the course, I found that almost all industries pull together all this information but there's not always a clear way to analyze and interpret the data we pulled in. So it was really interesting learning how to use R Studio and looking at the trends in the information that we compiled.

### What has surprised you the most about the MBA for Professionals program?

When I first started the program, I thought I'd go to school, go to work, balance life, and get it done. What surprised me is how much I've bonded with my cohort. We've all really come together to lean on each other, to really learn from each other, and pick up knowledge that we wouldn't have been able to without being in the same MBA program.

Another thing that I really like about the program is how friendly the staff is. I don't think there's been a time where I haven't been immediately greeted when I walked into the Portland Campus. I feel like they really try to set up a warm atmosphere. It's really nice to go to campus and know that you will see friendly faces and helpful people.

### Why Willamette MBA for Professionals?

It's very clear to me that every professor, instructor, and staff has a deep love and passion for the program and they really care about every student.

When I signed up for the program, I was a little bit hesitant about being able to

balance work, life, and school. What the professors do very well is they are able to deliver deep meaningful content and accommodate students' busy schedules, knowing that we're students and professionals who have a lot to balance at the same time.

I am so glad to be a student here because it's so obvious that everyone cares.

### Who is your favorite professor and why?

All of the professors at Willamette MBA for Professionals are amazingly knowledgeable and passionate about their area of expertise. If I have to pick my favorite professor, it would probably be **Associate Professor of Quantitative Methods Robert Walker** and the reason for that is, one memory of mine while our cohort took his class, really set him apart.

My cohort and I didn't quite get some of the content in Robert's **Data Analysis, Modeling and Decision Making** class. We decided to meet that upcoming Saturday to learn from each other and see if we could kind of crowd-source that knowledge to be able to move forward in the course.

Robert overheard this and volunteered to meet us on campus on Saturday to continue to teach us and make sure that we got the knowledge that we needed to be successful in that course. And I really appreciated him going above and beyond.

### What do you like about the cohort model?

My favorite thing about the cohort model is the balanced course load. In the first semester, we had a data analysis class and another class that focused on leadership. And together, it felt like a really rounded approach for a semester.

In another semester, both of my professors at the time worked together to make sure that deadlines and due dates didn't fall on the same date. I really appreciated that as a busy working professional. The fact that the faculty really think about how classes balance each other as well as when assignments are due, is really helpful for students in the program.

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*It's very clear to me that every professor, instructor, and staff has a deep love and passion for the program and they really care about every student.*

## Dustin Ebel

MBA'17

**Before Willamette MBA-P**Climbing Wall Attendant/  
Manager**After Willamette MBA-P**Product Developer at Nike  
NFL SIDELINE**Current Job**Technical Developer  
at Nike

**If you've ever visited a state or national park, or even just been outdoors in general, you've probably heard the common saying "leave no trace" referring to an effort to minimize the impact you have on the natural world. Others go even further, noting that you should always seek to "leave it better than you found it."**

Leaving the areas better than he found them is not a foreign concept to Dustin Ebel Willamette MBA'17. When he was an undergraduate student at Oregon State University, Dustin studied exercise and sport science and developed an interest in the outdoor industry. He worked in the school's rock climbing gym as well as at Smith Rock during the summers as a guide helping other climbers get better. As he put it, "I wouldn't be where I am today without those experiences. Each step along the way gives you lessons you carry forward."

Yet, post-graduation he found himself coaching youth climbers while

simultaneously asking the question nearly every person in their early 20's is confronted with — "where do I go from here?" His answer in the short-term came in the form of getting his EMT and then later becoming certified as a paramedic. "It was my way of helping people. Each day and each patient represented a chance to make a direct impact in the moment."

However, the life of a paramedic isn't an easy one. Feeling strained by the long hours, he found himself grappling yet again with the same question — "where do I go from here?" The thought of becoming a physician assistant or doctor initially crossed his mind, a clear continuation of his prior choice to enter the medical profession. Fortunately, about the same time, he was contacted by a friend about an opportunity at Nike's climbing gym located at World Headquarters in Beaverton.

An initial "no, but thank you for thinking of me" ultimately turned into a decision to apply at the encouragement of his wife. Upon starting the job, he began to learn more about Nike's culture and to figure out his role in a global company. Informational

conversations with other employees led him to develop mentors who challenged him to think about himself and his family, helping switch on the lightbulb that perhaps business was a route he might pursue.

A close connection with his good friend Alex Ursin led to conversations with Alex's sister Kristina Ursin MBA'13 as well as with their mother, former Assistant Dean and Director of Career Management at Willamette MBA, Beth Ursin. These conversations helped Dustin decide that the Willamette MBA for Professionals program was the right path for him.

He credits his experience in the Willamette MBA for Professionals program as helping him become more well-rounded in business and in his personal life, noting "some of my best friends are from my cohort." Having not studied business in college, Dustin gained the tools and frameworks for solving problems as well as working with others. "The diversity of people in my classes really pushed me to be better and challenged me to think holistically before presenting an idea; something that I use in my work to this day," he said.

Currently, in his role as a Technical Developer with the Global Football Apparel team, he gets to work on designing apparel in another sport that he loves. As someone who wakes up early on the weekends to watch English Premier League matches, he noted that "Many people don't see all that goes into designing apparel — they just see

the end product. Working in technical development opened a whole new world for me."

On the surface, being a rock climbing guide or paramedic might seem worlds apart from designing t-shirts. Paraphrasing Dustin, "we often frame it in our minds that domains don't relate to one another when they do. Each step builds on one another and it's important to give yourself credit for what you've done. Willamette helped me understand that every step to get to this point is what made me who I am and gave me the tools to link them all to the future." This ability to see the world through an integrated perspective can lead to greater insight even if it means constantly rewriting your thinking as you go. A company can only adapt as quickly as its employees can, and just like in rock climbing, there isn't just one route to the top.

Moving forward, he sees himself taking on roles that are focused on the intersection of strategic thinking and helping individuals to push their own boundaries, constantly retooling in the pursuit of becoming better. Given his love of reaching for greater heights, there's no doubt that he'll leave Nike and the world a better place than he found them.

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*Willamette helped me understand that every step to get to this point is what made me who I am and gave me the tools to link them all to the future.*

# Chris Susen

MBA'13

## Before Willamette MBA-P

Global Digital Marketing Director at Nike

## After Willamette MBA-P

Various roles at Nike in different functions

## Current Job

Marketing Planning and Operations

Director at Google

"I was living in Minnesota at the time and I decided that I wanted to make video games for the Star Wars Company. I packed my stuff into my car, found an apartment, moved out there, and started applying to jobs at Lucas Arts," Chris Susen, MBA'13 summed up the start of his career.

Jumping in at the deep end has been a common theme in Chris' career. This approach has proven to be successful for him as he has worked in household names such as Lucas Arts, Nike, and Google.

After graduating from Hamline University with a B.A. in history, Chris moved to the Bay Area to work for Lucas Arts. His foot in the door paid him just \$10 per hour, but he eventually became a Product Manager and jumped on the opportunity to market the number one selling game in Lucas Arts history — Star Wars Battlefront.

"I got to market the game the way that I thought consumers would want to receive a Star Wars game. It wasn't just talking to Star Wars fans, which is what we've always done, but talking to the mass population about why they should care about a Star Wars game."

Chris's next stop was Nike. Throughout his first six years, Chris couldn't help but feel like there was a gap in his knowledge when he had to work with some of his business partners. At that time, Chris was working in the role of Global Digital Marketing

Director, and he thought it was a good time to get his MBA.

Chris attended the MBA for Professionals program in Portland. Since then he has been able to communicate more fluently with colleagues in different functions from different departments. "I feel like I walked away with a tremendous amount of functional knowledge and honestly way better understanding of who I was and who I could become as a leader," Chris said.

Not long after receiving his MBA, Chris changed functions and went into human resources at Nike. "I had never ever worked in HR before then, so I leaned very heavily on what I learned from **Associate Professor of Management Polly Rizova** and **Professor of Management and Global HR Lisbeth Claus**," Chris said.

Pulling from his education and experience in working cross-functionally, Chris currently works as Marketing Planning and Operations Director at Google.

One piece of career advice that Chris has for people considering getting their MBA is what he calls his 40-40-20 rule to career success. Forty percent of one's job is to do a good job and deliver amazing work. Another 40% is always be an amazing teammate and be the type of person that people want to work with. The last 20% is self-growth and development and one of the ways to do that is by getting an MBA.

Above all, Chris says his biggest successes over his career are the number of leaders and awesome employees he has developed. "When I think about my fondest moments, it's a breakthrough with an employee or someone graduating out of my team to a different organization to go lead a team the way that we led our teams."

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– Chris Susen MBA'13

# Paimon Jaber

'17, MBA'18



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*Going to Willamette MBA I had so many resources, so many opportunities, so many people that invested in me.*

– Paimon Jaber '17, MBA'18

## Hometown

Bainbridge Island,  
Washington

## Current Location

Seattle, Washington

## After Willamette MBA

Business Intelligence Analyst,  
Seattle Seahawks

## Current Job

Senior Analyst, Strategy & Business  
Intelligence at Seattle Seahawks

**When Paimon Jaber was a kid, crisp autumn days were all about football—especially when the Seattle Seahawks played at home.**

He'd race to his seat for the opening kickoff, roar in unison with the crowd and revel in the game-day atmosphere. And as he grew older, the native of Bainbridge Island, Washington, knew he wanted to be a part of the team.

Mission accomplished. The 25-year-old Willamette MBA graduate plays an integral role in the Seahawk organization—not as the linebacker he was during his Bearcat days, but as a business intelligence analyst.

"Honestly, for me, it's a dream come true," said Paimon '17, MBA'18. "The experience

of being a Seahawks fan was incredible growing up—it was something that brought me great pride and joy. Now I get to be on the other side of it, and it's pretty phenomenal."

The work he does is essential to the team's success. Paimon and his colleagues analyze data related to ticket sales, fan preferences, stadium operations— anything that touches the business side of football. Then they present actionable insights to Seahawks executives to help drive business strategy.

"We're in a position to arm our stakeholders with data that helps them make better decisions, which is pretty rewarding," Paimon said. "We not only use

data for optimizing revenue and building business processes across the organization, but to improve our fan experience. We wouldn't be anything without our fans, so we want them to have the best experience possible."

As he strolled through the team's corporate headquarters on a recent Saturday, Paimon reflected on his journey to the NFL. His career path came into focus after he spoke with his older teammates about the work that they were doing in the classroom across the street at Willamette MBA.

"Up until that point, I truly didn't know what I wanted to do," Paimon said. "I saw the 3-2 business program as an amazing opportunity."

Paimon majored in economics and pursued his MBA at Willamette University's Atkinson Graduate School of Management (Willamette MBA). Working closely with **Atkinson Graduate School of Management Dean, Professor of Applied Statistics and Information Systems Mike Hand** and **Associate Professor of Quantitative Methods Robert Walker**,

Paimon learned how to analyze complex data sets. And under the critical eye of retired Professor of Management Practice Larry Ettner, he became a highly polished presenter.

"Larry really demanded that of us," Jaber said. "You had to know your stuff, and you had to present it in a way that was engaging. I learned how to command a room and present my work and insights with confidence."

While he was wrapping up his first year at Willamette MBA, Paimon contacted a member of the Seahawk's business intelligence team. That led to a part-time job in the summer of 2017, which turned into a permanent position one year later.

"I saw that he worked for the Seahawks, and I just reached out," Paimon recalled. "Part of that is my natural personality, but the MBA program gave me opportunities to develop my networking skills and my confidence at a pretty young age, which I think is pretty cool."

Paimon loves going to work every day—he said Willamette was the perfect launching pad for his career.

"Going to Willamette MBA I had so many resources, so many opportunities, so many people that invested in me," Paimon said.

# CorDarryl Hall

MBA'19



## Hometown

Chicago, Illinois

## Current Location

Portland, Oregon

## Before Willamette MBA

Financial Specialist, Xchange Leasing

## After Willamette MBA

Data Automation Analyst, Intel

## As a data analyst for Intel, CorDarryl helps the company identify and hire the best talent possible.

The position became permanent in March 2019 following a yearlong internship, and now he's turning numbers into images that are more powerful than words.

"I like data analytics because of storytelling," CorDarryl said. "With statistics, you can tell a story just by analyzing data and putting the results into a graph. I feel like everything and everyone has a story."

CorDarryl's story began in a troubled home on the south side of Chicago. The third of eight siblings, he had to contend with parents who struggled with substance

abuse. He assumed the role of family provider in high school, working three jobs to make ends meet.

"It was really difficult," CorDarryl said. "But I kept my head in the books and became really successful in high school. I saw what my parents were doing and flashed forward 10 years, 15 years, and I just had to be different. I'm not ashamed of where I come from, but I have to do better and help my family see a different side of life."

After graduating in the top 10% of his class, CorDarryl followed his own path to the University of Arizona. He earned his bachelor's degree in public administration one semester early, but the timing was far from ideal. It was 2011, and the nation was still reeling from the Great Recession.

CorDarryl surveyed the employment landscape and decided to join the Navy. He served the country with distinction, earning four letters of commendation and a Navy Achievement Medal during his four years aboard a submarine.

But CorDarryl wanted to do something else with his life. He knew an MBA would expand his career options, and he'd developed an affinity for the Pacific Northwest when he was stationed in Bremerton, Washington.

"I chose Willamette MBA because the Career Management team really stood out, and has a great job placement rate," CorDarryl said.

A career in human resources appealed to him because he enjoyed interacting with people. And after talking with **Professor of Management and Global HR Lisbeth Claus**, CorDarryl saw an opportunity to put his love of numbers to work.

"Speaking with her made me look deeper into HR, and it made me think about where I would end up," CorDarryl said. "Data analytics stuck out to me because I was always a fan of numbers."

**Associate Professor of Quantitative Methods Robert Walker** and **Dean and Professor of Applied Statistics and Information Systems Mike Hand** gave CorDarryl a firm foundation in data modeling and storytelling, while Professor

of Management Practice Larry Ettner taught him how to make effective presentations in a boardroom setting.

*Now CorDarryl is comfortable sharing his insights with Intel's executive team. "I didn't think that was possible for someone like me who'd never seen a boardroom before," CorDarryl said.*

"The professors at Willamette MBA are brilliant, and they meet us where we're at. That's something I really appreciate about Willamette."

CorDarryl also appreciates the relationships he's forged with faculty, staff, and alumni. Those connections led him to Intel, where he's embarking on the next chapter of a remarkable story.

"Prior to coming to Willamette MBA, I didn't know how to network," CorDarryl said. "Networking, along with the tools I developed at Willamette MBA helped me get this job. Now I'm working with data inside of human resources, where I eventually wanted to end up. It just happened sooner than I thought it would."

CorDarryl now works as Operations Program Manager at Intel, where he is directing the strategic objectives of millions of dollars of new product development.

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# Charles "C.J." Walker

18' MBA'19



## Hometown

Orange County, California

## Current Location

Portland, Oregon

## After Willamette MBA

Associate Strategist at Swift Agency

*At the time of the interview, C.J. had just completed his internship at Wieden+Kennedy and started his second year at Willamette MBA.*

**You had no professional work experience before starting your MBA. How did you earn this great summer internship from one of the biggest and most creative advertising agencies in the world?**

I think Career Management at Willamette MBA really helped a lot from day one. They told us that we should go out and meet with different professionals in the industries and fields that we want to go into.

So prior to my first year at graduate school, I did social media marketing for a local restaurant in Salem that is owned by one of the alumni of our MBA program. A coworker there had a friend who works at Wieden+Kennedy. When the school year started, I was trying to figure out what

internships I wanted to get my foot in the door in the marketing and advertising industry. My former coworker connected me with her friend who worked at Wieden+Kennedy. And from there, I just started networking with different people. This was probably about six months of driving back and forth from Salem to Portland, which if some people don't know, it's probably like a 45-minute drive. I had coffee and met with different professionals here at Wieden+Kennedy and really got to know what they do in their job function, why they like the industry and how they got to where they are now. I let people know that I was looking for an internship. About six months later, Wieden+Kennedy offered me a position as a strategic planner and I took it.

This was my dream internship, so it felt really good to get it. But it took a lot of hard work and getting out there and putting myself out there and talking to people.

**Could you describe what PACE (Practical Application for Careers and Enterprises) is and what your role in it was?**

For the PACE core course, my cohort was divided into different groups based on what our skill sets were. The PACE program is centered around partnering with different non-profits either in the Salem or Portland area. The projects we did differed depending on the needs of the client. For me and my team, we got the great opportunity to work with Albertina Kerr.

What we did was we created a revenue generating model to help them to continue to do all the great things that they do with the Portland community. We also created a financial model. I think that experience was really helpful with going into job interviews and being able to say, "Hey, I helped create a complete business plan with a financial model for a very well known non-profit in the Portland area." And at the time I was 20 to 21-years old. The fact that I can say that at such a young age is, I think, very valuable. Learning how to do those things early on was also very valuable.

**What does Albertina Kerr do?**

They work with developmentally disabled individuals and individuals with mental health challenges in the Portland area, giving them different work opportunities supporting them in the community.

**What was the biggest surprise for you going into business school?**

The biggest surprise to me was the group work. I expected the opposite, but I like the group work a lot, especially coming into an internship where I'm working in teams all the time. Being a strategist, I work with my team, creatives, and production. At Willamette MBA, most of the classes are centered around teamwork and group

projects. That aspect was very surprising to me and I think it's so valuable.

**What do you think best prepared you for your internship at Wieden+Kennedy that you got in the first year of the MBA program?**

I'm going to have to say the PACE program. I mean, here at Wieden, we create ad campaigns from the ground up. For our PACE project we had to do so many pivots. I think that creative problem solving really translates over to my internship now because we're always constantly having to problem solve and think about things in different ways because campaigns change, deadlines change, everything changes so much. Being able to keep a level head and that experience in building a project from the ground up was really helpful.

**What advice would you give to someone who is considering a Willamette MBA?**

I would say definitely take advantage of all the events that Willamette MBA puts on. We have a lot of different professionals come in and talk to the students, tell us about what they do for their careers, and let us know about the companies that they have started or worked for. Take advantage of all those different things because you never know. You might network with the right person. And then you've made a meaningful connection that's really going to push your career in the right direction and get you that first job.

# Emily Anderson

MBA'20



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*Sometimes you can get an education that doesn't quite match the job market, but the education I got in the MBA program was spot on. All those experiences added up to securing a job where I can do the kind of work I enjoy.*

– Emily Anderson MBA'20

## Hometown

Seattle, Washington

## Current Location

Seattle, Washington

## Before Willamette MBA

HR Coordinator at Foster Pepper PLLC

## After Willamette MBA

Auditor at CliftonLarsonAllen

### Emily Anderson MBA'20 used her educational experience as a springboard to a job with one of the nation's top accounting firms.

She's evaluated the investment potential of startups, consulted for businesses and nonprofits, and served as a staff writer for the Atkinson Graduate School of Management (Willamette MBA) — all before earning her MBA.

As Emily moves on to her new job with CliftonLarsonAllen, the eighth-largest accounting firm in the country, she looks back on her time at Willamette as a pivotal moment in her professional development.

"Sometimes you can get an education that

doesn't quite match the job market, but the education I got in the MBA program was spot on," Emily said. "All those experiences added up to securing a job where I can do the kind of work I enjoy."

Emily got her first taste of the business world at Gonzaga University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in international/global studies, minored in French and business, and interned for some local nonprofits.

After graduating in 2017, she set her sights on an MBA with a focus on human resources. She wanted to gain some professional experience first, so she took a year off from her educational pursuits and worked at Foster Pepper PLLC (now Foster Garvey PC), a law firm based in her

hometown of Seattle.

She explored business schools while she was honing her skills as an HR coordinator, and she appreciated the sense of community at Willamette from the moment she set foot on campus. "When I went on a tour, I noticed there were a lot of personal connections," Emily said. "I liked the people in the admissions office, and I liked the students I met."

She fully intended to pursue a career in human resources when she arrived at Atkinson in the fall of 2018. But her professional goals changed when she took her first accounting class.

"The wonderful thing about the MBA program at Willamette is that people will tell you what you're good at and what you're not good at," Emily said. "I quickly learned that accounting is what I'm good at and what I like to do, so it seemed like a natural fit."

In the two-semester long core course **PACE**

**(Practical Application for Careers and Enterprises)**, Emily served as a consultant for Ride Connection, a Portland-based nonprofit that provides transportation for seniors, people with disabilities and others with limited options. Focusing on operational efficiency, Emily examined the process for onboarding volunteers and reduced the number of steps from 36 to 24.

"There are so many people who need those rides, and Ride Connection is the only organization in the area that provides that service," she said. "I think it's so good that Willamette doesn't just focus on for-profit businesses, because not-for-profits are so important to the community."

In her second year, Emily served as president of the Atkinson Accounting Association and a member of the Atkinson Consulting Association, but she's not just a number cruncher. As a staff writer for the MBA program, she featured students and alumni in monthly newsletters and on the university website. She had also written numerous blog posts and crafted content

## Emily Anderson (continued)

for Atkinson's social channels.

At the same time, she gained incredibly valuable real-world experience in two of Willamette's signature programs: the **Angel Fund** and **PACE (Practical Application for Careers and Enterprises)**.

The Angel Fund, the nation's first student-run investment program, gives students a chance to evaluate the investment potential of startups as members of regional angel groups. The Angel Fund typically invests \$50,000 in one or two startups annually.

Two Willamette students are assigned to one of 10 to 12 angel groups on the West Coast. Sitting alongside business leaders, executives and investors, they listen to pitches from representatives of emerging companies. After a series of monthly meetings, the students return to class to share their findings, perform due diligence and decide as a group which startup to fund.

Emily attended monthly meetings at Element 8, an angel investing group that funds emerging cleantech enterprises. Although the class ultimately decided to invest in a medtech company, Emily said the experience was eye-opening.

"Before I took that class, I didn't realize the upside of startups," she said. "In the future, I might want to start a fund so people can invest in a portfolio of startups to spread the risk."

Emily is now based in CliftonLarsonAllen's Bellevue office, and she'll be working as an auditor for hospitals and other nonprofits. She'll also serve clients who need help with their taxes.

Emily said Willamette was the ideal training ground for her new position. "I gained so much not-for-profit experience through PACE, and then I learned a variety of skills through my accounting courses that I was able to combine into this new focus," Emily said.

And because Willamette's MBA program emphasizes cooperation instead of competition, Emily was able to make the most of her potential as a student and young professional.

"Reducing that level of competition makes learning a lot easier, because you're not so worried about what the person next to you is doing," she said. "Instead, you can learn from them — and Willamette really facilitates that level of teamwork."

## Brandon Nash

MBA'12

**Hometown**

Los Angeles,  
California

**Current Location**

Woodland Hills,  
California

**Before Willamette MBA**

Sports Producer/Anchor/Reporter,  
KMSB Fox 11 News

**After Willamette MBA**

Business Consultant, Avantiico

Brandon wanted to get out of broadcasting, but thought that he lacked the skills that would allow him to transfer to other industries. He thought that an MBA would provide him with the tools and transferable skills to break into a different industry. Now he feels he's qualified to reach for any job he desires.

Through Willamette MBA, Brandon gained

not only transferable skills but a new career path and passion. As a consultant, Brandon loves gathering the facts, designing the solution and then knowing the certainty that there's a solution or design that will make his clients' lives easier. "It's fun and feels good to know you have the tools or expertise to help someone else," he says.



# Jackson Boyd

MBA'20



## Hometown

Irvine, California

## Current Location

Irvine, California  
(temporarily working remotely)

## Before Willamette MBA

Community Economic Development  
Advisor, Peace Corps

## After Willamette MBA

Senior Financial Analyst at Intel

### What were you doing before your MBA?

I was in the Peace Corps and was stationed in the Dominican Republic where I worked with a small cooperative marmalade producer. I supported them with budgeting and finance, general organization/team management, and control and inventory management. When I came back from the Peace Corps, I knew I wanted to go to grad school and Willamette MBA is this great small school with a good scholarship program for Peace Corps volunteers.

### You mentioned you really wanted to go to grad school, but why did you decide on an MBA?

I think joining the Peace Corps really opened my mind up to what you could do

with an MBA. You are not limited to going and working in private industry even though that's what I am doing now. You can really go a lot of ways with it. You can work for not-for-profits, the government; you can really work in any organization so it's a versatile degree.

### When you arrived at Willamette MBA, did you already know you were going to go into finance? How did you decide that this was going to be your concentration?

I didn't know what I was going to focus on when I started my MBA. I had a little bit of finance experience from before. I really

enjoyed my core finance class. There are really interesting problems to solve. It's like a big puzzle and you're trying to find how all of the pieces fit together. You might think that there's one answer because it's very quantitative. What you learn is oftentimes there's a lot of gray area so you actually have to bring in your intuition and critical thinking abilities to the problem as well.

### What advice would you give to someone looking to start an MBA program?

From day one, own your own education and own your career. I mean Career Management and faculty and staff are going to be there to support you, but ultimately you have to be responsible for yourself. I would say just show up, own it, and take responsibility for your own classes and your career search. You really have an opportunity to take control and push your career in the direction that you want to.

### What advice would you give to someone looking to have your job?

Start networking really early at networking events hosted by the school. Start identifying companies that you may want to work for and meeting the recruiters. Start your relationships with them early. You can ask for one-on-one meetings and feedback about your resume. You can ask them what types of things you should be focusing on to get the position you want. So, I would say networking is definitely a big piece of business school. And really focus on learning the material. So for me, I wanted to go into finance. I really focused on solidifying my knowledge of basic accounting statements and all the financial concepts I needed. Really get the knowledge and be able to talk about things. I think that's important.

### Tell me about your study abroad experience. Would you do it again?

I would definitely do it again. I did a semester in Shenzhen, Guangdong, China which is in the southern part of China on the border of Hong Kong. It was really cool because I was basically in the middle of China's Silicon Valley. So it was just a really interesting place to be and Peking University HSBC Business School is a highly rated business school that we have a partnership with.

### If you could do your MBA over, what would you change?

I might actually take it a little less seriously. I think sometimes, I took it too seriously. It's good to keep things in perspective. Not every single little thing is going to make or break the rest of your life. I was kind of like an overachiever and was really worried about getting a job after graduation. And the reality is everybody got an internship and everyone got a job. Put as much effort in your MBA career as you can and have goals. Whether or not you get the specific job that you want, you're going to get something and things are going to work out in the end no matter what happens.

### Where do you see your career going from here?

For the time being, I'm really just kind of taking it step by step. We have a rotation program at Intel, so I am planning on doing this first rotation which will be about one and a half to two years.

## Liz Hartman

'18, MBA'19



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*For 22, 23-year-olds to get this type of exposure — through both of these courses (O'Neill Investment Fund and Angel Fund) — is absolutely unheard of.*

– Liz Hartman '18, MBA'19

**Hometown**

Lake Oswego, Oregon

**Current Location**

Portland, Oregon

**After Willamette MBA**

Senior Financial Analyst at Intel

**You came to Willamette with no prior work experience, tell me how the school's curriculum and Career Management helped you get where you are today as a senior financial analyst at Intel?**

When I entered the MBA program, I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do. And it turned out to be finance. But the best thing about Willamette MBA is that it really gives you a holistic, experiential learning curriculum. So you're able to test out a lot of different subject areas and get to know how it actually is in the workplace. And I am so grateful for that experience because in my current role, I'm constantly working with different functions, marketing, operations, you name it. I really have to have an understanding of these other

areas and Willamette MBA really prepared me for that.

**What did you do before going to business school?**

I was actually a part of the BA/MBA (three-two) program. I was an undergrad at Willamette University and I majored in political science, so I thought I was going to go more of the policy route. I spent my summers in Washington, D.C. working as a policy analyst. And that is where I was really exposed to some more of the private sector work, which really encouraged me to get my MBA and make that career change.

**What kind of experiential courses did you take while you were getting your MBA?**

I had the opportunity to take two experiential courses. The first one was the **O'Neil Student Investment Fund**, which is a course that acts as an investment team. You and your classmates get to work together and manage a little under half a million dollars for the investment fund. Our investment group would meet weekly to develop allocation strategies. And we also had the opportunity to write equity research reports and present our portfolio allocation to the board.

The second experiential course that I want to highlight was the **Willamette Angel Fund**. This is another investment team and we collectively worked to source and analyze and eventually invested fifty thousand dollar sized investments in seed stage startup companies along the West Coast. We co-invested alongside these other funds, which gave us an incredible networking opportunity. My partner and I for the year, were responsible for due diligence on deals coming from our monthly meetings in Pasadena, California. We flew down there once a month. We were able to meet with some really

incredible people, founders, entrepreneurs, and then brought those deals back to our investment fund and presented on which ones we found to be the best deal.

For 22, 23-year-olds to get this type of exposure — through both of these courses — is absolutely unheard of. And when recruiters see that and hear you talk about that, I mean, it's really a slam dunk in their eyes in terms of having someone who's young, who's hungry, who wants to learn and who's had these experiences during their MBA career. It's pretty incredible and definitely something that I was able to highlight in all of my job interviews and people definitely noticed.

**How did your class do in the O'Neill Investment Fund?**

We had a tough year last year. We saw the inverted yield curve and dealt with a very difficult market cycle. Eventually we did see some gains in the second semester and we ended up coming a little bit over. We had a really good time learning. And that's the point of the class, to be in that

## Liz Hartman (continued)

environment and take risks and be able to learn from those. I really want to also highlight the professors who were so supportive throughout that experience. And they're not just academics. They've had incredible professional careers, so they're really able to take actual strategies that are tried and true and give you that insight. And again, since it's a learning environment, you're really able to test your own strategies.

**What was the biggest surprise for you about Willamette MBA?**

I think the biggest surprise to me and it's a wonderful surprise is how supportive the Willamette alumni are and how strong that network is. I did so many informational interviews. Everyone I reached out to and it was a lot of people, they all said, yes, we'd love to talk. And having that support when navigating your career is so instrumental to where you want to go because they'll introduce you to people in their network. You're able to meet so many different people and network into a job or some sort of opportunity that you weren't expecting.

**From the MBA program, what have you found to be really helpful to you in your career at Intel?**

I think that ability to work in a group and work through problems in that group setting is invaluable. And that really only comes from doing work in the experiential classes where there was an actual deliverable on the line. I mean, I can't think of a better way to replicate the real world, right? I mean, there were actual consequences to your actions and being able to work through and troubleshoot problems, whether that be interpersonal group dynamics or maybe not even understanding how to get from point A to point B, is invaluable. Willamette MBA is also a place where you can fail and learn from that and it's okay. So I think that teamwork and learning in a real world environment has been the most helpful experiences early on in my career.

**What advice would you give someone who might be considering Willamette?**

I think they should congratulate themselves for considering the program. It's a whole journey. And I would encourage them to really explore everything that the Willamette MBA has to offer and reach out to professors, current students or alumni, because truly, everyone is happy to talk about their experience.

“

*I think the biggest surprise to me and it's a wonderful surprise is how supportive the Willamette alumni are and how strong that network is.*



# Nathan Love

'05, MBA'06



## Hometown

Grants Pass, Oregon

## Current Location

New York, New York

## After Willamette MBA

Analyst, Participations and Residuals at Lionsgate

## Current Job

Business Development at T-Mobile

## Business students are often told that networking is everything. Any doubters of that adage should meet Nathan Love '05 MBA'06.

Nathan amassed dozens of connections at Willamette University in the classroom, on the field and through student activities, leveraging the value of those daily interactions with his education — a combination of business, arts and science — to move up the ranks at Lionsgate, TiVo and T-Mobile.

Success in the business industry means making the most of timing, luck and connections, and Nathan didn't wait until he graduated to start.

Cross-country initially drew Nathan to Willamette, but on his first day, he met two people — Jim Booth '64, a virtual Rolodex of connections, and David Douglass, former dean and Civic Communications and Media Studies faculty member — who influenced him beyond his academic career.

They taught him how to make a difference through effective writing, networking and understanding Plato, Aristotle and Quintilian, principles that were required for his rhetoric and media studies major but ones that are still vital to his career today, he said.

But he gleaned the most from professors

outside of class, a diverse and approachable group who could talk about big-picture ideas, and from activities like leading the Interfraternity Council, which taught him how to run events that appealed to the student body.

Nathan also happened to be among a cohort of students — including Greg Orzell '05, who helped launch streaming at Netflix — who had an entrepreneurial spirit and saw a future in technology. During his first year at Willamette, long before the advent of YouTube and Facebook, Nathan joined a huge student file-sharing network, trading photos and content from events and cross-country meets.

"You have to think beyond what is now versus what is possible," he said.

By the time he received his MBA, he felt ready for a career in any sector he chose. He'd met industry influencers and a host of other connections through classes, as well as professors like **Mike Hand**, who is now **Atkinson Graduate School of Management's dean**. Mike taught him that applied statistics revealed the value of real world data analysis to make calculated decisions.

Willamette connections marked nearly every step of his career.

After his first job at Lionsgate in L.A. then New York, managing sales and promotion at the company, he spent a year at entertainment company Cinedigm Digital.

While he was in New York, he started heading the university's alumni association, hosting events in partnership with grads who worked for companies like Deloitte and at the World Trade Center. Through those gatherings he heard about a job at TiVo, and in 2012 started leading the ad sales team.

Some years later, he stumbled on an opportunity that brought him back to his MBA program — an experience that expanded his perspective and complemented what he learned in class. While studying abroad in Denmark, he became familiar with the Finnish "Long Drink," a mixed beverage initially concocted to tide people over during Olympic events and only available in Europe. In 2017, he became the founding U.S. investor of the company to great success: More than 200 bars, restaurants and other businesses agreed to sell it on opening.

And in 2018, when he felt ready for a change, he joined his friend Neil Berquist '09, MBA'10, who had started Coinme, the first licensed bitcoin ATM company in the U.S., to build its sales team in Seattle. After Coinme partnered with Coinstar to move to a kiosk model, Nathan turned to T-Mobile, where he runs the largest account on the business development team and works with other alumni.

Nathan credits his career so far to many factors, including luck. But at Willamette, it started with his network of friends and "the belief you can do anything."

# Colin Schilling

MBA'12



## Hometown

Coer d'Alene, Idaho

## Current Location

Seattle, Washington

## Before Willamette MBA

Material Planning Manager, Cart Logic

## After Willamette MBA

Busines Analyst at Avanade

## Current Job

CEO Schilling Cider

**If the natural, green, trendy vibe of the Pacific Northwest can be captured and contained, it's found in a Schilling Hard Cider can or bottle.**

Co-founded by Colin Schilling in the same year he graduated from Willamette MBA, the company celebrates the craftsmanship of Pacific Northwest hard cider-makers and the delicious bounty of local orchards and fields. Colin also added another Northwest ingredient to the mix—a commitment to environmental and social sustainability.

Opening the company was a natural move for Colin, who's been making his own cider for many years. The business and entrepreneurial knowledge he gained at Willamette MBA, especially through

*The business and entrepreneurial knowledge he gained at Willamette MBA, especially through experiential learning in the Angel Investment class, proved invaluable in helping him launch and grow the company.*

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*I'm a strong believer in the concept of sustainable business. Business represents the largest part of our economy, so it has the most potential for positive change.”*

– Colin Schilling MBA'12

it was the first cider company on the West Coast to package in cans, which are far more recyclable and lightweight for shipping than bottles.

“Other companies followed our lead,” says Colin, “and now the industry-wide change has prevented the creation of countless tons of emissions and landfill waste.”

Not content with incorporating environmental sustainability into its core business, Colin wanted to do more in terms of social sustainability. He went on to create a cold brew coffee company, Street Bean Coffee, in collaboration with a successful Seattle nonprofit that provides training to help homeless youth find jobs and stable lives.

“I'm a strong believer in the concept of sustainable business,” says Colin.

“Business represents the largest part of our economy, so it has the most potential for positive change.”

experiential learning in the **Angel Investment** class, proved invaluable in helping him launch and grow the company.

Schilling ciders are distinctive for being made from 100 percent fresh-pressed juice, locally sourced ingredients and hand-selected yeast strains. They contain no artificial colors, flavors or preservatives. After starting with a cider house in Seattle's Fremont District, the company opened another in the eastside of Portland in 2017. The Portland location boasts the world's largest number of draft craft ciders on tap from many local cider makers.

In addition to supporting Pacific Northwest cider makers, Colin helps other local businesses and artists. Instead of offering food, the Seattle cider house encourages customers to bring in food from restaurants. Both the Seattle and Portland cider houses also allow artists to display their work for free, instead of having to pay a gallery fee.

Besides its dedication to crafting good cider, Colin is just as concerned with the container that carries the cider. That's why

# Carina Comer

MBA'15



## Hometown

Framington, Connecticut

## Current Location

Beaverton, Oregon

## Before Willamette MBA

Baker, Wildflour

## After Willamette MBA

Founder, Carina's Bakery

### When Carina Comer MBA'15 was nine months old, a cancerous brain tumor took all of her vision in one eye and some in the other.

Comer hit a low at age 7, during radiation treatment for her second tumor, when she sat in a Boston hospital lacking hope, friends and any sense of what would happen next.

Then came a special delivery—piles of toys, cards and clothes from a nearby elementary school.

“They didn’t know me, but word got around that I was staying there and needed encouragement,” Carina recalls. “From that moment on, I wanted to

pay that forward.”

Already in love with the art and traditions of baking, Carina did a bake sale for children with similar serious health problems. Unfortunately, because she was selling her baked goods from a main street, people said she was affecting traffic—her charity operation didn’t meet city codes, they protested.

Carina decided to work around the problem.

By making the operation mobile (she used a tricycle to make deliveries), she got rid of the traffic issue. Soon she was even traveling back to Boston—a two-hour drive from her Connecticut hometown—to take baked goods to kids in the same hospital where she had been treated.

She did this for 10 years. All told, she probably raised \$20,000.

After attending culinary school, Carina realized she needed a business foundation to go out on her own. Willamette’s MBA program, with its entrepreneurial emphasis and focus on nonprofits, seemed a natural fit.

In her second year in the program, Carina had to take a leave of absence to get her third tumor treatment. The Willamette MBA family made it work, with her peers taking notes for her or going over the lectures with her after class.

“People at the learning center helped me craft an academic plan, and classmates helped make it happen,” she says. “As long as I was courageous enough to ask for help, people would do anything.”

An internship at the IKE Box coffee shop in Salem gave Carina yet another reason to go into professional baking. She loved the nonprofit side of the IKE Box—its partner organization, Isaac’s Room, provides local young people with job skills and a community they might lack elsewhere—but she noticed that the baked goods were from Costco. She approached the owner and got an internship as manager and organizer of a baking program, which provided yet another avenue for job training and practical experience.

In 2017, Carina opened Carina’s Bakery, purveyor of scrumptious treats influenced by her family’s Scandinavian traditions and her own vegan focus, in Beaverton, Oregon. There’s the smorgas, which she describes as “open-faced works of art that take the place of your average sandwich,” as well as a range of snack cakes, bar cookies, Danishes, tortas (Swedish meringue-topped cakes) and more.

After working in the food industry and at IKE Box, Carina realized the need for employment of people with disabilities at her bakery. As she says, “I wanted to make a difference in a community of talented people who often go unappreciated.” It doesn’t actually take much to organize the business to meet their needs—she uses larger-print recipe cards, for example, and simply reminds people that these things take time. Most customers get it.

“This world is far different than home baking as a hobby,” Carina notes, “a fact I discovered as soon as I moved on from peddling molasses crinkles and cardamom bread from a tricycle.”

Times aren’t always easy, and the bakery is still searching for a core audience—but Carina is making it work. She already has dreams of expansion—into a second bakery and, eventually, a nonprofit focused around entrepreneurs with disabilities.

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*People at the learning center helped me craft an academic plan, and classmates helped make it happen. As long as I was courageous enough to ask for help, people would do anything.*

# Nick Lawson

'12, MBA'14



“

*Had I not gone to Willamette MBA, this company would not exist.*

– Nick Lawson '12 MBA'14, CEO SQWAD

## Hometown

El Cerrito, California

## Current Location

Portland, Oregon

## After Willamette MBA

CEO SQWAD

### Filling a niche in an industry is just part of the recipe for a successful enterprise.

And when Nick Lawson '12, MBA'14 and his co-founders at SQWAD identified a need in the world of fantasy sports, they filled it.

Originally from the Bay Area in California, Nick came to Willamette to major in studio art and play four years of football with the Bearcats. After graduating with his BA in 2012, he immediately dove into his MBA at the Willamette MBA.

“The first semester (of the MBA program) was not easy, going from the year before—painting and sculpting and designing—to Excel sheets and customer segmentation,” Nick said.

The tough transition ultimately paid off as

Nick traces the creation of Sqwad—an app that serves as an engagement platform for minor/junior league sports fans—directly back to a paper he wrote for his Industry Analysis course with former Contributing Assistant Professor Sean Campbell.

The topic was “Minor League Marketing: Creating a Cycle Breaking Strategy,” inspired by his lifelong love of sports and his desire to focus on professional athletics as part of his career. The paper focused on ways that minor league teams could shake up their industry and become viable competitors of major leagues, and Nick conducted interviews with several minor league teams as part of his research.

When “the ability to engage with technology” was a desire brought up time and time again, “I kind of turned those

interviews into, ‘Hey, if I made this for you, would you buy it?’” Nick recalled.

Several meetings later, Nick pitched SQWAD to the Portland Winterhawks hockey team while still enrolled in the MBA program. Since the app had not yet been developed, Nick employed his art and design roots developed as an undergraduate student at Willamette to create Photoshop mockups of the SQWAD experience for the meeting, where the team was sold on the idea.

Soon fans of the Winterhawks, as well as the Charlotte Checkers and Spokane Chiefs hockey teams and the Seattle Storm WNBA team, can use the SQWAD app to check into games, refer friends, and select players for fantasy games, all of which earn them points to spend on team franchise-related rewards.

In its early days, another pioneering move of SQWAD’s was to spread beyond the Seattle Storm into the rest of the WNBA, a market where fantasy and brand engagement were nonexistent.

“There’s a need in the market and people

are ignoring a segment of customers,” Nick said. “Women’s sports don’t get covered as well as men’s sports. Women’s sports don’t have fantasy leagues. Other than this product and innovation, one of the things we’re most proud about is that we have the ability to highlight some of these great athletes we work with.”

This concept of filling holes in markets extends from the formation of the business itself all the way to the previously untapped markets that SQWAD is serving.

In addition to the paper that inspired his company, Nick says he owes much of his ability to grow his company to his Willamette MBA education—from **Practical Application for Career and Enterprise (PACE)** playing a “huge role” in the development of his presentation skills, to sharpening his sales prowess in Sales Force Management. Today, SQWAD’s clients include five-time Stanley Cup champion, the Edmonton Oilers. “Had I not gone to Willamette MBA, this company would not exist,” he said.

# Jan Taborsky

'10, MBA'11



As well as being gluten-free, the company's products are suitable for people who want or need to avoid wheat, soy, dairy, eggs, sugar, rice and corn. They're also organic and free of genetically modified organisms. Happy Campers Gluten Free makes five kinds of breads (Stompin' Good Seedy Buckwheat Molasses, Cravin' Raisin Cinnamon Spice, Classy Slice, Hemp Hemp Hooray) and Wild Buns.

When Jan and Lacy started their business, the gluten-free market was in its infancy. "We saw it as the perfect opportunity to marry our new baking passions with the nascent GF market," says Lacy. "We wanted to do GF right, to show how good it could and should be."

The retail market for gluten-free foods is expected to exceed \$6.47 billion by 2023. While delighted to be part of this growing industry, the Happy Campers also retain a healthy attitude: "Sure, we're bakers; we're business people," Jan says. "But we're simply passionate about wellness. The way we promote, support and encourage it is by baking a staple in most people's lives—bread."



## Hometown

Vsetin, Czech Republic

## Current Location

Portland, Oregon

## After Willamette MBA

"Camp Captain," Happy Campers  
Gluten Free Baking

### Nine years after Jan Taborsky '10, MBA'11 and Lacy Gillham BA'10 founded their own business, Happy Campers Gluten Free, they're living up to their venture's name

With sales of their gluten-free breads in 22 states beyond Oregon, Jan and Lacy have discovered that going gluten-free can be as good for your business as for your health.

A gluten-intolerance diagnosis and MBA classes turned out to be the perfect mix for Jan and Lacy. Unable to find healthy and tasty gluten-free food to fuel their outdoor adventures, they started making their own bread—an enterprise that eventually became one of Jan's class

projects at Willamette MBA.

The couple developed recipes, baked a few times a week and started selling bread at local farmers' markets. After outgrowing a tiny, borrowed commercial kitchen, the company moved to a dedicated bakery. In 2015, it moved again to a 10 times larger, certified gluten-free bakery in Portland, Oregon. Although they still spend time in the bakery, Jan and Lacy focus more on sales, marketing and research and development.

In fall 2015, Happy Campers Gluten Free expanded into the greater Seattle area, its first major inroad beyond Oregon, and California soon followed. Today, the company's products can be found in over 500 stores and restaurants in 23 states and Canada, plus the online store.

*In fall 2015, Happy Campers Gluten Free expanded into the greater Seattle area, its first major inroad beyond Oregon, and California soon followed. Today, the company's products can be found in over 500 stores and restaurants in 23 states and Canada, plus the online store.*

# Neil Bergquist

'09, MBA'10



## Hometown

Edmonds,  
Washington

## Current Location

Seattle, Washington

## After Willamette MBA

Tenant Representative at Washington Partners

## Current Job

Co-founder and CEO at Coinme

**In 2009, Bitcoin creator Satoshi Nakamoto carried out the first cryptocurrency transaction—a transfer of digital money administered not by a financial corporation but by a decentralized network of computers.**

Since then, Litecoin, Ethereum and thousands more digital currencies have used the same technology to build volatile but exciting trading markets, untethered from the analog world of banks and national economies.

Blockchain, the technology behind crypto, uses a combination of digital cryptography and distributed computer networks to create transparent and highly secure

ledgers. These databases can store and manage information related to anything from Bitcoin transactions to food supply chains. While many are skeptical that digital currencies will democratize money, there is little doubt that blockchain has massive business potential.

One company banking on the mass adoption of cryptocurrencies is Seattle's Coinme, which launched the United States' first licensed Bitcoin ATM in 2014. Coinme now runs a network of 2,000 digital currency kiosks, enabling consumers to buy or sell up to \$2,500 of Bitcoin at a time.

Coinme's goal is to build public trust in digital currencies and make crypto more accessible. "Consumers are used to walking into a bank, establishing trust and

then giving money to that institution. Whereas, in the world of digital currency, consumers were expected to go online to some random website and wire money to an account. Well, that doesn't create trust," Neil Bergquist '09, MBA'10 said.

A kiosk in a brick-and-mortar space "helps bridge the gap between 'magic internet money' and consumer trust."

But the company's ATMs are "just a piece of the overall digital currency ecosystem that we're building," he added.

On the tech side, Coinme provides a mobile wallet (an application that enables customers to use their crypto) and, for higher-stakes clients who wish to purchase more than \$2,500, a private client financial advisory team.

Cryptocurrency first caught Neil's attention in 2012, when he was running SURF Incubator in Seattle, home to around 1,200 budding tech entrepreneurs.

"It was just a curiosity, but like any curiosity, it led me to learn more," he said.

Friend and future Coinme cofounder Michael Smyers had just read about the world's first Bitcoin ATM in Vancouver, British Columbia, and, "out of his excitement, he bought three of them, blindly, from the manufacturer," Neil said.

The next step was working with the Washington State Department of Financial

Institutions to help revise state finance laws to incorporate crypto. Not long after that, the company had a license to open its first kiosk.

For the first year, Neil and Michael mapped out and tested assumptions about a Bitcoin kiosk business—were people going to use the ATM? Would it get hacked or stolen? Would they face legal issues because it was not federally regulated?

It worked out.

"I didn't go to jail, we didn't get hacked, people did use them," Neil said.

As of 2019, Coinme operates in 30 states and 150 countries. A new partnership with ATM company Coinstar will also see the integration of their software into 20,000 additional machines in North America and Europe. Rather than spending decades building and distributing ATMs, Neil realized that "we might as well leverage the existing infrastructure and achieve scale much faster."

Like Neil, Coinme's former Head of Private Client Services Nathan Love '05, MBA'06, also attended Willamette MBA. Before joining the company, Nathan had been working for DVR company TiVo in New York City.

"The cable industry has been nosediving for the last couple of years, so it was hard

*As of 2019, Coinme operates in 30 states and 150 countries. A new partnership with ATM company Coinstar will also see the integration of their software into 20,000 additional machines in North America and Europe.*

## Neil Bergquist (continued)

to motivate a sales team on a product where the long-range plan is losing 20 to 25 percent of its subscribers year over year," Nathan said.

So when Neil asked his classmate to join the Coinme team, it seemed like an exciting prospect. Nathan leveraged the benefits of cryptocurrency to make investment easier, more secure and cheaper for their clients.

When consumers use a company such as Western Union to transfer money internationally, for example, "they're carving out 10 to 12 percent. Even credit card companies charge 2 to 5 percent," Nathan said. "Cryptocurrency transactions can be done for a fraction of that cost—pennies, really."

Wherever national currencies are crashing, crypto can also help, says Neil.

In the United States, a dollar is likely to hold its value from one day to the next. In countries where the fiat currency is unstable—Venezuela, Argentina or South Africa, for example—people just want "a fair form of money that's not under the control of some erratic leader or subject to the price of oil."

While Coinme doesn't claim that cryptocurrencies are inherently more stable than government-backed money, they can "create alternative stores of value, whether that's pegged to the U.S. dollar or Bitcoin or gold or diamonds," Neil explained.

For Nathan, the crypto learning was steep.

Most surprising was the amount of fraud in the industry, but also the fact that crypto has been the best-performing investment asset class over the last five years.

Still, he would not recommend that clients sink their life savings into Bitcoin.

"We had a woman who was a schoolteacher. She was retired and wanted to put her whole pension into a crypto. We said: No, that's too much of a risk for you," he recalled. As a starting point, he and his team generally recommend that crypto investments be around 3 to 7 percent of your current retirement investment.

Nathan's next step was building his department and learning more about this industry.

"There's demand for the product," he said. "We're helping solve a problem for people, and I'm running a sales team where they're excited about something."



 Willamette University MBA

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## James Furlo

06' MBA'07

**Hometown**Los Gatos,  
California**Current Location**

Corvallis, Oregon

**After Willamette MBA**

LaserJet Supplies Market Analyst

**Current Job**

Owner of Furlo Family Homes and Majordomo

**James Furlo '06 MBA'07 is the proud owner and founder of Furlo Family Homes and Majordomo, two companies that aim to solve common property management issues.**

With a B.A. in mathematics and economics, James believed that an MBA would give him a world of opportunities. "Getting an MBA would allow me to apply the theories and concepts I learned in college," said James. "I would also gain practical skills and I could have a real competitive advantage."

James enrolled in Willamette MBA in 2006 and concentrated in marketing because he was fascinated with consumer behavior. James learned about surveying the market

and meeting the needs of a customer base — both of these skills were crucial to starting Furlo Family Homes and Majordomo.

During business school, James also found out that he has a knack for entrepreneurship. One of his first successful businesses was a t-shirt printing company called Bob the Autographer which was James' way of making money to buy Legos. From his basement, James and his brother dedicated whatever time that was not taken up by school to printing shirts.

After graduating from Willamette MBA, James was recruited to work at HP. A recruiter had asked **Professor of Marketing Elliot Maltz** and **Dean Mike Hand** if they knew any potential

candidates for a job at HP, and they thought his work ethic and skills could be a great fit. At HP, James spent his first 7 years as a market analyst and another 5 years as a supplies analyst.

James has been growing Furlo Family Homes since 2009, while working at HP. His interest in real estate began in middle school. He remembers being fascinated by the idea of buying a property to fix up and then sell it for a higher price.

Knowing that real estate was the industry he wanted to get in, James did informational interviews with anyone who was willing to talk to him. Through these informational interviews, he learned that landlords with multiple properties were overwhelmed with managing them all. So, the business started out of a desire to provide homes, not just units, to families. "Not everyone is able to afford a home," said James, "but everyone deserves to live as if they do."

The newest business, Majordomo, came about after James kept getting real estate related questions from his connections. He realized that the experience and knowledge he gained over the years had

made him an expert. "Instead of me making money maybe I can make money selling the tools to help other people make money," he thought. Majordomo inspects homes and provides a "Domoscore," which tells the homeowner about the quality of their home, how it could be improved, and what that would cost.

Having worked a full-time job while starting his own business, James really wants to spend more time with his kids and wife and volunteer more with his local church.

Looking back at his career thus far, James has one piece of advice for current MBA students: "It's never going to be easy to push yourself and to go that extra mile. So, if you have the opportunity and you're interested in something, I would go for it. If you feel stuck in your career, take the time to read a book or talk to people," he recommends. "Action breeds clarity. I find that to be true in my life."

“

*Getting an MBA would allow me to apply the theories and concepts I learned in college. I would also gain practical skills and I could have a real competitive advantage.*

# Anna Sevostyanova

MBA'17



## Hometown

Tashkent,  
Uzbekistan

## Current Location

Seattle,  
Washington

**After studying and working in marketing in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Anna Sevostyanova MBA'17 wanted to move into human resources.**

Searching for an MBA program in the United States, Anna discovered that Willamette MBA is one of the few schools in the country with an MBA concentration in HR. Anna sought out an MBA program because “in HR, you work with people in all different departments. You need to understand their language to be able to serve them.” Additionally, Anna found that an MBA gave her a strategic perspective of a firm. “Employees are a big part of the strategy of a company.” Through her **Global Human Resource Management** class with **Professor of Management and**

## Before Willamette MBA

Research Assistant and Teacher, Westminster International University in Tashkent

## After Willamette MBA

HR Resources Generalist,  
Boys & Girls Club of Salem

## Current Job

HR Manager at lumenomics

**Global HR Lisbeth Claus** in particular, Anna learned how to analyze HR problems and ensure the right people are in the right positions at organizations.

When Anna began searching for internships in HR, however, she struggled to find graduate level positions. “A challenge I came across was searching for a summer internship because there are not a lot of HR internships out there.” Searching for internships in the non-profit sector with an HR function, Anna attended a networking event for non-profit and

Willamette MBA students.

As part of the business school’s commitment to helping students work at non-profit, every year four Not-for-Profit Internship Scholarships are provided for student to accept non-profit internships in the Willamette Valley area as non-profits often don’t have the budget to hire MBA interns. The Boys and Girls Club of Salem—a local chapter of a national organization that provides after-school programs for young people—was one of the non-profits to receive grant funding for an intern and Anna discovered the internship had an HR component.

Though the internship had an HR component, the Boys and Girls Club had no dedicated HR professional. After Anna completed her internship, the Boys and Girls Club was impressed with her knowledge and skills and decided to expand the department and add a role solely focused on HR.

In her role as Human Resources Generalist, Anna said she incorporated more than just the tools she learned in her HR classes. “HR is a combination of a lot of other functions. For example, on the recruiting side, I incorporate a lot of marketing. I market ‘us’ to prospective employees out there. When I go to career fairs, I need to think about what [the attendees] will think about when they see our booths. Do our

booths translate the fun atmosphere we have at the Boys and Girls Club? When they pick up flyers, will they keep them and think about us in the future when they are applying for jobs?”

Anna also incorporated her data analysis classes into her job, particularly the elective course she took in her second year, **Management Analytics**, with **Professor Henry Bi**.

“These days you can’t make a decision that’s not based on data. From my classes, I learned how to ask the right questions. If you want to make the right decisions, you need to know how to ask the right questions.” Anna analyzed staff surveys to see what trends are occurring at the Boys and Girls Club to quantify the initially seemingly unquantifiable. Through analyzing the data, Anna is able to see if the initiatives she and her coworkers are promoting are having the desired effect on employees.

Working at a local non-profit requires an “all-hands-on-deck” mentality, which is the perfect place for Anna to use the vast array of skills she learned at Willamette MBA.

“I wouldn’t be at the Boys and Girls Club if it weren’t for Willamette MBA. They give you a lot of preparation to help you succeed.”

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*I wouldn’t be at the Boys and Girls Club if it weren’t for Willamette MBA. They give you a lot of preparation to help you succeed.*

# Kyle Roadman

MBA'06



## Hometown

Eugene, Oregon

## Current Location

Eugene, Oregon

## Before Willamette MBA

Software Engineer

## After Willamette MBA

Financial Analyst at Tektronix

## Current Job

Power Resources Manager,  
Emerald People's Utility District

**In 2010, Kyle was looking for a position in the Eugene, Oregon area when he came upon an opening at Emerald People's Utility District (EPUD), a public utility district in Oregon.**

"The job was for a financial analyst, but there was room to grow. Shortly after I started at Emerald, I was able to take on a larger role." Despite not having a background in energy when he started, Kyle has quickly learned the ins and outs of facilities as a power resources manager.

Kyle began his career in the software industry, where he worked as an engineer for several years before starting his MBA at Willamette. Kyle then began a career in

finance at Tektronix, which he credits Willamette MBA. "Career Management had a couple of employers come to campus and one of them was Tektronix. I applied for an internship and worked there over the summer. I ended up taking a full-time position while I was still in school. I had really fantastic mentors at Tektronix, one of whom was an Atkinson alum. That connection was crucial and alone made the decision to go to Willamette MBA absolutely worthwhile."

At EPUD, Kyle currently works on wholesale power contracting and risk management. "We have a unique relationship with our

power provider. We have to manage our loads and resources—how much our customers are using versus how much power we have available to provide to them." Kyle spends much of his time on financial derivative contracts, setting up policy, and performing trades and purchases for long-term energy needs. These contracts often look 36 months into the future.

Looking towards the future is something that Kyle does best. In his time at EPUD, he has led the development of the GREEN Grant Program. The project, funded by EPUD customers who want to support renewable energy projects, gives a \$40,000 grant annually to a non-profit partner.

Kyle has also been involved in EPUD's first strategic plan. Even though his expertise is in finance, Kyle finds having a marketing strategy and customer-centric vision to be crucial for EPUD. "There's a lot more consumer choice being introduced to the industry. Solar power and consumer storage are beginning to become cost effective. At the same time, you have consumers that are wanting information, more resources, and the ability to interact with us. We had to adapt to that."

Kyle's marketing focus in his current role can be traced back to one of the most influential classes he took at Willamette, **Marketing Strategy** with **JELD WEN Professor of Free Enterprise and Dean Emeritus Debra Ringold**. "I didn't have a

lot of interest in marketing until I took her class. Marketing is such a core part of any business endeavor." Kyle also credits **Dean and Professor of Applied Statistics and Information Systems Mike Hand's Business Forecasting** course. "It was very valuable to learn forecasting and something I use every single day. The concepts and the way of thinking was really important."

Kyle's efforts have not gone without recognition. In 2017, he received the Robert E. Roundtree Rising Star Award granted by the American Public Power Association and in 2018, EPUD was awarded the American Public Power Association's E.F. Scattergood System Achievement Award for the second time.

Kyle says he's now looking towards electric vehicles. In the future, EPUD hopes to incentivize customers to utilize electric vehicles through discounts on their bills. "A lot of times we'll have surplus energy overnight, so we're looking at rates that change based on the time of the day." Kyle says customers who take advantage of this potential system by charging their electric vehicles overnight would see a discount in their utility bill. "The crux of our strategic plan was to be a better partner with customers and have them look at us as a service provider as opposed to just a product provider—we think that this is the position that will keep us relevant into the future."

“

*I had really fantastic mentors at Tektronix, one of whom was a Willamette MBA alum. That connection was crucial and alone made the decision to go to Willamette MBA absolutely worthwhile.*

# Andrew Galen

MBA'17

## Hometown

Los Altos, California

## Current Location

Salem, Oregon

## Before Willamette MBA

Assistant Director of Admission,  
Southwestern University

## After Willamette MBA

Director of Strategic Initiatives, United  
Way of the Mid-Willamette Valley

## United Way Worldwide advances the common good in communities across the world with a focus on education, income and health.

As the Director of Strategic Initiatives for United Way of the Mid-Willamette Valley, Andrew serves as a project manager for strategic projects focused on alleviating some of the most critical issues in our community. One of Andrew's most recent projects was Taylor's House, a home for youths experiencing homelessness in Marion and Polk counties. In partnership with the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency, Andrew's role in this project was to raise funds and facilitate the acquisition of the property.

Andrew's passion for working in the non-profit sector is deep-rooted and credits Willamette MBA for the knowledge and skills he uses every day to perform his job well. Andrew's job is ever-changing and involves a lot of strategic decision making. He enjoys the freedom his job gives him and the opportunity to utilize the financial and operational skills acquired from his MBA coursework. One experiential course in particular, **Philanthropic Investment for Community Impact**, gave Andrew the skills and connections that led him to his job at United Way.

## Philanthropic Investment for Community

**Impact** is an experiential learning course that was introduced to Willamette MBA in 2016. Through this course, students decide how to invest a fixed pool of funds for social community impact and assess the performance of their investments year over year. In the process, students build leadership, critical thinking, analytical and communication skills. Andrew was a member of the course's first cohort and he says that no other MBA program has a course quite like it.

He wholeheartedly believes in Willamette MBA and its unique incorporation of non-profit management. Currently, he co-instructs Philanthropic Investment for Community Impact alongside **Associate Professor of Accounting Practice, Nicole Thibodeau**. Andrew sees his teaching role as one of the ways he can continue to be involved and connected with the Willamette MBA community, encouraging future business leaders to think about opportunities in the non-profit sector.

*Andrew's passion for working in the non-profit sector is deep-rooted and credits Willamette MBA for the knowledge and skills he uses every day to perform his job well.*

## Brandy O'Bannon

'98, MBA'00



### Hometown

Salem, Oregon

### Current Location

Salem, Oregon

### After Willamette MBA

Director of Development at  
Blanchet Catholic School

### Current Job

Executive Director at Lebanon  
Community Hospital

**“People who are drawn to nonprofits tend to have a sense of calling like this is more than a job,” said Brandy O’Bannon ’98, MBA’00. “It’s kind of our life mission to want to make a difference.”**

Brandy grew up in Salem, Oregon. She was always ambitious, but she never thought that she’d be able to go to a school like Willamette. After gaining financial support from the Ford Family Foundation Scholarship, Brandy was able to obtain her B.A. in History from Willamette. “We can learn a lot from studying the past,” she said.

Brandy’s initial interest in nonprofit management started in high school, when she worked as a tour guide at a local museum. During her senior year at

Willamette, she wandered across the street to the Atkinson Graduate School of Management (Willamette MBA) and connected with Emeritus Associate Dean Judy O’Neill, who explained that a Willamette MBA is really about training leaders and managers with the skills necessary to make a difference in the world.

Brandy and her classmates were actually the first students to experience **PACE (Practical Application for Career & Enterprises)\*** In this course, which has since evolved, Brandy and her team created a cookbook and donated the proceeds to A.C. Gilbert’s Discovery Village, a local children’s museum. The connection Brandy made with the Discovery Village led to her summer internship.

After graduating from Willamette MBA, Brandy spent the next 12 years at Blanchet Catholic School and worked in fundraising. She was also involved in many other aspects of the school. As a lover of the arts, Brandy was part of the team that helped build a theater for the kids and continues to attend performances to this day. The experience and knowledge that Brandy gained at Blanchet, including attending board meetings and taking on big responsibilities, at an early part of her career, helped her grow as a manager.

A fellow Willamette MBA alumnus recruited Brandy to Family Building Blocks to be part of the management team. During her six years at Family Building Blocks, one of her favorite projects was the construction of a large ceramic mural. She loved that she was able to install something that children can enjoy for generations to come.

Brandy recently transitioned to an Executive Director role at Lebanon Community Hospital and currently runs a team that stewards funds and resources for the hospital.

It has certainly been a challenge to navigate this unprecedented time, but Brandy is adamant about serving her community. “It’s very important for those smaller communities to have great access to quality healthcare and I’ve seen that and really value that,” she said.

Brandy credits her career success to her mentors and her education at Willamette MBA, which helped propel her career. “The Willamette MBA provided great flexibility in terms of I’ve been able to call on different skills at different times during my life and in different jobs,” she says, “I think it’s something that stays with you your whole life. I’ve been able to maintain friendships and collaborations with the classmates and professors.”

Brandy’s own work ethic and work style is another key to her career success. She has always been the type of worker and leader to be thoroughly involved in projects with her coworkers. “I’m in the trenches and I roll up my sleeves. A lot of my coworkers or people that I’ve supervised know that I can be depended on and I’m going to support them,” she said.

Brandy says that there is this preconceived notion that nonprofits are somehow inferior to for-profit businesses or are not as professional or have fewer growth opportunities. As a professional who has spent her whole career working in the nonprofit sector, Brandy says that she has never found that myth to be true. In fact, there’s an added bonus to working in the nonprofit sector for Brandy as she feels that she is making a difference every day by bringing the right people and right donors together and creating a huge impact.

*\*Since 2004, students in the first-year PACE core course work on a six-month long consulting project with real, nonprofit clients.*

# Manuel Velasquez-Garay

MBA'14



**Hometown**  
Asunción, Paraguay

**Current Location**  
San Lorenzo, Paraguay

**Before Willamette MBA**  
Director of Resources, TECHO  
**Current Job**  
Director/Founding Partner, Timón

## After obtaining his MBA from Willamette as a Fulbright scholar, Manuel moved back to Paraguay.

He really wanted to make an impact and difference in his country, so he accepted the challenge to join the Housing Ministry and develop the ministry from scratch. He managed 14 different strategic projects and among them was Barrio San Francisco, which is the largest social housing project in the history of Paraguay.

After his experience in the public sector, Manuel wanted to develop his own startup. "I chose Willamette MBA because of its focus on entrepreneurship, and I consider myself as an entrepreneur at

heart," said Manuel, "I wanted to develop projects that not only had an economic impact but a triple bottom line [people, planet, and profit]." Manuel co-founded Timón, which means the steering wheel of a boat in Spanish. Timón is a certified B-corp and has helped over 500 families with their financial education and wellbeing. "We invite people to take charge, to take control of their lives and their financial wellbeing," Manuel said, "I would like to develop Timón throughout Latin America and also to develop other enterprises and other startups that have this same outlook of having a social and environmental impact. Willamette MBA really helped me and gave me the necessary tools to develop projects that have more than an economic output."

# Employment Highlights

May 2020 Graduates

<b>3M</b>	M&A Tax Counsel
<b>CliftonLarsonAllen</b>	Associate
<b>Columbia Trust Company</b>	Trust Investment Analyst
<b>Deloitte</b>	Risk & Financial Advisory Consultant
<b>Haley's Heroes Foundation</b>	Executive Director
<b>Intel</b>	HR Business Partners
<b>Intel</b>	HR Business Partners
<b>Intel</b>	Senior Financial Analyst
<b>Microsoft</b>	Licensing Analyst
<b>NAVEX Global</b>	Implementation Analyst
<b>Oregon Department of Education</b>	Fiscal/Grant Analyst
<b>Oregon Department of Transportation</b>	Data Analyst
<b>Oregon Judicial Department</b>	Data Analyst
<b>OrePac Building Products</b>	Systems Analyst
<b>Swift Agency</b>	Associate Strategist
<b>Volkswagen Group of America</b>	Part and Accessories Analyst

**Engaged professors, a robust curriculum and experiential learning, internships, and a supportive Career Management team—you've now seen how these have helped Willamette MBA graduates achieve success.**

What sets Willamette MBA apart is that our career management is integrated into the curriculum through Practical Application for Careers and Enterprises (PACE), a first-year, two-semester core course. Our Career Management team works with students one-on-one. They will know your career goals and are invested in helping you succeed.

**OUR CAREER SERVICES INCLUDE:**

- ▶ Career Close-Ups (Willamette MBA career fairs)
- ▶ Management Writing Program
- ▶ Mentorship Program
- ▶ Mock Interview Day
- ▶ Non-profit Internship Scholarship Program
- ▶ One-on-one coaching appointments
- ▶ Virtual Career Treks with our partners in the Seattle, Portland, and San Francisco areas

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The MBA for Professionals program is offered both on the Salem and Portland campuses.

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MBA Portland Center  
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Portland, Oregon 97209  
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mba-p@willamette.edu

→ [willamette.edu/mba](https://willamette.edu/mba)



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*Class of 2019, with this degree, you have achieved greater education success—and set yourselves up for greater professional success—than the vast majority of humanity. My deepest hope for you is that you use your power to create communities where that kind of success is open to everyone. That it won't be predicated on whether you come from a certain place, or you look or speak a certain way. That, in the greatest tradition of this country, success will be available to everyone who reaches for it.*

*You are here today because you were given a gift: the gift of a Willamette education. It's been invaluable in my life, and I can't wait to see the lives, careers and communities you build with it. I'll be keeping tabs. Congratulations again.*

**– Punit Renjen MM'86, CEO Deolitte Global,**  
to the Class of 2019