



The Business of
Difference Making®
FALL 2025

 **DUQUESNE
UNIVERSITY**
Palumbo-Donahue
School of Business

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The Palumbo-Donahue School of Business is proud to share highlights from an extraordinary period of innovation, achievement, and impact.

Over the last three semesters, our students excelled in national and regional competitions, setting records and earning top placements. We again hosted our annual events and competitions, showcasing the School's leadership in experiential learning and our commitment to professional growth.

The **Duquesne New Venture Challenge** broke records with more than 150 entries competing for over \$100,000 in prizes. For the first time in 6 years, the winning team, Clean Plate Innovations, was comprised of all Duquesne alumni. (See page 12 for Clean Plate's story.)

The **Steel City Sales Challenge**, hosted by the Center for Leadership in Professional Selling and presenting corporate partner Ally Financial, drew 160 competitors from 15 universities, with Duquesne students among the finalists.

Graduate students from across the University showcased their skills at the **Data for Difference Making Challenge**, hosted by the School of Business in partnership with Dollar Bank and Excelitas. Students who excelled went on to compete in the **Super Analytics Challenge**, where a School of Business student was part of the winning team. (See page 19.)

Students from nine universities participated in the **Annual Supply Chain Case Competition**, hosted by the School's Center for Excellence in Supply Chain Management in partnership with the Association for Supply Chain Management Pittsburgh Forum.

Students benefited from a variety of targeted networking events—including **Accounting Connect**, **IS Direct**, **Supply Chain Connection**, **Marketing Mixer**, and **Meet the Firms Night**—that directly support their career preparation and professional development.

These events, along with the active engagement of some 23 corporate partners, created invaluable opportunities for students to make connections, secure internships, and launch meaningful careers.



DNVC finalist teams at the April 2025 awards ceremony.



Annual Supply Chain Competition sponsors and competitors on Duquesne's campus.



Marissa Panzetta (B'25) and Sarah Martin (B'25), Supply Chain Connection; Brenna Sachs (B'25), Marketing Mixer; Students and corporate partners networking at IS Direct.

From academic initiatives to strengthened corporate partnerships and alumni engagement, the School continues to distinguish itself as a hub for difference-making. “The Business of Difference Making®, Fall 2025” shares our accomplishments over the past three semesters and looks ahead to an exciting future, marked by expanded industry collaborations, enriched student experiences, and lasting alumni connections.

NEW RANKINGS

School of Business Rises in 2025 Rankings

For the seventh consecutive year, the School of Business' undergraduate program ranked on **Poets&Quants Best Undergraduate Business Schools** list. The 2025 ranking places the School 65th on the list, jumping up three spots from 2024.



The rankings measure three criteria including student experiences while in the School, career outcomes after graduation, and admissions standards.

Of the approximately 1,100 AACSB-accredited business schools, less than 10% appear each year in the **Poets&Quants Best Undergraduate Business Schools** list, putting our School in elite company.

The **2025 Princeton Review** has listed the School of Business MBA programs as:

- Best Business Schools On-Campus MBA
- #6 Greatest Resources for Women
- Best Online MBA Programs for 2025



U.S. News & World Report ranked the School as:

- Best Business School
- Best Part-Time MBA Program



SHAPING THE FUTURE

Unveiling “Palumbo-Donahue 2030: Enhancing Distinctive Excellence”



The Palumbo-Donahue School of Business officially launched its bold new five-year strategic plan, **Palumbo-Donahue 2030: Enhancing Distinctive Excellence (PD 2030)**, designed to deliver difference-making education and experiences that will set graduates apart in business, community, and society. **PD 2030** is a call to action. The renewed **Vision, Mission, and Values** along with the **Five Strategic Goals** set a clear, transformative vision for the School, reflecting both the challenges and opportunities in today’s rapidly evolving business landscape.

VISION, MISSION, VALUES

OUR VISION

We aspire to be the best student-focused business school known for...

- » Difference-making education that instills the inclusive Spiritan mindset and transforms lives
- » In-demand graduates who change companies and the world for the better
- » Innovative thought leadership that improves business and society

OUR MISSION

We develop sought-after business leaders who possess the ethical character, Spiritan mindset, and solutions-oriented skills needed to be global difference makers. We accomplish this through faculty and staff who deeply engage our students, alumni, and community partners to create:

- » Educational experiences that improve lives
- » Solutions to important business and social challenges
- » Thought leadership with lasting societal impact

OUR VALUES THAT DRIVE US FORWARD

- » Passionate about our students and instilling practical wisdom
- » Driven by ethics and principles of integrity
- » Encouraging inclusiveness, belonging, and collaboration
- » Developing leaders who improve the world
- » Pursuing research that matters to business and society

FIVE STRATEGIC GOALS:

1. Offer in-demand educational programs that set our graduates apart through difference-making experiences that transform business, community, and society.
2. Create external partnerships that deliver difference-making, entrepreneurial solutions for important ethical, strategic, and sustainability challenges facing organizations and communities.
3. Strengthen the ability of our faculty to inspire all students and produce difference-making research.
4. Strengthen our School’s **Business of Difference Making**® brand and elevate our external visibility with key constituencies.
5. Significantly increase philanthropic resources in the School to remove entry barriers for students, enhance difference-making educational experiences, improve faculty support, and create and maintain learning environments that are second to none.



ALUMNI AND ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS ROLES IN SHAPING PD 2030

In 2023, Dean McFarlin established the Strategic Review Working Group (SRWG), comprised of six members (listed below) representing a range of advisory committees. Drawing on their expertise as Duquesne graduates and active leaders within the School’s advisory council community, the participation of the **SRWG** ensured that those who have lived the Duquesne experience helped set the vision for the School’s future. During Spring 2025, the School sat down with four members of the **SRWG** to learn more about their roles in developing **PD 2030**.



Heidi Murdy-Michael (A’96)

When asked about the School’s unique position as a well-known and respected Pittsburgh institution, recognized for its exceptional student experience and outcomes, Heidi shared, “More than any one goal in the plan, I am excited about what underlies each of them – a drive to differentiate the education students receive at Duquesne and empower them to be difference-makers in their future careers. Duquesne has the privilege of having proved there is a proven return on investment with a degree from the Business School.”



Jared Hoff (B’00)

Jared believes that **PD 2030** sets the tone for a dynamic future, stating “[T]he goals laid out in the strategic plan are intentionally ambitious...the school and its leadership are better positioned than ever to achieve everything they set out to do.” He also shared, “As the driving force behind the plan, Dean McFarlin led the working group with zero sense of ego—creating a framework for open discussion and collaboration that helped distill the group’s best ideas, always with the goal of maximizing the quality of education, student experience, and outcomes.”



David Warco (B’79)

For David, the excitement lies in how the plan translates into action. “I’m most passionate about the elements of the plan that enhance the student experience,” he explained. “It’s about moving beyond the classroom to provide difference-making opportunities—like our capstone courses—that challenge students to solve real business problems. I believe that we created a plan that reflects our culture of ethics and sustainability, and one that students, parents, and strategic partners can clearly understand and embrace.”



Justin Mallgrave (Executive-in-Residence)

According to Justin, the **PD 2030**’s most engaging aspect is its “blended approach towards scholarship, community, and practical knowledge.” He believes this rare combination “will help students stand out in the competitive marketplace” and “sees a lot of effort to build both better relationships with business leaders and to continue and improve on the business school’s foundational elements of scholarships that matter, ethics and integrity, and collaboration. Building from such a strong history is impressive to undertake, and I was honored to contribute.”

One message shared by these four members of the **SRWG** was clear, under Dean McFarlin’s leadership, the collaboration between committee members, faculty, and students was evident. Everyone in the room had a voice, and every idea was considered and valued. With alumni experience and perspective woven throughout, **PD 2030** serves as a shared vision that connects Duquesne’s strong traditions, reflects the student experience, and fosters an impactful, difference-making education that adapts to meet the ever-changing needs of today’s business world.

Thank You to the Strategic Review Working Group (SRWG)

The SRWG met monthly from 2023 to 2024 and provided invaluable suggestions, guidance, and feedback. Members included:

Jared Hoff (B’00), Investment Strategy Institute Advisory Council**
Senior Portfolio Manager, Federated Hermes Strategic Value Dividend Portfolios

Enzo Santilli (B’93), Accounting Advisory Council**

Justin Mallgrave, Information Systems & Technology Advisory Council*
Vice President, IT Transformation, Excelitas
Currently serves as an Executive-in-Residence for the School

Dale Stephenson (B’87), Sales & Marketing Advisory Council*
Franchise Owner & Career Coach, The Entrepreneur’s Source; (Former) Area VP, Advertising Sales Operations, AT&T

Heidi Murdy-Michael (A’96), Business Advisory Council*
(Ret.) National Partner in Charge, Risk Management Policy & Enterprise Risk, KPMG

David Warco (B’79), Business Advisory Council*
(Ret.) International Tax Partner, Deloitte & Touche LLP
Currently serves as an Executive-in-Residence for the School

*Active Council Member **Past Council Member

CFP® Board-Approved Financial Planning Track

LAUNCHED FALL 2025

The School is excited to announce the launch of our **Certified Financial Planner (CFP®) Board-approved Financial Planning Track** within the existing **Finance major**.

The **Financial Planning Track**, supported by a generous gift from Schwab Advisor Services in partnership with the Charles Schwab Foundation, will prepare graduates to become trusted financial planners. Students will build the skills to guide individuals, families, and small businesses through major life decisions, making a real difference while building a rewarding career.

PREPARING GRADUATES FOR CFP® CERTIFICATION

The CFP® Board-approved curriculum, covers investment strategy, retirement and estate planning, tax and risk management, and more—all with a hands-on, real-world focus. The program prepares students to be eligible to sit for the CFP® exam, the gold standard in wealth management.

INNOVATIVE RESOURCES, ENHANCED OPPORTUNITIES

Students will leverage the resources of the School's **Investment Strategy Institute**, which includes access to 24+ Bloomberg Terminals, Wharton Research Data Services, and leading financial databases, ensuring they are well-equipped with industry-standard technologies.

Real Estate Program

LAUNCHING FALL 2026

Debating in the 2026-2027 academic year, the School is expanding its academic programming with a **Real Estate major, minor, and certificate**. Designed for students ready to shape the future of urban and suburban spaces, foster community transformation, and make a lasting economic impact, the Real Estate program blends rigorous academics with hands-on learning and industry engagement.

A CAREER-READY CURRICULUM

The Real Estate program builds on Duquesne's established strengths in sales, marketing, project management, finance, business analytics, entrepreneurship, and accounting.

The **24-credit hour major** will prepare students for a variety of roles in commercial and residential development, real estate finance, brokerage, property management, and corporate site selection. The **15-credit hour minor** will provide business majors with an additional competitive edge for pursuing real estate-related careers. The **15 to 18-credit hour certificate** is for Duquesne students outside the business school—including engineering and environmental science—who want to add marketable real estate skills to their primary area of study.

A TALENT PIPELINE FOR EMPLOYERS

Pittsburgh's prime location, competitive real estate market along with Duquesne's deep corporate connections create a direct pipeline from the classroom to the workplace. Employers will benefit from graduates who are trained to analyze deals, manage assets, navigate zoning and land use regulations, integrate sustainability into projects, and leverage emerging technologies such as AI and data analytics.



MEETING THE NEED FOR FINANCIAL PLANNERS

The need for CFP® professionals is rising, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, which predicts a 15% increase in demand for personal financial advisors between 2021 and 2031. Moreover, research shows that 86% of consumers prefer working with an advisor who has earned the CFP® designation, while 90% report feeling more confident in their futures thanks to their financial planner's expertise.

By aligning the curriculum with industry standards and trends, the **Financial Planning Track** will equip students to enter a growing field where they can help clients achieve personal financial goals. With demand for financial planners on the rise, there's never been a better time to turn a business degree into a purpose-driven profession.



FOUNDATION



Visit cfp.net for information being a CFP® Board Approved program.

DIFFERENCE-MAKING OPPORTUNITIES

The School's signature cornerstone-to-capstone experiential model will provide students with:

- Opportunities to work on real-world projects that matter with real estate industry firms as part of a course, both at the beginning (cornerstone) and end (capstone) of the curriculum
- Real estate networking events with alumni, corporate partners, and industry leaders
- Co-curricular real estate competitions and activities (both internal and intercollegiate)
- One-on-one guidance from a Student Success Coach to align academic goals with career aspirations.

INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT MORE? CONTACT:

Prospective Students: Ariana Williams, Program Director
Recruitment & Student Success at (412) 396-1849 or willi126@duq.edu

Company and Community Partners: Adam Viers, Assistant
Dean of Advancement at (412) 396-1322 or viersa@duq.edu

Visit duq.edu/realestate

Reimagined Flex MBA

FOR THE MODERN PROFESSIONAL

The School has transformed its **Flex MBA** program into a bold, forward-looking degree designed for ambitious professionals ready to take the next big step in their careers—without putting their lives on pause. This **33-credit program** delivers more than just an MBA. Students can pair their degree with a Specialized Certificate, giving them the freedom to personalize their path and sharpen their expertise in areas that will set them apart in a competitive marketplace.

BUILT FOR BALANCE

Flexibility is at the core of the program. With courses offered online or in a flexible hybrid format, the Flex MBA provides an impactful, hands-on education with immediate relevance and application in the workplace.

Courses include:

- 6 Required Courses (18 credits)
- 2 Electives (6 credits)
- 3 Specialized Certificate Courses (9 credits)

Specialized Certificates concentrations are:

- Analytics and Information Management (STEM)
- Entrepreneurship*
- Executive Leadership*
- Finance (STEM)
- Supply Chain Management (STEM)

*Online only courses.

LEARN BY DOING

One of the program's signature experiences is its capstone course. Students step into the role of a business strategist, tackling real-world challenges that deliver measurable impact for client organizations.

Refreshed One-Year MBA Program

EDUCATING HIGH-IMPACT SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS LEADERS

The School has officially launched its refreshed One-Year MBA (OYMBA) program. Running June through May, the full-time, 39-credit, cohort-based program builds on its long-standing reputation as a top-ranked "Better World MBA" by Corporate Knights magazine. The OYMBA program is known for educating leaders who integrate sustainability, ethics, and innovation into business practice.

The new curriculum responds to the evolving needs of today's graduate students and employers, providing a sharper focus on career readiness, customization, and experiential learning.

Core sustainable business concepts have been expanded to include ethics, corporate governance, social and environmental reporting, strategic sustainability models, and impact investing. Sustainability continues to be integrated into required and elective courses.

CONSULTING EXPERIENCES

Students in the program complete four consulting projects: Human-Centered Design Experience, Sustainability Consulting Experience, Strategic Consulting Experience, and Global Business.

REAL STORIES. REAL IMPACT.

For **Iziah Waugh (MBA '26)**, the Flex MBA has been a game-changer. With a background in chemistry, Iziah enrolled to expand his business acumen and strengthen his executive presence. His certification of Executive Leadership has already begun preparing him for future roles in senior management.



"Having these leadership skills will really help highlight and advance me in the marketplace and prepare me for positions like director or vice president of sales," shared Iziah.

While continuing to work full-time, Iziah is thriving while balancing his part-time studies with his role as a technical sales manager. "I chose to study part-time because my career is still the highlight of my life. I wanted something that would fit my schedule so I could balance a full-time role with an MBA program. I was scared I wouldn't be able to balance work and school, and then I got a 4.0 GPA in my first semester. Don't let fear stop you."

YOUR FUTURE. YOUR FLEX.

The revamped Flex MBA equips students with the skills, confidence, and professional network to accelerate their careers on their schedule.

CAREER AND LIFE DESIGN

The Career and Life Design class ensures every student graduates with not only a clear understanding of their strengths, values, and career goals, but also with a future plan supported by actionable strategies.

FLEXIBILITY THROUGH ELECTIVES

One-Year MBA students can customize their MBA experience by selecting two electives, allowing students to target the skills most aligned with their career goals.

ADDED SUPPORT FOR NON-BUSINESS BACKGROUNDS

The School offers online resource modules in business fundamentals that are accessible before the start of the program, allowing students to enter the program confident and prepared.

"After just three semesters, One-Year MBA students are truly prepared for anything," said **Dr. Karen Russo Donovan, Senior Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Executive Education**. "We look forward to welcoming the next cohort of sustainable business leaders in Summer 2026."

FACULTY Appointments



President Ken Gormley and Dr. Aimée Kane

Dr. Aimée Kane, Donahue Chair in Management, 2025-2030

Dr. Kelly Moore, H.J. Halliwell Faculty Fellow in Marketing, 2025-2028

Dr. Rui Liu, William and Helen Lyons Faculty Fellow in Finance, 2025-2028

Dr. Wenqi Zhou, Associate Director, Viragh Institute for Business Ethics and the PwC Alumni Faculty Fellow in Information Systems and Technology, 2025-2028

FACULTY & STAFF Awards, December 2024

The Palumbo-Donahue School of Business honors faculty and staff with annual awards, recognizing outstanding accomplishments and dedication to education and service. These awards celebrate the passion and commitment of our school members, highlighting their significant contributions to our community.

2023-2024 Eugene P. Beard Outstanding Service Award

- **Jennifer Milcarek**, Program Director, Investment Strategy Institute
- **Staci Offutt**, Director, Center for Excellence in Entrepreneurship and Instructor
- **Cindy McKittrick**, Budget Manager

2023-2024 Outstanding Research Award

- **Dr. Min Geiger**, Assistant Professor of Management

2023-2024 Outstanding Teaching Award

- **Dr. Kelly Moore**, Associate Professor of Marketing

2023-2024 Dean's Award for Excellence in Teaching

- **Dr. Wenqi Zhou**, Associate Professor of Information Systems and Technology
- **Dr. Pinar Ozturk**, Associate Professor of Information Systems and Technology
- **Andrea DiBernardo**, Associate Director, Center for Leadership in Professional Selling; Instructor

FACULTY RESEARCH Award

Congratulations to **Dr. Min Geiger, Assistant Professor of Management**, on receiving the **2025 Faculty Research Award** from **Duquesne's Center for Migration, Displacement, and Community Studies (CMDCS)**.

CMDCS Director Dr. Jennie Schulze praised the research for its rigor, timeliness, and relevance, noting it will be the focus of a public lecture in spring 2026.

Dr. Geiger was honored for her article, "*Accent Speaks Louder than Ability: Elucidating the Effect of Nonnative Accent on Trust*," published in *Group and Organization Management*. Selected through a competitive process, the award recognizes outstanding scholarship with significant societal impact.

2023-2024 Dean's Award for Excellence in Research

- **Dr. Ryan Atkins**, Associate Professor of Supply Chain Management
- **Dr. Mark Geiger**, Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship
- **Dr. Matt Drake**, Associate Professor of Supply Chain Management
- **Dr. Wenqi Zhou**, Associate Director, Viragh Institute for Business Ethics; PwC Alumni Faculty Fellow in Information Systems and Technology

2024-2025 Rethwisch Award Winners

- **Most Impactful Business Core Professor**
 - » **Dr. Ron Dick**, Associate Professor of Sports Marketing
 - » **Runner-up: Dr. Bryan Menk**, Associate Professor of Accounting
- **Most Impactful Major Professor**
 - » **Dr. Ron Dick**, Associate Professor of Sports Marketing
 - » **Runner-up: Professor Valerie Williams**, Associate Professor of Practice in Accounting

Welcome New Faculty and Staff

SHAKERIA CARTER

Student Success Coach

Shakeria's career in higher education began at Penn State University where she worked in admissions, academic counseling, and student advocacy. Shakeria supports Information Systems and Technology, Management, 3+3 Business and Law, Analytics and Information Management, and Flex MBA students.

MPS, Community and Economic Development, The Pennsylvania State University; Certificate, Africana Studies, The Pennsylvania State University; BA, Corporate Communications, The Pennsylvania State University



ANDREW CUMMINGS

Multimedia Communications Specialist

Before returning to Duquesne as part of the School's marketing and communication team, Andy worked in marketing and communications at Carnegie Mellon University's College of Engineering.

BA, Multiplatform Journalism and Political Science, Duquesne University



MICHELLE CURRY

Student Success Coach

Michelle has spent the past eight years in higher education serving in various roles. As a first-generation college student, she enjoys supporting our first-gen students, along with Discover Business, Economics, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and Flex MBA students.

MS, Leadership and Innovation, Daemen University; BS, Public Health Education, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania



JASMINE JONES-REED

Student Success Coach

Jasmine's career began at West Virginia University, where she spent six years in the department of Housing and Residence Life as a Residence Life Specialist. Jasmine supports Accounting, Supply Chain Management, and Flex MBA students.

MA, Communications, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania; BA, History, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania



JOHN NIEDENBERGER

Executive Director, Investment Strategy Institute and Instructor

John has a professional background in institutional investment management and wealth management at several firms. He holds the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA®) and the Certified Financial Planner (CFP®) designations and has taught at Duquesne since 2016.

MBA, Finance, Virginia Tech; MA, Economics, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; BA, Mathematics and Economics, Denison University



SHERRYL THOMEIER

Budget and Administrative Coordinator

Sherryl supports the School's Business and Administration department with budget management. She also supports the faculty and students of the Economics, Finance, Information Systems and Technology, Supply Chain Management departments.

MBA, International American University, Los Angeles; BS in Computer Management from Colegio de San Juan in Manila, Philippines



Congratulations on 25 Years

On September 4, 2025, **Dr. William Spangler**, Department Chair for Accounting, IST, and Supply Chain Management, and Professor of IST, was honored for 25 years of dedicated service.



President Ken Gormley and Dr. William Spangler

Congratulations to our Recent Retirees

DR. MATT MARLIN

Congratulations to Matt on his retirement from teaching after 38 years as a Professor of Economics.

DR. AMY PHELPS

Congratulations to Amy on her retirement from teaching after 26 years as an Associate Professor of Practice in Statistics.

VAL WILLIAMS

Congratulations to Val on her retirement from teaching after 24 years as an Associate Professor of Practice in Accounting.

Difference-Making Experiential Learning Opportunities

The School's project-based approach pushes our students to learn while doing by working with industry professionals. Our students are immersed in carefully designed corporate projects from their first semester to their last. From cornerstone-to-capstone curricular experiences to co-curricular competitions, in any given academic year there are dozens of class-embedded and external opportunities for students to be difference makers with real impact.

MGMT 712: Sustainable Business Practices Project ONE-YEAR MBA DELIVERS STRATEGIC CONSULTING

During the Summer semester, the 2025-2026 One-Year MBA cohort demonstrated the power of experiential learning through a high-impact consulting engagement with **MassMutual Pittsburgh**.

As part of the **Sustainable Business Practices** course, students were challenged to reposition **MassMutual Pittsburgh** from its traditional identity as a life insurance provider to a comprehensive financial planning firm.

Working in teams, students analyzed the company's current brand position, assessed competitive benchmarks, and engaged in strategic problem-solving. Their task culminated in presenting creative, actionable recommendations designed to support MassMutual Pittsburgh's long-term growth and strengthen its relevance to evolving client needs. Students gained valuable consulting experience while contributing meaningful recommendations to a leading organization.

BUAD 103: First Year Innovation Experience EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FROM DAY ONE

Every fall, the School offers our cornerstone course: **First Year Innovation Experience (FYIE)**. As a core business class, all first year students participate as individuals and in teams, immediately being immersed in a real-world business challenge.

For the 6th year in a row, **Ernst & Young (EY)** has been the corporate partner for FYIE, once again asking our students to propose enhancements to improve the working world for Generation Z. The challenge focuses on four areas that include: AI and other emerging technologies; social impact/mission of the company; professional development and continuous learning; and well-being and workplace recognition.



Congratulations to the Fall 2024 winning team, left to right, AJ Kolaris, Jared Kazmierski, Eli Kyle, Nicole Lamberson, and Julian Hargis who designed a smart AI guide that elevates the Gen Z new hire experience.



Left to Right: Martin Black, Curstin Carpenter, Carley Vedro, Heather Bonomi, and Samantha Dorundo

MGMT 499W: Strategic Management Capstone INTEGRATIVE LEARNING AND STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING

Strategic Management serves as a culminating experience for all business undergraduates where they integrate knowledge from across their studies. Students apply academic theory to a hands-on consulting experience. The capstone course strategically reinforces what students have learned throughout their four years at the School while preparing them to enter the workforce as thoughtful, adaptive, and difference-making professionals.

In Fall 2024, **WESCO's** Communications & Security Solutions Division challenged the student teams to identify growth opportunities in the cloud-based, next-generation security solutions market. The winning team developed a smart AI camera and sensor security solution.

In Spring 2025, students developed growth strategies for **Edgewell Personal Care**. Finalist teams had the unique opportunity to present their recommendations directly to **Dan Sullivan (B'91), Chief Operating Officer of Edgewell**, bringing their classroom learning into real-world dialogue with a senior industry leader.



The Fall 2025 Strategic Management finalists preparing to present their findings at WESCO's Pittsburgh office.



The Spring 2025 Strategic Management finalists with Dan Sullivan (B'91), seated in the center of the front row.

Partnerships and Projects that Transform Students

The following lists, while not exhaustive, provide illustrative examples of the range of course-embedded corporate projects offered across the School. Logos are included for firms that are official corporate partners in the School.

FALL 2024 UNDERGRADUATE PROJECTS

BUBA 285: Foundations of Business Analytics

Excelitas challenged students to address global strategic sourcing. Grouping by vendor, students focused on spend data across 20 categories of commodities and determined which plants are most efficient and identified areas for improvement. (Faculty: Matt Drake)



ISYS 489W: Information Systems Capstone

Students partnered with Pittsburgh Young Professionals to design and prototype an app that streamlines event proposal submission, review, and approval. Through requirements gathering, UX/UI design, prototyping, and usability testing, students delivered a functional prototype that improves communication, transparency, and efficiency. (Faculty: Karoly Bozan)

MKTG 373: Sales Fundamentals

Students partnered with Fastenal to create and execute realistic sales role plays, culminating in simulated meetings with Fastenal representatives in Rockwell Hall's sim labs. (Faculty: Andrea DiBernardo)



MKTG 472: Digital Marketing

Students completed a digital marketing plan for Level Agency's client Arcade Comedy Theater. (Faculty: Christina Kuchmaner)



MKTG 474: Data-Driven Marketing

Students analyzed paid search data and campaign results for Pitt-Ohio, looking for opportunities to optimize spending and ad placement for future campaigns. (Faculty: Ryan Luchs)

SCMG 375: Supply Chain Process Improvement

Students partnered with Kraft Heinz's Away From Home Division Integrated Business Planning Process. Working in five teams, they analyzed current practices and delivered recommendations for process improvements. (Faculty: Kathryn Marley)



FALL 2024 GRADUATE PROJECTS

ISYS 612: Data Querying

Dollar Bank asked students to examine the long-term decline in U.S. banks and its effects on underserved populations, especially the under- and un-banked. Students conducted research and data analysis to assess the impacts of this trend and developed recommendations to address these challenges and better serve affected communities. (Faculty: Jacqueline Gerber)



MGMT 722: Sustainable Business Practicum Project II

Students completed three consulting projects with local nonprofit and community organizations: Grow Pittsburgh, Green Leap (Monmade's business accelerator), and BikePGH. (Faculty: Staci Offutt)

SPRING 2025 UNDERGRADUATE PROJECTS

ENTR 485: Entrepreneurship Capstone

Students participated in techstars_ Startup Weekend, hosted at Duquesne University, as part of the Entrepreneurship Capstone. Over 54 hours, they pitched ideas, built prototypes, and validated business models in collaboration with InnovatePGH. (Faculty: Staci Offutt)

ISYS 489W: Information Systems Capstone

The capstone team developed an inventory management app prototype for The Good Coffee Company to track inflow/outflow of inventory and generate decision-support reports. Along with the prototype app, deliverables included a database schema, role-based access control, and testing with end-users. (Faculty: Karoly Bozan)

MKTG 374W: Marketing Research

Student teams designed and administered an online survey for the Pittsburgh Supply Chain Institute to measure interest in supply chain professional training programs. Their analysis provided actionable recommendations for new course offerings and alternative delivery formats such as hybrid learning. (Faculty: Georgiana Craciun)

MKTG 474: Data-Driven Marketing

Students analyzed Pitt Ohio's business data across sectors and classifications to identify growth opportunities and areas for divestment. They delivered a marketing plan supported by data-driven insights to guide strategic expansion. (Faculty: Ryan Luchs)

SCMG 499W: Strategic Supply Chain Management

Students partnered with Eos Energy Enterprises to tackle seven operations and supply-chain projects to drive measurable gains in visibility, planning, and factory performance. In the process, students applied analytics, lean/operations methods, and change-management skills to deliver breakthrough, metrics-driven recommendations. (Faculty: Ryan Atkins)

SPMK 477W: Strategic Sports Projects

Students worked with Women's Elite Rugby and The Women's National Football Conference (WNFC), both emerging professional sports leagues, to design strategic marketing plans aimed at profitability and sustainability. (Faculty: Caroline Fitzgerald)

SPRING 2025 GRADUATE PROJECTS

FINC 650: Capstone Project in Finance

Students partnered with IronStrong Metal Fabrication to build a three-year financial model that supports the firm's expansion into a larger facility and strengthens its financial discipline. By forecasting sales growth, cost savings, margin improvements, and capital investments, students delivered actionable insights. (Faculty: Phil Baird)

Interested in becoming a School of Business Corporate Partner? Contact:
Adam Viers, Assistant Dean for Advancement at viersa@duq.edu
Martin Black, Director, Corporate Relations at blackm1@duq.edu

Clean Plate Innovations DUQUESNE START-UP SEES CONTINUED GROWTH

From homestyle meals to international cuisine, a university dining hall is a student's dream. With an all-you-can-eat model, there are endless options and no limits. Don't like your food? Try something else. Want a second plate? Go for it. The result? Half-eaten plates that add up.

Commercial cafeterias, including those on university campuses, waste approximately 5 million tons of food annually, with plate waste accounting for 66% of the waste generated in these dining facilities. The bottom line: overproduction, unpredictable demand, and wasteful consumer behavior cost \$11 billion annually.

Concerned about this level of food waste, Nolan Sulpizio (B'24) founded Clean Plate Innovations (CPI), a pioneering cleantech start-up that aims to revolutionize how large-scale dining operations approach food waste using AI-powered, waste-tracking software.

HOW IT WORKS

Before leftovers are discarded, a camera captures the remnants on a plate. CPI's software analyzes the image and generates actionable insights which can help dining operators optimize inventory while reducing costs and waste.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

The idea for CPI sparked in ENTR 485, the Entrepreneurship Capstone course. Professor Staci Offutt encouraged Nolan to pitch his idea at **techstars_ Start-up Weekend**, a three-day hackathon hosted by the School's Center for Excellence in Entrepreneurship. During this fast-paced pitch competition, Nolan formed a team of fellow Duquesne Business students who rolled up their sleeves and started innovating. After winning second place, Nolan realized the value of his idea and made plans to bring his concept to life.



Back: Nolan Sulpizio (B'24), Abby Kennedy, (B'25, MS'26) Staci Offutt
Front: Diego López (B'25)

BUILDING LEGITIMACY

After techstars_, Nolan began team building by recruiting Duquesne alumni and faculty (and others) to the CPI team and Advisory Board. CPI's next big move was to secure a spot in **Innovation Works' (IW) Scalable Residency Program**, where they refined their prototype using IW's facility and began building credibility.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

CPI is growing quickly, partnering with respected regional organizations to bring their innovative product to the communities they serve.

Follow their growth online at cleanplateinnovations.com
@cleanplateinnovations_ clean-plate-innovations

DUQUESNE NEW VENTURE CHALLENGE (DNVC)

In 2024, CPI entered the DNVC and won the first-place prize of \$20,000. For the first time in the DNVC's six-year history, the winning team consisted entirely of Duquesne alumni and students: Nolan Sulpizio, Daniel Oldak (B'23), Ashton Jell (B'26), and Diego Lopez (B'25).



Left to Right: Ashton Jell, Nolan Sulpizio, and Daniel Oldak

Along with the generous cash prize, CPI also won 10 hours of free legal education through Duquesne's Thomas R. Kline School of Law, five hours of free consulting services from Duquesne's Small Business Development Center, and a six-month license for Palo Alto's LivePlan, a business planning software.

GROWING MOMENTUM

CPI recently announced its admittance to **Innovation Works' Alpha Lab hardware accelerator**, securing \$100,000, access to facility space, and accelerator classes led by industry experts.

"Our roadmap is clear: in the first 90 days, we'll refine our beta version, expand customer discovery, and develop a scalable manufacturing plan," Nolan shared. "From there, we'll target 3 to 10 pilot programs with partners."

CPI is capturing attention, ranking 31st in **F6S' list of the top 50 AI companies** and start-ups in Pittsburgh in March 2025 and receiving an honorable mention for **Technical.ly's RealLIST Start-ups of 2025**.

SHAPED BY DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

With guidance from his professors, Nolan took advantage of all learning opportunities. From pitch competitions and networking events to internships, Nolan immersed himself in the regional business community. As he gained experience, his determination to launch a start-up grew.

CPI remains connected to its Duquesne roots as a client of the Small Business Development Center, a mentor for entrepreneurship students in the Product Innovation course, and is hosting its first-ever internship program for Duquesne students starting in Fall 2025.

"If it weren't for the doors unlocked by Duquesne, I wouldn't have reached this point so fast," said Nolan.

FINDING BALANCE

Like many start-up founders, Nolan embraces the challenges of start-up life while balancing a full-time job at Wesco as a Supply Chain Analyst.

"I love both jobs—I get to be in a structured environment nine to five, solving large-scale problems with the backing of a Fortune 500 company," he said. "Then, from five to twelve, I get to be creative and lead an awesome team."

Mary Beth Jenkins (MBA'02)

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Congratulations to **Mary Beth Jenkins (MBA'02)** on her appointment as President and CEO of UPMC Health Plan, President of UPMC Insurance Services Division, and Executive Vice President of UPMC, effective on January 1, 2025. Along with her long history of service at UPMC, Mary Beth is an active volunteer with a commitment to community service.



Christopher Profeta (B'15)

JOINING A PRESTIGIOUS GROUP OF ALUMS



Congratulations to **Christopher Profeta (B'15)**, who was honored at the **5th Annual Dukes from the Last Decade Awards** as part of the distinguished 2025 alumni class. Chris shared that being a Duquesne University graduate means carrying forward a legacy of leadership, integrity, and service.

Christina Wilson (B'11)

SPREADING HOPE THROUGH ENGAGEMENT

Christina Wilson (B'11) was presented the **2025 Hope Award by the National MS Society**, which supports individuals and families affected by multiple sclerosis. Christina has raised significant funds for research and serves on the Philadelphia Board of Trustees, leading community engagement efforts.



Jack Eckenrode (B'50) A LIFE OF FAITH, FITNESS, AND FAMILY

Jack Eckenrode's journey has been anything but conventional. He's an air force veteran, an entrepreneur, and a family patriarch with 12 children, over 60 grandchildren, 40 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren. As the founder of Eckenrode Agency, he pioneered innovative business strategies, building a successful career in the insurance industry.



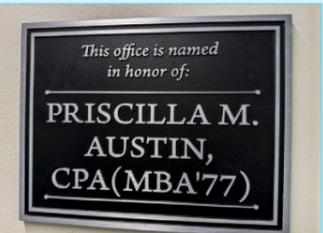
The University's Spiritan mission made an indelible mark on Jack. His Catholic faith has guided him, keeping him active in his parish, service organizations, and volunteer work. In recognition of his extraordinary life of service, Jack was awarded a **Presidential Medal at Duquesne's Winter 2024 Commencement by President Gormley**.

Honoring Legacies

DAN CANCELMI (B'85) CREATES ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP AND INVESTS IN PROGRAMMING

Dan Cancelmi, retired Chief Financial Officer of Tenet Healthcare, has made a lasting impact on Duquesne University through a generous scholarship and program investment. The **Dan Cancelmi and Noreen Cancelmi Poploski Endowed Scholarship** supports students in both the School of Business and the McNulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts, reflecting his deep commitment to educational access and opportunity.

Dan Cancelmi and
Noreen Cancelmi Poploski
Enterprise
Learning Lab



In honor of his late sister, **Noreen Cancelmi Poploski (A'81)**, Dan also extended his support to the Center for Hispanic Studies, ensuring her passion for language and culture continues to inspire future generations. Within the School of Business, his contributions will advance business education technology and enhance Rockwell Hall.

Additionally, Cancelmi recognized the pivotal role of faculty in shaping student success. He chose to honor one of his most influential business professors, **Priscilla Austin (MBA'77)**, by naming a faculty office in her memory on the 9th floor of Rockwell Hall.

Through these investments, Cancelmi is preserving legacies, those of his sister, his professor, and his own Duquesne experience, while empowering students to thrive.



Jack begins each morning with prayer and calisthenics. For two decades, he has competed in the National Senior Games, earning gold medals in biking, running, and javelin. In 2023, he was honored to light the ceremonial torch for the Pittsburgh Senior Games. Most recently, he medaled in the 95+ category for the 5K at the National Senior Games in Des Moines, Iowa.

Through it all, Jack remains a Duquesne man, sharing in his 2024 Winter Commencement address, "It's good to surround yourself with others who want to help their community. Studying at Duquesne, I was immersed with kind, giving people all around me."

Congratulations, Jack!

2025 COMMENCEMENT

CONGRATS GRADS!



Sharon Kelley (B'86), Commencement Address *A DIFFERENCE-MAKING CAREER*

When Sharon Kelley, the Chair of Revenue Cycle for Mayo Clinic's worldwide operations, returned to Duquesne University to deliver the 2025 commencement address for the School of Business, she brought with her decades of leadership experience and a message grounded in authenticity, resilience, and purpose.

In her keynote address, titled "Lead with Your Why—Even When You Feel Like an Imposter," Kelley drew on deeply personal stories to encourage graduates to embrace imperfection and lead with courage. She recounted an early career moment when, during a lunch interview at a Big Eight accounting firm, she unknowingly drank from a finger bowl. Far from ruining her chances, the confidence with which she handled the mistake earned her the job. "You don't have to be perfect to belong," she told graduates. "You just have to be brave enough to show up anyway."

Kelley's career has been characterized by her ability to take bold steps forward, even in the face of uncertainty. She shared an inspirational story about how she helped secure critical, life-saving care at the Mayo Clinic for a stranger's relative, despite feeling unqualified to intervene. Today, he is alive and thriving. "What if I had let imposter syndrome stop me?" she asked. "Real impact happens when we're open to unexpected moments and lead from the inside out."

Her willingness to lead with vulnerability was also evident when, in 2023, she shared with her 1,600-person team the devastating loss of her 37-year-old stepdaughter to a fentanyl overdose, prompting an outpouring of support and stories from colleagues. She shared that, "Vulnerability isn't a weakness—it's what allows healing and trust to happen. If you want to build a legacy—not just a résumé—be the kind of leader who makes it safe to be real."

Addressing the graduates, many of whom began their college journey during the pandemic, Kelley praised their resilience: "That resilience is now a part of your story, and it will carry you further than any GPA ever could. You are exactly what the world needs next."

Her closing charge to the Class of 2025 was simple but powerful: "The world doesn't need you to be perfect. It needs you to be present. It needs you to be real. It needs you to act with heart—especially when it's hard."

In both her career and her keynote speech, Sharon demonstrated that the heart of a true difference-maker influences beyond titles and metrics and transforms lives.



Dr. Dean McFarlin, Sharon Kelley, and President Ken Gormley



Dr. Kathryn Marley and Gina Govojean



Gina Govojean (B'12), Young Alumna Achievement Award

DIFFERENCE-MAKING LEADERSHIP

Since graduating from Duquesne University in 2012 with dual majors in Supply Chain Management and Legal Studies, Gina Govojean has forged a career defined by resilience, innovation, and a steadfast commitment to opening doors for others. Her rise at Howmet Aerospace has been nothing short of remarkable—becoming one of the youngest procurement leaders in 2018, the first female plant manager in the company's engineered structures business in 2022, and by 2024, one of the youngest female executives in her current role as Vice President, Procurement, overseeing a \$1 billion revenue portfolio.

Beyond her corporate success, Govojean has remained deeply connected to her alma mater as a member of the Duquesne Supply Chain Management Advisory Council and a vocal advocate for women in the manufacturing industry. Her passion for challenging the status quo has inspired countless young professionals. In honor of her accomplishments, Gina was presented with **Palumbo-Donahue School of Business Young Alumna Achievement Award**, awarded to alumni under 40 who have demonstrated outstanding early-career successes and commitment to the community.

"Making others around you see their own ability and potential is next level," she told graduates. Her inspirational speech included the importance of good leadership, stating, "It has been my experience that believing in people and inspiring them to achieve great things is the single most rewarding part of being in business." She concluded her speech by telling the graduates that "You have the potential to change things and impact the experiences of those who come after you—that's your legacy."

Her leadership and advocacy have earned her national recognition, including being named a **2025 Women MAKE Awards honoree by the Manufacturing Institute** and being included on **Pittsburgh Magazine's prestigious 2025 40 Under 40 list**.

Gina's work embodies Duquesne's mission proving that success is measured both by professional achievement and by the positive change you inspire in others.



IIA Annual Case Competition

DUQUESNE STUDENTS ON A WINNING STREAK!

In December 2024, Duquesne Accounting students swept The Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) Pittsburgh Chapter's Annual Case Competition, winning first through fourth place. The case highlighted issues with controls and safety considerations at an eyeglass manufacturer in Africa. Presenting their findings to IIA judges, teams determined the roles of Internal Audit, External Audit, and Management. Our students showed an in-depth understanding of expected management controls, how controls might be circumvented, and safety considerations within the business environment.



Left to Right: 1st Place Team Adam Larson, Jordyn Oaster, Michael Suric, Lenora Ciabattari, and Thomas Bradfield

FMA Finance Leaders' Conference

FINANCE STUDENTS PLACE 4th OVERALL

At the 2025 Financial Management Association International Finance Leaders' Conference Investment Analysis Competition in NYC, our students placed 4th overall and were invited to present their work at a poster session sponsored by the CFA Society New York, where they won first place.

While in NYC, they toured the trading floor of CME Group and visited FINRA. They also connected with several alumni, including Daniel Izzillo (B'21) from Morgan Stanley.



Left to Right: Aidan Boyd, Jake Rebel, Joseph Kostelac, Samuel Orecchio., Alexa Lovelace, Abigale Frist, Eva Conti, Katelin Flick, and Dr. Ryan Garvey

Lean Sigma Six Green Belt CONGRATS TO MONIQUE R. GOMES

MS in Supply Chain Management student, **Monique Gomes** earned her MoreSteam Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Certification as part of Dr. Mike Sherwin's Lean Six Sigma Process Improvement course. Monique completed a project with Heidelberg Materials, focusing on building a decision support tool to standardize fleet management decisions.



2024-2025 One-Year MBA

GLOBAL BUSINESS INTERNATIONAL TRIP

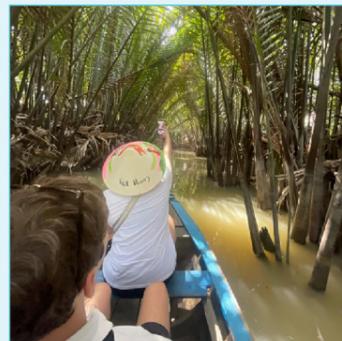
After working virtually throughout their **Global Business** course, the One-Year MBA cohort began their international experience, where they presented their findings to our international corporate partners.

In Singapore, they explored how the country leverages innovation and sustainability to improve urban life. While there, the cohort presented their project findings to **GreenBix**, a sustainable manufacturer of HVAC and refrigeration equipment.

Afterward, the cohort traveled to Vietnam. Despite economic growth in the manufacturing industry, as a developing country, Vietnam still faces challenges such as environmental pollution and inadequate infrastructure. There, the students presented their project findings to **Aplas Vietnam**, a plastics manufacturing company, and **Green Transition**, a sustainability consulting company.



Singapore: Gardens by the Bay, a 260-acre urban park, home to the world's largest greenhouse in the world



Vietnam: Exploring rural life along the Mekong Delta, home to agriculture and aquaculture



Above: The cohort, along with faculty advisors, visited a denim factory, where they learned about the importance of the textile export industry to Vietnam's economy.

Left: The cohort, along with faculty advisors, at international partner company, Green Transition.

Meet Jason Garland, Jr.

A TRUE DIFFERENCE-MAKER IN THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Jason Garland, Jr. is making remarkable strides in his academic and professional journey. As a junior triple majoring in Finance, Accounting, and Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Jason is ready for a promising business career. His commitment to leveraging every opportunity for growth and development is evident in his proactive approach to coursework, scholarships, internships, and extracurricular activities.

As a senior at Pittsburgh CAPA, Jason was drawn to Duquesne's program and campus for several reasons. Wanting to stay close to his family, he felt a strong sense of belonging during his tour—something missing at other schools. He credits his Student Success Coach, Chris Hilf, as a key influence in his decision to attend, stating, "Chris understands that I have big goals. He elevates me, lets me know about new opportunities, and supports my triple major by helping me map out my graduation plan."

EXTRACURRICULAR AND INTERNSHIP SUCCESS

Jason credits much of his success to his early involvement with the **Asset Management Group @ Duquesne (DAMG)**, where he took advantage of career development opportunities, including guidance on internship and job-searching strategies, as well as networking with professionals from leading financial firms. These career development opportunities inspired Jason to secure multiple internships while at Duquesne, that include:

- **Blue Tree Venture Capital:** As a member of the due diligence team, he analyzed potential investment opportunities.
- **Venture Starters nonprofit:** Engaging with start-up founders and investors, he gained exposure to a variety of emerging industries.
- **Hewlett Packard (HP) Corporate Venture Capital and Business Analytics:** He assisted with identifying potential investments and acquisitions.
- **Project Destiny:** During a seven-week real estate private equity training program, he underwrote multi-family deals and competed in a private equity-style pitch competition.
- **Access Distributed Training Program:** As one of 60 students accepted, he completed rigorous finance training through Financeable, completing investment banking and private equity case studies and networking with financial professionals. He currently serves as a mentor for new fellows.

In 2024, Jason received the prestigious **Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) Scholarship**, awarded by the **Executive Leadership Council (ELC)**. This honor placed him among the top 4% of



applicants. It gives him access to professional development, mentorship, and networking opportunities with fellow ELC scholars and members, senior-level executives, and prominent global business leaders. In the Summer of 2026, Jason will be one of only two students selected to intern at HSBC's investment banking infrastructure finance team in New York City.

EMBRACING DUQUESNE'S SPIRITAN MISSION

After taking Dr. Amy Yurko's Financial Accounting course, Jason volunteered with the **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program**, which assists people in underserved communities with completing their tax returns. His commitment to community service extends to his involvement in **Duquesne's Spirit of Community Scholars** program, where he volunteers with **Just Harvest**, a nonprofit that helps low-income households facing food insecurity.

Jason participated in a tech-focused growth equity immersion with **PeakSpan Capital**, where he improved his leadership skills by mentoring students in DAMG. Jason was named a **2027 Management Leadership for Tomorrow Career Prep Fellow**. He is a Fall 2024 initiate to **The Omicron Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.**

In Spring 2025, Jason studied abroad in Ireland as part of Duquesne's study abroad program. While in Ireland, he traveled to many other cities, including Paris, Barcelona, Iceland, and London.



Studying Abroad with Duquesne

A DIFFERENCE-MAKING FUTURE

Expected to graduate in the Spring of 2027, Jason's long-term career goals are ambitious. He aims to establish a private equity or venture capital firm based in Pittsburgh, with a focus on investing in emerging markets such as Africa, India, and Brazil. Jason's vision is to create international internship opportunities for students in the Pittsburgh area, bridging the gap between local talent and global markets.

Jason's journey is a testament to his determination, foresight, and passion for the business world. **With a clear vision for the future and a proven track record of success, Jason is poised to continue leading as a truly inspirational and impactful difference-maker.**



Jason with fellow HSBC Scholarship winners, Julian Yarborough and Joseph Jordan, at the ELC Reception in Washington, DC.



Jason at KDKA studios, being honored for his work with Junior Achievement of Western PA.

Business for the Public Good

DUQUESNE MBA STUDENTS TACKLE ABANDONED BOATS IN PENNSYLVANIA'S RIVERS

In the heart of Pittsburgh, where three rivers shape the city's identity, a group of Duquesne University Flex MBA students are tackling a problem that is often hidden beneath the surface, literally. Abandoned and derelict vessels, also known as ADVs, are a growing concern across PA's waterways. ADVs leak chemicals, block boat traffic, and pose serious environmental risks. With no formal statewide program to address the issue, the problem continues to expand year after year.

At Duquesne's Palumbo-Donahue School of Business, a new kind of response is emerging. Students in the **MBA capstone consulting course, Management 548**, used their business education to deliver real solutions to a real problem. Supported by **State Representative Anita Kulik**, who also serves as Majority Chair of the House Game and Fisheries Committee, this hands-on project was the result of a first-of-its-kind partnership between **Duquesne University** and the **Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC)**.

"I knew this was the kind of real-world challenge our MBA students could help solve," said David Fortna, Director of Executive Education and Leadership Development at Duquesne. "It sits at the intersection of sustainability, strategy, and public-private collaboration, and it is the kind of work that prepares students to lead with purpose."

Representative Kulik, a proud two-time graduate of Duquesne University, earning both her bachelor's degree and Juris Doctorate, has long advocated for responsible environmental stewardship and recreational access to public waterways.

"This project reflects what Duquesne does best," said Rep. Kulik. "It brings smart, community-minded students into conversations that have real consequences for people, the environment, and public policy. I am so proud to see my alma mater supporting this effort."

The issue is especially relevant to the Pittsburgh region, where our waterways define the landscape and serve as a hub for industry, tourism, and recreation. Across the state, ADVs are accumulating in coves, channels, and harbors. Estimates suggest that 20 or more new vessels are abandoned each year in Pennsylvania alone.

The PFBC is a self-funded agency without the resources to study or address the ADV crisis. That is where Duquesne's students stepped in.



Conservation Officer explains the hazards to students Maureen McGaffin and Yann Evain.

Led by **Professor Michael Corcoran**, students in the capstone course worked across five topic areas, each designed to address a core part of the ADV problem. These student teams developed strategic and sustainable solutions that could form the foundation for a long-term statewide response.

Students benchmarked programs in other states, estimated program costs, studied the legal framework, and identified potential partners for vessel removal and disposal. They also learned how to lead in environments with multiple stakeholders and limited resources.

"Our clients have been incredibly helpful in identifying the obstacles facing the PFBC," said MBA student, Maureen McGaffin. "It's gratifying to work on a sustainable project that can protect our natural environment."

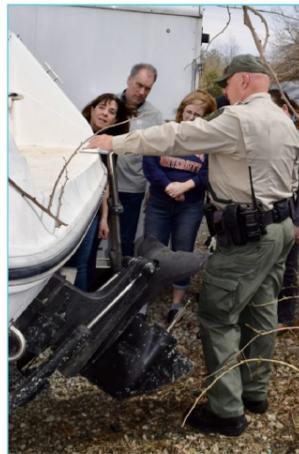
Among the student teams, the following actions were researched and suggested to the PFBC:

- Vessel Turn-In Program, providing boat owners with a legal and responsible option to dispose of aging or unwanted vessels
- Comprehensive cleanup strategy for existing derelict boats, including mapping current locations, coordinating removal logistics, and identifying disposal methods
- Funding strategies such as grant opportunities, potential sponsorships, and public funding mechanisms
- Communication and legal reforms, including ways to inform the public and improve regulations that govern vessel ownership and abandonment
- Sustainable disposal alternatives, such as fiberglass recycling and partnerships with boat manufacturers, to reduce reliance on landfills

Each team's work was rooted in the MBA curriculum, applying skills in financial modeling, operations, marketing, public policy, and systems thinking.

While their work was based on research and analysis, the students witnessed the impact of their work firsthand. On a visit to Southside Riverfront Park and Neville Island, students saw up close the vessels they worked to address. Along the shoreline, sunken boats and decaying hulls marred an otherwise beautiful view. Seeing those vessels underscored the urgency and importance of the work.

Students presented their recommendations to the PFBC. Their findings may help guide future legislation, influence agency programming, and serve as the basis for a pilot vessel turn-in event or ADV removal program.



State Rep. Kulik, Prof. Corcoran, McGaffin, and Officer Johnson

Life Design

EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF BUSINESS LEADERS

When David Fortna, Director of Executive Education and Leadership Development at Duquesne University, attended a Life Design program at Stanford University in June 2024, he discovered a philosophy he believes could transform business education.

"In today's world, professionals at every stage are asking the same question: *What's next?*" Fortna explained. "But too often, the default is to wait for clarity, opportunity, or direction to arrive. Life Design challenges that mindset."

Life Design, rooted in design thinking, flips that waiting game on its head. It empowers individuals to "prototype" their futures. Students and professionals experiment with small, low-risk steps, such as trying an internship, attending a networking event, or scheduling a meeting with someone new.

"Life Design is about applying product design principles to your life," Fortna said. "It encourages people to test ideas and learn from them. Clarity doesn't come from sitting still—it comes from action."

The process begins with honesty. Each workshop starts with the prompt: "You are here." It's an intentional reminder to begin with your current circumstances rather than an idealized version. From there, participants ask two guiding questions: "Is this a real problem?" and "Is this a human problem?" These ground the process in relevance and practicality.

Life Design is not just about reflection; it's about community. "People gain clarity through conversation," Fortna said. "They find confidence when they realize they're not alone in their questions. Life Design is deeply collaborative."

Fortna has embedded these principles into the One-Year MBA graduate curriculum through the Career and Life Design course. The course combines career coaching, professional development, and reflection, ensuring that graduates have an understanding of their strengths, values, and goals, along with an actionable strategy to pursue them.

From Data for Difference Making to Super Analytics Challenge

JEROMY LAMYA (MS' 25, MBA' 24) PLACES FIRST

In October 2024, Jeromy Lamya participated in the **2nd Annual Data for Difference Making Challenge (DDMC)**, a School of Business sponsored competition that gives all Duquesne graduate students the opportunity to develop data-driven solutions that address societal challenges. After receiving an individual honor award at DDMC, Jeromy went on to compete at the **2025 Super Analytics Challenge**, hosted by the University of Pittsburgh. There, Jeromy, along with a team of graduate students from three local universities, won first place by developing a sustainable, data-driven solution that provides preventative oral care to at-risk populations via a mobile dental unit. The team took home \$5,000 in prize money for their achievement.

For **Lauren Terry, a recent One-Year MBA graduate**, the process was life-changing. "[Career and Life Design] felt uncomfortable and even intimidating at times, but it helped me gain clarity on what I wanted for my future," she shared. "That realization was both exciting and daunting, because for the first time, my vision felt both possible and deeply meaningful."



Lauren Terry (MBA'25)

With her coach's guidance and the support of her peers, Lauren turned that vision into reality. "At the beginning of the program, my goals felt more like a dream than a plan," she said. "But my career coach and cohort believed in me when I didn't, and that made all the difference."

The program's emphasis on experiential learning, through consulting projects, case competitions, and networking opportunities, further prepared her to transition confidently into the workforce. "Once I landed interviews, I was ready. Duquesne had prepared me well, especially through the consulting experience built into the program," Lauren said.

By graduation, Lauren accepted a position as a Business Development Executive at Infosys, where she now works across sales, marketing insights, and consulting to manage client relationships.

Stories like Lauren's illustrate why Fortna is so passionate about bringing Life Design to business education. "We're not just preparing students for their first job," he said. "We're equipping them with tools to navigate an entire career filled with twists, turns, and reinvention."

At its heart, Life Design is about cultivating curiosity and courage—the willingness to explore, experiment, and grow. "If you're reading this and feeling curious, that's exactly the point," Fortna added.

Fortna's message to students, educators, and business leaders is clear—stop waiting for life to happen. Instead, cultivate the tools necessary to design your own success.

THANKS TO THE 2024 DDMC CORPORATE SPONSORS



Left to Right: Miao Yang, Jeromy Lamya, Garhvita Sethi, Shiv Patel, and Abigail Moses

6th Annual Negotiating Job Offers Panel ALUMNI SHAPING THE FUTURE

On March 26, 2025, the Palumbo-Donahue Student Advisory Council (PDSAC) hosted its 6th Annual Negotiating Job Offers Panel. Moderated by 2024–2025 PDSAC President Tyler Schultz, the panel featured Chelsey Graham (B'11), Manager, Solution Consulting at Ivalua; Jared Hoff (B'00), Senior Portfolio Manager at Federated Hermes; and Madison Stewart (B'19), ERP Risk & Automation Services Manager at RSM US LLP.

The 6th Annual Job Negotiation Panel drew a packed house of graduate and undergraduate students eager to sharpen their career skills. The panel of accomplished alumni shared real-world strategies for navigating job offers, communicating with confidence, and laying the groundwork for long-term success in new roles. The event concluded with a networking reception, where students had the chance to connect directly with panelists, faculty, and staff.

This annual, highly successful event underscores the School's commitment to the importance of professional development and presenting its students with opportunities to meet and learn from industry leaders.



Left to Right: Panelists Chelsey Graham, Jared Hoff, and Madison Stewart



Beta Gamma Sigma INTERNATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

Congratulations to our international graduate students, Likith Pamuru, Md Fazlur Rahman Shakil, Samir Nadra, and Surabhi Loya, who were inducted into the international honor society **Beta Gamma Sigma**. This is the highest distinction a business student can receive in an AACSB accredited program.



Left to Right: Likith Pamuru, Md Fazlur Rahman Shakil, Samir Nadra, and Surabhi Loya

WESCO INVESTING IN OUR STUDENTS

Over the past five years, WESCO has welcomed more than 90 interns and new graduates from Duquesne University. In recognition of our difference-making partnership, we are excited to announce that the 6th floor lounge in Rockwell Hall is now named the **WESCO Student Lounge**. A big congratulations to Summer 2025 interns Adam Johnson and Jackson Pierce, who have accepted roles in WESCO's IT Development and Finance Development programs, respectively.



Left to Right: Dr. Dean McFarlin, Adam Johnson, Robert Hayston (SVP of Enterprise Transformation), Jackson Pierce, Jordan Kart (Senior Manager of Early Career Programs), and Amanda Hildabrand (Senior Marketing Manager of Brand Governance)

Small Business Development Center GRADUATE ASSISTANT ACHIEVEMENTS

The Duquesne University SBDC graduate assistant team was presented the **Student Project of the Year Award at the PA Small Business Development Center Annual Conference**. They were recognized for hosting a two-day workshop on business management principles for entrepreneurs and small business owners.

During the Conference, the SBDC was also presented the **Happy Client Award**, recognizing excellence in client satisfaction and service delivery.



Left to Right: SBDC graduate student assistants Jeromy Lamy, Alicia Redington, and Tyler Padezan

Introducing the *Ethics VIBES* Podcast FROM THE ALBERT P. VIRAGH INSTITUTE FOR BUSINESS

The Albert P. Viragh Institute for Business Ethics (VIBE) has launched a new podcast series that discusses ethical decision-making in modern business. The podcast, titled **Ethics VIBES**, is hosted by Dr. David Wasieleski, the Executive Director of the Albert P. Viragh Institute for Business Ethics, Editor-in-Chief of the *Business and Society Review*, and the Albert Paul Viragh Professor in Business Ethics. Podcast guests will include business executives, entrepreneurs, non-profit leaders, and Duquesne alumni.

Ethics VIBES was created to bridge the academic and professional communities through thoughtful discussions about the ethical dilemmas faced by organizations.

"We offer compelling discussions with regional entrepreneurs, CEOs of local nonprofits, and experts in artificial intelligence," said Wasieleski. *"These interviews provide insight into how business leaders solve ethical challenges in their organizations, so podcast subscribers can learn new approaches for handling situations in their own lives."*

The first three episodes examine the ethics of entrepreneurship and the unintended consequences that can result from new ventures. This sub-series is titled *"The Destructive Side of Entrepreneurship"* and includes the following episodes:

- **Episode One: "Clean Plate, Clear Conscience"** features Nolan Sulpizio (B'24) of Clean Plate Innovations
- **Episode Two: "Avatar image Microalgae, Big Impact"** features Dan Fucich (B'15) of AlgenAir
- **Episode Three: "Comfort Meets Conscience"** features Julian Rizza (B'15, MS '20) and Serena Rizza of Hugh & Honey



Watch On YouTube



Also available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

Wags, Whiskers & Wings SUMMER PAWTY HOSTED BY HARP

The Palumbo-Donahue School of Business was delighted to sponsor the **Wags, Whiskers & Wings Summer PAWTy** hosted by the **Humane Animal Rescue of Pittsburgh (HARP)**. As the largest animal welfare organization in the region, HARP has an incredible legacy of compassion and care.

As a member of the board of directors, Dr. Dean McFarlin, along with the School's faculty and staff, are especially proud to support HARP's fundraising efforts alongside many other local companies.



Left to Right: Lillian Longo, Richard Longo, Andrea DiBernardo, Jennifer Grab Milcarek, Adam Viers, Staci Offutt, Dean McFarlin, and Tricia Brancolini-Foley

Academic Year End Celebration SUMMER HAPPY HOUR

In August 2025, the School celebrated an extraordinary year of achievements. We welcomed alumni, corporate sponsors, and advisory council members at Dollar Bank's stunning Pittsburgh headquarters for a rooftop event of relationship-building, networking, and celebration.



Pictured left to right: Associate Professor of Practice Bob Kollar (B'83, MBA'94) with Joseph Toth (B'81), Kevin (B'79) and Karen Prykull (B'79, MBA '83)



Alumni, Corporate Partners, Faculty, and Staff enjoying the evening.

2024 Rockwell Hall Renovations 8th FLOOR PHASE I

The 8th floor of Rockwell Hall underwent significant renovations during the summer of 2024 as part of a multi-phase project to modernize the floor. **The improvements included:**

- Newly redesigned, enlarged, and updated ADA-compliant restrooms
- New single-use restroom
- New carpeting in faculty and staff offices
- New heating and cooling systems (including new HVAC equipment in all offices)
- Fire suppression sprinklers
- Redesigned elevator lobby featuring open ceilings, flooring, and lighting similar to the other recently renovated floors

Costing nearly \$2 million, the upgrades to the 8th floor were essential for enhancing both individual and open workspaces, while also implementing necessary safety and ADA upgrades.

We look forward to Phase II of the 8th floor renovation, which will include redesigned “inner ring” spaces (e.g., new kitchenette, collaboration spaces, and other enhancements).

The timing of Phase II will depend on raising the necessary funds and scheduling of other facilities-related projects on campus.



8th Floor Elevator Lobby: In Progress



8th Floor Elevator Lobby: Complete



8th Floor Administrative Office: In Progress



8th Floor Administrative Office: Complete



8th Floor Office: In Progress



8th Floor Office: Complete



8th Floor Hallway: In Progress



8th Floor Hallway: Complete

Corporate Partners THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We are deeply grateful to our 23 corporate partners, whose unwavering support continues to transform our school and community.

Through their investment in course-embedded projects and funding for innovative educational initiatives, including access to cutting-edge technology, these partners are helping us create an enriched academic experience and a school-wide environment that is both welcoming and impactful.



These partnerships go far beyond financial support; they represent meaningful relationships that connect education to opportunity. With the engagement of our corporate partners, our students gain access to mentors, internships, and exposure to professional environments that ignite ambition and purpose.

We are honored to work alongside industry leaders who believe in the potential of our students and share our mission of making a lasting difference in individual lives and across the broader community.

Day of Giving 2025 OUR MOST SUCCESSFUL DAY OF GIVING YET

On Wednesday, February 5, 2025, Duquesne University hosted its annual Day of Giving online fundraising event. We are pleased to share that the School of Business once again topped the leader board for the most donations among all University schools, raising nearly \$140,000 for the Innovation Fund. The remarkable amount raised is the largest in the ten-year history of the Day of Giving.

The Innovation Fund plays a vital role in shaping our students' futures by providing resources to prepare them for today's dynamic workforce and tomorrow's challenges.

The School marked Day of Giving with an engaging, interactive experience that invited students to capture moments, share their stories, and highlight the event on social media, all while gaining a deeper understanding of our culture of philanthropy. These activities reinforced the message that, as future alumni, their commitment to paying it forward will be vital in sustaining and advancing the School's enduring legacy.

With the money raised, we will continue to enhance experiential learning, support our innovative curriculum, elevate the student experience, integrate cutting-edge technology, create inspiring learning environments, and advance and support faculty research.

The success of the 2025 Day of Giving is a testament to the generosity of all Duquesne alumni, students, and community partners who participated. Thank you!



Adam Viers, (far left) Dean McFarlin (center), and Amanda McQuillan (far right) with students from the Palumbo-Donahue Student Advisory Council



Left to Right: Student Ambassadors, Hannah Redington, Justine Fry, and Amelia Stezoski Student Ambassador, Francis Constantin

Save the Date

February 11, 2026

for Duquesne University's annual

DAY OF GIVING

ALUMNI DIFFERENCE-MAKER SCHOLARSHIP

SUPPORTING BUSINESS STUDENTS WHO ARE READY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

At the Palumbo-Donahue School of Business, we believe in developing difference-making students who lead with integrity, think boldly, and are committed to making positive change in both their careers and their communities.

The **Alumni Difference-Maker Scholarship** provides vital financial support to talented students who embody the Spiritan mission and values of Duquesne University.

This endowed scholarship fund helps us recruit and retain students who:

- Are enrolled in or accepted to the Palumbo-Donahue School of Business
- Demonstrate financial need
- Maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA while remaining in good standing with the University

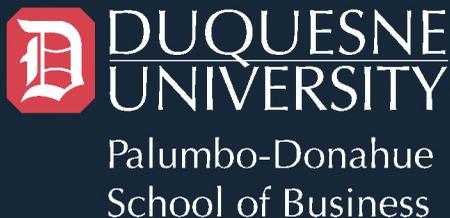
Every gift, no matter the size, adds to the legacy of excellence at Duquesne. Join fellow alumni and donors in ensuring that deserving students have the opportunity to pursue their dreams and transform the future of business.

Scholarships are awarded through the University's Office of Financial Aid and are renewable for up to four years.



Your support today makes their success possible tomorrow.

DONATE NOW



LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH

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*is published by the
Palumbo-Donahue School of
Business at Duquesne University.*