

BRYAN

BUSINESS REPORT



Creating a Legacy

The story behind one of the fastest growing chapters of the Association of Latino Professionals for America — and the Bryan students who made it all possible.

p. 8



UNC
GREENSBORO
Bryan School of
Business and Economics

BRYAN SCHOOL BY THE NUMBERS

OUR STUDENTS

3,678
Undergraduate

696
Graduate

44%
of undergraduate students are 1st generation students

94%
of students are from North Carolina

44%
of students are enrolled in online programs

84%
of undergraduate students employed within 6 months of graduation with an average salary of \$56,800

93%
of graduate students employed within 6 months of graduation with an average salary of \$81,900

30,000+
living alumni with 73% residing in NC

RANKINGS

#1
Part-Time MBA in N.C.
Fortune, 2024

#1
Online Bachelor's in Business in N.C.
U.S. News & World Report, 2024

#2
On Campus MBA in U.S., Greatest Resources for Minority Students
The Princeton Review, 2024

#3
Online Bachelor's in Accounting in U.S.
Forbes, 2024

MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM DEAN

Welcome to our latest Bryan Business Report, highlighting our achievements from the past year. In my new role as the Interim Dean, my first thought and instinct turns to our retiring Dean, Dr. McRae "Mac" Banks, who has successfully led our school to newer and greater heights over the past 13 years. For all that you have done for us, Mac, and the stellar legacy you leave behind, a BIG thanks from all of us!

As you may expect me to, I could begin by mentioning the stellar reputation of the Bryan School, as reflected in the rankings we have received; from being ranked the No. 1 part-time MBA in North Carolina by Fortune magazine or the No. 1 online undergraduate business program in North Carolina by U.S. News & World Report. However, such recognition by the world is merely the expected outcome of the one special quality that distinguishes us: our steadfast dedication to student success. It is an article of pride for us that as a business school, 49% of our undergraduate students are eligible for Federal Pell Grants. What makes us even more proud is the return on the education we provide, with average starting salaries of \$56,800 and \$81,900 for our graduating undergraduate and graduate students, respectively.

If there was ever an example of a transformative institution, it would be the Bryan School.

How do we achieve the above results? Part of that recipe involves our faculty members, dedicated teacher-scholars who ensure the latest and the greatest in business education is brought to our students by excelling in their own professional pursuits as researchers and practitioners. These talented individuals consistently publish high-quality, peer-reviewed articles in world-leading journals. According to a Stanford University list published in 2023, five of our own faculty members were among the top 2% most-cited researchers in the world.

But no foreword to our annual report would be considered complete without setting the stage for the real-life stories of inspiration and triumph that follow. As you read this year's Bryan Business Report, you will not have to squint to look beyond the flashing red carpet cameras, sparkling ski slopes, or polish of generative artificial intelligence to see that excellence comes in many forms, whether it is the work of our students, alumni, faculty, or staff. Excellence can come from anywhere – and that, in a nutshell, is what we do here. We truly believe that anyone can belong at Bryan.

Through it all, I hope you come away from this year's magazine as impressed as I am about what we do. All I request is for you to spread the word – that when we say your career is our business, we put tangible resources toward helping our students get to where they want to go.

Warm regards,



DR. JOY BHADURY
Interim Dean & Professor



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feature story

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BERT VANDERVEEN

WRITTEN BY DAWN MARTIN



Setting the Standard

After more than a decade as dean of the Bryan School – and 42 years in higher education – Dr. McRae “Mac” Banks is ready for his next chapter.

In 2011, when Dr. McRae “Mac” Banks was approached about leading a business school in Greensboro, NC, he thought the location might be a sweet spot geographically. Banks and his wife had six adult children, who were scattered along the eastern seaboard between DC and Atlanta, and being close to family was important.

But when he accepted an invitation for an on-campus interview at the Bryan School of Business and Economics, the schedule didn’t include time with students. And that was a deal breaker.

“I told the provost at the time that if I could not meet with students, I was not interested in coming for an interview,” he says. “They adjusted the schedule, and I am so glad they did.”

In 13 years as dean of the Bryan School, Banks has not wavered in his commitment to students – or to the faculty and staff who guide them, his colleagues say. Now retiring after 42 years in higher education, he leaves a legacy of achievement, having grown the Bryan School’s enrollment almost 50 percent, built its reputation for research, increased students’ placement rates and starting salaries, and improved diversity among students, faculty and leaders.



"He came in with a vision and really made it come to fruition, despite budget challenges, faculty and staff turnover, and all the ongoing changes we face in higher education. People want to come to a school that is winning, and Dean Banks has done that here – not all alone, but with his team and his faculty and staff. The Bryan School is a different place now than it was. He's really elevated the profile."

DR. DEBBIE STORRS
Former Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

In May, more than 150 people gathered to fete the Bryan School's long-serving leader on his upcoming retirement and thank him for his contributions to the School and UNCG, as well as to the business community and to higher education nationally. This came as no surprise to Beth Todd, the business manager for the dean's office, who notes that Banks has been a "tireless champion for his people, his students and his purpose – the Bryan School of Business and Economics."

'Two or Three Steps Ahead'

Much of his success stems from his focus on the future, Storrs says. "Mac is always thinking two or three steps ahead," she says. "He has created this ethos in the Bryan School where he encourages people to think outside the box and bring great ideas to him."

One of those ideas was the BONUS (Bryan Online Nontraditional Undergraduate Student) Initiative, which targets a key, growing demographic. The program is marketed specifically to North Carolina students between 25 and 45 who may have some college credits but not a full degree. This is an example of how Banks "made a pitch based on data, got his folks on board, and then the Chancellor invested dollars in that," Storrs said.

Through a similar focus on innovation, Banks has overseen the launch of 12 online degree programs, including the first online PhD program accredited by AACSB, the leading accreditor of business schools. With his support and increased funding for faculty research, professors now publish an average of 2 to 3 refereed journal articles annually. And during his tenure, the School updated curricula to require hands-on projects of all students, increased promotion and recruitment of graduates and undergraduates, and became the most

diverse business school in the state. Some key indicators: the Bryan School graduates more African American and Latin undergraduate business students than any business school in NC; faculty from underrepresented groups has increased by 37%; the number of female professors has doubled; and female department heads have increased from one to four out of six total.

One of Banks's proudest undertakings may be the development of the Bryan Blueprint undergraduate curriculum. Local executives indicated in 2011 that Bryan students were extremely well trained, knowledgeable and often outperformed their counterparts, but sometimes lacked polish and executive presence. The School experimented with offering voluntary classes and events aimed at professional development and career readiness, but students didn't jump at them. Creating the Bryan Blueprint Series – and making it a graded, four-course, credit-bearing graduation requirement – changed that. Banks recalls one student who used what he learned in the class to secure a coveted summer internship by Thanksgiving. The student's family was so impressed that many of them asked him for help in developing their own resumes. This program not only helped this one student and the generations that will follow him but also the generation that preceded him.

Putting Students First

Stories like these have long inspired Banks, who always dreamed of teaching college students. After a business career in Chicago and a stint as a general manager of a small startup in Virginia, he returned to the classroom to pursue his doctorate at Virginia Tech. From there, his career in academia took him to Radford University, Mississippi

State and Worcester Polytechnic Institute before he arrived at UNCG. Almost immediately, he appreciated the strong ties between students and faculty here, which seemed especially unique at a large, public institution. Banks built on this strength, developing a Presidents' Council of students and meeting with them, as well as the Bryan Merit Scholars, regularly. Today, he remains connected on LinkedIn with thousands of former students, who are now professionals in a variety of sectors across the country and around the world.

"Everything we do is about the students first, foremost, and by far," he says. "Our primary purpose is to build a culture in which students feel that they belong and that we care for and about them."

His leadership has also strengthened the reputation of the Bryan School more broadly across academia, as he served on the board and as chair of the AACSB International Board of Directors. During a conference for that group, "his fellow deans told me how grateful they were to learn from and get advice from Mac Banks," says Interim Dean and Professor Dr. Joy Bhadury. "The dean is the face of the institution, and he has brought great visibility to both UNCG and the Bryan School."

His colleagues say Banks won't take sole credit for the Bryan School's success. "But none of it would have happened without his leadership – him asking questions, making suggestions, offering gentle nudges and sometimes even stronger pushes," says Dr. Bill Brown, Associate Dean of Internal Affairs. "Mac truly has empowered others and provided support, and that's why we've accomplished great things." ■

LEARN MORE go.uncg.edu/bbr_setting_the_standard

**DR. MOEZ FAROKHNIA HAMEDANI**
Assistant Professor**DR. LAKSHMI IYER**
ISSCM Department
Head & Professor

CUTTING Edge

How one Bryan School department continues to innovate its curriculum in the face of A.I., landing a coveted Google cybersecurity grant in the process

When Google announced a second round of \$1 million grants in June to fund cybersecurity clinics at universities across the nation, only one institution in North Carolina made the cut – UNCG's Bryan School of Business and Economics. The grant was a significant feather in the cap for the School's Department of Information Systems and Supply Chain Management (ISSCM), though a fitting one given its continuous innovation and desire to push curricular boundaries, not just for its more than 200 students pursuing cybersecurity concentrations, but in growing areas such as generative artificial intelligence for business and more.

The Spartan CyberGuardian Academy

The new support from Google's Cybersecurity Clinics Fund will allow the Bryan School to establish a ground-breaking consulting center with two purposes: teaching students the latest cybersecurity and AI skills and providing those services to under-resourced community organizations and businesses. Similar to how law or medical schools offer free community clinics, the Spartan CyberGuardian Academy will help protect vulnerable organizations – such as schools, small businesses and nonprofits – from cyber-

attacks. Expected to open in January, the clinic will train more than 870 people over the next six years, including undergraduate and graduate students as well as high school and community college participants. Together, the students will work with 174 nonprofits and businesses that would otherwise not have resources to protect their digital assets.

"This not only puts us on the national map, but it aligns very closely with our vision to establish our department as a leader in innovative education, cutting-edge research and impactful community engagement," says Dr. Lakshmi Iyer, ISSCM chair and co-PI for the grant. "It's a great opportunity for our students to be engaged with the community while gaining real-world experience. At the same time, community organizations benefit because we can help them evaluate their infrastructure."

The grant is just part of an overall noteworthy year for the department as it adapts its programs to meet today's business needs. This fall, ISSCM has added three new graduate concentrations and graduate certificates in Generative AI for Business, Cloud Computing and Security Analytics, and Supply Chain Analytics. The programs are not only leading-edge but also reflective of lasting change in how businesses operate, Iyer said.

Cybersecurity is one of those growth areas. According to the World Economic Forum's 2024 Global Risks Report, cyber insecurity is one of the top 10 global risks over the next decade. Currently, there are nearly 450,000 open cybersecurity jobs in the U.S., including 13,251 in North Carolina, and demand for cyber professionals is projected to grow 32% by 2033.

To help meet this need, the grant will ensure accessible, free training for all students, including those from underserved communities, says Dr. Moez Farokhnia Hamedani, assistant professor and PI on the grant. Companies want to hire people who have not only theoretical knowledge but also certain certifications and real-world experience, he added. "So the knowledge and experience gained by these individuals will not only positively impact their career paths but also enhance the overall quality of cybersecurity in our region."

Generative AI is another sea change that will have far-reaching impact on business, and students specializing in this area will now be able to access the expensive, high-powered computers needed for this field in the new cybersecurity clinic. "Everyone's profession is going to be affected in some way by AI," says Dr. Al Salam, professor and co-PI on the grant. Recent studies of online job sites such as Indeed have found a 60% increase in jobs that have some type of generative AI component, he said. "Companies are looking for professionals who are quite familiar with the use of generative AI, particularly within the context of their professions, and who are able to use this technology really well."

An Innovative Curriculum

With its new concentration in generative AI for business – one of the first of its kind nationwide – the department will train students in this leading-edge technology that mimics how human beings operate, learn and make decisions. It's important students understand everything from how to write AI prompts with necessary context to how to evaluate the ethical use of the technology. Courses range from how to use AI to be more productive in business to more specialized concepts such as machine learning, big data analytics and neural networks.

In addition to AI, many organizations are moving toward cloud computing to save investments in server space. While many universities have program components on cloud computing and separate courses on cybersecurity and analytics, the new concentration in the Bryan School marries the two. "Students can now be trained to go into companies and provide expertise and professional direction on how to take advantage of the data analytics to make systems more secure," Salam said. The department will also offer a new concentration and certificate in supply chain analytics to help students learn to analyze supply chain data and use it to make informed decisions – a process that is all the more needed after the effects of COVID-19 on the world's supply chain.

To staff the new concentrations, new faculty will partner with colleagues who have already been publishing in top-tier journals and working with doctoral students on research. Innovations like these have contributed to the department being named one of the Top 50 Best Online Graduate Computer I.T. Programs in the Nation by U.S. News & World Report in 2024. "It's exciting to see how our department is committed to being on the front line of embracing these important changes," Farokhnia Hamedani said. "These are all areas of critical growth," Iyer added. "We really want our students to know what the landscape is and where there are new opportunities." ■

"Everyone's profession is going to be affected in some way by A.I."

DR. AL SALAM
Associate Professor

LEARN MORE go.uncg.edu/bbr_cutting_edge

cover story

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BERT VANDERVEEN
WRITTEN BY ANNA MORSE

"It is the #ALPFAmilia that made me believe that despite your background, you can lead in your own way and pave the path for generations to come."

HECTOR HERNANDEZ-ARROYO
'22 (Business Administration)



WE ARE #ALPFAmilia

The story of one student organization's meteoric rise and the Bryan students who made it all possible

Organizations sometimes say: "We're all family here." But for the Association of Latino Professionals for America, that rings true. Commonly referred to as ALPFA, the association fosters a strong sense of community for members, coining the term #ALPFAmilia or the idea that all members of the organization are treated as family. This Latino-based – but not Latino-exclusive – organization focuses on the personal and professional development of its members by hosting a series of events throughout the year.

ALPFA found its home at UNC Greensboro in May 2020. When universities were shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Founding Chapter President Hector Hernandez-Arroyo '22 (Business Administration) knew there needed to be other ways to stay involved with his friends and peers while quarantining. After searching on LinkedIn, Hernandez-Arroyo stumbled across ALPFA, and the more he learned, the more he felt empowered to start a chapter at UNCG.

Within its first year, UNCG's ALPFA chapter had 89 members – comprised primarily of students from the Joseph M. Bryan School of Business and Economics – more than 100 community service hours logged at organizations such as Linden Place Retirement Home and the Greensboro Fire Department, and partnerships with more than eight different Fortune 500 companies to provide networking and professional development opportunities for its members.

The following year, UNCG ALPFA had 188 members, hosted 10+ networking events, logged more than 275+ hours of community service, and launched its MacBook Scholarship. Hernandez-Arroyo attributes the chapter's rapid success to two ideas: the implementation of both virtual and hybrid events as well as, of course, the #ALPFAmilia mindset.

ALPFA AT A GLANCE

188
MEMBERS

10+
NETWORKING EVENTS

275+
HOURS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

"It is the #ALPFAmilia that made me believe that despite your background, you can lead in your own way and pave the path for generations to come," he said. "I hope this inspires others to be comfortable in the uncomfortable and take initiative to bring their ideas to life."

Hernandez-Arroyo's developing business savvy seems to be trumped only by his timing. Alongside UNCG being No. 1 in the UNC System for total percentage of Hispanic/Latino student enrollment, as of Fall 2023 at the Bryan School, nearly 16 percent of students were Hispanic or Latino – a number that has increased each year since Fall 2018.

These factors, alongside Hernandez-Arroyo's hard work, culminated in UNCG ALPFA winning Southeast Chapter of the Year in August 2022 over more than 100 chapters across 15 different states. Hernandez-Arroyo says that this was one of his proudest moments at the helm of the club before passing the Presidential title to Kevin Serratos-Prudencio '23 (Business Administration).

Creating a Legacy

Though Hernandez-Arroyo has since graduated, the UNCG ALPFA chapter is going strong. With 188 members and counting, approximately 70% of them in the Bryan School, the impact that ALPFA has had on its members and community has been immense. For Victor Velazquez '24 (Finance) and Kathy Meza-Herrera (Business Administration), co-presidents during the 2023-2024 academic year, ALPFA became both a serious vehicle for professional development as well as a home away from home.

"ALPFA has given me wonderful opportunities and resources in the last 4 years of my college experience," says Velazquez. "ALPFA has empowered me to gain amazing friends and mentors."

In summers 2023 and 2024, UNCG ALPFA was invited to ALPFA's four-day long national convention, located in San Antonio and Las Vegas. This annual convention is a chance for a select few ALPFA students from each chapter to work on their professional development and network with Fortune 500 companies. The convention hosted a career fair with over 70 different companies, networking events with segments of industry professionals, and opportunities for ALPFA chapters to mingle.

Hernandez-Arroyo is still connected with the ALPFA presidents today and continues sharing his journey to founding one of the most prominent organizations on UNCG's campus. The impact of ALPFA reaches far and wide, to both members and leadership.

"By joining ALPFA I have been able to break out of my comfort zone and join a Hispanic/Latino community that genuinely wants to help each other succeed," said Meza-Herrera. "By growing professionally and personally within ALPFA, I have been able to empower others within my #ALPFAmilia toward their career goals. ALPFA is truly a family – my family." ■

LEARN MORE
go.uncg.edu/bbr_alpfamilia

TAKING FLIGHT



HOW A UNCG MBA HELPED JOHN CARRICO'S CAREER TAKE OFF

Trained as a flight paramedic, Carrico recently became the business development coordinator for Mission Health's Mountain Area Medical Airlift team. In this role, he builds partnerships with rural hospitals, fire departments, and EMS agencies to provide air medical transport services to rural residents when and where they need them. The team's two medical helicopters airlift critically ill patients from trauma scenes or small hospitals to facilities that can provide higher levels of care.

It's a dream job for someone who loves helping people and responding in times of crisis.

"Even though it can be extremely stressful, there's no place I'd rather be," Carrico says. "It's a real privilege to do what we do, and I don't take that for granted."

After nine years as a flight paramedic for the team, Carrico decided to take his career to the next level through pursuit of an MBA from the Bryan School of Business and Economics. The timing was fortuitous. Right before he received the degree in December 2023, Mission Health created a position designed to promote the medical helicopter service among the region's first-responder agencies.

"I don't think I would have been hired for this had I not had the MBA," Carrico says. "I was able to really leverage my background of being in the field for a long time and knowing all the players with having this additional schooling. It was a nice marriage."

The degree gave him the additional skills and financial acumen he needed for this job. "I was able to build a foundation in business that allowed me to have a seat at the table with CEOs and presidents of hospitals," he said. "Before, I could refer to my experience in the field, but now I have this balance. And while I'm not an expert on finance, I know what's important in these conversations."

His classes helped him understand more about the business of providing healthcare services to all. The helicopters cost up to \$8 million each, and maintenance is expensive. "We have to be financially sound to provide this service," he says. "We want to make sure everyone has the best medical outcome possible, and to do that, we want this to be a service that anyone can access anytime they need it."

"I was able to build a foundation in business that allowed me to have a seat at the table with CEOs and presidents of hospitals."

JOHN CARRICO, MBA '23

Having served the western part of the state for 38 years, the Mountain Area Medical Airlift team has transported more than 29,000 patients. Clinical staff and contract pilots work together to operate the service around the clock, and their efforts can shave an hour off the time it would take an ambulance to navigate curving mountain roads. But it's a competitive environment. Today, agencies on the ground have a choice about who to call from several hospital-based and for-profit medical helicopters that operate throughout western NC and neighboring states. That makes Carrico's role in business development important.

"When agencies call us, they really need us because something serious is going on," he says. "I want to make sure our care and the transition for the patient is the smoothest it can be."

The Obvious Choice

Carrico came to the job after working in various disaster-relief functions, including service in the Americorps during Hurricane Floyd. From there, he worked with the Eagle's Nest Foundation in Winston-Salem, taking high school students on expeditionary programs all over the world. But when Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, he realized how much he missed helping people. He got his degree as a paramedic and returned to the field, working his way up from the ambulance crew to clinical educator to assistant supervisor and then a flight paramedic.

As he thought about where to pursue his MBA, UNCG's program became the obvious choice. "They were approachable and created avenues for asking questions and talking with alumni and current students," Carrico says. "The fact that I could do the entire degree online was attractive. I work days and nights, and I wanted something that allowed me to pace myself and adapt my schedule." An early riser, he often worked on academics from 5 to 8 a.m. before reporting to work. He also appreciated the in-state tuition and the semester-based programming that allowed him to have ample time to digest the material.

This flexibility was intentional when UNCG began offering the MBA online, says Tuisha Stack, Administrative Director of Graduate Programs. "We were open to what the market was telling us," she said. "We wanted to design a flexible curriculum to meet the students where they are."

Carrico was ready to make a difference and elevate his career, Stack says, and the MBA fit perfectly into that plan.

"Our goal is to make sure our curriculum works for people from all types of professions and to help them harness their skills and experience in a way that they can add value," she says. "John's story is a perfect illustration of our bottom line, which is training students to make an impact wherever they live, work, and serve." ■

LEARN MORE
go.uncg.edu/bbr_taking_flight

REMOTE Learning

Mother, daughter get lift from Bryan's online program offerings



Klara Feltl '23 (Business Administration) believes she found the right choice for her family with the Bryan School of Business and Economics. The school not only enabled her to earn a bachelor's degree as a mid-career professional, but now it's providing the best option for her daughter, an alpine ski coach who is working toward an online degree in Finance.

"My mother really liked the program for herself, but when she says she likes it for her daughter, that's a whole other level," jokes Micaela Feltl (Finance).

Micaela attends all of her classes online while she works as an alpine race coach in Utah and travels to visit family, study abroad and explore new places. She stays in close touch with her mother, who is putting her own Bryan School degree to use as a talent acquisition advisor for Merck in the Triangle.

Both mother and daughter are dual citizens of the Czech Republic and the US, and they found the Bryan School adept at meeting their needs as non-traditional students.

"They are anything but ordinary," says April Judge, a Bryan School lecturer and academic adviser who worked with both students. "Klara and Micaela had a strong pursuit of knowledge that was meaningful in their own ways at two very different stages of life. Though they were both earning a Bryan degree, we tailored their experiences uniquely and individually."

Klara, who emigrated from the Czech Republic more than 30 years

ago, enrolled first, choosing the Bryan School because of its strong accreditation and flexibility. When she started her coursework in 2018, she was working full-time, parenting her daughter and shuttling her to practices as both an ice skater and competitive skier. The family lives in Wake Forest, NC, and eventually, bought a condo in Utah so Micaela could ski the more challenging courses out West.

"I always wanted to earn a bachelor's degree in the US, so when I found the online program at UNCG, it seemed like the right fit," Klara said. From the very start, she was impressed with how approachable and engaging her professors were, and she appreciated how they connected course content to real life.

Klara completed her degree in business administration in December 2023. She believes it will open the door for further career advancement and values the lessons she learned along the way. "Being an adult learner and significantly older than some of the other students, I learned a lot about different generations and how they think and approach projects," she says.

"Taking classes online gave me a lot of flexibility and really allowed me to be able to enjoy life while getting an education."

MICAELO FELTL
(Finance)

Freedom in Flexibility

When it came time to help Micaela consider where to attend college, UNCG sprang to mind. Micaela considered the University of Utah, but her scholarship offer there didn't allow for part-time attendance. That meant she would have had to commute an hour each way for in-person courses while balancing her work as an alpine race coach and her interest in traveling.

"I wanted a bit more freedom and wanted to focus on coaching and skiing and studying," Micaela says. "Taking classes online gave me a lot of flexibility and really allowed me to be able to enjoy life while getting an education."

She completes four classes each semester and takes advantage of summer and winter terms to stay on pace for her degree. When she enrolled in 2021, she spent her first six months in Prague, where she'd traveled to visit her grandmother. The two went to Spain next because "my grandmother wanted to see Barcelona, and I wanted to show it to her," says Micaela, who loves to explore new places. She spent a Christmas season in France, has been to Croatia for weeks at a time, and has shown family members around California and Costa Rica.

During the winter, she skis daily from 9 a.m. to at least 1 p.m., and sometimes to 4 p.m. She also travels to races with the athletes she coaches, who range in age from 11 to 15. "At the Bryan School, I'm able to do all this without pausing my degree and without missing anything," she says.

In fact, Micaela didn't set foot on UNCG's campus until more than two years after she began her degree. In March 2023, she flew to Greensboro for a study abroad meeting that required her to attend in person. She secured a spot studying at LIUC Cattaneo University in Castellanza, Italy, for the Fall 2023 semester.

Micaela hopes to complete her degree in 2025, and this summer, the family is planning a cruise to Greenland as a belated graduation celebration for Klara. Mother and daughter – who look like they could be sisters – share easy laughs, finish each other's sentences, and have fond memories of their time as students, including a couple challenging math classes where Micaela tutored Klara.

So what's next for this dynamic duo? Maybe some ski lessons for Klara. She describes herself as a beginner, but Micaela clarifies that her mom is more of a "young intermediate."

"She's been coaching me," Klara says, with a laugh. "We've been cracking up over that." ■

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PICTURED:
Both Klara and Micaela Feltl are dual citizens of the Czech Republic and the US, and they found the Bryan School adept at meeting their needs as non-traditional students.





WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE **MILITARY FRIENDLY?**

It's a good thing that Zin Maung '23 (Information Systems and Supply Chain Management) was a Division I track and field athlete because he has spent a lot of time running – to class, sports practices, military obligations, and his work as a graduate assistant with the Bryan School of Business and Economics before recently landing a full-time job.

Recognized nationally as a veteran student athlete, Maung believes his achievements have been fueled in part from UNCG's deep commitment to supporting military students and veterans – the university has been named both a Best for Vets and Military Friendly school, and is a Yellow Ribbon Program participant, proud to offer a variety of benefits for veterans, active-duty military, and military-affiliated students.

"UNCG offers the flexibility for vets to attend school fully online and still live on campus if they choose," Maung says. "When I had military commitments, I would send my professors an email to let them know my situation, and they helped me

Running Down a Dream

Maung, who graduated with a 3.8 in May 2023, earned a bachelor's degree in supply chain management. Now, he is working toward an MBA and a post-graduate certificate, recently landing a full-time job in procurement. Eventually, he wants to pursue a PhD.

His dedication to his studies and the military are rooted in his history.

When he was 8 years old, Maung and his family emigrated to the US after fleeing Southeast Asia, where his father had been in Myanmar's rebel army. The family had been forced into the jungles of neighboring Thailand when his mother was 8 months pregnant with him.



"UNCG offers the flexibility for vets to attend school fully online and still live on campus if they choose."

ZIN MAUNG

'23 (Information Systems and Supply Chain Management)

Grateful to be in the U.S., Maung carried with him a desire to give back as his family moved from Pittsburgh, PA, to Chapel Hill, where he attended high school and became an All-State track runner. Once at UNCG, he got involved with the men's club volleyball team, spending two years as club president and helping the team take on some Division I matchups, before successfully trying out for track and field.

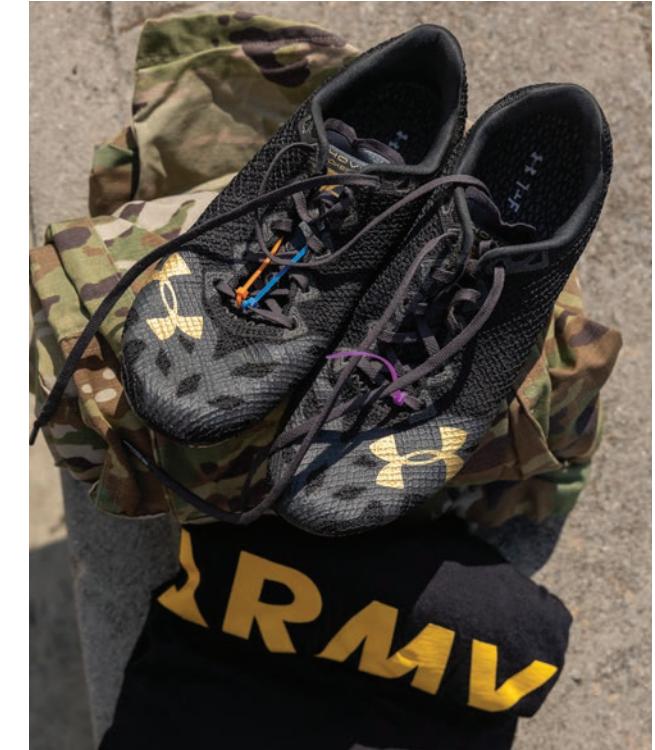
As he thought about his future, Maung decided to reach out to the U.S. Marines as well as the U.S. Army. "The Army picked up right away," Maung says with a laugh. So, the Army it was.

As soon as he finished his sophomore year, he traveled to Fort Jackson for three months of basic training that included 25-mile hikes with 60 pounds on his back. After scoring well on Army aptitude tests, he then went to quartermaster school in Fort Lee, where he honed skills related to warehousing, inventory management and automated logistics.

But by now, he was starting his junior year in college too, and that's when UNCG's support really kicked in. Maung attended the first part of his semester online so he could finish his time on base. "I had 4 a.m. wakeups for PT training; did Army school from 9 to 5; then more athletic training; and from 7 to 8 p.m. and on the weekends, I did as much UNCG school work as I could squeeze in," he said. Carrying a load of four Bryan School courses, he kept his grades up at UNCG while finishing second in his Army class. All the while, his professors were supportive, and the university held a dorm room so he could return to campus.

Hard Work Pays Off

Today, Maung serves in the Army Reserve while working for a medical technology manufacturer near Research Triangle Park. Before landing the role, he served as a Bryan School graduate assistant and graduate student ambassador, talking with prospective MBA students and helping international students navigate the application process. He received many compliments in his role as a GA, says Jennifer Kiger Chapman, assistant director of graduate recruitment.



"As a minority-serving institution with applicants from across the globe, the Bryan School relies on students like Zin, and he is one of the most gifted and devoted graduate assistants that I have worked with," she says. "He goes above and beyond by spending extra time meeting with prospective students, sharing advice and recommendations, and encouraging applicants. He was a leader on the team and motivated others through his example."

Chapman was so impressed that she successfully nominated him for recognition as a 2024 Student Veteran Athlete of the Year from GI Jobs Magazine. Today, he continues to train with the Army Reserves, learning tactics, radio communications, weaponry and battle assembly. His military service makes his mom a little nervous, he admits, but his dad is thrilled.

"My dad's motto is: Never let good enough be enough," Maung says. "I can see all the hard work that my parents put in for us. My goal is to pay back all my family's debts and be able to take care of them and then be financially stable enough to support my own family one day. And I know none of this would have been possible without the support of my fellow veterans, coaches, mentors and professors. I look forward to continuing to represent the veteran community both on and off the field."■

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BRIDGING THE GAP

MBA STUDENTS BUILD UNIFIED DATABASE FOR GUILFORD COUNTY'S FOOD SERVICE NONPROFITS

Amid inflation, people have struggled to put meals on the table, and food pantries have reported more requests for help. The good news is that Guilford County has more than 60 nonprofits focused on collecting and distributing food to those in need. But without strong coordination, efforts can be duplicated, food can be wasted, and people may even be left hungry.

"We know that there are millions of pounds of food available, and yet one-third of it gets wasted every year," says Leslie Loyd, president and COO of A Simple Gesture, an organization that works to combat food insecurity. "We want to make sure all of us who work in food non-profits are talking to each other, so no extra food goes to waste."

Earlier this year, Loyd took her dilemma to the Bryan School of Business and Economics. The Bryan School's Capstone project pairs MBA candidates with local companies and organizations – the students provide business consulting in exchange for real-world learning experience. MBA students Lukas Greff, Michelle Lawler,

Caroline Lowdermilk and Bianca Meister took on A Simple Gesture's challenge, working together to research Guilford County's current food distribution process, identify gaps and needs, and make recommendations for improvements.

"It was such interesting and impactful work," says Dr. Mike Beitler, director of MBA projects and senior lecturer at the Bryan School. "The community's needs are huge and getting food to the right places is critical."

With the help of three community partners, the students built a list of local nonprofits working to address food insecurity. They surveyed these organizations and interviewed all those who responded, gathering and analyzing data about how they picked up food and provided it to those in need.

From there, they developed what Loyd and others consider the most important deliverable: an accessible and user-friendly database showing which businesses are donating food, as well as the pickup locations, schedules and the types of products provided. The database also includes which

nonprofit organizations are picking up from each location and when, so partners can share knowledge and avoid duplicating services.

Loyd was surprised to learn that many nonprofits are not picking up food anywhere, but instead relying on more limited private donations and drop-offs. "We can help these nonprofits make new connections if they're willing to go pick up food," she said. "This can really help nonprofits if they want to grow."

The effort also helped to identify businesses that could be new potential donors, says Michelle Lawler, one of the MBA students. For instance, one well-known restaurant franchise donates food from one of its locations now, but 16 of its other storefronts in Guilford County are untapped.

This powerful finding may not have been uncovered without the Capstone project, said Mary Herbenick, executive director of the Guilford Nonprofit Consortium. Most small nonprofit organizations simply don't have the staffing or funding to conduct this type of comprehensive research.



"We know that there are millions of pounds of food available, and yet one-third of it gets wasted every year."

"The Capstone Project is a huge asset for nonprofit organizations that are exploring new strategies and partnerships to improve how they deliver products and services," Herbenick says. "The students are experienced and self-directed, and with a small investment in time to define the project and agree to deliverables, nonprofit organizations receive significant value from the students' expertise. Every project I have seen has been actionable with recommendations that can move quickly into implementation."

The program connects nonprofit needs to talent, which helps advance the mission of organizations within our community."

In addition to the database, the Capstone students also provided a comprehensive report and industry analysis, a technical manual on how to use the database, and a contact list of key stakeholders. "I feel like a kid at Christmas," Loyd joked as the students outlined the resources they were sharing. While the database will need an owner, students intend for every nonprofit to be able to update it with current, actionable information.

It was refreshing to be able to use their business skills outside the classroom to contribute to a worthy cause, said Lukas Greff. "This was not necessarily about dollars, but more about making a positive impact on society by helping to feed people," he said.

All organizations – including non-profit groups – can benefit from principles of strong business operations, added Bianca Meister. "We hope this project will be very helpful for all food-related nonprofits in Guilford County because it will open up so many more resources," she said. "We're all really proud to be a part of that."

It's just the kind of collaboration necessary to solve difficult problems like food insecurity, Herbenick adds. "We all have to work together, and this database is one demonstration of how that can happen. Kudos to all the non-profits who contributed their data to this project and to the students who provided this kind of digging and human resources." ■

A Simple Gesture combats food insecurity through three programs:

- Green-Bag Program** – Each month, residents fill a reusable grocery bag with non-perishable food. Volunteers pick up the bags and deliver them to food pantries.
- Food Recovery Program** – Volunteers pick up perishable food from grocery stores and restaurants and quickly deliver it to nonprofits that serve food.
- SHARE Program** – Refrigerators in all Guilford County schools allow students to share their unopened lunch items with other students in need.



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feature story

PHOTOS PROVIDED
WRITTEN BY DAWN MARTIN

In the New York G R O O V E

BURAKE TESHOME
'22 (Marketing)

Sometimes Burake Teshome '22 (Marketing) still can't believe where her UNC Greensboro Bryan School of Business and Economics marketing degree has taken her. Two years after crossing the stage at graduation, she is walking some of the biggest red carpets of New York and Los Angeles.

As an associate social media manager for Vanity Fair, Teshome monitors and helps shape the magazine's coverage of global news – from celebrity gossip and the Oscars to election news and general pop culture. Her work includes the chance to interview celebrities at premieres and awards shows, including some of the stars she's seen on TV and movie screens for years.

"Even now sometimes I'm walking to the office, and I think, 'This is crazy,'" she says. "I never particularly saw myself in rooms like this, so when I started there was a bit of imposter syndrome. "But in that same breath, it feels like a really perfect place for me. It's an intersection of all the things I'm interested in – movies, TV, pop culture, the geopolitical state of the world."



Practice Makes Perfect

Her time at the Bryan School "made the idea of having a marketing career after college very tangible and real," Teshome says. Professors like Dr. Sara Macsween, a lecturer in the Department of Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Hospitality and Tourism, brought real-world experience into the classroom, requiring students to build marketing plans from the ground up. This meant analyzing data to identify customers, then developing targeted strategies and creating content that ranged from direct mail pieces and email blasts to social posts and promotional videos. Teshome built a strong knowledge of sales and marketing and paired that with the creativity needed to make ideas stick, Macsween says.

"Burake was a very strong student. People are drawn to her very warm and outgoing personality, and she has very strong public speaking skills. I'm not surprised she landed this job because she is very good with people, organized, creative and detailed."

Empire State of Mind

On a typical day at Vanity Fair, Teshome begins scanning her phone for news and items of interest as soon as she wakes up. Part of her responsibility is to make sure the magazine's editors and writers are up to date and briefed on any online buzz and conversations that may interest their readers. She contributes to newsroom meetings, posts content daily on the magazine's social feeds, and promotes the magazine's digital site and print edition. "It means making sure our tweets are going out on time; working in collaboration with our video team to enhance our TikTok content; and in general just ensuring our unique Vanity Fair voice is well represented across social, all while preparing the robust social rollouts for each print issue and planning ahead for VF-centric tentpoles, like the Oscars and our annual Hollywood cover."



People may be surprised at the amount of strategy, time and planning that goes into producing and promoting each magazine issue and its associated features, she says.

"I have always wanted to be somewhere that starts the conversation," she says. "I'm really grateful to work somewhere that creates culture." Once, when she was on a plane returning from the Oscars, she noticed a woman across the aisle reading Vanity Fair's Hollywood Issue. She took a photo and shared it with her colleagues. "I said, 'Our culture footprint is everywhere.'"

Since her first red carpet experience at the Met Gala in New York, Teshome has had the opportunity to interview a variety of celebrities. Among the most friendly and personable: Anne Hathaway, Daniel Radcliffe and one of her favorites, Tony Winner and Glee star Jonathan Groff.

Teshome's first job in New York was an internship with Nasdaq in her junior year. While she wasn't particularly interested in finance, she was impressed with the caliber of the social team there. "I thought 'These women I want to surround myself with,'" she said. "They are the kind of women I want to become. They have the work experiences that I want to emulate."

One of those women stayed in touch with Teshome, a connection that eventually led to Teshome's hiring at the magazine. "It's a privilege to work with my colleagues – they are all people I deeply admire," she says. "Everyone is remarkably well rounded and highly intelligent."

Her future goals include continuing to learn and grow at Vanity Fair and perhaps within the larger Conde Nast brand, but for now she's enjoying the pace of life in New York amidst a news cycle that never stops. "I feel honored that I was asked to be a small part of such a legacy publication," she says, "and I'm soaking it all in like a sponge."

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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 2023, Bryan School professors had 180 unique peer-reviewed journal articles published or accepted – with 19 of them appearing in world-leading journals. On the 2023 Stanford-Elsevier List, five Bryan School faculty members were among the top 2 percent most-cited researchers around the world. This past year, faculty worked on 23 grants valued at \$2.4 million. Our innovative, hands-on curriculum is a potent complement to their hard work in creating and disseminating knowledge about the theory and practice of business.

Ghana's HIDDEN ENTREPRENEURS

When Dr. Moses Acquaah wanders the busy street markets in his native Ghana, he takes in a kaleidoscope of color – vibrant umbrellas shading fruit stands, mountains of brightly patterned fabric, jars of dry goods, and stacks upon stacks of hand-woven baskets for sale.

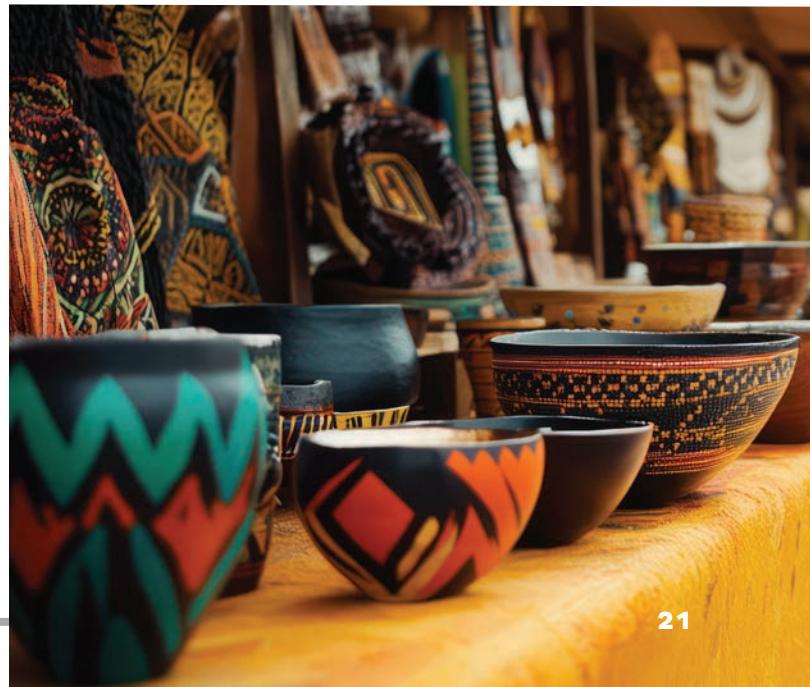
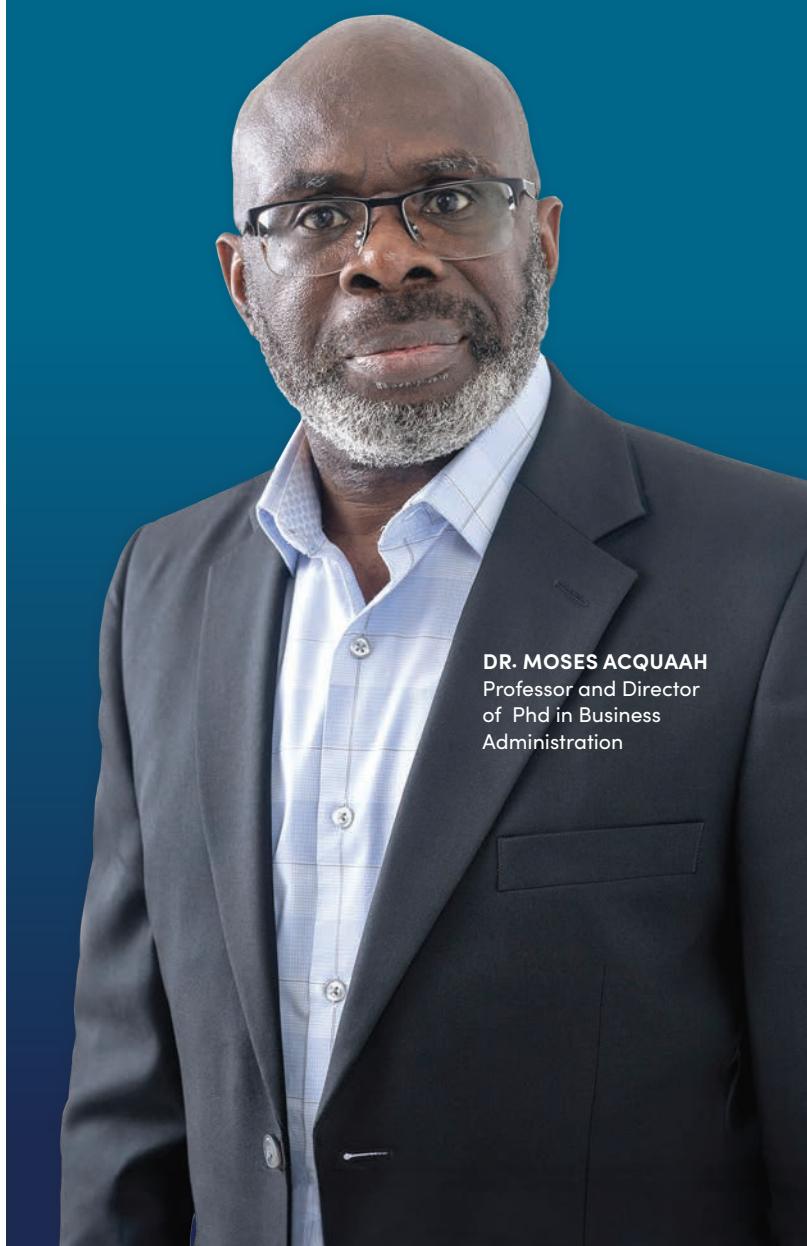
He also sees something else in all the hustle and bustle: generations of female entrepreneurs who are sustaining businesses – and shaping the nation's developing economy – often without monetary support or traditional financing from banks. "It is a very challenging environment and yet they persist and do so well," says Acquaah, Professor and Director of Phd in Business Administration at the Bryan School of Business and Economics.

This spring, Acquaah will travel to Ghana to further study these informal and "often ignored" businesses, as the recipient of a prestigious Fulbright U.S. Scholar Award for the 2024-2025 academic year. He will collaborate with fellow researchers doing similar studies of female entrepreneurs in Niger, with a goal of broadening and sharing the findings. "We hope to learn more about the innovative strategies these women use to organize, get resources, save money and reinvest in their businesses," Acquaah says.

The Fulbright award also brings with it a teaching role, and Acquaah plans to lead classes for Phd and master's students as part of his mission to advocate for business education throughout the continent. As president of the Africa Academy of Management and long-time editor-in-chief of the Journal of African Business, Acquaah is interested in issues of strategy, sustainability and family business. Already this year, he has helped to develop the research capabilities of junior faculty in South Africa and Kenya. He intends to bring his findings from Ghana home to students at the Bryan School, where he has taught for 24 years.

"It's important for students to know that business strategies that work here may not work in the developing world," he said. "Understanding that businesses are different from place to place truly helps with a global perspective."

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DR. ESRA MEMILI
Associate Professor,
Margaret Van Hoy Hill
Dean's Notable Scholar

NAVIGATING GROWTH IN FAMILY FIRMS

Conflicts over power and wealth in a family business take center stage in HBO's wildly successful drama, *Succession*, about a billionaire media mogul and his four children.

The show capitalizes on ideas Dr. Esra Memili has studied for a long time: family firms are complex, dynamic and highly relevant to the global economy and public policy. While they make up two-thirds of businesses around the world, they come in all sizes and are as different as the families who founded them.

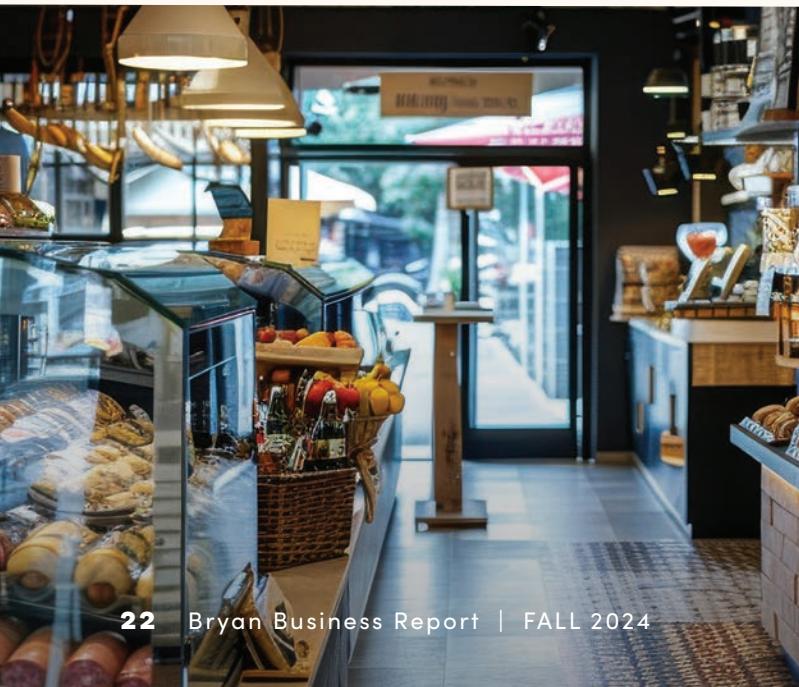
Memili's scholarship has positioned her and UNCG as national leaders in this growing field. An associate professor of entrepreneurship at the Bryan School, Memili was recently named the 12th most prolific author globally in family business research by *Small Business Economics*. The journal also ranked UNCG 14th for this research internationally.

From "mom and pop shops" to large conglomerates such as Walmart, Memili examines the influence families have on their businesses' financial and non-financial goals, as well as their strategies and performance. For instance, SC Johnson opts to tout its 5th generation family roots, using slogans such as "A Family Company at Work for a Better World." While this marketing may be effective in the consumer-products industry, it might not work in other fields, such as tech, which may need to appear more progressive and fast-moving.

Memili's research also considers questions that family firms often confront as they grow. For instance, if a business wants to expand quickly, is it sustainable to keep ownership, management and board membership within the family? What governing structures can help manage differing perspectives of a founder and the second and third generation owners? How do family firms cope with difficult times such as the pandemic? Do they use foundations, trusts and offices to manage wealth?

As associate editor of three journals and a member of the editorial board for three more, Memili has published more than 50 articles on these topics and often presents to scholars, practitioners and business consultants. There are always new topics to study. "Research findings from one project often bring up additional research to consider," she says. "We want all of our scholarly work to have meaningful, useful applications for both practice and policy making."

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UNDERSTANDING THE SEC'S INFLUENCE ON FINANCIAL REPORTING IN MERGERS

In the first half of this year, global companies launched 23,000 merger and acquisition deals valued at \$1.3 trillion. The success of such high-stakes transactions – and their effect on stock markets worldwide – hinges on many factors including the accuracy of financial accounting.

One faculty member at the Bryan School of Business and Economics is doing her part to make this reporting the best it can be.

Dr. Mengmeng Wang, an assistant professor in the Department of Accounting and Finance, has studied the impact of regulation by the Securities and Exchange Commission on financial reporting during and after mergers. Firms are required to file certain reports when they make new transactions involving issuing new securities, such as an IPO or a merger or acquisition. SEC staff review these reports to ensure that investors have sufficient information to make an informed investment decision. If the reviewers find potential deficiencies in the firms' filings, or if they feel the disclosures could be clarified or improved, they may issue a comment letter.

"We find that when firms have to respond to these SEC comment letters, the review process resolves accounting policy or estimation issues, and firms actually learn to do better reporting," Wang says. "By addressing anything that is unclear and resolving issues promptly, the quality of future financial statements and the accounting quality of the newly merged firm actually improves."

Wang acknowledges some negatives of SEC regulation, including additional review time and audit fees. "But the benefit to the firm is that their future accounting quality improves a lot," Wang says.

Her next paper will examine how gender can influence SEC reviewer's outcomes. Female reviewers are often stricter in their findings than their male counterparts, Wang says, perhaps overperforming due to perceived threats of sex discrimination. But she and her coauthors at George Mason University, the University of Texas at Austin, and Virginia Tech found one factor seemed to change this. When the SEC created the Office of Minority and Women Inclusion more than a decade ago to guard against such discrimination, the gender discrepancy began to drop off and outcomes aligned more closely.

Wang, who has also worked in banking, has had research published or accepted in the *Journal of Financial Economics*, *Review of Accounting Studies* and *Management Science*. She finds the field ripe for future study and often shares her research in the classroom.

"Students are very interested in how my research relates to capital markets," she says. "Broadly talking about what I'm doing often generates or stimulates their interest in this field, and that is important."



DR. MENGMENG WANG
Assistant Professor

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THE Hidden Costs OF STUDENT LOANS



DR. DORA GICHEVA
Associate Professor

You may have read about a law student with \$200,000 in loans who hasn't passed the bar or a grad student with six figures of debt and no job.

Stories like these are enough to strike fear in the hearts of parents and students everywhere.

But Dr. Dora Gicheva says the attention-grabbing headlines are the exception rather than the rule. What concerns her most as an economist is the impact that smaller student loans have on those who can least afford them as well as how student debt affects our economy as a whole.

"Student loans in and of themselves are not bad," says Gicheva, an associate professor of economics at the Bryan School of Business and Economics. "They are intended to help students who need assistance, and the idea is that students will get high-paying jobs to pay off debt. A lot of times that works. This is a necessary and effective policy, but there are areas where we can improve its implementation."

For instance, Gicheva has found that even small student loans of around \$15,000 can be insurmountable for those struggling to finish their degree or who have dropped out of college. She also studies the impact that loans have on students' decision-making after graduation. Do they postpone marriage, for instance, or delay buying a home based on student debt? That can slow down economic activity overall and begin to affect everyone. In addition, credit card debt may increase as people try to balance student loan payments with everyday expenses.

Gicheva's focus on the economics of education has led her to be quoted in national media such as The Washington Post and NPR. She has also helped various institutions such as the University of North Carolina System and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction evaluate their programs. She hopes her findings will illuminate students' hurdles a bit better while also making a difference. "I like to think all of my research has direct links to economic policy, including how we can help students succeed in their transition to college and after that."

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RETHINKING SUSTAINABILITY AND EFFICIENCY IN CORPORATIONS

In decades of studying global corporations, Dr. Kefeng Xu has found that some companies treat environmental sustainability like a tradeoff that can hurt productivity. "The mindset of many managers has been: if you have high efficiency, you may have lower sustainability. Or if you have high sustainability, you may have lower efficiency. So the requirement to improve sustainability can become like a hot potato to pass on," Xu says.

But that doesn't have to be the case. Innovative suppliers can make all the difference, says Xu, a professor in the Department of Information Systems and Supply Chain Management at the Bryan School of Business and Economics. When considering a company's environmental impact, Xu imagines a pipe running the length of the supply chain – from the sourcing of raw materials all the way to a consumer purchasing the end product. When businesses clamp down on emissions in one part of the pipe, they often pop up elsewhere.

In an eight-year analysis of 183 multinational corporations with more than 400 suppliers, Xu and his fellow researchers found emissions were often passed upstream to those suppliers. Another study of 300 global firms over six years found that, by moving operations offshore, companies passed emissions to overseas subsidiaries. These subsidiaries were often based in emerging economies with looser regulations, according to the articles in Decision Sciences and Production and Operations Management.

But when companies seek out suppliers that invest in sustainability throughout a product's entire life cycle, they can reduce emissions per unit. "So the main job for businesses should be trying to find innovative suppliers who will collaborate with them to reduce emissions, truthfully, across the whole supply chain," he says.

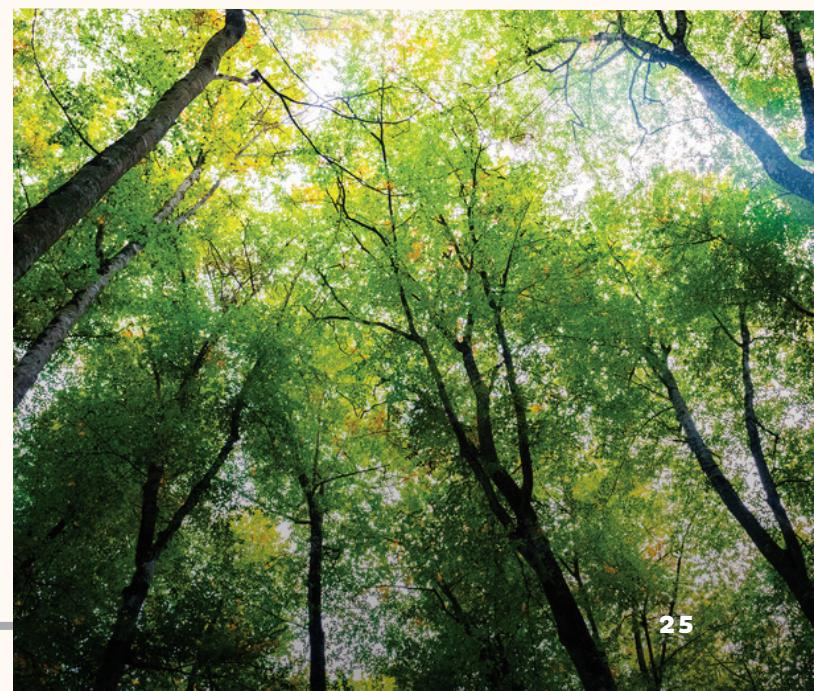
While this takes time, it proves worth it. "We found that when companies perform innovations this year, it could lead to higher emissions the same year, but generally lesser emissions in the next several years," Xu says. Having received multiple awards including a National Science Foundation Grant, Xu publishes in many fields including operations, logistics and information management strategy, supply chain sustainability, transportation, and inventory and supply management. He is associate editor of the Journal of Operations Management and serves on three other editorial boards.

He hopes to offer practical implications for supply chain managers, shareholders and students learning through case studies. "I often ask my students, 'What do you think the key challenges are here? If you are the manager in that situation, how would you resolve that challenge?'"



DR. KEFENG XU
Ph.D. Program Director
and Professor

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DR. JIN SU
Associate Professor
and Director of
Graduate Studies

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TRACING THE JOURNEY OF JEANS: A LESSON IN SUSTAINABILITY

The average U.S. consumer owns seven pairs of jeans, and this fashion staple can be found in a staggering 96 percent of Americans' closets. But Dr. Jin Su sees another purpose for the wardrobe icon: it provides an ideal way to teach key concepts in business and sustainability.

Su and three colleagues at the Bryan School of Business and Economics – Drs. Elena Karpova, Nancy Hodges, and Kittichai Watchravesringkan – recently received a grant from Cary-based Cotton Incorporated to develop a learning module in which students trace the life cycle of a pair of jeans.

"It was a very experiential project," says Su, an Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Consumer, Apparel, and Retail Studies. "It helped students understand why more and more apparel companies and retail stores offer sustainable jeans, and students learned how their own consumption behavior impacts the environment."

This is just one way Su is using her research to educate students as "emerging industry professionals" while also helping businesspeople and companies develop strategies for the future.

Another key area of interest is the study of adaptive apparel, which is designed for people with disabilities or impairments that make it difficult to put on or remove clothing. Adaptive apparel may feature more easily accessible buttons, user-friendly zippers, magnet closures or convenient slip-on shoe designs, for instance. Along with her Bryan School colleague, associate professor Melanie Carrico, and two faculty members at the University of Alabama, Su has reviewed academic literature, analyzed the market, and interviewed consumers about the growing need for adaptive apparel. The project has been funded through a three-year USDA grant.

"People with disabilities have often felt neglected and couldn't find the apparel they wanted or needed," Su says. "This is a huge consumer market, so we want our students to know that they can make contributions to society while also designing stylish and creative clothing products."

As an author of hundreds of peer-reviewed journal articles and papers, Su received the prestigious Mid-Career Excellence Award from the International Textile and Apparel Association in 2023. She continues to see endless possible research topics – ranging from sustainability, economics and supply chain management to marketing, consumer behavior and psychology – that can be studied through the lens of apparel.

"I really think people need to understand the contributions that textile and apparel products have to the whole world economy," she says. "Everything is connected."



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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From Landscapes to Ledgers



Initially a landscaping architecture major, it may be fitting that the career path for **Xiaoning Zhang** '20 MSA has had a few unique twists and turns.

"After I got my bachelor's and did some projects I thought, 'This is not what I want,'" said Zhang. "So, I started to explore other opportunities and finally made the decision to change to

an accounting career. The MSA program at UNCG's Bryan School allowed me to build up my accounting knowledge and skills from a beginner level until now."

It was a mixture of MSA program reputation and available graduate student resources that drove Zhang to UNCG. "Bryan provides students with a lot of opportunities to explore different areas of accounting. I studied auditing, taxation, finance, and other courses," she said. "The design of various projects also offered a comprehensive overview of the industry, which facilitated the career planning decisions I was navigating. Simultaneously, the program solidified a foundation for me to successfully complete the CPA examination."

Looking back, Zhang doesn't view her career pivot as challenging, she just remembers taking it step-by-step and trusting in the support of her family as well as the support system available at Bryan. "I just tried my best," she recalls.

For prospective students, Zhang emphasizes the comprehensive preparation the MSA program provides. "The program equips students with all the necessary tools and knowledge to be an industry professional – encompassing both foundational and practical aspects," she said. "Bryan also offers services like resume writing, as well as help establishing connections with company and firm recruitment teams."

Now a Tax Analyst with Unifi Manufacturing, Zhang is grateful for her transformative experience at the Bryan School. "All of my Bryan memories are precious," she said. "I hope this MSA program can become known by more and more people and those people can become more and more successful."

CONSUMER, APPAREL, AND RETAIL STUDIES

A Passion for Fashion

Faith Constantine '23 (Consumer, Apparel, and Retail Studies) discovered her passion for the business side of fashion early on. "Since high school, I knew that I wanted to pursue a degree in fashion. At first, I was hesitant because I didn't want to design," she recalls. This led her to research universities extensively, ultimately choosing UNC Greensboro's Bryan School of Business and Economics for its accredited, award-winning CARS program.

Attending Spartan Orientation, Advising, and Registration cemented her decision. "After attending SOAR, I knew I was going to enjoy my time," Constantine said. Her college journey was unique, starting before COVID-19 and continuing through the pandemic. Despite the uncertainties, she says she was able to thrive under the guidance of exceptional educators like CARS Lecturer Anne Wood and Putman and Hayes Distinguished Professor Dr. Elena Karpova.

Constantine's proactive approach to her education included joining some of the many campus clubs and organizations that aligned with her career aspirations. "I was a part of the National Retail Federation Association, which is actually how I got my job as an Allocation Analyst," she explains. Her role with TJX Companies, Inc. – a Fortune 100 company that operates stores including TJ Maxx, Marshalls, HomeGoods, and more – was one Constantine



didn't have to wait long for, and was a move that brought her up to Massachusetts almost immediately after walking across the stage at graduation.

Reflecting on her favorite Bryan School memory, Constantine also fondly recalls the annual THREADS fashion show, a signature event for another of the popular CARS student groups. "It was so amazing to see how everyone came together from designers to models to makeup artists to bring the show to life. It amazes me every year," she said.

For prospective students, Constantine emphasizes the value of a Bryan School education. "I believe students interested in the Bryan School should know that it is an investment that will take them far," she said, adding the hands-on classroom experience and a vast array of student organizations played crucial roles in being able to launch her young career.

ECONOMICS

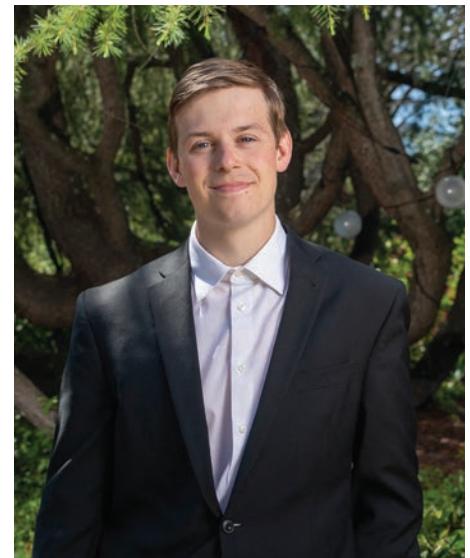
Finding His Stride

Dan Rust '20 (Economics), MBA '22 is no stranger to the Bryan School of Business and Economics. A two-time alumni and track-and-field athlete while at UNC Greensboro, Rust was off to the races when it came to his professional development. And it's safe to say he's still running strong at the start of his professional journey.

As an undergraduate, Rust wasn't always sure what career path he wanted to take. "I quickly found my stride thanks to the school's emphasis on developing exceptional problem-solving skills," he said. Reminiscing about his time at the Bryan School, Rust credits the school for equipping him with essential skills that have aided in his success thus far at Lenovo, where he has transitioned from Inside Sales Specialist to Inside Sales Representative to his current role as PC Account Executive for Corporate Southwest Acquisition.

"My journey as a student at the Bryan School was transformative," Rust said. "Pursuing my MBA at the Bryan School further deepened my understanding of the business world and expanded my professional network. Leveraging these experiences, along with internships facilitated by the Bryan School, I was able to secure my position at Lenovo."

Rust recalls tackling the hurdles of extracurricular commitments and challenges during his time as a student. "Running track and playing soccer at UNCG, along with working as a resident advisor on campus, all added layers of responsibility to my schedule. As someone prone to taking on more than I could handle, I often found myself stretched thin and exhausted," he said. "However, these experiences taught me invaluable lessons in time management and prioritization. Rather than rushing into solutions, I now approach challenges thoughtfully, considering all aspects before taking action."



Rust says the time he spent at the Bryan School offered more than just a degree; it provided an enriching experience and a supportive environment for personal growth. From the personalized educational experience, the low faculty-to-student ratio, and the Bryan School's dedication to its students, Rust feels that time spent in a dynamic learning environment enriched his educational journey and instilled in him a lifelong love for learning and a commitment to continuous improvement.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

From Bryan School Grad to Graduate Program Director

When asked to describe his time at the Bryan School, **Allen Rogers** '16 MS, spoke highly about multiple faculty members. "The supportive network of faculty, staff, students, and alumni at the Bryan School propel you to succeed. While it is ultimately up to you to get the work done the resources and leadership available to a student are limitless with endless possibilities," he said.

Rogers' journey through the Bryan School was marked by dedication, inspiration, and a passion for integrating technology with business. Working full-time in the Bryan School's Administrative Services suite, he found a mentor in John Eatman, ITS director and Information Systems and Supply Chain Management lecturer. His encouragement led Rogers to believe he could grasp and apply the principles of information systems and data science. This spark, aided by the tuition waiver program for state employees, allowed Rogers to pursue his Master of Information Technology and Management degree part-time.



The most challenging aspect of being a student was balancing a full-time job while juggling his academic responsibilities. However, Rogers fondly remembers Dr. Hamid Nemati's Business Analytics course. There, he learned the data science behind the book "Moneyball" which uses baseball to teach the importance of choosing the right variables when making predictions.

"Baseball had always been a passion of mine and combining analytics with that passion made my studies no longer feel like work. That is the beauty of the MSITM program, it is customizable to one's passions and interest because data science can be found in everything that we do," Rogers said.

And his journey extended far beyond education – one of Rogers' favorite experiences in the master's program was traveling to study at the University of Mannheim.

"We were connected with Bryan School alumni in Germany and got to tour BASF and the Deutsche Bank. Culturally it was a wonderful experience where we toured a vineyard, tried apple wine and indulged in Schweinshaxe, or pork knuckle," he said.

Though Allen wishes he would have pursued more internships while at the Bryan School, he is grateful for the customizable nature of the MSITM program. After eight years of applying the principles and concepts learned at the Bryan School in the professional world, he has returned to UNC Greensboro where he now serves as a Graduate Program Director within the ISSCM department as well as a lecturer. His decision to come back felt like a homecoming, driven by a desire to contribute to the community that had shaped his career.

MANAGEMENT

How a Bryan School Transfer Forged a Financial Career

Seeking a path that would align with his passion for numbers and problem-solving, **George Chung** '09 (Business Administration) transferred from SUNY Stony Brook to UNCG during his sophomore year. While Bryan School coursework played a pivotal role in shaping Chung's career, it was support from outside the classroom that truly propelled him to explore careers in the corporate world, specifically the financial services industry. Originally, Chung had planned to attend graduate school immediately following his undergraduate studies. However, the real turning point in his academic career came through a connection with Bryan Career Services, wherein Chung found the guidance he needed to navigate his ultimate career path.

"There was a particular counselor who was extremely helpful and ultimately helped me land an internship which unfolded into a full-time offer post-graduation," he said. "I remember being in her office working on my resume when she asked me if I was attending a Bryan alumni panel event. I hadn't planned on attending but after speaking with her I changed my plans and attended that evening, where I met an alumnus who was employed at J.P. Morgan Chase (JPM). Fast forward two weeks and I had accepted an internship offer with JPM, which really launched my career in financial services."

Chung now serves as the Director of Balance Sheet Management at Bank of America and has been with the bank for nearly 15 years. His advice to students – and that includes transfer students like himself – is to immerse yourself in everything the Bryan School has to offer such as support services and extracurriculars. "All of my opportunities at Bryan would not have been possible without a close partnership with Career Services," he said. "I wish I had engaged more with clubs and student organizations on campus. Being a transfer student

I guess you could say I had a slow start – but I'd recommend taking any opportunity to expand your network."

MARKETING, ENTREPRENEURSHIP,
HOSPITALITY & TOURISM

Making Her Mark in Marketing

RiAnica Allen-Jones '11 (Marketing) says her marketing journey was first influenced by her business-savvy family. "Marketing has always been a passion of mine," she says. "With an older brother working in marketing at major companies such as Blockbuster and Sony, I was fascinated by the 'glitz and glam' of the marketing world."

Allen-Jones, now a Web Production Manager for the well-known file hosting service Dropbox, attributes her time at UNC Greensboro's Bryan School of Business and Economics as laying a strong foundation for her career. Not only did the Bryan School allow her to foster a passion for marketing, Allen-Jones was able to immerse herself in the college experience at UNCG as a Spartan cheerleader, also earning a minor in dance performance. She says her network within athletics allowed her to shadow professionals and gain exposure to the marketing aspects of college sports.

LETTER FROM THE
BRYAN SCHOOL ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

HEY BRYAN FAM!

I am thrilled to step into the role of your 2024-25 Bryan School Alumni Association Board President. For me, assuming this position was a no-brainer, as I owe so much of my personal and professional development to the experiences and education provided by the Bryan School. Without them, I wouldn't be where I am today.

When it comes to the Bryan School Alumni Association Board, I am privileged to serve alongside a group of individuals who share a deep appreciation for our alma mater and a commitment to the Bryan School's continued success. Whether through academic achievements, professional accomplishments, or personal growth, we have all been shaped by our time here.

As we reflect on our journey and celebrate our achievements, let us also look to the future with optimism and opportunity. Together, we can make a meaningful impact on the lives of future Spartans and alumni. By staying connected, supporting one another, and giving back to our alma mater, we can ensure that its legacy endures for years to come.

I challenge you to get involved! Follow the Bryan School on social media and visit bryan.uncg.edu/alumni to learn more about how you can participate. Also, be sure to update your contact information so you can receive all of the latest updates. For any detailed inquiries, please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or Katy Barker at klpeter3@uncg.edu.

I hope to cross paths with you soon!

KINSLEY FRASER '16 (Business Administration), '19 MBA
2024-25 Bryan School Alumni Association Board President
BSAAboard@gmail.com

"Unfortunately, I wasn't able to land a sports marketing job right out of college, but I did land an internship," she said. That internship turned into a full-time job at an advertising agency, and her experiences since – including a stint at Lowe's Companies, Inc. – have exposed her to unique industries aside from sports, like retail and technology. Her journey also introduced her to web production and strategy, which plays a large role in her current job with Dropbox.

Reflecting on her time at the Bryan School, Allen-Jones says she wouldn't change a thing. "I will never forget the research project I led for a real-world small business start-up and the support, guidance, and knowledge my professors passed down to me as I worked to build a strategic business plan to present to the president and founder of the business," she said.

For Allen-Jones, that culture of care still stands out. "I loved that I was able to specialize and focus my degree on an area of study that meant something to me," she said. "But the welcoming professors and the variety of classes offered helped, too! I met some of the best people and started an amazing network through the Bryan School. While a large college, the programs offered, professors, and classmates created a community and safe space to freely learn and feel comfortable."

Internship Alert



Summer 2024 was a busy one for the Bryan School undergraduate and graduate students who spent their time away from the classroom partaking in a little hands-on learning as interns for employers like United Airlines, Amazon, Volvo and more.



RALIAT ABE, MBA

Arch MI

Raliat Abe '24 knows what it means to be data savvy. Thanks to her internship with Arch MI, Raliat spent her summer honing her skills in data-driven sales optimization and strategic decision-making.

"By harnessing the power of analytics, we can unlock the full potential of our sales initiatives and achieve greater success in reaching the organization's goal."



CHASE SPERKA (Accounting)

Volvo

Chase Sperka spent his summer helping facilitate financial reporting and assisting with cost analysis as a Business Control intern within Volvo Group North America's group trucks purchasing function.

"One of the most valuable things I learned while working with Volvo Group North America was the importance of communication in the professional environment. Meeting deadlines while satisfying project requirements was a pivotal part of what I did, and by maintaining good dialogue with my colleagues and manager, I did both of those things."



MAYA KAVULICOVÁ, MBA

United Airlines

It was a wheels-up kind of summer for Maya Kavulicová, who worked with United Airlines as a Global Procurement Intern with the Domestic Airport Services team.

"The team I worked with is responsible for procuring United's services for the stations within the United States, and I learned so much about United's supply chain management and practices. Plus, I made tons of connections across the organization and used my flight benefits to travel around the world."



BROCK ROHALY (Finance)

JP Morgan Chase & Co.

Brock Rohaly experienced first-hand how powerful networking can be as a Middle Market Banking and Specialized Industries (MMBSI) Summer Analyst with JP Morgan Chase & Co.

"Through this internship, I met various junior and senior-level employees from around the country. The Bryan School taught me the essential skills required to professionally communicate with them and make the most of my summer experience."



SOPHIE MACON (Consumer, Apparel, and Retail Studies)

Wynnie's Boutique

As an intern with Wynnie's Boutique in High Point, NC, Sophie Macon gained valuable insights into the planning and buying processes for a specialty boutique.

"This opportunity allowed me to work alongside a small business owner to see beyond the cute outfits and kids. Being a part of the full experience has contributed to my professional growth and love of children's wear."



NANA KUSI

(Business Administration)

Amazon

Nana Kusi '24 credits the Bryan School for giving her a strong foundation in business principles, critical thinking and practical skills that set her up for success as a Human Resources Partner intern within Amazon's AMXL HRD2 division.

"The Bryan School's emphasis on professional development and networking has provided me with valuable connections and insights into the business world, which prepared me well for my internship with Amazon."



ALLEN EAN

(Business Administration)

Atlas Copco

From benefits administration to employee relations, Allen Ean '24 thrived learning the ropes of human resources at Atlas Copco.

"My position involved assisting Atlas Copco's HR/Communications Specialist and their HR Manager with onboarding, payroll, recruiting, compliance, policy administration and so much more. I loved learning about Atlas Copco and its operations."



THADDEUS KING

(Business Administration)

Vestwell and Jetset World Travel

One internship wasn't enough for Thaddeus King. Thaddeus completed TWO internships this summer – one in-person with Vestwell, and a virtual one with Jetset World Travel.

"As a National Sales Intern at Vestwell in New York City, I played a vital role in supporting our sales channels and strategic distribution partnerships and worked on the front lines of our sales organization. With Jetset, I was able to do a little bit of everything – from data analysis and office coordination to website development."

CAYLYN STACKHOUSE

(Marketing)

Under Armour

Caylyn Stackhouse '24 has acquired a decent amount of marketing knowledge through her Bryan School courses, but she leveled up that knowledge through her Brand Marketing Rooking internship at Under Armour.

"At Under Armour, I worked closely with the brand marketing and social media teams to bring brand awareness to college campuses. I was paired with a manager and mentor who helped guide me through the program and presented a final project to Under Armour executives at the end of the summer."



RANDALL CRESS

(Business Administration)

Beyond Sports NC

Randall Cress kept his impact local as an intern with Beyond Sports NC – a Greensboro-based nonprofit that focuses on bringing youth sports clinics to low-income areas. While working with Beyond Sports NC, Randall led sports clinics for second through eighth graders, wrote grants to secure funding for the organization and more.

"One of the biggest things I learned at Beyond Sports NC was the importance of being able to adapt to new and challenging situations. The Bryan School's large focus on creative problem solving was a big contributor toward my success in that regard."

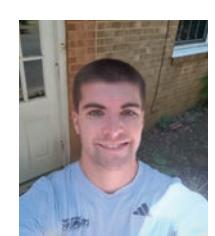


MARIA KOZIEL (Information Systems and Supply Chain Management)

bioMérieux

It was summer of growth opportunities for Maria Koziel, who landed an internship with bioMérieux – a company that develops, manufactures and provides diagnostic tests for medical and industrial applications.

"One of the most valuable things I learned beyond the scope of my written duties at bioMérieux is that the best way to connect to other colleagues or other companies is to be yourself. It's important to converse and get to know another person's story."





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