

# Business Dialog



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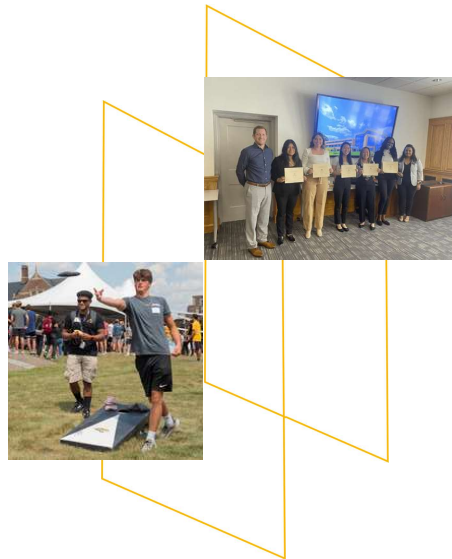
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## Letter from the Dean

As we enter the heart of the fall semester, we continue to look ahead with excitement and optimism at all that our students, faculty and staff will accomplish this year. With the comfort of knowing that some things will never change, such as the college's devotion to our students' success or the commitment of our faculty to high-quality, impactful teaching and research, we can happily embrace the transformations taking place on campus and within Stephens Hall.

- This semester, the College of Business and Economics welcomed nine new faculty, along with three new staff members who were hired since the spring semester.
- The College of Business and Economics debuted its first Business Residential Learning Community this semester. This group of freshmen business students will be invited to participate and attend programmatic events intended to engage them with the business community.
- The James L. Dunbar Sr. estate bestowed a gift to the College of Business and Economics, allowing us to create another Dunbar family scholarship fund, the James Dunbar Senior Management/Entrepreneurship Scholarship fund. In total, the Dunbar family has gifted over \$1.4 million in endowed funds at the College of Business and this is the largest historic family gift to CBE.
- Interest in our new minors in business analytics and business law continues to grow, with enrollments of 53 and 46 students, respectively.
- CBE faculty continue to offer innovative, meaningful classroom experiences. For example:
  - Mariana Lebron worked with on-campus experts to develop a first-ever workshop for her students to design and 3-D print their gaming pieces for their own original cooperative strategy games.
  - Tanja Darden's students worked with DE&I Brand Strategy group to complete a case study in the Citi Global Marketing Division. The winning team's recommendations so impressed the DE&I Brand Strategy group, they scheduled an additional meeting to discuss how best to implement the team's recommendations.
  - Leila Khooshghadam introduced a new marketing class this semester; "Sustainable Marketing" with a goal to provide students with the skills and knowledge needed to shift businesses toward more sustainable practices. This course will allow each student the opportunity to earn a certificate titled "Become a Sustainable Business Change Agent."
  - Over the summer, Natalie Scala mentored three student interns through University of Maryland's Applied Research Lab for Intelligence and Security. The students completed a project sponsored by the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security, presenting their conclusions in person at the Pentagon.

As Dean of the College of Business and Economics, I have enjoyed watching our students grow and I am so excited for what their futures hold. There is nothing more powerful than a good education and providing our students with the skills and knowledge is an honor and a privilege that I cannot understate.

Sincerely,

Shohreh Kaynama, Ph.D.  
Dean, College of Business and Economics



# TU Announces New Master Plan

By: Sabrina Viscomi

Stephens Hall, arguably one of TU's oldest and most iconic buildings, has been home to the College of Business and Economics since 1978. Constructed in 1912, the building has undergone several major renovations and updates throughout its 110-year history. While Stephens Hall, with its distinguished and recognizable clocktower, will remain a steadfast symbol of TU's history, it is slated to become a part of CBE's history as well.



Recently, Towson University introduced the 2020-30 Campus Master Plan, which includes a new home for the College of Business and Economics. Developed under President Schatzel's leadership, the Master Plan outlines capital priorities, including a new state-of-the-art academic building for CBE.



The new building, which is part of TU's larger vision for an investment in infrastructure of \$1.2 billion, will be located on the corner of York and Burke, connecting the north and south sides of campus. A timeline for construction has not yet been determined, but excitement is already building.

"We are thrilled that the TU 2020-30 Campus Master Plan includes a new building for the College of Business and Economics," says Dean Shohreh Kaynama. "Though we love our Stephens Hall, updated facilities will ensure a sustainable future for CBE and position TU to remain among the very best public business schools in the country."

While Stephens Hall may no longer house the College of Business and Economics, it is not going away. In fact, the Master Plan includes major renovations to the historic building, maintaining its place in TU's past, present and future.

TU's 2020-30 Campus Master Plan is available in its entirety at <https://www.towson.edu/facilities/masterplan/documents/master-plan-summary-2022.pdf>.

**"Updated facilities will ensure a sustainable future for CBE and position TU to remain among the very best public business schools in the country."**

-Dean Shohreh Kaynama

# Spotlight on Recent Grads

Highlighting the achievements of CBE's star new graduates!

## Karla Kaliman

By Emily Flinchum

Karla Kaliman '22, graduated from CBE with a degree in business administration and a focus in human resource management. During her time with CBE, Kaliman was able to find her dream of working in HR.

When sharing her story of what made her join CBE, Kaliman told us "When I met Lisa Simmons, I was confused and unsure about my future and my career. I didn't know where I wanted to go after finishing my degree in International Relations. I always knew that I wanted to help people and my community on different levels; Lisa showed me a new way to accomplish this goal. She inspired me to join CBE by showing me my 'incalculable' love for HR and how I can make a difference for my community by advocating for policies that can truly change an employee's life and improving the diversity of a workplace to ensure that people feel understood and supported. Lisa saw my potential, personality and challenged me and pushed me out of my comfort zone to find my passion for HR."

Kaliman is especially proud of her work during the Live Strategy Case Competition as it allowed her to test the knowledge she has been learning throughout her academic career while also being a great way to get exposed to topics that are beneficial to her career path.

"I practiced my teamwork, presentation and analytical skills by analyzing and researching a specific industry and being able to interpret that information to form an educated assessment for a specific business with real-world experience," said Kaliman.

The most helpful classes for Kaliman in her time at CBE have been MNGT 483, MNGT 452 and MNGT 381. Kaliman emphasized how she was able to not only learn the theories of HR, but also how to apply what she's learned in



these classes. Taking these courses during the pandemic, it stuck with Kaliman how HR is crucial in managing responses to COVID-19 at an organizational level.

"Human resources has been the driving force in keeping the workforce and organization engaged, productive and resilient. This situation has illustrated the true value of HR and demonstrated the importance of investing in HR structures and processes," she said.

Resiliency is important to Kaliman, as she has been able to overcome adversity and stay true to herself. When giving advice to other CBE students, she wants them to know to "fight to find your purpose and be confident that whatever passion you want to pursue your survival is assured. Remember that each person has a message to share simply by owning their own life story and being willing to share it with others."

After starting her career with Erikson Senior Living even before graduation, Kaliman hopes to use what she has learned in CBE to lead changes within business and to drive a culture of resiliency with her work. "As a Latina woman who faced systemic discrimination and bias, I would use my skills to help

people believe in themselves and help companies make more inclusive employment decisions," Kaliman said.

In her final remarks, Kaliman added, "I would like to thank CBE for providing me with mental, emotional and practical support when I need it most. For being my 'happy place' where I go to be fully present with myself and where I have opportunities to find meaning and a platform to achieve greatness. Thank you all my professors and mentors who encouraged me to be a better person every day."



## Nico Boone

By Millie Klefsaas

Nico Boone '22 earned a degree in business administration with a concentration in entrepreneurship. He says, "I've always enjoyed the many aspects of business and wanted to educate myself on how to be a successful entrepreneur. I knew the faculty and staff would be able to help me develop and provide opportunities for me to exercise my skill set."

During his time at TU dedicated himself to helping other students outside the classroom. He is involved in various organizations with Towson University including: VIBE Dance Team, Venture Club, Entrepreneurship@TU, the Towson University StarTUp and more. As he reflects on these experiences he says, "I've had the luxury of being a student aid in educating fellow classmates on entrepreneurship, as well as how to best pitch their business ideas."

While at CBE, Boone was able to experience a variety of different classes. When asked about which class was most valuable to him he says "the classes revolving around entrepreneurship, such as Creativity & Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship have expanded my mindset to what entrepreneurship is, what it can be and how possible it is for so many individuals. What's really stuck with me is pitching. Pitching is a life skill, not just a skill used to sell someone on your business. It's about a story, the story of your business and getting people invested in your venture."

In everything Boone does, he advocates for entrepreneurs. If he could give any piece of advice it would be to "become an entrepreneur. Don't be afraid to fail, don't be afraid to get involved and network with others and I strongly encourage others to be as creative as they imagine. Turn that idea into a thriving business and don't let anyone discourage you."

After his time at Towson, Boone plans to exercise his expertise in entrepreneurship, branding and marketing to help others with their businesses at TU StarTUp. Additionally he plans on expanding his current businesses and creating new ones. Outside of TU, Boone has several different interests such as music and performance art, social media content creation and marketing and graphic design.

As we look to Boone's future and celebrate his past, we are thankful for his contribution to CBE and look forward to all of the places he will be going in his career.

# BATM Hosts Data Analytics Competitions Partnered with the Baltimore Ravens



By Millie Klefsaas

CBE hosted the final round of its third Data Analytics Competition in Stephens Hall on April 22. The event was sponsored by the Baltimore Ravens and this semester's competition brought together 135 students across five TU colleges. The competition featured Cody Williams, director of business intelligence for the Ravens, who developed the case based on a dataset of Ravens merchandise and apparel sales. The students were tasked with deriving insights through data analysis and pitching ideas of how to drive other opportunities for local sales revenue.

In the initial round, all submissions of data analysis were judged by the Ravens, with the top 10 teams invited to deliver their final presentations in person. During the final round, the top three winning teams were selected based on the creativity and utility of data visualization, the clarity and quality of analysis and storytelling and the originality of recommendations.

## Results:

1st: Astrid Nina (CBE)  
2nd: Brittney Workman (CLA)  
3rd: Julia O'Connell (COFAC), Leah Sine (CBE) and Haja Sannah (CBE/CLA)

CBE was able to award \$5,000 in scholarships to these students.

After the final presentations, competitors, attendees and judges were able to interact and network to further discuss all things data and analytics. After observing and conversing with the students, Williams says, "I am hugely impressed by the skill level of the students and where they are today compared to this field 10 years ago when I was in college. Analytics was not necessarily even a major offered when I was in school. To see college students producing this quality of analysis work, visualization work, presentation skills, I am very impressed. I feel as though they are all going to be ready and prepared to enter the workforce and contribute right away and do a great job."

First place winner Astrid Nina became interested in this competition after seeing all of the other competitions CBE has hosted. She felt that her previous courses prepared her to succeed in the task given.

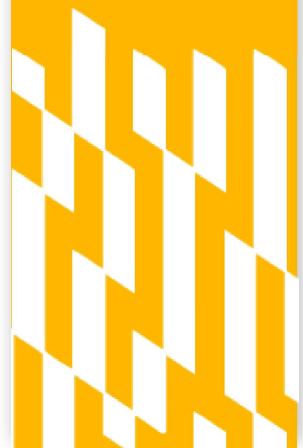
Nina expressed, "The data in general was really fun to work with. From doing everything to gather insights in order to see and do what they were asking us to do and then actually figuring it out."

She also benefited from networking after the event and believes the competition could impact her future. She adds, "Doing analysis, visualization and storytelling is something that I am really interested in and I asked him about if they have any opportunities at the moment and

he said yes. I will definitely apply, it is an internship opportunity and I am a senior looking for an internship. I am excited about that."

As the field of data analytics continues to grow, Williams believes that it is imperative to have competitions like this to not only help inform analytics in business. He says, "Data and analytics is paramount. It is hard to imagine businesses operating today without using data to make informed decisions. I think that we will only continue to rely on data more and more to move forward and that is why I am excited to see students really invest in their education in data and analytics and because it is the future and the present."

As analytics continues to impact our everyday lives, the college is proud to offer a business analytics minor, open to all TU students and a business analytics track under the business administration major. To learn more, visit our website.



# Alumni in Action

## Raquel Tennant, '19

By: Emily Flinchum



Raquel Tennant, a 2019 graduate of the College of Business and Economics, always had a knack for finance. Tennant always was making lists for her spendings and math came easy to her. Despite this, Tennant did not like the abstract nature of the subject and wanted something that could be applied to everyday people. When she found financial planning being offered in CBE in the business administration major, Tennant says the option “made it real for me.”

Tennant, a first-generation American, felt as if people were being left out in the overall financial field. An everyday person may not have the funds or understanding to invest their money right away, and Tennant found that financial planning was more inclusive to everyday people and lifestyles. Tennant also loved the comprehensiveness of financial planning, and how a Certified Financial Planner (CFP) has knowledge on and is able to help their clientele’s entire life.

With financial planning, Tennant was able to learn a skill that “not only helps other people but helps myself.”

Tennant also shares that financial planning, with its rigorous requirements and testing procedures, is what she sees as “the gold standard of finance.” Tennant feels distinguished knowing she was able to make it through the qualifications that make her “the real deal” while also having a comprehensive understanding of finance that allows her to speak on many parts of the industry.

Tennant enthusiastically shared her appreciation for her time at Towson University and how it has benefitted her in her career. One major part of her career that she feels CBE prepared her for was the art of networking. By attending networking events put on as part of her classes, she was able to find internships that matched her career interests. Tennant shares that while she was anxious about where she would go in her career, she would have been even more anxious without the opportunity to network during her time in CBE. Tennant was even able to get her first job after graduation through the College of Business and Economics.

Tennant remarks that “the jobs we want aren’t on Indeed, they are word of mouth.”

The financial planning program, as Tennant explains, was also helpful in giving her the needed technical skills for her CFP exam. Her prep course for the exam felt like a review of what she had already learned in her classes beforehand.

By having two steps done in one at CBE – her degree and her financial planning courses – Tennant was ahead of her peers who were taking separate courses for financial planning.

During her time in CBE, Tennant was a part of the creation of the Women in Finance club. This club was created to give a space to women in her primarily male dominated classes. Tennant explains that the idea for the Women in Finance club was sparked by the Finance club, and she wanted a place for women to call their own that would show that they are “by no means timid.” The group was created for women who love what they do and to build a sense of community. Tennant shares that the club shows other women in the field that they are not climbing the uphill battle alone and that they have a community of people there for them. The Women in Finance club is still a strong part of CBE thanks to Tennant’s hard work and perseverance to help in creating a space for women to achieve their goals.

Being in a field dominated by predominantly older white men, Tennant was concerned about the opportunities she would get in the professional field. Tennant felt that in her past, her talents may have been overlooked for those who meet the more common profile of a financial planner. Despite this, Tennant continued to persevere and reach her professional goals. Instead of backing down, Tennant saw this as a positive challenge to better the industry. Tennant expresses the importance of diversity, as diversity brings a variety of unique lived experiences to a company that is important in making changes.

For Tennant, it is important that the field is becoming inclusive on both the professional and the client sides. Throughout her career, Tennant places a great emphasis on helping minority groups who may not be fairly represented in the financial planning field.

In 2021, only 1.8 percent of CFP professionals were Black, even after growing 10 percent from the previous year; and even at an all time high, only 23.4 percent of CFP professionals are women. As Tennant explains, non-traditionally served groups in the financial planning field are going to want to see themselves reflected in the CFP professionals in the field. When going for financial help as

**"Who you are is your superpower, don't try so hard to conform to what you think is the status quo."**

**-Raquel Tennant**

# Alumni in Action

Tennant explains, there can be shame in asking for help and not previously knowing anything about financial planning. But with women empowering other women and young people empowering other young people, there is less pressure and shame in the experience. Having more diversity, Tennant says, also allows for culturally sensitive values to take a bigger place in the financial planning process.

Currently, Tennant is working with a women-led firm in Columbia, Maryland. Being a part of a field dominated heavily by men, Tennant wanted to place emphasis on helping her own community and generation. Tennant's goal is to help people who aren't normally prioritized in her field and has created a lower barrier of entry to do so. By talking to her clients and learning their history, Tennant is able to create a plan fit for her clients that is reviewed based on their life changes. A highlight of this, Tennant shares, is being able to work with her young clients through major life milestones such as marriage and children, which isn't always seen in the average clientele of a financial planner.

Tennant is also a big advocate for not only helping her clients with her skills, but educating them as well. By not only telling them the answers of their questions, but also explaining why, Tennant is able to share valuable information with clients who may not have been able to access this information before. Tennant shares that it's very empowering to share her knowledge with demographics who traditionally left out of the field, as it allows for more people to become aware of their own finances.

"Everyone is just trying to figure it out," says Tennant. By taking away the shame of not having this knowledge beforehand, Tennant is able to better help her clientele while also giving them important financial information.

When sharing advice with current students, Tennant would like to share with women considering the financial planning field that "who you are is your superpower, don't try so hard to conform to what you think is the status quo. What you've gone through is going to make you a great financial advisor". Tennant states that being who you are will allow for the people you are working with to naturally open up and connect with you. Tennant also wants to share to "know your why and do your research" when it comes to considering financial planning as a career path. Tennant urges people to look into the field, and by understanding what it takes may intrigue people into joining the field. Knowing why you want to go into the field will also narrow down where you want to work in the industry, she explains.

"We are a special field and that is really cool," says Tennant.

## Young Alumni Come Out for Full Tilt Brewing Event

By Emily Flinchum

On September 1st, the College of Business and Economics' Young Alumni Advisory Council hosted an event at Full Tilt Brewing for recent CBE graduates to have the opportunity to meet both old friends and new ones as they network and engage with other CBE alumni.

Full Tilt Brewing, co-founded by CBE alum Dan Baumiller, was the perfect space for young alumni to get engaged with CBE even after their graduation. The night offered beer tasting and games in an excited atmosphere.

This event, hosted by the Young Alumni Advisory Council, brings together young alumni of CBE to work with the council's goal of providing the perspectives of young CBE alums and encouraging all alumni to get involved with the college.

The Full Tilt Brewing event was one of the first events to get canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing extra excitement to the event when it finally was able to take place.

"The night at Full Tilt Brewing was great. We're excited to see the younger alumni getting engaged with CBE and we hope to see this involvement continue to increase in the future," says Frank Sneeringer, major gift officer for the College of Business and Economics.



# Jorge Romero

## Faculty Highlight

By Elizabeth Higgins

Jorge Romero, associate professor of accounting, has been with the accounting department at the College of Business and Economics at Towson University since 2008. During this time, he has taught a variety of undergraduate and graduate classes, as well as undertaking some exciting research projects. This piece covers insight into Romero's career, the world of accounting and what it is like to be a professor at Towson University.

When asked about all the degree programs he has completed, Romero stated "I enjoyed all my degree programs. Each program was unique and valuable." Romero gained his B.S. in mechanical engineering from Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru. He went on to get both his MBA and Ph.D. in management science with a concentration in accounting from the University of Texas in Dallas, supervised by Rajiv D. Banker, who Romero describes as one of the most influential researchers in business. On top of his impressive academic career, Romero also has experience working for HSBC Bank in its main headquarters in Chicago. Here he was part of a research team working in data analytics – very crucial for the world of business and accounting

Having been with Towson University for 14 years, Romero knows a thing or two about being a professor at the university. "It is a great environment, and I have a chance to interact with a diverse set of students and faculty." Romero says "I have very positive experiences with my students every semester. They're excited about accounting, data analytics and learning in general. They're fun and energetic, and it's great being around them. I also like to share with them the link between my research and the topics that we cover in class. I strive to integrate my experience in research and industry to provide real-life applications for students, and I like them to see practical applications of accounting concepts in the real world."

We went on to discuss his research interests, where Romero stated that his extensive background in cost accounting, managerial accounting, data analytics and the use of market measures of firm performance in a broad range of contexts, including research, teaching and industry has allowed him to contribute some valuable research to the industry. His work has been published in leading accounting journals. When asked more specifically about his previous and current research topics, Romero said, "because of my solid background in mathematics and statistics, my research expertise focuses on empirical accounting work. I work on different research projects with co-authors from different universities all over the world, as well as from Towson University. Currently, I am working with Dr. Rajiv Banker on several empirical accounting research projects."

Romero was also made the editor of the Advances in Public Interest Journal in January 2022. He explained that "the Journal is abstracted, indexed and ranked in several international databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) and the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC), among others."



The Advances in Public Interest Journal has been published regularly since 1986 by the UK-based Emerald Group Publishing, one of the largest publishers of academic material. Romero described his experience as an editor thus far by saying "being an editor is very rewarding; I get to interact with editorial members, associate editors, reviewers and authors. It also pushes me to be well-informed about relevant technological advances in publishing and disseminating research. Currently, I am working on expanding the pool of authors to American, Asian and Australian researchers interested in submitting papers to the journal through my network of contacts. The target of the journal is to create awareness of different issues of public interest and reach a higher ranking in the different international rankings and databases." He added, "current strengths of Advances in Public Interest Accounting include a solid reputation for providing original contributions that add to the understanding of public interest that impact businesses, regulators, governments and government bodies; a reasonable level of diversity of topics; and its association with Emerald, an established leader in publishing".

It is often interesting to look at business, and its related subjects, from the perspective that they can bring good to the world, rather than being very heavily 'corporate'. In reference to his role as editor of an academic journal about such a topic, Romero discussed how he thought accounting can promote the public good. He stated that the journal focusses on promoting the public good through its social impact on climate action and sustainability. He stated, "the central mission of the Journal is to provide essential reading for those who need to stay informed about issues related to public interest around the world. The journal plays a critical role in providing a forum where innovative and leading research is given open-minded consideration based on scientific merit. Advances in Public Interest Accounting aims to provide a forum for researchers concerned with critically appraising and significantly transforming conventional accounting theory, practice, teaching and research."

Finally, we discussed up-and-coming research in the accounting field. There is currently a new trend in empirical accounting where data analytics tools are being used to deepen the research understanding of different accounting issues in the field. Romero gave the following example: "For instance, currently Python is being used, which is a textual analysis tool that I am using to extract textual sentiments to analyze how companies write their annual reports, focusing on the sentiments and tones included in the text and how that affects the future performance of the company."

In his spare time, Romero likes to spend time with his family, enjoy the outdoors and watch movies. He is also an avid swimmer, and says it is a great source for relaxation. We'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Romero on behalf of Towson University's College of Business and Economics for his journal editorship and thank him for his contributions to the Towson University Department of Accounting.



# College News



## CBE Hosts Barbecue Bash to Welcome Incoming Students

By: Emily Flinchum

To celebrate the incoming class of College and Business and Economics students, CBE hosted a Barbecue Bash in front of Stephens Hall for students, faculty and staff to kick off the beginning of the Fall 2022 semester.

This welcome celebration on August 26th brought together 392 new CBE students to enjoy food and games while learning more about what CBE has to offer. Seventy CBE faculty and staff were in attendance to spend time with incoming students and answer any questions about programs and experiences.

Students sat together on the lawn of Stephens Hall to enjoy a picnic lunch and to soak in the last of the summer weather. Hot dogs, burgers and lemonade were served for attendees, the perfect foods to round off the summer before the start of a new school year.

Not only was there food, but students were also able to take part in fun activities and win prizes. Lawn dice and volleyball allowed for students to have fun and strategize. Students were also able to test their luck with a prize wheel. Giveaways such as sunglasses, frisbees and t-shirts let everyone go home with a memory of their time at the Barbecue Bash.

"It was marvelous to see eager and excited students at the inaugural New Student Welcome event this August. The front lawn of Stephens Hall was decorated with festivities including a volleyball game, cornhole and networking among faculty and students. The atmosphere was lively with music, food and fun giveaways for our incoming freshman and transfer students. This event was the perfect start to a new school year and I expect we'll be hosting for all new students for many years to come," says Lisa Michocki, director of Student Academic and Career Services.

