

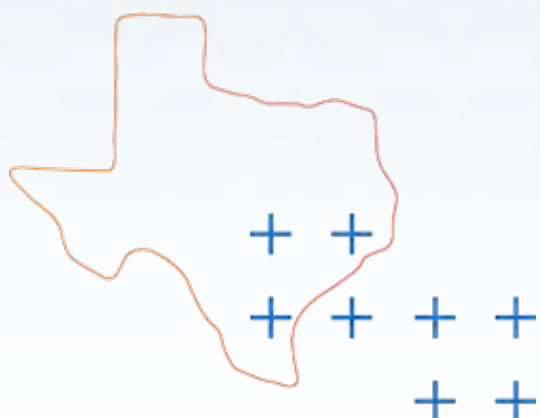
Alvarez BUSINESS



» Cover Story

Roadrunners
Giving Back p. 14

"NOW AND FOREVER...
I AM A ROADRUNNER"



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Dean's Message

Welcome to the second edition of **Alvarez Business**, the alumni magazine for the UT San Antonio Carlos Alvarez College of Business! We are excited to showcase the unique stories of our over 48,000 alumni — shining a spotlight on their successes.

Jonathon Halbesleben



Jonathon Halbesleben, Dean
Bodenstedt Chair and Tom C. Frost
Distinguished University Chair for
Business Excellence

This issue includes a series of inspiring stories that focus on some of our exciting initiatives in the college. Our cover story highlights three of our outstanding alumni: **Ann Janson**, '97, **Dan Karam**, '97, MSIT '01 and **Derek Shriver**, '05, MS '07. Each of these alumni have dedicated their time, talents and treasures in support of current Alvarez Roadrunners.

You will also learn about three of our recent graduates who utilized significant experiential learning opportunities to help launch their careers. Experiential learning also plays a prominent role in the story of **Somer Baburek**, '13, the CEO and founder of Hera Biotech, a healthcare start-up focused on women's health issues. Somer's journey began with a business plan competition sponsored by the college. Their success stories highlight why we have placed so much emphasis on experiential learning over the past few years, including recent changes to our curriculum that will ensure all of our students graduate with meaningful experiential learning experiences.

Finally, we feature alumni who have found unique ways to help secure the financial success of the college through scholarship endowments. **Iñigo**, '05 and **Iliana Arzac**, '03 have turned their passion for wine into an entertaining way to raise scholarship funds for first-generation students. We also highlight the story of **Tim**, MBA '99 and **Elizabeth Turner**, who have established a legacy gift to help ensure future generations of students have access to a high-quality education through the Alvarez College of Business.

This will be an extraordinary year for the college and a perfect year for you to get involved. We've just updated our strategic plan to focus on three key areas: increasing the job placement rates of our students; expanding the groundbreaking research of our faculty; and enhancing the ways we connect with our community. That plan coincides with the recent merger between UTSA and UT Health San Antonio to rebrand as UT San Antonio, which positions us to be a world-class business school and the third largest research university in Texas.

Your support is what will help us become that world-class business school. Whether it is mentoring a student, presenting a professional development workshop, creating an internship or making a financial contribution, you not only support our students, but increase the value of a degree from the Alvarez College of Business for all of our alumni.



Learn more about the
college's new strategic plan.

— Around Campus —



» Historic Merger Creates New Opportunities for The University of Texas at San Antonio

UTSA and UT Health San Antonio have merged effective Sept. 1 to become UT San Antonio. Bringing together both institutions' academic, research and clinical strengths, the integration will benefit the San Antonio community by sparking innovation and economic vigor.

Together, the merged powerhouse institution is positioned with the very best public research universities in the nation. The newly-unified university stands as the third-largest research university in Texas (based on research expenditures). At the same time, it encompasses 40,000 students, 17,000 employees, \$486 million in research expenditures and \$1.3 billion in endowments.

» Operations and Analytics Department Created In College

The Carlos Alvarez College of Business has created a new Department of Operations and Analytics beginning this fall. The department is focused on solving complex business problems using quantitative methods.

Undergraduate programming in actuarial science, business analytics and operations and supply chain management will be housed in the department, which replaces the previous Department of Management Science and Statistics.

Beginning in fall 2026, a new graduate degree in business analytics will be offered. Students will gain hands-on experience with tools like Python, SQL, Tableau and R, while mastering data analytics and visualization.

The transition was due to the establishment of the new College of AI, Cyber and Computing at UT San Antonio. Cyber security, data analytics, information technology and statistics faculty and programs have moved to the new college — allowing the college

to focus on research and teaching related to applying analytical methods to improve business operations.

The Alvarez College of Business will collaborate with this new college to ensure that our graduates remain well-versed in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence.



Our goal as a new department is to build our identity in the areas of business analytics and operations research. We'll focus on the application of analytics to improve business performance.

- Wenbo Wu

Chair of the Department of Operations and Analytics

» Harvey E. Najim Invests \$6 Million in Student Success and Career Readiness



UT San Antonio students will gain expanded access to hands-on learning and career preparation as the result of a new \$6 million commitment from San Antonio philanthropist and longtime supporter **Harvey E. Najim**. Over the next decade, this gift will support programs at the Harvey E. Najim Center for Innovation and Career Advancement and the Carlos Alvarez College of Business.

“UT San Antonio is so very fortunate to count Harvey Najim as a dedicated partner, mentor and advocate for

our Roadrunners — especially our students. His generosity has touched nearly every corner of the university, from experiential learning and entrepreneurship to food security and athletics,” said UT San Antonio President **Taylor Eighmy**.

Najim’s latest gift will fund experiential learning and professional development programming within the Alvarez College of Business, including the creation of a new project-based course where students will work with an external partner to address a real-world issue. The funding will enhance a range of initiatives designed to prepare students for the workforce, including professional development workshops, internships and job placement support.

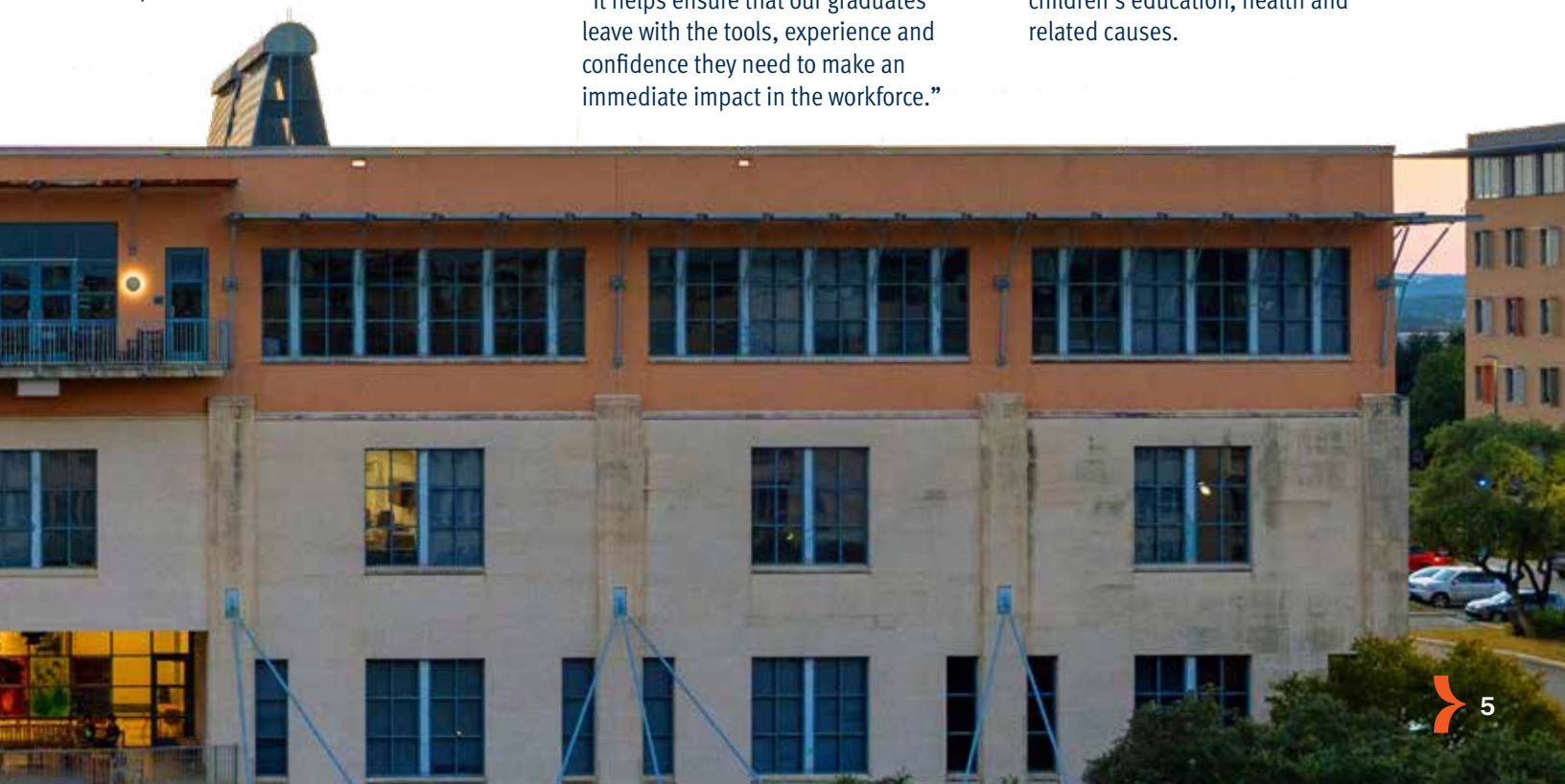
“This investment puts us on a path to ensure every Alvarez College of Business student graduates with a meaningful experiential learning encounter with an external partner,” said **Jonathon Halbesleben**, dean of the Alvarez College of Business.

“It helps ensure that our graduates leave with the tools, experience and confidence they need to make an immediate impact in the workforce.”

“It’s rare to find a university where students are both deeply proud and driven to turn classroom learning into real impact in the workforce — UT San Antonio has that magic,” said Najim. “When I saw how the Classroom to Career initiative was bridging the gap between the classroom and real-world job opportunities, I knew it was something I had to support. That’s what inspired me to create the Najim Center and continue to grow it with the Alvarez College of Business.”

The gift will also continue to fund the Najim Center, which connects students with real-world experiences that bridge academic learning and professional growth. Through programs like Najim Strategists and community-based innovation challenges, students work with non-profit and industry partners to solve real-world problems, build skills and explore career paths.

Najim is the founder and chairman emeritus of Sirius Computer Solutions. In 2006, he established The Najim Charitable Foundation, which supports children’s education, health and related causes.



AN ALVAREZ APPROACH TO EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

by Rebekah Alegria



In today's fast-evolving business landscape, success requires more than just knowledge; it demands experience. At the Carlos Alvarez College of Business, we recognize that the most valuable lessons happen beyond the classroom, where students put theory into practice, develop critical problem-solving skills and build the confidence needed to lead in a competitive global market.

Through a robust portfolio of experiential learning opportunities, including internships, hands-on consulting projects, global immersion programs, business competitions and industry-driven research, our students don't just study business; they live it.

Whether it's working alongside executives to solve real-world business challenges, traveling abroad to gain international business perspectives or launching start-ups, our students embrace experiences that accelerate their personal and professional growth.

Experiential learning opportunities prepare our students to adapt, innovate and lead with confidence. From day one, they're not just preparing for the real world; they're already in it.

The following stories spotlight some of our amazing Alvarez Roadrunners who turned their education into action by seizing opportunities and shaping their future in business.



BEVERLY QUINTANA

Stepping outside the classroom led to immense opportunities for **Beverly Quintana**, '25, a first-generation college student from San Antonio. Quintana graduated with a BBA in Finance and a full-time job, thanks to an internship she completed with the University of Texas/Texas A&M Investment Management Company (UTIMCO).

“UTSA aligned with everything I wanted: strong academics, a tight-knit community and a place where being first-gen is the norm, not the exception,” she said. That supportive environment empowered her to fully engage in hands-on learning experiences.

As a Business Honors and Honors College student, Quintana immersed herself in rigorous coursework and experiential programming. She joined the Business Student Council and the Investment Society early in her academic journey, where she began building her network and discovered her interest in asset management.

She also participated in several national and global learning experiences that pushed her beyond her comfort zone.

“Each trip gave me insight into the industry and helped me connect what I was learning to the real world,” she said.

But her biggest leap came through the highly-competitive UTIMCO Scholars program. One of just five students selected from across Texas, Quintana spent a summer working alongside investment professionals, gaining hands-on experience in asset management.

» **It was the first time I felt like I was truly part of the industry. We weren't just shadowing — we were contributing, analyzing data and learning how major investment decisions are made.**

- Beverly Quintana

Her performance earned her a full-time offer as a private equity analyst at UTIMCO. “It was surreal,” she said. “I told myself I had to be good enough that they couldn't say no.”

In addition to her academic and professional growth, Quintana worked as a student employee on the college's communications and marketing team. There, she found encouragement and mentorship from staff and faculty

who helped her push for bigger opportunities. “They always challenged me to apply, to speak up, to try,” she said. “That support system made all the difference.”

Quintana reflects on her time at UT San Antonio with pride and gratitude. “UTSA helped me turn ambition into action,” she said. “These experiences helped me realize what I'm capable of, and now, I'm ready to take the next step.”

VICKY KIDDER

Experiential learning wasn't just a part of **Vicky Kidder's**, '25 college journey; it was the foundation of it. With a double major in economics and political science, Kidder gained hands-on experience that connected her classroom learning to the highest levels of public policy.

During her freshman year, she interned with San Antonio City Councilwoman **Ana Sandoval**. That experience led to opportunities at the state level through the university's Legislative Fellows Program, where she worked on the Texas Senate Finance Committee helping analyze the state's \$300 billion budget. She later interned at the federal level for U.S. Senator **John Cornyn**.

But her most transformative opportunity came through the Archer Fellowship Program, where she interned for the White House Council of Economic Advisers.

Kidder also worked closely with **Edgar Ghossoub**, professor of economics, on research examining how monetary policy affects income inequality.



I applied what I learned in economics courses to real issues like unemployment trends and economic sector performance. Seeing policy discussions shape communities and businesses was powerful.

- Vicky Kidder

That research helped her stand out during her White House interview, and the academic knowledge she had received in statistical software programs prepared her for the data analysis required in her internship.

On campus, Kidder founded the UT San Antonio chapter of Ignite National, a nonpartisan group focused on civic engagement for women, and she served in leadership roles with the Student Government Association and the Mock Trial Team.

After graduation, Kidder plans to attend law school, where she hopes to combine her expertise in law and economics to work in public interest policy. Her goal is to advocate for economic policies that promote equity while also helping individuals navigate legal and financial barriers.

As she prepares for her next chapter, Kidder is grateful for the foundation UT San Antonio provided her. "Classroom instruction is valuable, but experiential learning is what sets you apart," she said. "UTSA gave me the tools and confidence to pursue a career in economic justice, and I am just getting started."

ARNAS BUDRECKIS

Arnas Budreckis, '25 business education was more than lectures and exams; it provided him with an invitation to lead. Graduating earlier this year with his undergraduate degree in business analytics, Budreckis spent his time at the Alvarez College of Business seeking out real-world experiences that would elevate his learning and expand his impact.

He held leadership roles across campus, serving as president of the Business Student Council, vice president of The Investment Society and treasurer in the Student Government Association. "Leading these groups taught me how to collaborate, manage people and translate strategy into action," he said.

His efforts extended beyond the organizations themselves. Through connections made in The Investment Society, Budreckis helped inspire



It was immersive from day one. I learned how to operate in high-stakes, fast-paced environments.

- Arnas Budreckis

the launch of new student groups, including the Real Estate Society and Economics Society — efforts aimed at creating more opportunities for fellow business students.

That same initiative helped him land a competitive internship with Deloitte's Risk and Financial Advisory division in Denver, where he worked on internal audits for the U.S. Air Force and participated in training sessions in Washington, D.C. and Texas.

Budreckis received a return offer for a second Deloitte internship this summer, a result he credits to the skills and confidence built at UT San Antonio.

He also points to the mentorship he received from faculty and staff, including **Julio Ramos**, director in the college's Student Success Center, and **Ron Sweet**, professor of practice in finance. "They pushed me to go after opportunities I didn't know I was ready for," he said.

As he looks ahead, Budreckis is eager to pursue a career in analytics with aspirations in venture capital or entrepreneurship. "Everyone earns a degree," he said. "What sets you apart are the experiences you embrace along the way."



Hear more about their hands-on experiences.

PASSION

FOR WOMEN'S

HEALTHCARE

by Wendy Frost

Battling to make a difference as an entrepreneur in women's healthcare, **Somer Baburek**, '13, co-founder and CEO of Hera Biotech, relies on her passion, grit and knowledge to make a difference in this industry.

Founded in 2019, Hera Biotech is focused on commercializing diagnostic technology for women. They entered the space with a non-surgical, tissue-based test capable of diagnosing and staging endometriosis, a disease that affects more than 190 million women worldwide. More recently, they acquired a point-of-care cervical cancer device that will launch in Latin America this year.

Baburek's passion for women's health emerged while she was a student studying at UT San Antonio. "When I heard about the entrepreneurship program, how could I not want to do that?" she said. "The degree is applicable to any area of business. **Dr. Anita Leffel** was amazing and instilled this passion for entrepreneurship in her students."

As part of one of Leffel's classes, Baburek participated in a student technology venture competition.

As a business student, her role was to develop a business and marketing plan for a product developed by an engineering student. But, Baburek saw a flaw in that process.

"I didn't want to do any of the projects that were presented," said Baburek, who was a nontraditional student. "I had an idea for a product, so I petitioned to do it on my own. The caveat was that I needed a prototype developed prior to the pitch. I hung out in the engineering building and found some students who were willing to help me put it together."

Based on her experiences from the delivery of her first daughter, she created a labor and delivery monitoring device that was more user friendly. Baburek and her team won the competition, and it resulted in the creation of her first company, Claresta Solutions.

"It was a memorable experience that was a lot of fun. At the time I thought I'd found a blocking patent, so I didn't pursue it further, but knowing what I know now, that wasn't true. I still have that product in my back pocket and at some point in the future, I may revisit that idea," she said.



Upon graduation Baburek used the connections that she developed through the competition and worked for 10 years at Targeted Technology Fund, a life sciences focused venture investment firm in San Antonio.

“I worked on diligence for companies seeking funding and served as the director of clinical operations for a couple of companies, sat on boards and filled in gaps. I got to wear a lot of hats and learn a lot of things,” said Baburek, who grew up in the Rio Grande Valley.

When those companies were exited, Baburek reflected on next steps in her career. With not many opportunities in San Antonio, she wasn’t sure what that meant for her and her family.

“I was struggling with what to do next, and my husband came up to me and said ‘if only you knew how to start a company, raise money, write a business plan and commercialize technology.’ And I thought, oh yeah, I do know how to do that. That is what led me down the venture fund pathway,” she said.

Circling back to her start in women’s health, she realized that not once while looking for deals in her previous role did she see any opportunity in that area.

“There are huge gaps in new ventures being established for women’s healthcare,” said Baburek, who also earned an MBA in data analytics from LSU. “And I thought, why is that? So, I decided that if no one else is willing to roll up their sleeves and fill these gaps, I needed to step up to take on this challenge.”

Based on her knowledge of the industry, she chose to focus on the diagnostic market. Baburek picked endometriosis because it was the largest unmet healthcare need for women outside of oncology. While searching for the

right technology to pursue, Baburek landed on a product developed at UT San Antonio Health Science Center and received funding from her former boss to help get it off the ground.

Surrounded by a team of medical professionals, most of Baburek’s day involves talking to investors, revising their strategic plan and making pitches. Recently she acquired a competing technology from a competitor and began working together with that researcher.

“Women’s health is tragically underfunded,” said Baburek. “So unfortunately, that means a lot of companies in this space are chronically undercapitalized. Our team is small, but relatively mighty.”

One of her proudest moments as a wife and mother of three daughters is hearing them brag about her accomplishments. Baburek also shares that the best part of her job is seeing how her work can impact actual patient care.

“What I love about entrepreneurship is that it is extremely varied,” she said. “I have to be quick on my feet. My education from UTSA gave me the basics for creating a business plan, understanding financial projections and reading accounting

statements. My time in the industry helped me understand what investors are looking for.”

Baburek’s long-term plan for Hera Biotech is to build the company as though they were going to issue an Initial Public Offering (IPO). Knowing that they will need to continue innovating, she plans to continue looking for products to develop and keep pushing and grinding.

For those with entrepreneurial aspirations, Baburek notes that the best advice is to just do it. “There’s never a right time. You’re never going to be prepared. But what I will tell you is that even if it is a complete and total failure, you will learn an immense amount from that, and maybe it will be the thing that you take into the next venture that makes you successful. You will never regret betting on yourself.”



Scan to hear more from Somer.



I learned from Dr. Leffel to pursue the root of the problem. I didn’t need to be a doctor to figure it out, but I could lead by understanding the problem and realizing the opportunity it presents.

- Somer Baburek

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

by Wendy Frost

Threads of community and connection are woven through the story of **Iñigo, '05** and **Iliana Arzac's, '03** commitment to UT San Antonio and the Carlos Alvarez College of Business.

"UTSA holds a special place in our hearts," said Iliana, who received her degree in international business. "This was the launching pad for us in terms of friendships and networking. We were both excited and looked forward to the day that we could give back to our alma mater."

Giving back in a variety of ways, the Arzacs have supported UT San Antonio by co-chairing and attending events like the Alumni Galas, serving on the Alumni Association board and supporting the university's library. Most recently, Iñigo serves as a member of the college's Dean's Advisory Council.

"When you want to get involved with a worthwhile cause there are three things you can donate: time, talent or treasure," said Iñigo, vice president of South Texas commercial banking at Wells Fargo.

"It doesn't need to be all three at the same time or in the same quantities. Our involvement has changed over the years, but we've enjoyed it very much. It is gratifying to see the various ways we can support UTSA."



Mixing their love of wine with their passion for supporting first-generation students like themselves, the Arzacs formulated a plan to host a wine tasting event to raise money for business student scholarships. They hosted their first wine tasting dinner in 2023 and have since continued the tradition every year.

With over \$55,000 in net revenue raised from the events, they were able to establish the Arzac First Generation Endowed Scholarship, which is awarded to undergraduate business students in

the college. The scholarship has since benefited six students. Additional funds have also been used to support student success programs in the college.

"As first-generation students, we felt it was important to help students who faced the same challenges that we did," said Iliana, a native of Brownsville. "There are so many opportunities for students, but first-generation students need additional guidance to make the most of them."



The entire event is organized and ran by the Arzac personally. Limited to 100 guests, attendees are treated to pairings of top wines with chef-curated cuisine. The Arzac partner with businesses and organizations to lower costs.

“Our goal is for it not to feel like an event, but a gathering of friends,” said Iliana. “We want people to be excited to attend and spend an evening with interesting people. Ultimately everyone comes together to support a great cause.”

“We provide good wine, good food and good friends,” said Iñigo, who also received his degree in international business. “We put a lot of thought into the seating arrangements to allow others to create new friendships.”

Understanding the value of these types of relationships, Iñigo credits many opportunities throughout his career to connections he’s made, and assistance he’s received from others. Working full-time while attending UT San Antonio, he was encouraged to apply for a scholarship by one of his professors.



As first-generation students, we felt it was important to help students who faced the same challenges that we did.

- Iliana Arzac

Not only did the scholarship help him financially, but it led to numerous networking opportunities. As a recipient of the **Joe McKinney** scholarship from the Northside Chamber of Commerce, he attended their annual gala to receive the award and sat with a team from Broadway Bank that included his scholarship’s namesake. He also met former UT San Antonio President **Ricardo Romo**, who later invited him to a reception at his home where he connected with individuals that he is still friends with today.

“It’s been 20 years since I won that scholarship,” said Iñigo, who sits on the board of the Witte Museum and the World Affairs Council. “Getting to meet Joe McKinney that day resulted in a wonderful mentor/mentee relationship. We’d get together for breakfast, he made introductions for me and helped point me in the right direction. I feel privileged to be able to form those same relationships with our scholarship recipients.”

Giving back through his corporation as well, Iñigo has supported the Wells Fargo Financial Literacy Program within the college. With colleagues he has come back to give presentations as well as spoken with student organizations about the importance of personal financial literacy — a topic vitally important in San Antonio.

“UTSA allowed me to meet people from all different walks of life,” said Iliana, who is active raising their two teenage



boys. “It widens your perspective on life, and it allows you to learn so much from them. It is gratifying to be involved with our university and to help make an impact in our community.”

“UTSA is playing such an important role in our city,” said Iñigo. “Being a part of something bigger than yourself is important. And when you’re able to give back and see tangible impacts as a result of your efforts that is gratifying. I know that I’ve invested my efforts in the right place.”



Scan to hear more from Iñigo and Iliana.

ROADRUNNERS

GIVING BACK

by Wendy Frost

Returning to the nest, Carlos Alvarez College of Business Roadrunners give back to UT San Antonio in countless ways. Whether that is through serving on a board, donating resources, sharing their professional knowledge with students or hiring alumni, the contributions of their time, treasures and talents creates an immeasurable impact to the college. Here are stories of just a few of our 48,000 alumni and their contributions.



BUILDING AN ECOSYSTEM

Community is at the heart of **Dan Karam's**, '97, MSIT '01 connection to UT San Antonio. Ties that bind him not only to the university, but also to the city of San Antonio.

"One of the most important things this university has is the continuation of community and culture in San Antonio," said Karam, who was part of the first graduating class of the MS in Information Technology program. "UTSA has inherited that culture from the city. And since San Antonio is the biggest small town, community and connections mean more than ever. It creates people like me."

Karam, an executive in residence in the Alvarez College of Business, returned to his alma mater following a successful career in information technology that included 13 years at USAA and another 13 years as chief information officer and partner at MUY Companies before retiring after it was sold to new ownership.

"UTSA set me up for success in life," he said. "There were easy ways to get involved. You could feel the pride. Everyone who went before, and everyone who comes after you is connected by this link. That is hard to duplicate at any other university."

Encouraged to come back and guest lecture by his mentor and former faculty member **Glenn Dietrich** in his Telecommunications and Networking class, Karam got his first taste of giving back to UT San Antonio. From there he expanded his repertoire to include lecturing on technical subjects as well as inspirational topics.



"I loved guest lecturing," said Karam. "I created a presentation on the '15 Things That I Wish People Would Have Told Me in College' and have since presented it more times than I can count. It is a presentation that I only give to Roadrunners."

After those experiences Karam was hooked, and he looked for additional ways to engage. He was a spokesperson for the "I Love UTSA" campaign in 2015 and later established a memorial scholarship for his niece.



Growing restless in retirement, Karam thought about returning to teach at UT San Antonio when the executive in residence position dropped in his lap. Working with the Alvarez College of Business the past two years, he teaches classes as well as collaborates on special projects focused on student professional development.

“I’m as Roadrunner as it gets,” said Karam. “The credibility and authenticity I bring to the classroom by imparting my experiences and passion is powerful.”

More importantly, Karam got to reconnect with Dietrich, who passed away last year. “The first thing I did when I started was to go to Glenn’s office and reminisce about how we are now teammates. He was always giving me advice and looking after me.”

Having taught over 200 students now, Karam’s hope is that he’s made a difference in at least one student’s life. “I want to be the favorite class of my students,” he said. “I want them to enjoy and learn so much in my class that it isn’t even close – just like it was for me. I want to make a difference with

as many kids as I can. Hopefully, if I can influence one person, a seed gets planted and blossoms with them.”

Karam’s other assignment was to explore how the college could expand the niche mentoring programs that were offered into something college-wide. Talking to other universities, he researched how their programs worked, and what lessons they learned from the experience. The program launched last year with 40 mentor/mentee pairs and was led by staff in the Dean’s Office.

“I knew this type of program would only make the college experience so much better for our students,” said Karam, who recharges his batteries through these student interactions. “It was such a cool thing to help build. Connecting business students with real business people that want to give back. It is a win, win. How freaking awesome?”

Karam hopes that through the Alvarez Mentorship Program, an ecosystem is created of alumni giving back to the college. “Come back to the place that made you successful and help business students be successful. I know there

are people that want to help, but don’t know how.”

According to Karam, Alvarez alumni should never say goodbye to their alma mater. But, instead, set the example for those who come behind you.

“Be proud of where you came from,” he said. “How lucky am I that I get to help students and motivate peers of mine to give back through their time, treasures and talents.”

» Karam Establishes New Endowment

Dan Karam, ’97, MSIT ’01 formalized a \$250,000 endowment agreement to establish the Karam Executive in Residence Program in the college.

The funding will support the professional activities of the college’s executive in residence faculty members. It will also provide full-time, fixed-term faculty with funding for professional development programs, global immersions and academic fellowships.

“The program will help the college create a pipeline of seasoned executives, just like Dan, to join the faculty and support a new chapter in their careers,” said Jonathon Halbesleben, dean of the Alvarez College of Business.

Are you an executive thinking of a career change and interested in a role in the college? Reach out to alvarezdean@utsa.edu for more information on the Karam Executive in Residence Program.

ACCOUNTING ADVOCATE

Advocating for his profession and his alma mater, **Derek Schriver**, '05, MS '07 has made it his mission to help other Roadrunners succeed. As partner and co-founder of Schriver, Carmona & Company, a full-service CPA firm that he started in 2010, 12 of the 25 employees are Alvarez alumni.

Schriver's original commitment to hiring Roadrunners began organically. "Most of our employees were hired through referrals," he said. "We would hire a UTSA student as an intern, offer them a full-time job after graduation and then they'd recommend a friend to fill their former intern position."

As he's deepened his relations with the Alvarez accounting department, the pipeline expanded to include recommendations from faculty and staff as well.

"I love being involved with UTSA," said Schriver. "I've built a great relationship with the accounting department. UTSA professors want to make a difference, and the faculty are engaged and invested in student success. How could I not want to work with them to build our reputation in accounting?"

Recognizing the decline of accountants in the profession, Schriver began working to improve not only the image of the field, but also promote the benefits of an accounting degree to students.

"It is up to us to be active in communicating and advocating for the profession," said Schriver. "By speaking in classes and connecting with students, I can give students a glimpse of what life as an accountant really looks like."



Schriver is working to shed the reputation that typically comes to mind when thinking about accountants — long hours, dull environments and a focus on the bottom line. As a mid-sized firm, his goal is to provide value to his clients, but also a healthy work/life balance for his employees.

"We have little to no turnover, which is highly unusual in this industry," said Schriver. "It says a lot about our culture. We are like a family. We have some really good people here, and we are making a positive impact on our client's lives."

Schriver found that he could thrive both personally and professionally by giving back to UT San Antonio. Asked to serve on the college's Accounting Advisory Board, he found a community of alumni who were committed to helping both current students and the profession.

One project that spoke to him was an accounting mentorship program that connected board members with accounting students. "It was my first glimpse at being a mentor," said Schriver, who now chairs the board. "I enjoy being a mentor and seeing how my actions can benefit them."

Schriver actively mentors between 3-5 students each year, and the program has evolved to include the entire college.

"I am an accountant, but I also discovered that working with people was my passion," said Schriver. "That is what drove me to establish this firm when I was only 28 years old."



UTSA professors want to make a difference, and faculty are engaged and invested in student success. How could I not want to work with them to build our reputation in accounting? My focus is giving back to the university in whatever way I can be most effective.

- Derek Schriver

Recently, he and his business partner, **Chris Carmona**, '02, have established the Schriver, Carmona & Company Endowed Scholarship to financially benefit Roadrunners as well.

"I remember all of the opportunities that UTSA provided to me, but the most vivid memories were when guest speakers were brought in to speak during class

and talk about what they did to be successful. That had a profound impact on me, and because of that, I feel like I need to return the favor and try and impact other students through my story," shared Schriver.

"My focus is giving back to the university in whatever way I can be most effective."



Dean Jonathon Halbesleben meets with Derek Schriver and other UT San Antonio alumni at his firm.

PRICELESS INTERACTIONS



Recognizing that she wouldn't be where she is now in life without the help of UT San Antonio, **Ann Janson**, '97 began her journey of giving back to the university that helped shape her.

"I know I would not be who I am, or where I am today without the help I received at UTSA," said Janson, who received her degree in personnel and human resource management.

"Throughout my career I was hired because of the education, networking opportunities and relationships that I developed there."

Janson, an HR business partner at Phillips 66 in New Jersey, initially began giving back to the college financially. Her gifts are in support of the college's Student Success Center, and she has also established a planned gift in this area.

Ultimately that led to an invitation to speak to a group of business students almost 10 years ago when she was in town visiting family.

"As an HR professional I was invited first to speak in the college's Career Action Program," said Janson, who has over 28 years' experience in human resources leadership. "And over the years it's evolved from there."

Since then she has become a fixture on campus lecturing in classes, meeting with student organization groups, mentoring business students and serving on the Dean's Advisory Council — all while having worked in multiple locations across the United States and abroad.

A pivotal moment in Janson's college experience was her introduction to the college's student chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). Struggling through her academic experience, that all changed once she became a part of the organization and embraced the field of human resources.

"There's so many more opportunities for students now than there were when I was a student," she said. "If I can reach just one student and make them want to power through and get their diploma, that's impactful."

Coming full circle, Janson has the opportunity to connect now with the student SHRM chapter as a professional.

"I met **Heather Staples** [SHRM advisor and management faculty member] at one of my speaking events and immediately connected with her since she is an HR practitioner with real world experience like me," said Janson.



*Ann Janson visits
with her mentee
Camilia Gonzalez.*

“From there I was invited to speak at student SHRM events and became connected with other HR professors.”

Janson was also one of the first alumni to participate in the college’s mentorship program. First through the Business Honors Program and now through the college’s Alvarez Mentoring Program. “These interactions have re-energized me professionally,” she said. “The students are starved to interact with someone from the real world. They want to learn what a day in the life of a professional looks like. I encourage them to use me as a resource and as a part of their professional network.”

The Alvarez Mentoring Program allows alumni and business leaders the opportunity to share their strengths and skills with business students and enrich their professional journey. The program requires a yearlong commitment with monthly one-hour connections.

“Being out of state, I get to expand their horizons and remind them that San Antonio is just a plane ride away if they choose a career outside of Texas.”

Her current mentee, **Camilia Gonzalez**, a senior majoring in human resources management, just completed a human resources internship with Kohl’s at their corporate headquarters in Wisconsin.

“It’s so heartwarming to interact with the students and to be able to share my experiences over the last almost 30 years with them,” said Janson. “My interactions with the students, my work with UTSA and my work in general makes me feel like I’m doing something good for the world.”

Wishing that a program like this existed while she was a student, Janson encourages other alumni to get involved on campus and through the mentorship program.

“There are ways to give back that aren’t financial. These opportunities allow you to stay connected with the university and help the next generation of business leaders. The time commitment is minimal, and the joy it can bring is priceless. And if you do try it and don’t like it, then there are other ways you can stay involved as alumni.”



If I can reach just one student and make them want to power through and get their diploma, that’s impactful.

- Ann Janson

ESTABLISHING A LIFETIME LEGACY

by Wendy Frost

Appreciating the value of higher education, **Tim**, MBA '99 and **Elizabeth Turner** have established a \$1.4 million planned gift to create a lifetime legacy benefiting future Alvarez business students.

“Education has always been important in our lives,” said Tim. “We wanted to create an opportunity for others to realize their goals and ambitions. People need help accomplishing their goals. Since we don’t have children, we’re happy to be able to help students, and in essence, the San Antonio community.”

Creating a living trust to accomplish that goal, the Turners both recommend individuals start first seeking professional, legal help to guide the process.

“Because of my landman background, I’ve dealt with estates that were left disorderly,” said Tim. “I’m a real advocate of leaving things orderly when our time comes, and we leave this world.”

“Part of this comes with our age,” adds Elizabeth, who shares that they both are turning 75 this year. “What can I do to improve the world? In this case, we are helping students at UTSA. It is something people should think about sooner than later.”

Attending UT San Antonio in his 40s, Tim was positively influenced by the experience. “I loved all of my professors.



I remember fondly **John McCray** as well as **Dale** and **Lila Truett**, and my finance professors **Lalatendu Misra**, **Karan Bhanot** and **Rajan Kadapakkam**,” said Tim, who was a recipient of the Texas Business Hall of Fame scholarship while a student.

Earning a concentration in finance as part of his MBA, Tim was grateful that his degree gave him credibility to go out on his own in the oil and gas industry. “I needed something to help me feel capable and qualified. UTSA gave me confidence to reinvent myself again.”

Reinvention is a common theme in Tim’s life. Following his undergraduate education in economics at the University of Houston, he became a Catholic priest and served in the mountainous region of Oaxaca, Mexico. He returned to San Antonio and worked in his father’s petroleum business before having a second calling as an Episcopalian minister. He also participated in his father-in-law’s drilling program in Starr County. Tim finished his active participation in the oil industry as president and owner of Paisano Petroleum when he retired in 2018.

Although Tim and Elizabeth met as schoolmates while attending Cambridge Elementary in Alamo Heights, their romantic relationship was born from a family connection. Both their fathers were petroleum geologists, and Tim met Elizabeth’s father at an industry conference in San Antonio. Seven months after their first date, they were married.

“UTSA has always played a big part in our lives,” said Elizabeth, who earned her degree from UT Austin in Spanish and French. “We were amazed at how many opportunities the students have. We were impressed with what UTSA has become, and where it is going.”

Embarking on the next chapter of their lives, the Turners have moved into their dream home in Kerrville, and they look forward to simple pleasures like sitting on their back porch viewing wildlife or appreciating the diversity of cultures through travel.

“The university has built a strong reputation in the community, and we are happy to support that vision,” concluded Tim.

Research Forum

» Peer Influence in the Workplace

by Wendy Frost



Can organizational communications impact the efforts of employees? According to a study by **Stephen He**, assistant professor of marketing in the Carlos Alvarez College of Business, sharing peer success can influence employee performance.

“Our work found a link between peer success messaging and productivity,” said He. “Recognizing employees for their accomplishments through electronic communications systems resulted in improved outcomes for all employees. A mere 10% increase in the intensity of praise-filled messages about coworkers motivated employees to boost their effort by 5%.”

He and his colleagues used observational data from an information technology service company’s messaging system to measure the effect of success messages within that

organization. His paper on that subject, “Peer Influence in the Workplace: Evidence from an Enterprise Digital Platform,” was published in *MIS Quarterly*.

Two types of messages were identified: ability-focused and effort-focused messaging. Ability-focused messages praised team members for the skills or traits that they possessed, whereas effort-focused messages highlighted employees based on the work that they put into their job. He’s research showed that not all praise is equally effective.

“Both ability-focused success messages and effort-focused success messages motivated workers to work harder,” said He, who joined UT San Antonio in 2023. “But with ability-focused messages, we noticed different reactions based on how close or connected the employees felt with the praised coworker. Ability-focused messages were more effective

for socially-close peers, but had little impact for colleagues that were socially distant.”

He theorizes that these messages allow coworkers to view success as something attainable. However, the differences likely arise due to people considering effort to be controllable (e.g., working harder) and ability to be uncontrollable (e.g., possessing unique skills).

“Individuals relate more to people that they know, and they tend to perceive they have similar traits and abilities with these individuals,” said He. “This connection makes the ability-focused messages more successful among individuals with personal connections.”

Looking to replicate their observations, He also conducted an experiment recreating these scenarios with different subjects. The results confirmed his initial predictions.

He plans on continuing this stream of research by examining emerging technologies and delving deeper into other digital phenomena.

“As more employees work remotely, employers need to understand how to leverage these digital communications platforms to motivate employees and improve productivity,” said He.



Scan to read
He's research.

» Marriage Prospects May Influence College Major

by Rebekah Alegria

What drives a student's choice of college major? For some, it's passion. For others, it's job prospects. But what if marriage expectations also played a role?

Alper Arslan, assistant professor of economics in the Carlos Alvarez College of Business, explores this surprising topic in a research study recently presented at the Econometric Society World Congress in Seoul.

The study analyzes the impact of hard-to-measure personal factors, like expectations around marriage, on educational and life decisions.

Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Arslan and his co-authors developed a novel econometric method to test whether unobservable influences affect both major selection and future marital outcomes.

Their analysis found that students do, in fact, consider potential marriage prospects when deciding what to study – particularly when majors are shaped by traditional gender roles and long-term economic stability.

For example, the study revealed that women with higher expectations of marrying within five years were more likely to choose education and less likely to pursue business as a major. While expected earnings remained the strongest predictor of major choice overall, the influence of marriage prospects was more pronounced among women, highlighting key gender differences in how students weigh personal and professional priorities.



“As empirical researchers, we’re often challenged by the difficulty of measuring unobservable factors that shape real-world decisions,” said Arslan, an inaugural Alvarez Research Fellow.

“Our study introduces a practical test for identifying whether such hidden influences affect both choices and outcomes, like major selection and eventual marriage. While we focused on marriage expectations, the method is broadly applicable to many other settings where unobserved factors play a role.”

The implications are both economic and cultural. The study, the first of its kind to provide empirical evidence linking marriage expectations to college major decisions, sheds light on how societal norms can quietly shape academic and career trajectories, even in fields like business that are often viewed through a purely professional lens.

With research interests in market design, econometrics and labor economics, Arslan has published in top journals including *Management Science*, *Manufacturing & Service Operations Management* and the *Journal of Operations Management*.

In addition to his work on education and labor economics, Arslan has explored a wide range of applied research topics across economics and operations including a recent study that analyzed the effects of variable pricing strategies in the NFL ticket market.

Alumni Notes

> 1990s <



Marie, '92

MARIE COHAN, '92 serves as the statewide digital accessibility program administrator for the Texas Department of Information Resources. She was honored with the Outstanding Women in Texas Government Professional Development Award.



Nicole, PhD '07

NICOLE BEEBE, PhD '07 was appointed dean of the College of Computing at Illinois Institute of Technology. A former endowed professor and assistant vice president at UT San Antonio, she brings more than 25 years of experience in cybersecurity, government and academia to her new role.

JOSE CAMACHO, '14 has been named a senior financial analyst of technical infrastructure at Google.



Robert, '15

ROBERT BENNETT, '15 serves as a technical recruiter at Microsoft, supporting the company's AI hiring efforts. He was honored as a Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District "Alumni Giant" in 2024 and regularly returns to his high school to mentor and speak with students.

> 2000s <



Andrew, '03

ANDREW WATERMAN, '03 was recognized by the UT San Antonio Alumni Association with a 2024 Excellence Award for his leadership in the construction industry and commitment to professional service. He is the president of Waterman Construction, LLC.

> 2010s <



Gaston, '12

GASTON SANCHES-ELGUEZABAL, '12 was promoted to partner at EY in London within the firm's Financial Advisory Accounting Services practice.



NOW AND FOREVER,

LOREN HERNANDEZ, MBA '15 is a project manager for San Antonio Wings, the largest Wingstop franchisee in the U.S. Since joining after earning his MBA, he has helped open 80 of Wingstop's 150 locations across five states, overseeing logistics, construction timelines and store launches to ensure brand and operational success.



Jared, '16

JARED CRUZ-AEDO, '16 is the digital content manager for the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Museum, leading social media strategy and content creation. He has supported three Olympic Games and launched the "Artifact in Action" series in partnership with NBC Olympics and national sports organizations.



Laura, '16

LAURA HILL, '16 is the manager of compensation and HRIS data analytics at BioBridge Global, where she also oversees workers' compensation and employee safety programs. She serves as president of the South Texas Compensation & Benefits Association, supporting HR professionals through development and networking opportunities.

2020s



Regina, '20, MBA '25

REGINA GARZA, '20, MBA '25 has begun a new role with the Alamo Colleges District. She previously managed outside scholarships at UT San Antonio.

JOHNNY NGUYEN, '24 began his career as a marketing intern at Mercedes-Benz of San Antonio and was recently promoted to marketing specialist for their Sprinter Department. He now leads digital strategy and community outreach initiatives, representing the brand at local events and associations.



Adrian, MBA '24

ADRIAN PORRAS, MBA '24 was named a SEC Scholar, one of only three recipients in Texas, and he accepted a full-time role as a senior contract negotiator with the U.S. General Services Administration.



Submit an Alumni Note
to be featured!

I AM A ROADRUNNER.

Where Are They Now

by Rebekah Alegria

At the Carlos Alvarez College of Business, our students leave lasting impressions, and their stories don't stop at graduation. In this special feature, we reconnect with outstanding alumni who were previously spotlighted for their achievements as students, and who are continuing to make a powerful impact in their careers and communities today.



George Cahlik, '08

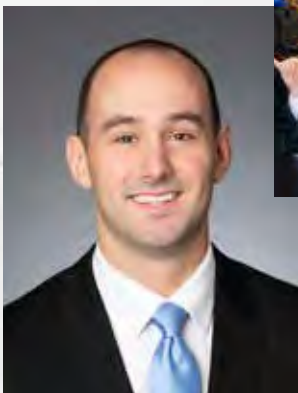
When we last featured **George Cahlik** as a student in 2007, he shared, “I want to work in an international setting” — a goal that has guided his path ever since. At the time, Cahlik was a double major in economics and political science with a minor in Russian, a first-generation college student and Army reservist with his sights set on a global career. He had already studied abroad in Moscow and earned the prestigious Gilman International Scholarship, one of just three UT San Antonio students to receive the award that year.

With strong mentorship from Alvarez faculty and a deep interest in global affairs, Cahlik developed a passion for international economics and diplomacy, interests that would shape his future in federal service and beyond.

Today, Cahlik is a lead specialist in the Exports and International Affairs group at Southwest Research Institute (SwRI), where he oversees the institute's export compliance program. Drawing on his prior role at the U.S. Department of Commerce, he helps ensure ethical innovation and national security compliance across SwRI's expansive research operations.

He credits UT San Antonio with laying the foundation for his global outlook. “That experience was truly transformative and helped shape my academic, professional and personal development in ways I couldn't have imagined,” he said.

Cahlik has received two Gold Medal Awards from the Department of Commerce for dismantling illicit military procurement networks and has been commended by the FBI, Department of Defense and Office of the Director of National Intelligence. He also volunteers with Big Brothers Big Sisters and the United Way Emerging Leaders Network and is currently pursuing a commission in the U.S. Navy Reserve, continuing his commitment to both national service and global impact.



Zack Dunn, '15

When **Zack Dunn** was featured in 2015, he was already making an impact serving as Student Government Association president, being crowned Mr. UTSA (now titled Spirit of the Roadrunner) and championing student-centered initiatives. “I want to leave UTSA having made it better for those who come after me,” he said at the time.

Now, a decade later, Dunn is living out that commitment to service in a new way. As an assistant district attorney in the Special Victims Unit at the Bexar County District Attorney's Office, he uses his legal training to advocate for survivors of crime in San Antonio. After beginning his career as a corporate attorney in New York City, he returned to his hometown to serve the community that shaped him.



“Being able to make a difference in people’s lives and help them find justice — that’s what makes this work so meaningful,” said Dunn.

In his current role, he has been part of multiple trial teams addressing complex and sensitive cases. He credits the Alvarez College of Business with providing not only a strong academic foundation, but also a lasting network of mentors and peers. “The relationships I built at UTSA continue to support me both professionally and personally,” he said.

Whether in student leadership or the courtroom, Dunn remains driven by the same purpose: making a difference for others.

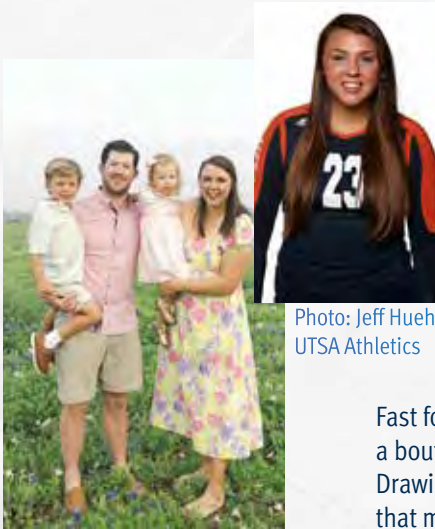


Photo: Jeff Huehn/
UTSA Athletics

Dempsey (Thornton) Warren, '14, MBA '16

When **Dempsey (Thornton) Warren** was featured in 2015, she was already setting herself apart — not just in the classroom, but on the court. A standout student in the Alvarez College of Business’ sports, event and tourism management program and a member of the Roadrunner volleyball team, she made the most of her time at UT San Antonio, gaining hands-on experience and developing the drive that would carry her into her future career.

Fast forward to 2025, Warren is the owner and lead event manager of Water to Wine Hospitality, a boutique event planning company specializing in private estate and ranch weddings. Drawing from her background in large-scale corporate events, she leads a team that manages complex logistics.

“The thing I love most about my job is seeing the joy that my clients have when all of their people are gathered,” she said. “Because of our team, they get to be fully present in the moment. That’s a true gift.”

Warren credits her time at UT San Antonio’s Alvarez College of Business with giving her real-world insight and confidence. “The hospitality industry is such a crucial part of San Antonio, and that was reflected in my studies,” she shared. “The hands-on experiences I had as both an undergrad and graduate student have been invaluable — not only as an event planner, but also as a small business owner.”

She also met her husband, **Michael Warren**, a UTSA baseball player from 2010 to 2014, during her time as a student-athlete. The two now have a family together and continue to cheer on their fellow Roadrunners, proudly following the success of the university’s athletic teams.

» Business Alumna Amanda Sendejo Steps Into the Ring

by Rebekah Alegria



Amanda Sendejo, '23 is redefining what it means to be a professional athlete — blending boxing with business and using her platform to amplify the voices of women in sports.

A two-time National Champion, Sendejo made her professional boxing debut earlier this year at San Antonio's Boeing Center at Tech Port, securing her first pro victory in front of a hometown crowd.

But her journey didn't start in the spotlight. It began in Floresville, Texas, watching her older brothers train and compete. Inspired by their discipline, Sendejo laced up her own gloves at 17 and quickly rose through the amateur ranks, proving she belonged in the ring. While pursuing her marketing degree at the Carlos Alvarez College of Business,

Sendejo realized that being a boxer and being a brand weren't separate goals; they were intertwined.

"As a boxer, you're constantly marketing yourself," she said. "Branding, storytelling and community engagement are just as important in this sport as physical strength. UTSA taught me how to think strategically and creatively about my future, both inside and outside the ring."

Her time at UT San Antonio not only gave her the academic foundation to navigate the business of boxing, but also valuable hands-on experience. Through internships

with the San Antonio Spurs and San Antonio FC, Sendejo learned the inner workings of sports marketing, sponsorships and fan engagement — insights that now help her shape her own narrative as a professional athlete. As a first-generation college graduate, Sendejo carries her family's hopes and hard work into every match. "Everything I do is for them," she shared. "My parents sacrificed so much to give me a chance at something more, and I want to make them proud."

Today, Sendejo is building a career that blends her passions for athletics and business. Outside the ring, she actively engages with fans on social media, collaborates with sponsors and envisions a future working in the sports industry — whether in marketing, broadcasting or athlete development.



"Branding, storytelling and community engagement are just as important in this sport as physical strength."

- Amanda Sendejo

Most importantly, she wants to be a role model. "Boxing has come a long way, but it's still a male-dominated sport," she said. "I want young women to see me and know that they belong here too."



» Alvarez Mentoring Program Connects Alumni with Business Students

by Wendy Frost

Created to foster meaningful connections between students, alumni and friends of the college, the Alvarez Mentoring Program launched last year with 40 student/mentor pairings.

“Our mentees this past year really valued the relationships they created, the space to ask questions and the opportunity to get feedback from someone who was there specifically to guide them,” said **Sara Gothelf**, assistant director of alumni engagement in the college. “Through this program we’ve unlocked a new way for our alumni to interact with our students and remain connected to the college.”

Mentees included representatives from 13 academic programs at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Mentors were predominantly alumni (70%) and included individuals in San Antonio as well as those who lived out of state.

“I think I learned more than my mentee did,” said **Marissa Scheffler**, ’07, vice president of human resources at Generations Federal Credit Union. “I’m in human resources, and she was in marketing, but we had a lot in common. I wish we had this program when I was a student.”

The mentoring program runs through the academic year and requires monthly in-person or virtual meetings. Mentors coach the students, provide career insights and give constructive feedback to help students prepare for internships or entry into the workforce.

“I really love this program,” said **Juanilu Aguilar**, a senior majoring in finance. “My mentor and I have a great bond. She is a first-gen Mexican American like me. She gave me good advice about the financial world. After talking with her, I want to go into the wealth management side of financial advising.”

“This experience has been fulfilling as well as fun,” said **Josh Amparan**, ’07, financial advisor with Eagle Strategies LLC. “As a mentor I can help my mentee understand how the real world works and give him some perspective into the workforce. I feel fortunate that I had a mentee that’s very ambitious and has some lofty goals. Being able to help people with at least one aspect of their life is rewarding.”

The college is looking for both first-time as well as seasoned mentors to connect with business students as part of the program. “We are lucky to have experienced mentors, but I also consider us lucky to have new ones too,” said Gothelf. “Knowing they are trusting us with their first mentorship experience means a lot, and we want mentors to feel equipped to handle any situation that may arise. We want everyone to have a good experience.”



Learn more about the college's mentoring program.



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Looking for Roadrunners to join your company as interns or full-time hires? Email RecruitAlvarez@utsa.edu.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer to participate in student networking events, mentorship programs or help students with professional development skills. Email AlvarezBusiness@utsa.edu.



Alvarez Business Alumni Council

The Business Alumni Council is a free, vibrant network of alumni dedicated to fostering connections among fellow Roadrunners and strengthening ties with UT San Antonio. By joining the council, you become part of a community that supports current students, collaborates with faculty and staff and contributes to the college's ongoing success.

Alumni Awards

Nominate yourself or a fellow alumnus for an Alvarez College of Business alumni award. Awards are given to alumni at all stages of their careers and within various disciplines.



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