

# INSIDE BAUER

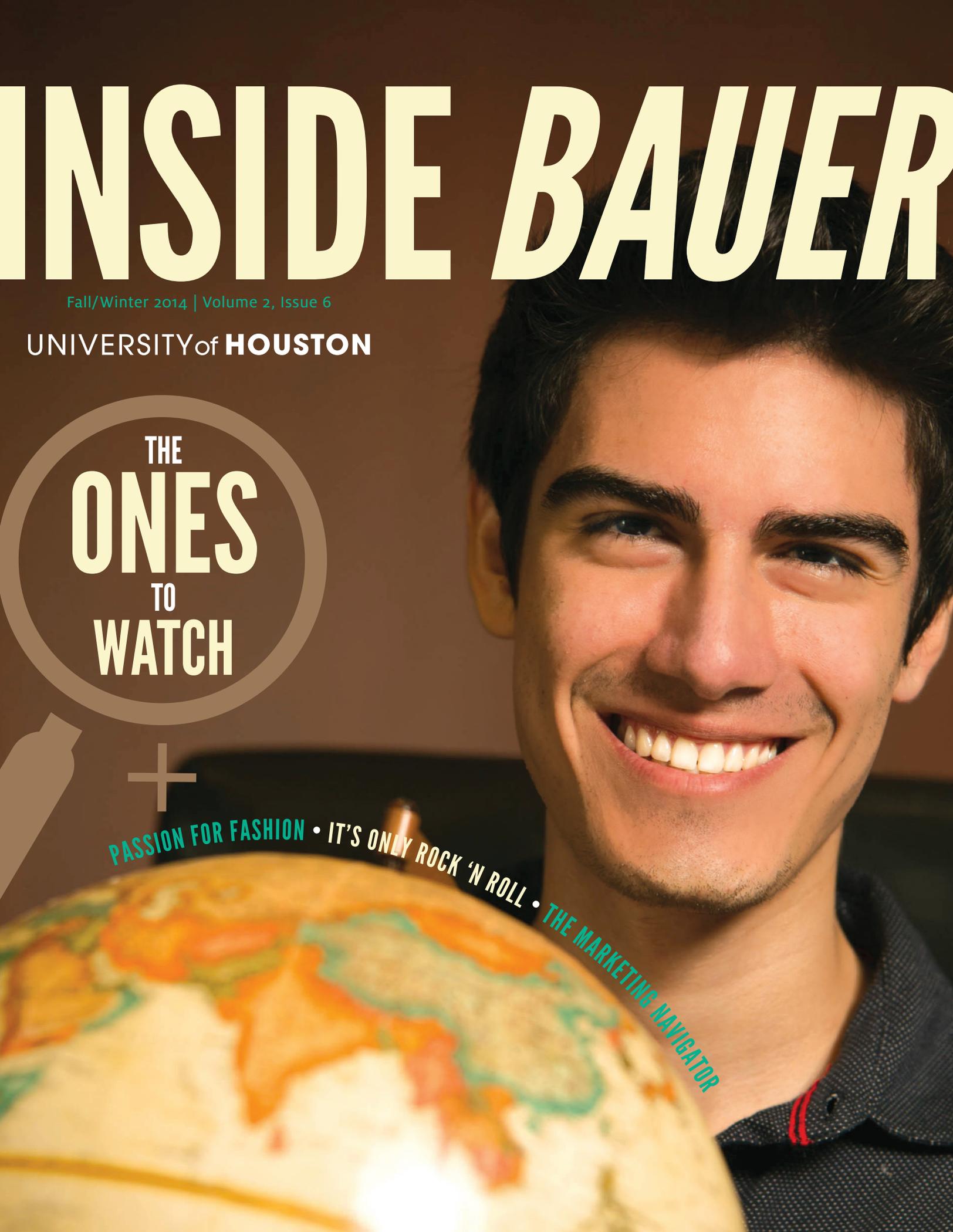
Fall/Winter 2014 | Volume 2, Issue 6

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

THE  
**ONES**  
TO  
WATCH

+

PASSION FOR FASHION • IT'S ONLY ROCK 'N ROLL • THE MARKETING NAVIGATOR



# WHAT'S INSIDE?

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Marketing professor Betsy Gelb is being recognized for decades of research excellence.



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# DEAN'S LETTER

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# GREETINGS...

Each day, as I meet with students, faculty, staff, alumni, partners and other stakeholders, I am reminded of the impact that even a relatively small decision can make on the world.

You see, when our students decide to come to Bauer College to pursue their degrees, they are making a choice that has the potential to impact many lives. Their Bauer experience will give them new perspectives and skills that they will take into their homes, their workplaces and their futures.

Yes, we provide a top notch business education, but I think something more happens within our walls. We transform lives.

We encourage our students not just to solve problems but also to pose the right questions. We challenge our students to think outside their comfort zones, and our faculty inspire students to create new paradigms even as they break down obsolete constructs. We don't let students settle for anything less than the best they are capable of achieving, and we ask them simply to pursue their passions.

And, we are able to do this because of the impact of one man's decision. Nearly 15 years ago, Charles T. "Ted" Bauer chose to invest in our vision to become a business school of first choice, and he set forth an energy among our

faculty, staff, students, alumni and stakeholders that has only gained momentum over time. His generosity has inspired so many others over the last several years to support Bauer College.

When you read through the pages of this issue of Inside Bauer, you will find stories about some of our recent successes, including another year for our Cyvia and Melvyn Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship to be included at the top of the list of the nation's best undergraduate entrepreneurship programs.

And, you will learn about research our faculty are pioneering that is being applied to business practice across the globe.

You will read about alumni who are taking the reins at leading companies in financial services and energy, along with others who are carving their own paths in the business of fashion, music and the arts.

Our cover story profiles several new members of the Bauer College family — students who have joined us this fall and have big dreams to build companies, spark innovation and change lives. They are here because they chose to make Bauer part of their lives.

Now that's impact.

Sincerely and with warm regards,



**Latha Ramchand**

Dean and Professor, Finance  
C. T. Bauer College of Business  
University of Houston

A Carnegie-designated Tier One research university

# EDITOR'S LETTER



In my role as director of communications for Bauer College, I am often asked, “What is the Bauer brand?”

It’s a simple question, and I wish I had a simple answer. But, more often than not, my response is usually to pose the question back to the person asking.

That’s because a strong brand is one that reflects what an organization’s stakeholders think, feel and believe. It’s not a tagline created by a group of marketers. It’s not a logo or a color palette or an advertisement.

All of those things are important pieces of what my office does and how we tell the Bauer College story, and over the last few years, as a creative team, we have worked diligently to elevate our collateral and integrate our messaging to build an award-winning communications program that supports the Bauer brand. This magazine, *Inside Bauer*, is part of that program.

Our strategy also includes targeted advertising. In the *Houston Business Journal*, you’ll see ads for Bauer College

that proclaim, “Our City. Our College.” and describe how we are meeting the needs of the Houston economy with specialty programming and experiential learning opportunities for students. In *Texas Monthly*, you’ll see ads showcasing how Bauer alumni are “Rooted in Business” and building businesses across the state. You will also see ads in other publications that have a straightforward message — “We are Bauer. We are Houston.” Sometimes, advertising is most effective when it gets right to the point. (You can see all of our current ad campaigns online at [bauer.uh.edu/advertising](http://bauer.uh.edu/advertising).)

We’re also immersed in digital communication, with a main website ([bauer.uh.edu](http://bauer.uh.edu)) that incorporates more than 50 subsites for the college’s departments, programs and centers, along with a newly launched microsite ([WhereAwesomeHappens.com](http://WhereAwesomeHappens.com)) of curated content on Bauer events, news, photos, videos and more. Earlier this year, we brought on board Bauer College’s first-ever social media coordinator to bolster our engagement efforts online, and we’re

growing our following each day across LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Instagram and Pinterest.

Our team also now includes a dedicated staff position for media relations, allowing us to increase the earned media mentions for Bauer College and to connect even more reporters to faculty in the college, who serve as subject matter experts for Reuters, *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*, the *Houston Chronicle*, *The Wall Street Journal* and many specialty publications.

And, we produce videos for the college’s official YouTube channel, which has received nearly 100,000 views on pieces that showcase student success, faculty research and innovation, events, and alumni involvement.

All of these efforts contribute to the bigger picture — communicating the Bauer brand. Our in-house team is passionate about creating content that illustrates the emotion of the college, but we aren’t the ones who determine that intangible feeling associated with Bauer.

That’s where you come in. Be part of the ongoing conversation about the Bauer brand and message. You can contact me directly at [jnavarro@bauer.uh.edu](mailto:jnavarro@bauer.uh.edu) with your thoughts and to share your input.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Navarro". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Jessica Navarro**  
(BA '07, MA '12)  
Director of Communications

# INSIDE *BAUER*

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the C. T. Bauer College of Business at the University of Houston is threefold: to create and advance knowledge that will shape and address new business realities, to provide a challenging learning environment through a rich variety of pedagogical approaches, and to prepare our students for effective and responsible business leadership worldwide.

*Inside Bauer* is published by the Office of Communications in the Office of the Dean.

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# SHATTERING THE GLASS CEILING

Leadership study strives to equalize advancement

By Ann Lynd

Female leaders may be underestimating their supervisors' perceptions of their work, according to a recent Bauer College study.

The study by Bauer professor Leanne Atwater, alumna Rachel Sturm (Ph.D. '14) and two other colleagues focuses on women in the workplace, examining how they predict their bosses' ratings of their leadership.

The research was inspired by a previous study conducted by Babson College's Scott Taylor, which found that women underpredict how others rate their socio-emotional competence. Atwater and Sturm, now an assistant professor at Wright State University, were curious to see if these under-prediction phenomena carried over into a leadership context.

"We felt that examining how women predict their bosses' ratings of their leadership would provide us with valuable insight into advancement opportunities for women and help answer the question of whether or not women are partially responsible for holding themselves back from advancing because they

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**WE NEED TO BE  
DOING EVERYTHING  
WE CAN TO BOOST  
PEOPLE'S SENSES  
OF SELF.**

”

think their boss, who normally has control over an employee's advancement opportunity, thinks they are not a good leader," Sturm said.

The study's findings presented one clear notion about women's leadership and prediction ratings.

"Women leaders predicted their bosses would rate them lower on their leadership behaviors compared with men, even though they did not self-rate significantly differently than men and were rated by their bosses similarly to men," Atwater added.

The researchers later turned to the women interviewed in an attempt to find the root of the problem—why exactly were women under-predicting their managers' views?

They found that low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence were the main contributors, but women also counted on more positive feedback.

"They don't believe their bosses see them as competent. Women rarely see themselves as enough of what their boss wants," Atwater said.



*Professor Leanne Atwater*

“Women relied more on feedback and reassurance. When it doesn’t happen, they interpret it as not being valued or appreciated.”

The repercussions of under-prediction and a decrease in self-efficacy could affect women’s likelihood of going for positions of leadership and salary advancements.

“If they think they can’t do it, the employee will feel powerless and shut down in an environment where they question their own competencies,” Atwater said. “Self-efficacy may be negatively impacted and result in lower performance.”

This presents those in management with an opportunity to evaluate feedback practices. According to the researchers, using 360-degree feedback could change women’s ratings of how their bosses evaluate them, improving the likelihood of advancement.

“You’re going to have fewer women who are pursuing advancement if they don’t feel confident,” Atwater added. “The bosses weren’t giving women lower ratings than they were giving men,

so this is not a question of bosses finding women to be less capable; it’s women feeling less capable. We need to be doing everything we can to boost people’s senses of self.”

After concluding the research, Sturm has moved to a full-time teaching position in Ohio, where she is using her experience in the classroom. She shares the results with her students as a step in increasing awareness of under-prediction and to help give female students a more accurate account of their leadership capability.

“We hope to raise awareness of under-prediction for male and female bosses in the workplace so that they may change their feedback-giving strategies and encourage women leaders more, and to change, in a positive way, women’s perceptions of their leadership and how they think their bosses perceive their leadership in the workplace,” Sturm said.



*Bauer Ph.D. alumna Rachel Sturm co-authored the study with Professor Leanne Atwater.*



# SEARCH TODAY, REALITY TOMORROW

Marketing faculty win national award for innovative research

*By Ann Lynd*

With technology evolving at a rate faster than ever before, marketing has quickly followed suit—and at Bauer College, that means tackling one of the industry’s most rapidly growing areas: big data.

The American Marketing Association awarded marketing faculty Rex Du and Ye Hu and doctoral alumnus Sina Damangir the 2014 Best Paper Award at the Advanced Research Techniques Forum for a recent study analyzing consumer trends using online search data.

In their research, “Monitoring Shifts in Product Feature Importance via Trends in Online Searches,” the team identified factors beyond the control of marketers, by harnessing big data and online search terms. They found those factors can lead to changes in the importance of various product features that shape consumers’ purchase decisions. The changes, in turn, can lead to substantial shifts in the relative attractiveness of products with different feature levels.

Through examining the dynamics between feature searches and sales, the researchers were able to demonstrate how marketers can use feature search trends to act more proactively in anticipating changing consumer tastes.

“Instead of using surveys, we used the relative intensity of consumer online searches for various feature-related keywords as predictors of consumer tastes, assuming product features that are becoming more important should receive increasingly more searches from consumers,” Du said.

The research was conducted using searches related to the Toyota Prius. It became apparent that over time, fuel economy became more important and prevalent in searches, leading the team to two big take-aways: better forecasting sales and better understanding the shifts in consumer taste over time for car manufacturers, and potentially many other industries.

“If you understand consumers’ taste for different types of cars, then over the long term you can better plan the fleet

composition,” Hu said. “If consumers know the economy is better, the demand may be shifting more toward high-fuel vehicles like SUVs rather than compact sedans, then you shift the composition of the cars you put in the market. The results would be very relevant to the automakers in their everyday operations.”

The team aimed to create a new decision support system for marketers. Historically, marketers have relied on costly, time-



*Marketing faculty Rex Du and Ye Hu, at left, worked with Ph.D. alumnus Sina Damangir on research that is helping change the landscape of online marketing.*

consuming surveys to conduct similar research. With this development, marketers could expand this way of conducting research beyond the automotive industry.

“Products can be viewed as a bundle of attributes or features,” Du added. “Consumers, when making choices, weigh different features differently. The weights they place on features change over time. There was no easy way of tracking those changes that’s fast and inexpensive.”

Damangir is now an assistant professor at San Francisco State University. During his time as a doctoral student,

he gained hands-on experience with the research and learned about framing problems and conducting exploratory research and methods, he said.

The research also gave him insight into a topic that can help managers. What makes this research different for those managers is its ability to be flexible and free, Damangir said.

“This paper is practical and generalizable for many industries. In any given industry, one can identify key features of the products and track the Google trends for those features,” Damangir said. “Managers can readily use the methods introduced in this research to improve their understanding of the market and improve their decisions, all using a tool that is free and available in real time.”

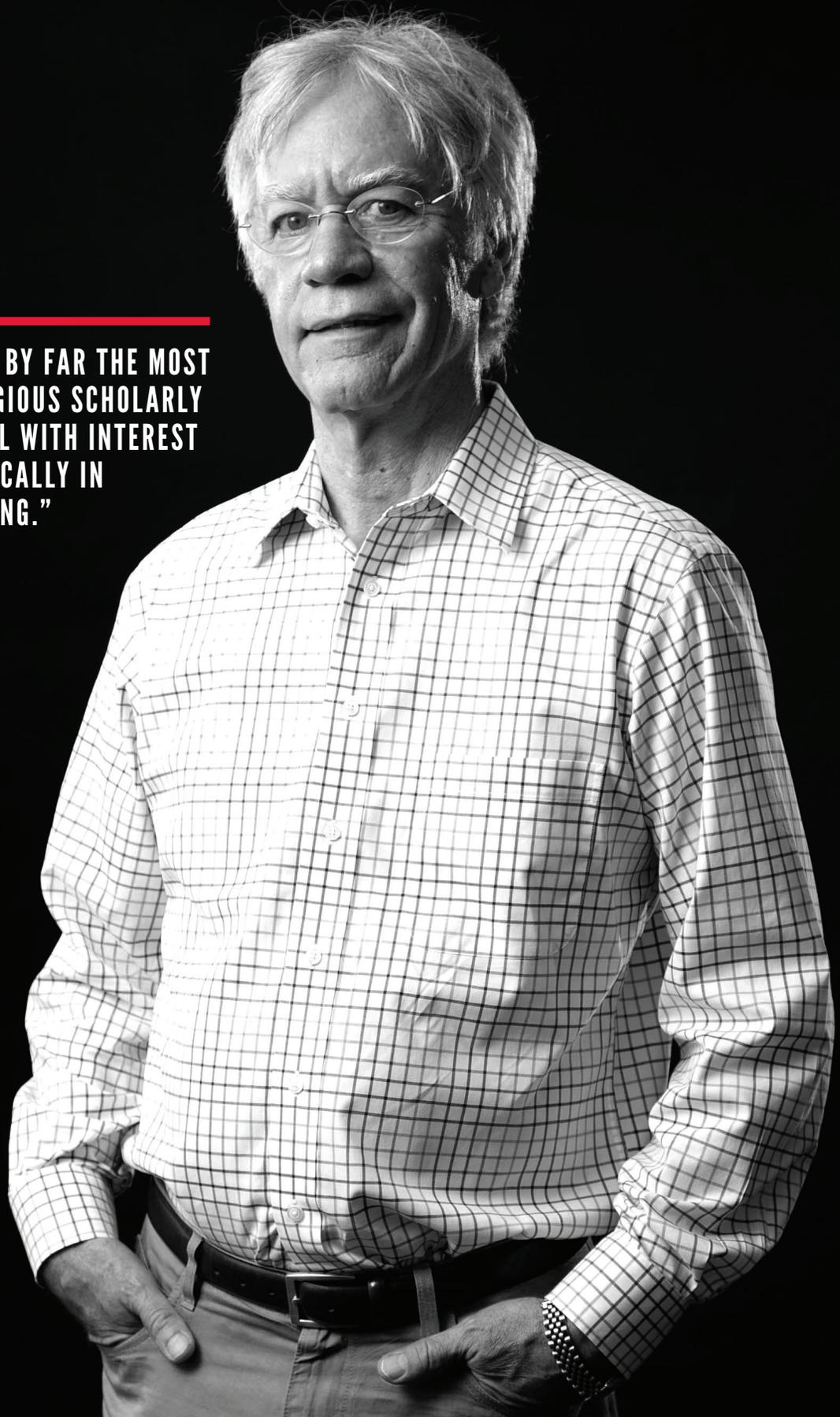
The recent growth in online marketing is just the beginning, Du said. Digital, online and big data-based marketing will become more important, requiring new talents from future and current market researchers.

“[Online marketing research] will demand more talent and people who are educated and trained in those areas,” Du added. “So the industry is not going to go away. That trend will only accelerate. But on the other hand, marketers also need to figure out a way to see the big picture. They need to strike a balance instead of being overwhelmed by online data. They need to see through the big data and get some big insights about how society and how the market is shifting.”

This is the kind of research that exemplifies how professors and doctoral students create new knowledge and insights that become part of textbooks, Du said, as it changes and improves how marketers conduct business.

“It’s critical to have faculty and doctoral students not just teaching, but also perform cutting-edge research to advance the field. I think Bauer is doing a very good job in that regard.”

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# A GLOBAL APPROACH

Professor Steve Brown now co-editor of *Journal of Retailing*

By Ann Lynd

Bauer College has long had a global reach. Students and faculty come from around the world for top tier academic opportunities, and this fall, that reach has stretched even further.

Marketing professor Steve Brown has been appointed co-editor of the prestigious *Journal of Retailing*, a highly respected scholarly journal with authors from the United States, Europe, Latin America, Asia, and beyond. The quarterly journal is the oldest in the marketing discipline, publishing its 90th volume this year.

The journal covers a broad range of topics and research approaches related to retailing, including strategy, communications, consumer shopping behavior, supply chain management, distribution channels, and much much more.

Brown will share co-editorship with Murali Mantrala from the University of Missouri at Columbia. Appointed by the advisory board for the journal at New York University, they will manage peer reviews, oversee the editorial process and represent the journal at conferences in the U.S. and abroad.

In advancing the journal, Brown says, “we would like not just to maintain, but elevate the scholarly reputation of the

journal by publishing research that makes a difference, an important original contribution to thought and practice of retailing.”

“We are the most prestigious scholarly journal devoted specifically to retailing, and we would like to extend our reach through greater dissemination and acceptance in industry.”

Brown has years of experience working in the editorial process as an author, reviewer, associate editor, and editorial review board member of other journals, in addition to the *Journal of Retailing*.

This is an opportunity for Brown and Mantrala to push the journal forward as retailing evolves globally. He’s looking forward to advancing the journal’s prestige and potentially developing several special issues on emerging topics in the years to come.

“I’m looking forward to the intellectual stimulation of reading, making editorial decisions, and developing for publication manuscripts that have the potential to make a good contribution to retailing thought and practice,” Brown says. “I’m looking forward to constructively developing to a publishable state research that may be

a bit rough, but has potential to make a significant contribution.”

The broad scope of retailing-related research gives the journal a presence in a diversity of academic societies. Brown plans to be a part of the outreach function the journal requires, promoting its interests at conferences around the world.

“We have to be present in a number of academic societies, from those focused on consumer behavior to others emphasizing empirical and analytical quantitative modeling, but all with direct implications for retailing,” Brown added. “It’s a really diverse and homogenous academic constituency that we have as our target for the journal, which makes our work both a great challenge and a real opportunity.”

**Marketing professor Steve Brown was recently appointed co-editor of the world’s leading journal on retailing.**



# THE MARKETING NAVIGATOR

Betsy Gelb, the Larry J. Sachnowitz Professor of Marketing at Bauer College, started her career in journalism, but after moving to Houston, she earned her MBA and Ph.D. and focused on the world of academia.



## MARKETING PROFESSOR BETSY GELB'S LEGACY INCLUDES 40 YEARS OF SERVICE TO BAUER

Story by Amanda Sebesta • Photo by Nicki Evans

What is a four-letter word that means tenacious, knowledgeable and dedicated?

G-E-L-B.

Marketing professor Betsy Gelb exemplifies that description. From the start of her career at WWL-TV in New Orleans to a four-decade tenure in Bauer College's Department of Marketing & Entrepreneurship, Gelb has a breadth of experience that makes an impression.

Gelb earned an undergraduate degree in journalism from the University of Missouri and worked at WWL-TV and then in public relations for the New Orleans Philharmonic Symphony. From there, she and her husband moved to Houston.

"After we moved to Houston, I worked for the anti-poverty agency here, first as research director, then as delegate agency coordinator, a contract compliance job for legal services for the poor and Head Start," Gelb said.

As she continued her work in Houston, she soon realized that she would need to further her education to succeed in her career.

"Overseeing organizations when you have nothing but a bachelor's degree is less than ideal," Gelb said, "So I decided to get an MBA, and did, here at UH. Then a couple of faculty members said, 'You should get a Ph.D. and become a college professor.' I believed them, so I did, also here at UH. Turns out, they did me a huge favor, and I think more MBA students should consider this career path."

Since getting her Ph.D., Gelb has taught at Bauer for 40 years, impacting thousands of students' lives.

"Once our college received the Bauer gift, everything changed—the faculty and what aspirations we have now for our college, and the students' perceptions that they are indeed at a top-tier

institution and college of business," Gelb added. "But I will say, I have two degrees from this college before the gift, an MBA and a Ph.D., and it was quite a special place even then."

When she's not doing *New York Times* crossword puzzles, Gelb focuses on research interests that include healthcare marketing, advertising and marketing, and public policy.

"My research focuses on the many areas that intersect legal issues, especially intellectual property, public policy and strategy," she said. "Anybody involved with marketing encounters legal issues very quickly, and often executives realize that they want to influence the policy-making that creates those issues. Even a small business will join with others in their industry to try to do so. That's where research comes in; sensible people want to know the effects and possibly the unintended side effects of what's happening or might happen in the legal realm. And overall, I like doing research that has practical applications."

Gelb's most recent research published in *Business Horizons*, an Indiana University management journal, marks a special achievement. This was Gelb's 23rd piece published in the journal since 1972. The publication honored Gelb for her outstanding contributions with the first-ever "Navigator of Business Horizons" award.

Gelb accepted the honor with her trademark humility.

"The current editor of that journal invented that title because I have published so many articles in *Business Horizons*," Gelb added. "I think he just enjoyed the idea that longevity should be recognized."

# BIG DATA: BIG REWARDS

Bauer students take top spots in supply chain paper competition

By Ann Lynd

This spring, Bauer MBA students studying supply chain management bested students from across the United States and Mexico to claim the top two graduate awards in a paper competition.

Now alumni, Jigyasa Purwar, Scott Ellis and Brian Miles were recognized among the best at the annual APICS Terra Grande District Charles K. “Chuck” Nelson 2014 Student Paper Competition with Purwar taking first place among graduate-level entries, while Ellis and Miles won second place for their co-authored paper. Both winning papers focused on the area of big data in analytics. Students in the Bauer course Global Supply Chain Strategy have brought home top honors in the past three years.

In Purwar’s paper, she addressed how big data analytics can help corporations be more efficient in supply chain efforts. She also found that there are benefits of those technologies, but companies are reluctant to adopt them.

“While the success stories are few, the amount of impact each of these stories has documented is immense,” Purwar said. “I felt that one of the reasons for this could be because there is not much research available on an implementation methodology for the same, which is where I decided to focus.”

Ellis and Miles’s paper titled “Analytics Enabled Supply Chain,” explored and identified the best practices for a successful company and examined how companies employing analytics capabilities are more profitable and productive.

In their research, the students put into practice concepts taught in Bauer classes by clinical assistant professors Michael Murray and Gordon Smith, Miles said.

“The Enterprise Operations and Business Intelligence and Business Modeling for a Competitive Advantage classes introduced us to the importance of big data and how many companies are taking advantage of the abundance of data available,” Miles added. “The hands-on approach we took in those classes really showed us how to manipulate available data to drive results.”

They applied what they learned in the courses and others to form competitive research for their paper.

“The research required competency in supply chain processes, information systems and overall business strategy. Bauer courses certainly helped build the foundation for our research,” Ellis said.

*Two Bauer supply chain teams claimed the top two awards in a recent paper competition for research on big data in analytics.*



*Jigyasa Purwar*

“

**THE RESEARCH REQUIRED COMPETENCY IN SUPPLY CHAIN PROCESSES, INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND OVERALL BUSINESS STRATEGY. BAUER COURSES CERTAINLY HELPED BUILD THE FOUNDATION FOR OUR RESEARCH.**

”



*Scott Ellis and Brian Miles*

“ I WANT TO LAUNCH A COMPANY OF MY OWN THAT HELPS WOMEN WITH BEAUTY FROM THE INSIDE OUT.”



# BUSINESS IN A BLINK

## Student brings experience from beauty industry to the Wolff Center

By Ann Lynd

The hot Texas summers are no secret, but while some seek shelter in the shade, others make the most of it — and that’s what Noor Daoudi did at 10 years old.

During scorching summers of the 1990s, Daoudi and her siblings turned the heat into an opportunity by creating a small driveway concession stand, attracting neighborhood kids and sparking an entrepreneurial passion, a new family mission.

Coming a long way from treats and lemonade, Daoudi is now an entrepreneurship junior at the Cyvia and Melvyn Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship (WCE) at Bauer College. She is also co-founder of a family business in the cosmetics industry, bringing this life experience into the classroom.

Daoudi and her mother began working on creating a new technique for professionally applied false eyelashes. In 2005, the family launched Xtreme Lashes, an eyelash extension training and manufacturing company that has since become a global phenomenon.

“Everything in my life came to a halt as I focused all my efforts on Xtreme Lashes,” Daoudi said. “For the next eight years, my role in the family business was to innovate products and education, design a first-rate client experience and make brand fanatics out of our lash stylists worldwide.”

At the company, Daoudi was able to gain experience in two of the things she most loves — design and people. She built and

staffed the education department and developed products such as lash adhesives and tools, along with her responsibilities in creating educational and training materials.

“At any given time, my team was responsible for the logistics and details of 50 training programs nationwide. I pitched our brand to beauty editors in New York and applied lashes to celebrities in Cannes, France,” Daoudi added.

By the time she was 23 years old, Daoudi was leading and managing a team of 25 people twice her age and running a half-million dollar department.

When she first started at the company, she was pursuing a bachelor’s degree in nutrition to eventually become a dermatologist. After working full-time at the family business for seven years, Daoudi made the decision to return to school.

In her junior year, Daoudi was honored with a \$10,000 Texas Business Hall of Fame scholarship for her involvement in the local business community and commitment to entrepreneurship. The TBHF sees each scholarship as an investment into each recipient who will serve as a representative of the organization.

“They saw in me that I was part of the Houston business community. I am a Houston native and have stayed here as part of a startup that supported the community,” Daoudi said. “They saw that throughout

my life, I have been involved with entrepreneurial ventures in Houston.”

Bauer’s entrepreneurship program has helped to further Daoudi’s innate entrepreneurial passion, she said.

“The program has built upon my passion for innovative entrepreneurship and business experiences, and given me a larger toolkit,” she added. “A WCE student gains financial knowledge, is taught how to hold their own in negotiations with other entities and learns how to monetize their value and raise capital.”

The experience she gained at Xtreme Lashes was valuable but focused on the customer interaction and product development side of the business. She didn’t learn the finances of the business but is filling that gap through the Wolff Center, she said.

“In order to be an autonomous entrepreneur you really have to be able to understand [the financial] side of the business,” she added. “I don’t think I’m ever going to be the person who does the finances at my company, but I would be able to interact with an accountant, a CFO or an investor. I think I’ll make more effective decisions.”

“I’m getting to bring all these pieces together so that, when I graduate in 2015, I have a platform from which I want to launch a company of my own that helps women with beauty from the inside out.”



# SWEET SONG OF SUCCESS

Bauer accounting student pursues love of music and number crunching

By Amanda Sebesta

For Bauer College accounting senior Meggie Reynoso, life has been a lot like one of the songs she loves to sing in church — the beginning starts in almost a whisper, building through the middle to a triumphant crescendo.

“I’ve always been very musical,” Reynoso said. “My mom put me in piano lessons when I was in the first grade, and I did that for about five years. It wasn’t until my eighth grade year when I competed in a talent competition in Los Angeles that I started taking singing seriously.”

From there, Reynoso developed a love of performing that has led her to participate in many more talent competitions, including a recent audition for NBC’s *The Voice*.

“The *Voice*’s auditions came to Houston, and I wanted to go, at least to see what it was all about. It was a long process, but only about 30 seconds to audition and get your answer.”

Unfortunately, that answer for Reynoso was a “no,” but she didn’t let the experience

deter her from the joy she finds in performing, which she still does regularly at church and on her own.

“Playing music and singing helps me through bad situations, or just to pass the time,” she said. “It makes me feel happy and worthy that I have talent. It’s my getaway from the world.”

Reynoso applies the same *joie de vivre* to a seemingly opposite passion for accounting. She plans to become a certified public accountant after she graduates. Much like her musical path, Reynoso has overcome



*Accounting senior  
Meggie Reynoso uses  
music as an escape and  
also as a passion for a  
career one day.*

obstacles in her studies and come through it stronger and more determined to succeed.

“After transferring to Bauer, I learned a lot about school and the real world,” she said.

“

**IF YOU LOVE DOING  
SOMETHING AND  
IT'S YOUR PASSION,  
KEEP CHASING  
THAT DREAM AND WORK  
HARD BECAUSE IT  
WILL PAY OFF.**

”

“I never had great study habits — in fact, I would always wait until the last minute to study. But when I got to UH, that all changed. My first semester taught me how to study ahead and to look over the notes

the same night, after class was over, to make sure I understood and didn't forget the information.”

Reynoso is also involved with Bauer student organizations, including the Bauer Women Society, where she serves as media director.

“It's helped me make friends and network to form study groups within my classes,” she said.

In both her academic career and her musical aspirations, Reynoso has learned not to let failures prevent her from moving forward.

“If you love doing something, and it's your passion, keep chasing that dream and work hard because it will pay off. Don't give up, especially if someone tells you that you can't do it. All you need to do is prove to them that you can.”

## **MEGGIE'S FAVORITES**

### **Top 3 Cover Songs**

1. Irreplaceable - Beyoncé
2. The Way I Am - Ingrid Michaelson
3. I Choose You - Sara Bareilles

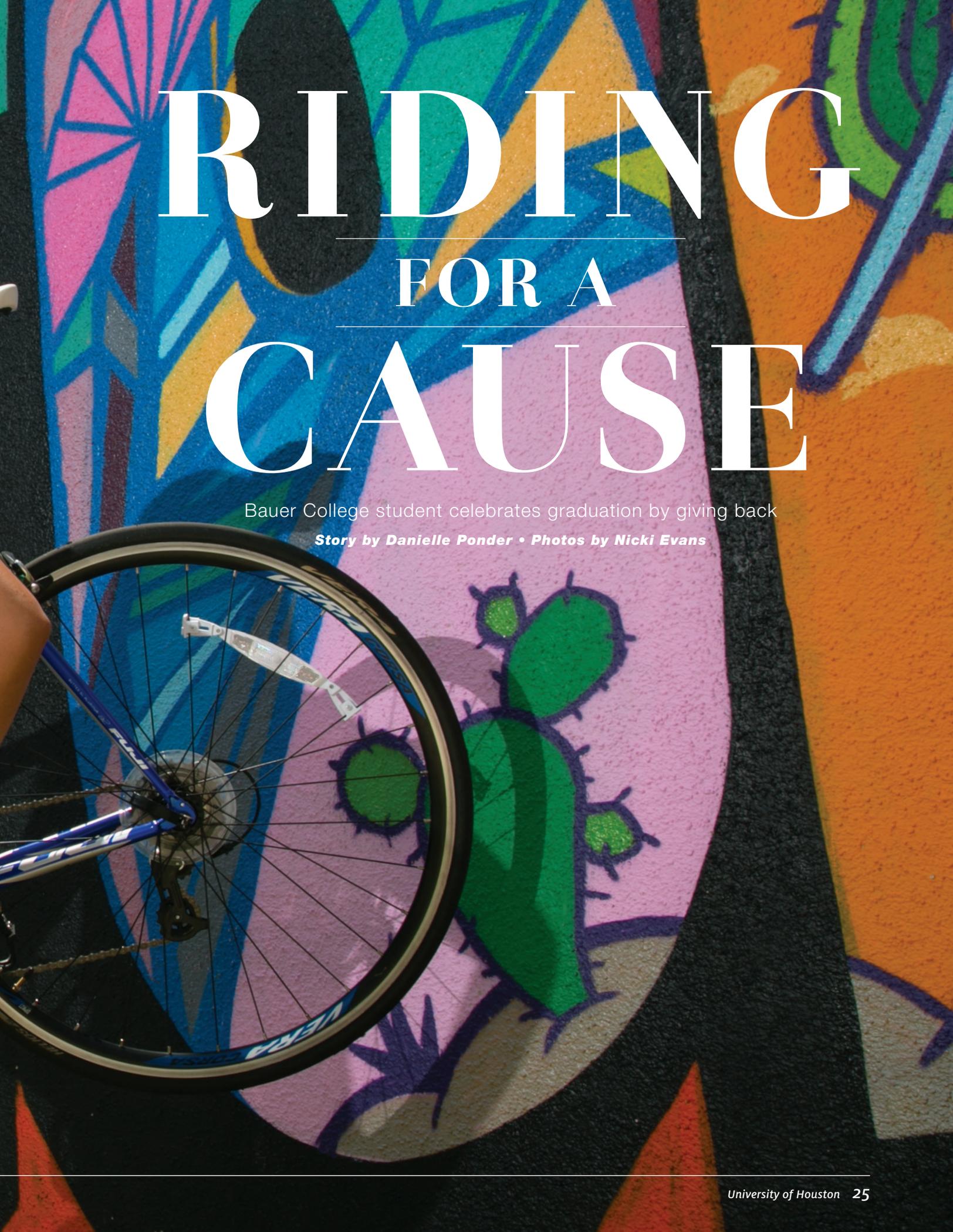
### **Top 3 Accounting Goals**

1. Become a CPA
2. Work for a company I enjoy
3. Be of great service to others

### **Top 3 Music Goals**

1. Continue singing for as long as possible
2. Sing Christian music for church conferences
3. Get more YouTube subscribers (Help Meggie reach this goal by visiting [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and searching “Meggie Reynoso” to find her music channel!)





# RIDING FOR A CAUSE

Bauer College student celebrates graduation by giving back

*Story by Danielle Ponder • Photos by Nicki Evans*

“People coming together for a greater good is truly the beauty of community projects. The same can be said of our time here at Bauer. Our fellow students, faculty and professors encourage us to put ourselves out there and strive for something greater.”



There is a quote by author E. L. Doctorow that Bauer College supply chain alumna Rani Ramchandani finds particularly inspiring.

“Writing a novel is like driving a car at night. You can only see as far as your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way.”

While she isn’t planning to write a novel any time soon, this quote prompted Ramchandani to find the dedication and motivation she needed to participate in the BP MS 150 bike ride this spring.

As she balanced a full course load and served as Vice President of the UH Student Government Association, Ramchandani made the decision to sign up for the ride. She overheard that ConocoPhillips had a bike team and decided to reach out to the team captain to join. The group

began conditioning every other weekend before completing the two-day, 160-mile trip from Houston to Austin.

It wasn’t just an athletic goal for Ramchandani, though. “I have a friend who has multiple sclerosis and competes in the ride every year. He will continue to do this until his body physically can’t anymore,” she said.

Seeing her friend persevere despite his worsening condition is what ultimately sparked Ramchandani’s desire to raise money for MS research through the event. She pushed herself mentally and physically, and when her bike broke the weekend before the race, a friend donated his to her so she could still participate.

“It was amazing to see this group of people come together to raise money for this cause,” Ramchandani said. “The day of the ride, you are on a high of excitement, and as you make it mile-by-mile you continue to feel a buzz that you feed off. That’s what keeps you going the whole time.”

At the end of the second day, she recalls the experience of finishing the last leg on Red River Road, coasting down a hill toward the Capitol Building.



“As you approach the finish line, people are cheering your team on, and it’s a bit surreal. People coming together for greater good is truly the beauty of community projects,” Ramchandani said. “I think the same can be said of our time here at Bauer. We’ve had this support from our fellow students, faculty and our professors to encourage us to put ourselves out there and strive for something greater.”

She encourages Bauer students to venture out of their comfort space. Even if they feel slightly vulnerable, she said, it may lead them right to where they are supposed to be.

Ramchandani has always felt a love for volunteering, spending several years dishing out turkey and sides to underprivileged families at the George R. Brown Convention Center’s Thanksgiving Superfeast. At the event, she was also able to help children prepare for the holiday season by assisting them with writing letters to Santa Claus.

“This may sound selfish, but I find myself going back to volunteer because there is something to be said about the warm feeling I receive in return. That gets me every time,” Ramchandani said. “By the end, you walk away knowing that you have left someone or something better than you found it. Sometimes that someone ends up being you.”

## HOW TO DONATE

At the time of the ride, Ramchandani surpassed her personal pledge goal of \$500 and collected over \$900 in donations, helping ConocoPhillips reach the first 85 percent of their \$550,000 goal. Ramchandani’s inspiration is her friend, Chris Potter—a graduate from UH’s Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management—who suffers from multiple sclerosis. Potter raised \$106,564.67 for his own “Team Wingman” and will continue to raise money until the next MS 150 ride. Ramchandani encourages those who wish to donate to Potter’s team to do so online:

**<http://main.nationalmssociety.org/goto/teamwingman2014>**



# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: BY THE NUMBERS

*By Amanda Sebesta*

Studies have shown a definite correlation between college student success and involvement in student activities. At Bauer College, business student activities allow students to complement what they are learning in the classroom with leadership and professional development opportunities as well as social activities. Bauer students lead nearly three dozen organizations that each manage events, raise funds and provide networking opportunities.

9

GRADUATE  
STUDENT  
ORGANIZATIONS

1,700

AVERAGE  
NUMBER OF BAUER  
STUDENTS THAT  
PARTICIPATE IN  
STUDENT  
ORGANIZATIONS

25

UNDERGRADUATE  
STUDENT  
ORGANIZATIONS



**FIVE ACCOUNTING  
STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**



**THREE ENERGY  
STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**



**THREE FINANCE  
STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**



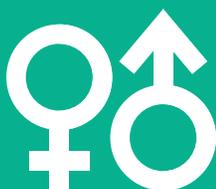
**ONE MANAGEMENT  
INFORMATION SYSTEMS  
STUDENT ORGANIZATION**



**TWO SUPPLY CHAIN  
STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**



**TWO ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**



**53% FEMALE  
47% MALE**

**45-50**

**NUMBER OF HOUSTON  
NON-PROFITS BENEFITTING  
FROM BAUER STUDENT  
ORGANIZATIONS'  
VOLUNTEER EFFORTS**

*students*

# SEARCH BAR SAVVY

Bauer MBAs make Google Competition history with help from digital marketing course

*By Danielle Ponder*



Few brands become so iconic that their names are used as verbs. Google is no doubt at the top of that list — just google it.

And when the world's leading search and digital advertising company asks university students across the globe to put their skills to the test in an annual Online Marketing Challenge, Bauer College is ready. Over the past five years, students from the college have participated in the competition, and this year, two Bauer teams made it to the top of Google's list for running online advertising campaigns for two local nonprofits.

Bauer MBA students won both second and third place in the Google Online Marketing Challenge AdWords Social Impact Award category, developing campaigns for Houston Grand Opera and Space Center Houston, respectively. The competition drew participation from 14,000 students at universities worldwide, who conceptualized and operated online advertising campaigns over a three-week period. The competition focuses on Google's AdWords service, which displays ad copy in Google search results.

The Bauer student teams prepared for the challenge by enrolling in the college's Internet Marketing Practicum, taught by executive professor Steve Koch and created in 2010 specifically to prepare students for participation in the Google competition. Many of the students completed previous internet marketing courses at the college, Koch said, including semesters covering web analytics and internet marketing.

"The Internet Marketing Practicum builds on these experiences by allowing the students to actually assess a company's business and marketing situation, write a detailed strategy and plan for how they would improve the business through Internet marketing, conduct a live campaign funded by Google that executes on the strategy and plan they wrote, and then develop a rather thorough post-analysis of the campaign to assess whether or not they created value for the firm through the campaign," he said.

Koch added: "When they leave Bauer, not only have they studied internet marketing, but they've created a plan from scratch that is responsive to a business's unique needs, executed that plan and reported back on its detailed performance, along with recommendations for the future. In short, they graduate with the kind of experience that is 'already done that, and done that quite well...even got the T-shirt.'"

Bauer's focus on teaching students these skills is important, Koch said.

"Fifteen years ago, dollars spent on the internet for marketing purposes was so insignificant, it was non-measurable. Now, Forrester Research estimates that by 2016, roughly one-third of all marketing media dollars spent in the United States will be spent on internet marketing. That means new jobs in a profession that requires very unique skills and knowledge — skills and knowledge that did not exist 15 years ago."

Over the past five years, nine Bauer teams have competed in the Google Online Marketing Challenge, performing well and often bringing home top honors, including recognition as Global Champions in 2011, the Americas Champion in 2013, one second place Global Not-for-Profit (NFP) category win and two third place Global NFP category wins.

"This impressive record demonstrated in this global competition of a significant

*Bauer MBA students, from left, Benjamin Smith, Shu Su, (not pictured) Sarah Burge and Neha Kejriwal gave the Houston Grand Opera a promotional push by selecting the organization as a client for the Google Online Marketing Challenge. The students claimed second place in the AdWords Social Impact Award category of competition. A second Bauer MBA team worked with Space Center Houston, placing third in the category.*



emerging area in business is not just important for Bauer College and the University of Houston, but indeed for the entire city of Houston and its efforts to be seen as a global center of business,” Koch said.

This year, Bauer College became one of only two schools in the world to have two team winners by placing second and third in the competition. The two teams received AdWords Social Impact Awards, recognizing their efforts to partner with Houston local non-profits.

The second place team included second-year MBA students Sarah Burge, Neha Kejriwal, Benjamin Smith and Shu Su, who collaborated with the Houston Grand Opera. First-year MBA students Saket Maheshwari, Randall Miller, Varuniya Pushparajan and Charles Shelton received third place for working with Space Center Houston. As part of the prize, Google will donate \$10,000 and \$5,000, to each non-profit, respectively.

“Two teams winning from Bauer College demonstrates its dedication to hiring excellent faculty like Professor Koch,” Maheshwari said. “The Google Online Marketing Challenge gave us hands-on experience where we were able to take risks and learn from our mistakes throughout the process. It gave us knowledge that will stick with us once the contest is over.”



Early in the spring semester, the students began compiling a list of potential clients, narrowing down the list to their final selections after receiving a strong level of commitment from both Space Center Houston and Houston Grand Opera to partner with them through the entire three-week contest. In addition, the organizations selected could not have utilized Google’s AdWords feature for at least six months prior to the contest.

“It was great to work with a non-profit because they are working toward a good cause,” Kejriwal said. “We were glad to share in helping them with this.”

After selecting a non-profit, teams spent two months researching their organization’s



*The Space Center Houston team included, from left, Saket Maheshwari, Randall Miller, Varuniya Pushparajan and Charles Shelton.*

current website, determining advertising keywords purchased by competitors and incorporating the organization’s goals into a pre-campaign strategy. Once the students submitted their strategies to Google, the execution portion of the contest began, lasting three weeks.

“We noticed an incredible increase by the second or third day. We saw the numbers start rolling,” Su said. “It was really exciting when we exceeded our original goals.”

At the end of the three weeks, the Houston Grand Opera team had a return on investment of 3,200 percent, and the Space Center Houston team reached 909 percent ROI, both for individual ticket sales. In addition, the Space Center Houston team had an ROI on customer lifetime value of 4,729 percent.

“In this challenge, we were up against teams from other universities, but also



**THE GOOGLE ONLINE MARKETING CHALLENGE GAVE US HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE WHERE WE WERE ABLE TO TAKE RISKS AND LEARN FROM OUR MISTAKES THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS. IT GAVE US KNOWLEDGE THAT WILL STICK WITH US ONCE THE CONTEST IS OVER.**



each other. We were classmates, but our classmates were also our competition. It got really competitive for all of us,” Shelton said.

He added: “We are so proud of our fellow MBAs because together we were able to do something that hasn’t been done before in the Google Challenge and contribute to Bauer’s tradition of excellence.”



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*Watch*

**New class of Bauer students  
share goals, hopes for  
academic careers**



*Story by Jessica Navarra  
Photos by Nicki Evans  
& Chase Pediga*

As a group, they represent the possibility, potential and promise for a future generation of business leaders and innovators.

They are at the start of a new adventure and have big dreams to realize. Right now, their futures are uncertain but exciting — over the next several years, they will discover more about themselves than they imagined, all while cultivating their strengths, making lasting friendships and experiencing a host of opportunities.

They are the new class of Bauer College undergraduate and graduate students, and they're the ones to watch.



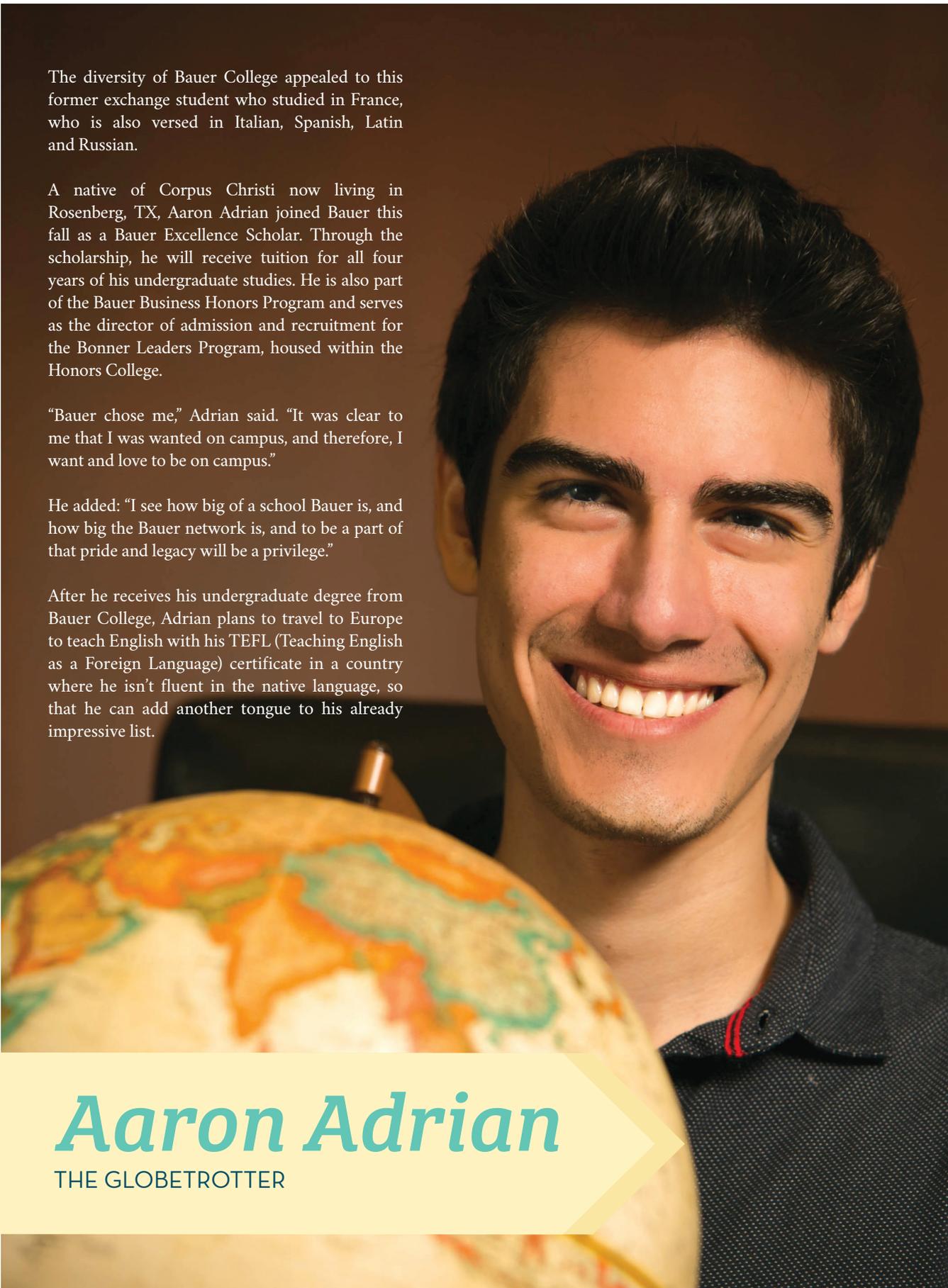
The diversity of Bauer College appealed to this former exchange student who studied in France, who is also versed in Italian, Spanish, Latin and Russian.

A native of Corpus Christi now living in Rosenberg, TX, Aaron Adrian joined Bauer this fall as a Bauer Excellence Scholar. Through the scholarship, he will receive tuition for all four years of his undergraduate studies. He is also part of the Bauer Business Honors Program and serves as the director of admission and recruitment for the Bonner Leaders Program, housed within the Honors College.

“Bauer chose me,” Adrian said. “It was clear to me that I was wanted on campus, and therefore, I want and love to be on campus.”

He added: “I see how big of a school Bauer is, and how big the Bauer network is, and to be a part of that pride and legacy will be a privilege.”

After he receives his undergraduate degree from Bauer College, Adrian plans to travel to Europe to teach English with his TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certificate in a country where he isn’t fluent in the native language, so that he can add another tongue to his already impressive list.



# Aaron Adrian

THE GLOBETROTTER



# Trang Tran

THE EXPLORER

After coming to the United States from Vietnam just six years ago, Trang Tran immediately became focused on what she wanted to achieve. This fall, she began the full-time MBA program at Bauer College, with the goal of becoming a corporate financial analyst.

She has a certain beginning and end destination in mind, but in between, Tran is open to explore — from trying the range of cuisines available in the Houston area to finding new places on campus, she is looking forward to the journey.

“I am excited about the next two years with Bauer, and I can’t wait to see what the future has in store for me,” she said.

In just a few months, Tran has already met with classmates who share her mindset, and she has benefited from the college’s student support services, including time with faculty and staff.

“Bauer was my top choice for its flexible curriculum, solid career support center and the extensive network of successful alumni in the Houston area,” she said.

Tran added: “So far, being at Bauer has been a tremendous blessing. I have met so many great people who have reached success in their careers or who are working toward it like me. We share the same goals and the same drive to accomplish those goals.”

Also on her college bucket list? Going to a UH Cougars football game and cheering on the home team.



# Randy Seawright

THE LEADER

For new Bauer MBA student Randy Seawright, taking on leadership roles is natural. After five years of service in the U.S. Marine Corps, including a tour in Iraq, he comes to Bauer College ready to make an impact and lead a team.

“I plan on concentrating in the economics of the energy value chain, business modeling and decision making, and sales leadership,” Seawright said. “I will use these skills to grow and manage either a sales team or an analyst team in the chemical industry.”

His experience in the energy sector — in his current job, he runs analysis for more than 20 chemical plants in North America and South America — brought him to Bauer.

“The classes are taught by industry professionals with a real world approach on education that is applicable after graduation,” he said, also citing opportunities to network with industry leaders.

In fact, Seawright has already begun to develop personal relationships with Bauer alumni and partners who are energy leaders.

“This is the beginning of my first semester, and I have already been in contact with a number of industry leaders from different companies,” he said. “They have expressed an interest in seeing if I am a good fit for their company, but the most pleasant surprise is that they have responded to my emails personally.”

If Bauer Honors freshman Brinda Penmetsa encounters an issue on campus and doesn't know what to do, she isn't worried — she knows how to improvise.

"So far, I've learned that college is the time to try out things I may not have had time for otherwise and also, a time to try new things," Penmetsa said. "I promised myself that I would join an organization or activity that I had no experience with, and the next thing I know, I'm in the improv play for Honors Club Theater."

She has kept her calendar full this semester, attending events like Freshman Connection and Freshman Fête, designed to give new Bauer undergraduates the opportunity to learn about scholarships, leadership opportunities and student services in the college as well as to connect with classmates. She is also serving on the Bauer Honors Student Advisory Board and in the Bonner Leaders Program.

"I've learned how to act professionally in social situations and socialize with ease in professional situations," Penmetsa said. "I cannot wait to see what else I will learn and how I can contribute."

She plans to major in finance and minor in political science, and after graduation, she wants to apply her knowledge and skills in a big way.

"I want to be able to say that I helped make a meaningful difference in the lives of my fellow students and Houstonians," she said.



# Brinda Penmetsa

THE IMPROVISER

# Michael J. Lewis, II

THE FIGHTER

When full-time Bauer MBA student Michael J. Lewis, II is presented with a problem, he doesn't back down.

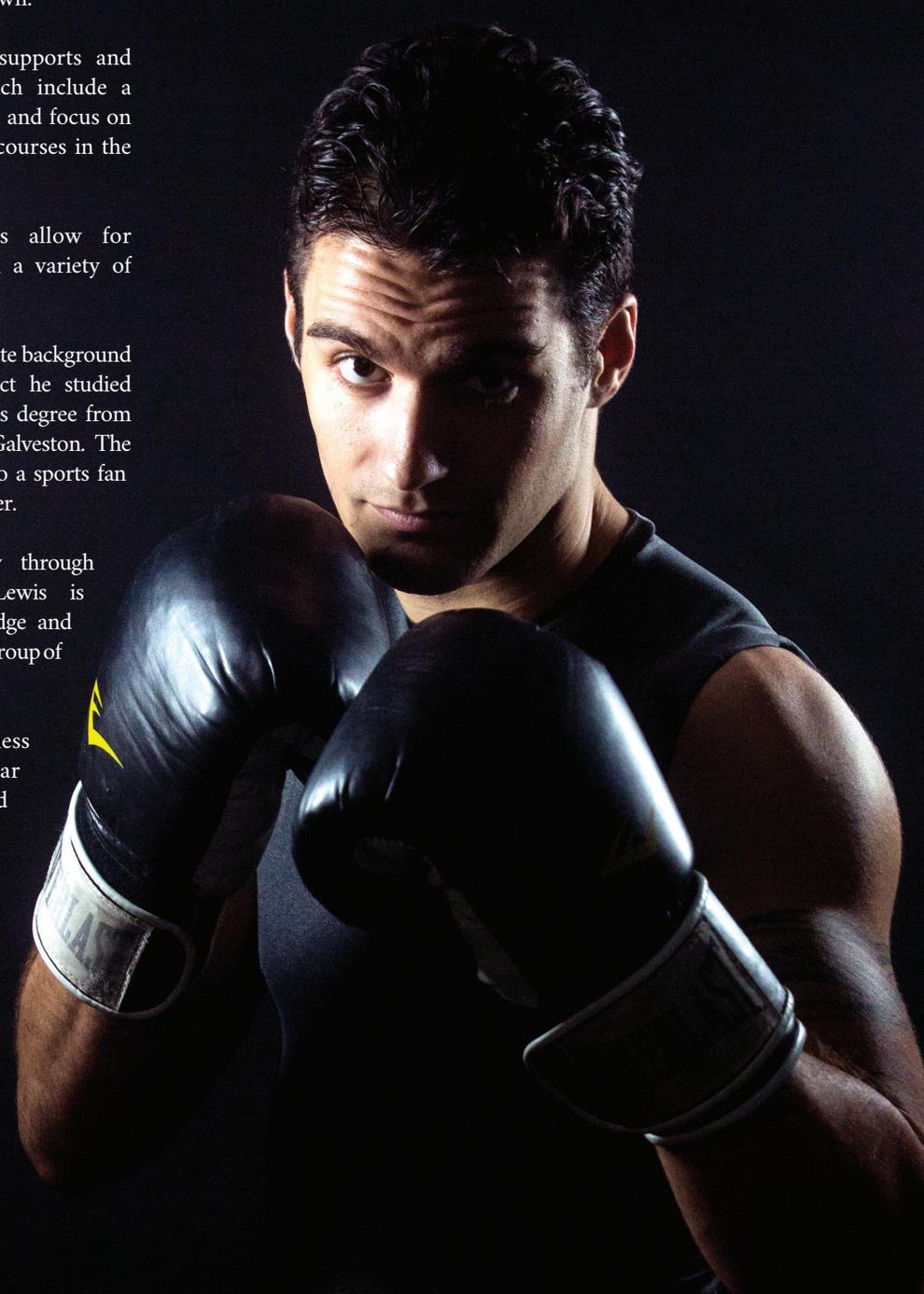
He fights for causes he supports and pursues his interests, which include a career in alternative energy and focus on finance and data analytics courses in the Bauer MBA program.

"Bauer's course offerings allow for vast specialization through a variety of certificates," he said.

Lewis brings an undergraduate background in marine biology, a subject he studied while pursuing his bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University at Galveston. The Oklahoma City native is also a sports fan and a certified personal trainer.

As he navigates his way through his graduate program, Lewis is making use of the knowledge and experience of one particular group of Bauer students.

"So far, the receptiveness and guidance of second-year MBAs has greatly enhanced my time at Bauer," he said.





As father to seven children — six girls and one boy — Ernie Ayala no doubt has his hands full.

But, he's making time to further his education through the Bauer Executive MBA program, which he entered this fall. Ayala spent 22 years in the U.S. Navy as a former boatswain's mate, gunner's mate, electrician and Naval Special Warfare boat operator with the Special Warfare Combatant-Craft.

He also has two journeyman certifications as an electrician and in electrical maintenance, each of which required 8,000 hours of on-the-job training. He received a bachelor of science in electronics systems from Southern Illinois University and two associate degrees in electronics technologies and science and math.

That list of achievements might be enough for some, but Ayala has set his sights even beyond his Executive MBA.

"In four years, I see myself in a doctorate program here in Houston, working as a manager with my new company," Ayala said.

# *Ernie Ayala*

THE FAMILY MAN



# RUSHING TO GET INVOLVED



Whether you're new to campus, or returning for your last year, getting involved is important to enhance the college experience.

Each semester, more than 30 Bauer student organizations host Rush Week, where they meet with prospective members and give them information about joining their organizations. From supply chain to finance, students have the option to join organizations targeted for their majors with the opportunity for social, professional and philanthropic activities.



Photo courtesy of the UH Cullen College of Engineering Office of Communications.

# INNOVATION INVASION

Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship creates powerful business ventures through collaborations with UH Division of Research, Valenti School of Communication

By Danielle Ponder

It was a University of Houston campus collaboration this spring as undergraduate student teams from Bauer College's Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship worked alongside students from the Jack J. Valenti School of Communication to build comprehensive commercialization plans for intellectual property invented by UH faculty.

Six teams of Bauer students traveled to 10 business plan competitions, claiming nine podium finishes, often besting graduate and doctoral counterparts. The teams also brought home several individual accolades, including Texas Christian University's Energy Independence Award, Rice University's Clean Technology Innovation Prize and MIT's Audience Choice Award, in addition to scholarship and grant funding to continue work on their plans.

"When we learned that WCE planned to take advantage of collaboration between Bauer and the two other schools, College of Technology and communications, we immediately understood that something new like this had great potential," said Ivette Rubio, who graduated from Bauer in May.

Rubio, along with Valeria Bernadac, Eric Beydoun, Julia Loennegren and Sergei Petrov make up the five co-founders of Wavve Stream Inc., a business designed to sell a water purification system to existing filtration companies. Created by Dr. Debora Rodrigues, a UH civil engineering assistant professor, the nanotechnology coating solution enhances existing water purification membranes and could eventually provide the means for clean, safe drinking water worldwide. Wavve won the Clean Tech Prize at the Rice Business Plan Competition and third place at Chapman

University's California Dreamin' Business Plan Competition.

The first pieces of the partnership came together in 2012, when WCE Director of Undergraduate Programs Ken Jones approached Mark Clarke, UH's associate vice president for technology transfer. Jones aimed to expand opportunities for not only the aspiring entrepreneurs at WCE, but for university researchers who had been steadily creating marketable technologies on campus for the last several years.

"This was a relatively unique approach that the UH campus as a whole has embraced," Clarke said. "Technology commercialization and viable business plans go hand-in-hand. Combining the entrepreneurial expertise found in the WCE with technologies from our faculty inventors fit perfectly with our institutional commitment to create a campus

culture of innovation and entrepreneurship while creating unique opportunities for our students.”

He added: “Allowing Bauer students to build actual business plans around a technology helps provide information on market size, competing technologies and commercial value for ‘real world’ commercial applications. The information helps the UH System IP committee decide which technologies should be patented or which technologies may benefit from additional UH Technology Gap internal funding to help with technology prototyping to accelerate technology transition to market.”

Clarke then helped select faculty inventors with technologies determined as viable — IP that had been deemed “good science” with evidence of a commercial future. According to Clarke, the skills of business school students helped faculty inventors to not only understand business terms like “value proposition” but also understand the value of entrepreneurship in marketing their technologies.

“Our scientists and engineers are great inventors, but 90 percent have no experience in how to structure a commercialization plan,” Clarke said. “The best idea is to pull in what you don’t have. At the end of the day, 50 percent of nothing is still nothing,

so it’s much more valuable to partner with someone that complements your own skill set while creating value for both partners.”

With a variety of promising technologies available to them, WCE students had to first determine if they could construct a business plan for those that showed the most viability in the marketplace. From there, they faced the obstacle of translating highly scientific jargon into something where potential consumers and investors could discover meaningful value.

“As business school students, we have a lot of passion, but being an entrepreneur is not about you. It’s about helping each other and using other people’s talents to create a successful business,” alumna Savannah Becerril said. “We had to learn how to not only communicate with the other business students on our team, but with highly technical researchers to understand their product. It was a challenge, but in order to grow, we have to work together.”

Becerril and teammates Glenn Figueroa, Brenda Melgar, Jennie Hemphill and Eduardo Visbal partnered with UH Department of Engineering Technology Associate Professor Deniz Gurkan to pitch Emergency Management Integration (EMI), a system that provides enhanced on-site crisis responses, integrating with software

systems to selectively show all emergency information needed in real-time.

As the Bauer student teams learned about the technologies behind the business plans, they also partnered with students from the Valenti School, who provided public relations and communications support.

Assistant Professor Jennifer Vardeman-Winter and Associate Professor Lan Ni created “Communication for Entrepreneurship,” a topic within the upper-level elective course Special Problems after the Division of Research provided seed funding to the Valenti School to explore development of an academic curriculum in entrepreneurial messaging in order to complement efforts underway with WCE. The curriculum allowed undergraduate public relations students to gain exposure to startup companies, providing the framework for consumer market research and aiding in the creation of strategic communication plans for the Bauer teams.

“This was a strong partnership in which all of the students, both at Bauer and Valenti, felt valued as they gained experience working together on real-world projects,” Ni said. “This was the best lesson for our students about bridging a communications gap.





## COMMUNICATION

Even though they are in the communication discipline, it doesn't mean it comes easily."

All the students spent countless hours during instruction and outside of class working on synergistic brainstorming and problem solving. This hard work between both groups contributed to what Ni and Vardeman-Winter deemed a "recipe for success."

In just a few short months, everyone came together, with the Bauer teams solidifying their business plan rationale and the communications students helping to craft creative elements for upcoming pitch presentations, including demo videos.

"Working with communication students, gave us, as entrepreneurs, a freedom to explore markets that we wouldn't know we had if we had stayed to ourselves in the business school," alumna Paula Musa said.

Musa and her teammates — Timothy Arnaez, Aliko Thanos, Ariana Thrasher and Christopher Wick — pitched their company OXIGINNE, who was developing a patent-pending Perfusion Mapping Device created by Dr. Luca Pollonini, assistant research professor for UH Center for Future Health, and Dr. Scott Paranzynski, a former NASA astronaut and current director of University of Texas Medical Branch Center for Polar Medical Operations. The device benefits

patients with skin cancer, burn victims and breast cancer mastectomies by decreasing failure rates of full-thickness skin grafts. OXIGINNE placed third during the Giants Entrepreneurship Challenge at University of North Dakota.

"The collaboration with Bauer and Valenti students brought two really great programs together to give us real-world experience. Then added to that is another layer, working with the technologies of research faculty on campus," Musa said. "What we were a part of is just the start of something excellent for future students at UH."

Other WCE business plan teams who participated in the partnership include:

### **CARA**

Entrepreneurship alumni Rashmi Bhat, Corbin Bradford, Karey Gallagher, Jacob Hines and Alicia Ramirez won first place at University of North Dakota Giants Entrepreneurship Challenge. CARA pitched a nanotechnology that revolutionizes the way wood is manufactured. It was developed by UH Associate Professor of Physics Seamus "Shay" Curran, director of the UH Institute for NanoEnergy.

### **Energetik**

Competitors Jonathan Brown, Jonathan Cohen-Kurzrock, Rowbin Hickman, Brenda Rojo and Noy Shemer walked away as the

top finishers at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln New Venture Competition for their plan's technology that replaces the anode of a battery with 100 percent organic materials, resulting in a longer-lasting solution. The technology was pioneered by UH Cullen College of Engineering Assistant Professor Yan Yao. Energetik was also the third place winner and the Quicksilver Energy Independence Award recipient at Texas Christian University's 4th Annual Richards Barrentine Values and Ventures Business Plan Competition.

### **REEcycle**

REEcycle focuses on recycling rare earth elements, neodymium and dysprosium, using a revolutionary process created by Dr. Allan Jacobson, the Robert A. Welch Chair of Science and director of the Texas Center for Superconductivity at UH. The co-founders — Bauer alumni Cassandra Hoang, Casey McNeil and Susan Tran — brought home first place wins at both the Baylor New Venture Competition and the California Institute of Technology's First Look West (FLoW) Business Plan Competition. They then went on to sweep the Department of Energy's National Clean Energy Business Plan Competition in Washington, D.C., by claiming the Grand Prize, the Audience Investor Choice Award and the People's Choice Award. In addition, REEcycle was selected as one of the top 50 global innovative ventures in 2014 by the Kairos Society.

# THE MASTER CLASS

New Master of Science degrees cover marketing, MIS and global energy management

By Wendell Brock

This fall, Bauer College has launched three new Master of Science degrees. Citing the need for specialized training in the Houston workforce, the college is establishing graduate-level degrees in marketing, management information systems and global energy management.

Tailor-made to address the growth of the region, the degree programs will complement Bauer's long-established and highly regarded graduate and professional programs, which include the Bauer MBA and two other MS programs, one in accountancy and another in finance.

The new MS degrees will also bolster Bauer's position in the region's higher education marketplace.

"Bauer College is pleased to be adding these new MS degree programs as part of our strategic vision for the future," Dean Latha Ramchand said in making the announcement.

"We have identified where the jobs and opportunities will be in the coming decades, and we are managing our resources — our faculty, our facilities, our business leaders — to meet these essential leadership needs. We're ready, and our graduates will be, too."

Here's a look at the new MS programs and why they are essential:



**WE HAVE IDENTIFIED WHERE THE JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE IN THE COMING DECADES, AND WE ARE MANAGING OUR RESOURCES TO MEET THESE ESSENTIAL LEADERSHIP NEEDS. WE'RE READY, AND OUR GRADUATES WILL BE, TOO.**



**MS in Marketing:** The U.S. government estimates that more than a quarter-million Texans work in marketing. This advanced professional credential will position them to advance in their jobs and be more nimble sales and marketing practitioners. The MS in Marketing is designed to provide skills in marketing research, strategic marketing, brand management and integrated marketing communications.

**MS in Management Information Systems:** The U.S. government forecasts a remarkable 22 percent growth spurt in this field during the current decade, making Management Information Systems (MIS) a top career option across all professions. The MS degree will allow MIS professionals to upgrade their skills in technology and enhance their management acumen. It is intended for people working in information systems, software development, database administration and computer-systems analysis.

**MS in Global Energy Management:** Bauer's world-class Global Energy Management Institute (GEMI) is internationally recognized. The MS in Global Energy Management is the natural next step in serving the needs of Houston, the energy capital of the world, at a time when jobs in energy outpace the overall private sector. The degree will equip students with effective management skills and make them highly conversant in the business of energy. The degree is intended to serve those with careers in energy management, trading and finance.



*The three new offerings will give graduates the expertise needed to meet the region's growth, college officials say.*



# CROSSTOWN COLLABORATION

RED Labs partners with Rice University accelerator for first-ever Bayou Startup Showcase

By Danielle Ponder

Houston, we have startups.

RED Labs, the startup accelerator for the University of Houston housed within Bauer College, joined forces with OwlSpark, its Rice University counterpart, this year to launch Bayou Startup Showcase. The event culminated a semester of collaboration between the two groups, including shared sessions with speakers and mentors.

Both RED Labs and OwlSpark previously have held separate demo day events for participants to present their startup concepts to small groups of family and

“

WE'RE CELEBRATING THE COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT OF THE STARTUP COMMUNITY RATHER THAN COMPETING WITH EACH OTHER.

”

friends and an even smaller group of angel investors and startup community members. RED Labs founder Hesam Panahi, who teaches in Bauer College's Department of Decision & Information Sciences, realized along with OwlSpark organizers that a joint effort would yield more participation for both accelerators, along with a bigger contribution to Houston's startup scene.

“It's more powerful to work together with others who have similar goals so that we can set the model for other organizations,” Panahi said.



Through Bayou Startup Showcase, RED Labs and OwlSpark drew a crowd that more than quadrupled the attendance of 2013's RED Labs Demo Day. This signifies the growing importance that university-borne startups have on the city's economy, Panahi said.

"Most of our graduates end up staying in Houston," he added. "Through Bayou Startup Showcase, we want to infuse up-and-coming entrepreneurial talent back into the city, and by partnering with OwlSpark, we're celebrating the collaborative spirit of the startup community rather than competing with each other."

Thus, the Bayou Startup Showcase was born. The inaugural event, held in August, reflected months of preparation.

The planning stages of the joint demo event began in the middle of March and involved weeks of painstaking decision making before each accelerator moved teams into their respective co-working spaces in May. The biggest decision the partnering universities made was to break away from the traditional crosstown rivalry and fully embrace working together by not having the showcase be a competition.

"We understand how we can simultaneously leverage the resources of the community while at the same time be able to give back," Panahi said. "The best way we felt to accomplish this was to eliminate the competition element and elevate the communal aspect."

It was this aspect, a tribute to the togetherness of Houston's startup community, that struck a chord with city leaders, most notably Mayor Annise D. Parker, who declared Aug. 14 — the day of Bayou Startup Showcase — as "Houston Entrepreneurship Day." Houston City Council member Ed Gonzalez attended the event to pass along signed certificates acknowledging that the showcase had accomplished what the co-founders set out to do.

When all was said and done, five RED Labs startups and eight OwlSpark startups pitched their innovations to an audience of more than 500, including local startup community members and investors as well as business school faculty and administration. One member from each team pitched for six minutes and delivered what the company's technology does, how it benefits the customer and the vision for future funding and testing.

"This entire process, from working on our idea with mentors from the startup community to ultimately presenting our final pitch in front of an audience full of our peers, faculty and leaders from both universities was great real-world exposure," said Valeria Bernadac, a Bauer student who was part of team Wavve.

After all 13 teams completed their pitches, the official showcase portion of the program began, allowing everyone in the audience to network with the companies, ask questions and offer feedback, and check out the latest prototypes of the technologies.

Next year's Bayou Startup Showcase is already in the works and will be hosted by UH and Bauer College.

## MEET THE STARTUPS

**Luminostics:** A smartphone based rapid medical diagnostic testing system powered by light-emitting nanoparticles. Co-founders: UH engineering Ph.D. students Gavin Garvey, Andrew Paterson and Bala Raja, practicing physician Gabe Hodges, M.D.

**RaptorBird Robotics:** RAVN technology aiding in the creation of a smaller, faster and more efficient civilian drone. Co-founders: UH electrical engineering students Rakshak Talwar and Micah Thomas.

**Thermal Nomad:** Self-heating thermos allowing customers to heat up food anytime, anywhere. Co-founders: Bauer MBA alumni Travis Arnold and Daniyal Inamullah, UH architecture senior Dylan Bailey.

**Wavve:** Filtering bead nanotechnology that removes bacteria, chemicals and metals from water that can be placed in existing filtration systems on the market. Co-founders: Bauer alumni Valeria Bernadac, Eric Beydoun, Julia Loennegren and Ivette Rubio.

**Zodist:** A weekly subscription box of customized e-juices for personal vaporizers to encourage customers to switch to vaping instead of smoking. Co-founders: Bauer alumni Tom Huynh, Tri Nguyen and Joshua Wathen.

**About RED Labs:** UH's startup accelerator nurtures new tech startups, turning their concepts into a marketable reality over 12 weeks during the summer. Each cohort of entrepreneurs is a strategically selected mix of undergraduate and graduate students who apply throughout the year.

For more information, visit [redlabs.bauer.uh.edu](http://redlabs.bauer.uh.edu).



# CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

Gartner ranks Bauer's SCM program 14th in the U.S.; Faculty sets sights on Top 10

By Wendell Brock

Now that Gartner Inc., the world's leading information technology research and advisory company, has ranked Bauer College's undergraduate supply chain management program 14th in the nation, the faculty has a new goal: to make Gartner's Top 10 List.

When the supply chain management (SCM) faculty received word that the program made Gartner's Top 25 for the first time, they were delighted, naturally. It's an impressive national achievement that enhances Bauer's stature in the eyes of peers, practitioners and potential students.

"This is a significant accomplishment for our department and Bauer," said Funda Sahin, an

associate professor of supply chain management in the college's Department of Decision & Information Sciences. "This is the first time the Bauer SCM program was evaluated, and we beat out several high-quality and well-known programs."

But resting on laurels is not the Bauer way.

While acknowledging the hard work so far, Sahin said the goal now is to raise the bar. Said the professor: "The challenge is to move into the Top 10 in the next ranking, which will be held in two years."

*Bauer College's supply chain program ranked 14th in the nation overall, with recognition as third in program scope and second in program size.*



Gartner, a 35-year-old Stamford, Conn.-based organization, began researching SCM programs in 2008 and has issued two previous reports. For its 2014 edition, published in August, 40 undergraduate SCM programs were evaluated on scope, industry value and program size.

Gartner awarded Michigan State and Penn State a tie for No. 1, followed by the University of Tennessee (3), the University of Texas at Austin (4) and Western Michigan University (5). Bauer's SCM program outranked those at the University of Oklahoma (20), Georgia Tech (21) and Texas A&M (22).

Bauer ranked third in program scope (tying with 12 other schools) and second in program size (tying with two other schools). (Currently, there are 13 full-time faculty members and 580 undergraduate majors in Bauer's SCM program.)

The ranking, Sahin said, was the result of a "conscious effort" by SCM faculty members. "Our goal was basically: 'Get organized and make sure the program is ranked in top supply chain programs nationally and internationally.'"

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"All of our supply chain faculty members worked really hard to make this happen," Sahin said. "We reviewed our program and redesigned it to better reflect the criteria that industry is looking for as well as what we think our students should know when they graduate."

She also credited Bauer Dean Latha Ramchand and Everette S. Gardner, Jr., chair of the Department of Decision & Information Sciences, for their commitment to the program.

# WE BUILT THIS CITY

Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship is again nation's No. 2 undergraduate entrepreneurship program

By Danielle Ponder

Houston is a city built by entrepreneurs, in a state where business thrives. And, it's no accident that Houston's business school houses one of the nation's top ranked undergraduate entrepreneurship programs, according to The Princeton Review and *Entrepreneur*.

Bauer College's Cyvia and Melvyn Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship has again been ranked at the top of *Entrepreneur's* Top 25 Undergraduate Schools for Entrepreneurs, as determined by The Princeton Review. The 2015 list, released in September, puts the Wolff Center in the No. 2 spot, solidifying its national presence as a driving force that educates entrepreneurs who in turn grow businesses and create jobs in Houston and beyond. This is the eighth consecutive year Bauer's entrepreneurship program has been included in the list, with No. 1 rankings in 2008, 2010 and 2011, No. 2 rankings in 2007, 2009 and 2013, and a No. 3 ranking in 2012.

"We are proud to again be included in *Entrepreneur's* rankings, as determined by The Princeton Review," Dean Latha Ramchand said. "Houston is a city built by entrepreneurs, where big ideas and passion thrive."

The list, an annual feature in *Entrepreneur* magazine, determines its rankings based on how well colleges demonstrate a

commitment to entrepreneurship both inside and outside the classroom. Topping this year's undergraduate list was Babson College, with Bauer College at No. 2, and Baylor University rounding out the top three. Active involvement among faculty, students, alumni and success in entrepreneurial endeavors are heavily weighted factors when calculating the rankings.

"As Houston's business school, we have placed a strong emphasis on building a program that focuses not just on teaching entrepreneurship but also giving our students the opportunity to experience it," Ramchand said.

The Princeton Review sent surveys to more than 2,000 institutions requesting a breakdown of courses, internships and opportunities to work with students from different disciplines outside of entrepreneurship. Bauer offers entrepreneurship students a complete and comprehensive program that includes a six-course, lockstep program as well as several enrichment activities to supplement the academic instruction. Each year, between 30 and 40 students are selected through a rigorous application process to take the Wolff Center's major program in entrepreneurship.

"The Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship benefits from being in such a vibrant city as Houston," WCE Director of

Undergraduate Programs Ken Jones said. "Our program is based on pragmatic and basic understandings of business models and the practical application in the classroom as well as extensive outside contributions of mentors and speakers."

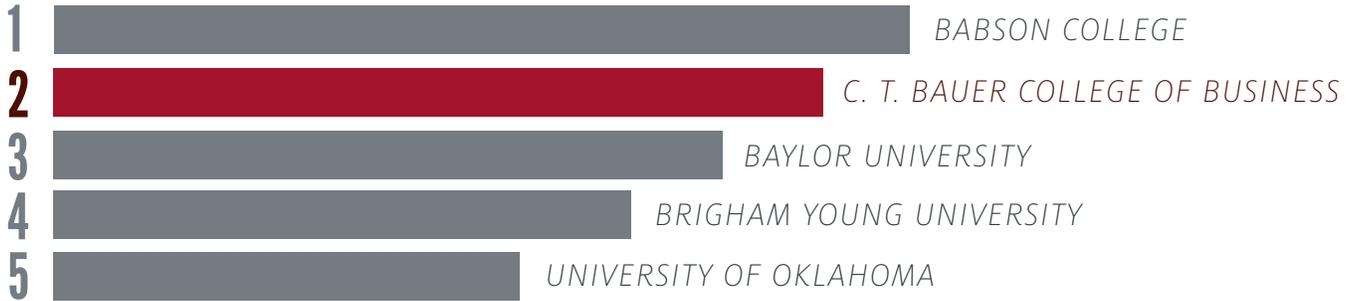
Created in 1991, the program began offering Bauer students entrepreneurship as a major in 1995 after approval from the Commission for Higher Education. Since then, the program has flourished and developed courses for entrepreneurship majors as well as business minors and students from all disciplines at UH, now attracting more than 1,900 students a year.

"Our entrepreneurial education student experience focuses equally on in-classroom and off-campus activities that in total help to create entrepreneurs who are quite ready to meet the challenges their respective business ideas present," Jones said.

Longstanding and highly respected Houstonians Cyvia and Melvyn Wolff became the namesakes of the program in 2008. Melvyn Wolff is a 1953 UH business graduate, member of the Bauer College Board and chairman of the board for Star Furniture, a Berkshire-Hathaway company.



For the last eight years, Bauer College's Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship has been ranked in the top three of Entrepreneur's Top 25 Undergraduate Schools for Entrepreneurs List, as determined by The Princeton Review. Here are more key facts about the Wolff Center and the Class of 2015.



## TOP 5 UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGES FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP, 2015

# 50%

OF WOLFF CENTER STUDENTS HAVE A DOUBLE MAJOR

# 280

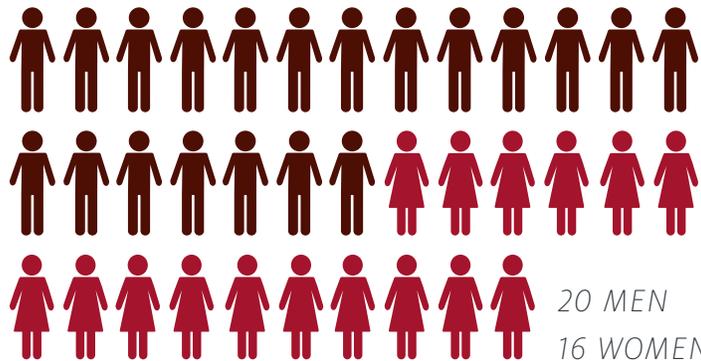
COMBINED YEARS OF EXPERTISE FROM WOLFF CENTER FACULTY

# 1,000+

NON-BUSINESS STUDENTS TAKE ENTREPRENEURSHIP CLASSES YEARLY

# 36

STUDENTS IN THE WOLFF CENTER CLASS OF 2015



29% OF THE CLASS WAS BORN OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES (INCLUDING PERU, CHINA, MEXICO, CANADA, VIETNAM AND INDONESIA).



# ELECTRIC AVENUE

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Bauer alumna and President of NRG Retail and Reliant lends  
experience, input to Bauer College

*By Danielle Ponder*





*President of NRG Retail and Reliant Elizabeth Killinger (BBA '91) maintains a busy schedule as a mother of three and an active member of the Bauer College Board.*

If you ask Elizabeth Killinger (BBA '91) what it takes to be successful as a woman working in the energy industry, she'll likely share a piece of advice that applies beyond gender and career.

"I have learned a great lesson, that nothing is forever, so we have to consciously choose to always do our best, no matter the circumstances," she said.

Growing up, Killinger thought she might be a homemaker, like her mother, or an engineer, like her father.

She started college at Houston Baptist University and soon after transferred to University of Houston's engineering program, but neither was the right fit. Then, she discovered Bauer College.

"I knew as soon as I came to the business school that this is where I needed to be," Killinger said. "I sought a real world education that wasn't focused solely on classroom instruction. I wanted something hands on in the career I would have after graduation."

She graduated with a bachelor's degree in management information systems and immediately began working as a consultant for a software developer, where she felt a sense of belonging.

"I loved the people and the challenge of working in client services, where I learned management consulting," Killinger said. "I was able to travel all over. It was interesting living in new places. I gained so many great experiences during that time."

Killinger said she never expected to pursue a career in retail electricity, but when the opportunity came, Reliant (now an NRG company) presented her with the question, “What will it take to get you to do this?”

Killinger not only took the opportunity — she ran with it. At Reliant, she spent two years helping prepare the wholesale and retail businesses for electricity deregulation in Texas. After more than a decade taking on increasing responsibility across the retail business, she was promoted to her current position as President of NRG Retail and Reliant.

The challenge of running the company’s retail operation, the largest in the state, was no problem for Killinger, who learned how to successfully balance priorities early on while at Bauer.

“I was highly active on campus as a full-time student, and I worked part time,” Killinger said. “My parents set the tone for me that getting a job after graduation was my goal, while still having a fun college experience.”

She chose meaningful leadership roles on campus, including student senate, and was hand selected as president to reopen Phi Mu Sorority’s chapter that had been closed for some time.

“I was busy, but being very involved helped me understand that we have to be passionate about what we participate in throughout life,” Killinger said. “In order to do our very best and be our very best, we need to be excited and inspired by being purposeful with our choices.”

Eventually, she found her passion in the energy business, a growing sector where she sees tremendous opportunity.

“Energy is a wide-open field, and there is no brighter time for anyone, man or woman, to find where they belong within it,” Killinger said.

She points out demand for hands-on skills like data and programming, but also indicates a need for outside-the-box areas like creative and marketing professionals.

“There is a need for all types of individuals from varied backgrounds because we are thinking about power differently. It’s no longer just the traditional idea of a plug with an outlet on the wall,” Killinger said. “Students can find a job in energy, wherever their interests are.”

Specifically, she encourages young girls to pursue technical fields such as accounting, finance and technology.

“We as adults need to help our daughters realize their potential in technical professions. They may be ruling out an entire set of career paths because they think they



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TO FIND WHERE THEY  
BELONG WITHIN IT.**



can’t do it,” Killinger said. “I’ve had that same challenge, too, with myself and my daughters. As people, if you think you can’t, you hold yourself back. We have to get into the mindset that we absolutely can.”

Her outlook on life — a self-proclaimed ability to see things through a “lens of abundance”—made Killinger an ideal person to serve on the Bauer College Board, a group of executives and leaders that advise Dean Latha Ramchand on everything from new curriculum to how to engage the business community.

“I was honored and appreciated being asked to join the board because I realize what a difference we as professionals can make in educating our future leaders,” Killinger said.

She added: “This is our chance to see who will carry on our companies after we’ve gone, and we will know they are better leaders because of the foundation we’ve given them. It’s a great way to give back.”

When she’s not giving back to her alma mater or overseeing the future of energy innovation, Killinger is a dedicated wife and mother of three.

Striking the perfect work-life balance comes back to Killinger’s perspective on making deliberate choices. Knowing what’s most important, she said, allows her to have ‘ah-ha’ moments where she checks herself within that balance.

“If you’re passionate about your career and love the people you work with like I do, it’s easy to get sucked in and pulled one direction or another,” Killinger said. “You have to keep a close tab on your variety of commitments, make some time to rest and recharge. That way you never forget what you stand for.”

# FROM TEENAGE INVESTOR TO HIGH-WEALTH MANAGER

John Keeton credits Cougar Fund with firing him up to succeed

By Wendell Brock

John Keeton thinks he probably made his best investment at age 15 — long before he went on to get his MS in finance at Bauer College ('08), where he worked on the college's highly selective Cougar Investment Fund. As a youngster, he had heard his dad and other family members talk about playing the stock market, and he was intrigued.

"It was a small little computer company in the north Austin area," Keeton recalls. "This was 1995. I put down \$4,000 in this one little startup."

A couple of months later, he sold the stock at a 15 percent profit. Not a bad rate of return by any means. Then again, if he'd held onto the purchase, he would be considerably richer today.

"That company was Dell Computer," Keeton says wistfully, waiting for the inevitable guffaws he gets from listeners every time he relates the tale.

Still, he gained a useful lesson, at a young age, about the fickle nature of the market and the inevitable highs and lows of business — not to mention life itself.

Today, Keeton is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) and wealth strategist at Covenant Multifamily Offices, LLC, a boutique wealth-advisory firm in San Antonio. In April, he received an award from Five Star Professional's wealth manager program, the largest and most widely published wealth manager award program in North America.

He believes his time at Bauer College — and his stint on the Cougar Fund, specifically — gave him the foundation he needed to advance his career, which has been a series of challenges as well as victories.

Though Keeton's work now affords him a glimpse into the rarefied world of the super-wealthy, he says he was not born into money. He grew up as the youngest of four in a working-class family in the Garland-Plano suburbs of Dallas. His mother — who was born in Japan and survived the bombing of Hiroshima at age 1 — passed away when he was in fifth grade, and his dad certainly had his challenges raising four kids as a single parent.

A talented baseball player, Keeton had his eye on a career in the big leagues. But

while playing ball in junior college, he realized he'd probably never make it big, so he hung up his cleats and hunkered down to study harder.

Transferring to Texas State University in San Marcos, he paid for college by waiting tables at a Mexican restaurant, even as he held two non-paying internships in the business realm. In 2003, he earned his BBA in Finance, graduating summa cum laude. He was the first member of his family ever to graduate college.

But as luck would have it, he entered the job market just as the aftermath of 9/11 was disrupting the world economy. The Austin area, his home at the time, had been particularly hard hit by the burst of the tech bubble. His first position out of college, he remembers with some disappointment, was as a bank teller.

But Keeton was not to be defeated.

He and his wife moved to Houston, where she pursued her Ph.D. in psychology at the University of Houston, and he took a job on the accounting side of a small gas-marketing firm. But because he still

“ WHEN I GO BACK (TO BAUER), I TRY TO LET STUDENTS KNOW I AM ALWAYS THERE TO DISCUSS THEIR SCHOOL AND CAREER CHALLENGES.”



wanted to pursue his boyhood dream of working in investments, he decided to pursue his graduate degree at Bauer. The Cougar Fund was a big incentive.

At UH, he found a culture that appealed to his work ethic and background. “There is no feeling of entitlement,” he said. He also formed a network with professors and colleagues that has endured to this day. “I built better relationships with teachers than I ever thought possible,” he says.

In 2008, he was on the legendary Cougar Fund team that placed first in the United States in the Chartered Financial Analyst Institute’s Research Challenge, a national stock-analysis competition. The group went on to a third-place victory in the Global Finals of the CFA Institute’s Research Challenge. Keeton describes that moment as one of the “most memorable experiences of his life. “We were just little old Houston competing against all the

top business schools in the nation,” he recalls proudly. “We worked extremely hard to prove not only that we belonged in the competition, but that we were good enough to win.”

That achievement also lit a fire in his belly and gave him the confidence to make the transition to the investment side of the business. In 2008, he became an equity-research associate at SMH Capital and soon after an investment analyst for Frost Bank’s Wealth Management Services Group. In 2010, he left Frost to help form Covenant, a boutique wealth-advisory firm, with a group of colleagues. He then put in a three-year stint as a high-net-worth banker advising business owners and corporate executives at J.P. Morgan. In 2013, he returned to Covenant.

Though he now lives in San Antonio with his wife, Kathryn, a NASA employee, and their two young children, he maintains

close ties with Bauer College, visiting the Cougar Fund team two or three times a year. “When I go back, I try to meet with everyone just to let them know that I am always there for a phone call, an email, or chat to discuss their school and career challenges.”

For those seeking a career in investments, he has plenty of insight. After all, he’s been on the path since he was 15.

“BAUER AND THE WOLFF CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEFINITELY PROVIDED ME THE TOOLS THAT ALLOWED ME TO GET WHERE I AM TODAY. AND THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING FOR ME.”

*Bauer alumnus Adam Cooper has been praised by Wired for his app, Pixify.*

Photo courtesy of Christa Belle Martin of Black Bread Box.

# AN EYE FOR APPS

Entrepreneurship grad launches successful mobile application used by journalists, law enforcement officials and the just plain curious

By Wendell Brock

Adam Cooper (BBA '13) remembers the day he had his eureka moment about Pixifly, a mobile application he was developing to help Instagram users search for photos by time and place.

This was February 2014, shortly after he graduated Bauer College's Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship. A giant fire was engulfing Kiev, Ukraine. Tuning in to CNN, Cooper heard nothing but frustrated reporters bemoaning the lack of information and access. ("They were like, 'Oh, my gosh! We can't get close!'" he remembers vividly.)

So he opened Pixifly, did a search on Kiev, and retrieved a cache of startling live images. "I saw pictures of the guy lighting the Molotov cocktail that started the fire. I saw pictures of people with guns. I saw everything."

From that moment on, the 24-year-old founder and CEO of Pixifly knew he was on to something: a photo-searching application that could be far more effective than cumbersome, often random hashtags (which are even more useless if you don't understand the language they are written in). Pixifly, which *Wired* has praised as an indispensable "Favorite New App," allows you to pinpoint images by address and date — using a calendar function to scroll back in time or a radius button to adjust distance. With more than 6,000 users, the free application has become a favorite device of journalists, businessmen and the just plain curious.

"At the moment, BBC and BuzzFeed are using the application to discover photos taken around the world," Cooper said. "It's

become a great tool for anyone looking to get a fly-on-the-wall perspective of current events."

So far, Pixifly has been deployed in a number of surprising ways. Some cases have served the public good or helped businesses; others have proved embarrassing for the less cautious of public picture sharers. According to Cooper, crafty restaurant owners and managers have used Pixifly to discover food critics dining on the premises. Parents have employed the app to find photos of kids throwing parties when they weren't supposed to. Law enforcement officials have used it to discover photos of drugs and other illegal activity.

The mobile app — which has been featured in the *Houston Chronicle* and *Digital Trends*, among other publications — has helped jumpstart Cooper's career. Just recently, he launched another application, DropShot, which allows users to interact anonymously with images that have been posted within a 500-foot radius of their location.

Of course none of this may have happened if Cooper had followed his first career hunch.

When he arrived at UH, he had no inkling that he was on the path of an entrepreneur. A native of Charleston, South Carolina, he originally planned to study hotel and restaurant management. His enthusiasm for food and travel spurred that decision, but it was his love of technology and innovative ideas that caused him to change his major his sophomore year.

"At the time my parents had just become involved in a couple of restaurants, so it

only felt natural that I study hospitality," said Cooper, who took time out from developing DropShot to do an interview. "It wasn't until I started to read books on venture capitalism and startups that my passion for technology and mobile applications started to take over. The idea of creating my own business just made me more determined to study entrepreneurship."

The entrepreneurship program proved a perfect fit. "I started to become more active in the entrepreneurial community in Houston, primarily the startup community," he said. He became a member of START Houston (a collaborative space for startups) and helped local startup Meshify prepare for its debut at the 2013 Surge Accelerator Demo Day.

In the end, Cooper graduated with honors, a Ted Bauer Leadership Certificate and a degree in both finance and entrepreneurship.

Now, as a successful techno-preneur, he is often asked for business advice.

His answer is simple: Just do it.

"The thing that separates Facebook and the companies that could have been Facebook is that Mark Zuckerberg did it," Cooper said. "You can do so much without money. You can come up with a logo design, mockups and a list of potential customers. You just need to do it. That's always my definition of entrepreneurship: An entrepreneur is someone who actually does something."



# THE KARATE KID

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BAUER ALUMNA USES MARTIAL ARTS TRAINING TO FIND BALANCE

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STORY BY AMANDA SEBESTA • PHOTOS BY CHASE PEDIGO





**U P AT 7 A.M. FOR CLASS.  
TEACHING KARATE AT 2 P.M.  
IN BED BY 2 A.M.  
IT WAS ALL IN A DAY'S WORK  
FOR BAUER COLLEGE ALUMNA  
KAYLA KAPLAN.**

Since day one, Kaplan knew that hard work is what it would take to be successful. Now a marketing coordinator for National Oilwell Varco, Kaplan started work at age 13, teaching karate lessons. That early determination, coupled with her upbringing and time as a Bauer student, gave her the skills to find balance throughout her life.

"I had to grow up real fast," Kaplan said. "I was staying at home at 9 years old and had to get myself ready for school. I had to mature faster than others, but that helped me as an adult because you always have to take responsibility for your actions."

She earned her third-degree black belt in 2011. Through karate, Kaplan said, she learned discipline and patience.

"I don't know what I would be like if I didn't have karate," she said. "I have an extreme amount of confidence now from that. Performing, competing, teaching kids — it will build you up. I learned how to be a leader early, and I learned that being a leader, not a follower, is important."

Kaplan first began her higher education journey at a local community college, transferring to Bauer in her junior year. She planned to apply her business education to the sport.

"I initially wanted to open a karate school," she said. "But, after seeing what went into that during my teenage years when I taught at someone else's studio, I realized that I needed to get experience

in the corporate world first. Eventually, I want to come back to karate.”

Now, she practices karate for her own enjoyment but still refers to the principles of martial arts in her daily life, along with the tools she received as a Bauer student. Her coursework, along with guidance from the college’s Rockwell Career Center, was instrumental in helping Kaplan prepare for her career.

“Classes at Bauer were my first experience to doors opening to the professional environment. Having to dress for presentations and know what’s right or wrong was hard for me at first, because I’m not entirely comfortable in front of people,” she said. “But as a marketing coordinator, I have to get over that and prepare

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I DON'T KNOW WHAT  
I'D BE LIKE IF I  
DIDN'T HAVE KARATE.

”

for presentations in front of clients. You can’t expect to learn how to do that on the job. It’s important to be able to immediately be ready to perform when you’re hired on somewhere, and through Bauer, I learned how to do that. Being a Bauer student means that you have to work and try hard to succeed; nothing is handed to you, and no one is entitled.”

**FOR RECENT GRADUATE  
KAYLA KAPLAN, TRAINING IN  
BOTH KARATE AND BUSINESS  
LED TO SUCCESS.**





# A STRONG SENSE OF PRIDE

Annual meeting of Bauer alumni allows for reflection, celebration

By Danielle Ponder

For alumni of Bauer College, the connection to the school doesn't end with graduation. In fact, the feeling of pride only grows stronger each year for members of the Bauer College Alumni Association, who held their annual meeting in August.

"Your participation and your presence make a difference," BCAA past president Edward Edson (MBA '01) told the auditorium full of alumni. "Bauer College alumni help strengthen the fabric that builds our community."

In addition to the meeting, alumni reconnected in Melcher Hall during a

reception to reminisce about their Bauer College days. Many discussed the impact their time at Bauer has had on their careers and why they are excited to be involved as active alumni.

Liz Nguyen (BBA '11) remembered her time spent in the Bauer Business Honors Program and the lasting connections she made, many of which she has kept long after graduation.

"I love giving back to Bauer," Nguyen said. "I love coming back to experience a little bit of what we had when we were students."

For CPA Katherine Rodriguez (BBA '13), the highlight of being a Bauer student was involvement in student organizations, which led to many industry connections across Houston.

"The student organizations at Bauer gave me the opportunity to talk to a lot of people I would never have met otherwise," she said.

BCAA member James Wilson (BBA '10) said his greatest Bauer moments include the time spent learning from mentors within the college's entrepreneurship program. He has since traveled the world



and discovered that the college has global reach — in Prague, someone caught his attention with a traditional “Go Coogs” hand sign.

“To me, where you graduated from is one of the parts of who you are,” he said. “I want to be able to give back to my college like my mentors did with me. I want to provide the same great experience I had for future students.”

At the meeting, Dean Latha Ramchand shared with guests highlights from the college’s year, including stories of success from students, faculty and alumni.

“We have 5,700 unique Bauer students, and each has their own story to tell,” Ramchand said. “This is the time to celebrate our milestones, and thanks to your engagement, we are able to create these awesome moments for our students every day.”

*Members of the Bauer College Alumni Association shared their Cougar pride at the annual meeting and reception in late August. BCAA welcomed new members and elected its incoming board, while Bauer Dean Latha Ramchand provided the keynote.*

# NAVIGATE YOUR FUTURE

Recent Bauer alumna gives her top three tips for young alumni

By Sana Mohammed

When I graduated from Bauer College in 2012, I felt confused. I was entering a competitive rotational program at a Fortune 500 company that would accelerate my career and expose me to a wide spectrum of opportunities. Still, I felt lost. Although my college years prepared me academically, I was unsure about the direction I wanted to take my career and how to navigate the years ahead of me.

Over these past two years, I've developed strong relationships at work and transitioned from a career in finance to marketing. I've served on the Houston board for a professional organization, and now, I'm moving to the executive board that oversees all of the global chapters. During this time, I've learned a great deal about myself and creating a career that I'm passionate about. Here are three key tips that have enabled me to get where I am today.

## ***Own your growth and development.***

As young professionals, we face a steep learning curve in our chosen professions. I started in the energy industry with limited knowledge of natural gas, NGLs and commodity trading as a whole, but unlike college, there wasn't a "recommended" path to follow. We don't have a college advisor, career counselor or a list of courses to guide us anymore, yet it's still essential that we continue learning and

striving to be an expert in our field. To do so, we need to take control of this process because no one else will do it for us.

Take the time to regularly assess your strengths and your weaknesses, and leverage the knowledge of those around you to find ways to fill the gaps. The once-a-year training your company offers pales in comparison to the development you can achieve if you are proactive in reaching out to others in your industry for advice and guidance. Create a development plan for yourself with concrete objectives, such as reading one relevant industry article a week, finishing one leadership or career development book a month or mastering a particular technical skill by the end of each month. Following through with this and updating it on a quarterly basis will help accelerate your professional growth and make you stand out among the rest.

## ***Be a leader.***

By our senior year in college, we have developed ourselves to be skilled leaders by driving initiatives across campus and serving as officers of student organizations. When we start work, however, most of us no longer use our leadership skills on a daily basis. We rarely present in front of large groups, run meetings or instigate change, and over time, these skills weaken. This happened to me, and I watched as my

confidence began to deteriorate as well. Research studies have also discovered that business college students often outperform employees who are 10 years into their careers in the areas of presenting and leading meetings. It goes back to the classic conundrum — "if you don't use it, you lose it."

Luckily, the solution is simple. Don't wait to be promoted to a management role. Take on a leadership role early in your career. Participate or lead an affinity group at work. Find a cause or a non-profit you're passionate about, and get involved. My first year out of college I experimented with a few organizations, and I became a board member for Muppies, an organization for Muslim professionals. This leadership experience rebuilt my confidence and gave me the courage and the preparation I needed to co-found and lead a women's leadership group at work.

## ***Seek feedback regularly and adapt quickly.***

People are often unwilling to give direct feedback. Sometimes, managers are trying to avoid hurting your feelings or they are uncomfortable with tough conversations. Perhaps they are waiting for the "right time," but that time is NOT your mid-year or year-end performance review because by then, it's too late. Their opinion

## THREE EASY TIPS FOR SUCCESS



ASSESS YOUR STRENGTHS  
AND WEAKNESSES



BE A LEADER



SEEK REGULAR FEEDBACK  
AND ADAPT QUICKLY



of you has already formed, and they might be ready to write a subpar review. Meanwhile, you may not have realized that performance was less than expected.

Don't let this happen to you. Set up monthly meetings with your manager to recap your month's accomplishments and get their feedback on your performance. Your manager may simply be unaware of all the work you're doing behind the

scenes, or there may be aspects you need to improve upon that you are unaware of. If your manager only provides you with positive comments, ask directly how you can improve going forward or what your next step should be. Make it so he or she feels comfortable giving you constructive criticism on a routine basis.

And, get accustomed to hearing such feedback and learn to adapt. As a young

professional, you're not expected to be an expert from the get-go, but you are expected to improve and show that you're eager to learn. Your willingness to ask for feedback and adapt shows your humility, commitment and lack of complacency—characteristics that all employers value.



# LIKE ONE OF THE FAMILY

Alumni brothers praise UH growth, contribute to campus initiatives

By *Nicholas Almanza*

The University of Houston means a great deal to its alumni — in scope, pride, and reminiscence. For alumni brothers Carl and Joe Arp, UH is a cherished and longstanding member of their family.

The weather on this Houston early spring day was cold and gray with on and off misty rain. “It’s a good day,” remarked Carl Arp (BBA ’64) as he flashed a bright smile and glanced out the window. “We beat Rice last night. If we beat them at tiddlywinks, I love it.”

Carl was referring to a March UH Cougar Baseball win over then No. 10 Rice University. By the end of the month, the Coogs would be ranked 10th nationally, and eventually rise as high as 7th. For the four fans sitting in a cozy living room and discussing their favorite UH moments, nothing brightened a rainy day more than a winning season.

“We’re excited about the new stadium,” said Dorothy, Carl’s wife. “We get excited anytime we go to campus and we see and hear about all the things they’re doing. That’s how we’ve been getting people more involved with alumni groups. We tell them, ‘You’ve just got to go out and see what’s new there.’”



**I THINK THE UNIVERSITY AFFECTS MORE PEOPLE IN HOUSTON THAN ANY OTHER UNIVERSITY.**



Carl, a Bauer College graduate, is a member of the Bauer Society Club and was past-president of the Bauer College Alumni Association Board. Dorothy is the secretary of Cougar Cookers, an organization formed by alumni and friends of UH that supports the university and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Both Carl and Dorothy are Life Member alumni and active members of UH’s philanthropic community.

Joe Arp (BBA ‘61)— Carl’s brother and Bauer College alumnus — and his wife, Elizabeth, also are generous supporters of UH and Houston Athletics. For Joe, UH has always been and remains THE University.

“We grew up with UH. That’s what attracted Carl and I to it,” Joe said. “When we were small, we lived a short distance from the campus. I even learned how to drive in the old stadium parking lot.”

“And I used to sneak into Frontier Fiesta as a kid,” Carl said. “When I was there for college, those were the days just after Frontier Fiesta was on the cover of *LIFE* magazine. We saw, and are still seeing, UH grow and improve right in front of us.”

The UH campus environment is being dramatically transforming as part of an ongoing \$1-billion construction program that includes nearly two dozen buildings and four million square feet of new and renovated space, including the 40,000-seat TDECU Stadium, Stadium Parking Garage, and the new Health and Biomedical Sciences Building.

“And it’s an absolutely beautiful campus now,” Elizabeth said. “I ask people all the time if they’ve been out to see it recently. Because they should. It’s just a beautiful campus, especially compared to other Texas schools.”

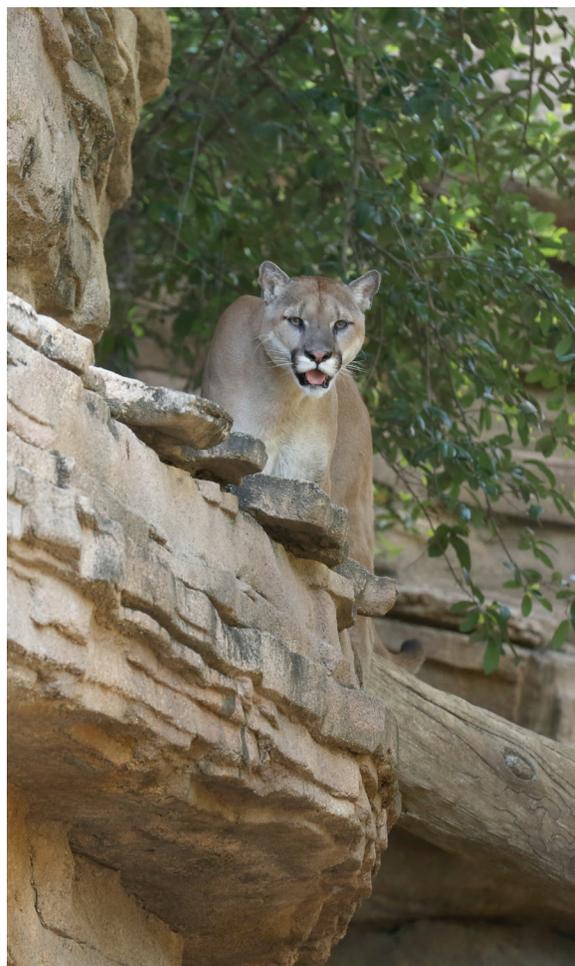
Both Arp families decided recently to create a lasting impact by naming UH as a beneficiary of their respective estates. Carl and Joe are both members of the newly named *In Tempore* Legacy Society, which honors donors who include UH in their estate planning. For two brothers who speak as if the university is part of their family, this manner of giving back always seemed the right thing to do.

“I wanted to help,” said Carl when asked why he considered his support to UH. “I think the university affects more people in Houston than any other university.”

“That’s true,” Joe added enthusiastically. “It contributes more to the economy and education of Houston citizens than anything else.”

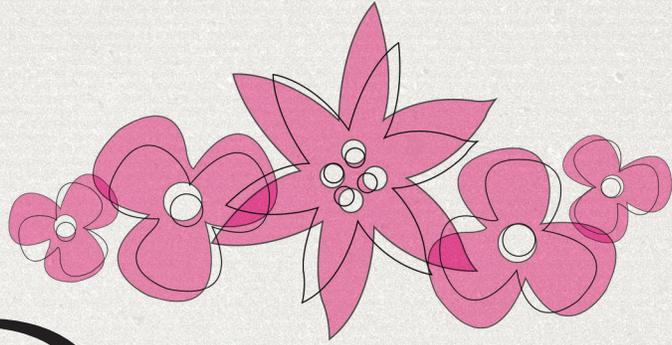
“I believe that every little bit you do for the university matters,” Carl said. “Plus, I enjoy it. It’s amazing to me what UH has done in the past 30 to 40 years. It’s just gotten bigger and better, and it will, if we all work together, become unstoppable.”

For more information on planned giving, visit [uh.edu/giftplanning](http://uh.edu/giftplanning).



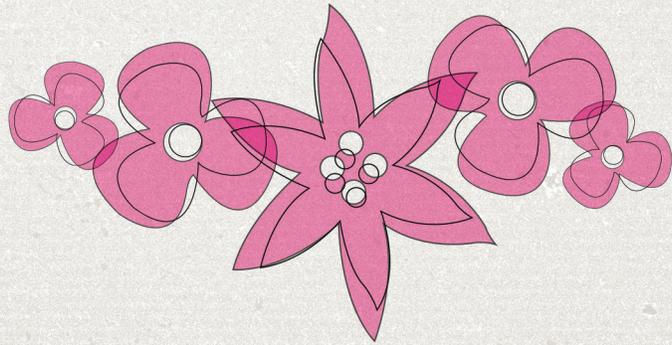
**(From left) Joe, Elizabeth, Dorothy and Carl Arp visited the Houston Zoo this spring with their spouses, where Shasta VI officially blessed their class rings.**





# Passion

FOR FASHION



Recent graduate Lillie Parks takes her  
business idea on the road

**STORY BY DANIELLE PONDER • PHOTOS BY NICKI EVANS**

PES alumna Lillie Parks (BBA '10) shares co-ownership of Park Boutique, a mobile fashion boutique, with her sister. Together the pair offer a non-traditional shopping experience for Houston-area trendsetters seeking unique clothing at a reasonable price.



A career in fashion excited Fort Worth native Lillie Parks as she decided on her undergraduate major. But, her mother encouraged her daughter to be more practical and go with a marketing degree, which is exactly what she did. Sort of.

Parks graduated with her marketing degree in 2010 from Bauer College. As part of the college's Program for Excellence in Selling, she used her college experience to realize her fashion dreams as co-owner and operator of Park Boutique, a Houston-based mobile fashion truck.

The other half of the business is owned by her younger sister, Viola Kincade, who transferred to Bauer this fall to complete her accounting degree.

"I firmly believe that what you want to do as a child is what you are meant to do in your adult life," Parks said. "When I started my college education, I was in real estate, and shortly after I began classes I knew I wasn't being fulfilled. Fashion is where I was meant to be. Once I started in PES at Bauer, I excelled and was one of the top students in the program," she said.

Those experiences at Bauer, including participation in the National Collegiate Sales Competition, helped her current endeavors as an entrepreneur and also as a future lawyer.

"I researched and found a degree in fashion law, which I had never heard of," Parks said, "I did some additional research and after a visit to the Fashion Law Institute, I applied and was accepted to South Texas College of Law where I am currently a student. I attend classes part-time so that I can run our business full-time."



Parks wanted to gain experience in the fashion industry while she worked toward her law degree, so she put her business skills to good use and developed Park Boutique.

"Growing up, I always wanted to copy my sister's style since she was really into fashion. We both just naturally gravitated toward this idea of a mobile boutique," Kincade said. "We wanted to offer fun yet affordable clothes that are unique. You won't find our pieces anywhere else you shop."

Parks and her sister explored mobile boutiques in the Los Angeles area, where they purchase many pieces in their collection wholesale. The duo entered into the West Coast Mobile Retail Association's annual funding competition and won a small business loan with zero percent interest.

"Winning the contest with my sister really helped us hit the ground running. The remainder of our

funding comes from what we've saved up from work," Parks said. "This non-traditional route of foregoing a brick-and-mortar store is what's emerging in retail."

Running the boutique alongside her sister comes naturally, Parks said, recalling their mother encouraging a similar partnership when they were children, letting them make and sell hair-bows part-time.

Later in life, she further developed business confidence at Bauer through the PES key accounts team, where student objectives include getting executives to engage in corporate partnerships through on-campus recruiting.

"I had to convince these executives that we lived up to our title as the nation's top sales institute and we could increase their bottom line," Parks said, "It

"Our items are the latest in what celebrities and fashion houses have to offer, but at a much more affordable price," she said, "The most difficult decision we have to make is selecting what pieces to offer because there's only so much we can carry in the truck at any given time. We only buy a few of each piece, and it creates a sense of urgency because if you want it, you need to buy it now or we may not have it the next time you shop."

Those types of marketing strategies underscore the connection of the fashion industry to a business education, Parks said, encouraging students to work hard no matter what career goal they have in mind.

"What I want to tell current students in PES and Bauer is to shoot for being number one," Parks said. "Always try hard



*I firmly believe that what you want to do as a child is what you are meant to do in your adult life.*

took a lot of research to know who we were selling to. Now I use those same experiences to talk to retail locations we might want to partner with."

She currently works closely with Forever 21's downtown location and some Houston-based businesses, including Taxi Taxi and the Cut Loose Salon in the Montrose area.

Because space is limited in the confines of a truck, Parks must be selective when it comes to inventory, while considering the range of styles of Park Boutique clientele, which include college-age students who want to emulate the latest celebrity trends, as well as business professional women searching for pieces to add a little something extra to a work ensemble. This spring, hot sellers were items you might find at the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, with lots of florals and bohemian styles, Parks said.

to give your best and strive for excellence in everything you do. You're at the best business college the nation has to offer, so your opportunities are truly endless."

A pink rectangular graphic featuring three white floral icons at the top. Below the icons, the text reads: "FIND THE LATEST ON PARK BOUTIQUE BY FOLLOWING @PARKBOUTIQUE ON TWITTER AND INSTAGRAM".

# NOW SHINING ONLINE

At Bauer, Danny Gavin found skills to make family business a top online retailer

By Wendell Brock

From Amsterdam to Johannesburg to Houston, Danny Gavin's family has been in the diamond business for six generations. When his father, Brian, decided to sell gems on the Internet in the late '90s, he became a trailblazer in the world of digital commerce. Now Danny Gavin (MBA '10) is using his innovative marketing skills to turn the company into a powerhouse of Internet retail.

This year, BrianGavinDiamonds.com made the *Houston Business Journal's* Fast 100 list, and Internet Retailer ranked it a Second Top 500 retailer. Most recently, the company was included in The 2014 Inc. 5000. In June, Danny Gavin was invited to speak at the Internet Retail Conference and Exhibition (IRCE), the world's largest Internet-retail event, where he shared the podium with Google and was on the agenda with the CEO of eBay and the founder of Wikipedia. Apparently he made quite an impression: He's been invited back to present at the IRCE's design conference in March 2015.

He credits Bauer's MBA program with wiring him for success.

"I am a walking ambassador," the vice president and director of marketing for Brian Gavin Diamonds says. "I always talk about the University of Houston and the MBA program. It's a world-class program, and I really think everyone should go."

But Gavin will be the first to tell you that he wasn't always disposed toward social and business interaction. He came to Bauer as a raw gem that needed a little polish.

He was born in Johannesburg, attended private Jewish schools and trained to be a rabbi. As an Orthodox Jew, "I had a really specific outlook on the world," he says. "Really sheltered." His rabbinical studies were intended as a foundation for his life, however, and not as a way to earn a living and feed his family.

At Bauer, where he concentrated in marketing and earned a certificate in business consulting, he was immersed in a culture of multiculturalism, networking and collaboration. He caught on quickly, and began to shine.

In 2010, he was on the Bauer team that ranked in the top 8 percent worldwide in

the Google Online Marketing Challenge. His group marketed a cupcake company, and the experience helped Gavin launch his own business, Optidge, an Internet marketing consultancy and services company. Also at Bauer, he won the Dean's Award for Academic Excellence.

"Bauer sort of sprang me into being the guy I am now," he says. "Just the diversity and the different types of people and networking — everything. It prepared me to be successful in diverse business situations both locally and internationally, and for that I will be eternally grateful."

Last year, Brian Gavin Diamonds generated \$11 million in sales and was named a 50 Fastest Growing E-Commerce Companies by Internet Retailer. "We have really created a strong brand and a strong culture," Gavin says. The website, he says, is a "living organism" that's constantly being updated and fine-tuned. But he thinks the "secret sauce" of the business is a combination of its unique product line and its "exceptional, personalized customer service." As an Internet retailer, the company has to work hard to compete with brick-and-mortar jewelry stores. Buying a diamond on the



**BAUER SORT OF SPRANG ME INTO BEING THE GUY I AM NOW. THE DIVERSITY AND THE NETWORKING – EVERYTHING. IT PREPARED ME TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN DIVERSE BUSINESS SITUATIONS BOTH LOCALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY, AND FOR THAT I WILL BE ETERNALLY GRATEFUL.”**

Internet requires trust. “It’s a lot of money,” Gavin says. “If you are getting engaged, you want it to be a special moment. The ring needs to be perfect.”

While the diamond trade seems to be a part of his DNA, Gavin also applies his marketing savvy to help other businesses. Since 2011, he has been Internet marketing director for Softway Solutions, Inc., where he won a 2014 Gold Addy Award from Bidserious.com. In his career thus far, he has consulted for an array of companies, including Centerpoint Energy, Brown-Forman, Houston Symphony, Fiesta Mart and Blinds.com.

When he’s not working, Gavin treasures spending time with his wife and three “wonderful boys,” ages 5, 3 and 1.

So would he like his children to go into the family business? “I’m hoping that at least one of my sons will follow in my footsteps and become a seventh-generation Gavin in the diamond business,” he says.

Yet even a visionary businessman like Gavin can only imagine how the technology of Internet retail will look by then.

*Bauer MBA alumnus Danny Gavin has used his online marketing skills to make his family’s diamond business an award-winning Internet retailer.*



*From left, Karen Tass and  
Jeffrey Detwiler*

# HIGH-WORTH NETWORKING

Cougar Investment Fund affords golden opportunities for professional growth

By Wendell Brock

When Karen Tass (MBA '10) arrived at Bauer College, she wasn't quite sure where her career was headed. She had worked as a real estate appraiser, taught English in Spain and spent several years in commercial real estate underwriting. But after realizing she wanted to focus on other areas of finance, she enrolled in Bauer College's MBA program, and it was there that things really began to fall into place.

After getting accepted to work on the Cougar Investment Fund, Tass competed in the 2010 Chartered Financial Analyst Investment Research Challenge. When her team gave a practice presentation to prepare for the competition, one of the professionals who came in to coach was Cougar Fund alumnus Jeffrey Detwiler (MS Finance '07). Impressed by what he saw, Detwiler recommended Tass for an internship at his Houston firm, Garcia Hamilton & Associates. That experience led to a job offer, followed by a series of promotions, and today Tass and Detwiler work side-by-side as fixed-income portfolio managers at the firm.

Jacob "Jake" Borbidge (MS Finance '05) studied mechanical engineering while playing football at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pa. After moving to Houston to work as an engineer with ExxonMobil, he enrolled in the evening MBA program at Bauer College. He knew he didn't want to spend the rest of his life as an engineer.

But like Tass, he had no specific career path in mind.

Through his work on the Cougar Investment Fund, he got an interview with Invesco's quantitative-investment research group, where he was snapped up by Duy Nguyen (MS Finance '05), who was in the very first Cougar Fund class. Ten years later, these two alumni remain connected as part of

the newly formed Invesco Solutions team, where Nguyen is chief investment officer and Borbidge is head of research.

Though Bauer College is often touted as a hotbed of networking opportunities, the stories of these four Cougar Fund alumni are especially instructive. A stint on the college's student-managed private-investment portfolio not only gives graduate students a meaningful, real-life lesson in the world of finance, but also provides them with invaluable opportunities to build relationships that can lead to employment. Tom George, the Bauer finance professor who oversees the Cougar Fund, is by all accounts a one-man personnel agency with a knack for connecting students with job leads.

"I've been able to have a total of four people on my team from Dr. George," says Nguyen, who serves as a Cougar Fund adviser and is frequently invited back as a guest lecturer. Nguyen joined Invesco in 2000 and brought in Borbidge as a research associate in 2004. After a series of promotions, Borbidge took over Nguyen's old job as director of research in April 2014.

At Garcia Hamilton, Detwiler has proved to be a Cougar Fund advocate and unofficial head hunter. Because his bosses were pleased with his performance, they asked if he could canvass the Cougar Fund for potential hires. "That's really the genesis that led to Karen joining the firm," he says. "She's done a fantastic job for us."

Tass, who earned a degree in international studies from Texas A&M University in 2002, describes her induction into the world of fixed-income investments as rather serendipitous.

*Through Bauer College's Cougar Investment Fund, select MBA and MS Finance students experience what it's like to manage a multi-million dollar private investment fund.*

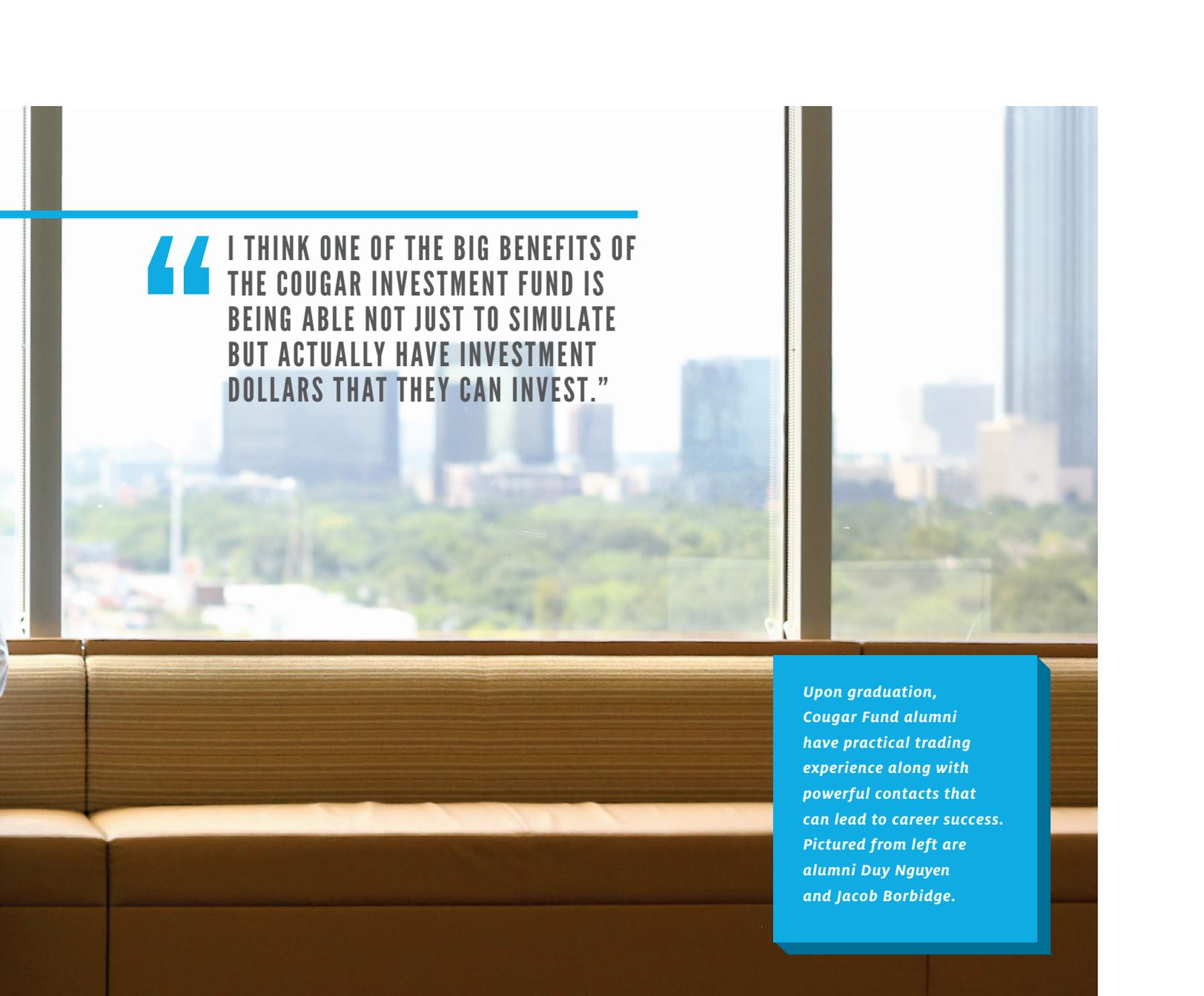


After enrolling in Bauer's MBA program, a finance professor suggested she look into the Cougar Fund. From there, she made the connection with Garcia Hamilton. And as she delved into the Cougar Fund and her duties at Garcia Hamilton, she was able to apply much of her real estate underwriting skills. "It worked out nicely for both me and the firm," she says.

Since the two Bauer graduates joined Garcia Hamilton, the firm has "grown exponentially," Detwiler says. Today the firm manages more than \$4 billion in fixed-income assets. In May, Garcia Hamilton was named Fixed Income Investment Grade Manager of the Year by *Institutional Investor* magazine. "I'm sure we'll look to add more good people," Detwiler says.

In addition to the networking advantages, the former Cougar Fund managers say they learned how to analyze individual securities, buy and sell stocks, give presentations to clients and be accountable for their decisions.

"I think one of the big benefits of the Cougar Investment Fund is being able not just to simulate but actually have investment dollars that they can invest," Nguyen says. "And there's a rigor behind that process. Not just from the understanding of how to read a balance sheet and income statement, but also the functional aspects of being able to step through the entire investment process: performing in-depth research and selecting a stock to add to the portfolio; vetting it to your peers; studying how to protect your portfolio from risk, from a



“ I THINK ONE OF THE BIG BENEFITS OF THE COUGAR INVESTMENT FUND IS BEING ABLE NOT JUST TO SIMULATE BUT ACTUALLY HAVE INVESTMENT DOLLARS THAT THEY CAN INVEST.”

*Upon graduation, Cougar Fund alumni have practical trading experience along with powerful contacts that can lead to career success. Pictured from left are alumni Duy Nguyen and Jacob Borbidge.*

portfolio perspective; trading it; and then doing the necessary due diligence to follow up afterward.”

“The involvement in the process gives you a sense of ownership and personal accountability. The result is a more ardent interest in financial markets,” Tass said.

The Cougar Fund, the alumni say, taught them to give thoughtful, persuasive and authoritative presentations, a skill that continues to pay dividends.

As Borbidge puts it: “We are presenting to panels of very seasoned investment professionals and Ph.D.’s — guys from the industry like Duy or other portfolio managers who come to give feedback

— and I think that kind of trial-by-fire method of hearing a bunch of really intelligent folks shoot holes in your investment thesis can really make you think: ‘OK, everything I put into what I am pitching in terms of investment has to make a lot of sense from a number of different angles.’”

Plus you never know: The person critiquing your presentation may very well have a job opening. Or know of one.

A photograph of a tropical resort poolside. In the foreground, several black lounge chairs with bright teal cushions are arranged on a light-colored concrete deck. In the background, a swimming pool is visible, surrounded by a white balustrade. Beyond the pool, there are numerous palm trees and other tropical vegetation under a clear blue sky with some light clouds.

# LIFE IN THE TROPICS

Bauer alumni bring Sotheby's International Realty to Belize

*By Wendell Brock*





Shane and Brittany McCann (BBA '07) do what others only dream about: They live and work in paradise.

After years of traveling to Belize “as often as possible,” the Houston-born entrepreneurs — who both studied marketing at Bauer College — relocated to Belize in 2010. After running their own vacation-rental and property-management business on the island of Ambergris Caye, the couple decided to move into the sales market. With their considerable client base and expertise, they signed with Sotheby’s International Realty in February 2014. Today they sell luxury properties out of a handsome contemporary office space not far from the sparkling waters and pristine white sandy beaches of the Caribbean. The Belize Barrier Reef, the world’s second largest coral reef system, is

practically within swimming distance. We recently checked in with Brittany to hear about their little slice of Texas in Central America.

***Q: Tell me about you and Shane.***

A: We were both born in Houston. Shane lived in Washington, D.C. for 13 years and came back to Houston for high school. We were introduced by mutual friends before our senior year in high school and have been together ever since.

***Q: What happened after high school?***

A: We moved to College Station. I went to Texas A&M University, and Shane went to Blinn College. Eventually, we decided there was more business

opportunity in Houston so we transferred to the University of Houston. We both studied marketing at Bauer College.

***Q: How did y’all get into real estate?***

A: I started working in commercial real estate right after high school. It was with the GSL Welcome Group, which is of course owned by Welcome Wilson, Sr., a UH alumnus who served on the university system’s Board of Regents. Welcome is a wonderful person and was a great mentor to myself and Shane. He was involved in the day-to-day business and always had time to chat and offer advice. Each time I visit Houston, I make a point to visit him and the rest of the office gang.

Shane was in real estate, too, but on the construction side. He was a superintendent for a six-story LEED-certified office building on the west side of Houston in the energy corridor.

***Q: Tell us about your new business.***

A: Sotheby's International Realty is an amazing brand to have in Belize. We have a partner, Curtis Fisher. He's a Minnesotan who's been in the real estate business since 1972 and owns property in Belize.

Belize Sotheby's International Realty is the only full-service real estate firm in the country. We offer sales, property management and vacation rentals. We are also the only real estate franchise that has the entire country as its territory. This is very appealing for prospective buyers, as we are experts for the country as a whole. Our customers come from all over the eastern half of the United States and Canada. I like to think of us as the new Galveston. We're just two hours from Houston by plane.

***Q: How did Bauer help prepare you for your career?***

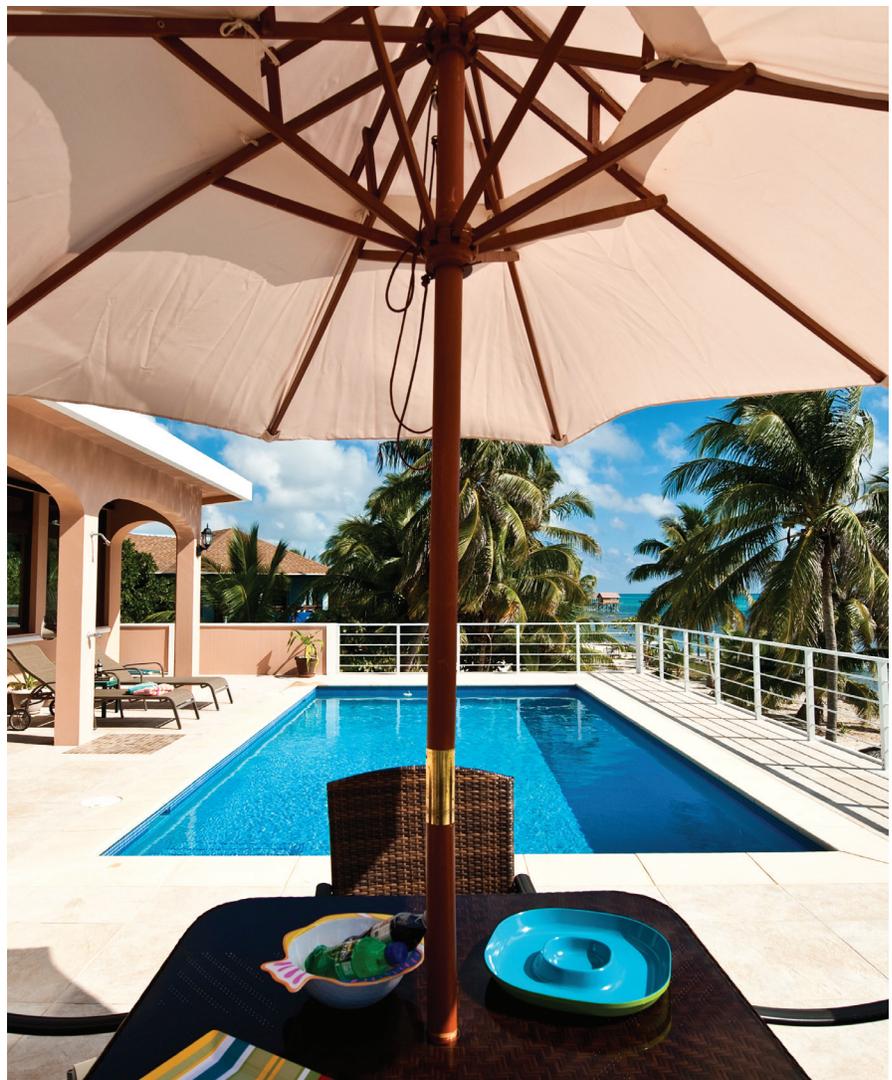
A: The fact that the professors had so much real-world experience really enhanced our educational experience. The lectures in the marketing courses, especially, went far beyond a textbook. Shane and I both worked during our time at UH, and everything just tied together very well.

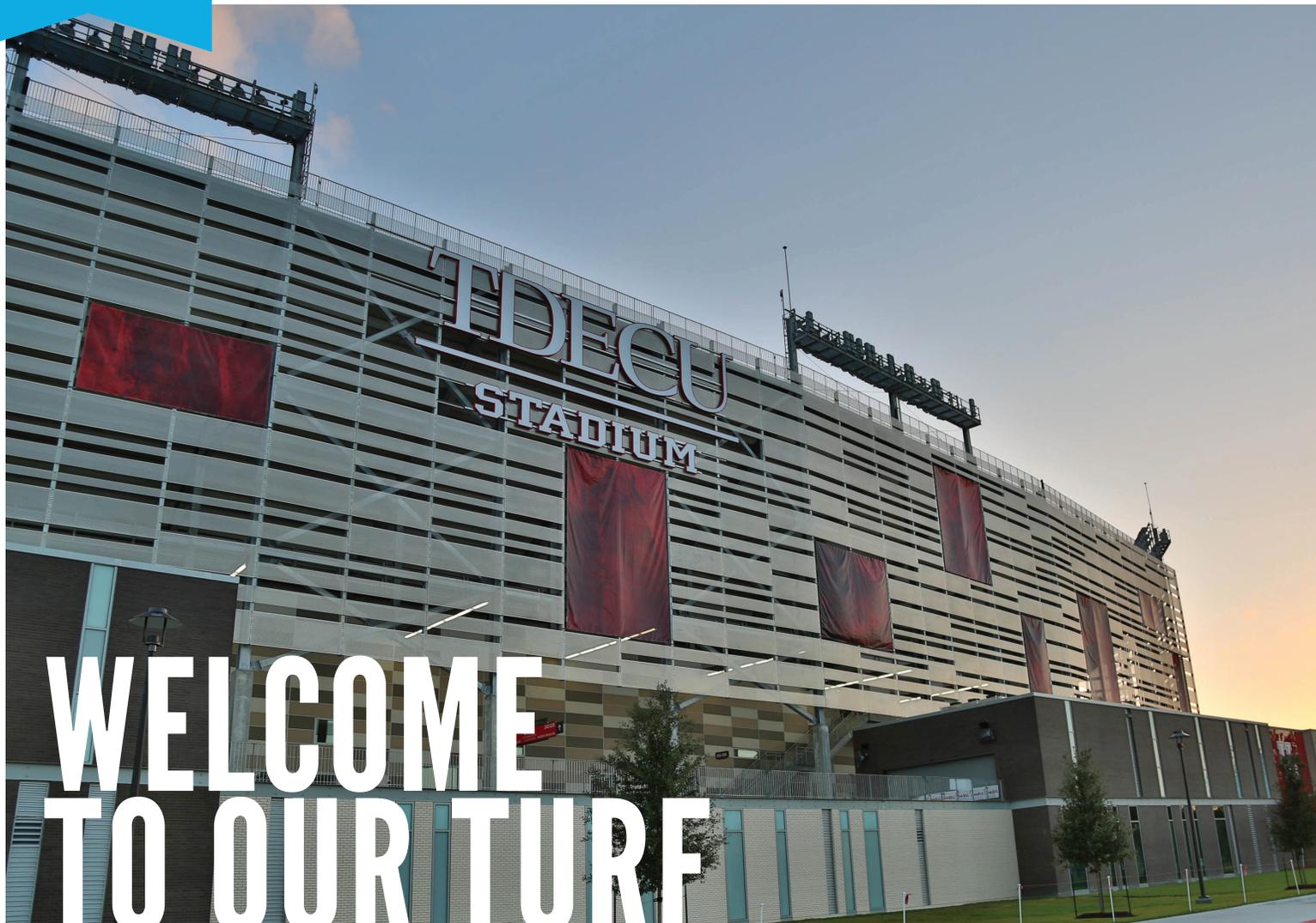
***Q: What's it like working with your husband?***

A: We both have different strengths. Shane handles business development and management. I do the recordkeeping, finances and customer relations. We share clients. And when one of us is unavailable, the other can step right in.

***Q: So life is good in paradise?***

A: We have been living here full-time for five years, but we still can't get over the beauty of the island and the whole country. The turquoise water is something one can never get over. It's simply stunning.





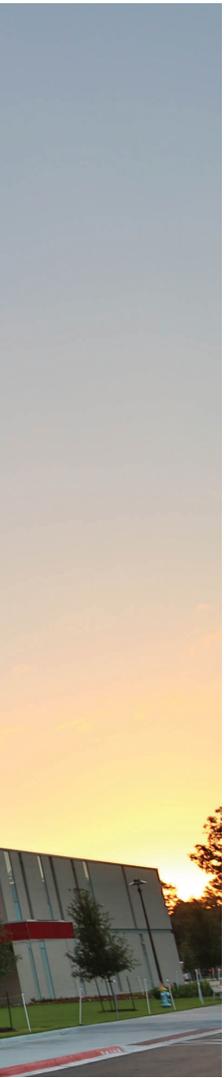
By Amanda Sebesta

In August, University of Houston history was made with the opening of TDECU Stadium, which seats 40,000 fans in a 655,900-square foot building. Students, alumni, fans, faculty and staff now have a new home to cheer the UH Cougars to victory, both during each home game and before, with a revamped tailgating program.

The Bauer College Alumni Association (BCAA) and Bauer students are celebrating the season by tailgating during all UH home games in front of the Alumni Hall with music, catered food and a rally cry of "Whose House?" before the games.

For more information on BCAA events, including tailgate times and locations, visit [baueralumni.com](http://baueralumni.com).







# BOARDROOM TO CLASSROOM

Corporate Advisory Board takes a hands-on approach to career services

By Ann Lynd

With an emphasis on connecting students and employers, the Rockwell Career Center has a corporate advisory board with a roster that includes some of the nation's most successful companies, all working together to take Bauer College's professional development programming to the next level.

Rockwell's Corporate Advisory Board and Partnership Program provides an

opportunity to balance academics with professional development, a rising need in the competitive job market. The board gives insight into what's needed to better prepare students for a successful career.

The program gives recognition of annual giving by companies who support career development efforts and student leadership programs. By becoming a part of the partnership program, companies

can participate on the board. The board is comprised of nationally recognized companies from a diverse group of industries, including energy, accounting, retail and financial services.

Assistant Dean for Career Services Jamie Belinne leads the efforts of the board. The board is an important partnership between the college and employers, Belinne said.

“The thing that’s nice about our board compared to many partnership boards is that it truly is a partnership,” Belinne added. “They’ve really stepped up with this partnership program and altruistically given money to help us have programs for our students. And the best part is that they not only fund the programs, but they also help us plan and implement them.”

Companies see a return on their investment in the form of well-prepared graduates who have taken part in the center’s programing that provides interview and résumé preparation, internship connections and networking events.

“They choose to keep partnering with us because they see the value of the work that’s done, and they care about Bauer students,” Belinne said.

We sat down with Belinne to learn more about what students and employers have to gain through the board.

### ***Q: What is the board’s function?***

**A:** Our Employer Advisory Board helps us make all of our major decisions within the Rockwell Career Center. They advise us on policy, on priorities and spending. They help us to evaluate decisions that we’re considering as a college and decisions we’re considering as an office. Really, they give us that employer perspective on everything that we do.

### ***Q: How do the employers benefit from being a member?***

**A:** Because they’re advising us, they have a hand in deciding how we will be run, so we’re able to run our office in a way that works better for them. Everything that we’ve done here has been based on feedback either from employers or from students, usually from both. We go to them every semester and ask, “What do we need to do to provide better services to you? What do we need to do to make it easier for you to hire our students? How do we better prepare our students so that they’re the right candidates for you?” They’re able to give us that feedback, and we’re able to take action.

### ***Q: How does the board help to prepare students for life after graduation?***

**A:** The board not only gives suggestions and advice, but they also volunteer their time to actually help implement solutions. For instance, nine years ago the board said we really need to improve résumés of the students at Bauer College, and from that we created the Résumé ER program. The board members and other corporate volunteers actually come and help us with the résumé reviews. When the board said we need to work more on interviewing, they offered to have us send video tape mock interviews to them or to actually come on campus and do mock interviews.

### ***Q: What is one of the standout programs the board assisted in creating?***

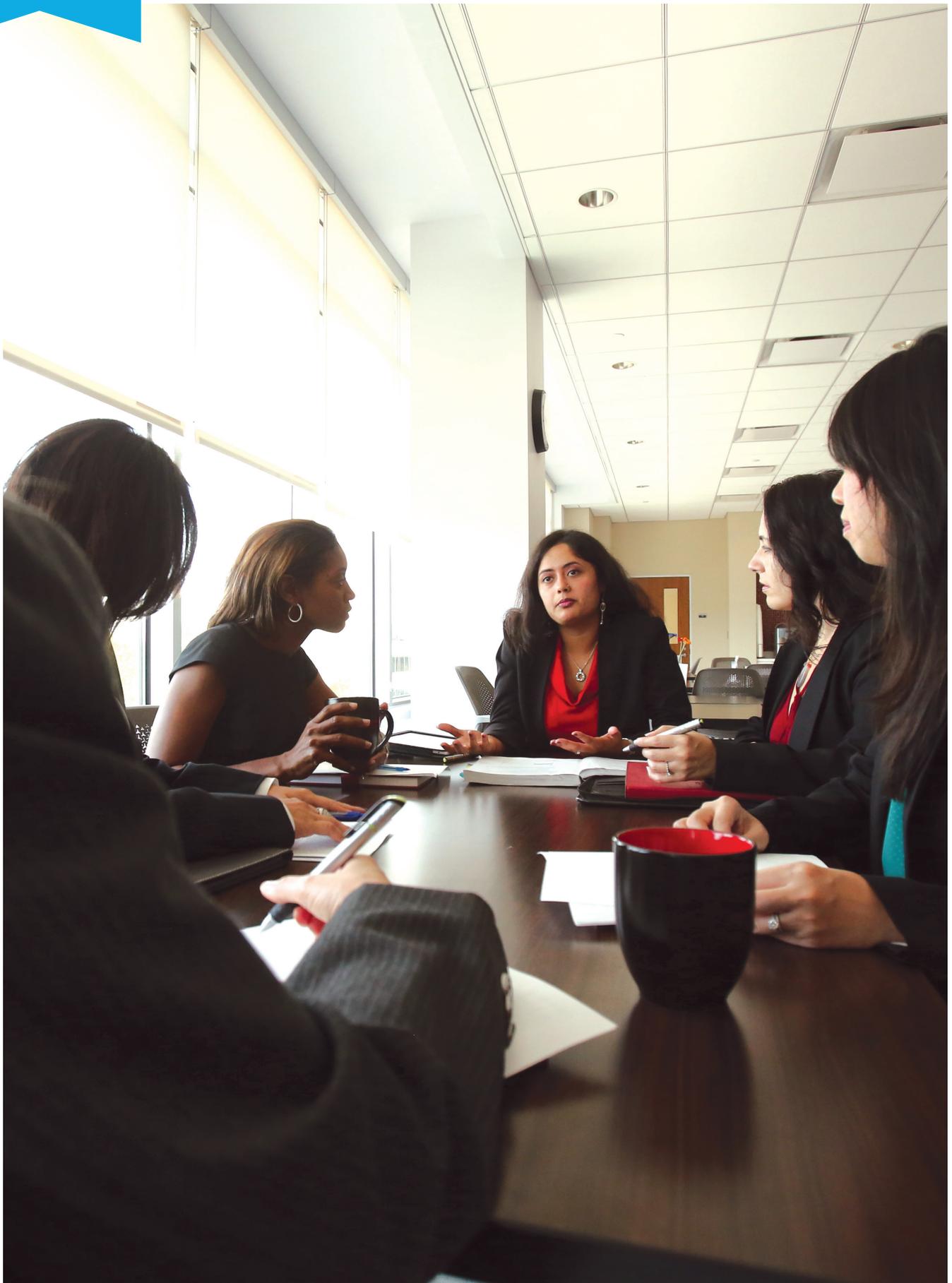
**A:** For me personally, the place where they’ve been most useful is in helping to define and implement the GENB 3302 “Connecting Bauer to Business” course. The curriculum was designed entirely based on their feedback, and it’s improved every year based on the feedback from the board. They also participate in delivery of the content through panels, and they participate through the corporate projects program. Because of their involvement, there’s no other course in the world like this one. We’ve received many national and international awards, and it’s because of the employer involvement.

### ***Q: What is in store for the board?***

**A:** The board has been very helpful in reviewing the new masters programs that the college has launched. I think they will continue to help us refine those programs and make sure they meet the market needs.

## **BOARD MEMBERS**

**Access Sciences Corporation**  
**BP Corporation**  
**Chevron**  
**ChevronPhillips Chemical Company**  
**ConocoPhillips**  
**Enterprise Holdings**  
**Enterprise Products**  
**ExxonMobil**  
**GEICO**  
**Halliburton**  
**Marathon Oil**  
**McGladrey**  
**Phillips 66**  
**PLS Logistics**  
**Reynolds & Reynolds**  
**Shell Oil**  
**Susser Petroleum Company**  
**Target Stores**  
**Willbros USA, Inc.**



# A NATIONAL PLAYER

Bauer College rises in top national undergraduate and MBA program rankings

By Ann Lynd

To some, Bauer College has long been a hidden gem among business schools in the United States, but as more rankings publications include the college at the top of lists of nationally recognized programs, the secret is out.

“At Bauer College, we focus on student success,” Dean Latha Ramchand said. “In every area of engagement, our goal is to enhance the student learning experience. It is gratifying to see that in the last year we have been recognized by leading national publications for our programs and the opportunities that these programs create for our students. To the extent these rankings are based on student success, they validate the work of our faculty, staff, students and alumni.”

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**U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT**

Undergraduate Program  
(among publics, 2015)

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**U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT**

Professional MBA Program  
(among publics, 2015)

50

**U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT**

Full-Time MBA Program  
(among publics, 2015)

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**BLOOMBERG BUSINESSWEEK**

Undergraduate Program  
(among publics, 2015)

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**BLOOMBERG BUSINESSWEEK**

Professional MBA Program  
(among publics, 2013)

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**U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT**

Top 10 Most Popular Business Schools,  
The Short List, Grad School, 2013

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**THE PRINCETON REVIEW/  
ENTREPRENEUR MAGAZINE**

Entrepreneurship Program

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**POLICYMIC**

5 Business Schools Just as Great  
as Harvard and Wharton

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**THE PRINCETON REVIEW**

10 Greatest Opportunities for Women,  
The Best 296 Business Schools, 2015

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**GARTNER**

Supply Chain Management Program



# DAY OF SERVICE

By Amanda Sebesta

In September, the Bauer College Alumni Association gathered together at the Houston Food Bank along with students and friends of the university for the third annual 9/11 National Day of Service Volunteering Event.

The Houston Food Bank is one of the largest food banks in the United States, serving 137,000 people each week.



Where  
**AWESOME**  
Happens.com

*Where can you find photos, videos and stories that  
demonstrate all the awesome things happening  
at Bauer College?*

*WhereAwesomeHappens.com is a new  
website with curated content on Bauer  
events, news and more.*

**BAUER**  
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS  
UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON



IT'S ONLY  
**ROCK'N'  
ROLL**  
(BUT I LIKE IT)

RECENT BAUER GRADUATE PURSUES  
MUSIC INDUSTRY CAREER ONSTAGE AND OFF  
STORY BY JESSICA NAVARRO • PHOTOS BY CHASE PEDIGO



On the surface, it might seem that business legend Warren Buffett and musician Dave Grohl have little in common. But for Bauer College alumnus Josh Wilson (BBA '13), they're both rock stars.

Wilson is bassist for the rising Houston-based band Catch Fever. He's also marketing director for Warehouse Live, a venue downtown that has hosted chart toppers including Drake, Bruno Mars and Adele, along with more indie fare and local artists.

"Being in a rock band, it's really cool to see a guy (like Grohl) that has a huge amount of success, but gives advice like, 'Just go play live.' Especially with a business mind

like I have, it's really easy to get analytical and spend too much time crunching numbers or mapping a path," Wilson said.

He added: "With music, as with any passion, the most important act is doing, and from an early age, Dave Grohl just had this 'I don't care if I'm right or wrong, but I'm not going to sit still' mentality, which I try to have. I try to make smart decisions, but I'm not afraid to fail. Learning from those failures is an important part of the journey."

Along those lines, Wilson has also modeled himself after Buffett. He had the opportunity to meet the Oracle of Omaha as a student in Bauer College's Wolff Center for

Entrepreneurship, which travels annually to Berkshire Hathaway headquarters in Omaha, Neb., for a question-and-answer session.

"I asked him how his view of success when he was in his early 20s compares to his view of success now," Wilson said.

Buffett responded by telling a story of one of the first companies he purchased — the owner was a Jewish immigrant who escaped Nazi Germany and likened success to having people willing to risk their lives to keep others safe.

"That was something he engrained in his character," Wilson said. "I feel this is very

important as well. Business should be win-win. We should be focused on helping others to succeed and making friends.”

Through his unofficial role as Catch Fever’s business manager and his day job promoting events at Warehouse Live, Wilson focuses on taking calculated risks, like Grohl, and sharing opportunities with others, like Buffett.

“Ever since I was 16, I’ve been playing shows around Houston,” he said. “I’m the type of person to say, ‘If they can do it, why can’t we?’ As a teenager, I was negotiating with venues around Houston and making sure my band was getting paid and included on good bills, things like that.”

When Catch Fever formed in 2012, Wilson naturally took on similar responsibilities for the three-piece, which also includes Taylor Huffman on guitar and Doug Andreano on drums. (In addition to bass, Wilson plays piano for the group. The trio shares vocal duties.) The timing couldn’t have been better, he said, as he was finishing his senior year at Bauer College and learning in the classroom business and marketing techniques he was able to put into practice with the band.

“With the education I received from the Wolff Center and Bauer, it was like every day I got to try something new,” Wilson said. “It was a great way to test what I was learning in class immediately, both with consumers of our music and as we were negotiating contracts.”

They recorded their debut album, Shiny Eyes, in early 2013 and celebrated its release a year later with a concert at Warehouse Live to a crowd of more than 300 well-wishers.

“The response has been great,” Wilson said. “The reviews we’ve seen compare us to more well known, and more expensive, recordings than ours. We were very particular about the quality we wanted for this record.”

In order to achieve a professional sound, Wilson and his bandmates assembled a team of music industry veterans to

produce Shiny Eyes. Mixing engineer and co-producer Mike Thompson has developed artists that have gone on to careers with music labels and management companies in the United States and the United Kingdom, with styles ranging from pop-rock and indie to country, gospel and electronic. When it came time to master the album, or prepare the audio for distribution, the band worked with Emily Lazar, who was nominated for a Grammy in 2012 for her work on Best Rock Album “Wasting Light,” by the Foo Fighters. (Coincidentally, Wilson’s music hero Dave Grohl fronts the Foo Fighters.)

The result is a seven-track album and a lead single, “Naysayer,” that has received airplay from local rock radio station 94.5 The Buzz.

“I started in a band because some friends needed a drummer,” he said. “Then, they made me the singer. I began playing bass when another group of friends needed a bass player, and I play piano in Catch Fever because we needed that.”

He added: “Playing onstage is a crazy feeling. At first, it was nerve-wracking, but now it’s the best feeling to have people watching you do what you enjoy and having them enjoy it. That’s why I do this.”

Wilson praises collaborators Huffman and Andreano for helping to define Catch Fever’s sound.

“Taylor is a musical genius,” he said. “Before Catch Fever came about, I used to watch him perform with other bands and

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“I TRY TO MAKE  
SMART DECISIONS,  
BUT I’M NOT AFRAID  
TO FAIL. LEARNING  
FROM THOSE FAILURES  
IS AN IMPORTANT PART  
OF THE JOURNEY.”

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“Catch Fever is dynamic rock music,” Wilson said. “Some call it pop-rock, some call it alternative, others say indie, but you really have to listen to the whole album to get the big picture. We try to do things our own way by doing what feels natural to us, and what comes out is catchy music that spans the whole spectrum of intensity.”

As a child, he honed his musical instincts informally, singing along to movie soundtracks with his sister, and formally, as a member of the choir both in church and at school. He started joining bands as a teenager, learning new instruments and gaining confidence performing in front of an audience.

thought he was the best musician I’d come across. I always wanted to write music with him. Doug is an incredible drummer and comes up with creative beats that really set the groove of a song. He and I lock in as the rhythm section, and he’s the best drummer I’ve had the privilege of playing with.”

The band has found synergy in other ways, too, Wilson said.

“We all work well together and treat Catch Fever like a business,” he said. “We have weekly meetings, and we all have our different roles and responsibilities.”



Wilson acts as the band's de facto manager, running Catch Fever's website, online sales and marketing, along with overseeing financials and personnel, including the hiring of a booking agent.

"Our idea from the get go was that we'd do everything ourselves until it becomes too much for us to handle on our own," he said. "Then, we'll hire someone. But right now, because I understand how the business works, the other guys trust me to make the right decisions. One day, if we hire a manager, we'll make sure it's someone who'd make the same types of decisions."

As marketing director for Warehouse Live, Wilson is familiar with what it takes to promote bands.

"Day-to-day, my job at Warehouse is to make sure we are selling tickets to our

shows," he said. "We try to get the best artists we can find and provide something new to the city of Houston. It's my job to find out how to reach people who'd want to come to these shows, ensure that the shows are accessible to them and that they can find tickets easily, and make sure they have a great time once they're here."

Marketing classes at Bauer College prepared Wilson to understand how to develop targeted strategies for different audiences, he said.

He added: "For each show, it's completely different — I may have a metal show one night and a pop-country show the next. And, at any given time, I have 45 to 60 shows on my calendar for the next two or three months. I have to be constantly thinking, 'How do we hit every demographic with the budgets we have in order to sell tickets?'"

His creative strategies include making personal visits with local radio stations and record stores to market shows, along with keeping an active social media presence and advertising schedule for Warehouse Live.

"Being a student in the Wolff Center taught me how to operate every aspect of a business," Wilson said. "Warehouse Live is a small, privately-owned company competing with much larger venues in Houston that are corporate and have much larger budgets, so we have to apply that entrepreneurial mindset to everything we do."

In the future, Wilson hopes to continue performing, with dreams of worldwide tours and even larger audiences. But, he remains committed to the Houston music scene and lending his business knowledge to others looking to earn a living pursuing creative interests.



CACTUS MUSIC



94.5 THE BUZZ



94.5 THE BUZZ

“I want to continue growing as an artist, and I also want to help other artists understand how to monetize what they’re doing,” he said. “That’s always been a passion of mine, and I feel like I’m getting to a place where I can really contribute something.”

Whether on stage or off, the music industry is where Wilson says he wants to apply his business acumen.

“As a student in the Wolff Center at Bauer, I realized that this was my passion. That’s

where they asked me, ‘If you could wake up tomorrow and do one thing your whole life, and money wasn’t an issue, what would it be?’ Music is what I would do.”

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**BAUER ALUMNUS JOSH WILSON IS EMBEDDED IN THE HOUSTON MUSIC SCENE THROUGH HIS BAND, CATCH FEVER, AS WELL AS HIS JOB AS MARKETING DIRECTOR OF WAREHOUSE LIVE, WHICH REQUIRES HIM TO CONNECT WITH LOCAL RECORD STORES AND RADIO STATIONS.**

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# A NEW DEVELOPMENT

Energized team of fundraisers focuses on relevance, engagement

By Maya Houston

*The Office of Development at Bauer College has recently undergone some staffing changes, welcoming several new members to the team, including Maya Houston, assistant vice president of development.*

*We asked her to share her vision for donor engagement and stewardship for Bauer College, and to introduce her team.*

In November 2013, after one meeting with Dean Latha Ramchand, I knew I wanted to change paths and become a part of the stratospheric growth that is happening here at the Bauer College.

I believe that Houston is the city of the future — and that UH is the university of Houston's future. Like Houston, UH is groundbreaking, exemplary, innovative, diverse and growing. As part of this growth, we must continually engage our community to make it aware of the successes and opportunities at Bauer.

That's where Bauer's new team comes in.

We are all here because we get to help people fulfill their dreams. We get to tell the remarkable story of Bauer College. To tell that story, we listen to alumni about their experiences and successes after graduation; our donors who invested in this dream; our students, to experience Bauer as they are experiencing it; and our faculty, whose daily work in the classroom — with colleagues and as experts in their fields — creates award-winning programs and research. We listen so that we can develop relationships with our community of investors, who want to help Bauer develop and thrive while creating their own relationship with the college — and the shape of Houston's future.

Bauer's new development team has its own story to tell and a sense of urgency!

We have a set of real and immediate goals — investment opportunities that will provide our community with access to education, relevant research and teaching, while also elevating the student experience.

## *The Bauer Excellence Scholarship*

A top priority of the dean, this scholarship seeks to attract students who might not otherwise attend Bauer College. Whether these are students who might not attend college at all, students who might choose other institutions before transferring here, or students offered scholarship packages elsewhere, we want them to choose Bauer. With a bold \$25 million goal for the Bauer Excellence Scholarship Fund, we seek to make the Bauer dream a reality for all who see their future here.

## *Bauer's Centers of Excellence*

Bauer's core strength lies in its programs in entrepreneurship, energy, financial services, information systems, internal audit, sales, supply chain and real estate. These programs are built around centers of excellence and create a strong student learning experience, which in turn helps students graduate on time and expand their opportunities in a global economy. Investing in these centers through naming gifts provides financial stability so that talented faculty can build unique programs that advance relevant thought leadership and knowledge in our community and beyond.

## *Faculty Support*

Research that advances practical and theoretical knowledge is critical to Bauer's mission as an education leader. Responsible investment in talent and thought leadership is what has driven the success of Bauer and what will continue the trend. Further investment in faculty at all levels will allow Bauer to become truly competitive and improve faculty-to-student ratios.

So the mandate of my team — newly hired and newly energized by Dean Ramchand's vision — is to put these goals into place as soon as possible. To do this, we need the support of our entire family of stakeholders: our community, alumni, volunteers, corporations, and students. One by one, we need them all. And that includes you!

*Connect with us! We want your feedback, stories, connections and, of course, investments.*

*Let us know about your experiences as a student and your successes after graduation.*

*You can contact our office directly at 713-743-4646.*



## MAYA HOUSTON

### *Assistant Vice President of Development*

I am not from Houston, but my connection to the University of Houston started early. My father taught at UH for a couple of years when I was in middle school. When I visited him I owned the campus: I wandered around with my sister, bowled a few frames, accompanied my dad to his classes in Agnes Arnold where he taught Spanish Literature, learned about Alechinsky at Blaffer Gallery and, of course did all of my back-to-school shopping in the university bookstore. As I went back to 6th grade in Colorado, I proudly carried the shiny, red University of Houston notebooks and folders.

Last November, several decades later, after earning a history degree from Trinity College in Hartford, CT, and an MBA in marketing from Rice University, I came back to the UH campus with its newly renovated bowling alley, expanded library and ever more impressive Blaffer Gallery. And I returned to UH with a last name that is strangely fitting.

At the C. T. Bauer College of Business, my past fundraising experiences in academia, the Houston Zoo and the Houston Public Library Foundation merge into a clear road map that focuses on education, access to education, and community. Dean Latha Ramchand's vision is to fulfill the goal of all of the students who seek a degree at Bauer. With faculty, staff and a dean who strive tirelessly toward the mission, my team's goal of generating robust scholarship programs and increased funding for improved programs and programming to achieve that vision is possible.

Each alum that I have met has impressed me with his or her life experiences and stories about their time at Bauer – or the College of Business. I look forward to working closely and collaboratively with alumni and business leaders to achieve Bauer's goals and achieve the vision. It is easy when you know that Bauer is truly Where Awesome Happens!

## DWAYNE BUSBY

### *Director of Development*

I definitely bleed red and white. Although I was born in Brooklyn, NY, I was raised in Houston from the age of seven. In 1983 and 1984, I attended the Guy V. Lewis Basketball Camp, or in those days what was called the Phi Slamma Jamma Camp, where I immediately fell in love with the University of Houston. Since then, I have always admired and had the desire to go to or work for UH.

I was blessed with a scholarship to attend Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT. I returned to my alma mater and worked in development for many years and also received my Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from Wesleyan during that time. After spending almost six years working as a major gifts officer for Clark University, I was finally given the opportunity to bring my talents back home to Houston.

I am now the director of development in External Relations at Bauer College. I work tirelessly and diligently with Bauer alumni, parents and friends to raise funds and awareness while promoting the institution and the students' progress and success.

Every morning I walk into work with the desire to live up to the virtue of our school's colors — "The Red stands for courage or inner strength to face the unknown, and the White stands for the good of helping one's fellow man."



## JOHN RYAN

### *Development Officer 1*



I joined the Bauer College Office of External Relations in July 2013 as a development officer. In this role, I work with alumni, friends, parents, corporations and foundations to raise funds and awareness to promote student success.

I earned my bachelor's degree in business administration from Ithaca College's Park Center for Business and Sustainable Enterprise in Ithaca, NY. I'm originally from Buffalo, NY, and prior to moving to Houston, I was the director of development at a Boys & Girls Club in the Boston, MA, area.

My career in fundraising includes positions in higher education, a community foundation, youth education programs and a homeless service provider. I have also provided independent consulting services to programs for children with special needs and at-risk youth. I'm excited to be part of the Bauer team and am extremely grateful for the opportunity to work closely with Bauer alumni and supporters to help grow the university. Together, we can provide the best educational experience for our students.

## KYLE VARDEMAN

### *Scholarships and Special Programs Coordinator*

As the scholarships and special programs coordinator, I have the privilege of working directly with Bauer College's great students, faculty, staff and alumni and the expanding UH community. Joining the Bauer College Development Team in November 2013, I largely work with the faculty-based scholarship committee and am responsible for all processes involved with awarding scholarships to the very deserving Bauer student body. As part of the development team, I am tasked with expanding and implementing a stewardship program that reflects the appreciation we have within Bauer College for our growing alumni and support base.

My passion has always revolved around serving others. While at Texas A&M University, I served on the Student Crisis Counseling Helpline, providing support to the student body in their individual times of distress. Prior to this position, I held a range of project coordination roles within the non-profit sector. Most notably, my time working in analytical chemistry and chemotherapy, for the Houston-based Stehlin Foundation for Cancer Research, revealed the utmost importance for strong development and fundraising practices within the non-profit sector.

My excitement for Bauer College and UH is fueled further from the pride I hold as a native of Houston. An avid Astros, Texans and Rockets fan, fisherman and gamer, my proudest accomplishment comes from the blessing of being a father and husband.





## KIMBERLY FERNANDEZ

### *Executive Administrative Assistant*

Where does awesome happen? Why, right here, and I am proud to say I am part of a great team that helps make it happen. I have been with Bauer since 2008 and have seen and been part of many exciting changes in the college, including the construction of Cemo Hall and the Insuperity building, the launch of RED Labs and the building of our new development team.

I currently serve as executive administrative assistant for the Office of Development. I am responsible for all the daily operations of the department. As an active member of the Association of Donor Relations Professionals (ADRP), with 18 years of administrative experience with the state of Texas, along with expertise in the areas of accounting, project management and data research, I am able to provide an excellent level of backing to the team. I am also the liaison between the development directors of other colleges, University Advancement and the general public.

In addition, I am also the event planner for the department. I plan and organize many of our college events. One of my favorites is the Gold and Silver Cougar Luncheon. This has become an annual event where we invite alumni who have graduated 25 and 50 years ago back to campus, update them on the new and awesome happenings here in Bauer and help them re-engage.

The Bauer development team is stronger than ever. We have a lot of awesome and together we will help pave the way for our students and help ensure the university community remains at the forefront of higher education.

**NOW THAT YOU'VE MET THE BAUER DEVELOPMENT TEAM, HERE  
ARE TWO STORIES OF BUSINESS LEADERS WHO ARE GIVING  
BACK TO BAUER COLLEGE TO IMPACT STUDENTS' LIVES.**

*giving*

# FROM HERE TO ETERNITY

Pyramid Tubular employees deliver stunning 30th anniversary gift to founders — an endowed scholarship for WCE students

By Wendell Brock

Kathy Walton, the founder of Pyramid Tubular Products LP, is a straight-shooting steel magnolia who believes in doing the right thing by her customers and her employees.

She founded Pyramid in 1984 with a \$100,000 bank loan and a staff of two. Today the Houston-based supplier of Oil Country Tubular Goods (OCTG) is an industry giant — with a staff of 40 and a sterling credo of customer service. Adored by her employees, Walton is a no-nonsense CEO and president with a conservative fiscal philosophy and a generous, “work hard, play hard” spirit. She’s been known to throw casino parties for her employees and spouses at an exclusive hotel in the Woodlands, and she always puts them up after the annual Christmas shindig at the Four Seasons Hotel. When times got tough a few years back, the company chose pay cuts over layoffs so they could stay together, only to have Walton pay back the lost wages (and then some) when the economy turned around.

No wonder, then, that Pyramid’s executive team wanted to do something exceptional for Walton and partners Steve Gilbert and Rick Thomas on the occasion of the company’s 30th anniversary this year.

Secretly, the management team of chief operating officer Hugh Heslep, chief

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**WHEN WE REVEALED THAT THERE’S GOING TO BE A STUDENT FROM HERE TO ETERNITY THAT GETS TO GO TO SCHOOL OR THAT GETS FINANCIAL AID FROM PYRAMID TUBULAR, IT WAS PROBABLY THE MOST SPECIAL MOMENT KATHY’S HAD WITH HER EMPLOYEES.**

”

financial officer Ken Richmond and executive vice president of sales Brett Mendenhall began to kick around ideas in April. They liked the notion of creating a legacy, something that would give back to the community in a lasting way. And they were keen on celebrating the business philosophy of Walton, Gilbert and Thomas — bootstrap entrepreneurs who achieved the American dream by virtue of their hard work, tenacity and “fanatical” approach to customer service. Fishing around on the Internet, they Googled “Houston” and “entrepreneurship.” As luck would have it, the first thing that popped up was Bauer College’s Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship — a program that is consistently named one of the nation’s best, though they didn’t know it at the time. After meeting with development officers at the University of Houston, Pyramid’s stealthy management team felt certain they had found the perfect tribute for their company’s top leaders.

The announcement came June 4 at the end of a company-wide sales meeting. The partners were asked to sit on one side of the room and the employees on the other. Walton, with typical directness, remembers being agitated that she didn’t know what was going on.

Then came the astonishing surprise.



**The team that Pyramid Tubular Products LP Founder Kathy Walton (seated, at left) created raised more than \$50,000 to establish the Walton-Gilbert-Thomas Scholarship Endowment for a student in Bauer's entrepreneurship program.**

Pyramid's employees — every single one of them — had contributed more than \$50,000 to establish the Walton-Gilbert-Thomas Scholarship Endowment for a student in Bauer's entrepreneurship program. It was, to say the least, an emotional moment — full of joy, tears and hugs.

"We were just speechless," Walton remembers. "It was probably the most wonderful gift I have ever received in my entire life."

And then, true to the spirit of Pyramid, which matches employees' charitable contributions on the dollar, the partners said they wanted to match the scholarship money. So today, Heslep, Richmond and Mendenhall's original vision for a \$25,000 gift (the university minimum for an endowed scholarship) has grown to \$141,000, meaning a \$5,000 scholarship will be awarded to a WCE student each year, based on need.

"I don't think in their wildest dreams they ever imagined that we would do something like this," Mendenhall said. "When we revealed that there's going to be a

student from here to eternity that gets to go to school or that gets financial aid from Pyramid Tubular, it was probably the most special moment Kathy's had with her employees. It was really remarkable." (Kathy and Rick Walton, her husband of 42 years, don't have children, but it is clear she considers her employees her family, and they think of her like a mother.)

Matching the gift, Gilbert says, was a no-brainer.

"This deal is something that lives forever and speaks of who Pyramid is," says Gilbert, who joined the company in 1987 as a silent partner and went full time in 1990. "I'll just be honest: When they told us about the scholarship and we saw how it was set up, we were begging to get into it. So basically like anything our employees have ever done for us, they didn't wait for us to come up with an idea. They came up with the idea."

In helping students who might not otherwise have the opportunity for an education, the scholarship pays tribute

to the humble beginnings of Pyramid's founders. "I came from nothing," Gilbert says. "I never even finished college."

Walton, who started her career as an accounting clerk at KFC and put her way through school at the University of Texas, is a true entrepreneur who knows the challenges of creating a business from scratch. In creating a Pyramid culture that rewards honesty, hard work and service, she has instilled those qualities in her employees.

Now they have given back — by investing in the next generation of entrepreneurs.

"We are hoping that another Kathy Walton or Steve Gilbert will come out of this," Heslep says of the scholarship. "We would be thrilled just to be a small part of that."

“ WITHOUT THE TEACHERS AND MENTORS I HAD FROM THE COLLEGE, I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE WHAT I HAVE.”



# LANGUAGE OF GIVING

For entrepreneurship graduate, business success translates into a scholarship for students

By Wendell Brock

Like every student in Bauer College's entrepreneurship program, Ludmila Golovine (BBA '95) was required to come up with a business plan. As an immigrant from the Soviet Union, she had been using her translation skills to help pay her way through college. So why not start a company that would provide interpreters and translators to the business community? After all, Houston was on its way to becoming a major international city, so the need for language services would only grow.

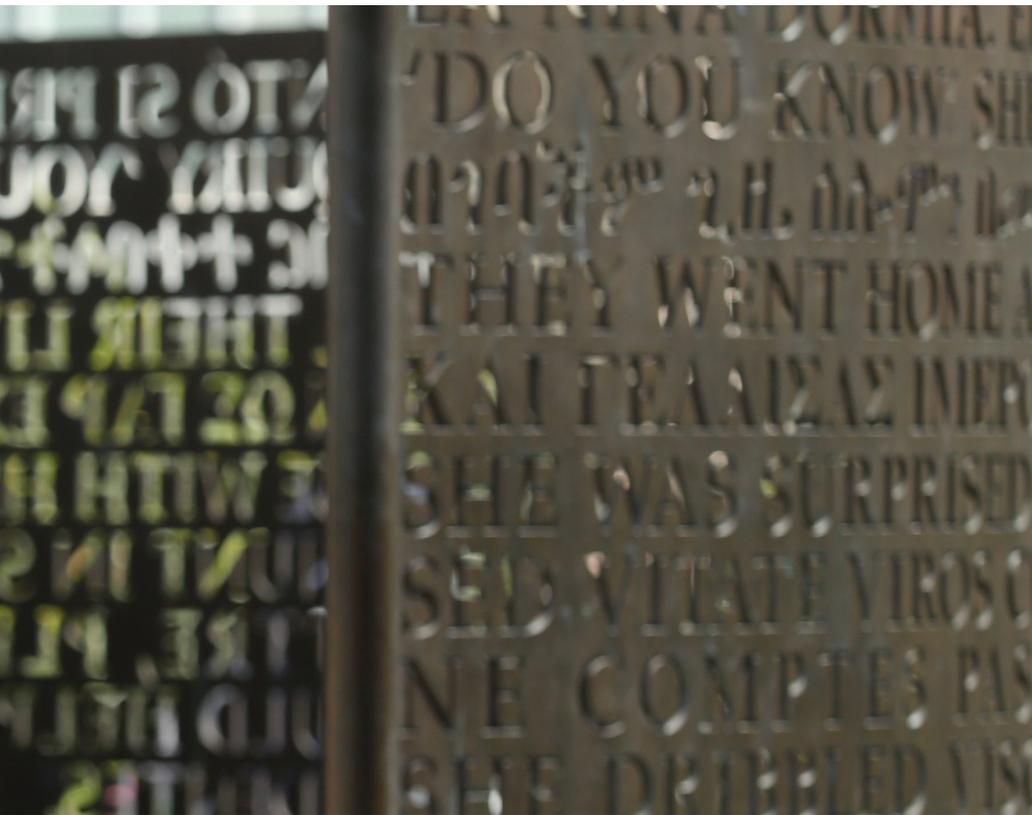
She got an "A" on her business plan. But the professor had his doubts. He thought the idea was "too risky," Golovine says, relishing the irony of the way things eventually turned out. Far from being discouraged, the fearless young woman

from Communist Russia pursued her dream anyway.

Today MasterWord Services, Inc. — the business she created in the first entrepreneurship class ever offered at Bauer — is a multi-million dollar enterprise and one of the most respected language-service providers in the country and the world. Golovine, named one of Bauer's three "most prominent alumni" by *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*, credits her success to the University of Houston. As a tribute to her alma mater and her business, she recently created the MasterWord Services Endowed Scholarship, intended exclusively for students studying at the Cyvia and Melvyn Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship (WCE).

"Without the teachers and mentors I had from the college, I wouldn't be able to achieve what I have achieved," Golovine says. The MasterWord Services founder and president established the scholarship to help aspiring entrepreneurs "who may not otherwise have the opportunity to afford the program." It is her way of giving back.

Ludmila Rusakova Golovine — who goes by "Mila" for short — knows first-hand the challenges of paying for college. In 1989, at age 19, she journeyed from Moscow to study international finance at the University of Houston. A refreshingly candid woman who jokes frequently about life's little absurdities, Golovine says she was only allowed to bring \$304 in cash. As a foreign student, she was able to get



*MasterWord Services was conceptualized during Mila Golovine's time in Bauer College's entrepreneurship program and is now a global operation.*

a scholarship that waived part of her UH tuition. She made up the rest by working as an interpreter and translator.

Almost on a whim, she signed up for a business elective in entrepreneurship. Little did she know the course would change her life.

The experience, she remembers, taught her “all the ins and outs of running a business.” She and her classmates got to meet highly successful entrepreneurs — like Rod Canion, the founder of Compaq Computer Corp. — and others who “had gone bankrupt more times than they could count.” It was a real-world crash course, a cautionary tale and a roadmap to the future.

In 1993, Golovine started MasterWord as a one-woman operation. She remembers working out of a sketchy apartment building and buying her first car for \$300. “I didn’t even have to lock the doors since no one would bother trying to steal it,” she joked. Her first employee wanted to get paid at the end of each day because she was afraid they might go out of business the next.

But UH’s entrepreneurship program taught her how to work with what she had. “It’s wonderful if you have a \$10 million advertising budget, but how do you do a marketing campaign with a \$100 budget?” she says. “How do you figure it out if you have no resources, just yourself?” Her Bauer experience showed her the way.

And as Houston grew into a dynamic world-class city, MasterWord grew with it.

Today this top provider of language solutions (including interpretation, translation, training and assessments) is a 24/7 operation with 130 full-time employees and an additional 13,000 contract workers across the globe. It has been named one of the Top 50 largest language-service providers worldwide (Common Sense Advisory), one of the top 500 women-owned businesses in America (DiversityBusiness.com) and a *Houston Chronicle* Top Workplace. “We support clients in 250 languages and 50 countries,” Golovine says.

Houston, she believes, is an ideal place to do business. “It has an amazingly mixed demographic with pretty much every

community represented,” she says. “Just in our own office, we have people from 22 countries who speak about 30 languages. We provide services in over 250 languages — for school districts, for courthouses, for hospitals, for community organizations, for refugee organizations, for child-protection agencies and for energy companies, to name just a few of the entities that we connect across language and culture.”

Though Golovine has had to balance the responsibilities of running a business with those of being a mother of three, she has always made time for Bauer College.

After earning her BBA in finance and marketing, she completed additional master’s coursework in entrepreneurship and has been a supporter of the WCE since its earliest days. In 1997, she was named an Outstanding Young Alumna of the college. Today she serves as a WCE mentor and regularly hires UH and Bauer graduates to work for her company.

Of all the things she learned at Bauer, she places the idea of giving back to the community at the very top. “Giving back, valuing education, improving your community and helping people be the best they can be,” she says, “is what life is all about.”

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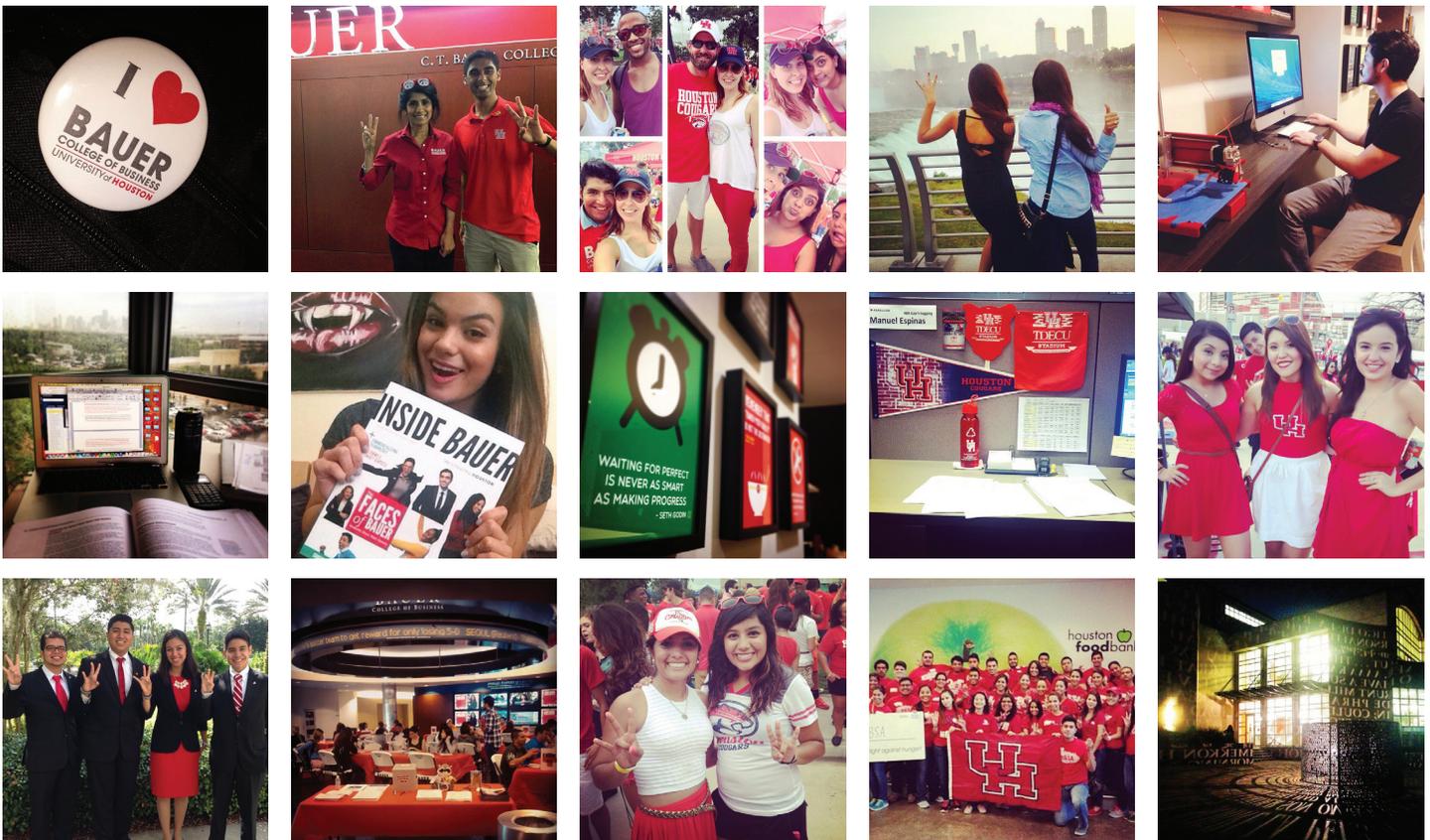
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