

BRYAN

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BUSINESS REPORT



Getting Ahead of the Game with Esports

Five years ago, video games were just a hobby to sophomore Morgan Atwater.

p. 8



UNC GREENSBORO

**Bryan School of
Business and Economics**

MESSAGE

FROM THE DEAN



McRae C. Banks, PhD
*Margaret and Harrell Hill
Distinguished Professor
and Dean*

As the dean of a business school, terms like inflation and supply chain are not unusual to hear in my day-to-day. However, this year, it seems those phrases would be hard for anyone to avoid with everything going on in the world. When I see fluctuations in the economy reflected in the headlines, I find myself thinking about the Bryan School and revisiting its mission statement. For those unfamiliar, it reads:

We create and disseminate knowledge about the theory and practice of business. In addition to our courses and research, we accomplish this through hands-on projects, global experiences, and outreach to the community. Our work produces principled leaders and exceptional problem solvers who have a global perspective, an innovative mindset, a broad understanding of sustainability, and a commitment to improve the organizations at which they work and the communities in which they live.

In last year's issue of the Bryan Business Report, I wrote about our ongoing efforts to be recognized as a premier business school among regional public universities. I wrote about how our School has garnered various national accolades from U.S. News & World Report and The Princeton Review in that pursuit. We take pride in those hard-earned accolades.

But this year I wanted to revisit our mission with all of you so certain topics will be top of mind when you flip through the pages that follow.

I want you to think about global experiences as you read about a Ukrainian-born Bryan School professor who made it his life's work to share information and ideas across borders. I want you to think about hands-on projects as you read about the MBA student consultants who helped a local lithium company – which extracts the material from existing resources for use in renewable energy applications – to figure out its next move. I want you to think about both the theory and the practice of business when you reach this issue's expanded research section and take a closer look at topics such as energy-efficient cloud computing and how the future of apparel could very well reside in the metaverse.

I want you to think about the future of business – and perhaps the future in general – as we celebrate all our exceptional Bryan School problem solvers who have committed to improving the organizations at which they work and the communities in which they live.

We are so glad to have each and every one of you as a part of our mission.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "McRae C. Banks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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Design

Kerri Lindley

Photography

Mike Dickens, Becky VanderVeen,
Bert VanderVeen

Contributing Authors

Mackenzie Francisco, Pat Holmes,
Dawn Martin, Robin Sutton Anders

Printing

Geographics

A

BLUEPRINT

TO BELIEVING
IN YOURSELF



**ONE DAY I WANT MY KIDS TO HEAR,
'YOUR DAD WAS A GOOD DUDE.'
THAT'S IMPORTANT TO ME."**

Steve Scott
President, Tri-State Steel

Steve Scott brings a prop—a bright, juicy orange—to the third week of Business 115, Blueprint for Personal Development. The class is first in the Blueprint Series, a personal and professional development curriculum unique to UNC Greensboro’s Bryan School of Business and Economics consisting of four credits designed to prepare students for the business world. The curriculum for Business 115, taught by C-suite professionals and entrepreneurs, is based on the idea that good business professionals are born from good people.

Scott, president of the Reidsville-based Tri-State Steel, places the fruit on his desk at the front of the classroom. “I tell my students that the world is an orange. The university is an orange,” he says. “It’s a perfectly lovely piece of fruit, and it’s just sitting there filled with juice. You have to choose to squeeze the juice. You have to make that choice, and nobody can do it for you.”

Scott’s students choose to squeeze the juice. “This is a one-hour class, and I never take attendance—every student is always here,” he says. “I tell them on week one of class: After your graduation, when you’re at dinner with mom and grandma and they ask which UNCG class meant the most to you, I want you to say, ‘There was this one class I had to take my freshman year that changed my life.’”

Leading with Authenticity

Three years ago, Tori Batts (Business Administration) took Scott’s class as a freshman. Scott remembers the first day she walked in the door. “That day, it was super hot. The humidity was 1,000 percent, and the AC wasn’t working. Tori had walked all the way across campus, and really didn’t want any part of it.”

In a class designed to help students identify their values and strengths, Batts felt lost. She’d recently transferred and wasn’t sure what she wanted to do with her life. “Scared and angry,” Scott describes, Tori was struggling to find a job and worried about how she would continue to pay for college.

“If you’d asked me about my strengths at that point, I might have said I’m organized and I have good communication skills,” she says. “The list would stop at that point.”

One day when she and Scott were talking, Batts smiled—“a million-watt smile,” Scott says. He told Batts he believed she had a lot to offer, and he encouraged her to lead with the positive energy shining through her smile.

“That’s you,” he told her.

Helping students unlock their strengths and lead with authenticity is Scott’s own superpower. “We talk all the time about how, in business, you have to be yourself, and you have to be consistent. Business is about people—whether you’re a doctor, a bakery owner, or a steel salesman. If you can’t connect authentically with people, you are going to fail.”



I WANT YOU TO SAY, ‘THERE WAS THIS ONE CLASS I HAD TO TAKE MY FRESHMAN YEAR THAT CHANGED MY LIFE.’”

Steve Scott

President, Tri-State Steel

It makes sense, but for many of Scott’s students, “authenticity” is a foreign concept. “This is the first generation that’s ever grown up with social media. My 32-year-old daughter didn’t have it, but my 25-year-old has never known a world without it,” he says. “Many of these kids don’t know an authentic world. They don’t know who they are beyond who they are on a reel.”

Scott takes the time to listen to his students, and he guides them on their path to self-discovery.

“After having taken his class, I know what I can contribute to my personal life and my career,” says Batts, who plans to graduate in December with a degree in business administration. “Instead of two basic and common characteristics that a lot of people have, I know that I’m observant, I’m detail-oriented, I’m strong-willed, and the list continues.”

That’s what Batts led with when she recently landed her dream job with Cone Health’s HR department. “I’m a young African American woman and was able to secure a position in a competitive business field,” she says. “When I think about my journey—especially when I think back to that first day I walked into Business 115—it leaves me speechless. If that class hadn’t been there to teach me about myself, there’s no telling where I would be.”

Leaving a Legacy

Living authentically isn’t easy, Scott knows. “Some of these students don’t feel loved, and they are afraid to be themselves.” When they are brave enough to share their life experiences with him, Scott listens—“with great intentionality.” He tells them it’s OK to be vulnerable.

“If you’re genuine, then you will be loved for that,” he says. “We end up having conversations about really heavy topics like addiction and even suicide. We cry a lot in class, and we are open with the phrase ‘I love you.’”

Scott learned how to squeeze the juice from his father, who told him that everyone leaves a legacy. “That’s one of life’s truths,” he said. “The beauty of it is that you get to choose what legacy you leave.” ■

Written by Robin Sutton Anders

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Jennifer Shoffner

WHO RUNS THE

Jennifer Shoffner '94 (Business Administration), '00 MBA, Tiffany Grant '18 MBA, and Hadley Iliff '16 MBA all come from completely different backgrounds and enrolled in the UNC Greensboro MBA program for completely different reasons.

Shoffner wanted a way to round out the skills she obtained working in human resources for four years. Grant originally enrolled to put herself on the track to her PhD. Iliff was at a crossroads in her life and decided to try her hand at business.

Though their paths differ, these women do have things in common. They have all used their advanced degrees to unlock new doors and blaze their own trails in a traditionally male-dominated business world. And they all graduated from an MBA program that boasts an above-average majority of women students.



Tiffany Grant



IT'S BEEN REALLY REWARDING TO SEE SO MANY MORE WOMEN HAVE A SEAT AT THE TABLE AND HAVE THEIR VOICES HEARD AND LISTENED TO."

Jennifer Shoffner

'94 (Business Administration), '00 MBA



Hadley Iliff

View From the Top

The role of women in the business world has changed substantially over the past decades.

Shoffner, a two-time Bryan School of Business and Economics graduate, can attest to that. She was fresh off her fourth year working in human resources when she decided to head back to the Bryan School for round two of her education in 1998. But Shoffner has earned more than an MBA over the years. Since the start of her professional career in 1994, she became the first female director for Triad-based hardware manufacturer, Liberty Hardware, and in 2020 she secured the position of Chief Human Resources Officer for leading building products installer and distributor Top Build.

WORLD?

"It's so crazy to think about how much things have changed, but it's also been really rewarding to see so many more women have a seat at the table and have their voices heard and listened to," she said.

Women in MBA programs is an oft-reported on topic, with CNBC, Fortune, Time, and The Wall Street Journal all writing on the subject in recent years. Each has cited a survey from the Forté Foundation, a nonprofit that aims to launch women into fulfilling careers through access to business education. That survey put the national average of women in MBA programs at 39 percent in 2020, climbing slightly to 41 percent in 2021.

This spring at the Bryan School, 54 percent of students pursuing their UNCG MBA were women, which is not dissimilar to the more than 52 percent of women that comprise the Bryan School's overall student population.

"I tell people all the time that education is something that never loses its value," Shoffner said. "Whether it's a degree, a class, a certification — education is something you can take with you wherever you go and no one can take with you."

Forging Her Own Route

Grant opened her first business, Tiffany's Cafe, as a little girl. Each night, she asked what her family was having for dinner, typed up a menu and took everyone's order. After dinner, she'd break out her piggy bank and collect quarters, nickels and dimes.

It came as no surprise that she'd pursue business as a career — first as a corporate human resources specialist, and most recently as a full-time entrepreneur. Grant, who initially enrolled in the UNCG MBA as a stepping stone to earning her PhD, made the leap into full-time self-employment through her own financial literacy firm, Money Talk with Tiff.

"Instead of 'Ready, aim, fire,' I've always said 'Ready, fire, aim,'" Grant said. "I take risks. I've had at least 10 careers in my adult life."

Through each business endeavor and career journey, two things remain the same for Grant — her confidence in her decision to pursue an MBA and her commitment to making her voice heard while staying true to herself.

"All the industries and careers I've had have always been white male-dominated or white-dominated, so here I am as a young black female and check none of those boxes," Grant said.

"I show up how I am in all spaces regardless of who's in the room and who isn't."

From Beakers to Briefcases

With bachelor's and master's degrees in biochemistry under her belt, Iliff was working as a research assistant in UNCG's biochemistry department — as well as part-time at a bakery — when she decided to switch gears in 2013.

"My boss at the bakery once worked as the VP of sales at a pharmaceutical company and suggested I go for my MBA, and I dismissed the idea," Iliff said. "I thought I knew what an MBA was until he started listing all of the things it entails. They were all things I love — supply chain, management philosophies, accounting — all of it."

Iliff enrolled as soon as she could and within a year, she'd secured an internship with Merz Therapeutics. That role turned into a full-time position and eventually, a spot at the top she currently holds — senior director of regulatory affairs and product safety.

From science to marketing, Iliff has pulled up her seat to the proverbial table. Since starting with Merz, Iliff's dual background in research and business has allowed her to serve as a liaison between the research and development and marketing departments. Ultimately, she credits her results-driven work strategy and willingness to advocate for herself and others as having made her the most successful.

"Sometimes, women in business feel uncomfortable making sure they get credit for the work they do, but you have to. Speak up, take credit when you deserve it and put yourself out there," Iliff said. ■

Written by Mackenzie Francisco



INSTEAD OF 'READY, AIM, FIRE' I'VE ALWAYS SAID 'READY, FIRE, AIM.'"

Tiffany Grant
'18 MBA

LEARN MORE

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LESSONS FROM UKRAINE

Dr. Vasyl Taras admits he's a little tired. War has ravaged his home country of Ukraine, and he's spending the morning trying to help a former classmate's daughter continue her studies in Italy.

Under normal circumstances, he says, he might not spend this much time on a kid from Ukraine. A professor in the Department of Management at the UNC Greensboro Bryan School of Business and Economics and founder of X-Culture – a popular program that helps students connect across cultures – Taras' to-do list is a long one.

But these aren't normal circumstances. "How can I ignore it?" he says. "It's good for her, I know I can help."

Born to Organize

Taras was born in the Soviet Union in 1977 and describes his childhood as catching a glimpse of a monstrous empire. Some of his earliest memories are of a program not unlike scouts in the U.S.

"They'd indoctrinate you into the ideology," he says. "You'd become a pioneer and wear this red neckerchief. When you went to school, they would give you a star with baby Lenin on it."

Taras remembers first refusing to wear the scarf and how quickly that impulse turned into something bigger.

"We created this youth organization, sort of camping, but more education-related," he recalls. "We invited any foreigner we could grab – professors – to speak. Because the Soviet Union was collapsing, everything was disorganized. We were maybe 16, and we went to the mayor for a place to meet and ended up with a two-story building downtown – pretty successful for just being kids."

This desire to question things didn't come out of thin air – Taras says if you look up and down his family tree, you'll find plenty of individuals who fought against the Soviet Union.

"Much of my family disappeared during the time of World War I. My great grandparents were some of the most prominent leaders against the first Soviet Union then," he said. "A generation later, their children were at the forefront of the Ukrainian Resistance Army. About two-thirds of my ancestors have died somewhere in Siberia. Those who stayed kind of whispered about it."

Academics Abroad

Taras' activism caught the eye of German visitors he'd invited to his youth organization. Impressed with what they'd built from scratch, they invited him to spend a year studying in Munich. These semesters abroad were just the beginning of Taras' journey in academia, not to mention his journey outside of the Soviet bubble. Fast forward a few years, and Taras eventually found himself in the U.S. for the first time.

"On my first visit to Wisconsin, it didn't look Imperialist," he said. "It was just a little town in Wisconsin. They were nice to each other, they weren't starving – they didn't even lock the back door when they left the house."

From there, Taras says he hopped from one university to another before finding a home at UNCG, where he's been since 2009.

X Marks the Spot

In 2010, Taras founded X-Culture. Its recipe is simple: take students from across the globe, split them into virtual teams, and give them a problem to solve.

Though he's quick to downplay any career accomplishments, Taras has reason to be proud of the program, which has involved tens of thousands of students at hundreds of universities around the world. In recent years, X-Culture has even become somewhat of a research collaboration platform, where senior researchers coach younger academics.

When you learn a little about Taras' story and the desire to share information across borders, you don't have to squint to see what has become his life's work.

"I'm not the best researcher, but one thing I seem to be relatively good at is community organizing. (My youth organization) wasn't a big national thing, but it was one of the biggest in Ukraine, people off the street plotting against the Communist party and risking jail. So, yes, X-Culture, to some extent, is relying on that experiment. If you look at the program, we've had as many as 500 universities participate in a semester, we're on every continent, and it's done without any budget. Everyone chips in," he said. "Somewhere in the back of my mind, I thought about building these bridges and connecting countries and improving cultural intelligence. And even sometimes, I think if we can lower the chance of the next conflict by 1 percent, I'll be happy."



'Where Do We Stop?'

Taras might be one of the most well-connected educators on the planet. He is combing through a few of the hundreds of emails he receives on any given day from across the globe as he ponders the predicament involving his former classmate's daughter.

"I have contacts in Russia and Ukraine, and we started a pen pal program, but should we do more? Start summer school for kids in Ukraine and around the world? Maybe I should roll out a full-scale program on an industrial scale with thousands of professors. Businesses can help, I have those connections. Should I roll out a program for humanitarian aid? I could raise money," he said. "So where do we stop? Maybe that becomes the question. I still have to teach classes. So it is a constant pressure."

These are not normal circumstances. And despite Taras' fatigue, it's hard to listen to him and not think about what else could be built from scratch. How can you ignore something when you know you can help?

"This stupid war," he says. "I don't know. It's a situation where you feel obliged to help." ■

Written by Pat Holmes



**IT'S A SITUATION WHERE
YOU FEEL OBLIGED TO HELP."**

Dr. Vasyl Taras
Professor

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NEW MAJOR



GETTING AHEAD OF THE GAME WITH

ESPORTS

MANAGEMENT

If someone told Morgan Atwater (Business Administration) five years ago he'd be taking an esports management class in college, he wouldn't have believed them. For Atwater, video games were just a hobby and esports just something he watched his friends participate in.

But the sophomore is one of the students enrolled in this fall's Introduction to Esports Management course at UNC Greensboro's Bryan School of Business and Economics — the first of five major courses offered as a part of the new Esports Management major.

Housed in the Department of Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Hospitality & Tourism, students pursuing a B.S. in Hospitality and Tourism Management are able to opt in. The business degree – 120 credit hours with at least 36 credits at or above the 300-course level – will provide students with a strong foundation in the functional areas of business with additional coursework that dives into the dynamic business of competitive gaming.

“Esports is a business,” said Dr. Erick Byrd, an Associate Professor in the department. “Therefore, we are approaching esports from the standpoint of how to develop, promote, manage, and host esports tournaments and related events. In essence, we are looking at this fast-growing segment of the event industry and training our graduates to be able to make this profitable for businesses, organizations, and communities.”

A World of Possibilities

Atwater recalls learning about the new esports major during a sustainable development class taught by Byrd. The idea of an esports course caught his attention, despite the fact that Atwater is currently pursuing a degree in business administration.

“I was so surprised when Dr. Byrd told us about the course,” said Atwater. “I’ve always been interested in esports and have always played video games. That, combined with the fact that Dr. Byrd was teaching, was enough to sell me on signing up.”

Now, Atwater said he’s 100 percent open to the possibility of a career in esports management — perhaps something on the branding side of things.

“There’s something so exciting about the idea of interacting with other brands and helping my own esports team continue to grow,” Atwater said.

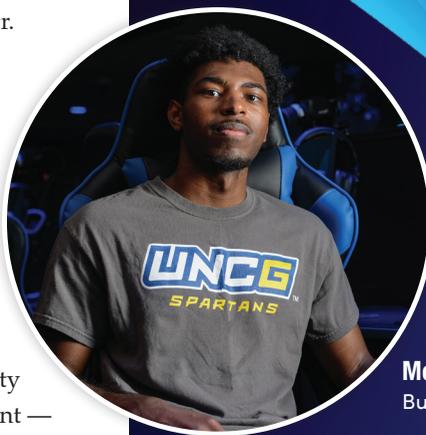
Hands-on Experiences

Students taking classes in the Esports Management major will receive hands-on experience hosting events in the newly opened, state-of-the-art esports arena in UNCG’s Moran Commons. The 3,300-square-foot space features 48 PCs, three gaming console bays, and a VR Oculus Quest 2 headset.

From hosting tournaments to managing brands, Byrd hopes that offering Esports Management as a major will allow students to plan and execute events and blaze their own paths within the burgeoning \$1 billion industry. Though only a select few esports management courses will be offered during Fall 2022, two additional electives will be available in 2023.

“Esports is an exciting segment of the event industry that could create multiple opportunities for communities. But all of this depends on sound planning, management, and execution,” Byrd added. “This is what we will help our students learn.” ■

Written by Mackenzie Francisco



Morgan Atwater
Business Administration

Along with the choice for two electives, major courses for the Esports Management major will include:

- **STH 103 INTRODUCTION TO ESPORTS MANAGEMENT**
- **STH 251 DIVERSITY AND EQUITY IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM**
- **MKT 421 PROMOTION MANAGEMENT IN ESPORTS**
- **STH 433 ESPORTS, MEETING AND EVENT TOURISM**
- **STH 491 TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT**

UNCG’s new state-of-the-art gaming facility opened in April of 2022 in Moran Commons. It features:

- **3,300+ SQ. FT.**
- **48 PCS**
- **3 GAMING CONSOLE BAYS**
- **VR OCULUS QUEST 2 HEADSET**



WE ARE LOOKING AT THIS FAST-GROWING SEGMENT OF THE EVENT INDUSTRY AND TRAINING OUR GRADUATES TO BE ABLE TO MAKE THIS PROFITABLE FOR BUSINESSES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES.”

Dr. Erick Byrd
Associate Professor

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A FLAIR FOR FASHION

LaParia Speight '21 (Consumer, Apparel, and Retail Studies), '22 MS fell in love with fashion in the seventh grade. "I was in a home-economics class, and I learned I could make things on my own," she remembers. Speight started sewing pillows and purses and selling them to family members. At the time, she dreamed of a career in fashion because of the freedom she'd have to stretch her creativity.

Today, as a recent graduate of UNC Greensboro's Bryan School of Business and Economics with her MS in Retail Studies, Speight appreciates fashion for a different reason. "Everybody, everywhere, all the time is wearing clothing," she says. "It's essential to life."

That's why inclusivity is so important in the industry, explains Dr. Nancy Hodges, who developed the Future Leaders in Apparel, Consumer Insights, and Retailing (FLAIR) fellowship program in 2021. Funded by the VF Corporation Foundation, FLAIR has two goals: first, to provide fellowship support to a diverse cohort of students who may not otherwise be able to enroll in an advanced degree program, and second, to give those students opportunities to develop leadership skills tailored to the industry.

"According to the National Retail Federation, about 10 percent of all senior leadership across retailers and brands are minorities—and just a fraction of this percentage are women," says Hodges, head of the Bryan School's Department of Consumer, Apparel, and Retail Studies. "Once you get to the senior level, the lack of diversity is really noticeable."

For the same reason Speight appreciates fashion, Hodges understands that diversity, equity, and inclusion are essential in

the industry. "Consumers come in all shapes and sizes, genders, ethnicities, and racial backgrounds," she says.

Rolling Up Her Sleeves

Speight's advisors encouraged her to apply for FLAIR as she approached the final year of her undergraduate degree and began her transition into the master's program.

Speight was beginning to hone her skills in fashion trend forecasting. "I wanted to work for a major company to better understand what's causing people to dress in certain ways," she says.

Through FLAIR, Speight was one of four fellows paired with an experienced professional for an individualized mentoring program. Not only would she receive scholarship money, but she'd also gain opportunities to learn workforce-ready skills.

"I knew I would learn a lot in my courses and through my practicum project," Speight says. "But I liked the idea of having a mentor who could teach me things I might not learn specifically in my program."

Twice a month, Speight met with Yvonne Johnson, Senior Director of Product Development at Cotton Incorporated who graduated from the CARS department in 1982.

"In the fashion industry, trend forecasting presentations are audience specific, and there's a particular way you want to portray yourself and present your research," Johnson says. "In one of my first meetings with LaParia, she told me that she wanted to grow her confidence in presenting, so we really focused on public speaking and presentation skills."

Johnson gave Speight an assignment she wishes someone had given her at the start of her career. "I challenged her to do some research to identify a few role models to study aspects that she would want to emulate."

Speight was assigned to choose a fashion designer, a motivational speaker, and a political speaker of interest to her. She watched Ted Talks and YouTube clips and compared and contrasted what made them so effective in delivering their messages. After studying these potential role models, Speight prepared a series of mini presentations she'd present to Johnson, who would offer feedback to help her improve.



IF A COMPANY IS TRYING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL ITS CONSUMERS, IT'S IN THEIR BEST INTEREST TO LOOK THROUGH A BROAD, INCLUSIVE LENS."

Dr. Nancy Hodges

Department Head and Burlington Industries Professor



Johnson also provided Speight insights on how to tailor her resume to specific positions, and conducted mock interviews to further develop her skills. “It’s great to have a network of people who can offer connectivity and support in future endeavors,” says Johnson.

A Model for Success

As her FLAIR capstone project, Speight prepared a presentation on fashion trend forecasting. She presented it to Johnson and the other three FLAIR mentors, as well as CARS graduate faculty members.

Johnson was very impressed. “LaParia just shined. She spoke so eloquently and had obviously taken into account the things we talked about.”

As Speight completes her final internship with QVC, where she’s working in their fashion trend and lifestyle department, she feels confident in her ability to gracefully move into the next stage of her career. “I feel very well-prepared,” she says. “I’m keeping my eyes open to different opportunities, and I feel like whatever I pursue, I have a good chance of getting it.”

That’s the type of confidence Dr. Hodges hopes to build through FLAIR, a program she hopes will provide students what they need to compete in a competitive job market. “If you look around and don’t see anybody in a leadership position that looks like you, you lack that sense of belonging that gives you the self-assurance to forge ahead on your career path,” she says. ■

Written by Robin Sutton Anders

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go.uncg.edu/bbr_fashion

LaParia Speight
'21 (Consumer, Apparel, and
Retail Studies), '22 MS



LITHIUM COMPANY STRIKES GOLD WITH STUDENT CONSULT

As oil and gas markets fluctuate and the demand for electric vehicles rises, one UNC Greensboro-spinoff company is powering up for success with the help of MBA student consultants at the Bryan School of Business and Economics.

Minerva Lithium has developed an innovative filter that can extract lithium from already existing resources such as petroleum wastewater or saltwater in the ground, capturing the highly valuable material for use in electric car batteries and other renewable energy applications.

“They are working to take what’s not needed and make it into something really usable,” says Richard Rorrer, an executive mentor with the Bryan School. “Said another way, they can take waste and make it wanted.”

Mine of Information

Before the idea makes it to market, the company must move its filter out of the lab and into pilot testing as well as identify its best niche for sales. That’s where the Bryan School’s MBA Capstone Consulting Projects come in.

The course allows a team of MBA students to earn credit by working on a client’s business challenge or opportunity, and presenting their findings with a proposed solution. This spring, the Capstone team worked with Minerva Lithium to develop a business case to secure additional research funding. The company is now applying for Phase 2 funding from the National Science

Foundation, which could yield up to \$1 million in research grants necessary to begin pilot testing.

The students assisted in that process by working on in-depth market analyses, recommending the best avenues for commercialization, and developing financial models that can project profit and loss while accounting for widely varying prices of lithium.

“We have a lot of knowledge on the research side, but we needed additional business expertise,” says Dr. Sheeba Dawood, CEO and co-founder of Minerva Lithium. “The students’ presentation was really great. They have provided us with all the tools we need to apply for funding and to go before potential investors. They explained everything and were very patient in their analysis.”

Golden Opportunity

Often called “white gold,” lithium could be even more in demand locally since Toyota announced plans to locate a battery plant about 20 miles from Greensboro. Today the material sells for 257 times more than gold and 500 times more than platinum, according to the MBA students’ report. And yet, traditional mining for lithium takes an environmental toll, often scarring the land and threatening supplies of precious groundwater.

Minerva Lithium’s patented nanofilter can extract the microscopic lithium particles from petroleum wastewater in a much cleaner and greener process.



The idea has so much wide-ranging potential that it was a bit challenging to narrow down the scope of the Capstone project at first.

“I think the biggest lesson was about continuing to ask questions until you get to the real root of the problem you’re trying to solve,” says David Jackson ’22 MBA, who worked on the project. “When we looked at their data, there was so much opportunity and we had to focus in on which question to tackle to provide the most effective assistance.”

Ultimately, the students suggested a targeted market for the filter – one in which there is currently no competition. They also advised the company to hone its messaging to be especially clear to the customer. All their recommendations were firmly rooted in a careful analysis of data.

Rorrer said he hopes the students gained newfound self-assurance applying classroom learnings to real-world problems. “As often happens in business, the group walked into a situation where it’s not clear at first what’s being asked or how to get started,” he said. “Through a process – and some encouragement and steering – they gained confidence not only in finding the answers but in presenting them effectively to a client. They just poured their heart and soul into this hard work.”

Dawood was impressed by the students’ commitment, curiosity and acumen as well as the value her company received from their expertise. She is looking forward to applying their work to her application for additional funding. “The right people were involved, and they were as excited about our product as I am,” she said. “They were very enthusiastic and put in 100 percent. They owned it.” ■

Written by Dawn Martin

“**THEY’RE WORKING TO TAKE WHAT’S NOT NEEDED AND MAKE IT INTO SOMETHING USABLE. SAID ANOTHER WAY, THEY CAN TAKE WASTE AND MAKE IT WANTED.**”

Richard Rorrer
Executive Mentor, Bryan School

LEARN MORE
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FAMILY

TILES



**THEY TOLD US TO IMAGINE
WHAT A FAMILY CAN DO
TOGETHER WHEN EVERYONE
IS SUCCESSFUL INDIVIDUALLY
AND COMMITTED TO PUSHING
AND HELPING EACH OTHER.”**

**Scarlett '22 (Finance, Economics) and
Andrew Nunez Roa (Finance, Economics)**



Scarlett '22 (Finance, Economics) and Andrew (Finance, Economics) Nunez Roa spent the earliest years of their childhood in Mexico, just next door to their grandparents. "We could easily walk over, and they always tried to teach us lessons," Scarlett remembers.

Andrew says their family prized genuine curiosity and balance over straight A's. "It was more important for us to be well-rounded and to get involved," he says.

That's one of the reasons they moved back to the U.S. while Scarlett and Andrew were nearing the end of elementary school. "Our parents were comfortable in Mexico," Scarlett says. "But they believed to be what we truly are—Mexican American—we had to experience both countries."



THEY BELIEVED TO BE WHAT WE TRULY ARE—MEXICAN AMERICAN—WE HAD TO EXPERIENCE BOTH COUNTRIES."

Scarlett Nunez Roa

'22 (Finance, Economics)

Fast-forward a decade to the UNC Greensboro Bryan School of Business and Economics, and the impact the Nunez Roa siblings have had on the School is hard to miss. From their placements on the Bryan Gold leaderboard to their involvement with the Spartan Investment Club, they've put their own spin on what it means to get involved—and how important it is to work together.

The Big Question

When Scarlett started her freshman year four years ago, she anticipated a question that might come up in a job or internship interview: What do you do outside of class? She chose to dip her toe into the Spartan Investment Club, and liked hearing about all the career possibilities.

The more she learned about finance, the more she was drawn to it because of the opportunities to use math. "When we moved to the U.S. and I had to learn English, I did not understand the language at first. But I understood math," she said. "Even then, I understood that numbers are universal."

Scarlett hoped the Investment Club would help solidify her career path, but she didn't anticipate the boost it would give her leadership skills. "Immediately that fall, I became an officer. At first, I was afraid to apply because I was just a freshman, but that's when I learned not to let fear get the best of you," she says. Scarlett went on to serve as the president of both the Investment Club and the Bryan Student Ambassadors, as well as the founding vice president of the Association of Latino Professionals For America at UNCG.

Andrew joined her at the Bryan School three years later. He followed in her footsteps and joined the Investment Club, where Scarlett helped him overcome his hesitance to take risks. The result: he applied and was accepted to an internship with a commercial real estate firm. "It was such a wonderful opportunity," he says.

On the Board

Naturally an introvert, Scarlett was happy to arrive on campus and discover Bryan Gold, an app-based challenge designed to bolster the personal and professional development of undergraduates. It gave her a bird's-eye view of activities and events, making it easy to make the most of her time at the Bryan School. She quickly established herself as a regular on the leaderboard, winning the competition most recently in Spring 2021.

An extrovert who'd spent his senior year of high school in a pandemic-driven virtual world, Andrew was hungry to make connections despite the big shoes to fill. "Climbing the Bryan Gold leaderboard is thrilling," he says. "It's like a video game."

During his first semester in Fall 2021, Andrew took encouragement from his professors and nabbed his own first place finish – in a Top 5 rounded out by four of his new friends in the Investment Club.

Better Together

Scarlett and Andrew sometimes meet other siblings who feel resentment or jealousy over each other's successes. Andrew understands that tendency; in fact, he experienced it in high school. "We went to the same school, and everybody recognized me as Scarlett's younger brother. I was a little rebellious before I realized it wasn't a bad thing!"

Their parents helped, too. "They never put us in competition with each other," Scarlett says. "They told us to imagine what a family can do together when everyone is committed to pushing and helping each other."

Unsurprisingly, Scarlett impressed right through to commencement, graduating in Spring 2022 with two degrees – a BS in Finance and a BA in Economics. Soon after, she started a rotational program with JP Morgan in Charlotte as a commercial banking analyst.

Meanwhile, Andrew will enter his sophomore year also pursuing a double major. He'll miss his sister – he believes having someone to back you up helps push you forward. "But Scarlett is just a phone call away, and our one year together allowed me to be the most successful I can be." ■

Written by Robin Sutton Anders

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Wearing Her Heart

ON HER SLEEVE

“

I AM BLESSED AND THANKFUL FOR ALL THE RESOURCES OF THE BRYAN SCHOOL. I FEEL LIKE EACH OPPORTUNITY WILL HELP ME AT SOME LEVEL IN THE FUTURE.”

Shirin Alhroob

(Information Systems and Supply Chain Management,
MS in IT and Management)

Shirin Alhroob (Information Systems and Supply Chain Management, M.S. in IT and Management) keeps reinventing what success means in her life.

These days, the UNC Greensboro Bryan School of Business and Economics plays a key role in that journey. An adult student and the mother of three, Alhroob is now jointly pursuing a bachelor's and master's degree. At 44, she is deeply inspired to learn, to serve others and to create the best possible life for her and her family.

This outlook has led her to take advantage of many opportunities at the Bryan School, including leadership roles, membership in seven honor societies, and participation in the Suit Up program, which provides recipients with professional attire for interviewing, presenting and working in business.

Finding the Right Fit

A native of Palestine, Alhroob lived in Jordan, where she worked as an agricultural engineer focused on plant production. After marrying and having two children, she moved to America in 2010. By the time she was expecting her third child, Alhroob was ready to work toward a degree in the U.S.

It wasn't easy taking classes with two small children and another on the way. After years of parenting and studying – combined with teaching students Arabic and religion on the side – she earned an associate degree in IT programming. But as her definition of success evolved, Alhroob quickly took the next step and dived into a bachelor's program at UNCG.

Unfortunately, after landing a job as an IT support technician, she had to resign when the pandemic took hold. She wanted to focus on keeping her family healthy and safe. "I was so sad to leave my job because the opportunity was an excellent one," she said.

But the very same day of her resignation, Alhroob received an exciting email from the Bryan School. The message shared information about the Suit Up program, which came as a "new opportunity for happiness," she says.

Suit Yourself

Alhroob applied and was selected to receive \$250 worth of business attire. Funded by donors and sponsored by JC Penney, the program allows participants to shop for professional clothing while also receiving tips about how to dress for success.

"Donors to this program have a direct impact on students," says Tyler Wiersma, assistant director of undergraduate professional development at the Bryan School. "You essentially see students wearing the donation."

The program is now in its sixth year. "You never want something as simple as a piece of clothing to be a barrier to success," Wiersma says. "Thanks to Suit Up, our students can put on a suit, walk into a room and immediately feel they have a right to be there."

Alhroob bought two jackets and a pair of black pants she can wear with both, as well as shoes, a purse and a blouse. She has worn the suits for online interviews and business events at UNCG, including one at which she was honored for student excellence. The attire also came in handy during her two summer internships.



“YOU NEVER WANT SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS A PIECE OF CLOTHING TO BE A BARRIER TO SUCCESS.”

Tyler Wiersma

Assistant Director of Undergraduate Professional Development

Later this fall, Alhroob will set out to finish her bachelor's degree while starting her first 12 credits toward her master's with a concentration in Cyber Security.

"I am blessed and thankful for all the resources of the Bryan School," she says. "I feel like each opportunity will help me at some level in the future."

Alhroob hopes to set a strong example for her sons – ages 17, 14 and 9. She shares her achievements with them, even jumping up and down to share in the excitement.

"I want my boys to see that you need skills and knowledge, but that you also need to work hard to achieve your goals," she says. "They didn't care about grades before, but now they tell me all the time, 'Mom, we changed because of you.' I truly believe you can do anything if you love to learn, want to make a change and serve others." ■

Written by Dawn Martin

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BRYAN Research

We are extremely proud of the culture of care that exists between Bryan School students and their professors. But it would be a disservice to our world-class educators if we didn't also highlight their prolific research. In 2020, Bryan School professors published 144 unique peer-reviewed journal articles – with 29 of them in world-leading journals. Our innovative, hands-on curriculum is a potent compliment to their hard work creating and disseminating knowledge about the theory and practice of business.

CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY'S SILVER LINING



Dr. Jiyong Park
Assistant Professor

From files to software, just about everything can be found “in the cloud” in today’s corporate world. “The cloud,” formally known as cloud computing, has risen in popularity for a number of reasons, but the sustainability it offers has proven to be particularly impactful, as shown by recent research by Dr. Jiyong Park, assistant professor at the Bryan School.

Published in *Management Science* (one of the elite business journals in the world), Park’s co-authored paper, “Green Cloud? An Empirical Analysis of Cloud Computing and Energy Efficiency,” explores how cloud computing can make companies more energy efficient if used correctly.

Using in-house IT servers for data storage and processing requires more energy than cloud computing, said Park, which essentially allows users to “borrow” computing resources and software as services on demand, offered over the Internet.

Depending on the types of services, cloud service models can be classified into two broad categories: Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) and Software as a Service (SaaS). Examples include Amazon Web Service or Microsoft Office 365, respectively. He revealed how different cloud service models can enhance a corporate user’s energy efficiency.

Park, who has been an assistant professor of information systems at the Bryan School since 2019, assessed the total energy savings from the use of cloud computing compared to the total energy consumption of data centers. His main takeaway? Cloud computing has the potential to be a greener option for businesses, and works best with the Triple Bottom Line management model: people, planet and profit.

“I want to share my findings with students to show them the value of data analytics and how they can be used to solve important business and social problems,” Park said. “There’s no doubt that environmental sustainability and climate change are one of the most urgent issues for society but also for business.”



I WANT TO SHARE MY FINDINGS WITH STUDENTS TO SHOW THEM THE VALUE OF DATA ANALYTICS AND HOW THEY CAN BE USED TO SOLVE IMPORTANT BUSINESS AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS.”

Dr. Jiyong Park
Assistant Professor

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STEPPING INTO NEW, VIRTUAL TERRITORY



Dr. Nancy Hodges
Department Head and Burlington Industries Professor

Dr. Kittichai "Tu" Watchravesringkan
Associate Professor

The Bryan School's Department of Consumer, Apparel, and Retail Studies (CARS) has always been a trailblazer among its peers when it comes to teaching technological advancements in the apparel industry. From being one of the first programs in the U.S. to gain access to virtual prototyping software to owning a full-body scanner that creates digital avatars, CARS is always on the cutting edge. That's because – as department head Dr. Nancy Hodges puts it – they have to be.

"We've always had to be what I call 'externally facing,'" Hodges said. "We have to constantly change and evolve our program because the industry is constantly changing and evolving."

When the recipients of the USDA Higher Education Challenge grant were announced in 2020, it came as no surprise that CARS was one of a few projects in the U.S. selected for funding.

The \$528,000 grant allows Hodges, Project Director and Co-Principal Investigator, and her CARS colleague and Co-PI, Dr. Kittichai "Tu" Watchravesringkan, to collaborate with researchers from other universities and study the next big thing. That "big thing," Hodges said, is developing best practices for teaching students how to use 3D technology to create for the virtual world and metaverse.

"Students are really good at being in a virtual environment through gaming and esports, but when it comes to learning to use applied technology that's virtual for doing a task or completing a job-related responsibility, that's a whole different ball game," Hodges said.

The final outcome of the three-year project, which is on track to wrap in the next year, will be a website that houses course materials, video libraries, and other resources for faculty across the U.S. to utilize in order to effectively teach virtual and 3D technologies. Included in the research are pre- and post-tests developed by the project team that can be given to students to measure their self-efficacy with virtual technology.

This project marks the third Higher Education Challenge project the team has had funded by the USDA. But that doesn't mean Hodges or Watchravesringkan are getting comfortable – they know how fast this industry can change.

"When we submitted this grant proposal in 2019, no one was talking about the metaverse," Hodges said. "But, they are now. While it's easy for a professor to sit in an ivory tower and say, 'I'll teach my students what I want,' that's not how it works for programs like CARS. We are serving an industry and we have to change."

LEARN MORE

go.uncg.edu/bbr_virtual_territory



WE HAVE TO CONSTANTLY CHANGE AND EVOLVE OUR PROGRAM BECAUSE THE INDUSTRY IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING AND EVOLVING."

Dr. Nancy Hodges
Department Head and Burlington Industries Professor



PUBLIC HEALTH? THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT

Have you ever downloaded a new app and hit “accept” on the privacy policy without reading it all the way through? Perhaps you’ve downloaded a weather tracker and provided access to your location. Despite our fear of privacy invasions, mobility data gathered from smartphones could prove beneficial in tracking the spread of infectious diseases, as demonstrated in a recent research series on data mobility from Dr. Martin Andersen, an associate professor at the Bryan School.

When cases of COVID-19 in America began to tick upward in March 2020, Andersen began studying how your phone’s location services play a role in depicting people’s responses to the pandemic. Andersen analyzed mobility data from SafeGraph – a company that provides location information from apps like WeatherBug and OpenTable – and searched for patterns in location.

He determined that the percentage of people leaving their houses in late March to early April of 2020 decreased between 40 to 90 percent compared to 2019. “Basically, we’ve been trying to understand how people are moving around and how that can spread disease,” Andersen said.

Mobility data may also provide evidence of whether procedures and policies implemented to mitigate the spread of disease are effective.

Andersen, who has worked in the Bryan School’s Department of Economics since 2014, has dedicated a large portion of his research to studying health and human behavior and its impact on the economy. “My future research is oriented around using mobility data to essentially understand the world,” he said. “I think a big part of being a microeconomist is that I care a lot about understanding what’s driving human behavior.”



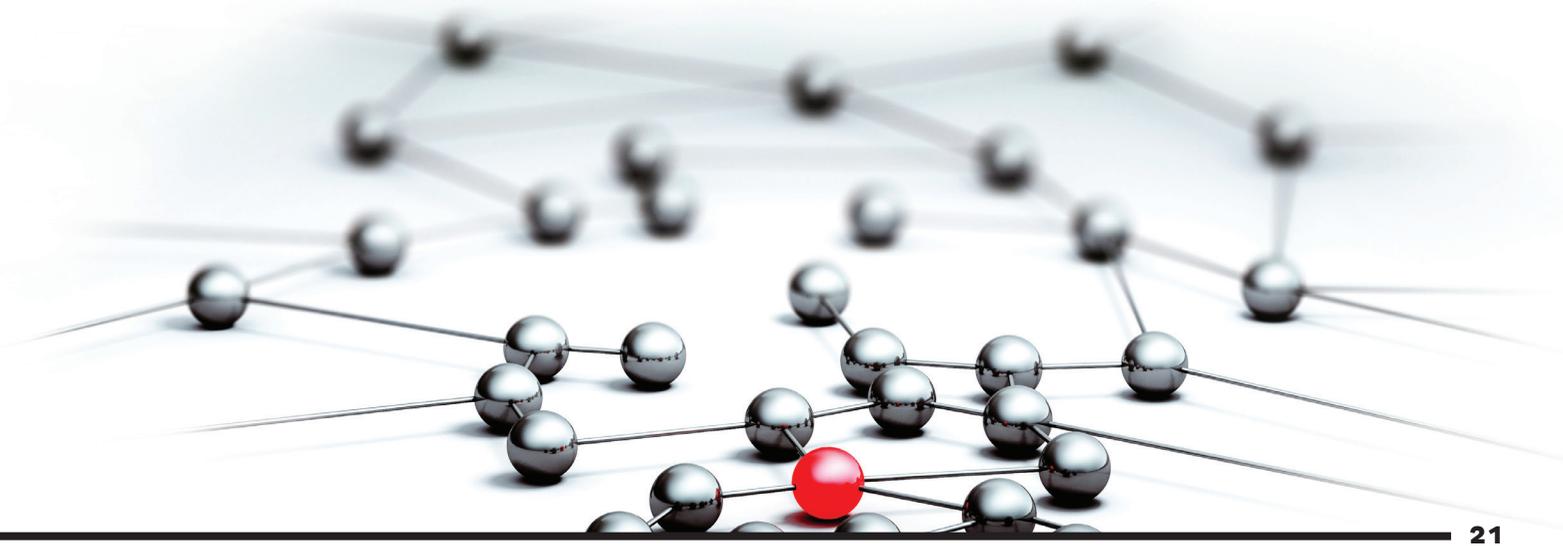
Dr. Martin Andersen
Associate Professor

LEARN MORE

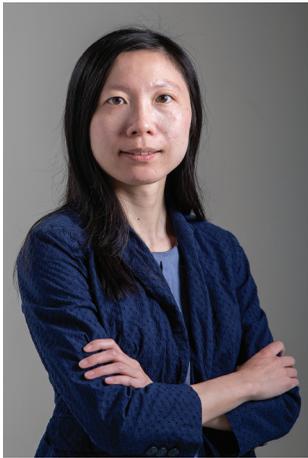
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“ I CARE A LOT ABOUT UNDERSTANDING
WHAT'S DRIVING HUMAN BEHAVIOR.”

Dr. Martin Andersen
Associate Professor



NOT EVERYONE USES SOCIAL MEDIA TO MAKE FRIENDS



Dr. Lijun (Gillian) Lei
Assistant Professor

Anyone with a smartphone has the capability to disclose information to a vast audience with the tap of a finger in today's social media-laden world. In recent research published in the *Journal of Financial Economics* (one of the elite business journals in the world), Dr. Lijun "Gillian" Lei of the Bryan School explores just how powerful social media can be when corporations utilize platforms to give themselves an instant financial boost over competitors.

The phenomenon is called negative peer disclosure, says Lei, a professor of accounting and finance. This occurs when companies disclose negative information about competitors without mentioning themselves. For example, in 2014, a popular file sharing company tweeted an article on how their competitor recently experienced a security flaw that exposed users' private data, which resulted in a short-term stock return increase for the company that tweeted.

Lei and her colleagues combed corporate Twitter accounts for tweets that negatively mentioned their competitors. They then tracked the stock return of those companies the following days after the messages were posted and found that, on average, corporate companies experienced a 1.6 to 1.7 percent increase in their stock return for a two-day period after utilizing negative peer disclosure.

"In the past, we thought companies only talked about themselves in regulatory filings such as annual reports," Lei said. "Now, we find that companies use social media to put the focus on what other companies are doing wrong. It is difficult for regulators to trace or monitor such disclosure as we have learned some companies have set up intermediaries and used Twitter bots to post such posts."

"This is a fairly new phenomenon, and we want to help people understand what a company has to gain financially by utilizing negative peer disclosure," she said. Lei hopes to continue her corporate disclosure research by delving into the potential impact of positive peer disclosure.

LEARN MORE

go.uncg.edu/bbr_social_media



WE WANT TO HELP PEOPLE UNDERSTAND WHAT A COMPANY HAS TO GAIN FINANCIALLY BY UTILIZING NEGATIVE PEER DISCLOSURE."

Dr. Lijun (Gillian) Lei
Assistant Professor

EVERY CORNER OF THE GLOBE

In his Sheth Foundation award-winning research paper “New product introductions for low-income consumers in emerging markets,” Bryan School Associate Professor Dr. S. Cem Bahadir examined the factors that motivate companies to develop and market new products internationally to those living at or below the poverty line.

Bahadir and his co-authors conducted in-depth interviews with low-income consumers and managers at international firms in India and Chile. The team tested a model based on insights from interviews across 27 emerging markets.

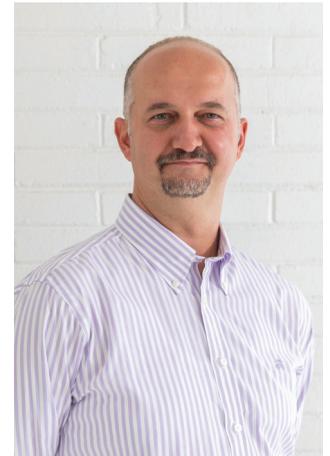
“The business idea is ‘OK, if you can innovate the products that this segment can afford, there might be a big market there,’” said Bahadir.

The research team found companies that tailored their marketing to the individual needs, wants, and cultures of different countries were more likely to succeed. Bahadir said it is a misperception that low-income consumers are fine with stripped down versions of branded products – rather, they’re interested in branded quality products at affordable prices.

He cites Unilever Global, a company that manufactures shampoo products, as an example. Unilever introduced a line of single-use shampoos in India after noticing the need for affordable and quality hygiene products. These single-use shampoos are both inexpensive to produce and purchase. Another example is Proctor & Gamble, which has produced a relatively inexpensive water cleaning solution that has done well in African countries.

Bahadir, who joined the Department of Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Hospitality & Tourism in 2017, says he tries to include research that adds this kind of futuristic and innovative global perspective to his international marketing courses.

“The interconnectedness of markets is here to stay,” Bahadir said. “For someone to be a good marketer, it’s imperative that they understand different cultures, consumer and market conditions.”



Dr. S. Cem Bahadir
Associate Professor



**THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS
OF MARKETS IS HERE
TO STAY.”**

Dr. S. Cem Bahadir
Associate Professor

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A NEW WAY OF TEACHING A NEW GENERATION OF MANAGERS



Dr. Arran Caza
Associate Professor

For nearly a century, business schools have focused on teaching students a model of managing that prioritizes profit, but not necessarily sustainability or ethics along with it. Bryan School associate professor of management Dr. Arran Caza and his colleagues refer to this model as Financial Bottom Line (FBL) management.

Through his research on management approaches, Caza is learning what happens when you expose the current generation of business students to additional managerial models that take environmental and social causes into account.

Caza’s teaching includes two additional models managers can consider when making a decision: the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) and Social Ecological Thought (SET). During a semester-long course, he presented all three models to a group of students as equally good options. He provided definitions and examples of each model, letting students choose which model they’d utilize to run a business.

Under TBL, a business takes profit, people, and planet into consideration. An example of this approach can be seen when Amazon gives you the option to have all of your packages shipped in one box to reduce waste while also saving money on shipping.

Businesses who choose the SET model seek to make only enough money to thrive and use the rest to support a social justice or environmental cause.

“These were second and third year students that already had plenty of exposure to the FBL and TBL models, but most hadn’t been given the third option of SET,” Caza said. “It was interesting that after being exposed to that third option, most of the students became more concerned with equity-related issues.”

Essentially, Caza’s research conveys that by exposing students to new management models, they’ll embrace new ways of thinking.

“I hope this can lead to the development of a different type of manager five or 10 years from now,” Caza said.

LEARN MORE

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I HOPE THIS CAN LEAD TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DIFFERENT TYPE OF MANAGER FIVE TO 10 YEARS FROM NOW.”

Dr. Arran Caza
Associate Professor

Spartan STORIES

Our alumni are changing the world – in ways big and small – every day. Here’s what a few of them are doing, and their thoughts on life, work, and the impact of their Bryan School education:

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CONSUMER, APPAREL, AND RETAIL STUDIES

Investing in Yourself

Graduating at the beginning of a global pandemic wasn’t part of the plan for Cassidy Burel ’20 (Consumer, Apparel, and Retail Studies).

“It was an interesting transition,” says Burel, who earned her bachelor’s degree in May 2020. “Because of COVID being so new, we were just trying to implement new infrastructure for dealing with things.”



But Burel never stopped. After a virtual commencement ceremony she did what she could to keep her career’s momentum moving forward, taking work at a local bridal shop performing alterations and customizations – just about anything she could get her hands on.

“CARS is great at teaching fundamentals on how to sew,” she made a point to note.

With a degree from the Bryan School in hand and more and more alterations under her belt, Burel began to dream bigger, of perhaps even setting out on her own. After a few custom jobs on the side, ranging from backpacks to bridal gowns, Burel noticed she was gaining some momentum when it came to the latter.

“Now I actually have taken a step into investing in myself and my business – CassB by Design,” says Burel.

Functioning out of a home studio, she sees this as a chance to choose what she wants to be known for – a seamstress, a designer, or wherever this road takes her. Burel released her first shoppable mini collection promoting sustainability in fashion earlier this year. You can find links to her work by searching [cassbbydesign](#) on Instagram.



“**CONSUMER, APPAREL, AND RETAIL STUDIES IS GREAT AT TEACHING FUNDAMENTALS.**”

Cassidy Burel

’20 (Consumer, Apparel, and Retail Studies)



ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE

Helping Others Make Sound Financial Decisions

Since earning his master's in accounting, Justin Moore '10 MS has been named a Forbes Best in State Next-Gen Advisor, to the Triad Business Journal's 40 Under 40 list and the American Bankers Association Top 40 Under 40, and twice an America's Top Next Generation Wealth Advisor.

Borderline hesitant to share those career accomplishments over the phone, however, it's clear Moore isn't in it for the accolades.



“SEEING CLIENTS ACHIEVE THE GOALS THAT WE STRATEGICALLY PLANNED FOR IS VERY GRATIFYING.”

Justin Moore
'10 MS

“You think about what's most important to people – I would say the top three in any order would encompass health, money and some form of spirituality. And I think providing sound financial advice and guidance enhances the quality of one's life,” Moore said.

“Seeing clients achieve the goals that we strategically planned for is very gratifying. Coming from a community where financial literacy isn't taught, these experiences prove that making informed financial decisions has a lifelong impact and sometimes generational implications. You either learn to manage money, or the lack of it will manage you.”

Though his client base has evolved through the years – his ideology has always stayed the same.



“Helping people make sound financial decisions, that's always been the goal. Money aside, I thoroughly enjoy changing the outcomes of others' lives,” he said.

When he's not serving as a Senior Vice President, Senior Financial Advisor at Bank of America, Moore says he enjoys traveling and cycling with his three kids. And he remains grateful for his time at the Bryan School.

“UNCG is a school where employers come looking for students,” he said.

MARKETING, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, HOSPITALITY & TOURISM

What Do You Love Most About Your Job?

“The thing I love most about my job is the people. I am lucky to get to work with some incredibly talented individuals and have the opportunity to learn from them every day. I am a fully remote employee and that can be lonely at some companies, but at Harvey Nash USA it's the opposite,” says Brenna Barnett '15 (Marketing). “My day starts early with conversations with my European & Asian colleagues and ends with meetings with the west coast team. I love that in one day I have virtually traveled around the world and made an impact globally.”

One look at her resume and it feels like Barnett hasn't wasted a single second since her time at the Bryan School. Currently a marketing manager with Harvey Nash USA, she says she's



Brenna Barnett
'15 (Marketing)

Beginning to Feel More and More Like Home

As far as Priyanka Karpe '19 MS is concerned, the Bryan School was a great place to be an international student.

"In India we have so many festivals. I was able to celebrate the Festival of Light at UNCG and that was a good experience for me – the faculty and students organized it and I never felt away from home," she said.

Karpe followed her husband to the U.S. when he took a job in the Raleigh area. After enrolling at the Bryan School, she says North Carolina began to feel more and more like a home away from home. Before long she was carving her own path, winning a coding challenge and landing an internship at IBM during her studies.

"One of the reasons I got my IBM internship was the mock interviews – it was really flexible and simple," she said. "They used to say, 'Just email or call us if you want to have one.' We'd call and that helped a lot. The Bryan School was really able to prepare me with that feedback."

After her internship, Karpe entered the workforce at Walmart's headquarters in Arkansas. But Carolina stayed on her mind, and she eventually landed back at IBM, receiving a promotion this past year in her role as a software engineer.

"I've told my friends to apply at UNCG," she says. "I tell them not to hesitate. There's such a good faculty, they're ready and always there for you, not just for coursework and exams but with extracurriculars and gatherings. Only studying is boring – you need to have some fun, too."



THE BRYAN SCHOOL WAS REALLY ABLE TO PREPARE ME."

Priyanka Karpe
'19 MS



motivated by diversity and representation efforts across industries – not just recruitment.

Alongside receiving the American Staffing Association's Emerging Women in Leadership Recognition in 2019, Barnett is an active participant in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council at Nash Squared, TechService Alliance Marketing Roundtable and Women in Leadership Roundtable, Staffing Industry Analyst Diversity Roundtable, Greater Houston Women's Chamber, as well as the Women in Energy Network.

"I recently had the opportunity to visit our Headquarters in London for the annual Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council meeting and – wow – what an exciting conversation to join," she said. "It's exciting, and humbling, to listen to individuals' stories. While we are all humans, we have different struggles and backgrounds that make us unique."

Barnett admits she's grown a lot since her time at Bryan, recalling fondly how she began to build her confidence through real-world, hands-on marketing class projects as well as extracurricular activities with various organizations. Her advice to current students?

"Have no fear," she says. "You are the future and have value to add. But also: it's early in your career. So be a sponge, listen and learn, soak it all up!"



I LOVE THAT IN ONE DAY I HAVE VIRTUALLY TRAVELED AROUND THE WORLD AND MADE AN IMPACT GLOBALLY."

Brenna Barnett
'15 (Marketing)

ECONOMICS

Limiting Your Probability of Failure

Probabilities of failure isn't a topic you'll see highlighted very often in an alumni magazine. That is, of course, unless a former PhD in Economics student writes a book on the subject.

Principal Investigators and R&D Failure: Probabilities of Failure" by Dr. Morgan Boyce '21 PhD is set for a 2022 release. Though Boyce says his journey to earning his PhD in 2021 almost never happened.

"When I started, my wife was pregnant with our first child so it wasn't feasible to quit working to go back to school full time. It was a bit of a Hail Mary," he says of his Bryan School application. "I was pleasantly surprised the Department of Economics was willing to work with me."

Now a Lead Quantitative Analytic Specialist, Model Risk Audit for Wells Fargo, Boyce recalls fondly his experience with Bryan School researchers.

"It was a great experience and quite honestly my advisor and my dissertation committee – I was extremely satisfied and impressed and humbled by their accomplishments," he said. "After my dissertation, I really can't give enough credit to my advisor Dr. Al Link – he is off the charts the number of times he's been cited."

Link, the Virginia Batte Phillips Distinguished Professor in economics, took a special interest in Boyce's paper, helping him share it with publishers and other leading researchers.

"I got more out of the program than I expected," said Boyce. "It's definitely helped my career prospects, it's opened more doors."



I GOT MORE OUT OF THE PROGRAM THAN I EXPECTED. IT'S DEFINITELY HELPED MY CAREER PROSPECTS, IT'S OPENED MANY DOORS."

Morgan Boyce
'21 PhD

MANAGEMENT



Finding Passion and Purpose

Larrishia Stanley '06 (Business Administration) says her favorite Bryan School memory was hosting an on-campus event for General Motors to help build brand awareness to their target audience. Between that event and a marketing professor selecting her for a classroom leadership role to compete for an internship with General Motors, she says her time at the Bryan School had a major impact on her life.

She hasn't dropped that leadership mindset, whether at the office and in her personal life. On top of volunteering with both Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the United Way, Stanley says she's currently trying to close the gap in STEM careers in the biotech field.

Letter from the Bryan School Alumni Association President

SCOTTY TROGDON '05
(Business Administration, Marketing)



FELLOW BRYAN SCHOOL ALUMNI,

Welcome back! The past couple of years have been a rollercoaster, but it feels like we are finally seeing that bright light at the end of the tunnel. I am so excited to get back to seeing everyone in person for meetings, sporting events, and fundraisers.

I am honored to serve you as the 2022-23 Bryan School Alumni Association Board President. The Bryan School has had such an important impact on both my professional career and personal growth.

My path to becoming an alumnus began with a transfer. I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I knew it was something in business. The professors at the Bryan School took time to discuss my passions and interests which led me to completing my degree and embarking on a 16-plus year career in finance.

During my time at UNC Greensboro I also met what would become lifelong friends. We continue a tradition that we started our senior year, which is playing in the annual Bryan School Alumni Association Golf Tournament. My passion for the tournament is what initially motivated me to join the board. In 2017, after 24 years, the tournament was canceled. In 2018, I

went to the board and expressed what the tournament means to me and others who participate, not to mention the students who benefit from the endowment fund it supports. After much deliberation, the tournament was approved to return.

I share this because without the interest of professors, friendships, and traditions I would not be writing this letter. I hope if you are reading this the Bryan School has had the same meaningful and lasting impact on you. I hope we can continue to elevate this great school that continues to provide so much to so many of us.

I encourage you to follow the Bryan School on social media, and to visit our website at bryan.uncg.edu/alumni to learn more about how you can give back. Be sure to update your contact information so you can receive all of the latest updates from our school. For any detailed questions, contact your alumni representative, Madeleine Carey, at mfcarey@uncg.edu.

I am truly honored to be serving as your president and hope to meet you at our upcoming events.

"That means supporting hiring efforts to increase underrepresented minorities through passion and purpose," said Stanley, who is finishing up her second year as Director – Head of Early Talent & University Relations with Gilead Sciences. "We recently hired the largest inaugural intern class that our organization has ever seen, organically reaching diversity goals and efforts."

An experienced and certified HR professional, Stanley has more than 15 years of expertise leading a wide range of HR initiatives to drive employee retention, engagement, equity, and inclusion.

"I value building high performing work forces that shape industry best practices and produce exponential growth," she says.



I VALUE BUILDING HIGH PERFORMING WORK FORCES THAT SHAPE INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICES AND PRODUCE EXPONENTIAL GROWTH."

Larrishia Stanley
'06 (Business Administration)



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