

FOSTER

THE BRAIN BEHIND THE "BOYS"

P8

ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM P18 — THIS IS WILDFIRE P28 — LASSO ON LEADERSHIP P42

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IN THIS ISSUE

- 3** The Liberty Project
- 4** Architectural Marvel
- 6** Champions of Service... Again
- 8** The Brain Behind the "Boys"
- 14** Foster Insights
- 16** Accounts Paid, Forward
- 18** Foster's Entrepreneurial Ecosystem
- 24** Honor Roll
- 25** Stellar Scholars
- 26** The Power of the Powwow
- 28** This is Wildfire
- 31** Class of 2023
- 32** Year of Magenta
- 35** Ascendant Analytics
- 36** From Marine to Mariner
- 38** Sharing the Load
- 40** Lifting As We Climb
- 42** Lasso on Leadership
- 46** Tutoring, On Demand
- 48** Make Smarter Resolutions



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On the cover: legendary Washington rowing coach Al Ulbrickson. Photo courtesy of Marist College Archives and Special Collections, Poughkeepsie, NY, USA

FOSTERING COMMUNITY

Every day at the Foster School, we strive to cultivate a community where everyone belongs and everyone feels supported and empowered to pursue their dreams. Our efforts begin with our students, faculty and staff, but then expand outward to embrace our alumni, donors, volunteers, mentors, recruiters, civic leaders, guest lecturers, corporate partners and many others. Even the kindergartners of Bryant Elementary School, who brought a blast of energy and eagerness to learn when they visited us on a field trip over the summer.

On the pages that follow, you'll find a sampling of stories about our thriving community. Together, with your help, we create futures.



Frank Hodge

Orin & Janet Smith Dean,
Foster School of Business





Courtesy of Mayor Bruce Harrell's office.

THE LIBERTY PROJECT

The Foster School of Business is partnering with Seattle University, Tabor 100 and the City of Seattle on the Liberty Project, a new initiative to accelerate revenue growth and expand opportunity for businesses owned by underrepresented communities in Seattle, particularly Black-owned businesses.

The project is named in honor of Liberty Bank, the first Black-owned bank in the Pacific Northwest to serve individuals and businesses that were excluded from financial services and investment opportunities.

For the initiative, Foster's Consulting and Business Development Center (CBDC) is collaborating with the Albers Business Foundry (ABF) at Seattle U's Albers School of Business and Economics, the City of Seattle and Tabor 100.

"Rooted in values of equity and inclusivity, the Liberty Project is an innovative approach to better support small local businesses as we strive to build an economy where every neighbor can access opportunities to succeed, grow and flourish in Seattle," said Mayor Bruce Harrell.

EXPERIENCE AND INNOVATION

Building on the work of its anchor institutions and deepening their collaboration with the city, the Liberty Project is powered by the CBDC's M³ model—providing services to Seattle businesses aimed at (1) improving their **management** capacity and (2) growing access to **money** through loans and investments, which

will lead to (3) increased access to **markets** through corporate and government contracting opportunities and access to new consumers in downtown Seattle and throughout the region.

"We have already proven the M³ model to be successful in growing Black-owned and other underserved businesses in Seattle and across the US," said Michael Verchot, director of the CBDC. "The value of the Liberty Project is that, for the first time ever, three anchor institutions are working with the city in a new, coordinated way, to grow Black-owned and other underserved businesses. We are excited to do this work with our long-term partners at Tabor 100 and the Albers School of Business to grow wealth-building businesses in this region through the Liberty Project."

FULL-SPECTRUM SERVICE

The Liberty Project offers a wide array of services, including business consulting and strategy, finance and accounting, marketing, technology, contract bid preparation and limited legal support.

The new initiative will serve Black-owned businesses in retail, personal services, commercial construction, food and beverage manufacturing, restaurant, and power utilities contract industries, plus partner with the Office of Economic Development's Seattle Restored program to assist restaurant, personal service and retail businesses in Seattle's urban core.

ARCHITECTURAL MARVEL

**FOUNDERS HALL IS RECOGNIZED
FOR DESIGN EXCELLENCE BY
THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE
OF ARCHITECTS**



FOSTER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Photos by Tim Griffith, courtesy of LMN Architects

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) recognized Founders Hall with a 2023 Education Facility Design Award of Merit.

Founders Hall is the privately funded 85,000-square-foot-facility that opened in September 2022 on the Foster School of Business campus.

As with the design and construction of PACCAR and Dempsey Halls, the Foster School partnered with LMN Architects and Hoffman Construction to bring Founders Hall to life.

The result of this latest collaboration is the first building on the UW campus to be built of mass timber, a composite hardwood that is sourced and manufactured sustainably, and continues to sequester excess carbon from the atmosphere indefinitely.

Mass timber is a one of many features that make Founders Hall the greenest building at the UW, designed to achieve a 76% reduction in cumulative carbon emissions and to use 70% less energy and 53% less water than a comparable facility built with conventional methods and materials.

The AIA notes that Founders Hall “creates a vital intersection of three discrete volumes that host collaboration spaces, program offices, classrooms and gather spaces linked by a five-story steel and wood stair that weaves through the mass timber structure. It’s organization... encourages spontaneous interactions among administrators, staff, students and visitors.”

The AIA’s Committee on Architecture for Education lauded the Founders Hall project for introducing mass timber as a construction method for academic facilities, and for showcasing commissioned works by respected local Native artists. “This project is also shaped by careful consideration of the history and legacy of Indigenous people in the Seattle area,” notes the jury.

All of this adds up to a unique space at the UW, the AIA site adds, “where collaborative learning and community building thrive inside a sustainable building poised to inspire future generations of students.”

The AIA’s Awards of Excellence recognize the most exemplary architectural practice. Award-worthy designs must meet a host of criteria, including



enhancing learning in classrooms; balancing function with aesthetics; establishing a connection with the environment; being respectful of the surrounding community; demonstrating high-level planning in the design process; and integrating sustainability in a holistic fashion.

According to the AIA, Founders Hall accomplished all of the above—in style: “In connecting to the history of the university and the forest industry, the building provides meaningful insight into Washington’s culture and heritage, shaping a holistic experience for the campus community. Founders Hall is not merely a place for learning, but a larger symbol of the school’s aspirations to leave a lasting, positive impact on students and the world.”



CHAMPIONS OF SERVICE... AGAIN

WINNING A FIFTH CONSECUTIVE CHALLENGE FOR CHARITY IS TESTAMENT TO THE COLLECTIVE PRIDE, PERSPECTIVE AND PURPOSE OF THE FOSTER MBA COMMUNITY

By Ed Kromer

Call it a quintuple.

MBA students at the Foster School of Business won a fifth-consecutive MBA Challenge for Charity (C4C) last spring, bringing home the competition's iconic prize—the Golden Briefcase—to reside in Foster's trophy case for yet another year.

The annual C4C pits top West Coast business schools against each other in friendly competition to volunteer the most hours and raise the most money in support of local nonprofit service organizations.

This year's contest was never in doubt, with Foster MBAs finishing #1 in fundraising, #1 in volunteering (and #2 at the annual sports weekend, which represents a small fraction of the overall score).

"Our MBA students at Foster continue to inspire and amaze me with their dedication not only to their own development, but also to their contributions to the broader community," said Wendy Guild, former assistant dean of MBA programs. "Their achievements through the C4C competition are a testament to the power of purpose-driven leadership on the part of all involved—organizing countless events, details and the work of their peers to support these local charities."

MANY HANDS, LIGHT WORK

Over the past year, Foster MBAs raised \$142,000 in support of their core nonprofit partners: Special Olympics Washington, Boys & Girls Clubs of King County and the University District Food Bank.

More than \$125,000 of those dollars arrived via the gala auction, which made its triumphant in-person return after years of pandemic pushed fundraising online. "C4C Night Live" drew a deep cast of generous community and corporate partners—and inspired a festival of giving, largely from a dedicated community of Foster MBA alumni.

In the volunteering category, Foster full-time MBAs also set the pace by logging 1,487 hours of service to its core charities and an eclectic list of additional nonprofits, including Farmer Frog, Forterra and Missing Maps, and supported the community efforts of the Seattle Kraken's One Roof Foundation and Seattle Seahawks' Spirit of 12 Program.

For Dominic Racelis (MBA 2023), vice-president of volunteering in Foster C4C, the outreach experiences in this year's campaign rekindled a childhood passion that had become lost in the hustle of school and work.

"I re-discovered the joy of volunteering with C4C at Foster," he says. "Besides doing impactful work with local groups, it's led to greater confidence, satisfaction and gratitude in all other areas of my life, too. This practice

I'll bring with me well beyond the MBA. And I hope my peers and colleagues will be inspired to join me!"

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

The massive volunteering and fundraising numbers were achieved through widespread participation among the Foster MBA community. This community commitment has become etched into the culture of Foster. Its continuity is supported by MBA Program staff, the leadership and legacy of an active C4C alumni advisory board and the passion of long-time faculty advisor Elizabeth Stearns.

But then it comes down to the MBA students, who come to Foster, year after year, with far more than money on their minds.

"I am so proud of the contributions every single student in the Foster community made to uphold this tradition and keep the Golden Briefcase here at Foster," said Cindy Cocca (MBA 2023), last year's president of Foster C4C. "One of the reasons I came to Foster was to join a program that cared about more than just the

typical academic MBA curriculum, and this group once again proved what empathetic, passionate, change makers come to Foster."

MEANING IN AN MBA

In a challenge that is all about giving, Foster MBAs have received something invaluable in return: As much as pride, a sense of perspective. And purpose.

These kinds of indelible extra experiences, stretched across the Foster MBA journey, are what turn an educated person into an enlightened one, and a promising career into a life of great impact.

"The dedication our cohort makes to a program like C4C—especially at a time when many other programs have lost some of their enthusiasm—continues to show how much the students care about making an impact outside of the MBA bubble," Cocca adds. "I can't wait to see how everyone continues to help the local community going forward and to see what impactful leaders we all become."

EXCELLENCE EVIDENCE

#2

MBA JOB PLACEMENT

Financial Times

#2

HYBRID MBA

Poets & Quants

#4

MS IN INFORMATION SYSTEMS

MIM-Guide

#4

MASTER OF SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

QS World University Rankings

#5

MS IN BUSINESS ANALYTICS

QS World University Rankings

#6

MS IN TAXATION

MIM-Guide

#7

MS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Princeton Review

#11

EVENING MBA

U.S. News & World Report

#14

EXECUTIVE MBA

Poets & Quants

#17

UNDERGRADUATE

U.S. News & World Report


#19

FULL-TIME MBA

Financial Times

FOSTER MAINTAINS HIGH MARKS IN NATIONAL RANKINGS ACROSS PROGRAMS

Here's where Foster stands vis-à-vis the nearly 500 accredited US business schools:



THE BRAIN BEHIND THE "BOYS"

**LEADING THE "BOYS IN THE BOAT" TO
GOLD AT THE 1936 BERLIN OLYMPICS
WAS JUST THE BEGINNING FOR AL
ULBRICKSON, WHO QUIETLY BECAME
ONE OF THE GREATEST COLLEGIATE
ROWING COACHES OF ALL TIME**

By Ed Kromer

Al Ulbrickson was barely older than his oarsmen when he took the helm of the Husky crew program in 1928.

MOHAI, Seattle Post-Intelligencer Collection, 1986.5G.3100.

While conducting the exhaustive research behind “The Boys in the Boat,” the absorbing account of the hardscrabble 1936 University of Washington crew that won gold at the Berlin Olympiad, author Daniel James Brown found one of the characters in his story most elusive to render in flesh and blood: the team’s enigmatic young coach, Al Ulbrickson (BA 1926).

“Ulbrickson was a challenging character to bring to life,” admits Brown, more than a decade after the publication of his bestseller. “It was, in part, because he was very reticent with his crews and with the sportswriters. He didn’t like to tip his hand.”

Those sportswriters took to calling Ulbrickson the “Dour Dane,” owing to his Nordic heritage and often solemn expression—and their own chagrin from quotidian efforts to draw blood from a stone. Ulbrickson said little and revealed even less.

The archetypal strong, silent type was not one to heap praise or seek the limelight. His newspaper coverage mined no deep insights. His meticulous practice logs divulged few of his personal thoughts or feelings. He left no journals or papers articulating philosophy or expressing principles. Even his grandchildren confirm that his reticence was a defining feature.

Perhaps that’s why Ulbrickson, who ruled the sport for decades after that celebrated season and transformed Husky boats into juggernauts, cuts such a fascinating figure even today.

What he did is easy to describe. How he did it is another story.

BORN TO THE WATER

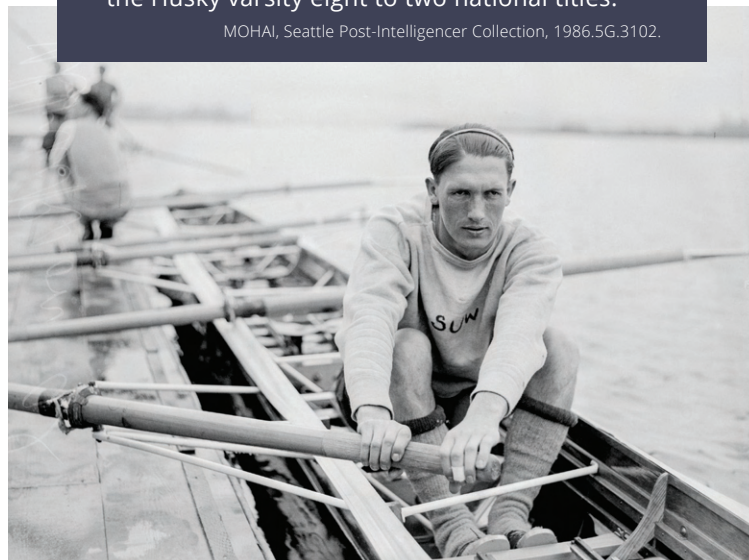
Alvin M. Ulbrickson was born in 1903 in Seattle’s Montlake neighborhood, just a stone’s throw from the UW shell house that would one day become his dominion. He grew up in a small farmhouse on Mercer Island, back when it was a more rustic and less fashionable address.

With no bridge connecting to the mainland, Ulbrickson had to row two miles across the lake every day to attend Franklin High School.

His dedication paid off. At the UW, he excelled in the classroom, earning a Phi Beta Kappa key for

Ulbrickson became a genuine celebrity stroking the Husky varsity eight to two national titles.

MOHAI, Seattle Post-Intelligencer Collection, 1986.5G.3102.



his performance at the UW College of Business. He also honed his rowing prowess, stroking the Husky varsity eight to national championships in 1924 and 1926.

As a star oarsman in the heyday of the sport, Ulbrickson’s celebrity was by then so pronounced that his courthouse marriage to Hazel Stehling ahead of that final year caused a stir in Seattle. “There was much speculation at the time that he wouldn’t return for his senior season,” says his grandson, Al Ulbrickson III.

But that was never a real possibility. Ulbrickson was a fierce competitor, and he always came back to the water.

After his decorated collegiate rowing career, head coach Rusty Callow hired his former captain to lead the Husky freshman team in 1926. Two years later, when Callow decamped for the University of Pennsylvania, he saw to it that Ulbrickson would take his place at the helm of the Husky armada.

HE WAS THE BOSS, AND HE MEANT BUSINESS

In those days, crew was king in Seattle, with its depth of maritime heritage and dearth of professional sports. The UW teams had become a steady spring of pride for residents of this inland isthmus, nearly surrounded by waterways. Regattas drew tens of thousands of fans, lining the course on shore, in boats and in traveling rail-car bleachers.

Coaching Husky crew was a big deal.

Ulbrickson was just 24 when he took over the program, scarcely older than the rowers he was called to lead. And scarcely equipped to manage the reporters that swarmed the program like pen-wielding paparazzi.

So, he regularly turned out to practice sessions in a business suit, necktie and a fedora. His natural poker face became even more inscrutable. And he set an uncompromising standard from the start. No swearing, no smoking, no drinking was permitted. Solid academic standing needed to be maintained. And the team always came first.

"Because there was not much of an age gap between him and these kids he was coaching, Ulbrickson had to put on a stern, formidable exterior in order to command their respect," Brown says. "He wanted to convey the sense that he was the boss, and he was all business."

His taciturn nature also kept the pressmen guessing. Ulbrickson became an endless source of intrigue to the legendary Royal Brougham of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* and George Varnell of the rival *Times*, whose grandiloquent daily reportage would later constitute the raw materials for Brown's opus.

At the time, those column inches turned the Dour Dane into a genuine local luminary. "The *Times* and *P-I* embraced the sport because the Seattle community wanted them to embrace it," says Eric Cohen (BA 1982), a former Husky coxswain and long-time program historian. "Ulbrickson became larger than life."

OLD-SCHOOL ATTITUDE, MODERN METHODS

And when he did speak, people listened. The direction he offered tended to be blunt and precise, at least to his rowers if not the press. "Ulbrickson created environments that were highly competitive," Cohen adds. "He knew what he wanted his young men to achieve."

Though his demanding style might have been considered "old school" even back then, some of Ulbrickson's methods could be considered quite modern.

He surrounded himself with an expert support system, including trusted classmate Tom Bolles, brought on to coach the frosh team (before leaving to coach at Yale). Most notably, Ulbrickson formed a long and profitable partnership with venerable boat builder and rowing philosopher George Yeoman Pocock. The two formed a rather odd couple. And they were not personally close, according to Brown. "They had very different styles," he explains. "Ulbrickson was stern, reticent, demanding and could be very gruff with the guys. Pocock had a more benign, encouraging

approach. So, he was sort of the good cop to Ulbrickson's bad cop."

Beyond personnel dynamics, Ulbrickson was ahead of his time in other ways. During days in the launch without a word for his crews, Cohen says, "he would observe and observe and observe."

He logged detailed notes at every training session, tracking and analyzing performance data as an alternative to decision-making from the gut (his grandson inherited several of his beloved stopwatch collection). He stressed the importance of nutrition. Obsessed over stroke rates and the nuance of technique.

And he tinkered like an alchemist with lineups.

Michael Callahan, the current head coach of Husky men's rowing, admires Ulbrickson's balanced approach now that coaching has tipped from instinctive to empirical. "In our sport, people want everything to be scientific," he says. "I see it as more like architecture. There's art and there's engineering. And if you have both, it creates a beautiful structure."

The analog, in rowing, is "swing," which generates speed. And Ulbrickson's boys were fast.

WASHINGTON VS. THE WORLD

But not so much in the beginning. In the early years of his coaching tenure, Washington struggled, especially against its West Coast archrival, the University of California at Berkeley, and its outstanding coach Ky Ebright, who trained as a coxswain under the ultimate Husky rowing innovator, Hiram Conibear. Ulbrickson had to watch as Ebright led Cal to Olympic gold medals in 1928 and 1932. Besting the best in the world became his mission. "There was never a moment that my grandfather wasn't thinking about how he was going to beat Cal," says Al Ulbrickson III.

As the next Olympic games loomed, Ulbrickson began to feel some existential pressure.





In Ulbrickson's days, crew was king in Seattle, with daily coverage of the program from a swarming press corps.

MOHAI, Seattle Post-Intelligencer Collection, 1986.5.15874.1.

But a promising group of freshmen had turned out in 1933—if only he could conjure the best in them. “After several disappointing years, Ulbrickson realized he was going to need more than just strong bodies,” Cohen says. “He would need personalities that could mesh together, become greater than the sum of their parts.”

You’ll find no more stirring account of the years-long drive to Olympic gold than the words of Brown in “The Boys in the Boat.”

In the Cliffs Notes version, a team of working-class kids at Washington finally beat Cal in the west, became the first team to sweep the Intercollegiate Rowing Association (IRA) national championship, outlasted Cal and all comers at the Olympic trials, then edged the powerhouse British, Italians and Germans—while Adolph Hitler and his inner circle watched on—to win the gold medal in Berlin.

“As George Pocock would say, it’s not enough for the muscles of a crew to row together. Their hearts and minds must also be as one,” says Cohen. “That’s what Al Ulbrickson found in 1936: something that reached beyond the physical.”

As Brown writes, the victory rendered Ulbrickson even more speechless than usual. But a United Press International reporter caught an unusually emotional coach racing to congratulate his young men, proclaiming them “the finest I ever saw seated in a shell. And I’ve seen some corking boatloads.”

MORE “CORKING BOATLOADS”

Berlin culminated years of dogged preparation, endless observation, obsessive attention to detail and quiet motivation. But it was also just the start of an era of Washington naval supremacy.

Ulbrickson’s granddaughter, Rinda Ulbrickson, recalls being aware of the 1936 team long before it became a national phenomenon thanks to Brown’s writing a decade ago. But she says her grandfather never dwelled on the achievement. “Because that was just a small part of his career,” she says. “He had such a fond recollection of all the men who came through the program. It was fantastic to see the ‘36 crew get so much acclaim, but it kind of overshadows some of the other stunning achievements at the UW.”

Ulbrickson led the Huskies to six national titles in the varsity eight (and 10 in the JV eight) in 23 trips to the IRAs, sweeping the regatta on four occasions. They defeated Cal in 20 of 28 varsity duels. He led

fours to Olympic gold in London 1948 and bronze in Helsinki 1952 (with his son, Al Ulbrickson Jr., in the boat).

Cohen counts the teams of 1940, 1941 and 1948 among the greatest in school history.

And then there was 1958, a cracking bookend to Ulbrickson’s early career adventure in Nazi Germany.

ONE LAST ROW FOR GLORY

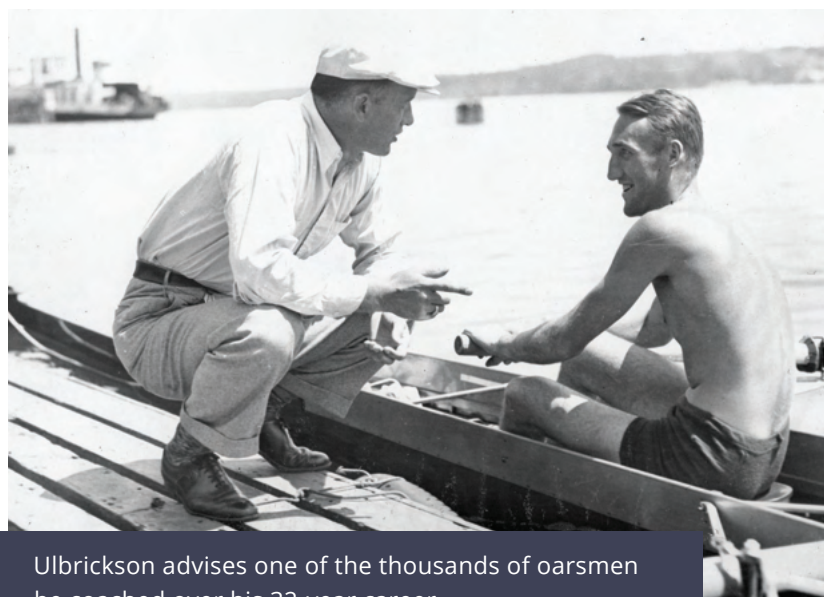
The harsh penalty for a rules violation by the Husky football program extended to all sports that year, grounding Ulbrickson’s promising crew team from contending for a national title. The now veteran coach felt for his young men. He pledged to them that, if they finished the season undefeated, he’d take them to the prestigious Henley Royal Regatta in England, where the best in the world tested their mettle.

They did just that. And Ulbrickson was true to his word, with significant financial assistance from the people of Seattle, who took up the team as a cause célèbre.

In the first round of single-elimination match racing, the Husky eight was defeated soundly by the hulking national champions from the Trud Rowing Club of Leningrad.

But that was not the end of the story. Behind the scenes, the U.S. State Department and Senators Magnuson and Jackson had brokered a goodwill rematch in Moscow, the epicenter of the Soviet empire at the height of the Cold War. They would be the first American athletes to compete behind the Iron Curtain.

In the two-week buildup, Ulbrickson did what he could to focus his rowers on the task at hand rather than the geopolitical ramifications surrounding the first USA vs. USSR clash. On race day, another Husky eight (this one



Ulbrickson advises one of the thousands of oarsmen he coached over his 32-year career.

Marist College Archives and Special Collections, Poughkeepsie, NY, USA.



Ulbrickson, in his final season, with the oarsmen of his 1958 varsity eight and four.

powered by four Foster students) became legend, seizing the lead from the start and pulling away to avenge its loss at Henley.

Cohen calls it “one of the most incredible wins in the history of rowing, not just at Washington.”

It was also the final race of Ulbrickson’s career. Feeling “emotionally bankrupt” after the dramatic past season, he retired—quietly—at the start of autumn 1959. “I’m deeply appreciative of the confidence and the trust the University has placed in me through the years,” he wrote. “This goes double for the thousands of parents who have allowed, and encouraged, their sons to row, and to those same sons who made our rowing so successful.”

HUMILITY AND HARD WORK

Those sons had plenty to say about him. One wrote: “With your uncompromising way of life as an example, your honest urging to ‘give the best that’s in us,’ stressing the need for teamwork... this lasts much longer and sinks much deeper into the lives of the men you have touched. Perhaps our practice of these values is the greatest tribute we can give.”

After leaving the spotlight, Ulbrickson was never tempted to return. He and Hazel retired to a quiet life of woodworking and fishing and Sunday family suppers and summers on Orcas Island. Supporting the Green Lake Rowing Club and impromptu reunions with former rowers was as close as Al would come to the sport he helped define for four decades. “My grandparents didn’t live out loud,” says Rinda Ulbrickson. “They were always satisfied with the small life.”

But her grandfather, who passed away in 1980 after being inducted into the National Rowing and Husky Halls of Fame, left a big legacy.

“Everybody recognizes that Al Ulbrickson was one of the greatest coaches in the history of the sport. And he was a coach of life as much as of rowing,” Cohen says. “But for us, it’s the influence he had on the program going forward.”

Callahan, the catalyst of contemporary Husky glory, views Ulbrickson as a progenitor of the program’s defining culture of hard work and humility, of individual sacrifice and shared endeavor.

“These ethics have run from generation to generation to generation—on both the men’s and women’s side,” he says. “Al showed us that the most successful teams are the ones that row for each other. He was quiet, unassuming, but extremely competitive—the embodiment of the values that are foundational at Washington.”

Callahan also admires the singular way in which Ulbrickson carried himself. “These days, everyone talks about personal branding and leaders are expected to be public and super charismatic,” he says. “Al showed a kind of quiet leadership that was more about the team than himself. It was never about him. That’s something I think a lot about. It was an incredible style of leadership that I think is undervalued these days.

“Al Ulbrickson was what I consider a true crew man. And what a presence! I look at the old photos of him and think, *man*, I need to get a suit and a fedora.”



FOSTER INSIGHTS

By Lauren Kirschman

STATUS SHIFT

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE CAN SHAKE UP COMPANY HIERARCHY

Organizational change can be seen as a threat, but it can also create opportunity.

How people initially react to change depends on their placement within their work groups' status hierarchy, according to new research by Elijah Wee, an assistant professor of management at Foster.

A status hierarchy is an informal but well-established ranking of employees based on the amount of respect and admiration earned from others. Once a hierarchy is established in an organization, it's difficult to break. Employees tend to behave in a manner consistent with their status: while higher-status employees are more assertive, those with lower status tend to defer to others.

Wee's study finds that task-based jolts—highly disruptive organizational changes that require a group to adjust the way it works—impact employees regardless of status. But how employees are affected depends on their place within the hierarchy.

High-status employees tend to respond to change by turning inward and focusing on their own development and survival. As a result, they lose status within the group. On the other hand, low-status employees, with little to lose, tend to react by becoming more generous, raising their relative status.

"When we think about change, we think about: Are we committed to change? Are we resistant to change?" Wee says. "We need to talk about what it means for status and the relationship between team members."

RISE OF THE RANK- AND-FILE

EMPLOYEE OPINION CAN DICTATE CEO LONGEVITY—ESPECIALLY FOR LESS- INFLUENTIAL CHIEF EXECUTIVES

Memo to CEOs: Employee opinion matters.

New research by Bruce Avolio finds that employee approval greatly influences whether a board of directors will retain or dismiss a chief executive officer. For a CEO, that means job security could hinge on keeping workers positively engaged and appreciative of leadership.

While financial performance, analyst recommendations and individual power are the best-known predictors of CEO longevity, the study demonstrates that employees offer valuable internal perspective on a leader's performance. The input of employees is also important because they are ultimately responsible for implementing strategies.

Avolio, a professor of management and the Mark Pigott Chair in Business Strategic Leadership, explains that high approval ratings signal that employees are confident in their CEO and will support their strategies. Low approval ratings signal the opposite.

"The bottom line is: employees matter—both to CEO success and organizations," he adds. "Employee approval does have a significant impact on the most consequential decision a board can make: the involuntary turnover and dismissal of the CEO. Based on our findings, you can predict, with some degree of accuracy, the risk of a CEO being dismissed."

STRATEGIC LEARNING

STRATEGY COURSES PROVIDE REAL-WORLD VALUE TO MBA STUDENTS—ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO TEND TO BE CONFIDENT

More than 100,000 MBA students graduate each year in the United States, and all of them take at least one strategy course. Even so, little is known about the effects of the degree's most popular course offering.

A new study by Mana Heshmati, an assistant professor of strategy and entrepreneurship at Foster, analyzes the value of an MBA education by examining what individuals learn from strategy courses and how those outcomes depend on individual characteristics.

The study demonstrates that strategy courses improve decision-making abilities, boost the amount of attention paid to broader industry concerns and expand the depth of mental representations, which allows individuals to see more of a problem's details. The classes also increase confidence while making students more aware of uncertainties.

The magnitude of learning, however, is affected by cognitive ability, prior knowledge and gender.

"After taking the class, we observe that students, in general, think more broadly and more deeply about different aspects of strategy," says Heshmati. "We noticed that students also become more aware of non-consumer dimensions and industry attributes, implying they're taking themselves out of the consumer perspective and seeing the larger picture."

VACCINE SHOPPING

WHEN VACCINES ARE PLENTIFUL, ALLOWING PEOPLE TO CHOOSE THEIR TYPE CAN ACCELERATE PANDEMIC ROLLOUT

When COVID-19 vaccines became obtainable in the United States, the policy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was that individuals should receive the first available vaccine.

New research by Leela Nageswaran suggests that might not have been the most effective strategy. Instead, it might have been more effective to allow individuals to select their vaccine type. "Vaccine shopping" can impact timely rollout of vaccines—depending on the availability of vaccines.

When vaccine supply is low, the study shows it is more effective policy to administer the first available. But

when vaccine supply is plentiful, allowing choice can expedite widespread adoption.

For wealthy nations, Nageswaran proposes a hybrid approach that allows people to either choose a preferred vaccine or opt for the earliest available. This option considers the supply and accommodates individuals with a strong preference.

"It's not always true that you must reveal or withhold information," says Nageswaran, an assistant professor of operations management. "It depends on the factors that affect disease spread in a country and the supply of vaccines. We were able to consider a key aspect that the next vaccine rollout should keep in mind and offer guidance on how to hopefully do this better."

THE VALUE OF CARING

PROSOCIAL CEOS INCREASE COMPANY VALUE AND STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION

From X (née Twitter) under Elon Musk to recent layoffs at technology companies, the choices of chief executive officers are more publicized and scrutinized than ever, affecting employees, customers and society at large.

The wide-ranging impact of CEOs inspired new research by Weili Ge, the Moss Adams Professor of Accounting at Foster, that examines their decision-making tendencies.

The study, a collaboration with former doctoral student Wei Ting Loh, demonstrates that CEOs who engage in prosocial behavior—activities that primarily help others—are more likely to make decisions that benefit people and increase company value.

Compared to companies with non-prosocial CEOs, those with prosocial CEOs see lower executive subordinate turnover, more employee-friendly policies, higher customer satisfaction and increased engagement in socially responsible activities.

"How do prosocial individuals act on the job? To what extent do your personal values match your on-the-job behavior? These are broad questions for all of us," says Ge. "But CEOs are very visible, and they have interactions with a wide range of stakeholders. Given their significant role and visibility in society, it's important to look at and examine this issue. The prosocial tendency of CEOs has a big impact on their on-the-job decisions."

ACCOUNTS PAID, FORWARD

SPRATLEN LEGACY AWARD-WINNER CLYDE WALKER EXEMPLIFIES THE POWER OF OPPORTUNITY, OF RESPONSIBILITY, OF COMMUNITY

By Ed Kromer and Kristin Anderson

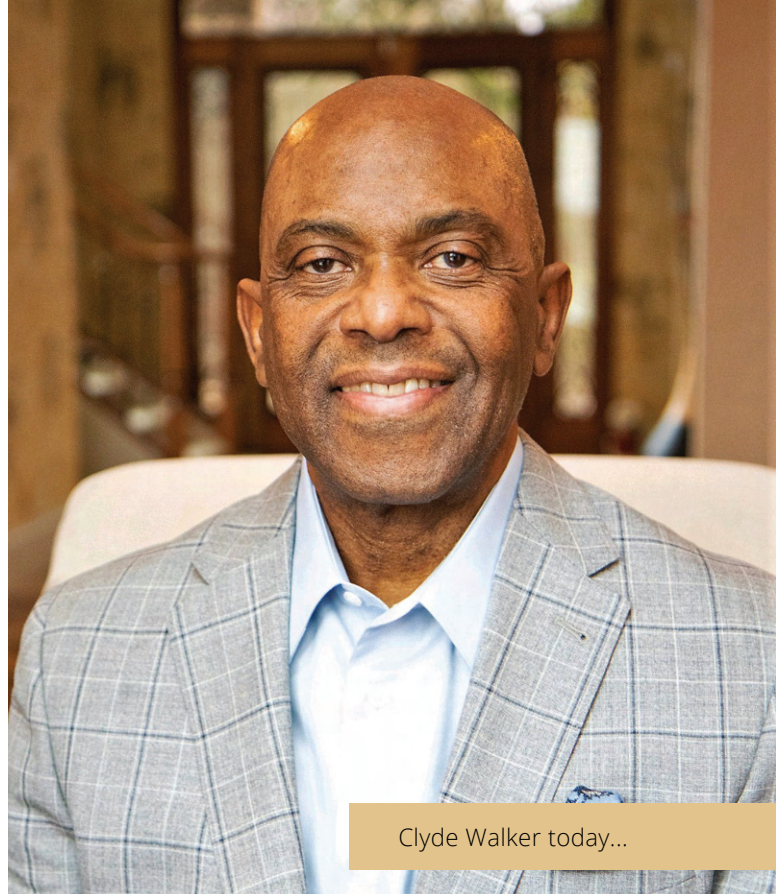
Clyde D. Walker's (BA 1977) remarkable career has reached for the stars, though his biggest impact has been felt here on Earth—and much of it at the University of Washington.

Walker turned a three-year college internship at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory into a contrail-blazing tenure in the aerospace industry that stretched from the mid-1970s to the turn of the century. After earning his BA at the Foster School of Business in 1977, Walker ascended from director of business administration to vice-president of human resources at the Rocket Research Company, an early developer of rockets and thrusters for space exploration, and later Primex Aerospace, manufacturer of liquid and electric propulsion units for satellite and spacecraft.

After capping his career leading human resources at Continental Mills (now the Krusteaz Company), he now chairs the board of directors of First Choice Health, an organization he has served for nearly three decades.

Walker also maintains a long and abiding commitment to the University of Washington and the Foster School. His 11 years on the UW Alumni Association Board of Trustees culminated in his 2016-2017 presidency. And he currently chairs the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) committee of the UW Foundation Board and serves on the Chancellor's Advisory Board at UW Bothell.

At Foster, Walker recently joined the dean's Advisory Board and also advises the Center for Leadership and Strategic Thinking. His own strategic leadership has shaped a school-wide initiative to create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive learning community. For his



Clyde Walker today...

consistent and unwavering support of DEI at Foster—and especially the resilience and growth of its Black student and alumni communities—Walker received the Spratlen Legacy Award at the 2023 Celebration of African American Alumni Achievement.

STRONG FOUNDATION

Walker's story begins in south central Los Angeles, where he feels fortunate to have grown up in a household with two parents and five siblings. More importantly, he came from "a family of accountability," he says. "A family that valued and prioritized education."

The reason? Both parents had come of age in rural Alabama in the 1920s and '30s, when little priority was made for educating Black children.

While raising the first four of Walker's siblings, they made the bold decision to join the mass migration from the South to the West. In 1954, the Walkers moved from Alabama to Los Angeles in search of a better life for their family. Clyde was born after they arrived.

His parents' sacrifice "allowed me to take advantage of opportunities that a lot of other folks were not able to," he says. "But it was really built on a strong work ethic, and it was built on doing what you said you were going to do, being reliable, and being



...and in the 1980s.

dependable, and taking advantage of opportunities that were presented.”

PROOF OF CONCEPT

Perhaps the greatest opportunity of his life presented itself while Walker was just starting college at the UW. Or rather, a family friend named Marshall Porter presented it: an internship at the famed Jet Propulsion Laboratory that began the summer after his freshman year.

“JPL was really pushing diversity ahead of its time,” Walker says. “And so, they allowed an inner-city kid to come to the lab, to be surrounded by some of the world’s smartest people. But they made it safe, and they made it comfortable to be curious and to explore. And so, my career really started on the premise of curiosity. I was a curious child anyway, but the lab allowed me to pursue my curiosity.”

After three years in this high-powered environment, Walker was never again intimidated by brilliance. And the experience helped him develop a sense that he could belong anywhere. “Having a foundation of belonging has also been very instrumental in where I am today and the success I’ve had in my career,” he adds.

It also proved the validity and solidity of the foundation his family had set for him. “I was able to take advantage of opportunities in real time,” he says.

“I had a reputation for being reliable, dependable. I was going to show up. I was going to work hard. I was going to do the right thing.”

But he learned one more lesson, too: always add value. “You have to put your individual ego aside and do what’s best for the team or project or program you’re working on.”

NON-LINEAR TRAJECTORY

Walker says it has not always been easy, as a Black person, to navigate the business and academic environments he has encountered.

“It’s not always a meritocracy, regardless of what people say. There’s a premise that people of color have to work twice as hard to get half as far. And, at some level, that is absolutely true,” he says. “But my parents were clear with us: that’s not an excuse and that’s not a reason not to excel or not to try or not to do your absolute best.”

Again and again, Walker has leaned on those foundational lessons: be present, be dependable, be reliable, seize opportunity, add value. And do so confidently and based on your values and principles.

“My dad told me, when I was very young, if you want to be good at something, pay close attention to people who already are,” he says. “I’ve always followed that advice in terms of leaning on people’s expertise and knowledge to help me navigate and make decisions.”

IT TAKES A COMMUNITY

Clyde and Sherrelle Walker, his wife of 42 years, were raised with a shared philosophy of life. And they passed down their families’ foundational values to their own three grown daughters: Tiffani, a licensed attorney; Allison, a licensed architect; and Adrienne, a program manager.

Family is the atomic core of community for the Walkers. And community is the key to a satisfying and impactful life and career.

Clyde Walker’s number one piece of advice to young people—and especially to young Black people—is to fully understand and harness the value of community.

“Understand the importance of having a group of folks around you who uplift, support and reinforce you, who keep you honest, keep you humble,” he says. “And know—not think, not believe—*know* that you belong. Know that you have a particular unique talent that is important or valuable. And then figure out how to apply that special power, that superpower, in service to something bigger than yourself.”

FOSTER'S ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM

AN INTEGRATED SUITE OF RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED AT THE FOSTER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS DEVELOPS STUDENT ENTREPRENEURS AND STARTUPS FROM AROUND THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON AND BEYOND

By Sally Parker



Jerred Mace (right) pitches OneCourt to a judge at the 2022 Dempsey Startup Competition.

When Jerred Mace (BDes 2023) arrived at the University of Washington, he brought interests in artistic expression, innovation and entrepreneurship. He also carried a sensitivity to people with physical challenges, the imprint of early struggles with low vision. In his sophomore year, he fell in love with industrial design and decided to major in it.

One day, the themes of his life converged when he saw a video of a blind man at a soccer match following the game through touch on a game board. His hands were guided by a sighted woman who was watching the game below.

“That’s when I started thinking about how technology and design could perhaps contribute and amplify that sort of experience for other people with blindness or low vision,” Mace says.

He co-founded OneCourt, a startup developing technology that enables visually impaired people to enjoy live sports by translating game play into trackable vibrations.

This innovation helped land Mace a spot in this year’s Husky 100 and warranted inclusion in a *Fast Company* article on ways that computer vision can improve lives. He and co-founders Antyush Bollini, Andrew Buckingham and Nick Durand have committed to pursue OneCourt after graduation, supported by a grant from Microsoft’s AI for Accessibility program.

Mace’s early success and the considerable promise of OneCourt have been catalyzed by an extraordinary entrepreneurial ecosystem that is rooted at the Foster School of Business and stretches across the University of Washington and beyond.

FOUR MAIN HUBS

Each year, hundreds of innovation-minded students like Mace—studying management, engineering, computer science, public health and anything else under the sun—develop skill sets and cultivate business ideas within this sprawling ecosystem. The opportunities are endless. From paper-napkin brainstorming to startup launch, students find endless support to develop business plans and grow as founders.



Greg Newbloom (left) with the original Membrion team, champions of the 2017 UW Business Plan Competition (now called the Dempsey Startup Competition).

The entrepreneurial ecosystem at Foster has four main nodes:

The comprehensive **Arthur W. Buerk Center for Entrepreneurship** is one of the oldest and most respected centers of its kind in the country, serving innovative undergraduate and graduate students across the University of Washington.

The **Lavin Entrepreneurship Program**, a Buerk Center co-curricular program, engages a select cohort of undergraduate entrepreneurs in a motivated community of peers where programming builds entrepreneurial skills and personal networks.

The **Master of Science in Entrepreneurship Program** immerses advanced entrepreneurs in a hybrid of new-venture accelerator and targeted MBA.

Creative Destruction Lab-Seattle, part of an international network, offers a unique accelerator for early-stage startups and an indelible experiential opportunity for embedded students.

“We all understand the richness of experiential learning and cross-program networking,” says Samantha Ogle, director of the MS in Entrepreneurship Program. “So, we help students connect with valuable opportunities at Foster and across the UW campus.”

CENTER OF EVERYTHING

For many students, the journey begins at the Buerk Center. Critical to its efforts to build young entrepreneurs from the ground up, Buerk annually hosts three competitions for undergraduate and graduate students and an accelerator for recent graduates. Since 1998, these programs have awarded \$4.5 million in seed money to

students. The challenges are open to students at colleges across the Cascade Corridor—Washington, Oregon, Idaho, British Columbia, as well as Alaska.

One of the many success stories is Greg Newbloom (PhD 2014), the founder and CEO of Membrion, a tech firm that uses ceramic membranes to recycle and reuse wastewater. Newbloom, who earned his doctorate in chemical engineering at the UW, met his company's earliest investors at Buerk competitions and placed first in the 2017 Dempsey Startup Competition. These days he volunteers as a judge, alongside hundreds of the region's entrepreneurs and investors.

"The competitions really were about building my entrepreneurial/early investor network, having my ideas challenged and refined, and learning how to effectively communicate my ideas," Newbloom says.

In over 25 years, more than 6,400 students on 2,200 teams have competed in the Dempsey. Nearly 250 of those teams have earned funding totaling about \$2 million.

The more specialized Alaska Airlines Environmental Innovation Challenge and Hollomon Health Innovation Challenge play on regional economic strengths. Challenges like these encourage students to see wider applications for solutions they're developing in the lab or field—and they foster a wide range of ideas.

The ideas that have advanced into early stage startups are accepted in the Jones + Foster Accelerator, a six-month postgraduate program for advanced student startups.

Newbloom calls Jones + Foster "one of the single most valuable programs I have participated in as an entrepreneur, and I have done a lot of accelerators. The Buerk Center has such an incredible network, and they built me a bespoke mentoring team that really helped me to connect the dots on a lot of critical business elements."

THE LAVIN LEAP

One of the many offshoots of the Buerk Center is its Lavin Entrepreneurship Program. The selective program of specialized coursework and experiential challenges serves highly entrepreneurial UW undergraduate students in all disciplines. And it runs through their entire UW undergraduate experience. Most Lavin students compete in one or more Buerk Center competitions.

They also find affinity groups in the many other organizations and opportunities also focused on entrepreneurship and innovation at the UW.

After not getting into the Lavin Program in his first year at the UW, Mace immersed himself in every entrepreneurial opportunity and activity he could find, including the Buerk Center's Build Your Own Business (BYOB) workshop, a drop-in program for undergrads in all disciplines to share their ideas for a product or service with local entrepreneur coaches.

"I benefited greatly from that support," he says. "Entrepreneurs in this area seem to want to give back and it's usually with their time and experience."

Mace got into the Lavin program his sophomore year and embraced a new idea more in line with his interests. After winning the UW Science and Technology Showcase, he presented his pitch at an all-student Lavin meeting, and other students with complementing skills in tech innovation strategy, computer science and engineering stepped forward.

The result of this collaboration was a third place prize at the Hollomon Health Innovation Challenge and another third at the Dempsey Startup Competition, plus a coveted spot in the Jones + Foster Accelerator.

"Lavin became invaluable to me," Mace says. "I started having these very large roundtable discussions with people who I wanted to work with. Building a team was so easy because it reflected the energy and excitement around the idea."

CROSS-POLLINATION, BY DESIGN

This cross-pollination of different disciplines is one of the hallmarks of entrepreneurship at the UW, says Amy Sallin, director of the Buerk Center.

"For students, their journey is not linear," she says. "They're in all areas of the innovation sandbox of the university. It's not just the Foster School."

A variety of backgrounds fuels the strongest teams. More than a good business idea, investors see future success in companies whose leaders work well together and reflect a mix of cultures, perspectives, experiences, interests and genders.

Foster's Entrepreneurship Minor and Technology Entrepreneurship Certificate programs, which draw hundreds of students in a wide range of disciplines from across campus, are built with that in mind.

"We make sure these classes have that kind of diversity of thought," Sallin says.

Creative problem-solving pervades UW's entrepreneurship efforts. Even students who view



André Stone (top, bottom right) leveraged the MS in Entrepreneurship network to recruit a team from across the UW to found nomi.



business with a wary eye become “entre-curious” when they realize the social and cultural impact they can make.

“We reach out to those students across campus who don’t see themselves as entrepreneurs,” Sallin adds. “This is a skill set everyone should learn. You develop the tools to see a problem and come up with a unique solution.”

MASTERS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Students in the MS in Entrepreneurship Program bring with them an innovation mindset and a deep curiosity to solve problems.

The program is designed to equip and empower them to become successful and insightful entrepreneurs. Over an intensive year, a founder-focused curriculum builds a foundation for real-time application as students develop business ideas that they either brought to Foster or created with classmates once there.

More than just time to focus on building a business, the program also provides an all-access pass to a larger entrepreneurial world. Its hallmark of concentric communities places the program’s diverse and cohesive cohort of students at the center of a vibrant suite of entrepreneurship resources across Foster and the UW and a remarkably collaborative Seattle entrepreneurial ecosystem.

“The bonds of these communities are strong,” Ogle says. “MS Entre students have access to talent and technologies across a major public research university within a thriving innovation hub.”

André Stone (BS 2015, MS 2023) is one such student. After studying engineering at the UW to make lives better through innovative products, he came to realize that building great products is only half the equation.

He sought the MS in Entrepreneurship to get the other half. Taking advantage of every aspect of the program, he assembled a multidisciplinary team from across the UW to help him develop nomi, an adorable biofeedback “petbot” that helps its owner manage stress. After leading nomi to the “sweet sixteen” of the Dempsey Startup Competition and the Jones + Foster Accelerator, he’s determined to take it to market.

“Coming into the program, I didn’t have confidence in my ability to lead a business,” Stone says. “Going through it, I feel way more equipped, more prepared

to not only run a company, but also to direct it with purpose.”

CREATIVE DESTRUCTION

Creative Destruction Lab-Seattle is driven by purpose. Part of an international network, CDL-Seattle is an accelerator for early stage startups with massive market potential to innovate in the areas of computational health and advanced manufacturing. It’s a partnership of the Foster School and the UW College of Engineering, Paul G. Allen School of Computer Science & Engineering and CoMotion, the hub for commercializing UW technologies.

The emerging companies are based around the country and sometimes the world. Referred by mentors and VCs, they first work with CDL staff to prepare for periodic session days, the highlight of the program. Morning small-group meetings with top-level mentors are followed by a gathering of all ventures, mentors and advanced Foster students.

“It’s like a live case study on steroids,” says Emer Dooley, CDL’s site lead and the Charlene M. and Arthur W. Buerk Endowed Faculty Fellow at Foster.

CDL sessions are not a pitch, but rather a platform for moderated, frank discussions between founders and mentors, one company at a time. From each round, mentors pick which companies they’ll work with for the next eight weeks. Even companies not chosen to continue walk away with valuable guidance.

Most of the companies are poised to raise millions but are led by deeply technical teams that need help with financials and marketing. UW students in a parallel CDL course are embedded with one of the startups to provide that early market and financial research. They get a front-row seat at discussions and a chance to ask their own questions when mentors visit class.

It makes an indelible impression on students like Suleiny Altamirano (MS 2023), a recent MS in Entrepreneurship grad who led Tizana Mexicana, her online marketplace for Mexican art and artists, to the Dempsey Startup Competition’s Saara Romu Community Impact Prize and a berth in the Jones + Foster Accelerator. She says her time spent inside a CDL startup rounded the comprehensive entrepreneurial education she experienced at Foster.

“Every founder, every mentor has a journey,” says Altamirano. “And that’s something to learn from as well.”



Suleiny Altamirano (right), with her Tizana teammates, experienced everything that the Buerk Center, MS in Entrepreneurship and CDL-Seattle has to offer.

GOLDEN TICKET

Being in the room with entrepreneurs who were once in their shoes, many of them UW alumni, is a direct outgrowth of the way all points in the ecosystem work together: collaborating on ideas and spinning out new programs.

It's a form of entrepreneurship itself. The result: a calendar bursting with workshops, hackathons and competitions of all kinds and sizes, plus a network of alumni and founders eager to help, Sallin says.

"We always called it the *golden ticket*, being a UW student. You can call anybody—literally anybody—in Seattle, whether they're a CEO of a big company like

Expedia or somebody with their own little company with a few people. They will always take your call and they will have time for you."

Newbloom, of Membrion, says that the interconnected teams who run these programs and center and lab make this possible:

"Anything I needed help on, I could ask and they would know the exact right person to connect me with. I haven't met a more incredible team focused on empowering students."

HONOR ROLL

FOSTER FACULTY HAVE EARNED NUMEROUS AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND APPOINTMENTS FOR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH, TEACHING AND LEADERSHIP OVER THE PAST YEAR

Christopher Barnes, the Michael G. Foster Endowed Professor of Management, was elected a Fellow of the Society for Organizational Behavior.

Philip Bond, a professor of finance and the Edward E. Carlson Distinguished Professor in Business Administration, was elected to the board of directors of the Financial Intermediation Research Society.

Mark Forehand, a professor of marketing and the Pigott Family Professor in Business Administration, received the Benedict Steenkamp Award for Long Term Impact from the European Marketing Academy.

Weili Ge, the Moss Adams Endowed Professor of Accounting, began her appointment as editor of *Contemporary Accounting Research*.

Stephanie Grant, the Deloitte & Touche Endowed Professor in Accounting, served as an academic fellow in the Office of the Chief Accountant at the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and was named editor of *Accounting Horizons*.

Andrew Hafenbrack, an associate professor of management and organization and Evert McCabe Endowed Faculty Fellow, was named a Fulbright Scholar.

Jarrad Harford, a professor of finance and the Paul Pigott-PACCAR Professor in Business Administration, was elected vice-president of program in the Financial Management Association and received a Best Paper Award from the Eastern Finance Association.

Chris Hrdlicka, an associate professor of finance and business economics and Carol Batchelder Endowed Finance Faculty Fellow, was named one of the "Favorite MBA Professors of the Class of 2023" by Poets & Quants.

Jonathan Karpoff, a professor of finance and business economics and the Washington Mutual Endowed Chair in Innovation, was appointed to the council of the Society for Financial Studies and the ethics committee of the Financial Management Association International.

Charles M. C. Lee, the Kermit O. Hanson Professor in Accounting, served as keynote speaker at the 2023 Hawaii Accounting Research Conference.



Dawn Matsumoto (pictured above), the Marion B. Ingersoll Professor of Accounting, began her appointment as editor of *The Accounting Review*.

Leela Nageswaran, an assistant professor of operations management, was named one of the "Top 50 Undergraduate Professors of 2022" by Poets & Quants.

Emily Pahnke, an associate professor of management and organization and the Lawrence P. Hughes Endowed Professor of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, won the Best Entrepreneurship Research Award from the Karl Schlecht Foundation/G-Forum.

Robert Palmatier, the John C. Narver Endowed Professor in Business Administration, won the Louis W. Stern Award from the American Marketing Association, the Jagdish N. Sheth Award from the Academy of Marketing Sciences, and was ranked the #6 most productive marketing scholar of the past decade by the AMA.

Shawn Shi, an assistant professor of accounting, received the Best Reviewer Award at the 2023 Hawaii Accounting Research Conference.

Masha Shunko, an associate professor of operations management, served as the "Featured Thought Leader" at the C-Suite Assembly on Transforming the Digital Enterprise, hosted by The Millennium Alliance and Digital Supply Chain Transformation.

Stephan Siegel, the Michael G. Foster Endowed Professor of Finance, won the WRDS Award for the year's best empirical finance paper from the Western Finance Association and also began his term as managing editor of the *Journal of Finance and Quantitative Analysis* (JFQA).

Yang Song, the Norman J. Metcalfe Endowed Professor in Finance, was named associate editor of *Management Science*.

David Tan, an associate professor of management and Michael G. Foster Endowed Fellow, was listed among the “Best 40 Under 40 MBA Professors” by Poets & Quants.

Yong Tan, the Michael G. Foster Endowed Professor of Information Systems, was elected to the Washington State Academy of Sciences and ranked #1 in the world in the Association of Information Systems research index.

Esther Uduehi (pictured above), an assistant professor of marketing and international business, was named one of the “Top 50 Undergraduate Professors of 2022” by Poets & Quants.



Francesca Valsesia, an assistant professor of marketing and Evert McCabe Endowed Fellow, was named a 2023 Marketing Science Institute Young Scholar.

Hema Yoganarasimhan (pictured below), a professor of marketing and Michael G. Foster Faculty Fellow, received the Marketing Science Service Award for excellence in the associate editor role, from the INFORMS Society for Marketing Science.



STELLAR SCHOLARS

FOSTER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS FACULTY

#12

IN THE WORLD

For research productivity in the top 50 scholarly journals representing every business discipline, according to the latest Financial Times research index.

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

#4

IN THE WORLD

For research productivity over the past three years in the discipline of information systems by the Association for Information Systems.

DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING

#10

IN THE NATION

For accounting research published in the discipline's top 12 journals over the past six years and #2 for its contributions to the field of financial accounting, according to the BYU Accounting Rankings.

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

#10

IN THE WORLD

For research productivity in the top four marketing journals over the past decade, according to an American Marketing Association index. Foster is #6 in the world for its publication record over the past five years.

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION

#12

IN THE NATION

For research productivity over the past five years in the discipline's eight most influential journals, according to an annual index compiled by Texas A&M and the University of Georgia.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ECONOMICS

#14

IN THE WORLD

In the ASU Finance Research Rankings for its 2022 publication record in the discipline's top-five journals. Foster also was listed #13 in the world for its research productivity over the past decade.

THE POWER OF THE POWWOW

FOSTER UNDERGRAD ANNICETTE GILLIAM RECONNECTS WITH HER NATIVE HERITAGE THROUGH FIRST NATIONS @ UW AND ITS ANNUAL SPRING POWWOW

By Ed Kromer

Annicette Gilliam (BA 2023) contains multitudes.

A fresh graduate of the UW, Gilliam studied accounting, information systems, history and environmental science. She was a Hovind Global Leader at Foster and a mentor in its Young Executives of Color Program. She worked with the Foster Advancement team and interned at PwC, the Seattle Fire Department and Seattle Public Library. And she volunteered with a range of organizations working for social equity and climate justice. Even her cultural makeup is eclectic, a mix of Vietnamese, white and Native American heritage.

But the circumstances of a challenging youth obscured the Native aspect of Gilliam's identity for most of her life.

Her mother is affiliated with the Kiowa Tribe of the Great Plains, though her upbringing in Washington state led to connections in the Yakama Nation and Suquamish Tribe.

Years later, when she found herself raising three children on her own in South Everett and North Seattle, the struggle to survive took precedence over heritage. Annicette Gilliam recalls her mother was "always working or trying to recover from working," usually in tribal casinos that required long commutes and longer hours, often overnight.

She eventually sacrificed solid casino wages for lower-paying jobs that would allow her to be more present for her kids. But finances got even tighter. While Annicette Gilliam was in middle school, her family became homeless, couch-surfing with friends and living out of a car while relying on assistance from organizations like Mary's Place.



"When you're supporting a family on a low income, there is very little time or energy for recreation, cultural events or even visits to relatives," Gilliam says. "We became disconnected, and I grew up so detached from the Native community that I did not consider myself Native. It did not feel like my mother's ancestry had passed on to me."


RECONNECTING THROUGH LOSS

This changed after the death of Gilliam's older brother, whose baby photo was borne in a Kiowa cradleboard at his memorial. At this time, with Gilliam beginning her studies at the UW, her mother decided to move with her younger brother to the Suquamish reservation so that they could live among friends and family.

Gilliam was happy for her mother and brother to be part of a Native community again, but also envious, because she had never had the opportunity.

The way she viewed herself, however, had forever expanded. "I realized that whether I engaged with our culture or not," she says, "it did not change the fact that my family is Native."

She decided to engage. In a big way. With the help of Foster's Undergraduate Diversity Services, Gilliam found a supportive



community that “motivated me to get involved on a deeper level.”

She joined the Native Business Association at Foster. And, to reconnect with and learn more about her Native heritage, last year she joined First Nations @ UW, the intertribal undergraduate organization—just in time to experience its annual Spring Powwow.

“I signed up to volunteer for a few hours,” she recalls. “But after my shift was done, I didn’t want to leave.”

Gilliam was mesmerized by the performances, especially the Grand Entry. She browsed the many Native vendors and sampled the traditional foods. “It was exciting to be part of a team that was able to gather the entire community together,” she says.

The experience motivated her to put her business and communications skills to use. Gilliam chaired the fundraising committee for the 2023 Spring Powwow—the largest student-run event (by budget) at the UW. And she brought in nearly double the fundraising goal.

A TRADITION OF SHARED CULTURE

The tradition of powwows was established after Indigenous tribes were forced onto reservations, often confined to the same undesirable territories. Powwows were a means of gathering Native peoples to compete through performance and share each other’s culture and art—in a spirit of respect and unity—during an incredibly dark period of Indigenous history.

The UW Spring Powwow began in 1971. It was originally hosted by the American Indian Student Commission. In 1989, organization of the Powwow turned over to the newly formed First Nations, the primary student organization supporting the development of Native students at the UW.

The 2023 First Nations Spring Powwow—the 52nd hosted by UW students—took place in April at Alaska Airlines Arena. This convocation of Native people from multiple tribes and nations featured music, dance, art, crafts, food and colorful regalia.

ALL ARE WELCOME

Though the First Nations Spring Powwow is a celebration of Native culture, Gilliam emphasizes that the event is not only for Native people.

She adds the notion that Native arts and cultural events are meant to be engaged by Native people alone is a misunderstanding that typically comes from a place of respect from non-Native people. “The reality,” she says, “is

that we want the public to be knowledgeable of our cultures and traditions.”

WIDER KNOWLEDGE, SHE BELIEVES, WILL BE VITAL TO THE VERY SURVIVAL AND EVOLUTION OF NORTH AMERICA’S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, WHOSE MARGINALIZATION IS COMPARATIVELY RECENT IN THE VAST SPAN OF THEIR HISTORY.

This reality hit home for Gilliam while traveling in Italy, of all places, through Foster’s Hovind Global Leaders Program. She was struck by the words of a tour guide, who pointed out that anything occurring in the past 400 years is considered *new* to Romans, the descendants of an ancient civilization. The insight helped her see the comparatively brief history of the United States in a new perspective.

“In the context of history, the colonization of the United States and Pacific Northwest is extremely new and still being processed by Native communities across the continent,” Gilliam says. “Yet our presence has been diminished so severely that it is common for Americans to believe Indigenous people are historical people, rather than a community that is continuously evolving and learning to thrive in the new nation we’ve been enveloped into.”

The annual Spring Powwow, the **wəṭəbʔaltx**™ – Intellectual House, the Native plants of the UW Medicinal Garden, the Guest from the Great River exhibit leading to Indigenous collections at the Burke Museum, the works of Native artists in Founders Hall—all of these are expressions of a living culture on the UW campus. And their creators and curators wish to share them with the broadest audience possible.

“When people from outside our communities put in the effort to attend our events and learn about our cultures,” adds Gilliam, who joined PwC after graduation, “it shows their support for our struggles and gives us solace that our traditions will continue to be taught to younger generations.”



**AUTHOR JUSTIN ANGLE EXAMINES THE CONUNDRUM OF WILDFIRE IN A WARMING WORLD—
AND HOW WE CAN MITIGATE THE RISK MORE EFFECTIVELY**

By Ed Kromer

THIS IS WILDFIRE

Justin Angle (MBA 2006, PhD 2012) has mixed feelings about Smokey Bear.

The U.S. Forest Service's friendly, furry mascot certainly deserves praise for inspiring personal responsibility ("Only YOU can prevent forest fires"). But Angle, a professor of marketing and the author of "This is Wildfire," has also come to view Smokey as a manifestation of the nation's misguided approach to wildland fire over much of the past century. A symbol of suppression.

"Fire is a natural part of the landscape, a natural part of ecosystems, and it has been since the planet has had stuff to burn," Angle says. "It wasn't until the last 100 or so years that the notion of suppressing fire on a wide scale began dominating the popular culture."

In his new book, Angle argues that this uncompromising policy, coupled with a rapidly warming climate and populations living ever deeper into wilderness, has produced conditions primed for the kinds of megafires that, in recent years, have scorched vast landscapes and spewed toxic smoke across the continent. But he also proposes practical ways we can mitigate the risk as individuals, as communities, as a nation.

More on Smokey's checkered legacy later. But first, you may be wondering, how does a marketing professor know so much about wildfire?

INTO THE FIRE

Angle began his career as a bond trader before earning his MBA and PhD at the UW Foster School of Business. He joined the faculty of the University of Montana in 2012. A competitive ultra-marathoner and lover of the outdoors, Angle was drawn to the epic landscapes around his new home.

But that first year in Missoula saw a particularly intense fire season, with a heavy incursion of smoke, which was new to Angle. The risk hasn't relented.

"In the time I've been here, I've experienced climate change in real time," says Angle, "both in terms of changing weather patterns and landscapes, and the severity of fires."

Now a professor of marketing and Poe Distinguished Faculty Fellow at the UM College of Business, Angle has diverged from his studies of branding, identity and consumer behavior in search of insights from social psychology that will guide people toward better choices for the planet.

To address one of the biggest challenges facing his place on the planet, he immersed himself in wildfire, studying its history, policy and strategy. He connected with faculty in the UM College of Forestry and Conservation. Collaborated with the nearby National Fire Lab. Came to know the elite corps of

wildland firefighters known as “Smokejumpers.” “It became immediately clear that Montana is an epicenter for some of the most important work on fire,” Angle says. “And I wanted to understand it better.”

He explored the topic in the long-running public affairs program, “A New Angle,” that he hosts for Montana Public Radio. In 2021, he and producer Nick Mott spun off a podcast series called “Fireline,” which won a national Edward R. Murrow Award. Angle and Mott followed up this year with “This is Wildfire: How to Protect Yourself, Your Home, and Your Community in the Age of Heat.”

Angle says this stream of work addresses “a need for more translational scholarship, taking complex issues like wildfire and helping the public understand not only what’s happening, but potentially their role in the solution.”

HISTORY OF SUPPRESSION

It begins with a history lesson. Fire has always played a key role in the organic cycle of life, death and rebirth across North America. “Indigenous populations lived in coexistence with fire for millennia,” Angle says. “They respected it as a natural part of shaping the landscape and used it to actively manage spaces for crops, travel and hunting.”

Besides recognizing the value of naturally occurring fires, tribes practiced a periodic technique known as “cultural burning” to revitalize their lands and the plants and animals that lived on them.

But this respectful coexistence ended abruptly in 1910, when a rail spark ignited a conflagration that decimated three million acres across a swath of Washington, British Columbia, Idaho and Montana, sending smoke all the way to the East Coast.

After the “Big Burn,” the nascent U.S. Forest Service, a branch of the Department of Agriculture, adopted a strict policy of suppression to protect the nation’s natural resources. It banned the practice of controlled burning and enforced “harsh punishments for putting fire into the landscape or allowing existing fires to burn,” Angle says. “The history of suppressing fire is also one of suppressing culture.”

THE PROBLEM WITH SMOKEY

A few decades later, the Forest Service collaborated with the Ad Council to animate a beloved—and seemingly benign—forest ranger named Smokey Bear.

Smokey proved to be an extremely effective pitchman for the federal government’s aggressive policy of wildfire suppression. And the populace was lulled into a false sense of security.

“We got really good at putting out fires,” Angle explains. “So good, that the average citizen started to assume that the government would always put out fires, that we were safe to build our homes wherever and of whatever materials we wanted.”



Justin Angle, co-author of *This is Wildfire*. Photo by Tommy Martino, courtesy of University of Montana Marketing & Communications.



More and more people migrated to wildland areas—some for the quiet and views, others to escape exorbitant costs of urban living. All the while, rising temperatures were drying overgrown landscapes, turning trees into tinder.

“And the stage is set,” Angle says, “for these massive, uncontrollable fires we’re seeing now.”

COURSE CORRECTION

Along with bigger blazes, wildfire season is now 80 days longer than it was three decades ago.

Can this trend be reversed? Not so long as we continue our reliance on fossil fuels and keep approaching wildfire like a medical system that treats only symptoms, never the cause, according to Angle. “We throw so much money at suppression that there’s not a lot left for forest management, thinning projects and prescribed burns.”

He believes that flipping that equation would make a huge difference. Experts like Susan Prichard, a fire ecologist at the UW School of Environmental and Forest Sciences, have demonstrated that a strategy of prescribed burning and vegetation thinning is the most effective way to prevent big, uncontrollable fires.

At a more local level, Angle says that we need to think harder about where and how we build—or rebuild after disaster. State and local governments can enact stricter construction regulations. Incentives could be built into insurance and mortgage lending markets.

Some clear-eyed economic analysis wouldn’t hurt, either.

“The cost of doing a prescribed burn or thinning project is minuscule relative to the cost of a town burning to the ground,” Angle says. “And that’s before even talking about the loss of lives.”

A TURNING POINT?

The scale of fires that have burned across the west in the past few years is nearly unfathomable. This year, blazes burned 45 million acres across the belly of Canada, spewing smoke that choked the skies across an enormous swath of the Midwest, East Coast and Southeast. On Maui, we watched in horror as a wind-borne brushfire consumed the historic town of Lahaina in a matter of minutes.

“These mega fires are terrifying. And once they get to that size, there’s really little we can do,” Angle says. “But there are things we can do to prevent those types of events. And there are things we can do to make our homes and communities more resilient.”

He views fire as a solvable problem. Because we’ve solved it before. Most American cities were decimated by fire at some point in their early history. “Cities used to be devastated regularly by fire. But we changed building codes, materials and practices. And cities became much safer,” Angle says. “We can apply some of those same principles to wildfire—if we can build widespread political will.”

He wonders if the past few years will be a wake-up call to the reality that wildfire affects everyone, in every region.

“Maybe this year will be a turning point,” he says. “I certainly hope it is.”

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Smokey Bear is right about one thing: we can all take more responsibility for our lives and homes in the event of fire. “Thinking of your home as a source of fuel and about how fire can be delivered is an important mindset to adopt,” says Angle.

If you live in an area vulnerable to fire, he suggests taking actions to “harden” your home:

- Consider your property as a concentric set of rings of defense.
- Remove anything on, under or against the house that could serve as fuel.
- Clean gutters and roof; trim trees or remove shrubs that touch the house.
- Replace wooden roofing.
- Collaborate with neighbors; devise a fire plan.

If you experience an incursion of wildfire smoke, he recommends that you:

- Understand that airborne particulates are dangerous—especially to those with pre-existing respiratory conditions.
- Seek credible measures of air quality.
- Close windows and storm windows.
- Use a HEPA filter or make one with a furnace filter and box fan.
- Stay indoors if you are able.
- Wear an N95 mask when you have to be outside.

CLASS OF 2023

RYAN ALLEN



Assistant Professor of Management and Organization – earned his PhD from Harvard Business School – won best paper awards at Strategy Science and Strategic Management Society Conferences, and the Wharton Innovation Doctoral Symposium – studies strategy

and innovation, organizational theory and data-driven decision making – teaching Strategic Management at Foster – fun fact: despite raising four kids with his wife, still finds time to climb and mountain bike, and has his eye on Mount Rainier.

LÉONARD BOUSSIOUX



Assistant Professor of Information Systems and Operations Management – earned his PhD from MIT – studies AI, machine learning and optimization, healthcare operations, environmental sustainability and analytics for social good – won the Zetta Prize, Goodwin

Medal and Graduate Student Council Teaching Award at MIT – was an AI PhD resident at GoogleX Moonshot Factory – teaching Analytics, Data Science, Machine Learning, AI, Operations Research at Foster – fun fact: is an avid bird watcher and nature photographer.

JESSICA (HUISI) LI



Assistant Professor of Management and Organization – earned her PhD at Cornell University – Joined Foster from Georgia Institute of Technology, where she was an assistant professor in organizational behavior – studies status and power, diverse teams and

employee turnover – won a Best Student Paper Award from the Academy of Management – teaching Organizational Behavior and Staffing at Foster – fun fact: a painter, cook and baker, she used to write blogs viewed millions of times.

XU LU



Assistant Professor of Finance – earned her PhD from Stanford Graduate School of Business – studies asset pricing, macro-finance/financial intermediation and household finance – teaching Banking and the Financial System at Foster – fun fact: an avid cyclist, counts uphill rides among her favorite activities.

MEET THE FOSTER SCHOOL'S SEVEN NEW TENURE-TRACK FACULTY MEMBERS

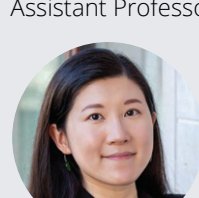
SURESH NALLAREDDY



The Durwood L. Akire Endowed Professor of Accounting – earned his PhD at USC – Joined Foster from Duke University and Columbia University, where he was an associate and assistant professor of accounting,

respectively – studies accounting information and the macroeconomy, accounting information and asset prices, and empirical asset pricing – won the PhD Achievement Award and Mary Pickford Foundation Doctoral Teaching Award at USC – serves on the editorial board of *The Accounting Review* and *Contemporary Accounting Research* – teaching Financial Reporting and Analysis at Foster – fun fact: would be a software engineer if not an accounting professor.

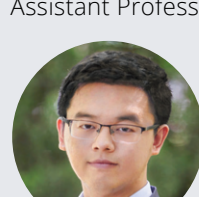
MING ZHU WANG



Assistant Professor of Strategy and Entrepreneurship – earned her PhD at Washington University (St. Louis) – studies entrepreneurship, confidence biases and competitive strategy – won the Best Paper Award (Strategic Entrepreneurship Track) and the Litschert Best

Doctoral Student Paper Award at Academy of Management Meetings – teaching Introduction to Entrepreneurship at Foster – fun fact: raised in a small town in Japan, she recently became a U.S. citizen.

ZIKUN YE



Assistant Professor of Marketing and International Business – earned his PhD from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign – studies digital platforms, machine learning and data-driven decision making – worked as a data analyst at Walmart Global

Tech – won a Best Paper Award (second prize) from the Chinese Scholars Association for Management Science and Engineering – teaching Analytics for Marketing Decisions at Foster – fun fact: simultaneously learning to ski and K-pop dance.

YEAR OF MAGENTA

THE FOSTER SCHOOL AND T-MOBILE STRIKE UP A POWERFUL PARTNERSHIP IN SUPPORT OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

By Ed Kromer

There are some who would tell you that Husky Purple clashes with T-Mobile Magenta.

Frank Hodge is not one of them.

Over the past academic year, Hodge, the Orin & Janet Smith Dean of the Foster School of Business, witnessed an extraordinary partnership arise with a local company that has grown into a "big three" wireless carrier. And "big" describes everything T-Mobile does, from its bold branding to its nation's largest and fastest 5G network to its outsize commitment to the community it calls home.

In the past year, T-Mobile went big in its support of the Foster community, committing \$100,000 in support of experiential learning in many forms.

"Community is about building connections," says Hodge. "And we couldn't be prouder of our connection with T-Mobile, a wonderful partner in providing time, talent and resources. Together, we are both striving to build all kinds of inclusive communities and better humanity through business."

THE MATCHMAKER

Credit for brokering this partnership goes to Kelvin Westbrook (BA 1977), the president and CEO of KRW Advisors who also happens to serve on the boards of both the Foster School and T-Mobile.

As a director of a public company, Westbrook views his role as leveraging his skills and judgment to help increase firm value—which includes community engagement. As an advisor to a top 20 business school, his role is leveraging his network and resources to advance the mission.

So, introducing parties with mutual purpose and interests made perfect sense. "T-Mobile has always impressed me as the sort of organization that is focused on community engagement and improvement, especially through education," says Westbrook, chair of the Foster Advisory Board. "And with my association with the Foster board and understanding of what the school is trying to accomplish, I thought the two were a natural fit. I'm glad people took to the idea, and I'm delighted to see the partnership grow. And I hope it continues to flourish."

EXPERIENCING FOSTER

Foster's "year of magenta" began last October, when T-Mobile stepped up as the presenting partner at the school's Business Leadership Celebration.

The event assembled local dignitaries—keynoters Brad Smith of Microsoft and Fritzky Chair Joanne Harrell (BA 1976, MBA 1979), plus Distinguished Leadership Awardees Betti Fujikado (BA 1977) and Ken Denman (MBA 1986)—to share leadership insights from their own experiences with hundreds of Foster alumni and students in attendance.

T-Mobile led by example, pacing a coalition of corporate and individual partners to raise more than \$430,000 in support of experiential learning at Foster. This includes everything from board service to student organizations to case competitions to entrepreneurship contests to consulting projects to international study.

"T-Mobile is very much a values-driven company," remarked Mike Katz, the company's chief marketing officer. "And we share a lot of those values—especially diversity and equal opportunity—with the University of Washington and the Foster School of Business."



T-Mobile CMO Mike Katz (right) with Microsoft's Brad Smith, Dubs and Dean Frank Hodge at the 2022 UW Business Leadership Celebration.

W FOSTER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



T-Mobile CEO Mike Sievert addresses Foster grads.

He added, “We’re excited to continue to partner with the Foster School, because we know it’s bringing up the next generation of innovators and disruptors. We know the entire community benefits from that.”

EXPANDING GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

A healthy tranche of T-Mobile’s support went to the Foster School’s Global Business Center and, specifically, its annual Global Business Case Competition (GBCC). Held in person for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic, this event brings student teams from a dozen top business schools around the globe for a week of cultural exchange, professional development and networking ahead of an intense real-world competition.

“Study abroad is incredibly powerful as a transformational learning opportunity,” says Kirsten Aoyama, director of the Global Business Center. “But with this flagship event, we bring the world to Foster. And having a marquee firm like T-Mobile among our partners is a huge draw for students everywhere.”

T-Mobile supported GBCC operations and especially its “culture day,” which culminated in all participants sharing the cultures, customs and regalia of their home nations in a spirited gathering at the UW’s *wetab?altx* – Intellectual House.

For the Foster students who served as organizers and ambassadors, this global endeavor was a great opportunity to exercise leadership and growth.

“Seeing my team’s efforts to build meaningful cross-cultural relationships come to fruition instilled a great deal of confidence that choosing international business as my academic path was the right decision,” says Alicia Ing, co-chair of the 2023 GBCC. “It was a true honor to be a small part of the GBCC legacy, and I hope that community and corporate partners like T-Mobile continue to generously support these types of experiential learning for students.”

ADVANCING CUSTOMER ANALYTICS

T-Mobile’s support extended to more advanced students as well. An infusion of computing and data resources is supporting the efforts of Foster’s Customer Analytics Center to apply academic rigor to real-world data problems facing corporate clients.

This cutting-edge work is conducted by associated Foster faculty and, especially, graduate students. The next generation of data science thought leaders are developing at Foster.

“The grad students working at the center benefit from both additional resources and exposure to real-world analytics problems that executives and managers face,” says Hema Yoganarasimhan, a professor of marketing and founding director of the Customer Analytics Center.

“This can help and encourage our students to develop solutions to the most challenging problems faced by firms, which, in turn, can feed back into firms as solutions, hopefully creating a virtuous cycle of engagement.”

CONSULTING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

A third major benefactor of T-Mobile support is Foster's Consulting and Business Development Center (CBDC), which received new or renewed funding for its experiential student consulting and executive and business education programs. This included a significant infusion of resources to further the center's mission of accelerating the growth of businesses owned by people of color or in underserved communities.

Working with T-Mobile's supplier diversity program enabled the center to launch a new initiative with national reach that combines business education from Foster School faculty with MBA student projects. The goal is helping companies grow their revenues above \$10 million.

Beginning in 2023, T-Mobile also began underwriting the center's longstanding student consulting program, enabling more than 100 Foster undergrads to apply what they learn in the classroom to help small businesses create or capture new opportunities.

"Since 2019, T-Mobile has partnered with us to accelerate the growth of businesses owned by people of color and other underserved businesses," says Michael Verchot, director of the CBDC and national lead of the Ascend network. "Through T-Mobile's support, our students are

learning to solve real-world, unstructured challenges while helping companies grow revenues."

PUNCTUATING A YEAR AT FOSTER

If T-Mobile CMO Mike Katz kicked off Foster's "year of magenta" in October, CEO Mike Sievert brought it home in June with his address to the graduates of Foster's class of 2023.

Sievert shared experiences from his own career and from the rise of the "Un-Carrier" to the top of a crowded wireless industry.

The atomic center of his advice to students was composed of two simple, guiding questions to ask themselves throughout their lives. "Today, as graduates, you're at a crossroads," Sievert said. "For the first time, you have the complete freedom to ask 'what if?' and 'why not?' every day, to chart your course, and to define what success looks like to you."

In the past year, Kelvin Westbrook, T-Mobile and the Foster School asked "what if?" and "why not?" And a potent partnership for experiential learning began.



T-Mobile supported student consulting projects through the Consulting and Business Development Center.



ASCENDANT ANALYTICS

SIMHA MUMMALANENI, AN EXPERT GUIDE TO DATA-DRIVEN MARKETING, WINS THE 2023 PACCAR AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

Tackling the most technical of topics may not be an obvious path to teaching awards.

Yet a rarefied expertise at guiding students through the esoteric complexities of customer and digital marketing analytics is *precisely* what earned Simha Mummalaneni, an assistant professor of marketing at the Foster School, the 2023 PACCAR Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Foster's highest teaching honor was established in 1998 by PACCAR Inc, the Fortune 200 global technology company based in Bellevue, Washington. The PACCAR Award's annual recipient is selected by Foster MBAs.

Mummalaneni, a former data scientist at Twitter, joined Foster in 2016 after earning his PhD in marketing from Northwestern University. He is a distinguished faculty fellow of Foster's Customer Analytics Center. And his exceptional teaching has previously earned the Dean's Excellence Award for Graduate Teaching (2020) and the Full-time MBA Professor of the Year Award (2022).

In his Customer Analytics and Digital Marketing Analytics classes, Mummalaneni introduces problems

before the tools to solve them, creating a motivating sense of anticipation. And he walks students through in-class demos, analyzing data together so they can see the coding and statistical inference methods while he works the problem in real time.

"I've found that students are quite happy to learn new technical tools once they understand why it can help them solve important problems that businesses care about," Mummalaneni says.

The notion resonates with Foster students who, increasingly, want to make a difference with data. And they applaud his efforts.

"Simha is a great professor who dives deep into what the data means and how you can utilize it to inform best decisions," noted one of his students. "He is patient and pushes you outside your comfort zone—in a good way—in order to learn. Wrong answers are never met with criticism, only more questions to help you get to *why*."

FROM MARINE TO MARINER

CHRIS KENNEDY PIVOTED AT FOSTER FROM PILOTING MILITARY JETS TO PLOTTING STRATEGY AND ANALYTICS FOR THE SEATTLE MARINERS OF MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

By David Fenigsohn

Photo by Ben VanHouten, courtesy of the Seattle Mariners.

On the playground, some children dream of one day growing up to be a fighter pilot. Others dream of perhaps being part of a major league baseball franchise.

Chris Kennedy (MBA 2016) has gone on to achieve both these childhood aspirations.

While humble about his accomplishments, he points out that behind them is an immense amount of hard work, dedication, sacrifice and an often indirect trajectory. He is grounded in his belief that accomplishments are not solely the result of one's individual efforts; rather they are the result of your team, in life and in work.

LOVE TO COMPETE

Kennedy's path to the front office of the Seattle Mariners began in Seattle, where he was born and raised. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy with a degree in quantitative economics and a desire to make the most out of his commitment to serve. Drawn to the Marine Corps' ethos—"the few, the proud"—Kennedy accepted a commission following graduation with follow-on orders to flight school.

"I've always been the type to ask what's next? How can I improve?" he says. "The internal desire to see if I have

what it takes to perform at the highest levels has always resonated with me. I love to compete!"

Kennedy began his Marine Corps career at Quantico, where he was first indoctrinated into what being a leader of Marines and "service above self" meant. Over the next three years, Kennedy honed his craft as a military pilot, culminating in his "winging" and placement into an operational squadron.

His skill eventually qualified him to represent the Marine Corps as an exchange pilot, serving as tactics training advisor and military liaison to the Italian Navy while embedded with its lone attack squadron.

While training and teaching the competencies and capabilities of a combat operator, Kennedy also led an array of administrative, logistic, strategic planning and operations teams. "You have your flying job and your ground job," he explains. "Throughout my time in the military, I was able to learn practical leadership experience and develop skills that directly apply to civilian life."

RECHANNELING MILITARY LEADERSHIP

On the heels of his exchange tour, with their first child on the way and orders back to the U.S. forthcoming, Kennedy and his wife, Theresa, decided it was time to transition to civilian life. After multiple

discussions with friend and mentor, Peter Olagunju (MBA 2009), Kennedy decided that an MBA would best support and accelerate his desired transition.

He had extensive experience making high-stakes decisions under great pressure, as well as years of training in business functions within the context of the military. He chose Foster to teach him to apply those abilities in the private sector, build his network and broaden his skills.

In Foster's Executive MBA Program, he was able to learn from and partner with faculty and students from multiple industries, disciplines and career levels. The collaborative atmosphere was a highlight for Kennedy, who remains good friends with many of his classmates.

"I appreciated that the engagement with the faculty was almost at a peer-to-peer level," he says. "Classes were conversational versus a one-way lecture. They are the subject matter experts and were teaching, but we weren't taught or spoken *at*. It was more of 'here's what's relevant, here's how it looks today. Let's discuss.' I felt I could be more open, honest—and question while learning—versus being dictated to."

GETTING ON FIRST

While still at Foster, Kennedy secured his first post-military position at the consultancy firm PwC. He excelled and climbed the ranks from associate to senior manager, yet he acknowledges the transition to the private sector was tough.

"I think transitioning military members underestimate the amount of external support needed," he says. "Even if you plan it perfectly, you still need champions that will bring you to the next level, and I was incredibly fortunate to have several that supported me through my transition."

Kennedy later transitioned to a government affairs role at Accolade healthcare.

One day, a friend tipped him off that the Seattle Mariners were seeking candidates for a new strategic leadership role. A lifelong Mariners fan, Kennedy's interest was piqued.

"As Venn diagrams go, my interests and skills surrounding strategy, analytics and driving meaningful data-supported decisions overlapped with what the organization was looking for," he says. "Having the opportunity to work with a sports team that's near and dear to my heart...it was a no brainer for me."

BETTER BASEBALL THROUGH DATA

The title of Kennedy's job with the Mariners—senior vice president of business strategy and analytics—is appropriately broad, encompassing the wide range of his purview. The Mariners are a data-driven organization, on and off the field.

So, Kennedy is defining the parameters of this new role day by day, facilitating better collaboration of existing functions while refining long-term strategy. "I'm always thinking about the next step," he says. "What will the Mariners organization look like in five years? And what do we need to do today to prepare us for that?"

That future will be shaped by leveraging the wealth of data available to the team on everything from fan base composition and desired ballpark experiences to concession sales and sponsorship opportunities. As Kennedy points out, a vital aspect of the Mariners' success is ensuring the fans have a great experience.

SUCCESS IS A TEAM SPORT

Of course, what fans want most is for the team to win a World Series. Since its inaugural season in 1977, the Mariners have made it to the American League Championship Series three times, but never beyond that.

Kennedy and the rest of the organization are confident that it is just a matter of time. He appreciates the loyalty the fans have shown the team through its ups and downs.

"There's an expectation from our fans to win ball games," he says. "I think it's great that they expect that. I love the fan base here. You can tell that we have the city behind us, which brings us hope and the motivation to continue to push forward."

That spirit of teamwork and elevating the performance of his organization has been the common thread of Kennedy's career, from the military to consulting roles and now his position at the Mariners. He firmly believes in the adage that a team is greater than the sum of its parts.

"When I was consulting, we could come up with the world's greatest solution, but if the people implementing that change weren't on board and in place, it wasn't going to work. In the military, you quickly realize this is your team. You must be effective together to get things done," he says. "The role of a leader is to facilitate the output of others, to inspire greatness, and to ensure we are pushing ourselves to be the best we can be."



GM's electric fleet.



The Foster MSBA consulting team.

SHARING THE LOAD

FOSTER MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BUSINESS ANALYTICS STUDENTS WORK WITH GM TO RE-IMAGINE THE POWER GRID IN THE AGE OF EVS

By David Fenigsohn

Energy demand changes throughout the day, and utility companies have to generate enough energy in real time to meet that demand—or risk rolling blackouts. As the nation works towards an EV (electric vehicle) future, automakers and utility companies need to determine how to effectively and efficiently manage energy demands.

A group of students in the Foster School's Master of Science in Business Analytics Program collaborated with General Motors to determine how telemetry data can be used to simulate driving behavior and charging patterns in order to forecast the amount of total energy that may be available to send back to homes, buildings and/or the power grid.

The Foster team analyzed aggregated and anonymized vehicle data collected by GM to create models

determining optimal times of day for vehicle charging and the potential to temporarily return power back from cars to the grid when necessary.

"Human behaviors are highly correlated in time," explains Russell Walker, an associate teaching professor of marketing at Foster, who is overseeing the students' capstone project. "We all go home after work and turn on the air conditioner. And people do something similar with their EVs. They come home and charge the vehicle in the evening. As more and more people are using EVs and are charging them at home, it creates a mass spike in demand on the power grid."

This is a particularly serious problem as some states are already struggling to meet demand for electricity during peak periods.

COMPLEX PROBLEM, COMPLEX SOLUTION

Fortunately, while many EVs may be plugged in, on average, from 5 to 8 p.m., they all don't necessarily need to be charged at once. Instead, EVs could potentially serve as a source of power when the need is particularly high during the early evening, then be recharged overnight when demand is lower.

The formula to optimize the input and output schedule of potentially millions of vehicles to maximize the amount of available energy while still ensuring drivers can use their cars when needed is a massively complex analytics task. "It requires knowing where all the vehicles are, if they are being used, what their charging levels are, and even if they're likely to soon be used," Walker says.

That's where the Foster team came in. GM and the University of Washington combined efforts to grant six Foster students access to the valuable vehicle telemetry data points and an open-ended question of how to make the most of it.

"As GM shifts to an all-electric, more sustainable future, data insights and understanding human behavior around charging habits will be key to preserving energy across the country," says Aaron Shaffer, director of analytics innovation at GM. "By collaborating with the Foster School of Business and its students, we've created a learning opportunity for students who will soon be in the data science field, while giving GM an outside perspective to better sustain the power grid as EV adoption grows."

ESSENTIAL SEGMENTATION

The Foster team took on the challenge of determining everything from what tool set to use to how to divide the work among the team.

"Communication was key," says team member Chen Zhou (MS 2023). "This project provided us with a remarkable degree of flexibility, empowering us to fine-tune the initial scope according to our specific requirements. We were fortunate to receive valuable data, which brought forth an invigorating challenge of uncovering its complete potential and leveraging it to generate significant benefits."

As GM is focused on protecting the privacy of its customers and security of data, all modeling work had to be done within the GM firewall via remote cloud access. As the team dove in, they quickly realized the need to arrive at a subset of data small enough to be actionable but broad enough to be scalable and applicable to GM's entire customer base.

"We chose California, because the data from there was large and relatively clean," says Patrick Hooley (MS 2023). "And California has a great blend of urban and rural areas."

After researching California's energy supply and demand and using predictive analytics to project future needs, the team used Databricks, a database analysis software, to create models around real-world customer behavior.

"We took the approach of looking at all of the different vehicles in our data set and clustering them into groups based on specific characteristics," explains Lyndsey Shimazu (MS 2023).

BENEFITS ALL

The opportunity for consumers to benefit from such a program is one of the most promising aspects of the rare arrangement in which everybody wins. Consumers can monetize their vehicle's batteries when not in use. Utilities don't have to charge a massive number of vehicles at once and can tap into an additional power supply. And all benefit from avoiding the astronomical cost of added power plants and the accompanying environmental impact.

GM is heavily invested in all aspects of EVs, including developing its own proprietary technology and producing electric versions of everything from luxury cars, like the Cadillac CELESTIQ, to pickup trucks, like the Chevrolet Silverado EV.

"GM is undertaking a massive transformation as we shift to an all-electric future," says Jon Francis, GM's chief data and analytics officer. "Data and insights not only play a critical role in advancing our vision of 'Zero Crashes, Zero Emissions and Zero Congestion,' but they will be key to getting everyone in an EV."

GM recently announced plans to integrate the North American Charging Standard (NACS) connector design into its EVs beginning in 2025.

PURPOSE-DRIVEN PROBLEM SOLVING

At the close of their project experience, Zhou, Hooley, Shimazu and fellow team members Davis Coats (MS 2023), Vicky Zhang (MS 2023) and Mai-Lan Hoang (MS 2023) presented their findings to a receptive audience of more than 100 GM employees.

"The countless hours Foster students dedicated to this project and the end findings presented are inspiring," says Shaffer. "GM gave a crucial task to these students, and we were impressed with their analytical and creative approach to a real-world problem."

The students also benefited from this amazing opportunity for experiential learning.

"This was a great project that aligns with Foster's values," says Walker. "The students had an opportunity to work with GM on a real-world project that stretched them and allowed them to apply the things they learned in the MSBA Program. Everything I have heard from the students and GM has been very positive. And I'm not surprised. Because we have great students, and this is a project that aligns with their interests."



LIFTING AS WE CLIMB

**THE FOSTER SCHOOL WELCOMES BACK ALUMNA
MICHELLE PURNELL-HEPBURN AS ASSOCIATE
DEAN OF INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY**

By Melissa Borges

Michelle Purnell-Hepburn (BA 1979, MBA 1982) is no stranger to the Foster School community.

She earned her undergraduate degree in business economics and finance, and her MBA specializing in accounting and finance at the Foster School. She was president of the Association of Black Business Students (ABBS) during her time as a graduate student and in 2021 was awarded the school's Spratlen Legacy Award, named in honor of the late Dr. Thaddeus H. Spratlen. In 2022, she taught a class at Foster entitled "The Power of Access: Impact Lending to Underserved Communities."

Purnell-Hepburn has extensive experience in the financial services and nonprofit foundation industries. She most recently served as the director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) at the Seattle Foundation. She has also held executive-level leadership positions at Salal Credit Union, Seattle Metropolitan Credit Union and Group Health Credit Union.

She served on the advisory board of Capitol Hill Housing and currently serves on the board of trustees of Community Roots Housing.

Returning to Foster this year in the role of associate dean of inclusion and diversity, she serves as a member of the senior leadership team at Foster.

A FAMILY LEGACY OF DEI

Purnell-Hepburn credits her family's motto of "lifting as we climb" for her DEI passion. Her parents, James C. and Mardine Purnell, along with nine fellow Central District community members opened Liberty Bank of Seattle in 1968 as Washington state's first minority-owned bank.

During this era, most mainstream banks held discriminatory redlining practices, in which resources or services are withheld from potential customers who reside in neighborhoods classified as "hazardous to investment."

The idea of a Black-owned bank grew out of the desperate need for a financial institution that would provide access to capital, including mortgages and business loans, in communities of color.

James Purnell, with his lodge brothers, also founded Sentinel Credit Union as part of their efforts to support their community.

"I was fortunate enough to have parents who did what they could to support their community," says Purnell-Hepburn. "So, that's what I do. I don't know how else to be."

Most Purnell family members have also attended the University of Washington with a strong focus on business and law in an effort to continue serving their community and beyond.

TOP PRIORITIES AT FOSTER

Asked about her plans in the early weeks of her new role at Foster, Purnell-Hepburn summarized her intentions simply: "My platform is belonging. When we are secure within ourselves, we are much more welcoming to anyone else."

One of Purnell-Hepburn's highest priorities is enhancing communication between faculty and students and bridging gaps. She explains that while many current students have been surrounded by conversations about mental health, gender fluidity, sexual orientation, spirituality and diverse cultural backgrounds during their formative years, that is not always the case for faculty.

She is incorporating the research of her mentor, Dr. Edwin Nichols, on how different cultures and groups process information or the "cultural philosophy of cultural difference."

"We want students to come and absorb everything that we teach," she says. "But that must shift to be a two-way stream. It is also our turn to be lifelong learners."

Another of Purnell-Hepburn's priorities is engaging the Foster alumni community. She believes there is an opportunity to project a welcoming atmosphere by connecting people with similar lived experiences. "We all need mentors and executive coaches," she explains. "Let us support our students—especially our underrepresented students—by having them meet and be involved with underrepresented alumni."

A CULTURE OF BELONGING

Purnell-Hepburn received essential support during her own educational journey at the Foster School. "This was a very challenging place to get through as a young Black woman," she reflects. "However, I got through it because of my family and mentors like Dr. Thaddeus Spratlen, Dr. Liz Reynolds and Diane Martin."

She hopes her experience as a student will help her connect with the greater Foster community and support a culture in which more students of color feel welcome and wanted.

"I hope in this role," she says, "as a 'Double Dawg' and a Black woman with my curly hair and the melanin in my skin, I will help students realize they can also achieve their dreams."

Using a platform of abundance and belonging, Purnell-Hepburn is sharing her belief that diversity makes academia and the business world more creative and makes people stronger.



From the left: Dr. James E. Jackson, Mayor James "Dorm" Braman, Mardine Purnell, Gov. Dan Evans and City Councilmember Sam Smith cut the ribbon during the opening ceremony of Liberty Bank in the Central District on May 25, 1968. (Ron De Rosa / *The Seattle Times*)

LESSO ON LEADERSHIP

PROFESSOR BRUCE AVOLIO “BELIEVES” THERE ARE RICH LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS TO BE FOUND IN THE EPISODES OF FAVORITE FICTIONAL FOOTBALL COACH TED LESSO

By Ed Kromer



As if there weren't enough examples of leadership run amok in the real world, you'll also find an abundance of dreadful fictional leaders across the landscape of prestige streaming television. Think Don Draper of "Mad Men." Walter White of "Breaking Bad." Logan Roy—the entire Roy family, really—of "Succession." The list could go on and on.

Into this toxic world, in fall of 2020, ambled Ted Lasso, the titular protagonist of a refreshingly different kind of series on Apple TV+.

This fairy tale of a decent small-time college football coach called up to lead a professional world football (a.k.a. soccer) club fighting for survival in the elite English Premier League became a bona fide sensation and an absolute awards magnet.

Lasso, the ultimate underdog as played by series co-creator Jason Sudeikis, incrementally wins over all of AFC Richmond—the players, the club management, the fans, even the cynical press—with a consistent, persistent style of positive, home-spun, human-centric leadership.

But is this fantastical streaming series merely a bauble, a cozy embrace in a time of global pandemic and political division? Or is there something deeper, more instructive and reflective going on between the touchlines?

To find out, we asked Bruce Avolio to help us view "Ted Lasso" through a leadership lens. Avolio is the Mark Pigott Chair in Business Strategic Leadership at the Foster School, the founding director of Foster's Center for Leadership and Strategic Thinking, and a foremost expert in examining and promoting evidence-based leadership development for sustainable organizational transformation.

He's also a big fan of the show. So, it wasn't difficult to convince him to "talk Ted."

Foster Business: Is "Ted Lasso" more than just another whimsical diversion?

Bruce Avolio: Definitely! The show and the character of Ted Lasso have a lot to say about the importance of kindness, self-awareness, transparency and the ability to suspend judgment in leadership. Ted is honest and ethical and empowering of everyone around him. He believes in himself and the common good, while seeking to understand the unique needs and strengths of all stakeholders—whether he is leading up, down or sideways.

In Ted Lasso, we are seeing a master class in authentic, considerate, motivational, strategic and moral

leadership that has unfolded across two seasons of a show what we might refer to as "Breaking Good."

What drew you to the series? And what made you stay?

What hooked me was the leadership challenge that Ted faced from the opening scene. Here is a person who becomes the coach of a team playing at the highest level—and he doesn't even know the first thing about the game he's coaching. Immediately, I thought, how is this imposter going to get through the first practice?

Can you cite an analog in the real world?

Early on, Ted reminded me of Lou Gerstner, who transformed IBM after arriving in 1993 from RJR Nabisco. At the time that Gerstner was installed as CEO, I was living near the original IBM manufacturing facility in Endicott, NY. And I remember many long-time employees of IBM in my neighborhood were saying, "He has no technology background—I don't think he can even turn on a computer!"

How does Ted Lasso approach his own fish-out-of-water conundrum?

Ted views each situation with a sense of childlike wonder and curiosity. Time and time again, he seeks out the developmental or performance opportunity, while also delaying judgment. This occurs when he is interacting with his players, his coaches, the people who own and run the team, and even when he enters a local pub near his apartment. He also transmits genuine humility, which a lot of leaders are afraid to do. When you recognize your limitations, you allow yourself—and others who know more than you—to find the motivation and belief required to achieve a higher collective potential.

All this suggests that Ted possesses a high-learning orientation, which precedes his attention to the kind of KPIs (or key performance indicators) that organizational leaders typically obsess over. Ted centers his focus on the human dynamic, perhaps the hardest of all skills to master.

Everyone matters to Ted (though his family suffers as a result). He transmits his capacity to observe, adapt and figure out how to do things differently, while still

recognizing his shortcomings and deep personal conflicts, which we see displayed repeatedly, though often in private.

This characterization of Ted is what makes him feel even more authentic to me. We are all imperfect versions of our best selves.



To mine hope from a seemingly hopeless situation, what is the most important facet of Ted's leadership portfolio?

First and foremost is his resilient positivity. He sees the glass as more than half full. And, related to this, he seeks out the good in people, rather than dwelling on the bad. His positivity spreads through his so-called *intangible* psychological resources of hope, efficacy, resiliency and optimism—yes it spells out H.E.R.O. These are profoundly *tangible* hard skills, not soft.

Beyond his enduring positivity, Ted also approaches people with a clinical sense of their orientation toward humanity. He pays close attention to understanding what makes people lean in or out for others.

Ted also is unfailingly patient with all those around him, even those who judge him as a fake. Like the homemade biscuits he brings Rebecca (the club's owner) every morning—these perceptive acts of kindness and individualized consideration help Ted build stronger connections and, ultimately, enduring relationships. Ted eventually wins over his most strident players and most dismissive fans, who began their relationship taunting him viciously. How? He allows himself to be vulnerable, highly exposed, and

honest about his lack of knowledge of the game he is supposedly coaching. Yet, Ted is powerfully confident in his understanding of what constitutes authentic and positive human dynamics that contribute to building a winning team.

What other effective leadership traits does Ted Lasso model?

I don't like to refer to "traits," because that infers a permanency that is not necessarily justifiable. As noted, Ted's leadership starts with a positive learning orientation—which, eventually comes at a cost to his own human condition.

His second orientation is represented in his empathic concern for the well-being of others. He is proactive—being "that kind of person" who reaches out and tries to help before being asked. He accepts his mistakes and seeks support to figure out how to correct them. Importantly, he knows that he's an imposter in terms of coaching this game, but he is curious, which creates in others a willingness to help him succeed. Ted also exudes a high tolerance for ambiguity, a fascination with what he can learn, and an openness to new experiences.

Except for the British tradition of tea, which he rejects as "garbage water."

That is the exception. But Ted takes time and gives people the opportunity to foster a relationship and grow, even if it is painful in the beginning. Plus, he demonstrates a high degree of consistency in his treatment of others, which can lead to higher levels of trust and admiration. Leading with his imperfections, he becomes more influential—perhaps surprisingly so.

How would you describe Ted's style of leadership?

I'd say that Ted is a *slow moving inspiring leader*, who is highly empathetic and unfailingly supportive. He's not charismatic in the traditional sense. He's not portrayed as an intellectual leader. He's kind of an in-the-moment sort of leader, who takes advantage of those moments using his keen awareness of what constitutes a humane orientation. This is what gives such power to simple actions, such as when he encourages newcomer Sam Obisanya, after being embarrassed on the pitch, to "be a goldfish," forget his failures and focus on the future.

In its totality, we understand the depth Ted brings to his philosophy of leading others.

Does this explain Ted's ability to draw the best out of everyone he encounters—even the petulant star striker Jamie Tartt?



I see the highest bar for effective leadership being *stewardship*, wherein a leader enables individuals to achieve their highest states of self-determination, even after the leader is gone. Great leading, like great parenting, nurtures self-determination, the ability to make your own decisions and act without advice.

Ted intuitively understands a powerful piece of human wisdom dating to ancient thinkers. There's enormous symbolic power in the simple sign he posts over the locker room door calling everyone who passes to "Believe." It represents his work to improve every individual's confidence or efficacy, which we'll call agency.

The act of increasing a person's agency to achieve better performance is what psychologist Dov Eden referred to as the "Galatea effect," after the sublime statue carved out of ivory by Pygmalion of Greek mythology—though this archetype appears throughout history and around the world, including in the 4th century BCE Chinese poem, "The Wood Carver." As Eden demonstrated, if you have low agency for any task, you are more likely to fail, even if you're capable. If you have high agency, you may succeed even if you are not as capable as others.

How do these principles apply, for example, to "Nate the Great," who ascends from timid kit man to (over)confident assistant coach?

Ted tirelessly works to increase people's agency, whether it's the club's owner, his players or even Nate. He's pretty good at it because he's persistent. His tactics on the surface appear to be simple, but sometimes simple acts are the most powerfully motivating.

With Nate, he's building a strong relationship—at least through the first season and a half. He gives Nate autonomy, so much so that he grows into a legitimate strategic partner on the coaching staff. Some might recall a similar transformation in "My Fair Lady," loosely

based on the myth of Pygmalion, in which a professor named Henry Higgins accepts a wager that he can turn a crude flower girl, Eliza Doolittle, into a presentable lady in London's high society. This may not be everyone's cup of tea, but the positive transformation is an example of the Galatea effect.

How does a leader like Ted Lasso ultimately affect an organization?

Is Ted changing the culture of the AFC Richmond organization? I don't really know much about what it was before, but I would venture a guess that it was neither inclusive nor equitable. Ted focuses on fostering inclusion and equity with everyone, which represents the harder challenges that emerge for leaders in organizations and societies that continue to diversify. Fortunately, leaders like Ted are always looking for help and to help others. They also motivate team members to step up and become more engaged in their organization by building greater individual and collective self-determination, ultimately to produce a better version of themselves.

Can the effective leadership behaviors of a fictional coach work in the real world?

Absolutely! The long game for leadership is about having a humane orientation. Ultimately, our most revered and respected leaders possess this orientation. These leaders can operate at the global level of a Nelson Mandela or at the more intimate level of a caring middle manager, an inspiring elementary school teacher, a confidence-building Boys & Girls Club big brother or sister, or a patient, positive youth soccer (a.k.a. football) coach.

These leaders, like Ted Lasso, seek to instill a belief that everyone matters. Everyone can win. Everyone *will* win.

TUTORING, ON DEMAND

THROUGH KADAMA, MARWAN EL-RUKBY AND AMIN SHAYKHO CONNECT STUDENTS WITH TUTORS FOR HOMEWORK HELP AND TEST PREP—RIGHT WHEN IT'S NEEDED

By Melissa Borges

A passion for educational accessibility led Marwan El-Rukby (BA 2019) to become co-founder and chief operating officer of Kadama, the nation's largest education social media brand.

Drawing its name from the Arabic word for "service," Kadama is a mobile application that provides on-demand help with homework, essays and exam prep. Users can select from a wide variety of subjects, set their own budget and get instant help.

The brand launched in 2019 and has reached #2 in the App Store's education category. After a successful \$1.7 million seed funding round in 2021, El-Rukby and co-founders Amin Shaykho (BS 2018) and Dani Shaykho were recognized on the *Forbes* "30 Under 30" education lists.

STUDENT-LED STARTUP

Marwan El-Rukby and Amin Shaykho began working on a service-based prototype a year before El-Rukby started at the Foster School of Business and the summer before Shaykho began his computer science studies at the University of Washington. Dani Shaykho, Amin's younger brother, joined in the journey as he made his way through high school and eventually to UW Bothell, where he's now a senior studying computing and software systems.

El-Rukby attributes his achievements with Kadama's business management structure to the entrepreneurial environment he experienced at Foster. "Whether it was the classes I took or the entrepreneurship programs I participated in, such as the Dempsey Startup Competition and Jones + Foster Accelerator," he says. "It's made a tremendous impact on me."

The startup process can be confusing and daunting for students looking to launch a product during their college years. The Jones + Foster Accelerator program helps early-stage, student-led companies with milestone-



setting, entrepreneurship workshops, mentorship from entrepreneurs and investors, and up to \$25,000 in seed funding.

Kadama graduated in 2020 from the accelerator and a year later, raised a \$1.7 million seed round led by Silicon Valley venture capitalist Dmitry Grishin, founder of the largest tech company in Russia. Other investors included Alliance of Angels, the largest angel investing group in the Pacific Northwest; Brett Hurt, founder of BazaarVoice; David Kamenetzky, food tech investor; and other notable angel investors.

Upon raising funds, El-Rukby resigned from his job as a financial analyst at Getty Images and Shaykho left his job as a senior software engineer at Apple.

LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA

Amin and Dani Shaykho used social media to promote and launch the Kadama brand. The pandemic was a huge accelerant. Kadama switched from in-person to virtual services once students were stuck at home and didn't have access to traditional academic resources.

Focusing on fast-paced, exciting content to grab the attention of Gen-Z students, the Shaykho brothers leveraged TikTok and began promoting a variety of "hacks" for homework and smartphone shortcuts.

"Everybody made fun of us," says Amin Shaykho. "There was no other education company promoting their brand on TikTok." But, within months, the videos went viral and the app began receiving customers. Kadama currently has 2.1 million followers on TikTok and 417,000 on Instagram.



PROMOTING ACCESSIBLE TUTORING

El-Rukby had struggled in school before joining the Running Start Program at Bellevue College. Lacking the healthy habits that many students learn early in elementary school, he studied three to four times more than his classmates and would rewrite whole textbooks to retain the information.

He also experienced financial hardship in his family and dealt with a very strenuous divorce process between his parents. “I had my mother and two younger brothers that I had to take care of,” says El-Rukby. “When that separation happened, my family was in a precarious financial situation.”

But his early struggles helped shape his passion for business management and accessibility. He focused on studying business economics and learning how to financially prepare for his future to better provide for his family.

Kadama’s founders built their business proposition around the lack of affordable education support in the market. The Kadama app gives users the opportunity to set their budgets and then hire a tutor. Most hour-long tutoring sessions cost between \$20-\$25, which is far less expensive than the average \$70-per-hour tutoring session or online tutoring packages that can run \$1,000-plus.

Kadama not only provides affordable access to tutoring but also offers employment to thousands of college students. Many of the app’s tutors are students paying off their tuition, while others provide tutoring as a source of extra income for bills and medical expenses.

ADDING DIVERSE VALUE

Kadama’s founders are proud to be the first Syrian Americans—and the youngest—to be named in a *Forbes* 30 under 30 list. The team hopes to unlock people’s inner potential and be an inspiration for other underrepresented entrepreneurs. Growing up, El-Rukby experienced a lack of diversity in school. He was often scared to stand out or do anything wrong that would bring any negative attention to the local Syrian refugee community. As COO of a successful startup, he’s experienced the importance of representation.

“I think when people see someone they can resonate with doing something big in an industry,” he says, “it encourages people to explore that industry and apply to those college programs.”

The Kadama team believes diversity is key in supporting a more robust workforce. “A team can achieve more with diverse viewpoints and problem-solving skills,” says Amin Shaykho.

As the creative mind behind Kadama, Shaykho used his passion for bettering humanity through technology and entrepreneurship when he conceptualized the brand. “To me, being an entrepreneur doesn’t mean you’re creating a business that focuses on revenue,” he adds. “An entrepreneur is creating something that has some sort of value to people, regardless of the end result.”

EDUCATING THE FUTURE

In a world that increasingly demands instant gratification, many students prefer Kadama’s micro-interaction approach.

Students also favor working with peer tutors who recently studied the same course material and can understand their academic obstacles.

One of the brand’s success stories is Hawah Drammeh, a student who struggled with STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) as a high school senior and used the app to acquire the support she needed at the beginning of the pandemic. Drammeh is now a thriving junior studying computer science and entrepreneurship at the UW and is an incoming software engineer and machine learning intern at Microsoft.

Kadama is neither a traditional tutoring company nor a search engine that feeds you answers. Its app appeals to the next generation of students by fostering a genuine love for learning while providing them the academic help they need—right when they need it.



Nidhi Agrawal. Photo by Quinn Russell Brown

MAKE SMARTER RESOLUTIONS

NIDHI AGRAWAL OFFERS A FEW SIMPLE, PROVEN TIPS FOR SETTING—AND ACHIEVING—YOUR GOALS IN 2024

Struggling through years of a grinding pandemic has left many of us hoping the flip of another calendar can be the occasion for a genuine restart—to set personal goals and make positive changes in the coming year. Get fit. Read more. Procrastinate less. Earn a promotion. Be more mindful. Do more good in the community.

But achieving a better you, as most can attest, is no simple task.

According to Nidhi Agrawal, the Michael G. Foster Endowed Professor of Marketing at the Foster School, the key to resolution *keeping* might just be in resolution *making*.

“We’ve learned that it is important to distinguish the why and the how of your resolutions,” says Agrawal, whose research in consumer behavior has frequently

explored the mechanics of willpower, or why we behave in/against our own best interests. “It’s important to have a clear, big-picture reason for the goals that you set. And the more concrete, specific, routinized you make them, the more success you will have.”

So, as the coming new year inspires new goal-setting, here are a few specific tips from Agrawal’s research:

1. FIND MEANING

Rather than simply establish a general goal of becoming healthier, for instance, spend some time reflecting on why you want to be healthier.

“You won’t have the motivation to achieve these difficult goals unless they are linked to something that is deeply important to you,” Agrawal says. “Because, when you are having trouble sticking to your rules, you’re going to ask yourself, ‘Why am I doing this?’ And if that answer is not compelling, then you’re likely going to falter.”

2. GET SPECIFIC

Setting specific rules can help. Instead of making an undefined pledge, enact some concrete guidelines to help you achieve it. And track your behavior.

“When you establish specific rules, you know whether you are executing on the goal,” Agrawal continues. “And once those rules become routine, decisions become more automatic and temptation becomes easier to resist.”

3. BALANCE THE WHY AND HOW

Agrawal says that both the *why* and the *how* of resolutions are equally important, but often conflated, at their own peril.

“We often make a resolution like: ‘I want to live more healthy’ (my why) ‘so I will eat healthy’ (my how). Now what we have is a vague path to an ambiguous objective. Instead, establish what it is that you are looking to achieve with your resolution. Find a little more thoughtful *why* and a much more specific, concrete, routinized *how*.”

4. GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK

Finally, Agrawal emphasizes that you need to forgive yourself if—and when—you falter. “Faltering doesn’t mean you are a failure,” she says. “It is a moment of weakness. One bad day. When we view it that way and know that actions can be changed, it’s empowering.”

And tomorrow is always an opportunity to get back on track.



PACCAR HALL

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