Message from the MBA Director

I hope your new year is off to a great start. I am excited to report that plans for an MBA alumni association are bearing fruit under the leadership of alumnus Chris Inverso. In this edition, Chris outlines his vision for the MBA Alumni Association and solicits your help to get it off to a great start. There is no membership fee to join.

It was great seeing many of you at the TGIF and the networking event (pictures are inside). We hope you will join us in the future for these events and for our quarterly executive speaker series. Also, please do send us news about yourself for the class notes section—promotions, additions to the family, etc.

Please read on to learn more about Professor Tracy Thompson and a few of our students and alumni.

As always, we would appreciate your recommending qualified students to our MBA Program. Our priority deadline is May 1st and we have a second deadline of July 1st.

Please stay in touch.

Best Wishes,
Eugene Sivadas
MBA Director

Class Notes

John Jackson ‘12 reports that his company MD Marine Electric recently acquired their direct competitor that had been in business since 1927.

If you have a promotion, personal or professional news that you would like to share in the MBA Class Notes please email aubreer@uw.edu by May 18th for inclusion in the Spring Quarter MBA Newsletter.
MBA Candidate Profile: Preston Crane, MBA, ‘12

Preston Crane graduated in 2003 from Washington State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Arts in Communication. He majored in Management Information Systems, Decision Sciences, and Advertising while minoring in Computer Science. Preston is also a Certified Public Accountant, licensed in Alaska and Washington.

As an undergraduate student, Preston provided technical computer support for the WSU Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures and computer programming services for the WSU Department of Environmental Health and Safety. In 2002, the Foreign Language department asked Preston to participate in a cultural exchange program in Shenzhen, China. In exchange for teaching conversational English to Chinese elementary school students, Preston spent two and a half months in China learning Chinese customs and culture.

After graduation in 2003, Preston moved to Seattle and worked for KPMG in their IT Advisory Services practice. At KPMG, he was responsible for leading a variety of audit and consulting projects for Seattle-area companies. Preston’s clients included: Costco, Weyerhaeuser, T-Mobile, Real Networks, and UW Medicine. In 2007, Preston accepted a two-year international rotation to KPMG’s Melbourne, Australia office. In Melbourne, Preston worked significantly with KPMG’s Transaction Services practice performing due diligence engagements. After returning to Seattle in 2009, he worked at KPMG for one more year until accepting a position at Russell Investments. Preston is now a Senior IT Auditor in Russell’s Internal Audit department.

Preston started the Milgard MBA program in the autumn of 2010 to expand his knowledge of business practices and operations. The evening format of the Milgard MBA program has provided Preston the opportunity to apply course knowledge directly to his projects at Russell. Each class has been valuable to his career and has improved his ability to develop insightful project reports for Russell. As he looks forward to life as a Milgard MBA Alumni, Preston looks forward to further applying his coursework to future leadership positions.

Preston is an avid supporter of the performing arts and enjoys the symphony, theater, opera, and ballet. Preston has played the guitar for more than 15 years and also enjoys snowboarding. After graduation, Preston plans to take a long vacation and to join a recreational ice hockey league in the Tacoma area.

MBA Candidate Profile: Rick Triggs, MBA, ‘13

Having a passion for medical research, it isn’t a surprise to find Rick Triggs working for a Tacoma research firm. As the Director of Finance for Northwest Kinetics, a pharmaceutical testing company, Rick helped lead the business growth from 40 beds in two older Victorian homes to a 250-bed unit in its 84,000 sq. ft. facility. The success of Northwest Kinetics caught the attention of larger firms and was purchased by Boston based Charles River Laboratories.

Rick left Charles River Laboratories 18 months post acquisition to seek other ventures, but still had a passion for medical research. Rick was fortunate to find his way to The Geneva Foundation where he has served as the Chief of Operations (COO) for the past 2 1/2 years. The Geneva Foundation is a non-profit organization founded in 1993 in Tacoma with the sole mission to support and promote the advancement of military medicine. The Geneva Foundation provides management and administrative expertise in the areas of federally funded research grants and contracts, industry funded clinical trials and investigator-initiated studies, and medical education and training programs to our service men and women.

As the COO of this fast growing non-profit- 60% growth in 2011- Rick has utilized his Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Central Washington University and 20+ years of his experience. To continue Geneva’s growth, Rick realized the need to update and expand his business knowledge. Attending University of Washington Tacoma Milgard School of Business felt like it was meant to be, especially since Rick moved The Geneva Foundation office down the street from the UWT campus in May, just months before autumn quarter began. The real decision was easy for him with the resources and quality professors provided by the Milgard School of Business.

When not at work or school, in the fall Rick spends a lot of time driving up and down the I-5 corridor to watch his daughter Megan, a sophomore at Western Oregon University, play volleyball for the Wolves. He also enjoys the outdoors with his German Shepherd (Misty May), camping, hiking, golf, water sports, Seahawk and Mariner games and volunteering for the Tacoma Relay For Life.
Alumni Profile: Bennett Smith, MBA 2007

Bennett grew up in Kirkland, WA and graduated from the College of Idaho with a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences. After graduating he began a career in Pharmaceutical Sales with Forest Laboratories. Bennett move through various positions with Forest including a variety of sales leadership positions. While moving up the career ladder, he realized that he needed to augment his leadership skills and financial knowledge, by enriching them with a MBA. Without that knowledge, it would be difficult to migrate to more strategic positions he desired. He also had a lifelong goal of being his own boss, which would be hard to be realized without a solid financial foundation.

Living in Tacoma and covering a broad sales territory, Bennett choose UW Tacoma’s MBA Program to grow the requisite business skills he needed, while being able to work full-time. He appreciated the flexible schedule and that many of his cohorts were balancing the same situation: work and school. Earning a MBA gave Bennett the knowledge and confidence to move ahead in his career and forge forward with more strategic roles within the Pharmaceutical Industry.

Upon graduating from Milgard in 2007, he was promoted to Divisional Sales Manager with Forest, covering 4 states and leading the regional success of 3 launch products. In April of 2009, he was promoted to Segment Marketing Manager and moved from his lifelong home in the Pacific Northwest to what he proclaimed to be the “center of the universe” – mid-town Manhattan. As a Segment Marketer he was responsible for the market access strategy for Teflaro – the first approved cephalosporin antibiotic that covers MRSA infections.

After nearly a decade with Forest Labs, Bennett accepted a position as Senior Manager, Managed Markets Strategy with Novo Nordisk in 2011. In this role, he is responsible for the commercial strategy with managed care organizations (health plans and pharmacy benefit managers), balancing product access with profitability in a market with continued cost pressures and many policy changes. Novo is a market leader in Diabetes, and he is also responsible for effectively managing their Diabetes portfolio in an ever growing competitive environment with new market entrants including biosimilars and generics.

While Bennett’s corporate career has flourished, his desire to be an entrepreneur and business owner was realized when he became managing owner of Crossfit Hoboken in 2010. Partnering with NFL coaching great, Bill Parcell’s nephew, they have grown into the largest Crossfit facility in New Jersey and plan to expand with 2 additional locations in 2012. Needless to say, Bennett doesn’t have much free time, but when he does he enjoys Olympic Weightlifting, Snow/Ice Climbing, Reading and Crossfit training. He was recently engaged to the Art Director of Wine Enthusiast magazine and they plan to wed in 2013.

MBA alumni association— Q&A with Chris Inverso: Founding President of the Milgard School of Business MBA Alumni Association

Q: What is the new Milgard School of Business MBA Alumni Association and who is it for?
A: The Milgard School of Business MBA Alumni Association is a newly formed, independent organization that has, and will continue to have, a close relationship with the Milgard School of Business. The association is exclusively for MBA graduates from the University of Washington Tacoma and its Milgard School of Business.

Q: What is the purpose of the organization?
A: The founding purpose of the organization is to unite Milgard MBA Alumni in a manner that provides alumni access to information and opportunities beneficial to their lives and careers while enhancing the overall reputation of the Milgard MBA Degree. However, I see the potential for this purpose to change or become better defined as the organization matures.

Q: Why do the Milgard MBA Alumni need an association?
A: The number of MBA graduates from the school has reached critical mass and the costs of creating and maintaining such an organization will easily be outweighed by the individual and collective benefits associated with membership. Any noteworthy MBA program has a strong, well connected population of MBA alumni and forming a Milgard MBA Alumni Association will provide an important mechanism to independently craft such a population.
MBA alumni association— Q&A with Chris Inverso: Founding President of the Milgard School of Business MBA Alumni Association (cont. from page 3)

**Q: What type of activities do you foresee the association being a part of?**

A: There are a wide range of potential activities that I can envision for the association as it matures. To begin we’re going to have to start small and build momentum. Without knowing what the future ultimately holds I plan to lead the association to pursue the following activities:

- Plan and host an annual dinner/social event during the month of June that loosely coincides with graduation. Such an event would potentially serve two goals: (A) Bring alumni together to network at a traditional social event and (B) Congratulate recent MBA graduates and invite them to join the association.
- Act as the formal host of the quarterly TGIF events for current students and alumni
- Act as the formal host for the quarterly Executive Speaker Series events for current students and alumni

In the future, we hope to plan and host an annual business case competition during the winter quarter exclusively for current first and second year Milgard MBA students judged by Milgard MBA Alumni. This could also be combined with some sort of condensed academic summit or conference.

**Q: What sort of specific benefits might exist at an individual level for members of the association?**

A: There are several I can think of, but I’m sure there are many more. Here’s a quick list of ideas:

- Ongoing social and educational opportunities exclusively for Milgard MBA Alumni
- Access to the Milgard MBA Alumni network to find solutions for current business challenges
- Access to the Milgard MBA Alumni network to seek career guidance and job opportunities
- An indirect increase in the value of one’s MBA degree from the Milgard School through the enhancement of the school’s reputation via the continually increasing strength and notoriety of the Milgard MBA Alumni Association

**Q: Forming the organization will likely require a lot of time and effort, why did you volunteer to take this task on?**

A: First, I see great value in the association and believe strongly in its potential to benefit Milgard MBA Alumni. Second, I’ve always enjoyed being part of something bigger than myself and I see my role as a way to add value to other Milgard MBA Alumni while I add value to my own life and career.

**Q: What’s next for the association?**

A: We need leaders and members. I’m currently recruiting influential Milgard MBA Alumni from a variety of class years to serve as founding officers of the association. My goal is to recruit 4 – 6 alumni who are willing to serve 16 month terms as officers from March 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013. Their primary duties will be helping recruit members through the use of their name and supporting Milgard MBA Association meetings and events with regular attendance whenever possible.

**Q: Why should Milgard MBA Alumni join the association now?**

A: Simply put, the faster we grow the association the more effective it will be in delivering value to Milgard MBA Alumni. Currently, lifetime membership in the association is free and Milgard MBA Alumni can **join online using the following link**: [http://bit.ly/milgardMBAAA](http://bit.ly/milgardMBAAA). Our goal is to recruit more than 50% of current Milgard School of Business (UWT) MBA Alumni to join the organization by June 30, 2012.
Winter Quarter TGIF

Dean Saudagarin, Shane Campbell ‘07, Mike Slevin ‘04

Geoff Lawrence ‘07 & Joe Lawless ‘07

Ashley Fuller ‘12, Corey Dill ‘12, Grace Tena De Lara
Second Annual MBA Networking Event

Write-up by Aubree Robinson Steffens, MBA Adviser

On Monday, February 27th the Milgard School of Business MBA held their second annual Networking Event. The Tacoma Room was filled with MBA students, alumni, and their guests ready to network and hear from our guest speakers.

The evening opened with a guest speaker, Greg Biersack, VP of Operations at Burkhart Dental and a member of the Milgard School’s Business Advisory Board. Mr. Biersack spoke about managing his career and his approach to networking. He spent 10 years as a Navy Officer and earned his MBA from The Ohio State University. He was close to starting a position with Texas Instruments when a trusted friend called and told him about a Branch Manager position with Burkhart Dental in Portland, Oregon. The friend convinced him to fly out and learn more about the position and company; while in Portland Greg met with Perry Burkhart and discovered the culture and mission of Burkhart Dental appealed to him and made the decision to join the company as the Portland Branch Manager. He identified some key components that helped him to advance from Regional Manager to Vice President of Operations. These components included:

* Being open to new opportunities.
* Willingness to take his plate and turn it into a platter by taking on additional work tasks.
* Focus on serving customers.

Greg Biersack is grateful that Burkhart Dental has been a place where he could use his talents and that his willingness to take on new responsibilities and tasks over the years lead to opportunities to be mentored and also to serve as a mentor to others. A piece of advice that he shares with those he mentors who are considering a change in career is not to focus so much on what you want to do, but where you want to do it. The culture and fit of a workplace are an essential piece in successful career management; if it isn’t a good fit, then you will endure a constant struggle rather than growth in your career. Another piece of advice he offered, “Don’t be so focused on where you want to be that you aren’t great where you are.”

When asked about networking and how to build a network, his advice was to find something you are passionate about and find ways to meet people in that area. If you are passionate about a topic you’ll have more things to talk about and will be able to ask better questions when meeting new people. His approach when he meets new people is to get to know the person and he thinks about whether he has something he can offer that person, rather than focusing on what this person can do for him.

An overriding theme from Greg Biersack was that of service—whether that is service in the form of taking on new tasks, service to customers, or service in the community. Being open and willing to serve has lead to new opportunities for him to excel and give back.

This presentation was followed by 2011 Milgard MBA alumnus Chris Inverso. Mr. Inverso shared practical tips for networking success and the importance of networking. He pointed out that it was through a personal connection that Greg Biersack had obtained his position at Burkhart Dental. And this was not a rare occurrence; many key hires are made due to a personal connection and referral. Building your network before you need it and constantly keeping it fresh were two of the main points in Chris’s presentation.

Chris highlighted three types of networks: operational network that is narrow and consists of the people we work with on a daily basis; the personal network which is broad and consists of different types of relationships; and the strategic network which consists of the people you connect with when you need to get something done. Understanding these different types of networks exist provides a framework for navigating and building your network.

Chris ended his presentation with some great tips for successful networking interactions.

1. **Strong handshake.** Keep your hand open until you feel the web of the other person’s hand, it is the premature hand grip that leads to weak handshakes.
2. **Remember names!** Find a memory tool that works for you, remembering a name shows you value the other person.
3. **Listen and ask questions.** Be prepared with answers to reciprocal questions.
4. **Don’t make a promise during your interaction.** If you think you have something to offer that person, make a note to remind yourself to check and make sure you have the resource, then follow up.
5. **Follow-up.** Send a personal note or email within 2 days of the networking event.

After the great speakers, we moved into the Speed Networking portion of the event. We had eight six-minute rounds which allowed participants to get to know eight people in less than hour. This was a lively activity that followed up nicely with the practical tips about networking.

The Milgard MBA enjoys providing this event for our students and alumni and plan to continue this annual event.
Winter Quarter Networking Event — Pictures by: Amy Carr, Executive Assistant to the Dean

Greg Biersack VP of Operations at Burkart Dental talking about managing a career

Charles Kraus ‘13 & Sean Macdonald ‘12 during a round of Speed Networking

Megan Bentley ‘13 and Rick Griffith ‘13
Q&A—Faculty Profile with Tracy Thompson Ph.D., Professor; Graduate Faculty
By Levi Botkin, Milgard Scholar, MBA Marketing Intern

Q: Dr. Thompson, when did you arrive at the University of Washington Tacoma’s Milgard School of Business?
A: I arrived in the Fall of 1994 as one of the founding members of the business school. We started with four faculty and a director, and now we are at twenty-two full-time faculty (plus several lecturers) and a Dean. It’s been quite a ride!

Q: Since the Milgard School of Business is rather new (est. 1994), what drew you to the business school?
A: The typical job for a newly-minted PhD is to go to an established school and teach multiple sections of maybe one or two classes which have already been developed. UWT was different. It was a start-up and an opportunity to create a school from nothing. Such an entrepreneurial opportunity, especially one associated with a high quality institution like the UW, is not very common in the academic world. Upon arrival, we were immediately responsible for creating a whole undergraduate curriculum and eventually, as you know, the MBA degree program. I was intrigued by that opportunity to build a school. Being located in the Pacific Northwest didn’t hurt either, as I’m a lover of the outdoors.

Q: What do you like about the MBA students at the University of Washington Tacoma?
A: I like the MBA students at UWT because they come from all walks of life. When I taught at Kellogg, the students were immediately responsible for creating a school from nothing. Such an entrepreneurial opportunity, especially one associated with a high quality institution like the UW, is not very common in the academic world. Upon arrival, we were immediately responsible for creating a whole undergraduate curriculum and eventually, as you know, the MBA degree program. I was intrigued by that opportunity to build a school. Being located in the Pacific Northwest didn’t hurt either, as I’m a lover of the outdoors.

Q: What business awards or honors do you hold?
A: I don’t have any business awards, but I do have academic ones. I am a member of Beta Gamma Sigma, the international honor society for business, as well as Phi Beta Kappa, an international honor society in the liberal arts and sciences. I’ve also gotten awards for excellence in reviewing and for research at the undergraduate level.

Q: What are your professional affiliations?
A: Yes, I’m a member of the Academy of Management, the preeminent association for academics in management and strategy.

Q: Can you tell us about your professional service?
A: In the broader academic field, I do lots of reviewing for journals including the Academy of Management Journal, Academy of Management Learning and Education, Administrative Science Quarterly and several others. I also served on the Executive Committee for the Organization Management Theory Division of the Academy of Management for a number of years. Locally at UWT, I am an elected member of both the Executive Council for UWT’s Faculty Assembly and the Strategic Budget Committee for UWT. I am also on the MBA Committee, so if you have any feedback for us (what’s going well, what can be improved), please don’t hesitate to share it with me.

Q: Is there any additional information that you would like to share with the Milgard School of Business M.B.A. candidates?
A: The relationships you have created with each other and us during your time in school, along with the relationships you are able to create in the future through the Milgard Alumni Association are important resources that shouldn’t be squandered. By staying connected and involved, you can make a positive difference in your community and the world around you. As the Once-l’er said in Dr. Seuss’s “The Lorax”, “Now that you’re here, the word of the Lorax seems perfectly clear. UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothings is going to get better. It’s not.”

Published by:
University of Washington Tacoma
Milgard School of Business
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Tacoma, Washington 98402-3100
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