Michael Thompson, then serving as BYU Marriott interim dean, welcomes BYU MBA students to the annual Camp Williams kick-off activity. Photo by Bradley Slate
The 2018–19 Year at a Glance

**September**

**Women’s View**
Ruth Todd, Liz Wiseman, and Saraah Toronto participate on a women’s leadership panel, sharing advice about succeeding in their fields while staying true to personal values and priorities.

**October**

**Diverse and Mighty**
At the third annual Go Pro diversity event, guest speakers Shaun McAlmont, Marc Chenn, and Carine Clark discuss how diversity differentiates—and strengthens—an organization.

**August**

**A Teamwork Tradition**
As part of new student orientation, students from the class of 2020 complete challenges together in their first-semester core teams at Camp Williams. This MBA tradition helps students bond.

**November**

**Tech-Trek Time**
A group of students heads to Portland and Seattle for one of several tech treks scheduled throughout the year. The three-day trip provides valuable recruiting opportunities as students visit Intel, Nike, Columbia Sportswear, HP Inc., PepsiCo, Amazon, and Microsoft.

**December**

**It’s a Wrap**
EMBA students celebrate finishing their capstone projects at an end-of-year luncheon; representatives of their partner companies also attend.

**January**

**Starting a New Year**
Both first- and second-year MBA students start the year off right by attending reorientation events. Students meet their new team members, section, and core professors, then participate in team challenges before enjoying insightful state-of-the-program addresses that prepare them for the upcoming semester.

**February**

**The Formal Event**
MBA students take a night off of studying to attend the 2019 MBA Formal. Students dance the night away with dates, spouses, and fellow students during the formal, which is one of the program’s social events of the year.

**March**

**No. 1 in Training Grads**
When it comes to who best trains their graduates, the BYU Marriott MBA program is awarded a No. 1 worldwide ranking by Bloomberg Businessweek, above schools such as Harvard Business School, Stanford Graduate School of Business, and the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

**April**

**Diploma Day**
More than 200 students graduate as BYU Marriott’s MBA and EMBA class of 2019. Congratulations to our grads and all those who support them.
When BYU Marriott MBA alum Marc Chenn talks about the power of his 2007 MBA degree, he uses the words *connections*, *relationships*, and *people* because, as he says, “That’s what my career, and my life, has boiled down to: a passion for people, meaningful relationships, and deep connections with those who have crossed my path.”

Chenn isn’t the only MBA grad to live a life and build a career on those ideals. Connections, relationships, and people could be adopted as the MBA program’s mantra, a mantra that certainly supports the program’s purposeful effort to prepare its graduates to lead the way forward—in both their careers and their lives.

So while BYU Marriott students certainly receive world-class business training during their time on campus, they leave with more than an academic foundation for their future endeavors; they leave understanding that leadership is an act of stewardship and that connecting with people may be the most important work they do.

The following four alumni are great examples of the positive impact a BYU Marriott MBA grad can make.
You might say Wyman Roberts’s path is just as defined by near misses as by bull’s-eyes. Roberts almost didn’t attend BYU. After growing up on Maui, he headed to the US mainland to attend the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. After a year there, he transferred to Ricks College in Rexburg, Idaho. Finally, he landed in between the two—at BYU in Provo, where he caught a vision he hadn’t found anywhere else.

“When I hit BYU, I thought, ‘This is what a real academic environment feels like,’” recalls Roberts. “I met fellow students and professors who were engaging and challenging, who inspired me in the way they reached out and interacted with each other.” So he stayed at BYU, completing his undergraduate degree in finance and then earning his MBA degree in 1984. By the time he left school, he had a deeper understanding of what he wanted to accomplish in his career—and how he wanted to do it. “I obviously gained education and knowledge, which is helpful, but you can get that in a lot of places," Roberts says. "My MBA helped me fine-tune my work ethic and gain real-world experience integral to my future success. My experience at BYU Marriott has one of the strongest networks of financial services professionals in the world, outside the Ivy League,” he points out. But after weathering the financial crisis of 2008, Chenn took a serious look at his life plan. A lifetime of being surrounded by entrepreneurs had convinced him that entrepreneurship was the best way to "control your own destiny—even though control is an elusive thing," Chenn observes. He decided to return to his passion for tech and invest his efforts and time into building something of his own. Chenn’s robust network ultimately led him to his current business partner, and in 2012 the two founded SaltStack, a company that develops intelligent automation software to help businesses secure and manage their digital infrastructures. As CEO, Chenn is able to take full advantage of the leadership expertise developed at BYU Marriott and refined through his years of experience. And as all good leaders do, when he talks about his company, he focuses on people—the people he works alongside and the people the company helps. “We improve lives through intelligent automation,” Chenn says. “Driving efficiency, saving people time and money, getting them home at 5 p.m. so they can see their families.”
Barnard currently works as vice president of marketing for Vivint Solar in Lehi, Utah. As a graduate of Southern Utah University with a degree in communications, marketing, and advertising, today her reach has grown to tens of millions of people around the world. Barnard graduated with an Executive MBA in 2016. Her MBA helped her gain the ranks of MBA alumni who are anxious to lead the way forward in their organizations and mentor others, she says. “Watching people work hard to achieve their personal and professional goals is incredibly fulfilling and by far one of the favorite things I do,” she says.

And her ability to become that kind of leader came, at least partially, from her experience at BYU Marriott. “The group I had as a cohort was filled with high-achieving, competitive people, and yet I watched as they unselfishly and willingly did whatever was necessary to help each other,” Barnard explains. “That is one of the elements of my BYU experience that continues to stay with me: how committed my classmates were to help one another while we were in school and how, years later, that is still true.”

Leaders such as the ones who emerge from BYU Marriott are needed out in the corporate and entrepreneurial spaces, points out Barnard. “The world needs leaders more than ever who are not only committed to creating success for their organizations but who are also focused on making positive change to improve the lives of others,” she says. Roberts adds to that sentiment: “If I were to challenge all of us, it would be to pay it forward in any way possible. Sometimes it’s in the work environment, sometimes it’s in the academic department, and sometimes it’s in your life. But paying it forward in the way we lead, and even just in the way we live our lives, comes through connections, relationships, and people. That’s where change happens.”
Tech treks—trips that provide BYU Marriott MBA students with a chance to visit high-tech companies while networking with company executives and MBA alumni onsite—offer invaluable experience to those who attend. On a recent trip to Seattle, more than thirty students visited seven companies, participating in panel discussions, interviews, and tours. These trips are only one component of the top-ranked MBA program, which prepares its grads to lead the way forward with incisive strategy, transformative mentoring, and inspiring optimism.
Head Sherpa Leads Students to Great Heights

Jesse Myrick, a 2013 BYU grad and former documentary filmmaker, decided to come to the BYU Marriott MBA program because he wanted doors opened in his career. However, Myrick is getting a lot more than just a career launch out of his MBA education; he is gaining confidence and assurance that he is capable of achieving his dreams.

As a kid from a small town in California, Myrick loved making short films with his friends. His passion for filmmaking got him into the media arts major at BYU, where he learned how to tell inspiring stories through documentary films. He worked on a BYU-produced TV series called *Beehive Stories* and on a film called *Peace Officer*, which ended up on a long list of potential Oscar nominees and won Grand Jury and Audience Awards at the South by Southwest Film Festival in 2015.

A few years and a lot of experience later, Myrick was redesigning an online program for Stringham Schools, an online realty school. He loved what he was doing, and he wanted to do it on a larger scale. He decided to go back to BYU for an MBA.

MBA applicants are required to complete the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), which tests reading comprehension, writing, and mathematics. Myrick hadn't taken a math class in years, so to prepare for the GMAT, he hired a tutor. During the first session, his tutor evaluated Myrick's math skills and told Myrick that he had major reservations about Myrick's ability to be accepted into an MBA program that year. Myrick was determined to stick to his plan. Despite the lack of confidence shown by his tutor, Myrick did well on the GMAT and was accepted to BYU Marriott. However, he didn't begin the program with a lot of confidence. “I came into the program feeling like I was way behind, like I was unqualified to be there, and like I was fooling people,” Myrick says. But all that changed when he met his sherpa, Erika Nash. In the BYU Marriott MBA sherpa program, second-year MBA students mentor first-year students by answering questions, providing support, and helping them find internships. Nash encouraged Myrick and helped him realize that he was smarter and better prepared for the program than he thought. “You can do this,” she told him. “Let’s go get you the best job possible.” Myrick’s insecurity was quickly transformed into confidence. “Within the course of three months, I went from feeling like I didn’t have the necessary skills I needed and feeling super self-conscious about myself to being hired for an internship at Amazon,” Myrick says. “The sherpa program taught me that the only thing I was lacking was self-confidence. It was so empowering to find that confidence inside me. It changed everything. That transformation is why I came to the BYU Marriott MBA program—the experience, the jump, and the career pivot.”

Myrick loved the sherpa program so much that he’s become the head sherpa, determined to do for others what Nash did for him. As head sherpa, Myrick’s vision is to not only give first-year students an education but also to build their confidence and find them their dream jobs.

As for Myrick’s postgraduation plans, he isn’t sure what he’ll be doing yet—and he’s okay with that. “I am realizing that I don’t have to commit to one specific industry,” Myrick says. “I am more versatile because of my MBA from BYU Marriott.”
2018 Case Competition Highlights

Our BYU Marriott MBA students took first place at the twelfth annual National MBA Case Competition in Ethical Leadership hosted at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. The competition, held 8-9 November 2018, was designed to advance the development of ethical leaders through experiential learning. Event organizers wanted to also recognize and promote MBA students and their programs.

A cash prize of $5,000 was awarded to the winning team from BYU Marriott. Team members included Sara Picard from Greenacres, Washington; Reem Raj from Bangalore, India; David Tensmeyer from Houston; and Kyle Woodhouse from Denver.

This student team from BYU Marriott competed against MBA teams from eleven other universities, including the University of Georgia, which took second place, and Auburn University, which took third place.

During the competition, teams were given the opportunity to present their analyses for ethical leadership in response to a case created specifically for the event. A panel of graduates of BYU’s executive MBA program judged the presentations.

“We were encouraged to see how many bright and talented people from across the country are interested in issues about business ethics,” says Tensmeyer. “I am confident that these students will go on to be strong leaders of integrity in their organizations.”

The MBA ethics class at BYU Marriott, taught by Dave Hart, an associate professor in the Romney Institute of Public Service and Ethics, was the most important preparation for these students, says Bradley Owens, the faculty advisor over this case competition. “We also met with these students and discussed ethical frameworks and strategies that had worked for previous competitions to help prepare them even further,” Owens says.

“I loved getting to heavily integrate ethical principles and theories into a traditional business solution,” says Picard. “Being able to creatively do that integration was fun, and it stretched us to do our best work.”

BYU Marriott’s MBA program prepares students to excel at competitions and also to study real ethical issues that they could potentially face. “This program has given me the necessary tools to think through a business problem correctly,” says Woodhouse. “Our team was able to come up with deep and well-thought-out recommendations because of what we’ve learned from the MBA program.”

Sawtooth Competition Sweep
BYU Marriott’s MBA team claimed victory in the Buckeye State at the Sawtooth Software Marketing Analytics Consulting Challenge; not only did the MBA team take the top spot, the school’s undergraduate team took second overall. The competition was open to both graduate and undergraduate students.

The MBA team included first-place winners Candace Child from North Ogden, Utah; Steve Martin from New York City; Avisikta Sahoo from Bhubaneswar, India; Sam Swain from Orem, Utah; and Doug Ward from Centerville, Utah, who were awarded a cash prize of $3,000.

“It is great to win the competition, but the best thing is that it provides an excellent opportunity for students to apply things we learn in the classroom in a concrete setting,” says Jeff Dotson, associate professor of marketing.

At the two-day event, students dealt with real-world problems and solutions surrounding conjoint analysis, a market-research technique that helps business owners make decisions on product rollout by determining consumer preferences.

“Competing in the Sawtooth competition taught me about humility and confidence, a necessary dichotomy,” Martin says. “I had to rely on my teammates’ strengths to make up for my weaknesses, especially in the complex world of analytics. We won because we were unified in purpose and diversified in ability.”

Cardinal Health, a Fortune 500 healthcare-services company, cosponsored the competition, and market-research experts from Sawtooth Software, Cardinal Health, and Procter & Gamble made up the panel of judges.

BYU Marriott Hosts, Wins Competition
BYU Marriott hosted and won the inaugural Adam Smith Society Case Competition—a three-day event that welcomed nine top-tier MBA programs from schools across the nation, including Yale, Chicago Booth, and Darden.

The event included a welcome reception the first night and then an initial round of the competition on the following day, with a brief recess in the afternoon in which students participated in a ski trip to Sundance. The competition concluded the third day, when MBA students Richard Bobo, Sam Fisher, Danny McCracken, and Seth Randall were awarded a $3,000 cash prize for first place.

“For me, this win demonstrates that BYU Marriott MBAs not only understand free-market principles, they can also articulate them and put them into practice,” Fisher says. “It is important that, as we study business, we understand the free market along with the rights and principles that make it all work. This contest was a welcome opportunity to engage in that learning.”

Paul Godfrey, William and Roccell Low Professor of Business Strategy, helped organize the case competition, which challenged contestants to explore how Facebook’s executive team should respond to issues arising from the 2016 US presidential election.

“I thought it was a powerful opportunity for students to deal with this big issue about business and capitalism, and our students did well,” Godfrey says. “They looked at the business and the social impact, and they presented well. I was proud to be a Cougar on Saturday.”

The Adam Smith Society is a national MBA association that works to help students foster a meaningful dialogue around complicated business issues that impact society.
BYU Marriott MBA Scholars

BYU Marriott MBA students are recognized for their uncommon maturity, confidence, and experiences. They excel in many ways, including academically. Top MBA scholars are honored annually through the Hawes, Stoddard, and Eccles Scholars programs.

Hawes Scholars

The Brigham Young University Marriott School of Business named ten 2018 Hawes Scholars, an honor that carries the highest distinction given to MBA students at the school and a cash award of $10,000. The 2018–2019 Hawes Scholars are Derek Croft, Fernanda Sayavedra, Jared Harrison, Jesse Myrick, Jonathan Hardy, John Rozan, Megan Brewster, Reenu Selva Raj, Sara Picard, and Shawn Merrill.

Stoddard Scholars

Twelve Brigham Young University Marriott School of Business students were honored with the George E. Stoddard Prize, a $5,000 award given to exceptional second-year MBA finance students. The 2018 scholars are Bryce Pinder, Chad Olesiak, Christopher Davis, Dan Visser, Daniel Gore, Iban Beltran, Jordan Testimale, Logan Rahn, Mark Johnson, Olivia Prochazka, Richard Maxwell, and Spencer Clegg.

Eccles Scholars

Eleven students were honored as Eccles Scholars, an award presented by the school’s Whitmore Global Management Center. Each recipient was awarded up to $9,000 of financial aid for schooling expenses, international projects, and global career exploration. The 2018–2019 Eccles Scholars are Alex Zhang, Andrew Daniels, Austin Pollard, Ben Anderson, James Ngai, Josh Brooks, Matt Lipp, Michael Moore, Sophie Zhang, Tiago Triumpho, and Wilson Moreno. (Not all scholars are pictured.)

Elevating the Possible

Megan Brewster, a second-year MBA candidate from Salt Lake City, has had a transformational experience at BYU Marriott. Her goal as president of the MBA Women in Management club (WIM) is to focus her passion for helping women gain self-confidence and overcome barriers in a way that enables other women to enjoy the same experience.

“I had no idea what I could accomplish in the business world until I came here,” she says. “The support from the faculty and the experiences I’ve been involved in here—both inside and outside of the classroom—have opened my eyes in powerful ways that I am excited to share with others.”

Though Brewster’s undergraduate degree was in English literature, she fell in love with business while working in a job at the crossroads of public policy and academic research in St. Louis. “I realized that it was business leaders who had the power to make the differences that I cared about,” she observes. “So I decided to get involved in business myself.”

BYU Marriott was particularly attractive to Brewster because she saw women filling important roles in the school. “I was attracted to the idea of ‘coopetition,’ where it’s cooperative but we also challenge each other to be progressive and excel,” she says. Brewster has also found BYU Marriott to be a supportive place. “That’s one of the reasons why I am so passionate about WIM,” she says.

In order to help all women feel welcome at WIM events, Brewster has made a conscious effort to invite speakers with diverse backgrounds. “Often we think that women’s experiences are all universal. While there are similarities, women are not one monolithic group,” she says. “The women in our program have diverse personalities, interests, and struggles, so we try to create a variety of events to ensure that there is something for everyone, regardless of what challenges they face.”

Another of Brewster’s main accomplishments in WIM is involvement in the male-advocacy group HeForShe, an organization designed to increase the conversation between men and women about representation and equality in the business world.

“It’s frustrating when we have an antagonistic attitude towards men,” she explains. “They’re inheriting the same culture that we have as women. It doesn’t have to be a versus thing. It’s actually beneficial for both genders when women have better opportunities.”

Brewster, who is married and expecting her first child, is looking forward to her future in business. She is planning on a career that combines social innovation, strategy, and healthcare. “An MBA is a diverse degree that I can use in a variety of settings,” she says. “I just wish more women could have this opportunity earlier in their careers and leverage their own strengths to make a successful leadership career. “I never saw myself pursuing an MBA, but it’s been an amazing choice with life-changing opportunities,” she continues. “Through my experience here, I’ve gained skills and knowledge, and now I have exciting job options to consider. And even more beneficial, it’s helped me conceptualize myself more as a leader and raise my sights in terms of what’s possible for me.”
One section of Kristen DeTienne’s office features letters and emails from grateful students who have benefitted from her instinctive curiosity, natural tendency to examine people’s behavior, and passion for helping students succeed. DeTienne often draws upon her own experiences as a struggling student to help those she teaches reach their highest potential. Read more about her story and her impact on others on page 25.
Faculty Awards

The Path to Real-Estate Success

When it comes to understanding the ins and outs of real-estate investment, BYU Marriott professor Barrett Slade is your guy. With plenty of professional and educational background in real estate, it is apparent that he is more than qualified to teach on the subject.

Of the many experiences that have been fundamental in getting him to where he is today, Slade specifically credits his missionary service for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for putting him on the path of ambition and success. “I grew up in a remote and rural part of Arizona where higher education wasn’t stressed much,” Slade says. “Thankfully, I had a wonderful mission president who inspired me to pursue higher education. As a result, after I finished my mission, I headed to BYU.”

In addition to receiving an undergraduate degree in economics, Slade earned a master’s degree in managerial economics from BYU in 1989 and a PhD in business administration with an emphasis in real estate from the University of Georgia in 1997. Those achievements ultimately paved the way for him to come to BYU as a professor, but not before gaining some industry experience along the way.

Following his undergraduate studies, Slade spent five years with a commercial-valuation and consulting firm. He later worked as the vice president and chief appraiser of Georgia in 1997. Those achievements ultimately paved the way for him to come to BYU as a professor, but not before gaining some industry experience along the way.

In addition to teaching, Slade is involved in real-estate research, specifically in relation to land markets. He recently published a paper on what happens to land values near new Walmart stores and is currently examining the same for Amazon fulfillment centers. He does this by constructing price indices that monitor and track how you measure and monitor it.” Slade says. “My background in real estate, which is by far the largest asset class across the globe, is more than qualified to teach the subject. Even in Slade's research, it is also the largest asset class across the globe, is more than qualified to teach the subject. Even in Slade's research, it is also the largest asset class across the globe, is more than qualified to teach the subject.
From South Africa to BYU

As a child growing up in South Africa during apartheid, Curtis LeBaron, associate professor of organizational behavior and human resources, was exposed to the circumstances and attitudes that defined the era. Later, as he served a mission in South Africa, LeBaron came to realize the impact apartheid had on his thinking about race relations. “I came to more fully understand the injustices and the horrible violence that apartheid imposed on people, both body and spirit,” LeBaron says. “I grew to love people who I had formerly been racially estranged from.”

LeBaron’s introduction eventually led him to study how people use language to influence others. After his mission, he earned a bachelor’s degree in English from the university of Utah and a PhD in language and social interaction from the University of Texas at Austin. “All of my research falls under the umbrella of the question ‘How do we create the realities that we reside in?’” LeBaron says. “That relates directly to my South African experience.”

Specializing in video-based research, LeBaron now teaches a leadership class for BYU Marriott MBA students. He films and analyzes situations that people don’t usually get permission to video record, where communication is key. For example, LeBaron has done video-based research on therapy groups, architects, surgical teams, job interviews, top management teams, and more.

LeBaron also analyzed recordings of FBI interrogations from a department with a history of getting confessions from innocent people. “The question was how on earth they get confessions from people who are innocent,” LeBaron says. “The answer is that they create realities in which the suspects feel like they have no other option but to confess.”

LeBaron’s work has helped numerous organizations with communication, especially the leaders within those organizations who create meaning out of inherently ambiguous situations. “When I sit down and start watching people interact on video, for me there’s nothing more interesting in the world,” he says. “I feel like I’m watching the most intriguing, multidimensional game of social chess where people say things and move and maneuver in ways that advance themselves.”

Drawing on his research and life experiences, LeBaron created three pieces of advice for MBA students:

- Take control of your environment. “If you ever find yourself in a situation or context that you’re unhappy with, look for ways that you might be actually creating the context that you dislike. If you’re ever faced with a problem you’re having a hard time solving, you might ask yourself how it is that you’re helping to create that problem in the first place and how might that change.”

- Remember that you only live once. “If there’s something you want to do, you need to go after it. If you don’t like what you’re doing, you need to change it, because we only get one shot at this.”

- Don’t underestimate the power of face-to-face interaction. “In an age of digital communication, I would encourage all leaders and professionals to not underestimate the power of face-to-face interaction. Any time leaders have truly wanted to make a difference in the minds of people, they’ve done it face-to-face.”

Always Asking What’s Next

Many universities don’t require professors to conduct top-tier ongoing research as well as carry a heavy class load and connect with each student, but BYU does—and it’s not easy. However, for Cindy Blair, her students are what make all the hard work worth it. “BYU professors are deeply invested in the success of our students,” Blair says. “We genuinely love our students and want them to do well.”

Blair believes in preparing her students with real-world application, so she strives to apply her experience in global supply chain to teaching her students information she wishes she had known while working in the industry. Her favorite part of teaching is hearing her students tell her that they are applying things they learned in her class to their careers. “That’s the real payoff,” she says.

Blair wasn’t always sure she wanted to teach, and her life has not gone the way she thought it would. However, she believes it’s gone according to God’s plan for her. When life is uncertain, Blair asks, “What’s next?” and keeps moving forward. This mentality has shaped the course of her career and continues to inspire her teaching and research at BYU.

Blair received her undergraduate degree in accounting from BYU in 1989 and then served a mission to Argentina for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When she returned, she decided to go back to school for her MBA, which launched her into a career in purchasing at Intel. After eight years there, she felt the need to return to school to get her PhD, which she received from Arizona State University. “I got my PhD at age forty, which is kind of late, but you never know what life will bring,” Blair says. “Even though it wasn’t typical, it was right for me.”

From there she came to BYU, where she has been teaching ever since. “It was never the plan, but I just kept asking myself—and God—what’s next?”

Blair’s current “what’s next” is her research. She is now working with her colleagues to connect impoverished countries with valuable materials to the global supply chain. Countries that don’t know the value of their resources often sell those resources cheaply to businesses already connected to the supply chain. Blair wants to help people in this situation elevate themselves by cutting out the middleman and connecting directly to the chain. “I always wanted to get involved in humanitarian work after I retired,” she says. “But then I realized there is something I could be doing now.”

Blair shares her interest in other parts of global supply chain with her students on the annual GSCM study abroad. The trip takes them to visit every step of a supply chain in Asia, which helps the students gain a better idea of the types of people they will be interacting with in the field.

“Our students in global supply chain management come to us already with a love for people beyond our borders. They embrace differences in other cultures, and that makes them easy to place,” Blair says. “You’re getting this mature, well-educated, well-qualified student.”
Advancing Eternal Learning

While pursuing a master’s of accountancy at BYU, Michael Drake worked as a teaching assistant for well-known accounting professor Norm Nemrow. Although the opportunity may have seemed ordinary to some, the experience proved to have a profound impact on Drake’s future.

One of Drake’s responsibilities was to hold review sessions, where he taught large groups of students. Drake quickly began to discover that these teaching experiences were having a significant influence on his life goals. “The natural ‘buzz’ I experienced after each of these sessions was clear,” Drake says. “This is when I set my sights on a PhD and life as a professor.”

After graduating from BYU with his master’s degree in 2003, Drake focused on acquiring valuable experience. He worked in public accounting at Arthur Andersen and EY before heading to Texas A&M to earn a PhD. Drake then took a faculty job at the Ohio State University, working in the Fisher College of Business for two years.


Drake is now an associate professor and a distinguished PwC Fellow in the School of Accountancy at BYU Marriott. He teaches MBA 501, Corporate Financial Reporting, and MBA 527, Financial Statement Analysis. His efforts in the classroom and in research led him to receive the BYU Young Scholar Award in 2016 as well as the MBA Core Professor of the Year Award in 2017 and 2018.

One of Drake’s favorite aspects of teaching is interacting with the many students who have a desire to learn. “The students at BYU inspire me,” he says. “I leave each class session in awe of their potential.”

When he is not teaching, Drake is actively engaged in research that explores the role of information in capital markets. His current projects examine the information-gathering activities of different types of investors and how those activities influence their trading decisions.

One of his most interesting papers examines market activity during the NCAA basketball tournament March Madness. The paper, titled “March Market Madness: The Impact of Value-Irrelevant Events on the Market Pricing of Earnings News,” illustrates just how far-reaching the tournament’s distracting effect actually is. What Drake and his fellow researchers discovered is that trading volume significantly drops and market reaction to news announced is muted during the games. “Our evidence suggests that markets are distracted by the tournament just like people are,” he says.

The ability to be involved in notable research is just one of the many advantages Drake appreciates at BYU Marriott. “To succeed in this profession, you need time and resources,” Drake says. “BYU Marriott provides me with both, which allows me to engage in the two professional activities I love most: researching and teaching.”

Figuring Out What Fits

A section of Kristen DeTienne’s office features letters, notes, and emails from previous students expressing their thanks and mentioning how their instruction in the classroom prepared them well for their future endeavors. She saves them.

“At BYU, our students are quick to appreciate,” says DeTienne, a professor of management. The BYU Marriott mission of BYU and BYU Marriott are what attracted her back to campus. “To teach what I love in the light of the gospel I love is the dream.”

DeTienne has always been interested in research and for continuing her education, she looked for creative ways to balance her family and career. She decided to pursue a PhD and to attend the University of Southern California. The school hired her to teach classes and agreed to cover the cost of tuition while she conducted her research.

While working her way through school, DeTienne also got married. Though she had a lot to balance, her passion for learning and her colleagues have positively impacted her life.

Another thing DeTienne admires about BYU is the work ethic exhibited by the many students she has taught through the years. “Many of them are trying to raise a family and even work while attending school at the same time,” she says. “I can relate to many of the challenges our students face.”

DeTienne grew up in Southern California and worked multiple jobs to pay for her education at California State University, Long Beach, becoming the first person in her family to graduate with a bachelor’s degree. As a young student, DeTienne found herself wondering why people—especially leaders—behave the way they do. Her decision to study management and behavioral patterns in the workplace seemed like a natural result of those ponderings.

During her undergraduate program, one of her professors approached her about pursuing a PhD. DeTienne wanted to continue her education, but it was simply too expensive, she told him. The professor explained that DeTienne could channel her passion for research and teaching into a way to pay for her education. Following his advice, she decided to pursue a PhD and to attend the University of Southern California.

For DeTienne, research and helping people in her field are lifelong passions that have aided her personal journey to success. She continues to conduct research about negotiation and behavior in the workplace and often finds examples around her. While she didn’t expect to be a professor, she loves teaching at BYU Marriott.

“You have to figure out what fits you and what will make you happy,” DeTienne says.
Steve Van Wagenen’s creativity and innovation—traits strengthened by his experience at BYU Marriott—enabled him to turn time spent with his sons building LEGO models into a rewarding side gig. And the rewards aren’t just financial. Van Wagenen says the most important benefits can’t be quantified. Read more about Van Wagenen’s LEGO ventures on page 34.
Alumni Report

Where BYU Marriott MBA alumni reside

BYU Marriott alumni at a glance

- 8,195 total alumni (as of January 2018)
- First class graduated in 1963 with 15 students (nine still living)
- First EMBA class graduated in 1986
- 14 MBA directors (Grant McQueen is no. 14)

Alumni by degree

- 71% MBA
- 22% EMBA
- 7% MGB

Moved by a Time-Out

The week before she started college, Sarah Waters made what seemed to be an inconsequential decision when she accepted a part-time marketing position with the Utah Grizzlies minor-league hockey team. But the decision had a significant impact on her future. “That job was the starting point of a decade-long career in professional sports,” Waters says.

Over the next ten years, Waters worked in various sports sponsorship and marketing roles. Her responsibilities included time in professional basketball with the Los Angeles Clippers and the New Orleans Hornets and a trip to Sydney for the 2000 Summer Olympic Games. “I had many amazing experiences,” Waters says. “Two of my most memorable are watching the Olympic opening and closing ceremonies in person and standing on the floor of an NBA arena watching twenty thousand fans go crazy over what I spent my days working on.”

While Waters enjoyed her routine and found great satisfaction in her work, life ultimately took her in a different direction. After ten rewarding but grueling years in the sporting world, Waters made the difficult decision to take a time-out. She returned home to Utah to reflect on what she wanted to do next from both a work and a life perspective.

“I started looking at opportunities in Salt Lake City and happened to find a posting for a position with Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals,” Waters says. “The job spoke to my skill set and what I had been doing in sports. I thought testing out my skills in a completely new industry would be interesting, and working for a cause would have a nice reward to it.”

When she was offered the job, Waters decided she was ready to make the move from sports sponsorship to nonprofit. Little did she know that the career pivot would stick. “My intention was to spend a couple of years expanding my experience and then move on,” Waters says. “That was eleven years ago, and I’m still here. Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals has given me so many opportunities to develop as a professional. That’s what has kept me here.”

Life has had many other fulfilling moments for Waters. During her time with Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals, she has helped raise more than $3 billion. This accomplishment and others were a large part of the reason she was included on Utah Business magazine’s “30 Women to Watch” list in 2011 and its “Forty Under 40” list in 2018.

In addition to these achievements, Waters received her bachelor’s degree in business administration from Golden Gate University in 2005 and her MBA from BYU Marriott in 2016, both while working full-time. She considers earning these degrees her proudest accomplishment.

“Getting my MBA deepened my business knowledge bench considerably,” Waters says. “Those learnings directly apply to the work that I am doing, and I have been able to bring that experience into my job and lean on it as I navigate my role and am able to bring more value to my company and the mission that we have.”
The Wonders of Learning

Growing up in the slums of Hong Kong, BYU Marriott alum Cecilia Yiu and her sister, Alice, were the first in their family to attend college—thanks in large part to their parents, who emphasized the importance of education and provided their daughters with the best education they could afford. Yiu now hopes to encourage children to pursue learning through her startup business, Discover Wonders.

Discover Wonders was inspired by Yiu’s own daughters, ages five and two, who constantly ask questions as they explore the world around them. Through Discover Wonders, Yiu wants to fuel that natural curiosity and empower her daughters and other children to learn at their own pace. Yiu has created a series of books about everyday objects, such as water, toothbrushes, and balloons. Through the books, children learn about the history and science behind different topics.

The book series comes with the Discover Talking Pen, an audio device to assist children through their learning process. Children can point the pen at the page and hear text, sound effects, and dialogue. Each book comes with more than three hundred audio hotspots so that children can learn the material without being limited by reading ability or parental availability. Parents can record their own voices for an added personal touch.

Yiu began working on Discover Wonders a year ago and launched a Kickstarter campaign early in 2018 that earned more than $32,000.

“We can’t wait to see people’s faces when they open the books for the first time,” Yiu says. “So far, every parent and child who has seen the prototype has been completely impressed.”

The world of entrepreneurship is a new adventure for Yiu, who worked as a market researcher for companies in Hong Kong and as a management consultant for PricewaterhouseCoopers in Dallas.

“Working on a startup means I have no branding behind me—it is just me and my product,” Yiu says. “It takes a lot of soul-searching to figure out how to help others understand what I’m trying to do. I’m challenged every single day.”

Each of Yiu’s professional positions can be traced back to her own educational experiences. She graduated with a BS in psychology from BYU-Hawaii in 2006 and an MBA from BYU Marriott in 2012. While at BYU, Yiu took every opportunity to be involved. She served as vice president of the MBA Strategy and Consulting Club and participated in various business competitions, including the Wake Forest University Marketing Summit case competition and BYU Marriott’s Miller Business Model Competition. For her achievements, Yiu was selected as both a Wake Forest University Marketing Scholar and BYU Marriott’s Miller Business Model Competition. In recognition of her efforts, Yiu was selected as both a Wake Forest University Marketing Scholar and BYU Marriott’s Miller Business Model Competition. In recognition of her efforts, Yiu was selected as both a Wake Forest University Marketing Scholar and BYU Marriott’s Miller Business Model Competition.

When she was just five years old, Yiu’s great-grandfather, an engineer, would point to different objects in her house and ask her what they were. “When I was considering the different schools that I could attend, BYU stood out in different ways,” says Yiu. “It took a lot of soul-searching to figure out how to help others understand what I’m trying to do. I’m challenged every single day.”

From Race Cars to Chatbooks

Dan Jimenez didn’t originally plan to get an MBA from BYU Marriott, but his choice to do so launched him in an unexpected career and helped him develop the skills needed to raise more than $20 million in venture capital in the first year of Chatbooks, a mobile app that creates photo books from your digital photos.

Since Jimenez was a young boy growing up in Alpine, Utah, he dreamed of working with race cars. That dream led him to study and graduate in mechanical engineering from BYU in 2011 and then find a job in the industry he’d always wanted to work in.

After graduation, Jimenez moved to South Carolina and worked for Ford designing, testing, and racing cars. He excelled in his work and was part of a team that won the Daytona 500. However, over the course of his time in the fast-paced world of racing, his vision for his future began to shift. He realized he had an acute interest in creating and growing his own business. To do that, he decided he needed to go back to school.

“When I was considering the different schools that I could attend, BYU stood out in different ways,” says Jimenez. “I returned to BYU and earned my MBA in 2015.”

Jimenez noticed a difference in himself from the beginning of the program to the end. And he wasn’t the only one; his wife, Adrienne, saw a change in him as well. Throughout the program and as president of the MBA Strategy and Consulting Club, Jimenez became responsible for and shaped the Chatbooks story to fit that. “I think I had every possible opportunity afforded me because of BYU Marriott and its brand and reputation,” he concludes.

As he was getting close to graduation, Jimenez was introduced to a local startup company called Chatbooks. After working for a couple weeks as a contractor, he decided he wanted to stay on long term. Because the company was less than a year old, the founders were primarily focused on marketing and product development. Jimenez became responsible for everything else: finance, operations, legal, and HR. “I loved the vibe of a younger company and the idea that I could come in and make a difference,” he says. “There were no limitations to what we could try.”

Jimenez brought a cool head and insight to the team at a time they needed it. He successfully led the raising of more than $30 million in venture capital, displaying a deep maturity by learning what investors were looking for and shaping the Chatbooks story to fit that.

Now Chatbooks COO, Jimenez is excited to see what the future brings. And he can’t help but remember the initial journey that brought him to Chatbooks. “I think I had every possible opportunity afforded me because of BYU Marriott and its brand and reputation,” he concludes.

The experience that gave him an intense belief in the possible—and the insight to achieve it. After graduation, Jimenez moved to South Carolina and worked for Ford designing, testing, and racing cars. He excelled in his work and was part of a team that won the Daytona 500. However, over the course of his time in the fast-paced world of racing, his vision for his future began to shift. He realized he had an acute interest in creating and growing his own business. To do that, he decided he needed to go back to school.

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Jimenez noticed a difference in himself from the beginning of the program to the end. And he wasn’t the only one; his wife, Adrienne, saw a change in him as well. Throughout the program and as president of the MBA Strategy and Consulting Club, he gained skills in strategy, consulting, finance, and operations, and his experience at BYU Marriott instilled a confidence that gave him an intense belief in the possible—and the insight to achieve it.

“I started the program as an engineer, and I was pretty introverted,” he says. “BYU Marriott taught me how to open up, how to be more outgoing, and how to get to know people.” He also learned how to take his skills of innovation—which he developed in the race car industry—and apply them to business.
When Class Notes Pay Off

While many students are tempted to toss away class notes at the end of a school year, BYU MBA alumn Jason Barron kept his and is actually making a profit from them.

Earlier in his education, Barron had begun taking notes in a different way. Instead of frantically writing lecture notes, he drew key concepts during class, a form of note-taking he calls “sketchnoting.” Barron first heard about sketchnoting from a work friend, and when he tried it out, he noticed his ability to remember the information was better. He decided to pursue the notetaking art by practicing and even attending conferences that taught the skill. When he started the MBA program, Barron decided to further apply the acquired technique.

“I was pursuing an MBA and realized that, as far as I knew, no one had tried sketchnoting an entire MBA class,” Barron says. “I thought it was worth trying.”

After receiving positive feedback from family members and classmates, Barron decided to compile his visual notes into a book, The Visual MBA, which he completed in fall 2017 after graduating from BYU. Barron planned to create the book for fellow classmates and the incoming MBA class at the time. To cover editing and printing costs, he started a Kickstarter campaign requesting $7,000.

In twenty-eight days, the campaign raised more than $70,000, with donations from about forty countries. Initially nervous about how the book would be received, Barron has been amazed at the responses from readers around the world. “My kids got to see this book going to Japan and Saudi Arabia,” Barron says. “All the reviews that came back were positive. For me, that was super satisfying.”

After seeing the success of the book, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt contracted publishing rights for the highly visual volume, which is slated to be released in the United States this April. Other publishers abroad have also taken an interest in pursuing the rights to translate and publish the book.

Barron remembers a time when he felt like giving up on the project altogether. As a father of five, he had to balance time amid the MBA program, compiling the book, and caring for his family. “It was a big challenge,” Barron says. “More than once I thought, ‘I can’t accomplish this. No one will like it. It will be too much work.’” The reassuring words of his wife, Jackie, and a strong support system helped Barron push through moments of struggle and to complete the endeavor.

A creative mind-set and the knowledge he gained from the MBA program continue to help Barron’s career goals today. “I think the ability to think outside the box and do things differently is critical,” he says. Thinking creatively helped him as a founding partner of a startup and currently as senior project manager of user experience for the Publishing Services department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The lessons learned have also helped him in other aspects of his life. “This entire experience—earning my MBA and the process of publishing the book—has helped me in my Church calling and as a father,” says Barron. “I can think more broadly and find a better way to do things. The whole experience has been a huge blessing to me.”
F or BYU Marriott MBA alumn Steve Van Wagenen, teaching his children about the importance of self-reliance and resourcefulness involves LEGO blocks. Van Wagenen is the author and creator of Brick of Mormon Stories, a storybook that depicts scenes from the Book of Mormon in the form of LEGO toys. He has enlisted the help of all five of his children about the importance of Latter-day Saints. One son has now paid for his mission through the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A second son is preparing to attend medical school but reevaluated that decision after undergoing surgery. Instead, he chose a BYU undergraduate degree in media arts studies to diversify his business school application. But by the time he graduated with a BYU Marriott MBA in 2009, Coon worked as a media and entertainment account manager at Adobe, founded Jeremy Coon Productions, and executive produced an animated Napoleon Dynamite television series with FOX Television. He also produced several other award-winning films. Coon is currently the executive producer at the September Center, a successful documentary-editing company. Coon sits on the board of the Utah Film Center and enjoys pickleball, skiing, traveling, and spending time with his wife, Katharine, and their two-year-old son.

Van Wagenen learned skills that taught him the value of ingenuity and innovation. “Those skills have helped me immensely as I’ve worked on the creation of this book,” he says. Van Wagenen was first inspired by the idea for his book when he had a back injury that limited his mobility. While he couldn’t move much, one thing he could do was sit on the ground and play with his boys. They built numerous creations out of LEGO bricks, and Van Wagenen wanted to save the memories they’d made; instead, he took pictures, which sparked an idea. “I’d seen picture books telling stories from the Book of Mormon,” he says. “I thought I could do something similar using LEGOs.” Van Wagenen ran with the idea—although it didn’t turn out to be nearly as easy as he initially anticipated. “I discovered there was a lot more involved than just playing with LEGOs,” he observes. Once the models were built, the real work began. Creating a picture book requires photography, design, publishing, and print skills—all of which Van Wagenen lacked. Not one to be afraid of a challenge, Van Wagenen pursued self-publishing; he read books, watched videos, and learned through trial and error. He also involved his sons throughout the process, knowing it would be a great tool for teaching them at a young age the wisdom of saving and managing money wisely. In addition, the boys would be able to put the money they earned to good use—funding the production of Brick of Mormon Stories, for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. One son has now paid for his mission through funds from Brick of Mormon Stories, and a second son is preparing to serve. And Van Wagenen and his sons are now working on a second book that depicts scenes from Church history. “I like that we learned to do something we didn’t know how to do and that we have done it together,” Van Wagenen says. “And to have our testimonies strengthened while we were doing it was perhaps the greatest benefit.”

2009

Getting an MBA was always Jeremy Romney Coon’s goal, so he chose a BYU undergraduate degree in media arts studies to diversify his business school application. But by the time his independent film Napoleon Dynamite received overwhelming popular response upon its release in 2004, Coon’s career path had shifted. His business education would play a supporting rather than starring role. After graduating with a BYU Marriott MBA in 2009, Coon worked as a media and entertainment account manager at Adobe, founded Jeremy Coon Productions, and executive produced an animated Napoleon Dynamite television series with FOX Television. He also produced several other award-winning films. Coon is currently the executive producer at the September Center, a successful documentary-editing company. Coon sits on the board of the Utah Film Center and enjoys pickleball, skiing, traveling, and spending time with his wife, Katharine, and their two-year-old son.

A fifty-minute train ride south from Milan will take you to the historic yet small town of Piacenza, Italy—the riverside hometown of BYU Marriott MBA alumn Andrea Cordani. While in Italy, Cordani received a master’s degree before moving more than five thousand miles away to Provo. The move, and the accessible professors and integrated classroom work, proved to be exactly what Cordani needed. The summer after his first year in the MBA program, Cordani interned for Apple then spent four weeks in Paraguay with the BYU Kennedy Center and Fundación Paraguaya. After graduation, Cordani took a job with Adobe and then with Amazon. Now Cordani and his family have returned to Italy, where he works as the Amazon Prime Italy and Spain leader. He enjoys traveling and spending time with his wife, Danielle, and their four children.

2013

In 2007, Austin Beckham graduated with a bachelor’s in neuroscience from BYU. He planned to attend medical school but reevaluated that decision after undergoing surgery. Instead, Beckham chose to study business. While in the MBA program, he interned at Domon and Mrs. Fields Famous Brands, gaining experience as a business-intelligence analyst and brand manager. He graduated in 2009 and stayed in Provo to work for health company BPX Innovations. Beckham then worked in marketing at Symantec before taking his current job at Cisco. He started as a project manager before being promoted to offer-strategy manager in 2018. He hopes to one day start his own business involving machine learning, artificial intelligence, and SaaS. Beckham and his wife, Katie, have two young children and live in Lindon, Utah.

Sarah Adams Mitchell chose to study marketing because of the way it “perfectly blended creativity and analysis.” She earned her BS in management with an emphasis in marketing from BYU Marriott in 2006. Following graduation, Mitchell served an eighteen-month mission in Germany and Austria. Upon her return, she took a job as a marketing manager for Mortgage Compliance Advisors in Salt Lake City. After almost three years with the company, she decided to return to school. Mitchell graduated with her MBA from BYU Marriott in 2013 and landed her dream job as the marketing manager at Harmon’s Grocery. For four years she oversaw the grocer’s strategy and content creation. She recently transitioned to life as a stay-at-home mom to her baby girl. Mitchell and her husband, Jeff, are raising their daughter in Salt Lake City.
Started two years ago, the BYU Marriott MBA annual alumni conference provides an ideal opportunity for alums to catch up with their classmates, network with other BYU Marriott colleagues, and stay connected with their alma mater. Attendance more than doubled this year, as grads enjoyed an agenda packed with inspiring keynote speakers, informative classes, and great food. The class reunion is only one of many events the MBA program hosts to serve its alumni. Read more about those events on page 39.
For the alumni conference, alumni are invited to attend every five years “so there is a dynamic mix of individuals attending the conference,” Jungheim explains. “It’s held during Homecoming week, which is an ideal backdrop for our alumni to reconnect with their classmates as well as network with peers working around the world in many different organizations.”

The half-day event includes a networking dinner, a keynote speaker, a variety of lectures, MBA swag, and an opportunity for each class to reconnect.

The MBA program also sponsored two tech networking trips: one to Seattle and one to San Francisco. “Our alumni are crucial to the success of our tech networking trips,” Jungheim says. “In Seattle, we visited Nike, Intel, Amazon, Microsoft, and T-Mobile. Our career services team worked closely with alumni contacts, who set up those meetings and arranged for panel discussions, tours, mixers, pizza parties, and all sorts of different things to introduce our students to their company and introduce company reps to our students.”

Being part of these tech networking trips is something that Jacob Morris looks forward to. A 2015 MBA grad, Morris took a job with Intel after he graduated because of his own tech networking experience. “I was deciding between a few different internship offers,” he says. “So coming to Intel personally to see...
the campus and talk with employees helped solidify that I wanted to come here for my internship, which then led to my employment. I choose to help host these trips because I have gone on the trips myself and recognize the benefit, and I want to return the favor and help other students in the same way I was helped.”

Tyler Nebeker, a 2016 MBA grad, organized the half-day tech visit to Microsoft and feels the same way. “I absolutely came away from my tech trek with a better feel for the companies we visited,” he says. “In some cases, it confirmed my interest level in the company—for better or worse. Everyone interested in the tech world should go on at least one tech trek.”

Finally, the MBA program held more than fifty information sessions on campus, at the BYU Salt Lake Center, and across the country. These sessions offer a face-to-face opportunity for potential students to chat with alumni, current students, and program officials. MBA alumni play crucial roles in these events as they connect and share their experiences with current and potential students. “Having our alumni at these sessions always provides interested individuals with an important perspective,” says Jungheim. “They bring credibility as they talk about how important the program has been in their careers, and how much they learned from and enjoyed their experience at BYU Marriott. Hearing that directly from alumni is more powerful than hearing us talk about how great the program is.”

Whether attending Career Boost, reunions, trips, or recruiting events, MBA alumni are connecting and networking in ways that make their time spent in the Tanner Building even more rewarding. “I talk with my work peers for weeks about what I learn at these events,” Rodriguez observes. “They are a big value-add of being a BYU Marriott alum. These events remind me that my school still cares for me.”

Have you
MARCH-D Forth?

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