She’s Magic

JULIE ENG
MAGICIAN

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★ Film Producers
★ Olympic Stager
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Spotlight on performance

As a business school, the word “performance” can mean quarterly results and how an organization meets its goals. But it can also describe how we choose to present ourselves to the world, how we articulate our ideas and how we perform in some capacity. Many of these individuals are accustomed to the limelight: they appear on stages in Victoria and across the world. They step into the spotlight to showcase their expertise, elicit reaction through music or mystify watchers with magic. Some design the stages and choose the camera shots, while others are responsible for making sure the crowd shows up.

Our business students cultivate public speaking and communication skills through case competitions, group work and pitches. The RBC Case Competition — a cornerstone of the Gustavson BCom program for 15 years — is an excellent example of applied performance at the student level. In this issue, we celebrate the anniversary of our partnership with RBC, and all that our students have gained from the competition.

Another long-time champion of our students was feted at the school on April 28. David Black, founder of Black Press Inc., has been a dedicated supporter of the business school for almost three decades. He has given of his time, serving on our board of directors, providing extensive student mentorship and advocating on our behalf. David's transformational financial contribution through the Black Press Scholarship has made a significant difference in the lives of over 280 students. Look for more about him in the fall 2019 issue of Business Class.

As we reflect on some of the stories from our alumni and our broader community, we see that both how we perform and what we perform matter. Gustavson students are passionate and inspired about their work and their lives, and what they take out into the world upon graduation. I am encouraged by their achievements, and grateful for the community support and committed faculty and staff at Gustavson who make it all possible.

Message from the Dean

Dr. Saul Klein
Dean, Peter B. Gustavson School of Business
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There’s No Biz Like Show Biz

Liam McDonald brings an entrepreneurial spirit to Victoria’s theatre scene

by Stacey McLachlan

Iam McDonald, BCom ’15, was 14 years old in 2007 when he saw Spamalot on Broadway during a trip to New York with his family. And while he didn’t fully get what was going on, he knew he wanted in on it.

“I was way too young to grasp all the jokes, but the audience was dying with laughter, and I thought, ‘I wanna do that,’” says McDonald, who now works as director of product and sales at Giftbit, a rewards platform that allows people to buy, send and control digital gift cards.

McDonald spent the rest of that family vacation banging rocks together in imitation of the famous Monty Python hit and driving his family crazy. But just a few years later, he was on stage himself, playing Thénardier in his Calgary performing arts school’s production of Les Misérables.

( Applying for this specialty school was the result of a bit of teenage bravado: “A girl I had a crush on told me she was auditioning for a dance program there and I panicked and told her I was applying to the school, too,” he laughs.)

He loved the theatre, but as he got ready to graduate, performing arts school’s production of Les Misérables.

“Closing Time” while wandering the empty box store. The resulting video went viral and landed him a CNN interview.

So when he went to see a show at Victoria’s McPherson Playhouse between semesters and came across an audition call for his old favourite, Spamalot, it didn’t seem like a big leap to get back on stage. Though he was rusty and a little intimidated by the close-knit theatre scene, McDonald mustered up the courage to audition—and got the part. Since then, McDonald has become a regular in local productions, earning rave reviews with his work in roles like Mark Cohen in Rent.

The world of theatre might not seem like an obvious place to flex one’s business school muscles, but McDonald actually finds himself regularly tapping into lessons from his Gustavson days.

“When you do a show, you’re partaking in a mini start-up in a way: you’re getting together and trying to make a thing in six months with deadlines and limited funding. For me, there really is no business like show business.”

Although technically offstage from nine to five, McDonald is also making waves in Victoria’s tech scene with his day job. At Giftbit, he applies his theatre expertise to the business world. “There’s an advantage in being able to think on your feet and to empathize with others. You learn so much about people in acting as you step into the shoes of characters. And the ability to understand other perspectives goes miles in business.”

In the future, McDonald hopes to enter a director or producer role, where the similarities between boardroom and stage will become even clearer: the leadership skills, strategic thinking and management of the business world all lend themselves directly to the management side of the theatre, too. And while his time at Gustavson is over, his education continues.

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“I learn something new every time I do a show,” he says. “I think both those things inform and complement each other in a big way.”
A Question of Cultural Diversity at Work

As a bicultural person, how can I use my unique skills to help me perform at work?

by Dr. Stacey Fitzsimmons

If you’re part of the 40 per cent of Canada’s population who will be immigrants or the children of immigrants by 2050, you might identify with more than one culture. For example, you may see yourself as Chinese-Canadian, Arab-Canadian or Brazilian-Canadian.

As a bicultural person, there are absolutely ways in which you can use your unique skills to help you perform at work. Gustavson professor David Thomas, Echo Liao (BSEE Business School), and I decided to find out how.*

We ran three studies with a total of 1,196 participants to find out how bicultural employees contribute to their workplaces.

We discovered that many bicultural people keep one foot in each of their cultures, giving them special knowledge that lets them navigate between groups of people with one culture (“monoculturals,” in our linglo). Here are a few work activities in which bicultural employees tend to perform especially well.

COMMUNICATION BONUS

Most obviously, many biculturals know more than one language, so are able to help with casual translation inside or outside the workplace.

Beyond language skills, bicultural employees are often skilled at adapting to cross-cultural situations. They’ve grown up learning how to change their behaviours to fit different cultural environments.

For example, a Chinese-German person will probably be able to switch between communicating directly (common in Germany) and speaking more indirectly (common in China), depending on the audience. If you have this skill, you can rely on it to help you perform within global teams or when working with clients.Over.

SOLVING COMPLEX INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS

Compared to monoculturals, who have only one cultural lens as a reference, biculturals can often analyze international issues at a deeper level.

For example, a French-Irish-Cambodian team member was working for L’Oreal on the development of skin care products for the French market. He saw the opportunity to combine wrinkle-reducing features with tinted makeup, something his French colleagues had not considered.**

He was able to combine his insider knowledge of both Cambodian and French beauty products to create a successful new product.

If you’re bicultural, try to use your cultural lenses to think differently about your next work project. You might discover that you can rely on your cultural identities to build creative new solutions.

CONNECTING PEOPLE

In one multinational technology company, bicultural individuals helped software development teams overcome serious challenges that threatened their projects.***

These teams had members in the US, Germany and India. When delicate communication was necessary, bicultural individuals succeeded at connecting their teammates across cultures.

If you can see that you have work or friend connections that cross cultural boundaries, you might be able to use your connections to change the social network at your organization. You can help to connect people who would not otherwise be connected.

THE DOWNSIDE: PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING

Despite the advantages of being bicultural, there are also challenges. Bicultural employees often say it’s hard to answer the question: “Who am I?” For many, it’s difficult to make sense of conflicting sets of values, norms, assumptions and expected behaviours from their different cultures.

The silver lining to this challenge is that the process of thinking deeply about how to make sense of your own cultures can help you become even better at integrating multiple perspectives to solve international problems.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU?

Organizations everywhere are facing a labour force and customer base that is increasingly culturally diverse. Working effectively across cultures is now a fundamental requirement for today’s business people. As a bicultural individual, you can use your multiple identities to excel. Dr. Stacey Fitzsimmons is an associate professor at Gustavson.


Standing on top of Whistler mountain, Stefanie Grieser, BCom ’12, straps on her skis and launches herself down the mountain, carving her mark in the fresh snow. The Colorado-native knows that out here, on nature’s stage, everyone is equal. Mother Nature doesn’t discriminate: your ability, skill and experience define you.

It seemed a “no brainer” then that Grieser, co-creator of the public speaking workshop Shine Bootcamp, would take her learnings from the wild and apply them to her professional life to create a level playing field in the public speaking realm.

“I wouldn’t classify myself as a professional public speaker; not many women do,” says Grieser, who launched the speaker bootcamp three years ago. “Women can be thought-leaders and still lack the confidence to raise their hands to speak. When it comes to conferences, there is a gender imbalance, and the bootcamp was launched to address that.”

According to a 2018 study by software company Bizzabo, men make up 68 per cent of speakers at conferences, trade shows and marketing events. It wasn’t until Grieser joined the software company Unbounce in 2012, after completing Gustavson’s entrepreneurship program, that she realized the size of the problem.

“I joined Unbounce when it was a start-up, as their second marketer. The company was growing quickly and I decided to pitch our CEO on starting our offline marketing initiatives and channels. I ended up building out our flagship Call To Action Conference from scratch.”

While Grieser says the inaugural conference was a success, when she looked back at the speaker line-up (consisting of eight male and two female speakers), a lightbulb went off. “It just didn’t sit well with me.”

Grieser made it her mission to get more women on stage — not a simple task.

“At first I thought there weren’t enough qualified female speakers, but what it came down to was I wasn’t trying hard enough to find them.”

Her own stint at public speaking gave her additional insight, and an understanding of the importance of coaching.

“I did some public speaking at university, but nothing beyond that. So when I decided to speak at the Unbounce conference in front of 1,000 people, I reached out to one of the founders who is a keynote speaker and got him to coach me.”

Grieser admits she was nervous and doubted her ability. “I didn’t think I was qualified to be on stage with all those other professionals.”

In fact, Grieser ended up with a Top 10 speaker rating at the conference.

She went on to write a blog post about her experience with diversity at conferences as both a conference organizer and speaker, and it went viral. Instead of just talking about the problem, however, she wanted to take action, and Shine Bootcamp was born.

That first year, Shine received more than 40 applications for the 15 slots. Participants were required to attend online workshops in the run-up to the three-day bootcamp to be sure their presentations were completed. This ensured that during the event participants could receive one-on-one coaching and end up with a polished presentation, which could be recorded and used to pitch to other event organizers. “It was a big success. The buzz just spread from there.”

Despite increasing demand, Grieser wants to grow the business modestly, keep the quality of the programs high and focus on diversity beyond just women. Shine wants to provide a platform for others who are underrepresented and aims to make space for the LGBTQIA+ community, persons with disabilities and people of colour.

Perhaps in coming years Shine will become bigger, maybe even a franchise,” says Grieser. For now, she sees it as a passion project, undertaken alongside her role as director of growth at Sphere, a technology start-up that is shaking up the coaching space.

Grieser credits her time at UVic for giving her even more of a global mindset. “Gustavson truly aligned with how I think and how I was raised. I got the chance to study in Istanbul, Turkey, as part of the exchange program, and work at some big companies during my co-op that made me realize my passion lay with start-ups. It offered me a range of transferable business skills,” she says.

As for advice for anyone thinking they could never be a public speaker, she says, “As long as you have a story and are an expert in your field, you can do it. I don’t think you ever stop being nervous, but with the right tools and support, you will feel the confidence to raise your hand alongside everyone else.”
companies are clamouring to have you feature their brand on your channels. As the newest iteration of brand endorsers, it looks so easy. Take some great photos, come up with a cute caption that catches your followers’ attention and voilà!

behind the scenes. There are many elements to juggle, from content creation to follower engagement and corporate connections, each requiring a different set of skills, including creativity, customer service and contract negotiation. It sounds a bit like owning a business, doesn’t it? Like any start-up, success doesn’t happen overnight. **What are their credentials? Do they embody the qualities that your business stands for?**

That synergy is echoed by Barber and Sims. “I’ve said no more than I’ve said yes,” Barber says of working with brands. “It’s important that I am a good fit for the company I work with: my brand needs to align with theirs.” Sims adds, “I have to like and believe in the product in order to promote it (I won’t just do it for the money).”

This caution is part of their success as influencers. They have a responsibility to their followers that’s not lost on Sims. “Alcohol is a touchy subject and, in being a role model, I have to be conscious of delivering content in a fun but responsible way.”

Barber, whose following is predominantly young women, is determined to help empower them. “My biggest message to my audience is that being yourself is the most beautiful thing,” she says. “The last thing I’d ever want to promote is that everyone has to be just like me. I want to inspire and encourage them to be the best version of themselves. That’s what makes this my dream job.”

Barber cautions, that it’s not an overnight success. “Some brands now reach out to work with them. But again, there is some前期 planning and relationship building. Knowing the right questions to ask when choosing your influencers is key.”

Patrice Donalds, MBA ’01, managing director of Engenue Consulting, provides marketing and social media management services to her clients. “Companies considering working with digital influencers to promote their brands need to examine the credibility of the influencer. Do they have a body of work? Are they relevant to your audience?”

The answer to these questions will determine what kind of relationship you can expect with your influencers. What do their values align with? What do you hope to achieve through working with digital influencers? Just as important as aligning with the right people, is the right timing for the relationship. Your influencers’ audience may or may not overlap with your business’s target audience. It’s also important to know what kind of marketing they do to monetize it. Knowing how much content they produce, what kind of content they produce and how much revenue they make is key to knowing how much to pay them.

**How do you determine when you’ve found a good match?**

Barber’s complaining. “Leopard Couture is a job of passion and engagement was invested into her channel. Not that I don’t respect the work put into it, but I wish they could understand how much time and effort is put into creating content.”

Many digital influencers now see themselves as entrepreneurs, and engage in social media management as a business. “If I’m not making money with this business, I’m not going to put in the effort,” Sims says.

Both alumnae have grown their audiences to the point of the influence world. She has developed a following that is predominantly young women, and is determined to help empower them. “My biggest message to my audience is that being yourself is the most beautiful thing,” she says. “The last thing I’d ever want to promote is that everyone has to be just like me. I want to inspire and encourage them to be the best version of themselves. That’s what makes this my dream job.”

She’s not alone in thinking it’s the ideal career. Donalds has some parting advice to those looking to work with or become digital influencers. “People are people regardless of the channel you’re on, and they’re still going to be triggered by the same sorts of things: something that reminds them of home, of a good moment, of memories; so the storytelling still has starpower. Social media marketing is marketing on a sugar rush because everything and everyone wants you to move at light speed. But really effective, ground-breaking, lasting marketing requires measured, strategic moves. So don’t forget how to balance both.”
WONDER... CONJURES MAGIC

by Keith Norbury

MAGIC has played a leading role in her life for as long as Julie Eng, BCom ’95, can remember. “The story goes that I wasn’t delivered by the stork,” the Toronto-based Eng says. “I was pulled out of the hat.”

She learned her first magic trick from her magician father, Tony Eng, when she was just a toddler. He later introduced her to a secret world that would eventually permeate every aspect of her life and lead her to networking with the likes of Las Vegas showmen Penn and Teller.

It wasn’t until Eng studied entrepreneurship at the University of Victoria, however, that she learned a few business tricks — such as mastering the mysteries of accounting — that gave her the tools to truly succeed at her chosen stagecraft.

“I’m very proud to have had my time at UVic,” Eng says. “I think it’s made a fundamental difference in my life.”

Born and raised in Victoria, Eng is the daughter of one the city’s most beloved magicians, who for decades owned the eponymous Tony’s Trick Shop downtown. Growing up, Julie, alongside her mother and her younger sister, often shared the stage with their dad. But Tony Eng, who grew up in Sidney and was a barman, he ran a wholesale business and a bartending school. From his trick and joke shop, he ran a wholesale business and a bartending school.

“So I grew up in that world of ‘you’ve got to work, you’ve got to work hard, and you’ve got to be aware of about 3,000 things at once,’” Eng says. At UVic, Eng dabbled in disciplines such as psychology, economics and education. It seems only natural now that, in her second year, she gravitated to the entrepreneurship program.

“As I got to the higher-level courses, and class sizes became smaller, I really found my classmates and I were very like-minded,” Eng says, recalling her move into the commerce program. “We were really getting into it. I loved it.”

Well — it may not have been “love” for everything at first. Not strong at math, she hated accounting and found the double-entry system particularly vexing. But her UVic instructor challenged her to alter her style of thinking.

“The story goes that I wasn’t delivered by the stork,” the Toronto-based Eng says. “I was pulled out of the hat.”

“Something that magicians know better than most is that you can’t always believe your eyes.”

For example, the lessons proved invaluable in her role as executive director of Toronto-based Magicana, a non-profit organization that, according to its mission statement, is “dedicated to the study, exploration and advancement of magic as a performing art.”

Founded in 2000 by magician David Ben and others, Magicana offers programs like My Magic Hands, a magic-teaching program designed for at-risk youth, and Senior Sorcery, which brings live magic to retirement homes and care facilities. Through these programs, Eng has brought imagination and delight to thousands of Canadians, and has also taught children to perform their own magic as an injury rehabilitation and confidence-building technique.

Over the course of her 30-plus-year career as a magician, Eng has appeared on many notable stages, most recently on the set of CBC’s The Nature of Things.

In the episode entitled “The Science of Magic,” Eng joins researchers in neurobiology and psychology as they use magic to explore cognition and consciousness.

“Something that magicians know better than most is that you can’t always believe your eyes,” says Eng at the beginning of the episode. Magicians have to be expert audience managers, manipulating quirks of human cognition to influence viewers.

“It was a wonderful opportunity and I’m dying for the chance to do more stuff like that,” Eng says. Eng pours her heart and soul into the magic industry, and she feels the rewards of community and career have repaid this amply.

“I am very lucky. A lot of people have put their arm around me in their magic-learning and have given me great advice, great information, great coaching,” she says.

She also met her husband, Suleyman Fattah, on the set of David Ben’s show The Conjuro in 1997. Sadly, Fattah died of a heart attack in January 2017 at age 53. A talented illustrator and artist, Fattah “loved working behind the scenes and making the magic happen off stage,” says Eng. They worked together on many shows over the years, and later at Magicana.

These days, most of Eng’s time is spent running Magicana and appearing on stages and at conferences across North America.

“I’m very fortunate because I love my job. My job is around something that I have grown up with — magic. It’s near and dear to me for many, many reasons.”

One reason is simply that it evokes a sense of wonder.

“I want to wow people and I feel like magic allows me to do that in a very non-invasive way. In the sense that I’m not selling them anything,” she says. “I get to remind them of the power of imagination and being open to the seemingly impossible.”

MAGICIAN JULIE ENG CONJURES WONDER...
Hartwell.

Belfry Theatre. Set

Dr. Steve Tax on FACULTY RESEARCH specialization, emphasizes in his research.

of Gustavson's service management theatrics are what Dr. Steve Tax, champion about the type of experience you will be

and the smartly dressed staff, all tell a story about the type of experience you will be having. These elements of storytelling and theatrics are what Dr. Steve Tax, champion of Gustavson’s service management specialization, emphasizes in his research. Many scholars have described customer service as an experience with the frontline service staff (actors), processes (script) and physical environment (set) resembling a live theatrical performance.

“The idea of customer service as a performance is not new, but my question was, if service is a performance, where can we observe best practices?” says Tax. He chose to study the theatre because of the industry’s long history of mastering a system delivering performance efficiently and effectively. He turned to the renowned Belfry Theatre in Victoria, BC to learn how performances are designed.

“The process in most theatres is the same but the culture at the Belfry makes it particularly compelling to study,” explains Tax. The Belfry Theatre is a professional theatre company producing contemporary plays, with an emphasis on Canadian theatre company producing contemporary plays, with an emphasis on Canadian theatre. Tax sought to learn how it is able to reach a high standard of performance in such a short time frame: the Belfry operates on a one-month production cycle. Students in Tax’s customer experience management course go to the Belfry to observe the performance design and apply those elements to the service experience.

“Empathetic design is based on a deep understanding of what touches the customers.”

- Steve Tax

Tax has learned that the elements necessary for a good theatre performance also make for a good customer experience. These include authenticity, engagement and empathy. Authenticity enhances customer experiences, allowing them to be more immersed in the performance without distraction. This includes a careful attention to detail. In the Italian restaurant, a distracting element could be something incongruous, such as opera music playing over the speakers or pictures of Greece adorning the walls.

Engagement refers to the level of audience participation in the performance, which creates a connection and ensures a memorable experience. The Belfry welcomes audience members to the experience the moment they walk in, and everything from the programs to the hosts set the stage for the performance. The Belfry spends considerable time assessing the performance from the point of view of the audience and continuously makes adjustments to ensure audience engagement.

How can managers apply the lessons from the theatre in their careers? They can start by seeing themselves as the director of the customer service performance.

“You can’t design the experience the customer has, but you can design and support the performance to achieve the impact you want,” says Tax, adding, “Outstanding service derives from a great service culture focused on telling a compelling story that resonates with customers.” Every element of the performance should be carefully designed to tell that story.

It is also vital the experience be empathetic, designed for the customers themselves. “Empathetic design is based on a deep understanding of what touches the customers,” says Tax. “A good manager should be able to connect with customers and observing, supporting and coaching front line staff.” As the Belfry experience teaches, teamwork and communication is vital to problem solving and delivering a superior performance.

Finally, Tax observed the passion people in the theatre have for their work, which contributes to authenticity and customer engagement. “You can sense the emotion when employees are passionate for the roles they play,” says Tax.

To Tax, the theatre provides an opportunity for his students to experience the key elements of a highly professional and effective performance. It helps them understand that all the world is truly a stage when it comes to the service experience.

Entertainers: ever wondered what it’s like to take part in a start-up accelerator? Stuart Kinneear, Mtus ‘09, MBA ‘11, traveled to Oslo, Norway last fall to participate in Techstars’ energy-industry start-up accelerator. Over three months, he and team members from his Calgary-based company Interface Fluidics had the chance to network, find mentors, pitch, iterate, fail, pivot and ultimately leave with new inspiration—and investors. Interface Fluidics, which Kinneear co-founded in 2016, offers chemical analysis of oil reservoirs to make extraction via hydraulic fracturing more efficient, and in the process, aims to minimize the fresh water needed to extract resources.

Business Class: What was the outcome of your experience in Oslo? Stuart Kinneear: Techstars’ model is “give first.” I think it really is a great mentality for every entrepreneur to have. When it comes to what we are useful for as entrepreneurs, it is our willingness to work hard, our great ideas and our network. And that network is built by helping others, by building that social capital that we all trade in.

BC: Did Techstars change how you do business at all? SK: I have a lot more confidence now. The specific brand of confidence is that I know I’m doing something important, I want to help other entrepreneurs and I don’t have time to wait. “We are doing something important, let’s do it together!” I don’t worry so much about being super polite.

BC: What do you think you brought to Techstars that others needed or didn’t have? SK: I come from a background of working at gigantic companies. I was at Canadian Natural Resources Limited for five years doing contracts. I’m not a lawyer but I have an ability to look at a commercial agreement and understand where the risks and benefits are and how to write one that is acceptable for both parties. Interface Fluidics now has this superpower: the ability to sell to corporates with very little friction. Most of Interface’s customers recently are billion dollar companies. At Techstars, I saw myself as a bit of a mentor for people who had never sold to a big company before. If you’ve never sold to gigantic companies before and you don’t know what’s on the receiving end of what you are trying to pitch, then it’s really impertinent and difficult to work with.

BC: Any other takeaways from Oslo that fellow entrepreneurs might be interested in? SK: The importance of reporting to stakeholders on outcomes. While you are in Techstars, you send a weekly update to every stakeholder. Weekly updates might be overwhelming for most people, but founders often don’t keep their stakeholders informed enough. And it’s not about putting on the rose-coloured shades and saying “these are all the good things and it’s great over here,” it’s saying “it’s good, but this and this and this are really bad, it’s a real problem and how can we solve it?” Learning to ask for help transparently will get you so much further than only showing the traction you’ve had.

BC: How do you know if you’re listening to the right people? SK: It takes a certain amount of crazy to quit your job and start a company. You have to believe in your ability to think critically. When I’m seeking advice, I ask for very specific feedback on one problem and I’ll probably get 10 completely conflicting pieces of advice. But then I can use my own thought to say, “I think this person was onto something here, and this person there,” and then I can synthesize it into my own solution for the problem. Nobody has perfect advice. You have to be confident in yourself and your ability to process that advice and take it forward.

Step on the Gas

Start-up accelerator helps energy tech company shift to high gear

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Step on the Gas

Start-up accelerator helps energy tech company shift to high gear

Entrepreneurs: ever wondered what it’s like to take part in a start-up accelerator? Stuart Kinneear, Mtus ‘09, MBA ‘11, traveled to Oslo, Norway last fall to participate in Techstars’ energy-industry start-up accelerator. Over three months, he and team members from his Calgary-based company Interface Fluidics had the chance to network, find mentors, pitch, iterate, fail, pivot and ultimately leave with new inspiration—and investors. Interface Fluidics, which Kinneear co-founded in 2016, offers chemical analysis of oil reservoirs to make extraction via hydraulic fracturing more efficient, and in the process, aims to minimize the fresh water needed to extract resources.

Business Class: What was the outcome of your experience in Oslo? Stuart Kinneear: Techstars’ model is “give first.” I think it really is a great mentality for
we were honoured to receive the viewer’s choice award.

and culminated in a sold-out screening at the Victoria Film Festival, where

offered us invaluable mentorship in the industry. The film screened at TIFF Whistler Film Festival 2010, which kicked off funding for the project and

the opportunity to successfully pitch the MPPIA Short Film Award at the

My role was business development/media producer. As a team we had

can’t just make a friend, you have to be one.

the garage. It is a “gothic and stylized film that explores the desire for love

reappears, she realizes there’s something wrong with Olivia! Locations

family. But when her foster sister, Olivia, goes missing and then suddenly

The Hollow Child (2017).

The stars were aligning. The DP was an old friend, Jo has a huge network of actors and actresses she works with, and the casting director had worked with one of the playwrights as a script reader. We were one of the bigger challenges. We needed an eerie set of woods and

for the crew to set up and shoot. We had plenty of local support and volunteers who offered their services, and we worked with the local community to gain support and permission to film in their areas.

It sounds far too easy, but it really is popcorn! My favourite movie night snack?

JR: A few years back I was a field producer on a Sobeys product demo, and it was a truly epic undertaking. It became my favourite almost instantly because of the stellar cast and crew assembled. It’s a story about evil changelings and

the crew size and what that afforded in terms of set location flexibility. It

why a business degree makes a piloting was a dream job to do a travel food show or chef documentary.

BS: Chips!

BC: What's one film (genre/topic/etc.) you aspire to make?

JR: It’s a thriller, and it’s called “The Lost Child.” It was a film that was produced in and it was truly an epic undertaking. It became my favourite almost instantly because of the stellar cast and crew assembled. It’s a story about evil changelings and

independence, the variety of roles available, and the opportunity to be creative.

BS: Exploring new places and meeting new people. Learning things and experiencing worlds I would have never come across if I didn’t have the opportunity to film them. I’ve been lucky to film projects in a variety of incredible places. I’ve also had the opportunity to capture unique brands and companies along the way, learning about entirely new industries.

BC: Was there a moment on a project that you will always look back on with pride?

BC: What's one existing film you would have loved to be part of?

BS: Nope! I am very much a hands-on learner and have

or training other than your BCom?

BS: Yes, many! Business skills come into play with everything

a company. BC: And most importantly: what's your go-to movie night snack?

BS: A drone video of a climber. It was one of the first

requires skill and adrenaline to capture.

BS: Any GoPro launch video! These are the definition of excitement and extreme shots. I’d love to be in the type of environment and chase challenging shots that

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In 2018, we had the opportunity to work with an amazing Vancouver ad agency, 123w, on a spot for St. George’s University in Grenada. Filming in the Caribbean was a surreal experience and definitely the highlight of my career so far, but the most exciting part about this project was the creative approach.

It is technically a commercial, but the final product feels like a mini short film. It’s raw, gritty, fast-paced, shot in black and white, and — for all you film buffs out there — we were able to film on Panavision C-Series Anamorphic lenses. This is the same set that lensed the original Star Wars films. I am particularly proud of this project because it was the product of true creative collaboration.

SM: Definitely. When I graduated from Gustavson, my brother Geoff and I decided to join forces. He has a film degree from Simon Fraser University and I always loved pursuing film projects outside of my business studies. Partnering with our third co-founder, Sebastien, we decided to open a production company. Geoff brought the film experience and I brought the business plan. We needed each other. BOLDLY would not be what it is today if we had not initially had diversity in our skillsets and education.

Business and creative industries go hand in hand. You can work hard every day creating art, but if you do not know how to sell it or get it out into the world, how will you ever make a living doing what you love?

SM: There’s nothing better than the classic — popcorn with butter. My biggest advice is do your research, speak confidently (even if inside you don’t feel confident) and just keep doing it over and over again. Repetition is key to getting comfortable.

BC: What’s your favourite part of your day-to-day work?
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Arda Ates has the best seat in the house

Once every two years, the Olympic Games blaze like a meteor across international headlines. For a few weeks, the Games seem to be on every tongue, front page and television. And then, just as suddenly, they’re gone.

Like the proverbial iceberg, however, what you see on camera is only a tiny percentage of what goes on behind the scenes.

“Olympic organizing committees begin their work seven years before the Games actually begin,” explains Arda Ates, MBA ’06. “Bid committees, which put forward the proposal for a particular city to host, get started about nine years before the competition.”

Ates himself has built a career setting the stage for international sporting events. For the past 11 years, he’s been working to spread the power of sports around the world and promote the positive changes that come with it, explains Ates.

“You need to have analytical, organizational and planning skills, but you also have to be flexible and able to prioritize ruthlessly.” - Arda Ates

A single Olympic Games requires more than 45 venues, so athletes can practice, warm up and compete. Thousands of temporary seats may be needed for any given venue. Add millions of spectators, athletes from around the world and business processes that change depending on the host country, and one can imagine the potential for the unexpected to happen, despite years of planning.

“For this job, you need an operations mind,” says Ates. “You need to have analytical, organizational and planning skills, but you also have to be flexible and able to prioritize ruthlessly, or you’re lost. You also need to be an optimist because so many things can go wrong.”

“During the Vancouver Olympics, I happened to be at the Richmond Olympic Oval when there was an issue with the temporary stairs — one of the steps came out or something. They ask if I can help and I’m in there with the duct tape and the zip ties, helping them fix the stairs. I’m a senior manager — hands-on, finding the solution.”

Who better to be on site than a mechanical engineer with an MBA and project management professional certification? Ates has drawn on all these skills in turn. He can build the strategy, manage the budget — and fix the stairs when one breaks 15 minutes before thousands of people turn up.

“If you want a real challenge, if you want to be under the spotlight, making decisions and problem-solving under enormous pressure with no excuse for delays, and if you like teamwork, it’s the job for you.”

“Olympic organizing committees are their own unique business environment, often employing 6,000 people in functional areas such as medical, security, finance, marketing, venues, sports and more.”

“The venues and overlay team alone is up to 600 people for an Olympic Games,” says Ates. “We are responsible for everything about the physical structure. We decide which existing venues can be used as they are, which need to be renovated or adapted, which will be purpose-built for the games and which will be temporary. And then there are all the add-ons that will be made to the venue, which constitutes the overlay.”

Ates responds to an all-hands-on-deck call for help while consulting at the 2018 European Championships in Glasgow.
MAKING THE CASE FOR 15 YEARS
RBC enables student learning through case competition

by Mackenzie Ford

T’S A BRISK Friday morning in January, and dozens of third-year BCom students flock to the UVic campus with coffee and calculators in hand. Separating into teams and chatting nervously among themselves, the anticipation is tangible as they prepare for three hours of rapid financial calculations, creative marketing analyses and detailed expansion strategies. Once they’ve been ushered into a classroom with no computers, cell phones or external help, an officiator announces, “You have three hours.” The annual RBC Case Competition has begun.

Spearheaded in 2003 by Gustavson professors Chris Graham and David McCutcheon, the competition was created to provide a platform for all third-year BCom students to present a case analysis to a panel of judges and 260 students for six days of competition over two months — the RBC Case Competition has stood the test of time. As the first real exposure to a case competition for Gustavson BCom students, the experience it provides is undeniably valuable.

“In classroom presentations, [the students] have had weeks to prepare, which they don’t for a case competition,” says Graham. “This forces them to get comfortable with group decision-making under pressure.”

The inaugural competition was a success; however, it seemed like there was something missing. Graham wondered, was there a way to further connect the students to the “real world” of business? The answer was yes, and the solution to elevate the initiative was a partnership with RBC.

In the 2004/2005 academic year, the competition transformed into its current name and shape: the RBC Case Competition. With this newfound support, the judging panel expanded to include staff from the bank, and additional funding was provided to broaden the scope of the competition. For the first time there was a cash prize on the line, and students could receive invaluable feedback from industry professionals.

Now, 15 years later, “The RBC Case Competition has become a cornerstone of the Gustavson BCom program. In order to thrive over time, an undertaking of this scope must have champions from the business community, as well as stalwart internal supporters. Simply put, ‘RBC’s support is the thing that makes it all possible,’” says Graham.

The perspective that comes with years in the work force doesn’t seem to be a judge and it gives RBC an opportunity to get a preview glimpse at top talent for the future.”

The perspective that comes with years in the work force doesn’t seem to lessen the value of the competition for participants. Alumni often say that the competition is one of their most memorable experiences from their time in the BCom program.

“What you learn in this competition is a real life skill,” says Tara Hack, BCom ’06, one of the winners of the competition in 2005. “Pitching and selling ideas is a big part of what I do today and getting exposure to that at university is so important. I can still remember the feeling of ‘we totally nailed it,’ and doing it as a team was so exciting. It’s still one of my top five accomplishments.”

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Students from the winning 2019 team (left) and judges from Gustavson, RBC and local businesses.

Thanking our 2018 Gustavson Alumni Donors

Our heartfelt thanks to all our donors for making innovative business education a reality for our students. And a special shout-out to our alumni donors, both those listed here and those who prefer to remain anonymous, for their contributions to UVic in 2018. Your generosity helps ensure today’s students have an experience every bit as meaningful as your own.

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- Scott Butler, BCom ’76
- Anastasia Fernandez, BCom ’00
- Phil Graham, BCom ’10
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- David Jiang, MBA ’94
- Danual Nanjamama, MBA ’01
- Kiris Sheety, MBA ’03
- Michaela Tokarski, MBA ’01
- Sybil Venture, BCom ’97
- Jane Zhu, MBA ’06

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15 years of RBC Case Competition have flown by! To celebrate, we asked a few of our past winners to share where they are now.

**Marcus Brandt**

**Graduation year:** 2009
**Current job:** Director of Marketing and Communications at Children’s Health Foundation of Vancouver Island

**Personal update:** I met my wife Erin in Vancouver, and we got married in 2016. We both love to ski, cycle and play ultimate Frisbee in our free time. When the weather is not so great, we like to cook and bake.

**Favourite RBC memory:** I have a few favourite memories — the first was working with the team to achieve a common goal. We were all very focused on the tasks at hand, and were on the same page. The second was having family and close friends in attendance who otherwise would not have been familiar with what was happening both within the confines of the building and our program in general.

**Coralie McLean**

**Graduation year:** 2009
**Current job:** Director of Marketing and Communications at Children’s Health Foundation of Vancouver Island

**Personal update:** I live in Victoria with my husband Andrew and our two dogs. In my spare time I maintain my company LivelyCo, which is a social media and content writing business, and I’m a contributor for Douglas Magazine.

**Favourite RBC memory:** It’s hard to believe that was 12 years ago! I remember our team just clicking and each person had a role to play right out of the gate. We were so elated when we learned we won!

**Tara Hack (nee McDougall)**

**Graduation year:** 2006
**Current job:** Interior Designer – Workplace

**Personal update:** I’ve lived in London, England for the last six years with my husband and daughter (who was born here). I work for Woods Bagot — an Australian architectural practice — as an interior designer. I have both clients like HP, Ericsson and Unilever to design and deliver office projects throughout Europe.

**Favourite RBC memory:** It’s still one of my top five accomplishments. What you learn in this competition is a real life skill. Pitching and selling ideas is a big part of what I do today, and getting exposure to that at university is so important. I can still remember the feeling of ‘we totally nailed it’ and doing it as a team was so exciting. I love a good SWOT analysis.

**Davin McLeod**

**Graduation year:** 2007
**Current job:** Management Consulting

**Personal update:** Off the job, I love to play outside. After spending half my life playing competitive soccer (including three years for the Uvic Vikes). I’ve found my new passion in outdoor adventure sport – mountain biking, off-road triathlon, open water swimming, ski touring, trekking and mountaineering. There is so much adventure to be had in BC! I also love to travel. I was married this year, and my wife and I just spent three weeks travelling Sri Lanka for our honeymoon.

**Favourite RBC memory:** All I remember from the case competition in 2006 was the nerves we felt in front of the panel of judges, and then the joy of the first place finish!

**Saare Adams**

**Graduation year:** 2006
**Current job:** Owner/Partner at MacPherson Adams, CPAs

**Personal update:** Shortly after graduating, fellow grad Derek Story and I secured venture capital funding to run our business. This proved to be an invaluable lesson in the value of having specific expertise, which led me to obtain my CA designation in 2009. My practice focuses on tax and advisory for small and medium enterprise clients in BC and Alberta.

**Favourite RBC memory:** I met my wife Mel while at UVic and we have a four-year-old son and two-year-old daughter. We’re based in Victoria and spend time at our cabin in the Okanagan.

**Favourite RBC memory:** Finished our presentation and being relieved and very proud; there was little time to analyze the case and I recollect thinking we’d done a great job, regardless of what the competition results were.

**OR BRIANNA DICK,** an accomplished painter from the Songhees First Nation, art has always been a passion. Now, thanks in part to training she completed last November with the Aboriginal Canadian Entrepreneurs (ACE) program, she is also building it into her career.

ACE, a collaboration between TRICORP, the Gustavson School of Business and Indigenous communities and government, has been invited into more than 38 Indigenous communities since it was founded in 2013, offering business training and mentorship to more than 300 aspiring Indigenous entrepreneurs. With federal government support through Western Economic Diversification Canada, philanthropic support from Tim Price and a $1 million gift from BMO Financial Group in 2018, the program was empowered to expand to an artist-focused cohort.

“Over the history of the ACE program, it became clear that Indigenous artists seek specific skills to create a special kind of business model to commercialize their art practices in the ways they deem most appropriate. We are grateful to our advisory board of successful Indigenous artists who have been instrumental in shaping the curriculum and delivery strategy,” says Dr. Brent Mainprize, Gustavson teaching professor and co-director of the ACE for Artists program.

“I think that the idea of a business course to an artist can be a little bit daunting,” says Program Manager Rosy Hartman. “Through the program, however, artists can gain the skills they need to really launch their careers and move from art as a passion or maybe a hobby to a career.”

For the 15th anniversary of RBC Case Competition, 15 past winners were selected to share where they are today and their top memories from their ACE experience.

“Looking at where we’re moving as a faculty and in terms of UVic’s commitment to Indigenous students, it really seemed like an absolutely perfect fit,” says Lewis. “Here in our faculty we’re putting more emphasis on how we can prepare students for careers in the arts through programs that are innovative and community based, with lots of opportunities for experiential learning. As I looked at the ACE program, I saw that a lot of that is in place within that program and extending it to artists exclusively made sense.”

“Over the history of the ACE program, it became clear that Indigenous artists seek specific skills to create a special kind of business model to commercialize their art practices in the ways they deem most appropriate. We are grateful to our advisory board of successful Indigenous artists who have been instrumental in shaping the curriculum and delivery strategy,” says Dr. Brent Mainprize, Gustavson teaching professor and co-director of the ACE for Artists program.

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“I think what I enjoyed the most about the ACE for Artists program is that it kind of gave me the inside scoop of business in our modern world,” says Dick, who was part of the first ACE for Artists cohort. “As Indigenous people we’ve always had that sense of business in terms of trading our items, negotiating deals on land and more, but when it comes to making a contract, knowing the legalities around copyrighting my art or what resources are out there for me as an Indigenous artist — and an artist in general — the program was helpful.”

In order for the ACE for Artists program to excel, there needed to be a high level of collaboration between the business school and the Faculty of Fine Arts.

“The partnership with Fine Arts has been so critical and important to the success of ACE for Artists,” says Mainprize. “There is a lot of excellent art-specific expertise that the Faculty of Fine Arts brought to the table that we really hadn’t had experience with.”

For Dr. Susan Lewis, Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts, the partnership made a lot of sense in terms of the direction in which the faculty wants to move.

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It's Not Always About Keeping More Objects in the Air

by Eden DaSilva

SIX YEARS AGO, Lucas Adverse, BCom ’18, saw a video of Japanese jugglers on YouTube and decided to look up juggling tutorials and give it a shot himself. Today, Adverse is bringing international attention to the arts of juggling and kendama (use of a traditional Japanese skill toy).

With a number of accolades to his name, he has performed around the world and represents the International Jugglers’ Association, the world’s oldest and largest jugglers’ entity. He has consistently ranked as one of the top 40 jugglers worldwide over the last four years (he was number eight in 2017) and recently became the second juggler ever to create a video for Instagram’s own Instagram page, receiving 5.9 million views.

Despite being one of the most well-known figures in the world of juggling, Adverse does it for pleasure: it’s a hobby, not his job. He’s reached this level simply by doing something that brings him joy, and sharing it with others.

“My dream is to have a retail store in Vancouver, selling imported products from Latin America,” says Adverse. “I heard a lot about the business program, and it seemed like the best option for me.”

Thanks in part to the language classes he took at UVic, Adverse is able to speak Spanish, English, Portuguese and Japanese. “I like communicating with and meeting new people, and I love speaking a lot of different languages.” This will serve him well as he pursues a career with an international focus.

But Adverse has no plans to stop juggling or making videos. He claims that most juggling videos don’t reach people outside of the juggling community, and that not many people are aware of what modern juggling looks like. The Instagram feature was a breakthrough in this regard.

“I got so many messages from people who want to start juggling or playing kendama. That’s what I hope to do more. I hope to influence more people to try it.”

According to Adverse, people who are interested in other coordination-based activities can quickly learn to juggle. Growing up in Brazil, Adverse spent his free time playing the drums and learning magic tricks. When he was 14, his parents helped him move to Vancouver. It wasn’t until graduating from high school that he discovered juggling. “People think they need some sort of skill or gift to do it, and never give it a try. But you can’t really learn anything in life without trying, right?”

And Adverse has plenty of reasons why people should try. “When you play any sport, it involves manipulating an object. When you play soccer, basketball or volleyball, it all involves manipulating a ball. Learning to juggle is just learning to manipulate one or more objects. It really helps you in other sports or games and anything that’s related to coordination,” he says, adding that it can improve flexibility and help develop quicker reflexes. “Modern juggling is about quality, not quantity,” he says. “Contemporary juggling focuses on your skill with three objects, rather than keeping as many as possible in the air.”

In the course of pursuing his passion and inspiring others, Adverse has almost accidentally become a digital influencer. Although he didn’t set out to build or capitalize on a personal digital brand, his Instagram account has 43,800 followers and he receives offers regularly from companies and individuals wanting to collaborate with him.

Reflecting on what he’s learned about building an online audience, Adverse says: “I don’t post too much. I don’t post too little. If you post in the same background, or similar tricks, people will think it’s the same thing and they’re not going to appreciate it. The more diverse you are, the better. It keeps me creative, and keeps me from doing the same things over and over.”

Adverse puts his marketing knowledge to work for the International Jugglers’ Association in his capacity as volunteer marketing adviser, making videos, translating text from Japanese to English and managing social media platforms for the organization.

Popularizing juggling and kendama may be his side gig, but he’s not planning to slow down anytime soon. With his accounts gaining new followers every day, Adverse is on track to expose modern juggling to more eyes than ever.

“The whole goal of my videos has been to reach people who don’t juggle. There are so many people that don’t really know about the benefits, but if they try juggling, they might love it.”

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Napoleon Never Slept in This Hotel
by Alexis Nichols, fourth-year BCom

When I first started university with a basketball scholarship in Bellingham, Washington, I never considered travelling, studying or working abroad. Fast forward two years, however, and the business school at UVic and a spot on the varsity basketball team drew me to Canada. Although I hadn’t anticipated it, this taste of international life turned out to be the start of something special to me.

After graduating from the BCom program, I was fortunate enough to land a job with the UVic Vikes athletics and recreation department that truly piqued my interest. My task was simple: get students more interested in our activities. As an ex-varsity basketball player, I knew the value of having big crowds of fellow students supporting our teams at home games. To make this a reality for our campus, I took my value co-creation learnings from BCom classes and launched focus groups to gather ideas. After many conversations with students, collecting feedback and brainstorming about the issue, Vikes Nation was born. The students not only helped create it, but also made it come alive. Vikes staff collaborated with a large group of student volunteers whose mission was to create an active, inclusive athletics community on campus.

Their energy fostered a building passion throughout the school as Vikes Nation gave UVic students a brand to showcase their passion for the university. Nearly every other weekend throughout the school year, Vikes Nation events brought together both students and staff. These events were built to be fun for everyone and engage the campus in unique ways. They ranged from the whimsical — like the student-created Yoga Rave, which was an instant hit and became a marquee Vikes Nation event — to the classic: big varsity events such as the ThunderFest soccer game. At this event, nearly 3,000 UVic students packed the stands for the home-opening games during the first week of school. Spirit on campus was at an all-time high. Professors were wearing Vikes Nation Game Day shirts, students were using #vikesnation on social media and student engagement at Vikes events and activities took off.

For five years, the momentum continued to build. I loved helping foster the passion that lived within UVic. However, it was time for me to grow again.

I heard about the Master of Global Business (MGB) program offered through Gustavson and chose a path which covered Victoria, the Netherlands and Peru. I met some of the most amazing people in the program and travelled nearly every weekend while studying in these countries. Similar to my first foray into Canada, my eyes were opened to new cultures and experiences. Combining what I learned in MGB classes with my UVic work experience, I landed an internship at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, where it was again my task to increase student engagement, this time for basketball games. Students rallied around the “6th Man” platform and student attendance saw a massive increase from the previous year. The Stanford campus was rocking!

These experiences in community-building have helped shape who I am, led me to meet amazing people and molded my career. Travelling has also helped me understand my own values as a person. I recently started a new job at the non-profit Sport for Life in Victoria, an organization that aims to support happy, healthy lives across Canada and globally through quality sport development. I am excited about the possibilities of bringing communities together across the world in new ways, and I truly thank the Gustavson School of Business for paving this international road for me and so many others.
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