

directions

WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY MBA Atkinson Graduate School of Management



INNOVATION
Imagination,
Ideas, Impact

FROM IDEA TO ENTERPRISE

Alumni with an
Entrepreneurial Spirit

WRITING THE NEXT CHAPTER

Peace Corps Fellows
Become MBAs

2012-13



Student teams in the Early Career and Career Change MBA program work with a variety of not-for-profit and government clients in the PACE (Practical Applications for Careers and Enterprises) program. Each year students donate more than 2,000 hours of consulting time to their clients. Learn more about recent projects on page 6.

CREATING AND INNOVATING

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Enterprising alumni share their stories

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Traveling the World to Recruit MBAs

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DIRECTIONS Questions or feedback? Please contact mba-media@willamette.edu or 503-808-9901. Willamette University MBA – Salem Campus, 900 State Street, Salem, OR 97301, 503-370-6167; Willamette University MBA – Portland Campus, 1120 NW Couch Street, Suite 450, Portland, OR 97209, 503-808-9901

Debra J. Ringold, Dean and JELD-WEN Professor of Free Enterprise **EDITOR:** Russell J. Yost **WRITING:** Russell J. Yost, Mike Russell, Bré Greenman, Erin Snelgrove, Lisa Lednicer **PHOTOGRAPHY:** Frank Miller, Souvik Mandal, Malissa Pellegrino **DESIGN:** Mike Wright, Emily Oliva **CREDITS:** Mike Russell, Pivotal Writing, pivotalwriting.com; Josh Erickson and Grant Leslie, [Beyond Study Abroad](http://BeyondStudyAbroad.com), beyondstudyabroad.com; Aimee Akimoff

Promoting Innovation, Defining Success

WHEN I SPEAK with executives, I'm often asked what sets our MBA students apart. What makes a Willamette MBA graduate different from other MBAs? Frankly, executives expect our students to be the very talented people they are. They expect our graduates to be very well educated by a remarkable faculty. But they are somewhat surprised when I emphasize that our graduates are earnest, dedicated to doing well by doing good, and ready to hit the ground running.

Professor Fred Thompson calls them "kinder, gentler MBAs."

That's not to say that the Willamette MBA experience lacks rigor. Quite the contrary — our students are pushed to learn, do and experience more in the two short years they spend with us than one might imagine. At recruitment events and in my welcoming remarks during Compass Week and MBA-P Orientation, I remind students to take every opportunity to challenge themselves. In our programs you can't be afraid to take risks.

Working in situations outside our comfort zone is when some of our best ideas happen. If we consistently find ourselves in familiar circumstances, we never learn to adapt. The changing and often challenging economy of the past few years is a not-so-subtle reminder that adaptability and resilience

are defining characteristics for success.

In spite of recent economic realities, the Willamette MBA has grown stronger. We've invested in our facilities, faculty and programs. We've partnered with organizations around the world to improve the accessibility and affordability of our MBA programs. As a result, all students have the opportunity to work with

colleagues from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

We've also invested in new laboratory spaces to complement our experiential learning

opportunities. The rapid prototyping lab for our "Design Thinking" course utilizes a three-dimensional scanner and printer to turn students' product ideas into reality.

Our state-of-the-art trading room provides students in the O'Neil

Student Investment Fund access to the latest financial information.

In short, we've innovated.

Innovation is a term that

is well-used — perhaps even over-used. Nonetheless, the drive to do something different and better, to change the world, to help one another in new ways is pervasive at Atkinson. Whether from

Shanghai, Saudi Arabia or West Salem, our students are challenged to embrace the unknown, to create, to innovate in the context of their coursework.

But an increasing number of students have taken the notion of innovation a step further — launching their own ventures to fulfill unmet needs. It's a career path with no shortage of risks but arguably offers

rewards like no other option.

We're proud of our Willamette MBA innovators and entrepreneurs — and the world is noticing. Just last year Inc. magazine named our "New Ventures" and

"Angel Investing" courses among the top 10 entrepreneurship classes in the U.S. Professor Robert Wiltbank, a nationally recognized expert in angel and venture investing, and the students who participate in the Willamette

University Angel Fund, have impact beyond the classroom. The businesses students launch and the start-ups they fund positively affect the economic climate of Oregon and the

Northwest.

Innovative thinking is in demand by well-established organizations, as well. Fortune 500 companies, government agencies and not-for-profits all seek talented new hires to

push boundaries and come up with the next best thing.

Read on to learn more about what some of our graduates are doing. It's amazing to see how they have taken everyday products — soap, semi-trucks, bread,

basketball and Facebook — and turned them into something different ... and better. ❶

— Debra J. Ringold, Dean and JELD-WEN Professor of Free Enterprise

From the Editor



I'm always impressed by the power of the Willamette MBA alumni community. We support each other, refer each other and even go into business with one another.

Along with the power of the faculty and program content, alumni regularly cite the relationships created through our programs as one of the key benefits of a Willamette MBA. Whether as colleagues in class, mentors, career counselors or business friends, our Willamette MBA network is there for us through all of life's major events.

This issue of Directions is full of examples where our community has supported each other — to start a new business, impact a not-for-profit or change the world.

Feel free to share your stories and ideas with us on our Facebook page (facebook.com/WillametteMBA) or send an email to mba-media@willamette.edu. Enjoy!

Sincerely,
Russ

— Russell J. Yost, MBA'05
Director of Marketing
and Contributing Assistant Professor
Directions Editor

I remind students to take every opportunity to challenge themselves. In our programs you can't be afraid to take risks.

Our students are challenged to embrace the unknown, to create, to innovate in the context of their coursework.

Setting the PACE

Early Career and Career Change MBA students impact organizations in Salem and around the world.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS for Careers and Enterprises (PACE) once again delivered on its 10-year promise to provide resume building, challenging and eye-opening experiences for first-year, full-time MBA students. In 2011–12, students served clients in the community, across the country and internationally. As in previous sessions, not-for-profit and government organizations competed to be selected as clients to work with Willamette MBA students.

In 2011–12, one team didn't have to look far for a project. It worked with Willamette Academy, which helps high-need students prepare for and attend college, in partnership with Willamette University. The PACE team developed a strategic plan for the academy, integrating the academy's relationship with both the university and the Salem community.

Team member and first-year MBA student Sidnee Schaefer commented, "once you realize the impact you are having on the kids in the program, it becomes more than just a school project."

Jillian Toda volunteered as a tutor for the academy while an undergraduate student at Willamette. As an MBA project, it helped her "understand the way not-for-profit

organizations operate and the challenges they face." She added, "I ended up taking the not-for-profit management course to know more about how other organizations operate."

Team members agreed that the project challenged them to see the big picture of not-for-profit management and how organizations like the Willamette Academy affect the areas they serve.

While certain teams worked in the Salem community, other PACE teams learned how to work with clients across the country, often meeting virtually.

The Chicago Children's Advocacy Center worked via videoconference with a PACE team to devise a management training program.

"I like that we had to conduct remote operations,"

said first-year MBA student Reese Olander. "It was a real struggle to key into how they operate, and to share information, but I enjoyed the challenge."

The project was a good learning experience for the team knowing that virtual meetings are commonplace in today's business world.

Aside from virtual operations, first-year MBA student Mansi Sanghavi added that the project helped enhance her vocabulary and professional writing. "There was a responsibility of being a student of Willamette University and wanting to represent it well," she said. 📍

— Bré Greenman

Willamette MBA Program Among top 25 Globally

WE ALL KNOW THE ATKINSON GRADUATE SCHOOL is a great place to live and learn — and the world is paying attention. During the past few years, Willamette's MBA programs have garnered a number of prestigious national and international recognitions, in addition to affirming its world-class accreditation. All the while, MBA alumni are making a difference in organizations large and small, representing the program well on the global stage.

A FEW RECENT ACCOLADES FOR THE WILLAMETTE MBA PROGRAM:

Ranked #23
by the Aspen Institute's "Beyond Grey Pinstripes" survey, which recognizes MBA programs that integrate social, ethical and environmental stewardship issues throughout their curriculum.

Ranked as the

ONLY PROGRAM IN OREGON

on Forbes magazine's top 75 "Best Business Schools List" for return on investment.

#7

Ranked in the world

for the "business impact" of the curriculum related to social, environmental and/or ethical issues.

Past PACE Clients

Eileen Brady for Mayor

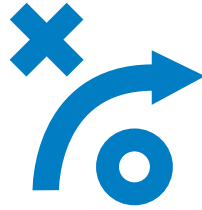
Location: Portland, Ore.
Project: provide business and economic papers, positions and evaluations for the Portland mayoral campaign of Eileen Brady

Gem Children's Foundation

Location: Salem, Ore.
Project: design a property development and acquisition study for a pediatric medical center

Chicago Children's Advocacy Center

Location: Chicago, Ill.
Project: create comprehensive training modules for existing and new managers, including hiring, supervising, legal understandings, leadership and personnel policy



Hacienda CDC

Location: Portland, Ore.
Project: develop business plan for a Latino Public Market, including feasibility, market analysis and development pro forma

Loaves and Fishes

Location: Portland, Ore.
Project: create a business development program to evaluate current strategy and design of additional revenue models

The Imani Project

Location: Portland, Ore./Kenya
Project: design marketing and development models for expanding the Imani Project's scope and delivery

Oregon Secretary of State-Archives

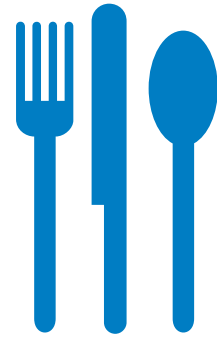
Location: Salem, Ore.
Project: develop a marketing plan to promote the Oregon Blue Book and an e-book or application for selected sectors

Mercy Corps Northwest

Location: Portland, Ore.
Project: initiate MCNW distance learning in Oregon and Washington for online lending platforms, market demand assessment, partner evaluation and organizational resource analysis

Willamette Academy

Location: Salem, Ore.
Project: create a strategy, development and marketing plan for the academy



Salem-Keizer Education Foundation

Location: Salem, Ore.
Project: establish community and alumni network design, including a business plan and campaign rollout for "NO Hungry Child" campaign

Backbones

Location: Chicago, Ill.
Project: create a strategic plan focusing on marketing, branding and development to expand market identity and presence



OnPoint Community Credit Union

Location: Portland, Ore.
Project: review and evaluate the intersection of social media and technology for banking services and the development of a business plan



Business-Dress Bearcat

BLITZ, WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY'S MASCOT, represented the MBA program in style to ring in 2012. Where will business-dress bearcat show up next? Like the Willamette MBA program on Facebook (facebook.com/WillametteMBA) to find out — and learn more about news and upcoming events.

New Ventures and Angel Investing course listed among Inc. magazine's

TOP TEN entrepreneurship courses in the U.S.



Recognized as a **top program for public affairs**

by U.S. News and World Report

Listed among the **TOP 100**

MBA programs on Poets & Quants.

Making the Most of Mentors



Jim Rasmussen (left) served as mentor for Kyle Hardy MBA'12, during Hardy's first year as an MBA student.

"Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction."

— John Crosby, author and newspaper columnist

"I HAVE MET some of the smartest people I know through the Atkinson program," Jim Rasmussen said.

In his 12th year as a mentor, he chose to participate in the program because he valued the mentors in his life and enjoys making a difference on a very personal basis.

Willamette's MBA mentor program pairs first- and second-year MBA candidates with professionals in the community. During their first meeting, mentors and mentees outline a plan they will follow. Each relationship is distinct and is built around set goals.

Once the relationship strategy is established, mentors coach students the remainder of the academic year. Mentor

plans often include such goals as improving networking skills, working on internship or job applications, learning the culture of business and growing a student's professional network.

During Rasmussen's service as a mentor, he has coached a mix of domestic and international students. "Each relationship is unique, and I let the student drive the agenda," he said.

Rasmussen's most recent mentee was Rinad Ayed, a first-year MBA student from Palestine who approached the mentorship program with

specific objectives.

"My goals were to know more about American culture and professionalism and working here — how people live their everyday life," she said.



Rinad Ayed MBA'13

Ayed and Rasmussen built a strong relationship. She recalls that "he opened up the chance for me to see things other international students won't have, [including] meeting [his] family."

Ayed sees this as a valuable part of the educational experience and thinks it will help her work with Americans in the future. Her post-MBA

Early Career and Career Change MBA Snapshot

goals include working in marketing for a not-for-profit in Palestine.

Rasmussen commented that “Rinad changed some of my international viewpoints in our very first meeting together — it’s experiences like this that cause me to continue to mentor.”

He especially enjoys meeting people from around the world because it opens his mind and gives him a great global perspective. “The mentors get as much out of the program as the mentee,” he said.

From a strategic standpoint, Rasmussen describes a mentor’s role as removing obstacles to the mentee’s success. He believes if students have help paving their road they will ultimately be successful.

The year prior to mentoring Ayed, Rasmussen mentored Kyle Hardy, another Willamette MBA student. At the time, Hardy was a first-year student whose goals were to network and build contacts for an internship.

“I wanted to participate in the mentorship program so I could get a good internship that would help me secure a job after graduation,” Hardy said.

Rasmussen worked with Hardy on his resume, cover letter and personal story to assist in his networking efforts. Hardy said he appreciated “the opportunity for one-on-one time with an experienced professional on a repeated basis,” and having a mentor made it easier to connect with people.

Fortunately for Hardy, he reached his goal in securing an internship and spent the summer of 2011 working in project governance at Pacific Gas and Electric in San Francisco. Due to participation in the mentorship program and a strong internship, Hardy also accepted a finance position at Bonneville Power Administration prior to his graduation in May 2012.

Outcomes-Focused Approach

Rasmussen has found the outcomes of each relationship to be different every year, adding that the partnership is student driven. “If the mentee is engaged, I am happy to be there,” he said.

During the last 12 years, Rasmussen has built many relationships. Today, he is still friends with a number of his mentees and even works with a few on a professional basis.

While he acknowledges that staying current with all former mentees can be difficult, Rasmussen said “it’s fun to hear from people that you developed close relationships with.”

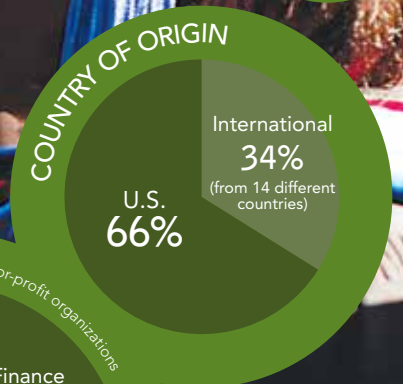
He also admits that each relationship has been unique, and the only real consistency from year to year is coffee and lunches. ☕

— Bré Greenman

Graduating in
2012

TOTAL GRADUATES
93

AVERAGE AGE
25



Source: Willamette MBA Career Management Office

Creating and Innovating

This concept of creating — and ultimately controlling — the future, rather than trying to predict it, is known in entrepreneurial circles as effectuation.

“Entrepreneurs deal with uncertainty by going out to the market first and trying to sell their ideas,” says Rob Wiltbank, associate professor of strategic management. “They can motivate people through providing a compelling vision of the future and raise the bar from potential to actual.”

For many recent MBA graduates, the idea of effectuation has taken root and grown into innovative business ideas.

The following five stories represent a small sample of the many organizations created and run by Willamette MBA alumni. Some are early on the path to success. Others have blossomed into sustainable businesses.

What they all share is a sense of purpose in creating products and services that improve the state of the world. It’s a concept that is abstract, but achievable, and also distinctly “Willamette.”

12345



Rising to the Challenge

Whenever Jan Taborsky '10, MBA'11 got a sore throat or a stomach ache, he blamed his weak immune system. That changed three years ago, when tests revealed he was severely intolerant to gluten.

1

Armed with answers — and a quest to keep carbs in his life — Taborsky and his wife Lacy Gillham '10 launched Happy Campers Gluten-Free Baking in 2010. They now sell their products throughout the Northwest, including several Whole Foods stores, Dave's

Killer Bread Store in Milwaukie, Ore. and Willamette University.

"I could have gotten a normal job, but I know I wouldn't have been as happy there as I am here," says Taborsky.

Making the grade

A native of the Czech Republic, Taborsky moved to Salem as a high school exchange student and stayed to attend Willamette, where he earned a bachelor's degree in economics. The following year, through a combined program offered by the College of Liberal

Arts and the Atkinson Graduate School of Management, Taborsky earned his MBA.

Taborsky and Gillham — who is also intolerant to gluten — met as undergrads. They began their business as an

Atkinson school project, spending more than a year conducting market research, forming an operations plan and giving taste tests to focus groups. Taborsky's team won first place in the university's New Venture Competition, a component of the PACE (Practical Applications for Careers and Enterprises) program where students' business plans are judged by a team of regional experts. From there, Taborsky turned his project into a career.

"Back then, there were no fresh options for gluten-free bread at all," Taborsky says.

Full speed ahead

While still students, Taborsky and Gillham enlisted the help of Salem restaurateurs, who let the couple use their kitchens. By October 2010, the two were selling their products at the Salem Farmers Market and to Bon Appétit, a restaurant company based at Willamette.

Today, Taborsky and Gillham operate out of their own facility in Tigard, Ore., where they make 300 to 450 loaves a week for about 20 Oregon and Washington merchants. Their products are Kiss Me Garlic-Rosemary bread, the sandwich-style Classy Grains loaf, the Party

Hearty loaf with buckwheat flour, seeds and molasses and Wild Buns sprinkled with sesame seeds, which are sold four to a pack. The products are all vegan and soy free, selling for about \$7 each.

"It was easy to get into stores," Gillham says. "We had something very special to offer."

Thinking big

Taborsky and Gillham work about 14 hours a day, six days a week. As a studio arts major, Gillham says she enjoys the creativity of marketing and running the day-to-day operations, while Taborsky relishes the innovation of his job.

Still, he says the demands of being an entrepreneur are overwhelming, which is why he's especially thankful for the continued guidance from Atkinson professors Rob Wiltbank and Wade Brooks.

"They made us believe in ourselves," Taborsky says.

Going forward, Taborsky and Gillham want to pursue additional accounts and develop new gluten-free products. Eventually, they may even sell their business and try something new.

"We know what we want and how to get there," Taborsky says. "We think big."

— Erin Snelgrove



Jan Taborsky '10, MBA'11 (left) and his wife and business partner in gluten-free baking, Lacy Gillham '10.

Growing at Full Throttle

If a quiet moment ever comes, Charlie Fought MBA'08 and Dan Reichenbach MBA'08, will recall the past few years as a breathless period of risk and growth.

Since buying Pacific Service Center (PSC) in 2008, their truck-fleet service company has grown full throttle; tripling its employee size, expanding into a second location, and acquiring large accounts with national brands. From a humble start as a body shop for semi-trucks, PSC's team now includes graphic designers, professional painters, on-demand drivers and mobile mechanics.

Not bad for a final project in the MBA for Professionals program that took on a life of its own before its completion.

It just happened during our MBA

"I came into the program from a healthcare background," Fought remembers. "I had no idea that I'd end up applying my degree this way, and definitely no clue about big trucks. It just happened during our MBA."

The pair chose to focus on PSC for their capstone integrated project; "we knew that there would always be a demand for the trucking industry," Fought says. "And, somewhere along the way, we knew that we'd go into business together."

As they progressed through their final year, the financials started to make sense, and the project tipped over into a serious discussion. "It was nice to realize that all of our work

was moving us toward the purchase of our business," Fought recalls. "The MBA was a great setting for that process; our pressing, real-life questions enriched the class discussions, and our classmates seemed eager to offer suggestions. That network of encouragement was great."

Incredibly time-sensitive

When rubber met road, the pair acted quickly. "Originally, everything was done on paper," Fought remembers in awe. "As soon as we acquired PSC, we digitized everything. That simple step shortened our response times dramatically and continues to help us meet the changing needs of our customers."

Now, a staff designer can take a client's concept and show how the final graphic will look before spraying a drop of paint. Their mobile service can meet trucks stalled on the side of the road and instantly access repair schematics online. From time-tracking to billing information, supporting photographs to estimating delivery times, PSC continues to sharpen its competitive edge with smart technology.

"This industry is incredibly time-sensitive," Fought says. "If it's not moving, it's not making money. Because we're always asking what we can do to keep our large fleet accounts happy, every one of our departments



Charlie Fought MBA'08 and Dan Reichenbach MBA'08, members of the inaugural MBA for Professionals Portland cohort, at Pacific Service Center.

seems to be booming. There's always something popping up with this business. We regularly find ourselves going back to what we learned [at Willamette]; finance, accounting, HR, even statistics once in a while. Our success comes from creatively applying what we know, taking risks, and thinking outside the box."

Next up: fuel prices

Rising fuel prices makes the trucking business more expensive. Customers are minimizing their overhead by outsourcing some of their transportation needs to PSC. By creatively expanding to meet the demand, Reichenbach and Fought hope to turn a liability

into revenue; "We try and take full advantage of our trucks," Fought says. "By keeping them on the road and eliminating downtime, they're continually turning a profit."

Next, Reichenbach and Fought plan to expand PSC's service area. "Because of our size," Fought says, "we can keep a step up on our remaining competition. We can turn projects around faster, keep our customers on the road, and keep them coming back."

"It's more fun than I'd expected."

— Mike Russell

Traditional Production, Innovative Distribution

When she graduated from the Willamette MBA for Professionals program in Portland, Janell Anderson's mind was brimming with ideas.



Janell Anderson '98, MBA'10 creating hand-made soaps in her Portland studio.

She knew she wanted to be an entrepreneur, and she knew her business must reflect her creativity. After months of market research, Anderson '98, MBA'10 launched Prunella Soap in October 2010. "I like working for myself," Anderson says. "I like making a product I believe in."

Creating a product

Anderson makes cold-process soaps in her Portland studio. Featuring a blend of essential oils and dried herbs and flowers, her concoctions are vegan, organic and eco friendly.

They take four weeks to cure, and they come in 18 evocative scents — including pink grapefruit and oatmeal, peppermint poppy seed and cinnamon walnut. Single bars sell for \$7 each, while prices for her other products range anywhere from \$5 to \$250.

The name, Prunella Soap, is derived from "Princess Prunella," a childhood nickname Anderson earned because of her propensity to linger in the bathtub until her fingertips wrinkled.

"Everything fell into place," Anderson says, noting that losing her sales job in 2009 propelled her to take action. "It gradually got to the point where I didn't have anywhere to go but back up."

But having an idea wasn't enough. Anderson says she needed to differentiate her product from the competition — a lesson she learned from her management professors at Willamette.

"One of the biggest things I learned at Willamette was to think of the global economy," she says, adding that her

education was enhanced by the small class sizes and dedicated staff. "I learned how to market to different cultures."

Marketing Strategy

Anderson doesn't pay to advertise her products. Instead, she sells her soaps on Etsy — an e-commerce website that sells handmade, vintage and craft items. According to June 2012 statistics, nearly \$62 million in goods were sold from the website that month.

Anderson had experience selling handmade cards on the website, so adding her soaps seemed like the next logical step, she says. From there, she touted the quality of her products and played with their visual appeal.

In photo shoots, she arranges the soaps in intricate patterns, adorns them in festive ribbons and bathes them in light. In some pictures, the soaps are even topped with small, plastic dogs.

"I wanted to keep it simple," Anderson says. "I wanted to make it different."

Building her brand

When she established Prunella Soap, Anderson made two, four-pound logs at a time. She's since more than quadrupled her production, selling her wares online and at Betsy and Iya and Tender Loving Empire, two Portland-based boutiques.

She keeps an ample supply of her soaps available for customer orders, and she's expanded her audience by selling one-time-use Adventure sticks to outdoor enthusiasts, sample packs as wedding favors and even soap for dogs.

A day doesn't go by when she doesn't think of her business and its future, Anderson says. She knows she has a lot to prove, but she knows she's on the right track.

"You could work 24 hours a day and still do more," she says. "But every time customers rave about my soaps on Etsy, it just confirms that I need to keep doing what I'm doing."

— Erin Snelgrove



4



Social Entrepreneurs, Beyond a Doubt

When he was a student athlete, Josh Erickson feared studying abroad would interfere with his training schedule. So he never went.



But after earning his MBA from Willamette University in 2010, Erickson and Grant Leslie '09, MBA'10 created a program designed to appeal to students and coaches alike — one that

features athletic training, community service and academic courses.

They named it Beyond Study Abroad.

Designed specifically for student athletes, Beyond Study Abroad is a cultural immersion program based in Costa Rica. Participants take academic courses offered through two local universities. They continue a rigorous workout routine with qualified trainers, and they stay with host families. They also volunteer in the community by coaching youth sports.

In 2010, Beyond worked with a few universities in the Northwest, offering six-week summer programs. Last summer, it expanded to 20 top-tier liberal arts colleges nationwide and began

offering year-round programming.

"We're very relationship driven, and we give our students the freedom to have their own experience," Erickson says.

Daring to dream

After graduating from Willamette in 2007 with a bachelor's degree in sociology, Erickson traveled to Costa Rica. Inspired by months of coaching basketball and teaching English, he knew he had found his calling.

But before he started his business, he enrolled at the Atkinson Graduate School of Management and auditioned his idea in the New Ventures course.

"We worked with students from other countries and we learned a lot about international communication," Erickson says. "It provided a great foundation."

Leslie, Erickson's longtime friend and basketball teammate, became Erickson's business partner. He says the guidance from Atkinson's professors was incredible.

"The professors are still engaged with us after graduation, providing an invaluable support network for entrepreneurs," he says.

Creating a brand

While Erickson stays in Costa Rica, Leslie spends much of the year directing marketing and recruiting efforts from New York City. He works predominantly with coaches and athletic

directors, doing his part to excite them by what the program offers.

Spreading word of their product is a constant challenge, Leslie says, but Beyond's sports camps are an alluring component. To date, more than 1,200 Costa Rican children have attended a camp, and just last summer, student athletes and staff spent more than 1,100 hours coaching kids.

For Leslie and Erickson, giving back to the community is how they stay true to Willamette's motto, "Not unto ourselves alone are we born."

"Seeing college athletes connect with kids is what this program is all about," Erickson says. "Those camps are what they take with them and what they remember."

Thrilled by what the future holds, Leslie and Erickson are moving into new offices in Costa Rica. They're constructing a larger gymnasium — which they will make available for community use — and they plan to expand their program into an English-speaking country next summer.

"It's important to have a positive attitude, to see it as a passion in your life rather than just a job," Leslie says about starting a business. "Combat the fear. Just go for it."

— Erin Snelgrove



Top: Josh Erickson '07, MBA'10 shares a laugh with a group of young "Ticas," waiting for their turn in a soccer tournament. Below: Grant Leslie '09, MBA'10 draws up plays in the huddle, giving Costa Rican high school students their first taste of American football.



Leveraging Legal Technology



Peter Ozolin's JD/MBA'97 tech start-up, Manzama, was recently featured in Entrepreneur magazine along with other growing enterprises in Bend, Ore.

If you're a lawyer juggling multiple cases, keeping up with what's happening on social media networks can be daunting.

All those posts and tweets: What's trending in the legal world? What do your clients need to know? What is the competition saying about you?

Enter Peter Ozolin, JD/MBA'97. A tech entrepreneur, Ozolin's specialty is mining data for the legal world. His Bend-based company, Manzama, licenses software to legal professionals who want to keep up with legal trends and competitors on platforms such as LinkedIn and Twitter.

Clients who want to know what issues are trending in, say, mergers and acquisitions can use the software to capture and analyze that data.

"It's information democracy," Ozolin said. "The future of business intelligence is people deciding what's important. I love bringing structure to the unstructured world of the Internet."

Manzama was partially funded by an investment from the Willamette MBA Angel

Fund, connecting the company back to Ozolin's Atkinson roots.

Entrepreneur at Heart

Ozolin was drawn to entrepreneurship early on — by age 16 he'd started his own lawnmower and valet parking services. "I'm not very good at wasting time," he said. "If there's a better way to do something, I want to pursue that." With a thirst for knowledge and fascination with law's analytical framework, Ozolin decided to earn law and business degrees to run his own business. He started his first one, Legal Anywhere, while still in school. The company built extranets for legal professionals before internal websites were common.

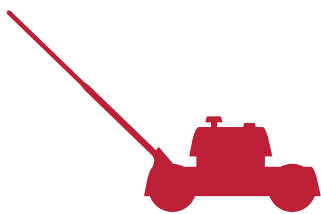
Niku Corp., a Nasdaq-traded company, acquired Legal Anywhere three years after its founding for \$27 million. Ozolin served as the company's vice president and general manager for the legal profession, then moved to a law firm, where he served as chief knowledge and technology officer. He started Manzama in 2010.

"Peter is a driven individual," said Bob Wiggins, managing partner of Mt. Hood Equity Partners and an early investor in Legal Anywhere. "He is very much programmed to succeed and to do what was necessary to achieve. He doesn't give up."

Ozolin said his law degree has helped him converse in the language of the legal world. Although he's enamored by technology — in law school, he'd read PC and Computer World magazines on the treadmill — he can't write code. But his deep understanding of technology, the law and the business world has enabled him to occupy a niche that few other companies do.

Ozolin's advice for would-be tech entrepreneurs is don't build technology in search of a problem; identify the problem first and then build a system to solve it. So, rather than build a complete version of Manzama and attempt to sell it to legal professionals, he built a skeleton and then asked law firms what they needed.

— Lisa Lednicer



Willamette MBA Encourages Innovation



Above: Students solve a problem using simple objects during a timed exercise in Design Thinking. Below: MBA for Professionals students discuss their IMAP projects.



Each career area of interest in the Willamette **Full-Time MBA** (Early Career/Career Change) program includes experiential electives where students put the knowledge they learn into action.

A sample of recent projects include:

🔗 **Entrepreneurship**

Development and launch of new ventures and investments in start ups in one of the “top 10 entrepreneurship courses in the U.S.” by Inc. magazine.

🔗 **Finance**

Management of a real portfolio of stocks and exchange traded funds valued at more than half a million dollars.

🔗 **Human Resources**

Work with partners like Boeing, Mercy Corps and the State of Oregon to solve challenges related to staffing, compensation and succession planning.

🔗 **Marketing**

Discover potential improvements in the world and find innovative solutions through product development and marketing communications.

🔗 **Operations, Analysis and Systems**

Use of SAP software to develop solutions to real management issues.

🔗 **Public and Not-for-Profit Management**

Consultation with government and not-for-profit organizations to apply management knowledge for improved efficiency.

In the **MBA for Professionals** program, students bring real-world issues from their workplaces into the classroom. This immediate application makes the program timely and relevant for professionals. At the end of the program, the IMAP capstone integrates what students learn into actionable projects.

Recent project concepts:

🔗 **Creation of a new venture business plan:**

Understanding that engaged parents are critical to the success of elementary school children, Kickball enables instant collaboration in a secure, interactive environment by dynamically sharing information in real-time, between parents and teachers.

🔗 **A newly created not-for-profit organization**, the Portland Kitchen, is the only after-

school program in the Portland metropolitan area applying the kitchen and garden as an instrument to teach high-school students job skills and influence long-term eating habits.

🔗 **Creation of an expanded business plan from an existing student-owned enterprise**

to grow the business of delivering mobile auto repair services to busy professionals and commercial fleets.

🔗 **Created an integrated strategy**

, marketing and financial plan for an existing medical non-profit with the goals of increasing membership, expanding program offerings and building a sustainable financial funding model. (Read more about the IMAP on page 18)



Innovation Through Integration

What's the big finale after two years of balancing work, family and earning an MBA?

Top: Students in the Portland MBA for Professionals class put the finishing touches on their IMAP projects. Below: An IMAP dress rehearsal session.

Opposite: Contributing faculty member Tony Cadena addressing the groups during the last class.

IN THE MBA FOR PROFESSIONALS (MBA-P) program, it's the Integrated Management Project, or IMAP. As the capstone course for Willamette's evening program, the IMAP is a rite of passage for students prior to earning their coveted degree.

The IMAP is designed to serve two objectives. First, students are asked to apply knowledge from their previous 11 courses to a management challenge. This can come in the form of a consulting proposal for an existing organization, a viability study for the expansion of a business or a plan for a new venture.

Second, students have the opportunity to focus their interests on a particular industry or functional area. Though the project is truly "integrated," students with a strong interest in finance can evaluate a need — a revised accounts receivable process, for example —

and determine how other management topics influence decision making.

The IMAP includes a written report and a final presentation to a panel of judges comprised of industry practitioners in Portland and Salem. The judges' job is to evaluate the presentations on how well they identify the business issue, the feasibility of the recommendations and the detail of the financial information.

Students are also graded on their mastery of key topics in the MBA for Professionals program, including management controls, accounting, organizational behavior, strategy, human resource management, marketing, information technology and community impact.

Balancing all of these concepts is the most challenging — but also the most important part of the IMAP experience.



Delivering Value

One week before their final class, students arrived energized and excited. They had the opportunity to practice their presentations one last time prior to facing a panel of judges. One by one, the papers were submitted and assembled. Teams huddled around laptops making slight alterations to their PowerPoint slides.

Tony Cadena, contributing associate professor who leads the IMAP projects for both the Salem and Portland cohorts, shares in the students' enthusiasm.

"They have met important milestones in their projects throughout the semester — and now is the time when it all comes together," he says.

Project topics vary greatly among groups — some teams choose to focus on impacting nonprofit organizations, while others look to increase profitability for local organizations.

Since the MBA-P program is comprised of working professionals, many students opt to

use their own organizations as the focus for their IMAP.

One group created a plan to help New Seasons Market, a Portland-area grocery chain, evaluate a successful entry into at-home delivery. The proposal, complete with maps and financial information, will be delivered to senior managers for possible implementation.

Another team, led by an adidas employee, evaluated a new product line marketed to

evaluated an online bill-pay system that could cut the city's costs by more than 80 percent.

Two students took on a project for the State of Oregon to streamline processing for individuals and families under the terms of the new Affordable Care Act. Savings from their proposed changes could be in the \$20-million range.

Overall, the presentations demonstrated just how much diversity exists in the MBA

for Professionals program. Most cohorts consist of around 20 students, all representing different organizations and from varying professional backgrounds.

One thing they all share — especially after completing the IMAP — is the accomplishment of finishing a Willamette MBA. **1**

— *Russell Yost*

"... students have the opportunity to focus their interests on a particular industry or functional area."

teenagers. The plan includes a full market analysis and financial report on the cost of operations.

A number of groups in Salem chose to focus on the public sector, specifically on cost-saving strategies for local government agencies. A team of students, led by a finance manager for the City of Salem,



MBA for Professionals Snapshot

Graduates since the inaugural cohort in 2006:



250+

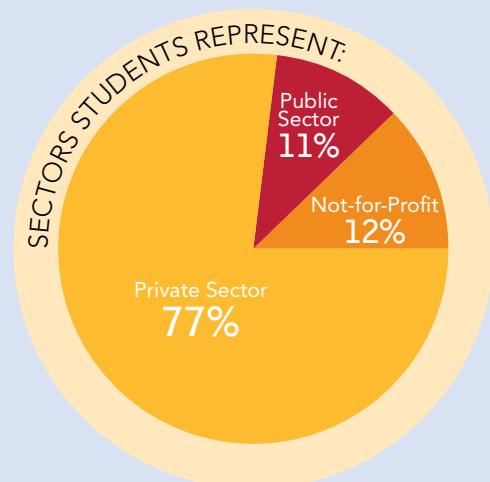
Number of organizations represented by students:



221

New Portland Cohorts: 2 per year (Sept. and Jan.)

New Salem Cohorts: 1 per year (Sept.)



DOING WELL & DOING GOOD

Peace Corps Coverdell Fellows shine in the Willamette MBA program

The Atkinson Graduate School signed an agreement with the Peace Corps to welcome a number of fellows into the program each year. The first group of these “Coverdell Fellows” arrived for the 2011–12 school year.

The driving force behind most of their decisions to select the Willamette MBA was the program’s tri-sector emphasis that includes not-for-profit management and public administration. This commitment to the greater good matches well with the fellows’ past experiences and drive to serve.

After several months in the program, they reflect on past experiences and prepare for the next chapter in their lives.



LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

Anne Fraiser, a fellow and first-year MBA student, served in El Salvador from 2004–07. She provided rural health and sanitation education in a small village.

When Fraiser returned from the Peace Corps, she continued

her health-care focus by working in a local clinic doing outreach, and later becoming a Peace Corps recruiter.

It was in this role that Fraiser considered pursuing an MBA. “I started to understand how an agency operates,” Fraiser recalls. “By doing HR and marketing work, I became interested in an MBA. Willamette’s program attracted my attention because of the dual accreditation — offering not only an MBA but also [the benefits of] an MPA [Master of Public Administration].”

Fraiser thinks her future may lead to a career in public service or working for a nonprofit.

“I love working with people and helping others — service is

of interest to me,” she explains. “The MBA builds on the hands-on experience the Peace Corps provides. The combination will hopefully help me to be a better manager.”

Fraiser thinks the Peace Corps provided her with a variety of soft skills and that her MBA will fill in the hard skills she needs to be a good manager.

COMING INTO FOCUS

It was early in Casey Morgan’s Peace Corps service that he started to consider a masters degree. Serving in Nicaragua’s Villa el Carmen, Morgan taught entrepreneurship courses to high school students.

“If it wasn’t for the Peace Corps, I probably wouldn’t have gone back to school,” Morgan admits.

Morgan looked into many types of master’s degrees but decided the MBA was the most versatile for his interests.

“I talked to people who worked at the embassy in Nicaragua and discovered the MBA itself is like a brand — if you tell people you have an MBA, they know what to



expect. It gives you the hard skills that allow you to move around the workforce,” he says.

Morgan believes the Peace Corps and MBA have helped him focus. “I had no idea what I wanted to do after the Peace Corps when I went in. Now my goals are very driven.”

Post-MBA, Morgan hopes to work raising the living standards in places that don’t have the resources to do it themselves.



A PLEASANT SURPRISE

Katie Skaar admits that everyone she knows was surprised by her decision to get an MBA.

Skaar served in The Republic of Panama from 2004–06 as a conservation education volunteer. It wasn’t until after working with cocoa farmers through the Peace Corps that she considered pursuing an MBA.

“In the Peace Corps, I was trying to get farmers higher production,” Skaar said. “In my professional experience, I wanted to get them actual income and to approach farming as a business.”

Skaar would like to work as an advocate along global supply chains.

“I call it a responsible sourcer,” working with corporations to bridge the gap among farmers, corporations and NGOs, she says. “I believe that marrying my MBA with my previous experience will help me to apply a greater sense of business acumen and practices — to create efficiencies and connections between the small-holder farmer and the Starbucks of the world.”



MAKING THE CONNECTION

“Living in another culture and seeing the world through different eyes changes you,” Collin Thibodeaux explains.

He served in the Peace Corps from 2008–10, teaching English as a foreign language in the former Soviet satellite of Turkmenistan. His landlord was a smart, self-made businessman, who encouraged Thibodeaux to look into business.

“My time spent traveling abroad got me interested in the flow of capital, imports, exports and how business works internationally,” Thibodeaux adds.

While Thibodeaux doesn’t see himself working in a corporate job, he is focusing his efforts on smaller enterprises.

“I would like to work for a small business and learn the ropes,” he says. “I still have a lot of things I am interested in and am not ruling out entrepreneurship, marketing or imports and exports.”

Thibodeaux believes his Peace Corps service helped him enter the MBA program with real-life experience.

“The Peace Corps helped me to grow up a lot, and the MBA is going to help me build skills and connections that are necessary to be successful as a human and business leader,” he says.

Considering the two experiences, Thibodeaux thinks his eyes have been opened to new perspectives, and that the combination has taught him how to focus on the things he wants in life.

The fellows leverage their combined MBA and the Peace Corps experiences to build great networks. They have enjoyed being able to talk about Peace Corps in light of what they are doing now. Skaar adds that the “Peace Corps is like speaking another language.” Fortunately, the fellows have each other to reminisce and share experiences as they embark on their next adventure. ❶

— Bré Greenman



Around the world and back again. From left to right, Casey Morgan, Anne Fraiser, Collin Thibodeaux and Katie Skaar are making the transition from Peace Corps service to their professional careers via the Willamette MBA.

Meet Madhu Rao, Senior Associate Dean

When Madhu Rao began his career in research and teaching, he never envisioned himself serving as an administrator.



AN ENGINEER BY TRAINING, Rao has published extensively on the application of quantitative modeling to business processes — specifically related to product warranties, computer systems and manufacturing. He moved up the ranks in academia, including a year as a senior fellow at the National University of Singapore. He even spent a short while as a member of the technical staff for AT&T Bell Laboratories.

“I want to place a greater emphasis on our career preparation and continually ask what else can be done to be proactive for students.”

However, Rao’s passion is in serving students. “I miss contact with students in the classroom environment,” Rao says. “I was searching for an opportunity where I could serve as an administrator but still be

able to continue my research and teaching.”

Though Rao may have found his role as an administrator by accident, he’s certainly proved himself. At Bowling Green State University in Ohio, where Rao spent most of his career, he served as a department chair, associate dean, senior associate dean and, eventually, interim dean.

As he led BGSU through the dean search, he stumbled across

a job posting for the senior associate dean at the Atkinson School. The position, a newly reconfigured role created by Dean Debra Ringold, manages the day-to-day operations of the school, develops curriculum

plans and oversees the accreditation process.

“I was familiar with Willamette, and both of my children attended liberal arts colleges,” Rao explains. “I was also impressed by the Atkinson School’s focus on the application of management principles across sectors — it wasn’t just about business.”

After interviewing for and accepting the job, Rao and his wife Kamala made the move from rural Ohio to Salem, Ore.

“We have never lived on the West Coast and have found there is so much to explore. The close proximity to both the ocean and the mountains means more outdoor activities, hiking and observing nature,” he says.

In his first six months as senior associate dean, Rao hopes to immerse himself in the Atkinson School’s unique culture. As he works with the

faculty to continually develop and refine the curriculum, he plans to incorporate more of the socially conscious, sustainable mindset for which Willamette, and Oregon in general, is known.

“Preparing students for the business, government and not-for-profit sectors is a pervasive philosophy here,” he explains. “I want to place a greater emphasis on our career preparation and continually ask what else can be done to be proactive for students.”

“I also look forward to appreciating the Oregon rain.” **1**
— *Russell Yost*

New Faculty

The following faculty members are new to the Atkinson Graduate School of Management in Fall 2012:



Gary Knight

Helen Simpson Jackson Professor of
Global Management
PhD, Michigan State University
MBA, University of Washington
BA, Washington State University

Professor Knight joins the Atkinson School from Florida State University and is an accomplished scholar in international business strategy, strategy in “bottom of the

pyramid” countries and emerging markets and strategy of the “born global” firm. His papers have been published in the *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of Global Marketing* and *Journal of World Business*, among others. He is also the author of several textbooks on international business.

Professor Knight has taught at the undergraduate and graduate levels at universities around the world, including visiting scholarships and professorships in Australia, Japan, Turkey, Denmark and France. He speaks Japanese, French and Spanish.



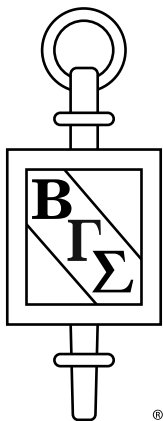
Robert Walker

Associate Professor of Quantitative Methods
PhD, University of Rochester
MA, University of Rochester
BA, University of Texas at Austin

Professor Walker joins the Atkinson School following a visiting professorship at Rice University and serving as an assistant professor in the department of political science at Washington University in St. Louis. He has

published numerous articles on public finance and budgeting and teaches courses in statistical methods and quantitative political methodology. His research includes political methodology using time series econometrics, Markov processes and dynamic modeling, political economy and international relations.

Professor Walker has previously held appointments in the Department of Political Science at Texas A&M University, the Department of Government at Dartmouth College and the Institute for Quantitative Social Science at Harvard University. He is a regular instructor for the Essex Summer School for Social Science Data Analysis in the United Kingdom.



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WHERE IN THE WORLD IS AIMEE AKIMOFF?



has traveled the globe telling the Willamette MBA story, met amazing new students in face-to-face settings, and racked up an enviable number of air miles.

BORN THIS WAY

Though Akimoff's family is from Oregon, she was born in Austria. Before the age of 20, she had already traveled to 25 countries and spoke two languages — Spanish and Russian — with a good degree of competence.

“Because of my many travels, I can easily acclimate to a new country and culture,” she explains. “It also helps that I'm not too choosy about my palette for local food.”

After starting at Atkinson in the dean's office, then Associate Dean Debra Ringold recognized Akimoff's desire to travel and market the Atkinson school as an admissions ambassador. Though Akimoff never

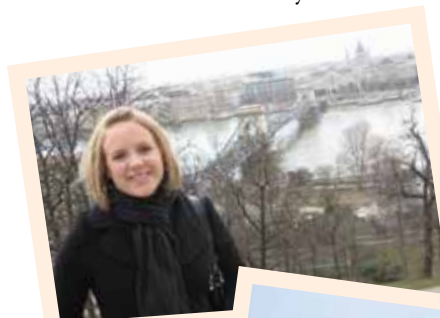
envisioned herself in the job she's in, it turned out to be a perfect fit.

INTRODUCING WILLAMETTE

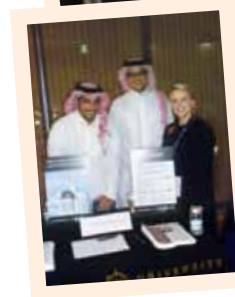
“Atkinson is a relationship-oriented place where personal connections are important,” Akimoff explains. “When I meet students in their home countries, I am essentially extending our brand image.”

The events she attends vary

from large-scale graduate school trade shows to smaller sessions similar to speed dating. The students Akimoff meets are always impressed when they learn how far she has traveled to visit them — a feeling that she says creates a certain prestige around the Willamette MBA program. “The visits instill a passion and excitement for the



Clockwise from top, posing above the Danube River in Budapest, Hungary; on the long walk towards India's Taj Mahal; with MBA alumni at a graduate fair in Saudi Arabia.





program that you just can't do via email," she says.

One of the best methods Akimoff has found to tell the Willamette story is through alumni local to each country she visits. Quite often, alumni will join her at recruitment fairs to tell their personal stories and connect with prospective students. A few have even invited Akimoff to their homes or businesses to meet their families and colleagues.

Akimoff also makes a point to visit local education service centers and embassies, both in

has once or twice found herself in challenging situations. In 2008, Akimoff was en route to India with a reservation at one of the hotels involved in the Mumbai terrorist attacks. And on a trip to Asia, she found herself traveling in the midst of a typhoon.

These events, although limited, have not deterred Akimoff's spirit of adventure, as she also travels when she's not working.

When asked about her favorite destinations, she has a difficult time choosing. "I just have a

passion for learning about different cultures," she says.

This desire to learn is something she shares with the prospective students she meets — whether in the U.S. or around the world. "When I first arrive in a new country, I feel that sense of excitement," she says. "I am able to empathize with the students who travel great distances to come to Willamette." 📍

— *Russell Yost*

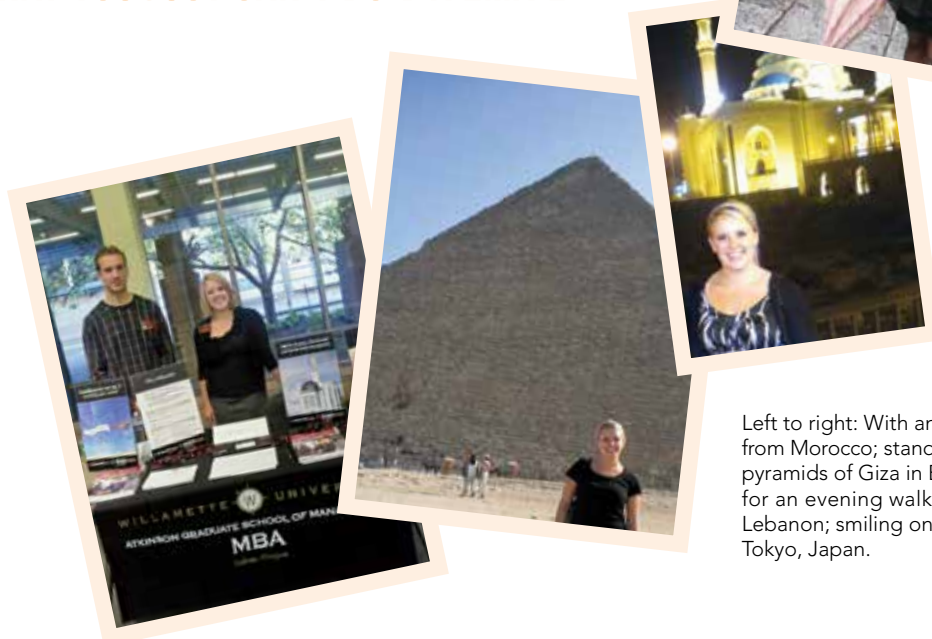


"THE VISITS INSTILL A PASSION AND EXCITEMENT FOR THE PROGRAM THAT YOU JUST CAN'T DO VIA EMAIL."

the U.S. and abroad, to tell the Willamette story. "Meeting with foreign student advisors and education ambassadors helps us form that initial relationship and show what a caring place Willamette is," she says. "I tell them that we will take good care of their students — they are in good hands."

ADVENTUROUS SPIRIT

Akimoff's travels have taken her to amazing countries on nearly every continent. Because of her willingness to partner with new MBA-related tours to reach a wide variety of destinations, she



Left to right: With an MBA alum from Morocco; standing below the pyramids of Giza in Egypt; going for an evening walk in Beirut, Lebanon; smiling on a wet day in Tokyo, Japan.

Plugging into Opportunity

Our appetite for energy remains strong. The people responsible for providing that energy — safely, reliably and cleanly — face an increasingly complex task.



Instructor John Hynes leads a session on understanding financial statements during the Utility Management program.

LIKE ALL BUSINESSES, the utility sector is responding to significant questions. How will renewable resources fit into supply and demand? What's the future of fuel prices, and how will we cope? How can we distinguish the useful advances in technology from the useless?

"Energy is the most capital-intensive industry in the world. There are successes and there are failures. Neither happens by accident."

Pre-empting change

Seven years ago, Atkinson professor Steven Maser reached out to the utility sector to discover what their leadership would need to address these issues. The

Utility Management Certificate (UMC) emerged out of that collaboration.

"The UMC remains in constant growth," explains Mike Pittman, the current program director. "Especially with the onslaught of emerging technologies — the smart grid is just the start — we're always working to align the deliverables of our program with the needs of the industry."

A veteran of the utility sector, Pittman is intimately familiar with the industry's challenges. As a member of the executive team for PacifiCorp and ScottishPower, he participated in all major strategic discussions. Between his industry experience and tenure as program director, Pittman has a strong sense of

the practical value participants and their organizations need.

"The industry is facing a huge number of retirements," Pittman says. "We're helping them prepare their emerging leaders for a rapidly changing environment."

Forecasting the future

The UMC was designed for busy utilities supervisors, managers, analysts and directors who need focused education to advance their careers. For two non-consecutive weeks in the fall, participants convene in Willamette University's Portland, Ore. center to explore and integrate the fundamentals of effective utility management.

Participants cover core topics such as accounting, finance and



Meet Melinda Rogers

Each year representatives from a variety of organizations converge on the Willamette University Portland Center for the Utility Management Program.

regulation in the first week, then return one month later to go over a dynamic combination of strategy, human resources, trends in technology and leadership skills.

A scenario-planning project caps the certificate experience. Based on a series of assumptions about the energy industry 10 years in the future — such as fuel prices, technology, regulations, etc. — teams are asked to provide recommendations to the CEO about how to prepare.

“The students get a lot out of that final presentation,” Pittman says. “They apply what they’ve learned over the course. They collaborate with peers from other parts of the sector — people in roles they might not otherwise interact with. They excel at juggling the implications of power

prices, world markets, varying demand and the sustainability imperative.”

“It’s easy for participants to get isolated in their roles,” Pittman explains. “An accounting manager may think about nothing but accounting all day long.”

Overall, the UMC prepares participants to think more broadly about how their decisions will affect other parts of the business. Several utilities have made the UMC a required stepping stone for the advancement of their managers.

“Energy is the most capital-intensive industry in the world,” Pittman says. “There are successes and there are failures. Neither happens by accident.” **1**
— *Mike Russell*

Recently, Directions caught up with the new director of the Executive Development Center (EDC), Melinda Rogers. With her extensive experience in cultural change leadership, executive coaching and organizational development, Rogers was a natural choice for the job.

Directions: What drew you to the directorship?

Melinda Rogers: Willamette’s mission, reputation and tri-sector emphasis deeply resonated with my passion for helping people develop and realize their full potential. I knew that I could make a meaningful contribution, but I also felt that I would gain a lot from being surrounded by such bright people and good ideas.

Directions: How is the EDC adapting to these changing times?

MR: Since joining the team, I’ve been amazed by all the opportunities.

We’re exploring the potential for collaborating with institutes that aren’t traditional partners of MBA programs. Nothing is firm, but I’m very excited.

We also offer career coaching to our MBAs. An MBA is inherently a great asset in a career, but it doesn’t guarantee promotion. We coach graduates to optimize their accomplishment and complement their learning with the practical elements that will multiply their success.

Directions: What makes you optimistic in your work?

MR: Working with great people to advance great ideas. We’re in the beginning phases of exploration and experimentation. I see a fruitful time ahead for our participants, our faculty, and everyone who contributes.

View Rogers’ online profile: willamette.edu/mba/staff/rogers/



Opening Markets in Romania with Simona Bucur

For most MBAs, the challenge of “culture fit” is limited to aligning one’s working style and goals with those of co-workers and the employer. For Simona Bucur MBA’08, who returned to her home in Romania after graduation, her new boss represented the least of her cultural challenges.

I knew that I could change locations without impacting my career, in case things didn’t work as planned.”

Crafting Answers from Ambiguity

Four years and several promotions later, Bucur is the external affairs manager at Janssen, a J&J subsidiary. She works to bring products to Romania

will, patience, energy and quick thinking,” she said.

Because all pharmaceutical companies face the same challenges, Bucur has joined the industry’s local association that partners with government authorities.

“We try to walk in the shoes of the authorities and find countrywide solutions that ensure a sustainable business

“The general feeling is that things are improving, that we are becoming more mature. We’re starting to ask questions ...”

effectively, while protecting the rest of the portfolio in a market “restrictively regulated by the state. Working in the Romanian market requires a lot of strong

environment,” Bucur says. “Sometimes it’s as simple as comparing the health systems of a few countries. In other cases, we get into large databases

ALTHOUGH ROMANIA had just joined the European Union in 2007, Bucur worried the former communist regime’s residual influence would frustrate the growing business culture, and, potentially, her ambitions as a recent Willamette University graduate. “It will be tough to go back to the inefficiency that I left behind,” Bucur said in 2008. “But I’m not afraid. [At the Atkinson Graduate School of Management], I’ve learned to be an individual and to have confidence in my actions. I’m pretty sure that Romania needs young people like me.”

At the time, Johnson & Johnson recruited Bucur to work as a junior new business development manager in Romania’s emerging market. For Bucur, J&J represented a two-fold opportunity. “I was giving my country a second chance and applying my MBA to stimulating work,” she said. “One of the biggest challenges in my return was to adjust to the unpredictable and rapidly changing business environment. In the MBA, you learn how to get things done efficiently, but what if you’re working against entrenched mentalities? I chose J&J because

of information and forecasts.”

Bucur draws “a bit of everything” from her MBA.

“Finance, marketing, statistics, data mining, market research and HR—fortunately, I’d already had a preview of these challenges in professor Michael Dothan’s investment classes. There, we learned how to demonstrate the true value and benefits of a company.”

Applying and Adapting her MBA

Bucur is pleased to see more of her contemporaries returning home to pursue their careers; a few years ago, young professionals chose to emigrate rather than confront Romania’s challenges.

“There are a number returning, though not as many as I would like to see,” Bucur says. “The general feeling is that things are improving, that we are becoming more mature.

We’re starting to ask questions such as ‘What have I done for this country?’ instead of ‘What has this country done for me?’”

Bucur remembers her MBA experience warmly. “I am grateful for my classmates and my professors; they motivated, inspired and mentored me, professionally and personally,” she said. “Earning an MBA at Willamette was the wisest decision of my professional life. I wouldn’t hesitate to do it all over again. The cultural and educational experience was a complete service to prepare me for a tough corporate job and world.”

In addition to hands-on experience and more opportunity, Bucur is glad to have earned her MBA in the United States. “That was the best option for having a true immersion in American culture and values,” she said.



Manifesting Opportunity

For others interested in earning their MBAs in the U.S., Bucur advises to “go for the entire experience, not just the diploma. You learn just as much from the experience and relationships as you do from the classroom. I wanted a personalized relationship with my professors and a high-quality education. I chose my school well.”

As for her own future, Bucur remains optimistic: “I want to stay with J&J and broaden my professional experiences, most likely in Romania for now. I realize that I like it here after all,” she said. 🎯

— Mike Russell

The Bucharest Financial Plaza, built in the late 1990s, sits across the street from the historic CEC palace, circa 1900. The juxtaposition of old and new is an architectural reminder of Romania’s transition to a modern economy.



On the first day of Compass Week 2008, Bucur begins her networking with alumna Jennifer Dale MBA’06.

Investing in Innovation

George Hoyt '58 is a tremendous fan of the Atkinson School. A life member of the Willamette University Board of Trustees and former chair of the Atkinson Committee, Hoyt is a driving force behind the growth of the school and the expansion of its programs.

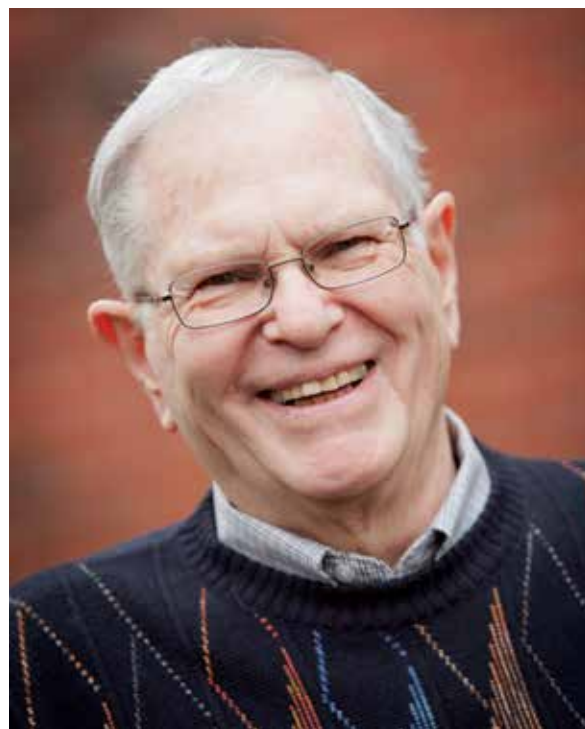
"I'M PROUD OF THE WORK done to increase the visibility of the Atkinson School over the past few years," Hoyt notes.

His passion for Atkinson has led to his service on several task forces, including the development and updating of the school's strategic plan. During his tenure, Hoyt, in collaboration with alumni, faculty and staff members, has refined the school's mission statement, drafted a facilities plan and

provided needed funding to career management programs.

One of Hoyt's goals is to keep alumni engaged with the school through specialized programming. In conjunction with the Executive Development Center, Hoyt provided funding for a series of virtual sessions on hot-button management issues.

In 2011–12, the "Atkinson Alumni Conversations" series presented a number of topics, including "Dealing Practically



"The work we are doing now is important in shaping the future direction of the Atkinson School."

George Hoyt leads a discussion during an Atkinson Strategy Working Group meeting.



with Uncertainty," "Guerilla Finance for Business" and "Building Sustainable Enterprises and Communities." All sessions featured Willamette MBA full-time and contributing faculty members leading discussions in person and online.

Hoyt's latest partnership is the Willamette MBA Alumni Book Club, launching in fall 2012. The goal of the club is to create a continuing education

opportunity for all alumni around the world to explore current themes in management.

The club meets by telephone and includes a one-hour question-and-answer session with the author of the latest book.

"Offering special benefits post-graduation creates a bridge between the school and alumni, providing something meaningful and educational," he says. 📖

— *Russell Yost*

Read more about the Atkinson School's mission and strategy: willamette.edu/mba/mission


Interested in reviewing past alumni conversations? Visit the online library of past sessions for audio recordings and slides: willamette.edu/agsm/executive/alumni_conversations/library.html

OPENMIC

You can turn on the television in any country around the world and find a competition seeking the next great vocal talent. The Early Career and Career Change MBA program's infamous "Thursday Night Out" events are often held at Salem's local karaoke hot spots. What songs would we recommend for our rock-star faculty? Here are a few suggestions:


Mike Hand, Professor of Applied Statistics and Information Systems

"The Times They Are A-Changin'" by Bob Dylan

 Our resident "rocket scientist" is an icon at Atkinson and has seen the school grow and change. It's only fitting that professor Hand have an anthem that represents his cross-generational appeal.


Polly Rizova, Associate Professor of Management

"People" by Barbra Streisand

 Professor Rizova's research on social networks discusses the connections between people in an organization and spheres of influence. Essentially, people need people.


Debra J. Ringold, Dean and JELD-WEN Professor of Free Enterprise

"Keep the Customer Satisfied" by Simon and Garfunkel

 A well-respected marketer and researcher, Dean Ringold believes in always delighting the customer. Critics disagree on what this song is really about — so we'll just assume it has a positive marketing message.


Larry Ettner, Professor of Management Practice

"Go Your Own Way" by Fleetwood Mac

 Professor Ettner manages the PACE program and encourages his students to go their own way and think outside the box for their clients. He also loves to play music at the start of his classes.

Nicole Thibodeau, Assistant Professor of Accounting

"I Love Rock and Roll" by Joan Jett and the Blackhearts

 Professor Thibodeau is an accounting whiz as well as an avid motorcycle rider. This fun sing-a-long song represents her rock'n'roll edge and smooth approachability.



Share your recommendations on our Facebook page at facebook.com/WillametteMBA.



ASHLEY NIXON

Assistant Professor of Human Resources
and Organizational Behavior

"Hidden Value: How Great Companies
Achieve Extraordinary Results with
Ordinary People" by Charles A. O'Reilly III
and Jeffrey Pfeffer

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Faculty's Recommended Reading

PAUL DWYER

Assistant Professor of Marketing

"Data Driven Marketing: The 15 Metrics
Everyone in Marketing Should Know"
by Mark Jeffery

STEVEN MASER

Professor of Public Management
and Public Policy

"Negotiation Genius: How to Overcome
Obstacles and Achieve Brilliant Results
at the Bargaining Table and Beyond" by
Deepak Malhotra and Max Bazerman

POLLY RIZOVA

Associate Professor of Management
"Made to Stick" by Chip Heath and
Dan Heath

HENRY BI

Associate Professor of Operations
Management and Information Systems
"Public Information Technology
and E-Governance: Managing the
Virtual State" by G. David Garson