

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF BUSINESS • SUMMER 2023

# VOYAGE





Master of  
Professional  
Accountancy

# You're a problem solver.

CWU's Master of Professional Accountancy (MPA) program can be your pathway to a highly rewarding career.

*"The demand for accounting graduates has been booming. Most students have multiple offers before they even graduate."*

— Han Donker,  
Accounting Department Chair

## Graduate Degree (MPA)

- 100% online: attend live classes from anywhere
- Part-time or full-time
- CPA exam prep
- Can be completed in 4 quarters (full-time)
- Financial aid available

## Career Paths

- Corporate accounting
- Public accounting
- Tax services
- Forensic accounting
- Information technology
- Advisory services

[cwu.edu/business](http://cwu.edu/business)

CWU is an AA/EEO/Title IX Institution. For accommodation email: [DS@cwu.edu](mailto:DS@cwu.edu).



AACSB  
ACCREDITED

## FEATURES

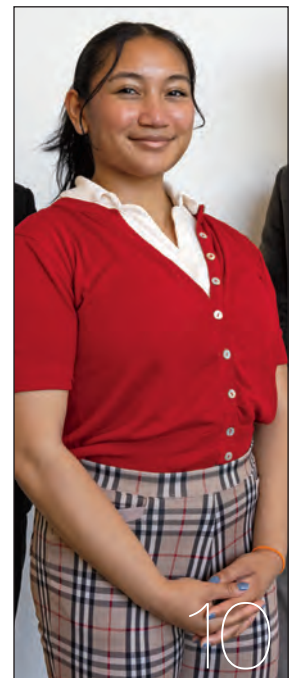
- 6 New Partnership Promotes Access and Equality
- 9 Mentors and Mentees Grow in Racial Equity Leadership Program
- 10 Price Index Tracks Cost of Living as a Student in Ellensburg
- 12 When Markets Fluctuate, Stay Focused on the Big Picture
- 14 An Investment in Opportunity  
Alumni share how their CWU degrees have served their lives, careers, and communities.
- 18 How Young Alumni (and Anyone) Can Thrive at Work
- 20 Ag Biz Carves Out a Niche



## IN ADDITION

- 3 Dean's Message
- 4 Gift Supports Accounting Students for Generations to Come
- 5 Business Dean Departs after 15 Years of Service to CWU
- 22 Student Profile: Accounting Grad Follows His Heart to the Ivy League
- 24 Student Profile: Empowered Women Empower Women
- 26 Faculty Profile: Behavior Economics Researcher David Zuckerman Connects Classwork to Real World
- 28 Philanthropy

## IN THIS ISSUE



**ON THE COVER:** CWU graduate Matthew Braganza, a first-generation college student, is on his way to Cornell University this fall to pursue a master's in accounting. *Read more on page 22.*

# VOYAGE

**CWU College of Business Voyage**  
is an annual free publication.  
Issue date: June 2023.

Address:  
Voyage magazine  
Central Washington University  
College of Business  
400 E University Way  
Ellensburg WA 98926-7487

© 2023 Central Washington University.  
All rights reserved.  
Views expressed in *Voyage* do not  
necessarily reflect official policy of  
Central Washington University.

#### EDITORS

Jeffrey Stinson, PhD, Dean, College  
of Business  
Coco Wu, PhD, Associate Dean, College  
of Business  
Barb Amott ('09), Department of  
Public Affairs

#### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Robin Burck ('17), Travis Finney,  
Della Gonzales ('19), David Leder,  
Tara Roberts, Marty Romero,  
Rune Torgersen ('18), and  
Savannah Tranchell

#### GRAPHIC DESIGN

Bret Bleggi

#### PHOTOGRAPHY

David Dick ('97), Department of Public  
Affairs stock, and others as credited.



Central Washington University is an  
EEO/AA/Title IX Institution.  
Alternative format: DS@cwu.edu.

#### COMMENTS:

cb@cwu.edu

#### UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION AT:

cwu.edu/alumni/update-your-information

or

Office of Alumni Relations  
400 E University Way  
Ellensburg WA 98926-7508

Email: alumni@cwu.edu

Call: 509-963-2552

**TELEPHONE:** 509-963-2930

**cwu.edu/business**



The Central Washington University  
College of Business is accredited by the  
Association to Advance Collegiate Schools  
of Business (AACSB). Only five percent  
of business schools globally earn the  
coveted, quality-assurance designation.  
The continuing accreditation validates the  
work of the College of Business to link  
students with current and emerging trends  
and practices.



# Dean's Message

---



Jeffrey Stinson

Greetings, Wildcats!

We are excited to present the 2023 edition of Voyage to you. This year has marked a transition, I think, to a post-COVID world. In some ways, our life and work have returned to normal with many more on-campus, in-person events, full classes, and great activity in our buildings. Yet, we continue to adapt to new technologies, remote and hybrid work, and desires to balance professional success with personal life satisfaction. The stories of this year represent this transition from the eyes of our students, faculty, alumni, and industry partners.

The economic turmoil of the past year is highlighted across several stories. Our economics students have built a CWU Student Price Index that mirrors the Consumer Price Index with a basket of goods specifically reflective of the inflationary pressures facing our students. Their research has been highlighted at several local and regional conferences with the hopes of influencing policy centered on the costs of university attendance. In an article focused on the challenges of personal financial planning, Dr. Steele Campbell provides advice and perspective for navigating uncertainty.

Professor Anderson Parks continues to lead efforts on supporting BIPOC students and alumni. His work was recognized with the prestigious American Council for Education Reginald Wilson Diversity Leadership Award. Look for articles highlighting his work on new leadership development and internship training programs.

This issue also highlights several contemporary topics, including the value of a bachelor's degree and advice on how to thrive in today's changing work environment. You will also read about our outstanding students, new programs, and new faculty. I hope you enjoy these stories as much as we have enjoyed working with the students, faculty, and staff who make these successes possible.

Central is a special place. While after 15 years at CWU, and 4½ as dean, I am moving on to new opportunities, it has been the honor of a lifetime to work with the many fantastic faculty, staff, students, and alumni who are proud to be Wildcats. I have no doubt the College of Business will continue to thrive under new leadership. This place will always hold a special place in my heart, and I wish nothing but the best for everyone here. I look forward to hearing of the many new accomplishments yet to be achieved. Go 'Cats!

Jeff

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Stinson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeffrey Stinson, PhD  
Dean, College of Business

---

## COLLEGE OF BUSINESS MISSION

We create a positive, enduring impact on business and society by serving our diverse communities through collaborative education, contemporary research, and engaging partnerships.

---

# Gift Supports Accounting Students for Generations to Come

By Robin Burck

Central Washington University's accounting program is in the top 15% of all colleges and universities across the country, according to College Factual.

With so many students choosing to study accounting, CWU College of Business alumnus David Schelert ('81) and his wife TJ wanted to lessen the financial burden and establish support for the accounting program that will benefit students for generations to come.

"We don't want people to be left behind just because they don't have funds," David said. "I always knew I wanted to be an accountant, and my high school counselor told me about a full-ride scholarship at Central called the Central Investment Fund, which I ended up being a recipient of. Now I want to give back to support current and future students."

David and TJ committed \$51,000 to the College of Business to fund the David and TJ Schelert Endowed Scholarship and provide funding to the department research lab, VITAL (Virtual Analytics Lab).

"Rather than just helping one person through scholarship, we thought it would help all business students if we also supported VITAL," David said. "We thought that even though we might not be giving enough money to help all students individually, we could support a product that could benefit all students."

Partial funds from their donation will provide support for annual scholarships, which will be given to one or more students who are full-time students accepted into the accounting program, have a minimum 3.0 GPA, and have good academic standing at Central.



David and TJ Schelert

---

*"We don't want people to be left behind just because they don't have funds."*

*David Schelert*

---

"I am very appreciative and thankful to David and TJ Schelert for establishing this new scholarship to support our accounting students," said College of Business Dean Jeffrey Stinson. "This will increase our ability to attract and graduate strong students who go on to become successful alumni. The David and TJ Schelert Scholarship will provide much needed financial support and access to the next generation of outstanding accounting students. I am grateful for their generous partnership with the college to ensure we remain a top accounting program."

If you would like to learn more about creating a College of Business scholarship named after you or a loved one, please contact Director of Development Travis Finney at [Travis.Finney@cwu.edu](mailto:Travis.Finney@cwu.edu) or 509-963-4151.

---

# Business Dean Departs after 15 Years of Service to CWU

By Della Gonzales

After 15 years of service at Central, CWU College of Business Dean Dr. Jeff Stinson will begin his new position as dean of the George Dean Johnson, Jr., College of Business and Economics at the University of South Carolina Upstate on July 1.

“My time here has been filled with great joy, and I am very proud of the accomplishments we have all achieved together,” Stinson said in a letter to his colleagues. “It is a very difficult choice to leave, but this opportunity allows us to be closer to family and to engage in a new adventure.”

Stinson started his career at Central in 2008 as an assistant professor, before becoming chair of the Management Department from 2012-15. He served as associate business dean from 2015-18 before assuming his current role in January 2019.

He said he is proud of the college’s elite reputation and record of success during his time at CWU, noting that CB has been internationally recognized since 2010 with certification from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). That recognition places CWU’s College of Business among the top 5% of business schools in the world. “From then, to now, this college has continued to transform and lead,” Stinson said.

Stinson shared some additional highlights from the past five years.

- “We have more than doubled the College of Business scholarship support for our students, including an emergency fund targeted to quick intervention for students facing acute financial crisis.
- We have established VITAL (Virtual Analytics Lab) to ensure that our students and faculty have access to real-world, industry-relevant data sources throughout their education.



Jeffrey Stinson

- We have re-located the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (I4IE) to downtown Ellensburg to strengthen connections with local and regional communities.
- We have developed an enhanced co-curricular program, EDGE (Explore, Develop, Grow, Excel), on the Suitable platform to increase student professional development and engagement.
- We have launched the first two Agribusiness certificate programs on the way to offering a first of its kind stackable degree option.
- We have expanded our financial literacy efforts, establishing the Center for Financial Planning and Wellbeing and extending financial literacy on campus and through College in the High School partnerships.
- We have grown our alumni mentorship program, serving more students with critical support and networks.”

Over the next month, Stinson will keep working hard to ensure the continued success of his colleagues, students, and the institution as a whole. He hopes to make the transition to a new dean as seamless as possible.

“This is and will continue to be a very attractive place to work, live, and play,” he said in the letter. “I know you will find a great next dean. In the meantime, we will continue working on our strategic goals, planning for next academic year, and serving our students. My sincere thanks to each of you for making this a special place.”

# NEW PARTNERS ACCESS AND EQ

Nearly 60% of U.S. college seniors who received a job offer by graduation had participated in an internship, and they were more likely than their non-interning peers to receive multiple offers, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

This supports scores of data that reinforce the value of internships and their connection to better outcomes, including higher salaries and employment rates.

But those benefits aren't distributed equally. Students of color are significantly less likely to apply for internships. Research by the B.A. Rudolph Foundation shows 68.2% of White students participate in internships, while only 59.5% of Black students and 53.3% of Hispanic students do.

The outcomes for Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) don't improve, either. People of color are less frequently referred for jobs, less frequently called back for interviews, and have less access to their organization's senior leadership compared to White colleagues. All that combines for a promotion rate from manager to executive of just 2.6% for Black managers, compared to 4.9% for White managers.

CWU's Milton Kuolt Professor of Business Andy Parks is hoping to move that needle. Parks is partnering with Deanna Kennedy, associate dean of academics for the School of Business at the University of Washington Bothell. The pair was awarded a \$25,000 grant from the KPMG U.S. Foundation's Reaching New Heights Program. The program is designed to promote access and equity in higher education and increase awareness of pipeline diversity.

In addition to being grant partners, Parks and Kennedy are co-chairs for the Washington Employers for Racial Equity's (WERE) Pipeline for Black and Indigenous Employees committee. The committee is pursuing three large initiatives to prepare and open the pipeline to more BIPOC employees:

1. Create a racial equity repository of information and resources for the academic and business communities.
2. Create a leadership training program for BIPOC early career professionals and their mentors.
3. Create an internship training program for BIPOC students.



*Andy Parks, CWU's Kuolt Distinguished Professor of Business, received one of the most prestigious honors in U.S. higher education this spring when he was presented with the Reginald Wilson Diversity Leadership Award from the American Council on Education. The annual award is presented to an individual who has made outstanding contributions and demonstrated sustained commitment to diversity in higher education.*

The KPMG grant will help fulfill the third objective. The first was completed in 2022 and is available on CWU's WERE website. Parks and Kennedy completed the first round of the leadership training program in March (see accompanying story on page 9).

"When Deanna and I decided we needed something for college students as well as business professionals, we decided to use a model of mindfulness and emotional intelligence training that would go outside what a student would traditionally receive through their university's career services department," Parks said. "The other part was we wanted to give their managers training on how to best support an intern of color, which they may not typically receive at their company."

# SHIP PROMOTES QUALITY

BY SAVANNAH TRANCHELL

## TWO-WAY TRAINING

In the past few years, many organizations have launched diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives to support hiring more BIPOC candidates. But those good intentions come with learning curves.

Kennedy has worked with different organizations to create internship programs that are accessible to diverse students. That process may include reevaluating the application to give more weight to community and family involvement over academic achievement, as well as holding information sessions targeted at students of color.

“We saw that students of color weren’t applying for internships because they didn’t have the same kind of job experiences” as their White peers, Kennedy said.

Once companies saw success at increasing the diversity among their interns, they came across an unexpected hurdle.

“A manager reached out and said, ‘I don’t know how to mentor this student. Their background and experience are nothing like what I grew up with,’” she said. “Another reached out and noted some professionalism and business skills the students were lacking. It was interesting to me that there were shortcomings on both sides that we could work on.”

With the Reaching New Heights grant, the two universities are creating a program that helps students be more prepared for an internship in a corporate environment and helps their supervisors build emotional intelligence skills vital to managing individuals from different backgrounds.

“As companies are working to break down systemic barriers, creating more policies that will help increase hiring, retention, and promotion of minority employees, we want to make sure that as that pipeline is opened, our interns, our employees are prepared to step into that open pipeline and effectively compete,” Parks said. “Especially those who are first-generation and may not have business acumen from their home environment.”

## ON-DEMAND, SELF-TAUGHT

The program consists of online, self-guided modules hosted in the Canvas learning platform. Each module includes a short lesson paired with homework activities and assessments where the participants can apply the skills. For students, the modules cover:

- Overcoming imposter syndrome and code-switching
- Requesting and receiving negative feedback
- Bringing your authentic self to work
- Using an emotional vocabulary to manage stressful situations
- Building your personal network and partnering with employee resource groups

Managers also get access to Canvas and the modules in order to learn along with their interns. Manager topics include:

- Cultural awareness
- Considering employee diversity holistically
- Communicating with empathy
- Recruiting and onboarding interns
- Communicating the corporate culture

Kennedy and Parks are each creating half of the modules. Participating in the program will be free for CWU and UW Bothell students and the host companies.

“What makes this program unique is the combining of expertise of these two universities,” Parks said. That collaboration is key to reaching more organizations and making a real impact on the employee pipeline.

## KPMG PARTNERSHIP

Another aspect of the grant is an expanded relationship between Central and KPMG, one of the largest financial service organizations in the world. The company created a team of champions—CWU alumni who are dedicated to increasing KPMG’s presence on campus and utilizing Central’s faculty expertise to benefit their own employees.

“This partnership allows KPMG professionals to closely collaborate with Central in many areas,” said Michelle Quisenberry, a KPMG partner and 1990 graduate of Central’s accounting program. “I am the first female



*The inaugural cohort of early career professionals and their mentors completed the Washington Employer for Racial Equity (WERE) leadership training program in spring 2023. The program was cohosted by CWU's Milton Kuolt Professor of Business Andy Parks, left, and Deanna Kennedy, associate dean of academics for the School of Business at the University of Washington Bothell.*

consulting partner within KPMG's Seattle office, and I also come from a diverse background. The work we're doing here is so important as it will help increase the number of BIPOC students entering the workforce and provide them the confidence, skills, and mentoring necessary to thrive and become our next generation of leaders."

The partnership includes connecting KPMG with student clubs and faculty to identify opportunities for guest speakers; increasing KPMG's visibility on campus and in career fairs; holding emotional intelligence and DEI workshops for KPMG staff; and creating a way to track interactions between students and the company using the college's EDGE (Explore, Develop, Grow, Excel) career readiness program.

"We've been fortunate to have a number of alumni who are with KPMG, from new associate to senior partner. This is an exciting extension of that, and mutually beneficial," said Jeffrey Stinson, dean of the College of Business.

"The thing I like about it is it's not just us going to KPMG and asking for money, or them giving us funding and then standing aside and saying, 'OK, figure it out,'" Stinson noted. "It's really developing that partnership. They're supporting employees coming to campus to be guest speakers and interact with classes; they're leveraging our faculty expertise to provide professional development. It's going to be a critical piece for both organizations as we really try to leverage our DEI efforts."

## ADDITIONAL FUNDING

The initial grant award was \$25,000, but the institutions have the ability to earn up to \$500,000 thanks to a 2:1 matching program. The KPMG Foundation will match donations made by KPMG's professionals, partners, and retirees.

"This is a great opportunity for us to help rally alums within KPMG to donate this year and take advantage of the match," Quisenberry said.

With additional funding, Parks and Kennedy hope to expand the number of modules in the training to include topics like conflict resolution, giving and receiving feedback, coaching, bias training, and transitioning from internship to job. They'd also like to be able to offer in-person training.

## A POSITIVE FUTURE

Parks and Kennedy hope to see at least two dozen people from each school go through the program in its first year. The benefit of the online format is it will live on past the grant funding and serve students and employers well into the future.

"What we're really hoping this accomplishes is to reduce that feeling of imposter syndrome, especially for students of color," Parks said. "We want to build up the confidence and esteem levels of the intern so they can be their authentic selves in the workplace."

# MENTORS AND MENTEES GROW IN RACIAL EQUITY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

BY SAVANNAH TRANCHELL

A native of Nigeria, mother of three, and a recent immigrant to the United States, Lola Oyewumi has often struggled with her self-image.

“I sometimes think that people do not like me—they do not like my accent, they do not like my color,” Oyewumi said.

But now, she has new tools to fight that self-doubt and begin rewiring her brain.

Oyewumi was one of 11 pairs of early career professionals and their mentors to complete the Washington Employers for Racial Equity (WERE) leadership training program, co-hosted by CWU’s Milton Kuolt Professor of Business Andy Parks. Parks is co-chair of WERE’s Pipeline for Black and Indigenous Employees committee.

The leadership program empowered the participants with 12 weeks of training focused on emotional intelligence, mindfulness, business development, and sponsorship and networking—all skills critical to helping them succeed in the business world. Participating companies included Microsoft, Delta Dental, Avista, and Lease Crutcher Lewis. The program kicked off in January with an in-person launch and wrapped up with a graduation ceremony this spring. The rest of the weeks were held virtually. The program featured instructors from CWU, University of Washington, Seattle University, and Washington State University.

“This has been one of the most rewarding parts of my career,” Parks said. “The difference in the participants between week one and week 12 in terms of their business acumen, their confidence level, their belief in themselves—it’s amazing.”



Lola Oyewumi

It’s a transformation that Oyewumi can certainly attest to. Oyewumi is a product manager for Microsoft’s Digital Employee Experience group.

“I see a difference now in how I start my day, how I start each meeting. I’m using all those tips and best practices and the leadership skills I learned,” she said. “This helped me with my self-awareness of who I am and how I can position myself in the room. The program helped me understand my unconscious bias and my self-talk. It let me understand how I want people to treat me.”

Oyewumi’s mentor, Melissa Delgado, also noticed the shift. Delgado has been with Microsoft since 2014 and is a program manager on the privacy team. Delgado lives in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and participated remotely.

“I’ve seen her grow through this program, and become more mindful about her negotiation skills and communications,” Delgado said.

As a mentor, she also took a lot away from the program, including more knowledge about communication types and how to identify the best ways to communicate with others.

“If you are a mentor, that’s critical. If your mentee has a way of communicating and you’re trying to guide them through a path, you have to learn what their style is,” she said. “You have to learn to communicate how they want in order for your guidance to be meaningful.”

With the first cohort complete, Parks hopes the program can continue, with a goal of reaching up to three cohorts per year.

# PRICE INDEX

## TRACKS COST OF LIVING AS A STUDENT IN ELLENSBURG

By Della Gonzales

Cost-of-living increases affect everyone and can have an especially significant impact on students. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics measures the average change in prices paid by consumers for a variety of goods and services. It does not account for the unique costs and services that students experience. To address this gap, the Student Price Index (SPI) project was born.

CWU's College of Business has seen a number of students and faculty participate in the project since it began. Currently, Dr. Yurim Lee, assistant professor of economics, is heading up the team, which includes students Mia Young, Landen Hashimura, and Caden McNair.

To develop the SPI, CWU students were surveyed to collect information about their typical expenditures and spending habits. Costs were determined by visiting businesses in Ellensburg where students would be making the purchases. Costs were used as the baseline to assess future increases or decreases. The initial measurement taken in February 2021 found that while the SPI had actually decreased by 0.2% compared to the month prior, students' housing costs accounted for approximately 42% of their expenditures as compared to 33% for the average U.S. consumer.

We spoke with the SPI team about the project's history, outcomes, and future.

**Caden McNair:** We have found that the Student Price Index generally tracks similar changes each month as the CPI. The big difference comes from the magnitude of the changes. The CPI in recent months has begun falling, likely due to the Federal Reserve raising interest rates. The SPI has seen similar results however, because the SPI focuses on a basket of goods that are consumed by students. Changing prices in goods such as coffee and take-out food impact students much more than the average American.

**Landen Hashimura:** I believe that the comparisons of living expenditures for CWU students relative to the nationwide averages highlight the unique needs of students and their financial pressures. For example, the fact that CWU students spend a higher proportion of income on housing compared to the national average while being located in a relatively affordable geographic area shows that students are being financially restricted by cost-of-living expenses.

**Mia Young:** SPI results highlight the issues that college students have been facing for years. Certain items are inflated in Ellensburg, which can be due to the high demand for certain items such as coffee, beer, and groceries. I believe our results further illuminate the financial struggle college students may face in Ellensburg.

**Dr. Yurim Lee:** The SPI offers crucial insights into the cost of living for CWU students at the local level, which cannot be captured by the Consumer Price Index. By analyzing the actual expenses that CWU students incur, we can determine the real wage of students working on campus and accurately calculate the real cost of university-related expenses. This information is essential for our purposes, as it provides valuable details about the financial realities that students face.

This project is not only important as a tool to provide information on student expenses specific to CWU, but the faculty involved are also teaching valuable skills to the students who keep the project going.

**McNair:** For me to participate in the SPI project, I had to learn how to analyze the data we gathered and format it into the monthly reports in a concise and understandable manner.

**Hashimura:** When I first started working on the SPI project, I was still in the first year of my economics coursework, and seeing the formulas and datasets used for the SPI project intimidated me. Fortunately, the former president of the Econ Club Kaylee Cooper, as well as one of my professors, Dr. Tennecia Dacass, were there to explain in simplified terms what each component of the project was, making

it more digestible and less intimidating. I have been fortunate to have mentors such as Dr. Lee who have been able to guide this project during uncertain times (particularly when supply shocks were happening, and we didn't know how to approach incorporating that into the project). Throughout the process of working on the SPI, I have become confident in my ability to use excel for data analysis and explain the quantitative logic for our project.

**Young:** SPI has provided me with 1:1 mentoring with the best faculty. Although there is a lot of information introduced with SPI, the mentors are there to help break down the complexities of our research.

As the group continues to monitor and make adjustments to the SPI on a monthly basis, the interest in their results increases both on- and off-campus. They believe that there are a number of ways in which the data provided by the SPI could be used for the benefit of not only CWU students, but could also help inform policies at the university-level, and local, state, and national levels.

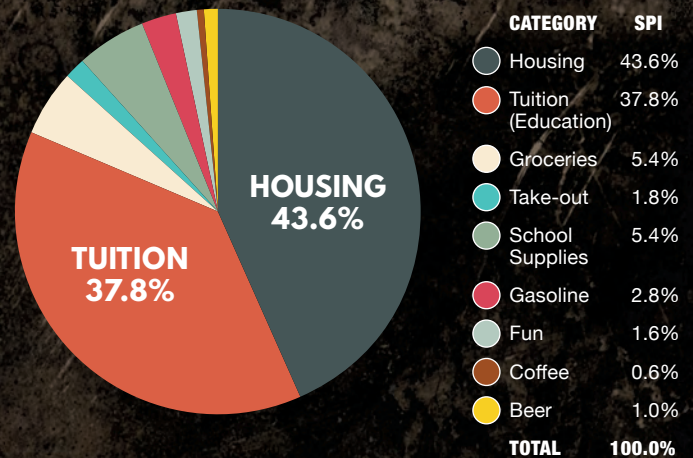
**McNair:** The SPI reports could be used by the university to have a better understanding of the cost of living within Ellensburg for a student. This may help to adapt budget decisions within the university as well as help the university understand what kind of aid may be most beneficial to a student's long-term success.

**Hashimura:** I believe that the SPI can be a blueprint that other schools follow, eventually leading to the nationwide tracking of college cost of living and hopefully result in policies designed to alleviate college financial pressures (room and board standardizations, tuition changes etc.). The data from the SPI can also be used by college towns to better plan their economic activities to best meet the demands of the local population.

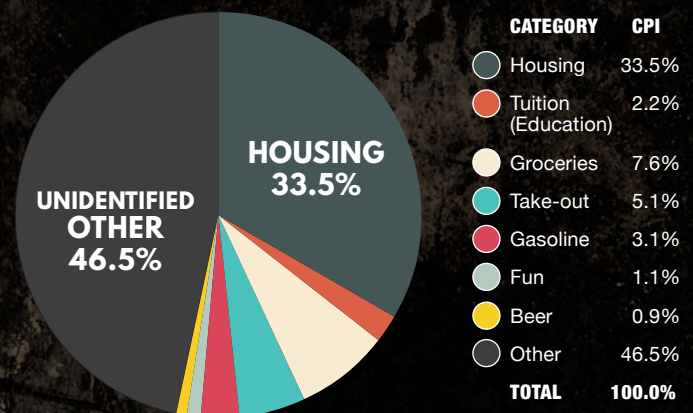
**Young:** Our SPI findings have been available for the Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce to help make policy decisions. I believe that our results can be used in the legislative decision process in Washington state. It is important that those decision-makers are aware how price changes and rent caps can positively impact college students in college towns.

The SPI began as a student project idea and has grown into a valuable tool providing data that can support the improvement of the student experience at CWU and beyond. It has provided a hands-on experience for business students to learn about data collection and analysis, price index and inflation rate calculation, and several other real-world skills that they can apply as they continue their educational journey and when they enter the workforce.

## SPI 2021 EXPENDITURE CATEGORIES



## CPI-U 2021 EXPENDITURE CATEGORIES



Left to right: Sophia Apostolides, Caden McNair, economics professor Dr. Yurim Lee, Mia Young, and Landen Kaya Hashimura.



# WHEN MARKETS FLUCTUATE, STAY FOCUSED ON THE BIG PICTURE

BY MARTY ROMERO



---

# The world of personal finance can be a tumultuous and unpredictable place.

In recent months, U.S. financial markets have become increasingly volatile, causing many personal investors to feel anxious and uncertain. Rumors are swirling about a possible collapse in the housing market, similar to the devastating crash of 2008. And to make matters worse, there are daily reports of massive job layoffs in the tech industry, leaving many skilled workers struggling to make ends meet.

Memories of the 2008 housing market crash still haunt many people, and rumors of a similar crisis can be unsettling. However, it's important to remember the current situation is different from 15 years ago. Lending practices have become more conservative in the years since the housing crash. Additionally, the economy as a whole is in a stronger position now. While there may be some bumps along the way, economists believe it's unlikely we'll see a repeat of the 2008 crisis.

Another source of anxiety for many people is the recent wave of tech industry job layoffs. This is a concerning trend, as the tech sector has been a major driver of economic growth for the past three decades. However, it's important to remember that not all industries are experiencing layoffs; some are even showing signs of growth. And even in the topsy-turvy tech industry, there are still plenty of opportunities for skilled workers.

"It's important to stay calm and focused on the big picture, rather than letting short-term market fluctuations drive your decisions," said Dr. Steele Campbell, a professor of personal financial planning at CWU.

"If you find yourself in the unfortunate position to have lost your job, the key is being deliberate in your job search and make time to build up a strong set of skills and experiences that will make you a valuable asset to potential employers," Campbell said.

Of course, it's not just tech industry workers who are feeling the pinch. Many people across a variety of industries are struggling to keep their head above water in the current economy. Whether you're facing a layoff, a reduction in hours, or other financial difficulties, it's important to take a proactive approach to your finances. This might mean looking for ways to cut back on expenses, exploring new job opportunities, or seeking out additional sources of income.

Whatever your situation, it's important to stay focused on your long-term goals and not let short-term challenges derail your progress.

One important tool for weathering financial uncertainty is having a solid financial plan in place. This means setting clear goals for your finances, whether it's paying off debt, saving for retirement, or building up an emergency fund. It also means having a realistic budget and sticking to it, even when times are tough. And, of course, you must invest wisely, keeping your focus on long-term growth rather than short-term gains.

For students who will be entering the workforce, the key to success in the current climate is being deliberate and proactive. Start looking for job opportunities early, build up your skills and experiences, and don't be afraid to explore new industries or career paths. The financial market may be volatile, but history has shown that it tends to recover over time. By staying focused on your long-term goals and taking a proactive approach to your finances, you can weather any storm that comes your way.

Aside from being proactive, it's also important to seek out professional financial advice. A qualified financial planner can help you assess your current financial situation, set realistic goals, and develop a plan to achieve those goals. These wealth management experts can also provide guidance and support when you are facing difficult financial decisions or unexpected challenges.

It's also important to stay up to date on the latest financial news and trends. This can help you make informed decisions about your investments and stay ahead of the curve when it comes to job opportunities and industry trends. One caution: don't get caught up in media hype. Instead, seek out reliable sources of information and take a measured, rational approach to your financial decisions.

Lastly, stay focused on your long-term goals, even when facing short-term challenges. Whether you're dealing with a layoff, a market downturn, or other financial difficulties, it's important to keep your eye on the big picture. By maintaining a long-term perspective, you can make strategic decisions that will position you for success in the years to come.

"Don't panic. With a measured, rational approach to your finances, you can achieve financial stability and success, no matter what the future holds," Campbell advised.

It's no mystery that the current financial climate is challenging and uncertain for many. But by staying proactive, seeking professional advice, diversifying your investments, staying informed, and focusing on long-term goals, you can weather any storm that comes your way.

*Kevin Moran*



---

# AN INVESTMENT IN OPPORTUNITY

---

## ALUMNI SHARE HOW THEIR CWU DEGREES HAVE SERVED THEIR LIVES, CAREERS, AND COMMUNITIES

BY TARA ROBERTS

During Kevin Moran's senior year studying marketing management at CWU he became the first-ever College of Business ambassador. Moran represented the college at events, welcomed visitors, and reached out to new students.

It wasn't his first time being an ambassador. The moment he decided to go to college, he became a representative for higher education in his community.

Moran ('15), who is from Kennewick, was the first in his family to go directly to a four-year college. When he called home during his first year at Central, his family peppered him with questions about his experience. When he visited, neighborhood kids asked what he was learning, what he liked about college, and whether he met other Spanish-speaking students.

Today, Moran is back in Kennewick, working as a community development officer for STCU, a Spokane-based credit union with branches in the Tri-Cities. He continues to be an ambassador for higher education; he's raised over \$200,000 for scholarships through the Hispanic Academic Achievers Program, which he's volunteered for since his senior year at Central.

He wants to ensure students with backgrounds like his have the opportunity to change their lives by earning a degree.

"I really appreciate the fact that higher education allowed for me to have a better understanding of having a goal, accomplishing it, and also recognizing the value in it, because it can be incredibly impactful to others, as long as you're willing to put that effort in," Moran said. "It just made me who I am."

Higher education needs ambassadors like Moran more than ever. College-going rates across the nation have dropped rapidly since the pandemic upended the world from 2020-22.

According to a September 2022 Newsweek article, "enrollment is down nearly 10% over the past two years, a loss of 1.4 million students pursuing degrees." The article cites a survey by the nonprofit ECMC Group that found the percentage of teens considering a four-year degree plummeted from 71% in May 2020 to 51% in 2022.

Washington has followed the same pattern. A March 2023 analysis from the Washington Student Achievement Council reports only 51% of the state's classes of 2020 and 2021 enrolled in a two- or four-year institution within a year of high school graduation—a 9% drop from 2019. The decline was sharpest among Hispanic and Latino students, with a 14% drop from 2019 to 2021.

The concern with these drops isn't about filling classrooms. It's about the future—for individuals, their families, and their communities.

---

### INVESTING FOR A LIFETIME

---

For individuals, one of the biggest selling points for earning a degree is simple: college pays off. The median income for full-time workers with bachelor's degrees between the ages of 22 and 27 in 2021 was \$52,000, according to a Newsweek analysis. For the same age group with high school diplomas only, the median income was \$30,000. Research also shows people with bachelor's degrees hold a higher percentage of well-paying jobs, are less likely to become unemployed, and have higher lifetime earnings.



*Evelyn Ramos*

Jeffrey Stinson, dean of the College of Business, said he expects the earnings gap to close in some disciplines. But the overall difference is still dramatic.

“A degree is still a very strong investment, and one of the best investments that you can make,” Stinson said. “There’s a lot of talk in the public press about removing a degree as a requirement for many jobs. And yet, if you look at who’s getting hired for those jobs, there still is an observable preference for a degree, and certainly when you get into promotion and advancement opportunities. You still have many more opportunities with a degree than without.”

The personal benefits go beyond money. College creates an environment where students build relationships with peers and mentors.

Evelyn Ramos (’22)—a first-generation student from Cowiche, Washington, who majored in business with a specialization in financial planning—found close friends at Central. Her professors also were an invaluable resource.

“The professors really do care for you and want you to be successful,” Ramos said. “They provide you with all the resources necessary to find a job and go out into the world.”

For some, the promise of future earnings is tempered by the cost of college now. To save money, Ramos earned her associate’s degree at a community college. After transferring, she found a multitude of scholarship opportunities at Central.

Central’s alumni network not only helped make college more affordable for Ramos; it connected her with her

career. She received the Haberling Family Scholarship, and a scholarship director introduced her to the sponsors, Ty (’83) and Noelia Haberling of Kennewick. Ty Haberling later encouraged Ramos to apply for a position at his company, HFG Trust.

“I thought, ‘You know what? I will,’” Ramos said. “‘This school and this program have prepared me for this, and I’m ready to make the jump.’”

Ramos secured her job as a wealth planner at HFG a few months before graduation.

---

## SKILLS BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

---

Ty Haberling said a college degree—especially from Central’s personal financial planning program—provides the background people need in the growing financial planning industry. He doesn’t believe a four-year degree is a must for everybody, but for professional fields, college is an opportunity to prepare for a career and mature.

“What does college give you? You’re going to figure out whether you’ve got the discipline and the focus to be able to stay on campus and to complete your coursework and balance life,” Haberling said. “There’s so many things that distract you when you’re on your own at 18.”

Brandy Peters-Mayer—a senior program manager at Microsoft who is part of the College of Business Leadership Board—said her father always told her a degree shows people you’re trainable.

“A bachelor’s degree is the gateway into proving that you can follow through and commit to something and get those critical, essential skills in your field,” she said. “Then the reality is, you use those skills that you got from your undergraduate to apply to wherever you go.”

Higher education also gives people the opportunity to become more well-rounded and globally minded, Peters-Mayer said.

“The thing I like about Central is how diverse the university is,” she said. “The experiences you get with such a diverse student population really prepare you for the working world.”

---

## INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

---

Like Moran, Ramos set an example of college success for her family and people in her small, agriculture-focused hometown of Cowiche. Ramos hopes her experience shows young people that their strengths and interests can guide them in deciding their college path.

“Take in mind your strengths and passions when you’re figuring out what major to pursue,” Ramos advised future students. “You will be dedicating a lot of your time learning about this subject, so choose a major you will find



Ronee Jones

enjoyable and engaging. Think about what you want and need in your career and explore your options.”

Ronee Jones (’22) also wants her family to follow in her educational footsteps. Jones worked in operations at a telecom company for 20 years. When her position was cut, the company offered her retraining funds.

“I’d been trying to get a degree for years, but me having kids, it was kind of to the back burner—I’d take a class every so often to try to get there,” Jones said. “This kind of kick-started me. Like, ‘OK, well, you’ve got nothing else to do,’ since my kids were grown.”

Jones fell in love with accounting at Renton Technical College and transferred to Central to earn her bachelor’s.

With the encouragement of P.R. O’Shaughnessy Executive Professor of Accounting Jenny Cravens, she met employers through Central’s Accounting Career Event. Shannon and Associates hired Jones as a part-time associate accountant, and she continues to work at the firm while earning her master’s at Central.

Her next step is a doctorate—and encouraging her five grandchildren to earn at least master’s degrees. And she hopes her story reaches even further.

“I want to be an example for people—especially, honestly, Black and Brown people,” Jones said. “You don’t see a lot of us in accounting. There was nobody that was my nationality in any of my classes, as a professor, none. That can be disheartening. People may think, ‘Can I really do it? I don’t see anybody. I don’t see any examples.’ So, I want to be one of those. I’m like, ‘Yeah, you can do it, because I’ve done it.’”

**INCOME** The median income for full-time workers between the ages of 22 and 27 in 2021.

**\$52,000** with a bachelor’s degree

**\$30,000** with a high school diploma only

## ENROLLMENT

- Down nationally nearly **10 percent** over the past two years, a **loss of 1.4 million students** pursuing degrees.
- The percentage of teens considering a four-year degree:

**71%** in May 2020 to **51%** in 2022.

**Washington has followed the same pattern.**

**51%** of the state’s classes of 2020 and 2021 enrolled in a two- or four-year institution within a year of high school graduation—a **9% drop from 2019.**

**The decline was sharpest among Hispanic or Latino students, with a 14% drop from 2019 to 2021.**

Sources: (Top) A Newsweek analysis. (Bottom) A September 2022 Newsweek article. The article cites a survey by the nonprofit ECMC Group. And a March 2023 analysis from the Washington Student Achievement Council.

## ADAPTING FOR THE FUTURE

Higher education has a responsibility to adapt in response to students’ and employers’ changing needs, Stinson said. Part of this is making the four-year degree more flexible. For example, many universities are creating short-term certificates and stackable degrees—like the College of Business’s new agribusiness minor/certificate programs.

Higher education curricula should change in line with the world, Stinson said. A degree can prepare people to change, too.

“We have to make sure students are getting technical competency, but we also need to make sure that we’re teaching them to learn how to learn, and that they’re going to have to be lifelong learners, that the skill that we just taught them has probably got a shelf life on it, with the advances in technology and the advances in industry,” Stinson said. “They’ve got to be able to upskill and transition throughout their life. We can give them the skill sets and the confidence to do that.”

HOW YOUNG Alumni (and Anyone) can

# thrive

Jobseekers are looking for work-life balance and workplace culture.

# at work

What can you do to find the right fit? By Tara Roberts

As new grads explore the job market, more and more of them are asking a new question beyond the conventional FAQs: Is this job where I will thrive?

A 2022 survey of global workers by human resources provider Randstad found that work-life balance was just as important to workers as pay, and more than 60% said they wouldn't accept a job if they thought it would negatively affect that balance.

“These numbers show that recruiting great talent requires more than just competitive pay and benefits,” the report concludes. “It’s clear that talent today want the whole package: secure, flexible, inclusive, and financially stable employment in a place they feel they belong.”

Erica Holley—a CWU associate professor of management who studies workplace stress—has noticed her students becoming more focused on work culture.

“I think there’s an awareness that life is fleeting,” Holley said. “In an odd way, I think the pandemic sharpened what we want in our work and what we want in our lives, and it gave us a very different perspective to take on work. I think people are tired of feeling like a cog in a wheel.”

## Advice for Jobseekers

The pandemic blurred the lines between work and home for many people and opened the door to large-scale remote and hybrid work. Meanwhile, the fluctuating economy has left some employers trying to find workers while others lay people off.

“I think it’s a tough time right now to be in any job because there’s enough ambiguity about the world,” Holley said.

For recent College of Business graduates, navigating the market may feel overwhelming. But human resources experts have advice for jobseekers who want to find workplaces where they can thrive.

Entering a company is a lot like starting a relationship, Holley said.

“If you end up in a relationship where you’ve got someone who’s always taking, taking, taking and not thinking about you—which happens in a lot of companies—that’s not a good place for you to grow,” she said.

Holley advises jobseekers to ask during their interview how they and the company could grow together. She recommends talking to current employees, listening for green flags like mentorship opportunities and red flags like high turnover.

Jenn Schwope (’01), an HR lead at Microsoft, said jobseekers should consider what kind of workplace culture fits their personality and goals. Some people may value caring and flexibility, while others want competition and ambition.

“You’ve got to know what you want and what you’re trying to get out of it, and then take the initiative to learn about what the culture is like there and if it’s a match,” Schwope said.

Jobseekers should gather information from review sites like Glassdoor, but take them with a grain of salt, she said. She recommends asking current employees to share the best and worst things about working for the company.

Scott Washburn (’95), vice president of human resources at Tree Top, urges new graduates to gain professional experience, skills, and perspective.

“Do they like hybrid, do they like remote, do they not? They haven’t done it,” he said. “I would encourage them to be extremely flexible on what the business needs. If the business says, ‘Look, I need you here Monday to Friday, 8 to 5,’ go get the experience. Go learn. If they say, ‘You can pick one day a week you can be remote,’ well, see how you like it.”

## Strategies for Employers and Employees

In the Randstad survey, 48% of all workers said they would quit a job if it was preventing them from enjoying their life. Among 18- to 24-year-olds, 58% said they would quit.

Businesses should create intentional strategies for building workplace culture and developing people within it, Washburn said.

“Companies need to figure out a way to be really good at individual development and career progression,” he said—but noted that employees have a role, too. “It’s important for somebody to have depth and breadth. It doesn’t happen only by the company; it doesn’t happen only by the employee. They have to figure out a way to partner.”

When an employee is struggling, the most important thing to do is communicate, Schwope said.

“If there’s a delta between what you want out of where you work and what you’re getting, then I think you’ve got to communicate to try to understand more deeply what the issue is,” she said.

Schwope advised looking for mentors and connections in the company, but also considering other job opportunities.

In a recent research paper, Holley and CWU professor James Avey found that workers who experience injustice or unfairness at work are more likely to rebound if they can reframe events from a different perspective.

“Even when things are difficult, they get knocked down, they’re able to actually get back up and not be sent down a spiral,” Holley said.

However, consistent injustice can lead to burnout, she said. People need to make sure they have activities and relationships that help them replenish their energy.

“I think so many of us have been in the short-term frame of mind at work—‘We’ll just get through this,’” Holley said. “But the reality is you are also doing a marathon. You have to preserve yourself and nourish yourself.”

# Ag Biz Carves Out a Niche

Stackable programs grow talent to meet industry demands

By David Leder

*CWU students networking and exploring internship/job opportunities with Washington agribusinesses attending the IFPA's 2023 Global Produce & Floral Show.*



**A**s the demand for agribusiness professionals increases in Washington and around the country, the CWU College of Business has taken steps to help the agricultural industry address its growing need for more qualified professionals.

Associate Professor Claudia Dumitrescu and Dean Jeffrey Stinson have been working closely with dozens of industry partners over the past three years to develop a plan they hope will help CWU bridge the industry's widening training gap.

In the fall of 2021, CB successfully launched its first minor/certificate program in food and agribusiness management and marketing. A second minor/certificate in applied agribusiness technology followed in 2022, and a third stackable certificate has been proposed for this fall, centered around food and agribusiness innovation.

"These programs will give business and other majors a competitive advantage in the job market because they will acquire a good understanding of, and be able to solve, the marketing and management issues as they relate to the food and agricultural systems," Dumitrescu said.

Additionally, the CWU agribusiness program is designed to give students an opportunity to learn skills that are immediately applicable to their jobs, while allowing them to develop business and technology/data skills in production, processing, packaging, distribution, and sales, along with marketing proficiencies.

According to her research, Dumitrescu said Central is the only institution in the state that is offering certificates aimed at the business side of food and agriculture through an AACSB-accredited business school.

"We expect there will be great career opportunities in these industries, both in Washington and nationwide," she said, adding that Central's program is unique because it confers the business knowledge—with an emphasis on the marketing, HR management, transformative innovations, technology and data skills—needed to succeed in the food and ag sectors.

"We will continue our efforts to address employers' needs, student career preferences, and have a positive impact on our communities," she continued. "The long-term goal is to develop a degree path, which will prepare our students to fill the void in the job market."

CWU agribusiness is now poised to take the next step in its development with \$75,000 in federal funding from the recently passed congressional spending bill. With help from U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell and nearly two dozen industry leaders across the region, the ag biz program is now in the process of developing a third stackable minor/certificate that will eventually be combined with two other certificates as a four-year degree program.

"There is a huge need, and our industry partners and congressional representatives were absolutely critical to helping us get this grant," Stinson said.

The first-in-the-state concept would allow nontraditional learners to combine their CWU training with their industry experience to earn a bachelor of science degree. Instead of earning their general education credits first, like traditional learners, program participants can develop their specialization and then pursue general ed credits.

"Once someone earns two of the certificates, we hope they will start to see a pathway to a four-year degree," Stinson said. "After they complete their industry-specific requirements, they can finish up their general ed classes and then package them together for a BS."

Less than two years into its development, the agribusiness program's future appears bright. The first course of the food and agribusiness management and marketing program reached its maximum enrollment capacity of 40 last fall, while 17 students enrolled in the inaugural applied agribusiness technology course in fall 2022.

As of spring 2023, 29 students were pursuing a minor in agribusiness. And while it's hard to predict where enrollment will be in a few years, Dumitrescu says seeing so much immediate interest is promising.

"We appreciate all of the support we have received so far, and we are hoping this new funding will contribute to the sustainable growth of our program," she said.

Dumitrescu and Stinson expressed appreciation for the contributions of industry supporters such as Loftus Labs, Domex Superfresh Growers, Tree Top Inc., John I. Haas Inc., Allan Bros. Inc., and others who have contributed their time and expertise to help get the program off the ground.

The Kobata Foundation donated \$55,000, the Vatheuer Family Foundation contributed \$30,000, and organizations like the Washington State Tree Fruit Association and the Washington Tree Fruit Research Commission have provided support throughout the process. Paired with the recent \$75,000 federal grant, the program now has \$160,000 in resources as it continues to evolve.

Stinson explained that the agricultural industry desperately needs the support of higher education as it looks to fill the gap between available jobs and qualified candidates. CWU has identified that overwhelming need and is taking significant steps to deliver a remedy.

"This is workforce development, and that's what's really driving this," Stinson said. "Like many other industries right now, the ag industry has more jobs than qualified people. The reality is that the sustainability of our agricultural systems and food security rest on having employees who possess these specific skills."

# Accounting Grad Follows His Heart to the Ivy League

By David Leder

When Matthew Braganza arrived at Central in the fall of 2019, all he knew was that he wanted to study business.

He tried a little bit of everything—business administration, finance, pre-med, and supply chain management—but nothing seemed to click until he took a financial accounting class. Braganza’s professors opened his eyes to the many upsides of becoming a CPA, setting him on the path to graduate school.

Braganza is on his way to Cornell University this fall to pursue a master’s in accounting.

“I saw an ad online and decided that was the program I was looking for,” he said of the Ivy League school in Ithaca, New York. “People always say to apply for everything, so I spent a couple months working on my statement of purpose, and they accepted me.”

Cornell sweetened the pot by offering Braganza a scholarship for half-tuition, and it was enough to convince him to travel east for his next adventure.

“Cornell was my first choice, and when they made such a generous offer, I knew I had to go,” Braganza said. “It’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and my family and I are going to find a way to make it work.”

The first-generation graduate student from Yakima plans to work so he can afford the higher cost of living in New York, along with the other half of his tuition. But he’s not worried. On the advice of his parents, he followed his heart.

“My mom moved here from the Philippines when she was 23 with only a nursing degree and \$200,” he said. “This opportunity feels eerily similar. And just like her, all I have is my education.”

CWU professors Ryan Cahalan, Jenny Cravens, and Nancy Pigeon also helped Braganza arrive at his decision to move across the country instead of staying closer to home at the UW or University of Oregon, his other top choices.

Not all students are cut out to work their way through grad school while taking on hefty student loans. But if anyone is up to the challenge, it’s Braganza.

“There are some students who I would tell not to go, but Matthew’s circumstances are different,” said Pigeon, CWU professor of business law and sports law. “He is creative, and he’ll find ways to make money over there—maybe an undergraduate teaching position. I believe he can do anything he sets his mind to.”

So far, he has.

Aside from getting into Cornell, Braganza has served as an intern at Moss Adams in Seattle for the past two summers. He also has been instrumental in helping CWU revive its campus tour team as the lead student ambassador. As if he needed more to do, he manages and plays in the local band Tinted Red, which does regular gigs on campus, at Old Skool’s, and at various Ellensburg bars.

Braganza’s life experiences caught the eye of Cornell’s admissions team.

“There was a video interview portion where I got to tell them more about myself,” he said. “Music has always been a big part of my life, and I love to talk about those experiences. I think my passion really came through.”

Braganza played the saxophone during his youth and was all set to become a section leader in the CWU band when the pandemic shut everything down. He used his down



*Matthew Braganza*

time to learn the piano, sharpen his guitar skills, and work on his backup vocals.

“I just love being creative—that’s the biggest thing for me,” he said. “I also love to bring people together, and this band has helped me do that. We’re like a family, and it’s going to be tough to leave that behind.”

As difficult as it’s going to be to leave Central Washington, Braganza is keeping his eye on the prize. He plans to return to the Northwest someday, but the allure of New York may be difficult to ignore once he holds a master’s degree and a CPA license.

“I still don’t know what I want to do, so I feel like I should stay in New York for a few years after I graduate,” he said. “But I’m a West Coast guy at heart, and I have always

wanted to live in Seattle. Until a few months ago, I didn’t even know New York was going to be a possibility. I just want to take time to figure everything out.”

No matter which path Braganza chooses, he is likely to excel. Pigeon believes his engaging personality will carry him even further than his intelligence, ingenuity, and work ethic.

“Matthew possesses a level of intelligence that’s more than just book sense,” she said. “He is a good person and a good citizen, and I expect him to shine no matter where he ends up. He’s going to be successful in a lot of different venues because he is nice, and he is approachable. But, most of all, he’s fun. He’s going to find a lot of people who want to work with him.”

# Empowered Women Empower Women

By Rune Torgersen

Overcoming generations of underrepresentation and inequity is a tall order, and yet events like the annual Find Your Voice conference at CWU push the needle further towards justice every year. Hosted by the CWU Women in Business club, Find Your Voice connects aspiring entrepreneurs with women who've shattered the glass ceiling. Students learn from their experiences and develop important connections that will power their journeys into the world of business.

Women in Business President Leila Haji says the event helped her discover her own aspirations in the field.

"I've found Find Your Voice to be super helpful and incredibly inspiring," Haji said. "It wasn't until I went to one of these conferences that I truly thought I could be a leader in my field. This year, I was happy to help bring that inspiration to others."

This year's conference, held in March, featured a keynote delivered by two CWU alumni. Julie Back, class of '91, is a senior vice president at Wealthspire Advisors, and Julie Penwell, class of '19, is an advisor at the very same company. Back served as an alumni mentor for Penwell.

"Getting to be up there with [Back] was so much fun, because our stories are so intertwined with Central," Penwell said. "Had I not gone to Central, had I not done the mentorship program, I would not be on the path I am today, and I wouldn't have met [Back], so I feel really grateful for my time at CWU. Central means so much to me, so getting to give back was really nice."

During her time at CWU, Penwell studied business administration, specializing in financial planning and forecasting economics. She was also an active participant in Women in Business, both as a member and eventually as president of the club. She says the organization offered her a way to pursue her business dreams and build a community of like-minded peers.

"Even before I started at CWU, I wanted to go into the very male-dominated field of finance, so it was incredible to know that there was a support system and an organization in place to help give me the resources and skills to get into the workforce. When I was in the club, I went from member to secretary to vice president to president, and through all of that, I had a lot of amazing experiences. Just learning how to collaborate and work well with others was fascinating, and I wouldn't have been exposed to it had I not been involved."

Back and Penwell's speech, "Networking 101: Pitch our Potential," centered around all the ways in which a network is essential to a flourishing career. In Back's words, "by nurturing a really great network, you have the ability to grow your own career while helping others do the same, and that's just as important as what you can get out of it. How you can help other people is integral to the process of networking."

This mindset of mutual support is driving a cultural shift within female spaces in business, Back says.

"When I started working, women were still so underrepresented that, in far too many cases, other women were the competition because there were so few places and so little representation," she said. "I feel like that's changed, finally, where we're at. Women are now looking at each other as support and knowledge and experience, as opposed to competition. These kinds of things, where young people can see women who are willing to give up their time and come out to Ellensburg to speak, show that there's this shift."

Women in Business emphasizes this shared experience as the path forward, through their programming and activities as well as their very mission. Crystal Clausen ('22) says it's precisely this focus on community that makes the club such a valuable resource. Clausen, the College of Business engagement coordinator, served as president of Women in Business from winter 2020 to spring 2022.



CWU Women in Business speakers and attendees gather for a group photo at the end of the Find Your Voice Conference in March.

“Clubs like WIB are important in the business world of today because they help students feel a sense of community and belongingness amongst their peers,” Clausen said. “Many business clubs are career-focused, which is fantastic, but building a network of like-minded peers who commonly face the same challenges as yourself is just as important as practicing your technical skills.”

Haji concurs, crediting the club with helping her reconcile the often-theoretical nature of classroom learning with the realities of the real world.

“When I started college, I felt an indescribable distance that I couldn’t quite pinpoint,” Haji said. “When I joined the club, I realized that the disconnect was between what we’re taught in classrooms and what’s needed in the real world. We’re taught what to do, but not what we might encounter, and I feel like the Women in Business club really helps with that, through connecting us with women in the field who’re willing to share their experiences, both good and bad.”

Ultimately, resources like the Find Your Voice conference and Women in Business amplify that most basic human ability to find strength in community and inspiration in the perseverance of those who came before you. In Penwell’s words, and in a very real sense, “empowered women empower women.”



Find Your Voice speakers Julie Back, left, and Julie Penwell talk to a CWU student after speaking at the March 3 event.



CWU students and Women in Business President Leila Haji, right, pose for a celebratory photo at the end of the conference.

# Behavior Economics Researcher Connects Classwork to Real-World

By Rune Torgersen

David Zuckerman is following a dream.

“I’ve always wanted to go into academia,” he said. “My parents are both in academia, and so growing up, I saw a lot of perks with that lifestyle, like getting to research what interests you and having a flexible schedule.”

Zuckerman, an assistant professor in the Department of Economics, focuses his research on behavioral economics, which he describes as a hybrid between economics and psychology.

“Standard economics typically assume that people are rational, and make careful, calculated decisions,” Zuckerman said. “We know in reality that that’s not the case, so behavioral economics tries to take these economic models and make them more realistic by assuming that people make mistakes, have biases, and care about things that standard economic theory might not take into consideration.”

Specifically, his current research centers on crime and punishment, and what steps can be taken to satisfy our collective sense of justice when someone is harmed. While the research is far from complete, it has already produced some fascinating findings.

“What I find is that we value compensating the victim much more if the victim was intentionally harmed, as opposed to through some random accident. That’s when our sense of justice is violated, and that’s one of the big findings from this project.”



*David Zuckerman*

After finishing his PhD at Stanford University, Zuckerman went looking for a teaching position. In fall 2022 he found his calling at CWU.

“Even more so than research, I like interacting with students and teaching,” he said. “I find that really meaningful and fulfilling, so when I was on the job market, I targeted places with a focus on education, which of course meant Central was one of my top options. When I came for my interview, I was struck by just how friendly everyone was in the department. It was really collegial, and right away, I saw myself working here.”

Zuckerman teaches material economics and principles of economics with a focus on connecting class discussions with real-world issues. He draws on his own academic experiences to create an environment that encourages discussion and interaction.

“In the fall, for example, when we were talking about monopolies, there was this whole fiasco with Taylor Swift’s Eras tour and TicketMaster. I had my students listen to a podcast that broke down how TicketMaster operates as a monopoly, which was a great way to get them engaged with the subject.”

Zuckerman finds his position very meaningful.

“Because I get to see firsthand the impact I’m making on students,” he said. “Research is great, but with this, with teaching, you’re talking and interacting with people in real time. I get the best of both worlds.”



Central  
Washington  
University

# COLLEGE OF BUSINESS LAUNCHES TWO NEW AGRIBUSINESS CERTIFICATES

- **Food and Agribusiness Management and Marketing**
- **Applied Agribusiness Technology**



Grow your knowledge in food and agriculture by earning an Agribusiness Certificate from CWU's College of Business. Geared toward the growing needs of Washington's food and agriculture industry, the certificates are a collaborative effort between the College of Business and leaders in the agribusiness sector.

## **Agribusiness Certificates:**

- Designed for working professionals and current students
- Flexible learning options: hybrid or 100% online
- Can be completed in 6 months

**Only institution in Washington offering agribusiness certificates through a college of business.**

[cwu.edu/business](http://cwu.edu/business)

cb@cwu.edu | 509-963-2930



CWU is an AA/EEO/Title IX Institution. For accommodation email: DS@cwu.edu.



Travis Finney

## Your Support Helps Future Business Leaders

Dear CWU College of Business Alumni,

I hope this letter finds you well and filled with pride for the impact your philanthropy and alumni engagement have on students at the College of Business.

Our Wildcat family has shown exceptional resilience in the face of challenges. With compassion, grit, and determination, the CB community has rallied to support our students in extraordinary ways.

The CB emergency fund provided almost \$25,000 to more than 30 students, surpassing the combined 14 grants awarded in the previous two years. These grants help students overcome obstacles such as lost employment, unexpected health expenses, and inadequate technology for remote learning.

Our donors also raised over \$175,000 in scholarships, nearly doubling the average scholarship award to more than \$3,300, which covers 43% of in-state tuition and fees.

Janet Britt, a student who exemplifies the spirit of giving back, established the Giving Back Business Scholarship Fund. The endowed scholarship will perpetually support future CB students. Her dedication to fellow students is an inspiring example of the impact a person can have on the lives of others.

Your continued support and engagement are crucial to providing exceptional education and opportunities for future generations of business leaders. Please do not hesitate to contact me anytime to assist you and facilitate meaningful connections.

#CWUtogether

Warm regards,

Travis Finney, Director of Development,  
College of Business

### CB Leadership Board Roster | Updated June 7, 2023

**Julie Back** (CWU '92 BSAD)  
Financial Advisor, Principal, CFP | Private Ocean, Seattle, WA

**Brandy Peters Mayer** (CWU '03 BAEd)  
Sr. Program Manager | Microsoft, Redmond, WA

**John Delaney** (CWU '74 BSAD)  
President & CEO | CentralBanc Mortgage Corp, Kirkland, WA

**Jeff Dieleman** (CWU '93 ACCT)  
Partner | Moss Adams, Yakima, WA

**Andrew Juarez** (UW '00 Mechanical Engineering)  
Director of Operations & Engineering | LiteHouse Foods, Sandpoint, ID

**Brent Johnson** (CWU '88 ACCT)  
Partner | KPMG, Seattle, WA

**John Kalkman** (CWU '97 BSAD)  
Managing Partner | Alerce LLC, Bay Area, CA

**Ryan Landon** (CWU '97 BSAD)  
VP, General Manager, Global Emergency Care Business | Philips, Bothell, WA

**Tommy Leong** (UW '80 ACCT)  
Asset Director | KTM Group LLC, Sammamish, WA

**Mike Luckenbaugh** (CWU '93 BSAD)  
Founder | Xternal Source, Sammamish, WA

**Dan Maycock** (WSU '05 MIS; CMU '09 SOFTWARE MGMT)  
VP Data & IT | Loftus Ranches, Yakima, WA

**Rhoda Milam** (CWU '01 BSAD)  
Chief People Person | Zulily, Kent, WA

**Nhan Pham** (CWU '01 BSAD)  
Sr. Manager BCA Supply Chain | The Boeing Company, Everett, WA

**Steve Ricco** (CWU '85 ACCT)  
Chief Financial Officer | PEMCO Insurance, Seattle, WA

**Jenn Schwope** (CWU '01 BSAD)  
HR Lead, Commercial Software Engineering | Microsoft: Seattle, WA

**Stacy Short** (CWU '05 ACCT)  
Certified Public Accountant | Clifton Larsen Allen, Yakima, WA

**Mark Turley** (CWU '05 ACCT, BSAD)  
Lead Controller | Highspot, Seattle, WA

# Philanthropy

**Thank You, Donors**—CB Donors Gifts and Pledge Payments | Jan. 1, 2022 through Dec. 31, 2022

**\$50,000 AND ABOVE**

American Endowment Foundation

**\$25,000 AND ABOVE**

KPMG Foundation  
Brent A. Johnson  
Hans M. Vatheuer  
Stefan T. Vatheuer  
Mary E. Vatheuer  
Vatheuer Family Foundation  
Costco Wholesale Corporation  
Charles Schwab

**\$10,000 AND ABOVE**

The Boeing Company  
Phillip A. Piazza  
Jean E. Adams  
Mary Compton  
Richard S. Eichler  
Jeffrey A. Nomura

Tree Top, Inc.  
Boeing Employees Credit Union  
Domex Superfresh Growers, Inc.  
Coldstream Wealth Management

**\$5,000 AND ABOVE**

Julie A. Back  
Moss Adams  
Greater Tacoma Community  
Foundation  
Scott J. Dietzen  
Jon T. Haberling  
Kathleen Bezold  
Nancy Smith

**\$2,500 AND ABOVE**

Seattle Mariners Baseball Club  
Lars I. Landrie  
Aaron J. Christophersen  
Jeffrey L. Stinson

**\$1,000 AND ABOVE**

Bradley S. Miller  
Microsoft Corporation  
Moss Adams, LLP  
Jerry F. Brown  
George W. Campbell  
Jeremy P. Wittmann  
Jeffrey D. Dieleman  
Rhoda Milam  
Kristine M. Hoeflin  
Moss Adams Foundation  
Hilary J. Tanneberg  
David Massey  
UBS Financial Services, Inc.  
Andrew L. Mork  
USAA  
Frederick J. Peterson  
Bader Martin PS  
John A. Williams  
The Skipping Bear Foundation Inc



**\$504,374**

Total Gifts and  
Pledges for 2022.

**Thank You!**



**College of Business**  
400 E University Way  
Ellensburg WA 98926-7487

*Change Service Requested*

**“CWU has inspired me because before I never really felt like a business woman. ... I feel really empowered and strong and smart and confident. And I think I have CWU to thank for that.”**

**Nina Greges,**  
junior,  
business  
administration  
with a marketing  
specialization



**“I’ve been able to push out of the comfort zone, make a name for myself, and grow in my expertise as a supply chain student, but also as a person.”**

**Daizie Jones,**  
senior,  
supply chain  
management  
and leadership  
management

**[cwu.edu/business](http://cwu.edu/business)**

509-963-2930 • [CWU.CollegeofBusiness@cwu.edu](mailto:CWU.CollegeofBusiness@cwu.edu)

**FOLLOW US:**   