PITCH PERFECT
GARRY VAN SOEST
RAISES THE CAPITAL

ACE IT
$1 MILLION GIFT
EMPOWERS ENTREPRENEURS

People
POWER

Tech HR star
CHRISTINA SEARGEANT
Message from the Dean
The spirit of entrepreneurship

CONVOCATION IS ALWAYS an exciting time in our calendar. Years of work, late nights studying, and new understanding of career and self, all culminate in a day of celebration for our graduates, their families, friends and faculty.

Any convocation that includes a new program's first graduates, however, is cause for an added degree of hat-tossing, and this spring's convocation is just such a day. The 20 graduates of our first custom MBA program—the award-winning MBA for TELUS—walk across the stage. Sincere congratulations go to those dedicated and inspiring professionals as well as to all of our graduates. I know that they will go on to do great things.

Other exciting news on the program front at Gustavson are the establishment of a fourth Master of Global Business path, through which students will study in Victoria, Scotland and Thailand, and the approval of a brand-new Master of Management degree, to launch in 2019. Aimed at non-business grad, the Master in Management is a pre-experience master's degree focusing on general management practice. It will enable students to pair their undergraduate degrees in a variety of fields with comprehensive business knowledge. We are excited to be empowering these students to enter the workforce with well-rounded, relevant skill sets.

On the topic of firsts, we recently announced Gustavson's commitment to full carbon neutrality, a step we believe makes us the first business school in the world to fully offset our carbon emissions. Over 90 per cent of Gustavson students and faculty travel internationally every year, forming a cornerstone of our ability to develop globally minded business leaders. Offsetting the resulting greenhouse gas emissions, and those emissions associated with employee commuting, is one way we are enacting our values of sustainability and responsible leadership. We look forward to sharing more on this initiative in the coming months.

You will see many of these stories in the pages of this issue of Business Class. You may also notice a subtle theme of entrepreneurship weaving throughout this issue: from articles on how to get funding for a venture, to insights into how entrepreneurship teaching has changed through the years, readers with an entrepreneurial bent will find much to interest them.

There is, however, only so much that can fit in 32 pages, and I encourage you to look online for other exciting developments in the school. Both our 2017 Year in Review, an annual retrospective of newsworthy events, and the SEEK Research Report, a snapshot of some of the ground-breaking work being generated by our faculty, may be found at uvic.ca/gustavson/about.

Best wishes,

Dr. Saul Klein
Dean, Peter B. Gustavson School of Business
dklein@uvic.ca

Dr. Alan Winter has held a lot of impressive titles over the years: CEO at Genome BC, New Media Innovation Centre, MPF Teletech Ltd., and a host of other leadership roles; Gustavson adjunct professor; and, as of February 2018, BC’s first innovation commissioner.

“It’s an honour to serve as BC’s innovation commissioner,” says Winter of the newly created position. “My role is to encourage the federal government, the private sector and international groups to invest in innovation in BC—whether that innovation is in tech or other sectors. From a personal point of view, I’ve always believed that sustainable prosperity in a country or province is driven by innovation in its widest sense across business, government and academia. If we do not invest, then the next generation will not have opportunities in this emerging economy, and we will not have the wealth as a province to afford our existing services. So I look forward to making a positive contribution to BC in my role as innovation commissioner.”
ANY BCOM COMING through Gustavson after 2004 remembers the RBC Case Competition: three intense rounds of analyzing a case, presenting to judges, and answering questions as a team.

And anyone who remembers RBC Case Competition likely remembers Tom Siemens, VP of commercial banking at RBC, who brought the RBC title sponsorship to the competition in 2004; and Rebecca Grant, associate professor and RBC Case Competition co-ordinator since 2010. These two stalwart supporters of the program stood at the podium for the last time in 2018; both Siemens and Grant retire this year. Professor Chris Graham, who was the competition’s original co-ordinator from 2004 to 2010, will take on the role once more.

“I’m looking forward to coming back to help the BCom RBC team with the 2019 competition,” says Graham. “Rebecca has grown the competition over the past eight years and leaves it in great shape. As always, the challenges will be selecting the ‘right’ cases, recruiting and briefing 75 judges, and helping to organize 250 BCom students.”

Gustavson Bids Adieu...

Tom Siemens, VP of commercial banking at RBC, retires this year after 14 years of stalwart support for the RBC Case Competition.

ORCAS, Kilts and Pad Thai, Oh My!

STUDYING IN VICTORIA. Glasgow and Bangkok, students at the Sardul S. Gill Graduate School can now choose a fourth path of the multi-country, two-year Master of Global Business program. Starting at Gustavson, students will then travel to the University of Glasgow in Scotland and on to Chulalongkorn University in Thailand. Students in this new fourth path will begin in January 2019.

MASTERING MANAGEMENT

COMING IN MAY 2019: our Master of Management degree! This brand new pre-experience master’s program aims to complement a bachelor’s degree with a one-year program teaching general business management. Fueled with a mandatory co-op work experience, the new program bridges the gap between undergrad and the world of work, and helps students fast track their career.

MBA for TELUS Trailblazers

GUSTAVSON’S FIRST CUSTOM MBA, the MBA for TELUS, has had a big year so far: in addition to presenting diplomas to its first graduating class in June, the program was recognized by the AACSB International as one of 30 Innovations that Inspire. “The biggest risk to business schools is not the rapid pace of change. It is in failing to prepare the next generation of business leaders to cope with that change,” said Thomas R. Robinson, president and CEO of AACSB. “Through its best-in-class leadership development program, the MBA for TELUS at the Gustavson School of Business is ensuring that the business leaders of tomorrow will be ready for whatever lies ahead.”

The program also won the Silver Award for Talent Development at the European Foundation for Management Development 2018 Excellence in Practice Awards.

We asked 6,342 consumers to score 299 Canadian companies and brands on a range of brand value measures. The result? Our fourth annual Gustavson Brand Trust Index, measuring the performance of brands and companies in 20 industry sectors.
Smart choices led alumni couple to careers in Silicon Valley and a return to their BC roots

by Mike McNenny

Sometimes taking a risk is the secret to finding security.

After graduating from the Gustavson BCom program in 2003 with specializations in entrepreneurship, and taking brief detours to jobs in Ontario, Erika Lange and Tim Fitzgerald put faith in their young careers and accepted positions with KPMG’s San Francisco office. They thrived for a dozen years in Silicon Valley’s intense culture of innovation, competition and financial incentives. Now they’ve come home to Victoria where they are raising their three young kids. They recently chatted with Gustavson over afternoon coffee and shared some tips on what they’ve learned and the career choices that have made them leaders in the business of protecting corporate digital footprints.

Gustavson BCom program

corporate digital footprints.

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Embrace change

Skills and experience are important. Using them to seize opportunities in unfamiliar territory like the cyber security sector? That’s big.

“You’ve got to get comfortable with being uncomfortable,” says Fitzgerald. “Every time there was a gap or an opportunity I would step in and say, ‘I think I can do this to help.’ It solidified my skill set and earned me respect from the decision makers.”

For her part, Lange quickly realized that change is a fact of life in a Fortune 300 company. “I had 10 supervisors in six years. It was about figuring out how to navigate and still show success in six years. It was about figuring out what type of person you want to be in life. For Fitzgerald, a personality test during his undergrad tagged him as an “armchair quarterback.” He raised against that label and became determined not to be that way in his career. “Once you get in the work world there’s a lot of people telling you what to be. If you don’t go in with a sense of identity, you can get lost fairly quickly.”

Find a (suitable) mentor

A mentor doesn’t need to be someone near the top of the food chain. Lange suggests finding someone who is “one step up” the ladder. “It can be very casual. It can be with someone who doesn’t recognize that they are your mentor.”

“Sometimes young employees feel like they need face time, or to demonstrate lots of volume of work, when really people are looking for you to deliver something meaningful,” adds Fitzgerald.

Good timing and a bit of luck help a lot

Fitzgerald joined US software company Symantec as a manager in 2010 and rose to VP and chief security officer, where he led a team of 150 until he opted to leave the firm in 2017. (He is now chief information security officer for the UK-based computer chip maker, Arm Holdings.) Lange joined Symantec in 2009 as senior principal security analyst, and went on to become director of information risk management. “We were on the forefront of helping to define what cyber security was,” says Fitzgerald. “It was exciting and interesting, with good career prospects, but we were taking a pretty big chance. It helped that it was an emerging field.”

“If we’ve gone in thinking we needed to be experts, we never would have started,” adds Lange. “We didn’t come in with tech backgrounds, but we were able to learn and figure it out.”

“Smart choices led alumni couple to careers in silicon Valley and a return to their BC roots”

Improve

“It’s important to find those people that you can have a real relationship with. Where it’s not just, ‘what can you do for me?’” Fitzgerald says.

Productivity rules

“Focus on where you can deliver, not just being visible,” says Lange. “If you have the right network set up and you’ve seen as a collaborator, then it doesn’t necessarily mean that you’re always there in the building.”

“Sometimes young employees feel like they need face time, or to demonstrate lots of volume of work, when really people are looking for you to deliver something meaningful”

Workplace identity can start in business school

Undergraduate years are formative. They’re a chance to put a stamp on what type of person you want to be in life. For Fitzgerald, a personality test during his undergrad tagged him as an “armchair quarterback.” He raised against that label and became determined not to be that way in his career. “Once you get in the work world there’s a lot of people telling you what to be. If you don’t go in with a sense of identity, you can get lost fairly quickly.”

Balance, balance, balance

“Taking vacations and enjoying the northern California lifestyle meant Fitzgerald and Lange got plenty of good-natured teasing from colleagues about being ‘so far away’ by taking time off. But it’s something they held onto, before parenthood and the kids (now ages four, seven and nine) came along. “I don’t think you can fully comprehend how fast-paced and insane Silicon Valley is until you’re down there,” Fitzgerald says. “It’s not just ping pong tables and weird shoes. It is intense. There’s a lot of money on the line, so people can be pretty cutthroat.”

“Smart choices led alumni couple to careers in silicon Valley and a return to their BC roots”

Online security?

“Sometimes young employees feel like they need face time, or to demonstrate lots of volume of work, when really people are looking for you to deliver something meaningful”

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Online security?
Recently caught up with Interferry, the world ferry career turning point, he
Interferry is really involved I have a passion for safety. The young entrepreneur in question was a lady that don't have the same standards as the developed named Banou. “She was born to a father who didn’t countries down there have a great deal of that’s taken seriously, usually consisting of bread or a piece of fruit. Although the ferry industry worldwide, but there are still areas where we need to get it's not forgotten, and that the IMO or the European standards among ferry operators. We've just started up a safety committee for Southeast Asia, The developing countries down there have the same standards as the developed world—Europe, North America and Australia—are the leaders in that regard, and we want to draw on that to get the rest of the world up to the same standard. That was something I really wanted to focus on.

I want to grow the breadth, scope and influence of the organization. We represent the ferry industry worldwide, but there are still areas where we need to get more members and to have a greater influence.

The ferry industry is important to the global economy, and it's something I'm passionate about. I want to use my education and experience to make a positive impact on the industry. A great deal of my time at Interferry was spent working on safety issues, which is something I'm very passionate about. I want to continue to work on improving safety standards around the world.

What appealed to you specifically about transitioning to Interferry?

I have a passion for the ferry industry and have a passion for safety. One of the big things that Interferry is really involved with is improving the safety standard around the world among ferry operators. We've just started up a safety committee for Southeast Asia, for example. We also need to make sure that the ferry industry's not forgotten, and that it's taken seriously, by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which is the regulatory body that sets shipping rules for the entire world. I mean, as big as we like to think ferries are, they only represent three percent of the entire shipping world population. When the IMO or the European Union are setting regulatory standards, we need to make sure they're taking into consideration the unique concerns of ferry operators.

What does receiving the Distinguished Alumni Award mean to you?

I certainly appreciate it, and I see it as a significant accomplishment. I've been very proud to have gotten my MBA at UVic, and proud of where I was able to take my career over the years. I've always had a great deal of respect for UVic, and the program there, and receiving this award is certainly a feather in my cap and I'm proud of it. At this point in my career I always said when I left BC Ferries that I had one more chapter left, and that chapter right now is Interferry. So it's a nice boost to push you into the next phase of your career, so to speak. It's a certain level of validation, I guess, but it's also a boost—that added level of energy you need to know that people are recognizing the good work that you're doing.

What are the short-term goals you're hoping to accomplish at Interferry?

I want to grow the breadth, scope and influence of the organization. We represent the ferry industry worldwide, but there are still areas where we need to get more members and to have a greater influence. Southeast Asia, for example. We also need to make sure that the ferry industry’s not forgotten, and that it’s taken seriously, by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which is the regulatory body that sets shipping rules for the entire world. I mean, as big as we like to think ferries are, they only represent three percent of the entire shipping world population. When the IMO or the European Union are setting regulatory standards, we need to make sure they’re taking into consideration the unique concerns of ferry operators.

Mackenzie Bailey gains unique experience working abroad with small business owners

by Natalie Bruckner-Menchelli

Mackenzie Bailey, BCom ‘15, understands that investing in people is key to building a successful business; so much so that when she was invited by a young female entrepreneur she was mentoring to drive eight hours on a packed bus, hike another three to a remote home in Dodoma, Tanzania, and subsequently slaughter a goat for dinner, she approached each task with the same amount of enthusiasm she approaches everything in her life. “Looking back, it was a crazy experience. I was declared missing for two days! But I strongly believe in immersing myself into any situation. You need to take the successes, challenges and unexpected experiences for everything they offer,” says Bailey, who specialized in entrepreneurship at Gustavson and has spent time working in microfinance, human rights advocacy and at the home-grown African social enterprise The Great African Food Company.

The young entrepreneur in question was a lady named Banou. “She was born to a father who didn’t believe girls were worth educating. When I met Banou, she and her daughter were eating one meal a day, usually consisting of bread or a piece of fruit. Although Banou was illiterate, she was hungry to make a better life for her daughter. Together we created a business plan, raised the financing and hired the construction team to build her new store.

“Despite Banou not speaking a word of English, and me speaking only basic Swahili, we ended up forming an amazing friendship. The business changed everything for Banou and her daughter—I just was honoured to be a part of that transformation.”

When reflecting on the experience, Bailey notes, “My time in Africa was an interesting chapter for me. It underscored the value that comes from taking time to actively gain a deep understanding of the needs of the particular context that you’re in, and the people you serve. Solutions come from insights, and insights only happen when you analyze the context, think creatively, and have the humility to step outside yourself. Working in Africa definitely made me more confident; it allowed me to be versatile in my skill set, and creative in my problem solving.”

With a year in Africa behind her, and a desire to do a master’s degree in marketing overseas at a Global Top 40 business school, Bailey decided to enrol in the MSc in Marketing Strategy and Innovation at Cass Business School in London, England.

“I wanted to carve out an area of expertise and deep knowledge, and Cass Business School was a perfect choice. It offers a two-year program, and is linked into the business community in London and across Europe. We are exposed to the latest academic thinking, and fantastic insight from industry experts who are brought into the program as guest speakers.”

With a set of skills from her foundation at Gustavson, a unique global set of experiences from working and living abroad, and now studying in one of the world’s leading business hubs, Bailey is looking to the next exciting challenge.

When asked what the future holds, she says, “At the end of the day I do want to launch my own business. But I also recognize the benefits of learning from others. I think that there is value in building your relevant skill set and network, as this lets you control some of the risks that come with launching a business. Risk is central to entrepreneurship, but I think successful entrepreneurship is about taking smart risks, while controlling what factors you can.”
one out of 10 start-ups fail. That’s a pretty hard pill to swallow for any entrepreneur wanting to get their foot in the door of the business world, but this figure comes as no surprise to Garry van Soest, BCom ’95, who has not only created, nurtured and harvested, in one shape or another, nine companies over the past 30 years (most recently AVS Systems Inc., which he sold for $45 million), but also seen and been part of his fair share of start-up failures.

“Success doesn’t teach you a whole lot, it’s in failure that you get a chance to reflect and iron out the errors,” says van Soest, who was a member of one of the first business graduating classes at the University of Victoria. Back in 1995, during his final semester at UVic, van Soest had already jumped onboard the start-up train and was powering full steam ahead. “Like most things in my life, I had a compressed mode of getting through business school. I started a company called Boulevard Technologies, got married and had a kid on the way,” laughs van Soest. “That first business was a success and I went on to help a number of start-ups attract funding and monetize their intellectual properties. I started with more of a consulting role and then realized it would be smart to negotiate equity in some of the projects and that developed into executive roles. Some of the projects were great, some were stinkers."

One of those “stinkers” was a tech company in the Okanagan. “My wife and I decided to move here 22 years ago. At the time there were around 30 software tech companies in the area; far from today’s figure of around 700 in what has been coined the Silicon Vineyard. I came to the area and managed to raise a bunch of start-up capital for a company . . . but that company failed. That was a pretty big failure for me. The founder of the company was a great guy and had an unwavering vision for his product that he was willing to die for and wasn’t willing to adapt a more commercial-ready attitude, he wanted all singing, all dancing, and that got to be really expensive to deliver.”

Sourcing investors and raising capital is never the issue, says van Soest. “You’ve got the initial funding in place; money isn’t tough to get. The tough part is understanding what you need and how you are going to use it. If you have $100,000 cash and a compelling concept, you can start a business. You’ll have to find more investment, but that initial money should come from trusted people who see something in you. Then when you bring others into this business environment, they’ll see other people have the trust to invest in you.”

In order to get funding, says van Soest, people need to stay away from the same old, same old. Mention PowerPoint presentations and his reaction is: “I have zero tolerance to sit through another one of those,” he laughs. Instead, van Soest learned the value of coloured markers and a bunch of whiteboards. “I recall a Toronto banker about 15 years ago who I managed to get up to the board to draw and write things out that he thought I needed to get done. He ended up saying, ‘How did you get me up here?’ I said, ‘You’re the strongest character in this room and I wanted to pay you the respect of learning from you.’ He wrote me the biggest cheque and we are still friends to this day. It’s about getting the smart people to show you what they know.”

This is where having a mentor comes in. Someone who is able to expose your weaknesses, without having any financial interest in your business. But van Soest warns that you need to be willing to expose those weaknesses. “Ego is important for self-preservation; but it can also be your worst enemy, and you need to know when to hang it on the door.”

Once funding has been secured, the next step is growing a business, and van Soest says those that do well are the ones who have figured out how to leverage organic growth. The ones who fail, or who fail to attract investors in the first place, are those without a solid marketing plan. “The old adage is true that the marketing plan is always the Achilles heel in the tech community. The part of business requires a lot of social understanding, and a lot of tech people are not socially gregarious. It’s tough to find an entrepreneur that has all that stuff put together.”

So you’ve secured funding, grown your business, been transparent with your investors and reported back in a timely manner, avoided conflicts by being up front and having the paperwork in place from day one . . . what’s the next step? It’s time to consider selling!

“Never fall too hard in love with your business. It’s a vehicle; it needs to be serviced, you will get tired of driving it. It’s great to believe in your business, but everything is for sale. And never sell your own business. Only a fool tries to sell his/her own business. If I’m going to buy a business and a business owner is going to sell it to me, I will get a deal. People who sell and buy businesses, it’s their business; and they are good at it, like you are good at what you do.”

In the end, van Soest says to be successful requires an understanding of how much time you have in a day, as small-business entrepreneurs are competing with everyone else to begin with. This self-awareness is also essential to understanding when you may be on the wrong path. “If your marketing strategies aren’t coming to fruition, and you’ve changed and changed them again, and taken advice and it’s still not working, it may be time to rethink. I always give Q-tips as an example. When they started up they probably never had the electronics industry in their marketing plan, and yet today one of the three is still used in electronics factories. Your customers are a business too, so ask them what they think.”
Students experience what it takes to be investors in the real world

When it comes to preparing students for the workplace, nothing gives a bigger leg up than hands-on experience. When your chosen career involves managing large sums of money, however, that applied experience can be tricky to come by. Imagine, then, being given $650,000 of real money to invest. That’s how it feels for the students accepted into the Applied Portfolio Management Program.

“In this competitive industry, having hands-on management experience and access to mentors can be the difference between getting hired and not,” says Jordie Hutchinson, director of the new Applied Portfolio Management Program.

“The idea is to connect industry professionals with motivated students and help them navigate a career path in the finance and investment management industry, and obtain a CFA designation.”

Consisting of two courses, the Applied Portfolio Management Program is designed to set students and the fund up for success by first offering a non-credit foundational course, Applied Investment Management. Students who complete this course are then invited to apply for the highly selective Applied Portfolio Management course. Once accepted, students are tasked with managing a real investment portfolio and their activities are overseen by an investment advisory committee comprised of industry professionals and UVic faculty members.

“The first step was to get the investment management course up and running—which the president of the CFA Society and myself did in 2016—in order to put students in a position to become portfolio managers in the second half of the program,” says Hutchinson.

The applied portfolio management course is done through four quarterly meetings with the investment advisory committee. “Other than that, it’s all on the students to communicate and Skype once or twice a week throughout the year,” says Hutchinson. “It’s a heavy commitment for the students—they take it on in addition to their standard course load. It’s not for everyone by any means, but for the ones who are doing it, the reward of knowledge and opportunity that can be translated to work co-op positions or full-time opportunities in the industry is worthwhile.”

The program is a natural fit for Gustavson’s collaborative and integrative learning style, since students come from both economics and business departments, and mentors and instructors are members of the community with a wealth of real-world experience.

Hilary Echtner, MBA ’08 and a program mentor, was excited to participate. “I am an alumna of the MBA program at UVic, and my career and educational background has all been in finance,” she says. “I was in the capital markets for 16 years, and I’m currently with Suncor Energy in Calgary managing our joint venture audit group, which is a more commercial role.” Echtner says in the early days of her career she received some great mentorship and wants to pay that forward. “I would like to give some outside experience because it’s pretty hard to go it alone in this industry, especially when you’re just starting out.” She adds, “For my own career, a program like this would have been very important when I was an undergrad student.”

Echtner says the current Applied Portfolio Management group, which includes one of her mentees, did an outstanding job preparing their first quarterly package. “The quality, professionalism, sophistication in writing and analysis was excellent.”

Thomas Cecchi BCom student and member of the current Applied Portfolio Management course, notes the course is more hands-on than the preliminary Applied Investment Management course. “Our $500,000 fund came from contributions from UVic and generous donors to the business school,” he says. “We received the funding in the middle of October, and we were fully invested by the middle of November.”

Cecchi explains that they invest as a group. “We have two different teams—a strategy team that focuses more on the macroeconomics side, and an investment team that does specific company research. The way it is set up, students will spend an equal amount of time on each task over the course of the year.” The students have to manoeuvre through a steep learning curve, but for most of them, it is what they are aspiring to for future careers. “I think the highlight of being in this program is the real-world experience,” says Cecchi. “To have this opportunity is great for myself, and for future students who want a career in investment management.”

And there is every reason to expect that the program will continue to thrive, as donors salute the potential of the program with additional funds throughout the coming year. “This has been a game-changing addition to my time at Gustavson,” says Cecchi. “It’s a great advantage to have this experience starting out.”

The idea is to connect industry professionals with motivated students and help them navigate a career path in the finance and investment management industry, and obtain a CFA designation.

Students experience what it takes to be investors in the real world

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Echtner says the current Applied Portfolio Management group, which includes one of her mentees, did an outstanding job preparing their first quarterly package. “The quality, professionalism, sophistication in writing and analysis was excellent.”

Thomas Cecchi, BCom student and member of the current Applied Portfolio Management course, notes the course is more hands-on than the preliminary Applied Investment Management course. “Our $500,000 fund came from contributions from UVic and generous donors to the business school,” he says. “We received the funding in the middle of October, and we were fully invested by the middle of November.”

Cecchi explains that they invest as a group. “We have two different teams—a strategy team that focuses more on the macroeconomics side, and an investment team that does specific company research. The way it is set up, students will spend an equal amount of time on each task over the course of the year.” The students have to manoeuvre through a steep learning curve, but for most of them, it is what they are aspiring to for future careers. “I think the highlight of being in this program is the real-world experience,” says Cecchi. “To have this opportunity is great for myself, and for future students who want a career in investment management.”

And there is every reason to expect that the program will continue to thrive, as donors salute the potential of the program with additional funds throughout the coming year. “This has been a game-changing addition to my time at Gustavson,” says Cecchi. “It’s a great advantage to have this experience starting out.”

The idea is to connect industry professionals with motivated students and help them navigate a career path in the finance and investment management industry, and obtain a CFA designation.
It’s hard to believe that just seven years ago, it didn’t even occur to Christina Seargeant that HR was a career option. “HR wasn’t even on my radar,” says Seargeant, who today is a senior HR business partner at Workday, a software company specializing in cloud-based management for finances and employees.

But springboarding from her BCom degree into the tech world offered endless potential and possibility—and she found herself, after graduating in 2011, on a career path she had never imagined. “Not enough BCom students are thinking about HR, and not enough HR students are thinking about tech, even though it’s Victoria’s largest industry,” says Seargeant.

Because start-ups so often need to fill so many entry-level positions—junior product managers, HR and executive assistants alike—with young, hungry workers, Seargeant believes that BCom students and tech are a perfect match. “Business students just have that hustle, and I think it can be a strong pairing.” Not to mention the attractive advancement factor: “The career mobility in this sector is practically infinite.”

Having tried her hand at a tech customer service position with AbeBooks after graduating, Seargeant jumped at the chance to explore the industry in a deeper way when an executive assistant role at a young tech company in town, MediaCore, opened up. “I thought, ‘How great, I get to be a generalist,’” says Seargeant. “I came out of the BCom with an entrepreneurship specialization, which means I’m not deeply specialized but feel like I’m open to taking on anything.”

At MediaCore, Seargeant was a Jane-of-all-trades. From her perspective assisting in the CEO’s office, she was able to see from the senior level what a start-up looked like, and offer support. “The entrepreneurship program at Gustavson gave me great insight not just into how to be an entrepreneur, but how to support one,” she says. “It was so valuable to have in my toolkit.”

Though there were only eight staff at MediaCore when Seargeant first joined the team, she quickly identified the people side of the business as a passion, and CEO Stuart Bowness encouraged her to develop that skill set. “The more I learned about that side of the house, the more I started to feel like a professional,” says Seargeant. She pursued her professional HR designation while building MediaCore’s HR protocols from scratch.

“It certainly wasn’t easy. “I would say that there was a lot of trial by fire,” laughs Seargeant. “At MediaCore I was learning HR from the ground up, running faster than my feet could carry me, and making mistakes along the way—but that environment was a wonderful opportunity to fail fast and iterate as I went.” Working for Amazon previously and knowing what they had for their HR setup gave her a head start, but she also reached out to community mentors, and followed
creating an HR program from scratch

Connecting careers across continents
by Rich Taylor

**GLOBAL REACH**

Master of Global Business (MGB) alumni face a unique networking conundrum. Whereas your typical business program gives you the opportunity to build up your professional contacts in the city, region or even just the country you study in, following graduation, MGB alumni quickly spread far and wide.

However, as any resourceful MGB graduate will tell you, this potential hindrance can be turned into a boon. Knowing someone in a different part of the world isn’t just a useful way to save costs on hotels in Paris, Beijing and New York—it can also act as a launchpad to an international career, as these inspirational examples demonstrate.

Alice Rebondy and Katie Pearce

Shortly after completing their MGB journeys, Alice Rebondy and Katie Pearce (both MGB ’15, who lived and studied in Canada, Taiwan and Austria as part of the 2015 Path 1 cohort), were catching up over Skype. Rebondy had recently started working in London with business travel management company Carlson Wagonlit Travel, while Pearce had just returned home to Canada and was looking for a job after completing an additional internship in Austria.

“As we were talking, it popped into my head that there was a new opening in my team as a bid writer,” Rebondy says. “Katie is a skilled writer—I actually used to send her blog to my parents so they could see what I was up to during our MGB—so when I saw the bid writer position I knew she’d be great. And she’d talked about always wanting to live in London, so I thought, why not give it a try?”

While the connection seemed natural to Rebondy, it wasn’t on Pearce’s radar. “It didn’t cross my mind for a second to ask Alice about jobs in London—we were just catching up about her birthday,” she laughs. “But the next day, Alice emailed me saying: ‘Hey, really nice talking to you. My company is looking for somebody with your experience. Do you want to apply?’ I was like, London has been a dream of mine for 20 years, don’t hang this carrot in front of me! But I submitted my application and things moved pretty quickly from there. Within a month, Pearce was in London, complete with a visa, job and apartment. She has since moved up to manage the company’s global bids team, liaising with colleagues across Europe, North America and Asia. Rebondy, meanwhile, has recently moved on to a new challenge with a different company, but the connection that led the two to work together remains. “Every year that my MGB—so when I saw the bid writer position I knew she’d be great. And she’d talked about always wanting to live in London, so I thought, why not give it a try?”

Alice Rebondy (second from left) and Katie Pearce (centre) with fellow MGB students.

Irene Coughlin and Hossein Kharazian

When the opportunity arose to relocate from Vienna to manage the US operations of Austrian industrial manufacturing firm Semperit AG Holding, both Irene Coughlin, MGB ’13, and her employer knew that a particular background was required to fill the business development manager role she would be leaving behind.

“My manager was looking for someone with my skill set,” says Coughlin. “I reached out to [former MGB Associate Director] John Oldale, who provided me with the resume of a recent MGB grad named Hossein Kharazian.”

With previous work experience in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, Kharazian had chosen UVic’s program with the aim of enhancing his international career. After graduating, Kharazian, MGB ’16, planned to take his next professional steps in Canada. With Oldale’s recommendation, however, the MGB network’s tendency to present unexpected opportunity struck once again. “John introduced me to Irene, and I had a very long procedure of different stages of interviews and online tests, and a final interview in Vienna, which took almost seven hours!” says Kharazian. “After some time I got the call and was offered the position. Although I had been targeting Canada, I have always been open to challenges, so I said yes.”

Moving to Austria and beginning with Semperit in January 2017, Kharazian achieved his goal of expanding his international career into new territory. And the MGB—it’s unique network included—proved to be the perfect vehicle to do so. “When I was choosing MGB I was 100 per cent confident that there is no other program like it, which gives you the opportunity to develop this diverse international network,” Kharazian says. “It’s just so incredibly valuable.”

Although it spans time zones, oceans and continents, the MGB network can often be closer than you might think. As our alumni will agree, part of the magic of the program is that its life-changing ability to connect people across countries and cultures doesn’t just last for a year—it continues past graduation and into careers.
There comes a time in every educator’s career when they exit the classroom door in pursuit of their next great lesson. For four of Gustavson’s long-term instructors, that moment came this year as they each embrace the art of retirement. Their next chapters hold the promise of many new adventures, and we wish them all the best. Thank you, Dr. Angela Downey, Dr. Rebecca Grant, Dr. David McCutcheon and Mr. John Oldale for the lessons, wisdom and advice you’ve shared with us over the years. Class won’t be the same without you!

**Angela Downey**
**UVic - 2008-2017**

An accomplished researcher with a flair for making finance fun, Dr. Angela Downey brought her unique perspective to the classroom. Her research focuses on the financial implications of changes in health-care system delivery and in her managerial accounting courses she drew examples from the health-sector to show students that finance careers aren’t limited to accounting firms alone.

“Angela is an outstanding accounting professor. Her tough-love approach and humour always keep the classroom lively. Angela truly cares about her students and teaching them what they need to do to be successful in the boardroom.”

– Kate Donner, director administration, undergraduate programs

“Rebecca’s business technology class was the only one of its kind. It had a lasting impact on me because it was so ahead of its time. She saw an opportunity that was only going to get bigger and kids needed to know about it and how to take advantage of that industry.”

– Don MacKiel, BCom ’86

“Rebecca gave us so much energy and instruction during our very first case competition. (BCom students) benefited so much from her coordination and dedication to the work.”

– Nellie Yue, BCom ’17

When issues arise and I make my way over to Dave’s open door, I am always greeted with an amused, wry smile that says ‘Come on in, I’m looking forward to hearing what interesting problem you have!’ Then, Dave will effortlessly provide great advice that is meticulous and fair to resolve the issues at hand. He will be greatly missed. Happy retirement!”

– Wendy Mah, program manager, PhD program

“David’s leadership style is giving others the space to feel confident in the innovations they suggest, and then providing a steady hand to support their implementation.”

– Sherif Karas, director administration, pre-experience masters programs

“John’s tenacity of purpose and ongoing support throughout the MGB program cannot be overstated. He helped all of us in our search for global education, added a familiar face to UVic, and was a pillar of support through each step of our journey. I wish him nothing but the best in his retirement; there is nobody more deserving.”

– Garrett Semen, MGB ’11

“I’d like to congratulate John on his retirement, and thank him for all he has done for this program. It was a life-changing experience for me, and for so many others, and John was a big part of making it all possible! I wish him luck with wherever life takes him next.”

– Rachel Mark, BCom ’14, MGB ’16

**David McCutcheon**
**UVic - 1993-2018**

Known in our hallowed halls as “Super Dave,” Dr. David McCutcheon has been a driving force in the administration of our programs, from spearheading the implementation of our 2+2 model for the BCom program to overseeing our assurance of learning details for accreditation. McCutcheon has used his military precision to keep Gustavson’s programs in top form, all while maintaining his research and teaching duties in the classroom. Super Dave, indeed!

“Dave’s leadership style is giving others the space to feel confident in the innovations they suggest, and then providing a steady hand to support their implementation.”

– Sherif Karas, director administration, pre-experience masters programs

“John Oldale has been at the heart of our Master of Global Business program ever since its inception in 2010. Over the years, Oldale has welcomed hundreds of students from all over the world to Victoria, supported and assisted them on a transformational, international journey of learning and discovery, and congratulated them when they became MGB alumni.”

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– Rachel Mark, BCom ’14, MGB ’16

**Rebecca Grant**
**UVic - 1993-2018**

A trailblazer in e-commerce and tech, Dr. Rebecca Grant always connected the broader community with the business school. In addition to bringing business leaders into the classroom, she recruited them to be volunteer judges for the school’s annual RBC Case Competition. Grant also connected her students to community organizations, such as CanAssist and United Way, through integrated class projects. And if that wasn’t enough, she always had a spare tie or two on hand for students in need of a wardrobe upgrade before a big presentation.

You may not know this, but Angela started her academic career later in life. I can attest to the fact that she is very proud to have earned her education while raising three children on her own. Students describe Angela as ‘tough as nails . . . but only on the outside.’ She has been and always will be vivacious, sassy and gregarious—and some say ‘kinda out there!’

– Pat Elemans, assistant dean, external relations

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– Rachel Mark, BCom ’14, MGB ’16
ACE It!

$1 million gift empowers Indigenous entrepreneurs

by Anja Karadeglija

For aspiring Indigenous entrepreneurs in Canada, there's no power greater than combining business know-how and confidence to forge economic self-reliance. The unique community-based Aboriginal Canadian Entrepreneurs (ACE) program—developed by a partnership between the Tribal Resources Investment Corporation (TRICORP) and Gustavson—has been a key driver in supporting exactly that empowerment since its inaugural class in 2013. Bringing culturally sensitive and community-tailored business education, by invitation, to Indigenous communities across BC, the impact of this unique program has been immense—and is continuing to gain momentum.

To help expand this innovative program throughout BC and to other regions across Canada, BMO Financial Group has committed $1 million to create the BMO Aboriginal Canadian Entrepreneurship Catalyst Fund. The first program expansion, a Vancouver Island-based ACE for Artists, launched in June 2018, and supports entrepreneurial training for Indigenous artisans wanting to launch or expand their business artist venture.

“As an artist, I’m excited to see the idea of an ACE for artists program become a reality,” says Ben Davidson, an ACE graduate. “In 2014 when I was taking the ACE program, I had already started my own business. I soon realized that I had done many things the hard way or the wrong way. Through the ACE program I learned to delegate and build a good team, as well as create multiple revenue streams with my art. It’s a very beneficial course.”

The program currently operates in three areas of BC: the North West (NW-ACE) in Prince Rupert and Terrace, Central BC (LD-ACE) in the greater Enderby area, and the Haida Owned and Operated program that rotates between Old Massett and Skidegate. Over 20 weeks, ACE participants engage in classroom learning, mentorship coaching sessions and hands-on entrepreneurial learning exercises, including the development of a business plan for a start-up venture.

More than 275 graduates from 26 Indigenous communities across BC have taken it; 72 business ventures have been launched; and many more are in the planning stages. In addition to entrepreneurial start-ups, program graduates pursue further education, or secure employment in their business area of interest.

“The participation of Aboriginal people in the economy as business owners contracting and doing business with other Aboriginal businesses and with non-Aboriginal businesses is the highest form of economic development,” explains Frank Parnell, CEO of TRICORP. “And it provides the greatest promise for our people.”

The BMO Aboriginal Canadian Entrepreneurship Catalyst Fund received an initial $250,000 from private donors Tim and Frances Price to support in-community entrepreneurship educational opportunities.

Supporting the ACE program with customized, in-community entrepreneurship training is aligned with our desire to support new business leaders,” says Mike Bonner, BMO senior VP, BC and Yukon. “At BMO we’ve been thrilled to learn about all the business enterprises that have started in various communities and are honoured to support a program that has collaborated so successfully to support Indigenous entrepreneurs in advancing their business goals.”

“Raven,” by ACE graduate Lianna Spence (pictured with her art front right on facing page). Photo presented by BMO with a print of “Raven” in acknowledgment of their gift.

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Tina Belcourt, MBA ’09
Affie Berkes, BCom ’07
Allison Braulton, BCom ’98
Marcus Brandt, BCom ’08
Lindsay Brooks, BCom ’15
All Caruthers, BSc ’08, MBA ’16
Hao Chang, MBA ’10
Jennifer Chen, MBA ’12
David Clark, BEng ’92, MBA ’12
Marlene Coote, MBA ’99
John Craig, BCom ’12
James Derpak, BCom ’04
La Diaz Memoe, BA ’08, BCom ’11
Kailie Douglas, BCom ’08, MBA ’16
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Darius Namgalrav, MBA ’01*
Jessica Ng, BCom ’05
Siang Ng, MBA ’04
Lesley Patten, BCom ’96
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Matthew Ronald-Jones, BCom ’99
Gabriel Russo, BCom ’05
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Lane Yu, MBA ’05
Qinsheng Zhang, MBA ’14
Jane Zhu, MBA ’06 *
Amrit Lalli
Program: BCom
Graduation Year: 1999
Business Name: Lalli Wealth Management/Investors Group
Business Update: 2018 marks the 18th year of developing my personal financial planning practice specializing in business owners and professionals with Investors Group. I have had varying roles with Investors Group, but my passion remains guiding individuals to financial success.
Personal/Career Update: Celebrating 16 years of marriage to Amy Robertson, BCom ’90; two children, 13 and 11.

Amy Robertson
Program: BCom
Graduation Year: 2000
Business Name: Amy Robertson Mediation Services
Business Update: I specialize in divorce, family and workplace mediation services and provide a neutral space for clients at my office, which was renovated for the sole purpose of conducting mediations.
Personal/Career Update: I have chosen to work in a field where I support people during challenging times. Several years ago I made the decision to utilize my skills and experience as a management consultant and chairperson for a federal administrative tribunal for a different purpose. I have now conducted hundreds of mediations and support people in making big and small decisions.

Pat Hundal
Program: BCom
Graduation Year: 2000
Business Name: PSH Business Consultants Inc
Business Update: I launched PSH in 2017, in Victoria. Our firm’s strength is implementing and maintaining strong internal control environments and financial practices, in companies from a range of industries.
Personal/Career Update: After 18 years as a finance professional, working in various industries, cities and countries, I was ready to take a risk and start my own firm. I am ecstatic to be back and building roots in Victoria. I am actively involved with Gustavson, VIATEC and other local associations. It took some convincing at first, but my wife is loving island life as well.

Florence Pergament
Program: MBA
Graduation Year: 2009
Personal/Career Update: Since graduation, I have been working in the manufacturing sector for high-end products for the hotel industry. Upon graduating, I joined Northern Feather Canada, where I moved through the ranks from strategic manager to VP sales & marketing. After seven years there, I moved to the U.S. and joined SamuraiSon Furniture as a general manager. Currently, I am seeking my second masters, an MS in data analytics at Montclair State University, as I believe it is a great complement to my MBA and business career. After all, data is everything nowadays.

Sean Wiggins
Program: BCom
Graduation Year: 2012
Business Name: North Digital
Business Update: North Digital is a digital marketing agency based in Vancouver, serving clients in very diverse industries around the world. Recently, North Digital began offering a full-suite of marketing services in English, Mandarin and Cantonese.
Personal/Career Update: After finishing a master in accounting degree and passing the exam to get my CPA designation, I did a 180 and started a digital marketing agency. I have built the agency from the ground up and now have an established team in downtown Vancouver. I plan to continue to scale the agency and my personal brand in the digital space.

Andrea Bava Ramsden
Program: BCom
Graduation Year: 2004
Business Name: Blitz Media & Events
Business Update: In 2008, I took the leap of starting my own boutique communications agency in Vancouver. Blitz Media focuses on PR, social media management and event production, and works with a small team of highly skilled PR pros.
Personal/Career Update: I am a proud and exhausted mother of two and recently escaped the bustle of Vancouver for Nanaimo, where we are settling into our island lifestyle.

Lauren Minogue
Program: BCom
Graduation Year: 2014
Personal/Career Update: I’m fortunate to be building my practice atConnor, Clark & Lunn Private Capital in Vancouver, a partner-owned investment firm with over $74 billion in assets under management and notable clients like the CPP. My practice caters to private wealth families, business owners and small foundations. I am passionate about finance and continuing my post-graduate professional development, and am currently a level III CFA candidate. I am co-chair for the MS Society’s 2018 Vancouver Walk, with a goal to raise over $210,000 locally.

Colin Filliter
Program: MBA
Graduation Year: 2016
Business Name: SuavAir Aerial Imaging
Business Update: Suavlr was developed through the MBA entrepreneurship specialization at UVic in 2015 and continues to grow as the applications for aerial drones expand. We remain focused on the forestry, mining and natural resource industries as a drone service provider, and now have a diverse client base throughout coastal and interior BC.
Personal/Career Update: Nuch Chanthasinh, MBA ’16, and I were married in late 2017. We met in the UVic program as classmates and recently purchased a house together in Campbell River, BC. Nuch is enjoying her career, currently working as an advisor to Health Emergency Management BC.

Kevan Matheson
Program: BCom
Graduation Year: 2015
Business Name: Crypto Capital Partners
Business Update: I left my career in institutional finance to start a blockchain advisory firm in Vancouver. I am a strategic adviser for venture capital deals, public company financings and enterprise consulting clients. My proudest achievements so far include advising clients during equity issuance of roughly $20 million, writing a book and being elected to the board of directors at a publicly traded cryptocurrency mining operation.
Personal/Career Update: My business and social life are interconnected (mostly because I am always working). One of the best aspects of running my own business is the flexibility to work remotely—I head to Whistler and Cypress often, and spent most of the winter in California and South East Asia.
Entrepreneurship faculty talk shop

When UVic’s business school was founded in 1990, three “concentrations” were offered to students: international business, tourism and entrepreneurship. Over the intervening 28 years, “concentrations” have been replaced with “specializations” and the topics have evolved, but entrepreneurship is still a popular choice among students. Whether you were in the classroom five or 20 years ago, some things in entrepreneurship education haven’t changed—and some are unrecognizably different. Here to share their insights on this topic, entrepreneurship faculty themselves.

Claudia Smith
Years at Gustavson: 15
What is the most important skill or learning you hope your students walk out of class with?
First, they will develop skills in identifying, analyzing and realizing opportunity. By the time the program is over, most will have developed the beginnings of an expert script that will allow them to perform much better than other entrepreneurs. Second, I hope they gain an appreciation for both evidence and rationale. Entrepreneurs need passion, but evidence is going to help you avoid making poor decisions. Anyone can make strategic and tactical decisions—but those entrepreneurs who can add rationale to those decisions from business theory, concepts and best practice are going to be more successful in the long run.

Mia Maki
Years at Gustavson: 10
How has the content of your courses, and the field in general, changed during your time teaching?
Entrepreneurial finance and venture capital has completely changed in recent years. Ten years ago, if you were starting a business, you really did need to go raise capital! Now you can get pretty far just bootstrapping and figuring it out on your own. Because the online platforms and tools exist, you don’t need as much money to get started and see if you really have something, and maybe even start generating revenue. Of course, you do still reach a point where you need to go raise capital, and the venture capital world is a widely different landscape—it’s been in the past. Angel investors have much bigger chequebooks than before, pension funds are coming down to dabble in venture capital, and crowdfunding platforms are emerging—all creating some interesting new personas to work with.

Brock Smith
Years at Gustavson: 27
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Graham Brown
Years at Gustavson: 6
What is your favourite lesson to teach, and why?
Negotiation, because everyone can get better. Most people do not understand negotiation and are afraid of it—it is another way to create value and teaches the importance of honesty, respect and trust better than any other exercise or lesson I have.

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Brent Mainprize
Years at Gustavson: 2
How has the content of your courses, and the field in general, changed during your time teaching?
The most important change over the past 20 years is the role entrepreneurs are playing (and are expected to play) in society. The defining elements of success as an entrepreneur have changed. I have learned from working with Indigenous communities that entrepreneurship must be deeply rooted in Indigenous ways and is something that our mainstream or non-Aboriginal entrepreneurs are gaining a deeper understanding of, and perhaps beginning to adopt more explicitly. The millennial generation seems to be naturally wired this way, and are rapidly driving change using this approach.

Sara Soares Traquina Alves Elias
Years at Gustavson: 2
What is your favourite lesson to teach, and why?
Paradigm shifts and the process of creating value—both concepts are fundamental to entrepreneurship and strategic management. I particularly enjoy the discussion with students around “outside-of-the-box” thinking, the different types of value one can create beyond profit alone (e.g. societal, aesthetic, cultural). In one of my favourite classes, students engage their imaginative minds to create value on campus from office supplies. Students often find this a fun class that allows them to experiment with seeing things differently, all while leveraging their creativity and developing teamwork and communication skills.

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“Go for it, whatever it is. Don’t be afraid, try things and keep going. Our students are young and so now is a great time to learn and make mistakes—don’t try to make mistakes, but the world doesn’t end if you do, and you can learn so much by trying.”
I’ve always considered myself a lifelong learner, so when I heard that TELUS and UVic were working together to offer a custom MBA, I was immediately drawn toward the possibility of participating. The fact that I would be on this learning journey with 19 equally inspired colleagues from across the TELUS team was compelling, as was the appeal of sharpening my professional skills. I had high expectations of the program going in, but after two years and over 3,000 program hours, hindsight confirms that the experience has absolutely exceeded those expectations.

Perhaps the deepest, richest and farthest-reaching experience was triggered as a result of the program encouraging us to explore ways of engaging in work that is more directly connected to a personally meaningful purpose.

I consider myself fortunate to have begun my journey toward just such a purpose, as a result of my MBA capstone project. During our third-term sustainability course with Professor Heather Ranson, we discussed the challenges of meeting food production demands associated with our growing global population. Although previously I might have felt that this was a problem that was outside my realm of expertise, I felt a newly heightened sense of social responsibility and chose to invest my talents and energy in a capstone project looking at what technological innovation in agriculture production could do to help solve this challenge.

In my eyes, the MBA has been a shining example of an investment in personal and professional development, backed in a meaningful way by TELUS. Today this translates into an initiative that will not only pay back this academic investment, but also pay forward the learning in a way that will, optimistically, help solve a very significant global challenge.

Prior to my UVic MBA experience, I would have defined my role as a leader within the parameters of my job title, and perhaps my organization. Through this experience, I now appreciate that our role as leaders does not stop when we leave the office, but that it in fact permeates every aspect of our lives and all matters of societal concern.

I had the good fortune to be able to work on the project with three amazing colleagues. Over the course of our second year in the program, we collectively invested over 1,000 hours of research. We concluded that providing smart agriculture solutions to the Canadian agriculture industry presents a significant opportunity for TELUS and the communities in which we live, work and serve.

Smart agriculture solutions can assist greatly in improving the overall efficiency and sustainability of agriculture-based operations, translating into safer, healthier food supplies and communities, as well as improved quality of life for all those involved in the industry. Moreover, this conclusion paved the way for the creation of a new role within TELUS: I am now leading the TELUS initiative to explore how we will support our Canadian agriculture industry with world-leading agriculture innovations.

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The Nov. 17 – 19, 2017 inaugural Victoria Forum was a tremendous success. It is with gratitude that we acknowledge and thank our exceptional hosts, our inaugural sponsors, our organizing partners, our speakers, contributors, passionate delegates and volunteers.

Conversations and images from this inaugural event are online at victoriaforum.ca