TRADING UP
Grad Builds Canadian-Mongolian Ties

SOCIAL START-UP GIVES NON-PROFITS A LEG UP

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Message from the Dean

Preparing business students for the global stage

WE ARE LIVING in troubling times, with levels of protectionism, populism and xenophobia on the rise around the world. These sentiments are enacted in the tightening of national borders (disrupting global supply chains and impeding the resettlement of those trying to escape from persecution), the development of divisive policies (pitting people against one another) and a general suspicion of that which is different (eroding trust in our key institutions and across our society). These responses are not, we believe, the answer to today’s international challenges, nor are they consistent with the values we espouse at Gustavson.

Solutions should and can emerge from being open to different ways of thinking, connecting more with others and giving rein to our entrepreneurial spirit, rather than by following the calls to retreat to narrowly defined self interest or a mythically aggudnized past. Positivity, open-mindedness and a willingness to embrace diversity are the themes we seek to understand, practice and teach at Gustavson as the means to creating a better future.

International knowledge, cross-cultural awareness, socially responsible leadership and collaboration across disciplines are priorities for our school, all reflected in our “Crossing Boundaries” strategy, which is woven throughout our program design. You see it in the extraordinarily high percentage of our students who are developing their global understanding through direct international experience while at the school, and in our commitment to carbon neutrality.

Our partnerships with First Nations are bearing fruit, too, as graduates of the Aboriginal Canadian Entrepreneurs (ACE) program are creating new opportunities in their communities. We have already delivered this training to over 20 cohorts and are currently rolling out a province-wide entrepreneurship training opportunities in their communities. We have already delivered this training to over 20 cohorts and are currently rolling out a province-wide entrepreneurship training program to all of British Columbia’s 100 communities. This program is now the vehicle for delivering the extraordinarily high percentage of our students who are developing their global understanding through direct international experience while at the school, and in our commitment to carbon neutrality.

And perhaps most relevant for this issue of Business Class, you see these values of diversity and social responsibility reflected in the lives of our alumni build after graduation. Whether building a career in social entrepreneurship or simply showing up to work every day with an open mind, empathy and strong collaboration skills, the achievements of our alumni speak volumes about the values of diversity and social responsibility reflected in the lives that our alumni are leading. Solutions should and can emerge from being open to different ways of thinking, connecting more with others and giving rein to our entrepreneurial spirit, rather than by following the calls to retreat to narrowly defined self interest or a mythically aggudnized past. Positivity, open-mindedness and a willingness to embrace diversity are the themes we seek to understand, practice and teach at Gustavson as the means to creating a better future.

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What’s the Story?

Do you have a story suggestion or career update to share? Help us create great content by sharing your ideas for articles about alumni, faculty and the Gustavson community. You can also submit personal career updates for our Class Notes section or suggest a question for our new Ask A Prof feature (see story on p. 10).

Thoughts are welcome at bized@uvic.ca.

The Future of Brand Trust

EACH YEAR, the Gustavson Brand Trust Index (GBTI) collects data from more than 6,000 consumers across Canada to evaluate their trust in over 310 different brands. Brands are evaluated on values-based, functional, relationship and word-of-mouth trust. These scores are then averaged to create the overall trust rank. Here, we take a look at a few of the 2018 findings that offer insight into trust in a key consumer demographic: millennials.

DAVIDsTEA: According to the GBTI 2018 findings, DAVIDsTEA ranks highest with consumers under 35. This comes as no surprise, as the tea retailer is positioned toward millennials. However, what makes the DAVIDsTEA ranking interesting is that it incurred the highest relationship trust score from millennials out of all national brands plus year.

CBC/Radio-Canada: Millennials (and in fact all age groups) ranked their trust in traditional media substantially higher than their trust of social media platforms. Specifically, CBC was ranked as the most trusted voice in the media, across all age groups, with millennials ranking the media behemoth #3 among all brands for values-based trust.

Campbell Soup Company: Campbell Soup gave a nod to millennials in 2018 when the other 149-year-old brand adjusted its marketing to reflect shifting family structure norms. Those efforts might be paying off as in this year’s GBTI millennials ranked their trust in Campbell Soup significantly higher than the older age groups did.
DID YOU KNOW that UVic was the first university in Western Canada to offer a co-op program? Launched in 1976, the UVic co-op program started out with 58 student work-term placements in its first year—and is now approaching 85,000 total. Because all commerce students participate in work terms, Gustavson is a major contributor to this impressive number.

929 WORK TERMS
929 WORK TERMS
at
at
517
517 COMPANIES
COMPANIES
in
in
24
24 COUNTRIES
COUNTRIES & REGIONS
& REGIONS

Top Industries:
Top Industries:
• Provincial Agency/Government
• Federal Government
• Entrepreneurial (self-employed)
• Non-profit

Linh Sa Arnold, BCom
Co-op: Linh Sa Arnold Designs (entrepreneurial work term)

“After picking up sewing again a couple years ago, I began to work on Linh Sa Arnold Designs in the summer of 2017. In the conception of this brand, it was extremely important to me that I not be yet another contributor to the waste created in the excess-driven fashion industry.”

Yingxun Zhang, MGB
Co-op: Business Development with U-Bicycle North America Inc.

Sydney Conway, BCom
Co-op: Marketing Assistant Coordinator for The Calgary Stampede.

Jeremy Saimoto
Co-op: Sales Coordinator for Tiny Life Supply
Read more about Jeremy’s work term on p. 24: Tiny Houses, Big Movement.

Catherine Musgrave, BCom
Co-op: International Marketing Intern for The Hartmann Group.

Sarah Bickerton, BCom
Co-op: Administrative Operations Support for the Canadian Coast Guard

Michelle McAnerny, BCom
Co-op: Marketing and Outreach Assistant at The Robert Bateman Centre

Working in the recruitment industry in a place like Tokyo, a lot is asked of you as an intern, but the experience I have gained has been so valuable. Apex hires interns every semester, and I would 100 per cent suggest pursuing this opportunity if you’re up for it. You won’t regret it!”

Liam Moore, BCom
Co-op: Executive Search Intern at Apex K.K.

David Nicmans, BCom
Co-op: Intern at Pete McLeod Aeronautics Inc.

Christen Fang & Julia Macartney, BCom
Co-op: Program Coordinators for International Summer Institute for Business Management at Gustavson

“Our goal is to work in the art industry and because I am passionate about nature, The Robert Bateman Centre was a dream co-op opportunity for me. The biggest highlight so far was helping install a new exhibition and meeting artists from across Canada.”

IN THE LAST CALENDAR YEAR Gustavson students completed…

TOP INDUSTRIES:
TOP INDUSTRIES:
• Provincial Agency/Government
• Federal Government
• Entrepreneurial (self-employed)
• Non-profit

Sarah Bickerton, BCom
Co-op: Marketing and Outreach Assistant at The Robert Bateman Centre

“Since my goal is to work in the art industry and because I am passionate about nature, The Robert Bateman Centre was a dream co-op opportunity for me. The biggest highlight so far was helping install a new exhibition and meeting artists from across Canada.”
Social-Conscious Capitali$m

Grad puts entrepreneurship to work for non-profits
by Stacey McLachlan

Some romances are love-at-first sight stories. Others are a slow burn. For Jeff Hemmett, BCom ’13, his relationship with the business world falls firmly into the latter category: a spark that didn’t light until he was more than three-quarters of the way through his business degree. But today, thriving in his role as chief revenue officer for busy Vancouver start-up Keela, it’s clearly a passion that was worth the wait.

“Playing intramural hockey was more important to me than exams,” laughs Hemmett, thinking back on his BCom days. “Just ask my operations management prof how much time we spent in office hours making sure I got through the course.” It wasn’t until three years into his studies that it all finally clicked for him. “Social enterprises, capitalism 2.0, whatever you want to call it… that was really what caught my interest. I didn’t enjoy business school until corporate social responsibility and sustainability came into play.”

His interest truly piqued, he joined the entrepreneurship track and signed up for an exchange to Turkey. “I found my groove in that international co-op and fell in love with the work I was doing. Having the flexibility to follow a developing interest in those final years was key.” While in Istanbul, he took the reins of a non-profit, building a women’s entrepreneurship incubator. What was supposed to be just a semester turned into nearly a year-long stay, thanks to the support of Gustavson.

It was that time on the front lines of a non-profit that wound up setting the stage for Hemmett’s career in tech. “Much like start-ups, non-profits are completely under-resourced, fighting week after week to achieve sustainability,” says Hemmett. “There’s a commonality in managing and thriving in uncertainty.” It’s the sort of challenging environment where Hemmett feels right at home, so when he graduated in 2013 he began “crashing and banging” his way through Vancouver’s tech scene, eventually landing an internship-turned-job at Techstars, as director of business development for a short period, until one of its funded ventures caught his attention: Keela.

The company was offering a cloud-based suite of tools that helped non-profits consolidate several tasks: fundraising, project and program management, CRM, all in one. Hemmett connected deeply with Keela’s do-good philosophy, and came on board as chief revenue officer in early 2017. In this role, he supports the go-to-market team: marketing, sales and customer success—though as with any start-up, the specifics are always changing. When he started at Keela last year, there were just five staffers and six customers on a beta version. But the investments and business awards began stacking up, as Keela has helped non-profits like the Vancouver Metropolitan Orchestra, Ladies in Heels and more maximize their output. Today, there are hundreds of customers and 25 staffers—all galvanized to make change. “It’s very value-based, very human, and I’m just really proud of what we’ve taken to market,” Hemmett explains. “The team all comes to work energized.”

And as that team grows, Hemmett is interested in finding the people who are truly making their degrees mean something, just like he did in those pivotal last years of his BCom program. “There are tens of thousands of business students across Canada who are going to graduate this year—what are you going to do to stand out?” he says. “My best hires right out of school are engaged and creative people in business school, not the people just going through the motions and getting B-pluses. They’re the ones founding non-profits, starting clubs, building products, acting on ideas—the creatives, the people doing things differently. Do good work, be patient, and the rest will follow.”

Much like start-ups, non-profits are completely under-resourced, fighting week after week to achieve sustainability. There’s a commonality in managing and thriving in uncertainty.
The first part of this question focuses on the “what do I want from life” aspect of our careers. Whether we call it a purpose or a passion, in essence it refers to the extent to which we feel inspired by the work we do. If we are immersed in the kind of work we like to do, we feel energized to take on new challenges, lose ourselves in our work and gain a deep sense of fulfillment when we achieve our goals.

Our experience is accompanied by a quiet excitement that underscores an awareness that we are doing what we do not because we have to, but because we want to. The prerequisite for accurately answering this part of the question rests in a nuanced sensemaking of the world around us—its needs, values, traits, strengths, instincts, limitations and aspirations.

The second part of this question gets at the “what does life want from me” aspect of our careers. Our place in the world of work is shaped not just by our own interests but also by the requests, demands and opportunities that the world unfurls at our doorstep. While the tasks we are called to do, or the responsibility that we feel obligated to take on, may not necessarily be how we imagined our work lives would unfold, we may find it difficult to shake off the feeling that it is the right thing to do and that it would erase the inner disquiet that often colours a purely self-oriented path in life.

The prerequisite for accurately answering this part of the question rests in a constant willingness to reinvent ourselves—to reimagine, reframe and relocate the boundaries of our possibilities.

So what does it mean to be at the intersection of these three lines of reflection about our careers? Doing what we like to do will fuel our drive; doing what we should do will strengthen our resolve; and doing what we could do will elevate our contributions. The combined result will be a richly textured work life that is inspired, meaningful, challenging and life changing.

Since September 2016, the students — who brought expertise from careers in industries including healthcare, manufacturing, public relations, IT and more — had been learning, working and growing together. Meeting one weekend per month on campus and collaborating online in between, the program fostered a learning experience that combined the flexibility of part-time graduate study with intimate access to a group of peers with far-reaching collective professional experience.

“I can easily say that one of the best things about the UVic Weekend MBA program was the diversity within my cohort,” says Melissa Uppal, Weekend MBA ‘18 and project manager with Island Health. “It was an incredibly positive experience to partner with professionals across such broad and advanced career backgrounds. I always knew that no matter the problem we had to solve, someone in our class would have experience in dealing with it, which facilitated a lot of peer-to-peer learning and created an environment of openness and support.”

This particular characteristic of the Weekend MBA is enhanced by the fact that students in this program have, on average, 12 years’ career experience and are generally balancing full-time jobs – and in many cases, families – with their coursework.

One experience that many ranked as a highlight of the Weekend MBA program was the International Applied Project (IAP). Working as consultants for Canada-based green energy firms looking to expand their operations, half of the group travelled to China and half to Brazil for 10 days to immerse themselves in their clients’ businesses, and build recommendations on manufacturing, sales and sustainable development opportunities in each region.

While there, they took the opportunity to visit other local organizations (and take in a few of the sights on the way). The trip provided a global lens through which to view key concepts of leadership, teamwork and strategy.

“Another pivotal moment, and one that was a high point for me, was watching the students complete their capstone consulting projects this summer,” says MBA Associate Director Ian Robertson. “Each team had been working on the projects for almost a full year, which gave them an excellent opportunity to apply their classroom learning and do something really meaningful, either for their own employer or a different client organization.”

No, after all that, how would Robertson describe the mood of the cohort on that August weekend that marked the group’s final time on campus? “I’d say it was euphoric. The cohort was buzzing with excitement and pride of completing the difficult endeavour they had set out to tackle together.”

And naturally, we share their sense of celebration and pride in their accomplishments. Congratulations, to our trailblazing Weekend MBA alumni!

To learn more about the Weekend MBA program, visit www.uvic.ca/gustavson/gill/mba/weekend.
TRADING PLACES

Bolor Sambuu fosters international trade with Mongolia and Canada

By Natalie Bruckner

When Bolor Sambuu graduated from UVic in 2011 with an MBA in entrepreneurship and a newfound appreciation for sustainability, mining wasn’t exactly top of her list as a sector to explore. “Sustainability and mining are a bit of a contradiction in terms,” laughs Sambuu. “No one leaves university, especially after those specializations, and wants to work for a mining company.”

And yet, Sambuu credits the MBA program with opening her eyes to new values in new ventures. “I was taught to look at things from all angles and realized I could make more of an impact from within an organization.”

She is the founder and executive director of the Canada Mongolia Chamber of Commerce in Toronto, program manager, international services at Ceso-Saco (an international economic development organization) and founder of Women in Mining Mongolia, which promotes diversity and inclusion practices within the mining sector in Mongolia.

“I didn’t consciously set out to promote sustainable international trade, but when I think about it, the idea of sustainability has always piqued my interest. As humans, our nature is to try new things and be curious. So if it’s done sustainably, why shouldn’t we promote international trade, too?”

Photograph: Patrick Doyle

Hearing a truly global perspective helped Sambuu value the importance of fostering trade development. “When I was 10, my father got a job as a trade commissioner at the Embassy of Mongolia in Poland. I attended a Russian university, and that provided me with international exposure. We returned to Mongolia once his term was over, but I went back to Poland after winning a scholarship for the Warsaw School of Economics. Poland is really my second home.”

From there, Sambuu went to study English in the US before applying to UVic. After receiving her MBA, Sambuu made a mistake and returned to Mongolia, as a shareholder in the Mongolian Metal Exchange. “The industry was changing and this exposed me to a network that I would never have had access to if I had stayed in Canada. I got great experience under my belt and a better understanding of how global investment was impacting Mongolia and the political challenges happening within the country.”

However, her world opened up when friends visiting from Mongolia described the country’s rapid growth and suggested she return to explore opportunities there. “International students who came to Canada often feel conflicted about returning home, but you need to realize you may have more opportunities there. It’s about opening yourself up to possibilities—the global aspect of the course allows you to see that,” explains Sambuu.

Back in Mongolia, Sambuu secured a job as an IPO Specialist at Erdenes Tavan Tolgoi and as a shareholder in the Mongolian Metal Exchange. “The industry was changing and this exposed me to a network that I would never have had access to if I had stayed in Canada. I got great experience under my belt and a better understanding of how global investment was impacting Mongolia and the political challenges happening within the country.”

Within the first two weeks of arriving in Toronto I founded the Women in Mining Mongolia. I came across the Women in Mining Canada group and realized it would be a great platform to encourage networking with like-minded women in the industry from Mongolia and Canada. Just a year later, she set up the Canada Mongolia Chamber of Commerce, with the idea of further developing the Canada-Mongolia relationship.

“The government of Mongolia was starting to understand that its minerals sector is critical to its national plans for sustainable development, and Mongolia was also having a lot more influence beyond mining; the cashmere trade, for example, was starting to take off.”

Now, as Canada-Mongolia trade relations enter what Sambuu describes as “stage two” in its development, with greater investments, an exchange of ideas between the two countries and a greater networking hub, Sambuu reflects on the advice she would give graduates wishing to enter the international trade environment. “Don’t limit yourself with where or who you work for,” she says. “You may be an environmentalist at heart, but realize that you can make greater impacts from within.”
Considering – and Countering – our Footprint

Gustavson invests in offset projects to go carbon neutral

by Rich Taylor

Neutral doesn’t only factor into the Gustavson vocabulary. We’re passionate advocates for social responsibility, sustainability and innovation, and staunch critics of chasing profits at the expense of people and the planet. We’re believers in international education, research and experience, and strive to cross boundaries in ideas, culture and society.

Because of this passion, however, we are now neutral on one thing – our impact on the environment. This spring, Gustavson officially became carbon neutral by investing in carbon offset projects to counter the impact of our air travel – and what’s more, we believe Gustavson is the first business school in the world to do so.

This milestone follows almost a decade of research into, and ongoing efforts to reduce, Gustavson’s environmental impact.

In 2009, guided by Dr. Basma Majerhi, Gustavson began collecting data on its carbon footprint, tracking Scope 1 (natural gas for heating), Scope 2 (electricity) and Scope 3 (paper, travel and commuting) emissions. The following year, the University of Victoria became mandated by the province to offset its Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions, and in 2011, with the launch of Gustavson’s Centre for Social and Sustainable Innovation, the business school formally set a goal to become completely carbon neutral.

This goal came into focus late last year following the release of Gustavson’s 2016 carbon report. The report found that over 80 per cent of Gustavson’s carbon footprint was produced by the school’s travel and commute-related activities.

These stats led to a new question: how can Gustavson reconcile the environmental impact of its focus on international education with its commitment to sustainability and social responsibility? The logical solution was to counter the emissions produced by the school’s travel through responsible investment in carbon offset projects.

To achieve this, a Carbon Neutrality+ committee, comprising faculty, staff and students, was created to develop a shortlist of offset projects that not only reduce emissions by enabling more sustainable alternatives for existing carbon-producing activities, but also provide other social benefits for the communities in which they are located. After consultation with the school community, five projects were selected for investment – three that will improve living conditions in communities in Uganda, Thailand and Honduras, and two that focus on environmental conservation in BC.

Acting on and championing our values is an ongoing and evolving process, however. Investing in these projects is not the final step on Gustavson’s road towards carbon neutrality. The Carbon Neutrality+ committee will continue to develop strategies and encourage initiatives that help the school further reduce its carbon footprint, such as low-emission commuting methods. As Gustavson Dean Saul Klein says, “It’s important and timely to demonstrate leadership to our students and to the world. If our actions have a negative impact, we have a duty to do something about it.”

What we’re investing in

A CHLORINE DISPENSER PROJECT IN EASTERN UGANDA that provides rural communities with safe drinking water, replacing the need for communities to boil water with wood-fuelled fires

A WASTEWATER TREATMENT PROJECT IN THAILAND that reduces fossil fuel use by 4,700 litres a day by capturing methane from wastewater at a starch manufacturing plant and converting it to heat for the starch drying process

AN AFFORDABLE, ENERGY-EFFICIENT cooking stove distribution project in Honduras that provides communities with stoves that are 50 per cent more efficient than traditional wood-burning open fires

THE GREAT BEAR FOREST CARBON PROJECT, which helps support the ecosystem-based management model in which coastal First Nations, environmental groups, forest companies and governments co-manage the Great Bear Rainforest to sustain biodiversity and create jobs for Indigenous communities

THE QUADRA ISLAND FORESTLAND CONSERVATION PROJECT, which helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions, preserve important site-specific environmental and cultural features and protect the Quadra Island Forestland Conservation area for recreational activities
Improving healthcare with an unlikely super power: data

by Natalie Bruckner

MICHAEL CAESAR, MBA ’01, AND KEVIN FENG, MGB ’14, never intended to make a career for themselves in the healthcare data analytics realm. In fact, while studying at Gustavson, they had very different expectations of where they would end up. “A musician, perhaps?” suggests Feng, laughing.

And yet, with data analytics among the fastest growing industries in the tech world right now (estimated to be worth around $1.45 billion in Canada today), and the healthcare industry booming, it was a wise, if unexpected, career path.

Today, Caesar, Executive Director, Data and Implementation Science at the University Health Network (UHN), and Feng, former Functional Manager, Analytics Operations Lead at Cancer Care Ontario, are impacting the future of healthcare by working on enhanced data that will lead to insightful action.

Caesar, a veteran in the field with 18 years’ experience, leads a team of experts in both change management and analytics on a variety of projects to help improve patient outcomes, health system costs and access to care. Feng, who has five years’ experience in the sector (two of which were with Caesar at UHN), was recently working on a project to find long-term solutions to help those with mental health and addiction issues.

The experiences of these two alumni offer a glimpse into what it takes to work—and thrive—in this sector, for everyone from established professionals looking for fresh ideas about continued growth to recent grads curious about transitioning into healthcare administration and analytics.
MICHAEL CAESAR  
Leading the Charge for Change  
Navigating a leadership career from MBA to award-winning healthcare executive  

- **How did you become involved in healthcare data analytics?**
  I honestly thought I would end up in a completely different industry, but when I came out of the MBA with a specialization in service management, it opened my eyes to a larger potential to get involved. My father was a physician so I was exposed to the healthcare environment from an early age, and that struck a chord in me. Straight out of my MBA, I was recruited as a senior analyst in Toronto before moving into change management at University Health Network (UHN). I would often spend the day with care providers and that hands-on experience helped me understand the complexities involved in the healthcare realm as a transitioned from project manager to executive director.

- **How did your MBA prepare you for this career?**
  I was fortunate enough to be one of the first cohorts through the MBA service management specialization at UVic and this program has been invaluable to my journey in healthcare. The program is structured around teamwork, and healthcare is a team industry. The MBA teaches you to be adaptable, which is essential due to the sheer complexity of the healthcare environment.

- **What is an indicator of an award-winning or highly functioning team?**
  I’ve had the incredible opportunity to be part of teams that have won local, national and international awards. These awards include being recognized for business transformation, change management, project management and innovation. One of the most important characteristics of an award-winning team is the collective desire to seek genuine, impactful improvements for the organization. I see this come to life in a team’s willingness and courage to pull apart and put back together ideas, to put historical paradigms aside and grab a whiteboard marker and walk through new ways of thinking, to be able to show the organization, with data and passion, where “better” lives. It’s one part a way of working and one part a deep desire for improvement. I’ve had the incredible opportunity to be one of the first cohorts through the MBA service management specialization at UVic and this program has been invaluable to my journey in healthcare. The program is structured around teamwork, and healthcare is a team industry. The MBA teaches you to be adaptable, which is essential due to the sheer complexity of the healthcare environment.

- **How did you create such a team?**
  Good question. I’m not sure it’s such a simple answer. Every team is different, working on different problems and bringing different skills to the table—every single time. There are a few things that I think are important in positioning a team properly. However, first, it’s about goals: clarity in purpose and a direct link between purpose and the team is essential. Helping the team remain focused on these goals, surfacing data that support those goals and helping the organization learn about those goals is essential. Second, it’s about setting up an environment for the team to debate, discuss and sometimes, yes, argue. These are all incredibly important traits for a team. If they aren’t debating and challenging each other then they aren’t learning together and the team is essential. Helping the team remain focused on these goals, surfacing data that support those goals and helping the organization learn about those goals is essential. Second, it’s about setting up an environment for the team to debate, discuss and sometimes, yes, argue. These are all incredibly important traits for a team. If they aren’t debating and challenging each other then they aren’t learning together and the team is essential. Helping the team remain focused on these goals, surfacing data that support those goals and helping the organization learn about those goals is essential.

- **How did an international business education prepare you for your role?**
  In work in data analytics, and in particular healthcare, it takes a certain element of entrepreneurship. It’s a relatively niche career, and you need to be able to take charge. Networking is essential, and a little bit of networking is involved, too. The MGB gave me great foundations for all of this. It pushes you into unfamiliar environments with people from all walks of life, so you learn how to quickly adapt. The health system has a lot of moving parts, so this skill is essential.

- **Would you say your career path has been organic or structured?**
  My mother was in healthcare, so I come from a lineage of healthcare—and apparently the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree—but I never expected to transition into data analytics. I started out with a business angle as a business analyst at Cancer Care Ontario, but found the analytics component a lot more interesting. It was so foreign to me and was an opportunity to learn. I enjoy doing things that are outside of my comfort zone. I then took a job as a senior business analyst before becoming a functional manager, analytics operations lead. Five years ago, I would never have imagined I would be working with a team that delivers high-quality analytic services to drive policy-making decisions. That’s for sure. I was fortunate enough to be one of the first cohorts through the MBA service management specialization at UVic and this program has been invaluable to my journey in healthcare. The program is structured around teamwork, and healthcare is a team industry. The MBA teaches you to be adaptable, which is essential due to the sheer complexity of the healthcare environment.

- **What exciting projects are you involved in currently?**
  I am working with four hospitals that provide specialized mental health data on mental health and addiction. It’s a private project that is planned to be scaled out to all mental health units and programs in the province. We are looking at not just patient access in the hospital but also what happens once they are discharged. How do we not lose patients in the gaps of the system? How can we ensure the continuity of care is available in the community? The project is trying to address that gap by unifying data so we can speak the same language and use that data to positively effect change.

- **What advice would you give recent grads looking to get a foot in the door?**
  I feel lucky that I had the experience in ER as I got to see the realities of the frontline and feel I can now bring this into my role. However, having that experience isn’t essential. It’s more about being open-minded and recognizing opportunities. I was a business analyst with a business degree and somehow ended up in healthcare data, so don’t rule anything out. I think most people want to try to do something that will make a difference and save a life, and healthcare provides a great chance to do this.

- **How do you become involved in healthcare data analytics?**
  It really wasn’t intentional! When I was a student, I started working part-time as a clerk in the ER at UHN. You learn a lot about the nitty gritty when you work night shift and weekends in ER. I was there for two years while I finished off my undergrad, and the summer between graduating and starting the Master of Global Business program at UVic, a project analyst position became available where I supported a major project to procure an enterprise hospital information system.
Years of Recognizing Entrepreneurial Excellence

by Carlos Chicas Berti

THE DISTINGUISHED ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR AWARD (DEYA) celebrated its 15th anniversary in 2018 with a night to remember, inducting its latest honouree: Slack co-founder and CEO Stewart Butterfield. Since its beginnings in 2004, the gala’s list of past honourees has grown to include many of Canada’s top business leaders. Butterfield joins a select group that includes inaugural recipient and former COO of Yahoo! Jeff Mallett, Black Press president David Black and musician/producer David Foster.

The award celebrates business leaders from across Canada who strive to affect positive change through their work. DEYA continues to play an important role in celebrating the contributions of business leaders to communities in BC and across the globe, and has helped raise the profile of the business school internationally.

Award Committee Chairman Peter B. Gustavson reflected on the long history of the event and the amazing honourees. “At each gala, we’ve been inspired by the incredible individuals we had the privilege to honour. Their words of wisdom are timeless. Thanks again to all of you for your exceptional support, and cheers to 15 great years.”

By Carlos Chicas Berti

TEWART BUTTERFIELD, BA Philosophy ’96, knows better than most that the road to success is paved with failure. The co-founder and CEO of Slack, and this year’s Distinguished Entrepreneur of the Year honouree, took to the stage at the Victoria Conference Centre this spring to accept the award and converse with students and business leaders about his philosophy on business, life and success in the tech world.

Butterfield stresses that “success makes a lousy teacher”—it was, after all, in the failure of both of his game ventures that he ultimately found success. His first project, Game Neverending, an intricate multiplayer video game, never attained success, but in its collapse, Butterfield came up with a new idea. “We had developed all this incredible technology, so we thought there must be something we can do with this to come to market more quickly,” says Butterfield. He soon developed a new plan, using his team’s technology to create a start-up devoted to online photo sharing—a project that became the website Flickr. After selling Flickr to Yahoo! and leaving the company in 2008, Butterfield returned to game development. Yet his new game, Glitch, failed in a similar fashion to Game Neverending.

“We’re often told to follow our dreams and never give up,” he says, “but there’s also a point where you should stop throwing good money after bad, and realize that this thing just isn’t going to work.” Butterfield used the remaining start-up capital from Glitch to further develop the real-time collaboration and messaging platform that his team had created and used internally while working on Glitch. That collaboration platform was eventually launched as Slack, and now boasts over eight million daily users.

It was at UVic that Butterfield originally discovered his passion for computers. “In 1992 I went to the basement of the Clearihue building, and was given my first account in the school’s UNIX machine. That gave me access to the internet, which completely changed my life,” Butterfield remembers. He was astonished by the types of relationships computers could create. “I loved the idea that we could transcend geography and connect with people with whom we shared interests.”

A philosophy student at heart, Butterfield wasn’t afraid to share his thoughts on some of the issues facing the corporate world in the modern era.

Butterfield believes communication is key in order to fight dissatisfaction in the workplace. “There’s a lot of alienation and most of it comes from not understanding the context of where decisions are being made, and so a lot of cynicism creeps in.” Butterfield believes that transparency and the creation of a shared company vision are integral to leading a successful company. “To the extent that people are able to know how decisions are being made, they are much more empowered and more capable.”

At Slack, Butterfield is focused on creating a different kind of workplace. The company has devoted itself to investigating pay equity and rates of promotion. It now ensures the company fosters an environment where the rates of attrition are significantly lower than the rest of the tech industry. Butterfield believes all corporations need to have honest conversations about the way they do business. “At Slack, the way we conduct ourselves in the world is to very a high ethical standard, and to the degree that we’re successful, hopefully people will try to emulate that.”
word to the wise

MBA grad translates love of language into business venture

by Keith Norbury

B

Y THE TIME she was four, Ottawa-born-and-raised Catherine Bedeski, MBA ’05, was already fluent in Mandarin and English. So naturally, her Taiwanese mother and American father decided to enroll her in French immersion. “Languages have always come easily to me. My parents instilled the importance of being multi-lingual and multi-cultural,” says Bedeski.

“Hearing English and Chinese at home, I absorbed its rhythms and meanings before I could speak them. I don’t even remember becoming fluent in French because I was so young when I started.” She has since picked up perfect fluency in Spanish and Japanese, as well.

The surprise, therefore, is not that Bedeski would eventually become a professional translator and start her own burgeoning translation company, Progengo LLC, despite her Taiwanese heritage. It was a natural progression of her passion.

“Going in, I was focused on the technology side of things,” Bedeski recalls. “I didn’t realize that a company was made up of so many different areas — like the finance and the marketing. That’s when I decided that I wanted to go into business.”

So she enrolled in UVic’s MBA program, citing its non-traditional specializations and small class sizes as determining factors, and knowing these would allow her to define her own career rather than the other way around.

Shortly after earning her MBA in 2005, Bedeski moved to Seattle to work for Microsoft as a business analyst and ultimately a senior financial analyst. Then in 2010, she went on maternity leave, and began looking for a way to support herself while caring for her daughter at home.

After stints teaching violin and editing from home, she took the leap in 2012 and founded her own translation company, Progengo LLC, which is where she really applied what she learned at UVic’s business school. Today she matches her clients — which include Microsoft, Amazon and Washington State government agencies — with about 100 translation contractors.

While Bedeski herself has certifications from Washington State’s Department of Health and Social Services to interpret French and Spanish, her company’s roster of contractors provides translation services for many other languages, including Russian, German, Korean and certain Indian dialects. Services include translating written documents but also interpreting spoken language.

Her work in the social services sector, which is primarily interpretation, is particularly important to her. Her day-to-day work often involves non-English speakers who rely on these services to survive in the U.S. Bedeski’s past work and reputation has gained her clients in Seattle and around the world. Her work has taken her into medical facilities and schools, as well as the entertainment industry and high-tech sector, where she has served as a conference interpreter for visiting delegations and teams at Fortune 500 companies. (A personal highlight: Bedeski was also a simultaneous interpreter for music legends Amadou & Mariam when they performed in Seattle.)

“One challenge that applies to all industries is to keep up with all the terminology, because language is constantly evolving,” Bedeski says. “I try my best to keep up in my language by continually reading, constantly listening to the radio in French, Spanish, Chinese, English and Japanese any chance that I can.”

Much of Bedeski’s time now is spent on the business end instead of actual translation, work that involves vetting the interpreters, including personal interviews, to ensure their credentials and abilities are up to snuff.

For the most part, she has received rave reviews — on Yelp.com, often the bane of an entrepreneur’s existence, and elsewhere. She even received a People Love Us on Yelp award in 2016, an honour she didn’t know was coming.

“I’m particularly proud about that,” she says. “Sometimes it comes in waves. But more than pride, her business provides her with a good income and the feeling that she’s empowering people to communicate effectively.

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One BCom’s co-op term with start-up Tiny Life Supply

by Carlos Chicas Berti

Jeremy Saimoto, a third-year BCom student from Smithers, BC, returned to his hometown last summer for an unconventional summer co-op work term: sales coordinator with Tiny Life Supply, an online store dedicated to supporting the growing tiny house movement worldwide.

The company, primarily a shopping and logistics business, sources sustainable products from around the world to its online store, helping provide specialized building materials to customers in the tiny house industry.

Saimoto’s co-op placement has given him the opportunity to operate large parts of Tiny Life Supply’s day-to-day business. “A normal workday for me can include anything—reaching out to new suppliers, tracking orders, talking to customers, building the website,” Saimoto explains. Yet he enjoys the challenge of working for a young and vibrant start-up. “I love to have different problems to solve everyday.”

Tiny Life Supply was founded in 2016, by friends Axel Whalen and Jake Daly, and was originally intended to be a personal tiny-house building project. “They were building tiny homes in the hopes of creating a small community, but they were having trouble sourcing most of the materials during the building process,” Saimoto says. Hoping to make tiny living more accessible, Whalen and Daly partnered to create Tiny Life Supply. The company has now evolved into a global online retailer and tiny-living resource hub.

Saimoto didn’t know much about the tiny house movement before he started his job. “The movement is actually huge—it’s just taking off right now, but the basic principle is ‘you can live the same life with less.’” Saimoto says. The movement’s ethos is centred around sustainable living and recognizing the effect humans are having on the environment. “Lots of people are choosing tiny houses in order to scale back and have a smaller impact on the planet.”

As their eponymous name suggests, tiny houses are in fact tiny. Generally between 200–400 square feet in total, they can be found both on and off wheels. To some, these houses serve as a summer residence, but for a growing number of people tiny houses are becoming primary homes.

“Vancouver has had three or four new builders pop up because it’s becoming so expensive to live there, and so people unable to afford a traditionally sized house are looking at alternatives. Being able to buy a tiny home for under $50,000 and owning it straight out is an attractive alternative.”

Yet the tiny house movement still has obstacles in its way. “Right now local legislation is holding it back,” Saimoto says, citing bylaws in cities like Vancouver that prohibit people from living in what the city considers RVs. “They won’t let you park anywhere, and generally we don’t meet the size requirements for a house. But once we cross that barrier and legislation changes, the movement is likely to explode.”

Saimoto shares the owners’ vision of a new way of doing business. “What makes these guys smile is seeing the tiny house movement grow,” he says. “It’s not just about financial success; their goal is for their business to make a difference in the world. If that means we lower our prices, lower our profit margins but make more people tiny houses—then that’s what we’re going to do.”

While we can quibble about the empirical status of poverty and inequality—how to measure it and how much it is changing—the fact is that both poverty and inequality is a stubborn persistent part of the human condition. Like religion, capitalism and marriage, poverty and inequality are well-established social institutions. Second, and perhaps more important for the purposes of this essay, how we talk about the phenomenon is an important and as revealing as the debate about whether poverty or inequality are growing or receding.

When you examine the terms being used today—“income inequality,” “social cohesion,” “promoting shared prosperity”—an underlying assumption emerges: namely that inequality, today, is an exclusive preserve of business and economics. Not only do economists hold the legitimate authority to describe the problem, there seems to be an implicit presumption that the ultimate solutions to inequality will come from that domain as well.

How did we get here? How did the debate shift from resolving the “ever-spreading pool of stagnant misery” (1892) to “promoting shared prosperity” (2017)? When did inequality become more compelling than poverty?

Rhetoricians remind us that words matter. The language that we employ to describe the world reveals hidden assumptions about the way we perceive and construct social reality. Language records our values and unmasks our justification for action. Most critically, our choice of language reveals the underlying ideological assumptions via unique research into inequality as a stubborn social institution and explores an implicit process model by which talk first creates inequality and then reinforces the rational myths of the contemporary institutional environment. Dominated as we are by the language and impulses of economics and management, we are preoccupied with the rational myths of poverty and inequality too often passed from one generation to the next.

This special issue of Journal of Management Studies expands on these ideas via unique research into inequality as a stubborn social institution and explores an implicit process model by which talk first creates inequality and then reinforces the rational myths of poverty. How did we get here? How did the debate shift from resolving the “ever-spreading pool of stagnant misery” (1892) to “promoting shared prosperity” (2017)? When did inequality become more compelling than poverty?

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Chase Cedar  
Program: BCom  
Graduation Year: 2017  
Business Name: Koi Research Group Inc.  
Business Update: Over the past nine months, we have created an online network where blockchain researchers, instructors and students can discuss projects, share and learn from peers and thought leaders. Although we are an early-stage start-up, we have secured sufficient capital to bootstrap our venture and are on track for the release of our coin map application and opening a physical blockchain academy with a partner organization in Vancouver for 2019.

Nitin Gupta  
Program: MBA with International Exchange  
Graduation Year: 1999  
Personal/Career Update: I am a firm believer of sustainable relationships in the workplace—having developed and maintained strong relationships with people I have only met once. I would like to express my gratitude to our local HR and management team for their support over the years. This award is a reminder of the strength of our network and the value of our partnerships.

Andrew Johns  
Program: BCom  
Graduation Year: 2000  
Business Name: Cash Management Group & HoneyBadger  
Business Update: After 18 productive years in the finance and accounting industry, I decided to move my financial advisory team, the Cash Management Group, to Canaccord Genuity. We work with municipalities, public corporations and other entities across Canada. Currently, we manage $2.5 billion in assets and are on track to reach $3 billion by the end of the year. In 2016, I founded the bitcoin start-up HoneyBadger. Today, it is Canada’s largest bitcoin kiosk network and we are growing rapidly. I thoroughly enjoy the daily challenges that both businesses present and I am proud to employ over 20 talented individuals, including several UVic graduates.

Natasha Lacasse  
Program: MGB  
Graduation Year: 2016  
Personal/Career Update: In 2017, I dusted off my suitcase and moved to Austria to work at Fronius International GmbH in the international HR department. I support the managing directors and HR staff in our foreign subsidiaries with their local HR needs and work together with them to develop, implement and manage a variety of HR-related projects. I love working abroad—no two days are the same, and although it can sometimes be challenging, it is always rewarding.
As an activist

by Angela Cowan

A N ACTIVE VOLUNTEER since her mid-teens, Arielle Houghton, BCom ’18, has always had a powerful sense of connection with her community and environment. That connection has only grown stronger through her years at Gustavson, and it appears to be here to stay: Houghton starts a full-time position at grassroots organizer Dogwood BC this fall.

Houghton found early on that Gustavson aligned closely with her own ideals.

“It was very focused on leadership and human resources, and they talked about the importance of knowing yourself and what you want to do with the start of your career,” says Houghton, adding that one instructor even touched on meditation and other holistic approaches.

“And there was an entire class dedicated to business and sustainability,” she says. “Not just green, but what does it mean to take the environment and people and profit all into consideration, and build a business which is one of integrity, and delivers value not only to the shareholders but also their stakeholders.”

That focus on the triple bottom-line throughout the program strengthened Houghton’s already strong sense of social responsibility and drive for connection, some of which was forged on a backpacking trip through southeast Asia. The trip, taken between her second and third years at Gustavson, left a deep impression and searing awareness of her own privileged position. “It was my first time in a developing country. The poverty, the pollution, the child labour, the sex industry — I was really challenged by that,” she says.

As she reflected afterward, “This trip was one of many formative moments for me — now, having travelled to nine countries and lived in three, I have become explicitly aware of my culture, history and privilege. It has shaped the way in which I interact with the world and the responsibility I feel to create a more inclusive place that respects all life.”

Business is the kind of thing where I can take those skills and apply them to the non-profit sector and really help out."

For the next five hours I got to pick his brain,” she laughs. When he found out what Houghton was studying and that she’s already begun volunteering with Dogwood, he encouraged her to apply for an internship in future. She walked away from the conversation, and the trip, with an inkling of where her young career might go. It was also a connection which ultimately led to ongoing work in a field that has meaning for her.

In a twist of fate, the trip to southeast Asia also introduced her to the executive director of Dogwood BC — the province’s largest nonpartisan citizen action network, with a formidable track record of tackling high-profile issues such as resource extraction and political party campaign finance laws — who happened to be sitting in the seat next to her on a connecting flight.

“And there was an entire bank campaign that mobilized thousands of people submitting their feedback. I was one of many formative moments for me — now, having travelled to nine countries and lived in three, I have become explicitly aware of my culture, history and privilege. It has shaped the way in which I interact with the world and the responsibility I feel to create a more inclusive place that respects all life.”

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She’s lived her advice as well, particularly since becoming involved with Dogwood. As a volunteer, Houghton started the Dogwood UVic club, which was Dogwood’s first fully functional university campus club, as well as organizing students on campus to motivate and educate their peers on where and how to vote. As a staff member, Houghton helped organize and execute a phone bank campaign that mobilized approximately 10,000 people to attend the Protect the Inlet peaceful demonstration in opposition to the Kinder Morgan pipeline. She also assisted in mobilizing Capital Regional District constituents to participate in the public consultation period on oil spills in April, resulting in thousands of people submitting their feedback.

“If I were to pass something on to business students, or really just anyone who’s living a fairly comfortable lifestyle — it would be to think about, ‘What is the privilege that I have here that other people don’t?’” says Houghton. “What are the challenges that I never have to look in the eye, and how can I be of service?’”

She also advocates for some self-reflection. “What are the things you care about? Then do some research. Find out what’s going on in your area and see if you can get involved,” she says.

“I’ve realized that there are so many incredible, good things we can do in the world — things that have personal significance and can help you connect with the opportunity in your local community.”

Working (and living) as an activist

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Following the heart on the path toward purpose

by Natasha Rohani, BCom ’13

SOMETIMES YOU KNOW exactly where you stand, why you’re there and where you are going. And other times, it can take a few twists and turns on the path to show your real destination.

Starting at the University of Victoria at the age of 17 was new and exciting, but like many of my classmates, I had no idea who I was or what I wanted to be. I chose a degree in commerce that felt safe at the time and would grant me opportunities. I knew that being able to go straight into university was a privilege, but without a clear purpose, I was unable to find meaning in my work and was floundering to just get by. Every decision felt like a shot in the dark. I had this longing for something more, but I didn’t know what.

My longing for meaning temporarily subsided as my degree came to a close, and I celebrated my graduation. Soon, the longing returned. I moved to Vancouver and started to volunteer at a transition home for women and children who were fleeing violence, an area close to my heart. I also began working with the BC crisis intervention and suicide prevention centre as a volunteer crisis service responder. I was taught how to respond and support those in crisis. It seemed surreal, working in something I was so passionate about and using my degree! From that point, I began to actively apply the skills and knowledge I acquired from my degree to projects compatible with my passion for supporting others.

Eventually, this meant moving back to Vancouver to pursue a masters degree in counselling psychology, but not without some hesitation. I thought my background in commerce would disadvantage me, but to my surprise, it made me stand out. My time at UVic had taught me to creatively and confidently pursue my passion, and this led me to opportunities that I would never have had otherwise.

My knowledge in business allowed me to support women with career guidance, resume building and interview skills. I was able to use my knowledge of service management to mentor and build strong relationships with my peers and clients. I brought this same knowledge to working with a not-for-profit organization, the Pacific Assistance Dogs Society, auditing its volunteer program and creating a strategic plan to improve structures. (Prior to this, I was a volunteer puppy raiser, training four-legged colleagues like Pippin, pictured here!) During my masters degree, I started to work as a concurrent disorders counsellor working with addictions, and a trauma counsellor at a feminist organization with women who have experienced violence throughout their lives. Going forward, my knowledge will only continue to enhance my career path as I build a private practice, go into leadership roles, and work with organizations that are in line with my values.

Life has a funny way of working out sometimes; no experience is ever in vain. Despite the indirect path and occasional chaos that ensued while connecting fully with my purpose, I have never felt more certain that I am exactly where I am meant to be.

**STOP in Santorini**

by Tamiko Sianen, BCom ’18

Sianen explores the crevasses of the island of Santorini, Greece, while on exchange at Bocconi University in Milan, Italy. “If you take a moment to stop, you’ll encounter moments of tranquility that make exchange truly special.”
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