Gerdin Business Building expansion is open!

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ON THE COVER:
CLAIRE ROGOWSKI (SENIOR, ACCOUNTING)
Dear Alumni and Friends,

By the time Prospects magazine is published and reaches you, we will have passed the one-year mark of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Since last March, we’ve all had to adapt to conducting business virtually. When we are together, we wear masks, stand six feet apart, and use hand sanitizer by the bucket. Students, faculty, and staff all became experts at scheduling and attending virtual meetings. At Iowa State University, we didn’t tailgate outside of Jack Trice Stadium this year, even though this would have been the best season to be together for Cyclone football games! It’s been a difficult time for all of us, as we do our part to control the spread of COVID-19. Some in our community have contracted the virus. Some of you may have lost a friend or family member due to COVID-19. We are so sorry for your loss.

Throughout these days of adversity, the work of the college continues. We are preparing Ivy students to be the next generation of business leaders, ready to take on big challenges in a world full of constant change. When our students returned on January 25, after a two-month winter break, they were excited to return to the fully operational Gerdin Business Building, which has been undergoing a 45,000-square-foot expansion. Please enjoy our review of the process, and the photos of this exciting journey, in our cover story on pages 4–7.

Good news continues at Ivy. Over the last seven years during the Iowa State capital campaign (fall 2012–fall 2020), our college enrollment grew 34 percent, despite enrollment declines in many other schools. When I reflect on how that could be, some key points come to mind. In 2017, we gratefully accepted a $50 million naming gift from alumnus Jerry Ivy ('53 industrial administration) and his wife, Debbie. That helped us invest strategically in key areas. Also, our rankings have been rising for years. We just achieved our highest undergraduate national ranking in college history with the 2021 U.S. News & World Report rankings. We continuously assess and add new academic programs that benefit students and their future employers.

In this issue, we highlight several of those areas, plus record enrollment in our full-time MBA program (page 26), the #11 ranking for undergraduate entrepreneurship programs (pages 8–9), and our part-time MBA program being voted Best MBA Program in Des Moines for the third year in a row. As you can see, we are a college on the move.

I hope you can visit campus to see the beautiful Gerdin Business Building expansion in person when it is safe for in-person visits. I hope you, your family, and colleagues are healthy and well.

Go Cyclones!

David P. Spalding
Raisbeck Endowed Dean
Debbie and Jerry Ivy College of Business
Interim Vice President
Economic Development and Industry Relations
Student excitement was visible. “Oh my gosh, I love the team rooms!”

That was a repeated comment as Ivy College of Business students toured the new Gerdin Business Building expansion for the first time in November 2020.

“The new expansion to Gerdin has brought more excitement for the upcoming semester,” said Multicultural Business Network President Vianka Damas Rosales. “The amount of space provided for students will bring Ivy students together. I am looking forward to studying and making use of the great space that is being provided to us.”

Corey Wagner (’20 management) immediate past president of Ivy Student Council, expressed his excitement before graduating in the fall. “I can’t think of a better way that they could have designed the expansion,” Wagner said. “There is a very clear student focus, with new spaces designed to help our students develop themselves into business professionals.”

The much-needed expansion to the Gerdin Business Building is now complete. Construction on the 45,000-square-foot addition started in February 2019 and concluded in November 2020. Classes are now being held in the new space.
THE SPACE

The $28 million, four-story addition was designed with students in mind. It includes 40 percent more space with a central common area that will be available as a student study space, a state-of-the-art sales suite, 35 faculty office spaces, and five additional classrooms. Seven team rooms on the first and second floors are dedicated for student work and contain movable furniture as well as a suite of technology.

BRINGING IT TO LIFE

The expansion was made possible thanks to a $7 million commitment from the Gerdin Charitable Foundation, as well as other generous donors. BNIM of Des Moines, Iowa, and Story Construction of Ames, Iowa, were the design-build team for the addition, which was constructed on the east side of the Gerdin Business Building, facing Wallace Road.

CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION

A small, physically distanced Gerdin Business Building expansion celebration was held November 13, 2020. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in the new Kingland Hub, a central common area for student study space and college events. Special guests included Iowa State University President Wendy Wintersteen, Raisbeck Endowed Dean David Spalding, Iowa State Foundation CEO Larissa Holtmyer Jones, and several members of the Gerdin family.

“Today’s dedication of the Gerdin Business Building expansion holds an extra special place in our hearts because it’s truly a family affair,” Wintersteen said at the ceremony. “The Gerdin family has demonstrated time and again that they are loyal and forever true to Iowa State University. Their initial support to build this facility helped usher in a new era for the Ivy College of Business. And now, with this expansion, we are raising the level of excellence once again for business education at Iowa State.”
The Houston Professional Sales Suite was dedicated during a small ceremony November 20, 2020, and included Dan and Joanie Houston, Iowa State University President Wendy Wintersteen, her husband Robert Waggoner, and Raisbeck Endowed Dean David Spalding.

Sales is at the heart of most business enterprises, which is why a dedicated space for the new sales program was included in the plans.

Named after Ivy alumnus Dan Houston (’84 marketing), chairman, president, and CEO of Principal Financial Group, and his wife, Joanie (’83 physical education), the Houston Professional Sales Suite is the new home of the Ivy sales program.

The sales program prepares undergraduate students so they are ready for a career in sales as soon as they graduate. “Creating a new sales program for students is an example of how we are setting our students up for success,” Spalding said. “We already have real strength in this area and we are building on it. This is a unique program in Iowa, and we expect it to be the best in the Midwest.”

The Ivy sales program, part of the Department of Marketing, fills a need as demand for sales in marketing classes has grown over the years. Having a dedicated suite allows space for sales education and real-life practice. Students will walk in and greet someone at a front desk as if they are coming in for an actual client meeting. They will meet with an industry representative and make their sales pitch. Students will be recorded so their work can be reviewed and critiqued later.

PICTURED (ABOVE)

[Left to right:] Dean’s Fellow in Marketing Raj Agnihotri, Joanie Houston (’83 physical education), Dan Houston (’84 marketing), Iowa State University President Wendy Wintersteen, and Raisbeck Endowed Dean David Spalding
Iowa State University Student Innovation Center

Top: HNI CyBiz Lab and Entrepreneurial Suite in the Student Innovation Center, a space for hosting entrepreneurial programs year-round

Middle: Lauren Gifford ('19 marketing) paints a mural in the new space

Bottom: Judi Eyles, director of the Pappajohn Center for Entrepreneurship, with Megan Sweere, program assistant
When the results of The Princeton Review’s 15th annual survey naming the top undergraduate schools for entrepreneurship studies were announced in November 2020, Iowa State University came in at #11 in the nation. That was a massive jump from #26 last year and marked the highest ranking in university records.

Based on data the education services company collected from its summer 2020 survey of more than 300 schools with offerings in entrepreneurship studies, The Princeton Review’s ranking lists for 2021 name 50 undergraduate and 50 graduate schools as outstanding choices for students aspiring to become entrepreneurs.

The accomplishment hit close to home at the Ivy College of Business.

“Entrepreneurship has been a theme at Iowa State for more than 20 years with much of it revolving around programs offered through the Pappajohn Center for Entrepreneurship, which is part of the Ivy College of Business,” said Raisbeck Endowed Dean David Spalding.

The Ivy College of Business launched an undergraduate major in entrepreneurship in fall 2017 to serve those who have a passion for entrepreneurship. “Small businesses are the engine of our economy and we are doing all we can to support those efforts,” Spalding said.

The college also launched a PhD program in entrepreneurship in 2017, which was only the eighth in the country at the time. The university also offers a minor in entrepreneurship, which is open to all Iowa State students.

“Our improved ranking is a testament to the dedication and talent of Ivy and Iowa State faculty and staff, who continue to offer high quality academic programs for our students,” Spalding said.

“When you look at the many new programs we recently launched to meet the needs of our students, their future employers, and entrepreneurs who strive to start their own business, and also at our improved rankings over the past six years, you will understand why we are known as a college on the move.”

The Pappajohn Center for Entrepreneurship offers innovative programs, such as CYstarters, CyBIZ Lab, and the Startup Factory to connect students, community entrepreneurs, business professionals, and alumni.

“Hands-on learning opportunities are key to the entrepreneurship learning experience,” said Judi Eyles, director of the Pappajohn Center. “By embedding innovation and entrepreneurship more deeply into its culture and curriculum, Iowa State is creating a unique pathway for its students to change the world.”

The Princeton Review annually ranks programs based on several factors including experiential learning opportunities and career outcomes.
Three Iowa State University alumni reacted to the global pandemic by starting a business that would lift the spirits of people who felt lonely and isolated from their friends and family. It was off to a great start. However.

There’s always a however, right? In typical COVID-19 fashion, it all changed suddenly and came to an abrupt end, just as this magazine was about to go to the printer. This story originally started like this:

Talking with Susan Wilson (’78 industrial administration), her husband, and her twin sister is like sitting at the kitchen table having coffee with old friends. That’s why it’s so fitting that she created a new company during COVID-19 that spreads those same feelings of friendship.

From their home in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Susan and her husband, Tom (’78 journalism and mass communication), and Susan’s twin sister, Nancy (Stoner) Wellinger (’79 English), who lives in Detroit, Michigan, created Notes to Brighten. It’s a monthly subscription service that mails seasonal cards to aging relatives or friends. Each card includes a chosen message from the sender.

As COVID-19 spread broadly in March 2020, Susan explained, she learned they could no longer visit her father at his assisted living facility in Minneapolis. “It really made me sad because he was such a social guy. We did get to have Zoom meetings with him once a week, but that wasn’t as much as we were used to with in-person visits.”

She knew from past visits how much her father enjoyed receiving mail, “even if it was junk mail,” she said. He treasured old Christmas cards and enjoyed the sentiment that arrived with each card. She wanted to do something.

Working together, yet remotely, they created the company with one purpose — to mail personalized cards every week to brighten the spirits of isolated seniors. They were aware of a recent Washington Post article citing studies that link regular correspondence to lowering depression.

“Aging seniors love getting mail. They look forward to getting our cards every week,” Susan Wilson said. “These are so much more than cards. They’re reminders that someone is thinking about them, that they’re loved. And even though the majority of our subscribers are age 50 or older, I’m surprised how many millennials we have as clients. They miss their grandparents, so this really is for anyone.”

The rewards of this new endeavor impact them all.

“Sadly, our father died in June so he never got to receive our cards,” Susan said. “But just knowing we are sending a little joy and brightening someone’s day, just makes me so excited about this.”

Unfortunately, the trio lost a significant revenue stream and closed Notes to Brighten in February. Their experience is not unique. According to Entrepreneur magazine, 90 percent of startups fail.

“Making a big splash on a limited budget is tricky for a startup,” Susan Wilson said. “The fight for eyeballs — through social media, advertising, public relations, online influencers — is fierce. It’s time-consuming and expensive when no one knows who you are, and in our case, involve a new type of subscription model. Launching during a pandemic when millions of Americans lost their jobs and had to tighten their belts proved challenging. We also pinned some hopes to working with senior care communities, only to find they were too mired in the tactical and financial burdens of protecting their patients from COVID.”

Since this was their career focus, their future plans are unknown.

“We’re not sure what’s next professionally, but in the near term, we’re excited about spending more time with our children and grandchildren. We loved marketing to seniors, but there’s nothing more joyous than babies,” Wilson said.

Even though the business ended, and even though they are in good company with other entrepreneurs, there are lessons to be learned.

“Starting a new business is tireless work, but it’s also very exhilarating, especially when you get to work with family members.” Wilson said. “We learned that it takes so much more work and a lot more money than we had originally thought. Technology provides powerful marketing tools, but the learning curves are steep. No matter where your efforts take you, enjoy the journey and soak up every insight you can along the way.”
AN ENTREPRENEURIAL TEAM OF SEASONED PROFESSIONALS

Tom Wilson is a 30-year veteran account director at Minneapolis, Minnesota, marketing and advertising agencies.

Susan Wilson, his wife, is a serial entrepreneur who has started several businesses, including Baby Dabbers, Doggie Do Right, and Baguette Fresh. Her products have been sold in Target and other leading retailers.

Nancy Wellinger, Susan’s twin sister, has more than 30 years of experience as a creative director at advertising agencies in Detroit, Michigan. Before creating Notes to Brighten, the sisters wrote copy for the Detroit-based card company, Avanti. “Because of that experience, the Notes to Brighten venture was a very easy transition for me,” Wellinger said.

Living in Detroit, Wellinger has a lot of experience writing about the auto industry. “After a while the writing becomes just another sheet-metal story. I liked it, but it grew tiresome. So here, I get to write about something we are all passionate about, which is the human connection. We think that is what we really do. We bring joy to people through cards.”
Seven members of the Ivy College of Business faculty were honored for their teaching innovation during the spring 2020 semester. The announcement was made in September.

In the midst of an unprecedented spring semester, and with only 10 days’ notice, Iowa State University faculty transitioned more than 6,000 courses to virtual instruction, ensuring students would maintain progress toward their degrees. In celebration of these efforts, the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost recognized 36 faculty with spring 2020 Teaching Innovation Awards, which included a one-time $1,000 award.

Funding for the program was provided by a generous (and anonymous) donor to support faculty excellence.

“We are proud to celebrate the unsung heroes among our faculty who made the spring semester a success,” said Dawn Bratsch-Prince, associate provost for faculty. “These individuals went above and beyond to serve our students, modifying their courses and pedagogy in novel ways and achieving strong course learning outcomes.”

Raisbeck Endowed Dean David Spalding echoed those comments.

“I was impressed with our faculty and their students, to suddenly make this historic transformation in less than two weeks,” Spalding said. “To do this with grace and ingenuity speaks to the high quality and talent among our faculty.”

I was impressed with our faculty and their students, to suddenly make this historic transformation in less than two weeks. To do this with grace and ingenuity speaks to the high quality and talent among our faculty.”

David Spalding
Raisbeck Endowed Dean
Ivy College of Business

**HONORED FACULTY**

- John Burnley, professor of practice, information systems and business analytics
- Christine Denison, associate professor, accounting
- Bruce Kraft, professor of practice, finance
- Tingting Liu, assistant professor, finance
- Abhay Mishra, associate professor, information systems and business analytics
- Beatriz Pereira, assistant professor, marketing
- Kayla Sander, teaching professor, accounting
At the Ivy College of Business, our staff are providing top-notch service to business students. That was confirmed when members of the staff in the Union Pacific Undergraduate Programs Office received an Exemplary Student Support Award.

One of 12 special COVID-19 Exceptional Effort Awards presented by the university, this award recognizes an individual or team that has demonstrated a resilient commitment to student life and success.

Under the leadership of Director Diann Burright, staff managed many aspects of the virtual transition that started in spring 2020, including proactively navigating a new online summer orientation, modifying processes to allow for quicker responses and individual attention to students, ramping up Business Learning Teams enrollment for fall to nearly 80 percent of incoming students, and more.

“I want to thank you for your leadership and outstanding commitment to Iowa State University during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic,” Iowa State University President Wendy Wintersteen wrote in a congratulations letter.

When asked about the award, Burright gave the credit to her staff, which includes 12 academic advisors.

“This is a wonderful recognition of our team’s work during such a challenging time for all of us,” Burright said.

“Our undergraduate programs office continues to offer outstanding support to our students and to the dean’s office. Diann Burright and her staff were exceptional partners in managing many aspects of the transition that started in spring 2020,” said Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Valentina Salotti, who supervises the department.

“For example, they advised our college leadership on how to implement numerous new policies and procedures that the university introduced in response to COVID-19. Thanks to their work, we continued to manage new student admissions and graduation with great efficiency.”

Ivy advisors have a relatively high advising load, well over 300 students per advisor, yet they continue to provide high-touch advising to all of our students. In acknowledgment of the accomplishment, the team will receive a $500 award to support a unit or team priority.

>> PICTURED (ABOVE)

Top: (taken January 2020, left to right) Diann Burright, Robert Musselman, Stephanie Larson, Cindy Steeby, Melody Schobert, Brenda Thors-Webb, Austin Haytko, Kelly Pistilli, Taylor Shine, Pat Oswald, John Wageman, Sarah Eastlund, Tara Fisher, Sarah Adams, and Shannon Grundmeier (not pictured): Michele Tapp, Katherine Clotey, Karen Huang, Kayla Hauser, and Kathy Weaver

Bottom: Academic Advisor Tara Fisher advises Ivy College of Business student organization leaders
Persistence and guidance from Ivy Business Career Services leads to success

STORY: MICHELE APPELGATE | PHOTO: DAN McCLANAHAN

Jasani Whitehead grew up in a poor household, with no access to technology outside of his school. His desire to have that access took him on an adventure that helped him attend college and secure an internship with Amazon, which would change his future.
“I came to Iowa State on a fluke,” said Whitehead, a senior in management information systems (MIS). “I actually didn’t plan on coming to college, but on the day of the application closing, I applied for a full-tuition scholarship, and I got it.”

He received the Multicultural Vision Program (MVP) Award, which is one of only 100 scholarships that cover full tuition to incoming first-year students who meet the requirements.

“That’s the reason I am here,” he said.

When he arrived on campus, he explored majors in engineering but realized that was not his passion. He wasn’t enjoying his classes, especially the amount of math required.

“I wasn’t doing super great, academically, so I just decided I was going to toss it in. My advisor, Jason Follett from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, suggested MIS. I’d always kind of leaned toward MIS just because I wanted to be on the business side of IT, but obviously, I wanted to be in a profession that would make the most money,” he laughed.

“When I switched to MIS, it just felt natural and I actually enjoyed going to my classes and learning what I was learning. It was stuff I felt passionate about. That was a good shift.”

As he was getting closer to his senior year, Whitehead created a LinkedIn profile. “Because you know, that’s what they tell you to do.”

Tanya Austin, assistant director of the Ivy College of Business Career Services office, worked with Whitehead to prepare for his job search, including encouragement to create a LinkedIn profile.

“I couldn’t be happier or prouder of Jasani,” she said. “He is a perfect example of how to plan and pursue career goals by leaning in and completing the necessary steps to make you marketable and competitive. Now, more than ever, with our changing landscape of recruiting, Business Career Services continues to provide a valuable role to students to successfully pursue career goals by offering current insights, strategies, and resources through individual coaching sessions, professional development programming, and class instruction to help students navigate what can feel like an overwhelming employment process.”

After updating his LinkedIn profile, Whitehead received an email from a recruiter at Amazon. “They suggested I apply for an internship. It was the first year they were offering an engineer internship for Amazon,” Whitehead said.

He applied but didn’t get his hopes up.

“I expected to hear crickets chirping, honestly,” he laughed.

The crickets did not chirp. He was contacted and invited to interview. He made it through three rounds of interviews with Amazon. After each interview, he wanted to get a feel for their interest. “I just wanted to get a vibe from them. I got nothing. I didn’t think they liked me. Then, I got a call with the offer and I was elated!”

He was hired for the internship at Amazon during summer 2020. He was supposed to move to Texas and begin his internship in person, but because of COVID, they transitioned it to be done online. He was grateful to have employment and get that internship.

For his internship project at Amazon, he drew on his passion working with underprivileged youth.

“I grew up in urban Des Moines before moving to Grundy Center. I lived in a very poor household. I didn’t have the opportunity to get, or even play with, the latest technology outside of what was at my school,” he said.

“Amazon has this program called Future Engineer. They asked us to take a current initiative or program at Amazon, then make an amendment, or submit an idea for a new one.”

Whitehead chose to amend one. “They had plans to amend their Future Engineer program, which provides free STEM [science, technology, engineering, and math] curriculum for students in grades K-12. Schools who take up the Amazon curriculum would be recognized for encouraging future engineers,” he said.

It’s a beneficial program, according to Whitehead.

“Amazon’s curriculum, can apply for a scholarship. It’s a $40,000 scholarship and a guaranteed Amazon internship for any student pursuing STEM as a career. That’s a huge opportunity,” Whitehead said.

The program is offered by a division of Amazon called Amazon Community.

Learning about this got Whitehead’s wheels turning. As an employee of the Apple Store Jordan Creek, Whitehead was familiar with a summer camp program offered by Apple. “It’s like day camp sessions. Kids come to the Apple Store for two-hour sessions and learn something great,” he said. “You give them the latest and greatest technology and you let them play with it. You give them an objective and you see how far they can go.”

As he was thinking about his Amazon internship project options, he came up with an idea.

“I thought Amazon could do the exact same thing and actually make a meaningful impact right there in a community,” Whitehead said. “Why don’t we have a representative from Amazon bring our latest tech into the community, call it Amazon in the Community? We could use bits and pieces of this accredited program that we already have, this curriculum, and teach it on a smaller scale. Get that exposure to students and youth who wouldn’t get it otherwise.”

At Amazon, “they ate it up,” Whitehead said. His internship experience had been an impressive one. “I just want to make a difference,” he said.

The experiences he had at Iowa State, including three years as a peer mentor, prepared Whitehead for this moment. “I want everybody to succeed, regardless of their background. I think that’s a really big thing. I just want to relay this message of lifting everybody up, lift as you climb, as they say.”

Whitehead, who plans to graduate in May, is also getting married in June. He has accepted employment at Kingland Systems as an infrastructure tech engineer.
A first for Iowa State

Relieving stress and opening minds during a historic winter session

Hitting the slopes and the books is what some students did over the first winter session. Ben Kaschmitter, a sophomore studying management information systems and international business from Littleton, Colorado, had an exciting break. Kaschmitter was enrolled in ACCT 285 to relieve some stress for upcoming semesters.

“I tried to hit the slopes skiing on every free day I had this winter break,” he said. “Like flying down the mountains, the course flew by as well because I was learning at a much faster pace. Having the course be accelerated three times as a regular school semester course was a lot of work. Taking a winter course allows my spring semester to open up more. I was going to take 18 credits this spring and now I can take 15 credits. Also, it opens up the opportunity to do more extracurriculars this semester to build my résumé,” said Kaschmitter.

More than 480 business students were enrolled in the first winter session offered at Iowa State University. With an extra-long winter break due to the pandemic, the addition of a five-week winter session gave students an option to stay busy during the break. The Ivy College of Business had the second-highest number of courses provided (12) out of all colleges to accommodate students’ needs.

Enrollment numbers for the winter session went above and beyond expectations for Raisbeck Endowed Dean David Spalding.

“This was a wonderful opportunity for students to stay busy during the winter break, get back on track, or get ahead. I’m so glad they responded to this in such a positive way,” he said.

Anne Clem, Elaine R. Everson Teaching Fellow and teaching professor of accounting, who taught ACCT 284, thinks the winter session was positive for students.

“I think it is a great thing for students to earn credits during this long break. Some days are harder than others during this global pandemic, but it feels nice to accomplish something with this class for the students and myself with this winter session. Overall, it has been a great time with them,” she said.

Students took winter session courses for many reasons, ranging from relieving stress for upcoming semesters, to getting ahead on graduation requirements, or preparing for a future internship or career. Overall, the winter session attracted about 2,300 students at Iowa State. Students chose from 52 courses.

The winter session was a lifesaver to many. Mike Cooper, a senior majoring in management information systems from Anamosa, Iowa, said the winter session courses benefit his future. “To graduate on time was a huge stress of mine last fall, and taking this winter course puts me on the right track again. I am working full time and taking the course ACCT 285, which seems like a lot, but works very well with my schedule. The course relates to real-world knowledge,” Cooper said.

Some Ivy students have already accepted an internship for summer 2021, like Hannah Pento, who will be an IT intern at 3M. Pento, a sophomore majoring in business analytics and management information systems from Barrington, Illinois, put many hours into her winter course but knows all the time will benefit her future.

“Before my first internship starts this summer, I wanted to get ahead and take classes that will pertain to my internship experience,” she said. “During an average week, I put in 25 hours a week studying, watching lectures, and working with my team on our project in MIS 320. Seeing a speedy outcome of my team project, which was building a company database, was so rewarding to see it go from nothing to being done in 25 days instead of 16 weeks of a regular semester. I also built many relationships with my professor and other students,” Pento said.

The winter session was beneficial to many faculty and students, keeping their minds engaged over the long break. ☺
days in the session that began December 16, 2020, and ended January 21, 2021

52 courses offered campus-wide, 12 by the Ivy College of Business

480 Ivy College of Business students enrolled in winter session courses
More than a supply chain scenario

Important lessons about daily impact

STORY: MICHELE APPLEGATE | PHOTOS: DAN McCLANAHAN
When Scott Grawe talks about the real-life impacts of the supply chain, people listen.

In November as the global pandemic holiday shopping season was about to begin, Grawe, chair of the Ivy College of Business Department of Supply Chain Management and an associate professor of supply chain management, addressed a timely issue in a news release published by the Ivy College of Business: some e-commerce experts predicted a “shipageddon” of delays and chaos for holiday shopping.

The news release captured the attention of many reporters and Grawe was quickly featured on TV and radio programs across Iowa.

“I explained to reporters the same thing I teach to my supply chain students. There were a lot of things at play here. Ever since the pandemic hit, we have had a significant imbalance in the supply chain,” Grawe said.

“If you think back to pre-pandemic times, and you step back and look at this not just from a bird’s-eye view, but from a truly global perspective, you see all of the movements of products. They’re going from raw materials to manufacturing sites, to ports, along the highways, to warehouses, to retail stores, to customers. That’s logistics at work – keeping all of the flows in balance.”

The supply chain is always in motion. A truck driver will arrive at a manufacturing facility, pick up a loaded trailer, take it to a warehouse, drop that trailer off, pick up another trailer, take it to a manufacturing facility, pick up a loaded trailer, take it to a retail store, drop it off, pick up an empty one, move it back so that everything’s always moving.

“When the pandemic started, things started to shut down. However, it didn’t all shut down at the same time. It came in waves,” Grawe said. “In China, where a lot of our products are manufactured, the manufacturing sites were shut down. People were not allowed to go to work. Nothing was being made in those factories. When nothing is being made, that means nothing is being shipped out of those factories and nothing’s being shipped into them. Everything else around the world continues to move, even though those places are shut down,” Grawe explained.

When they opened back up, they weren’t able to just pick up where they left off.

“They had back orders, because everybody else continued to place orders while factories were closed. Everything backed up in the system. As they came back to work and started to fill back orders, everything else had to catch up,” said Grawe.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a unique opportunity for Ivy students to learn about the real-life challenges faced by businesses around the globe.

“I never thought I’d be witnessing so many changes to the supply chain in such a short time,” said Cameron Hillsman, a supply chain major from West Des Moines, Iowa. “In class, we learn about just-in-time shipping and manufacturing, which assumes that parts will be available when you need them. Obviously, this is no longer the case. The COVID-19 pandemic is going to force us all to completely reevaluate how we understand and utilize global supply chains, and in the future, a supply chain management degree is going to be more important than ever.”

In addition to teaching those real-life scenarios in the classroom, Grawe and his family have experienced supply chain shortages firsthand.

His son suffered an injury during a football game last year, which required knee surgery and a special brace. When it was time to order the brace, Grawe was initially told to expect a four- or five-day delivery, with the brace coming from a warehouse in California. He soon received a notification saying the brace was on back order.

“I called the distributor where I placed my order and they said they had approximately 6,000 units on back order. My response was, wow, that’s a lot of units,” Grawe said.

The wait time was now about eight weeks.

“I can’t just go to another retailer to order that same brace because they’re all being manufactured from the same place in China,” Grawe said.

Another problem hampering supply chains has been the positioning of shipping containers.

“There are trailers and containers out of place because they didn’t have a chance to get back to where they started when people stopped shipping out of China,” Grawe said. “It’s not just about not having the right product available. In some cases, the problem is not having the trailer or the container available to put it in.”

Supply chains are back in motion again, but the cadence has certainly changed.

“Organizations remain committed to serving their customers as always, but they can’t accomplish this alone,” Grawe said. “They will continue to work with their partners in the supply chain to get products to consumers when they are needed. One of the great aspects of being a part of the Ivy College of Business is that we have great partners who are not only making this happen in the marketplace, but they will also carve out time to meet with students to explain how they do it and get them excited about stepping in to make an impact upon graduation.”

PICTURED (LEFT)
Scott Grawe, chair of the Ivy College of Business Department of Supply Chain Management, with his son, Caleb

I never thought I’d be witnessing so many changes to the supply chain in such a short time.”

Cameron Hillsman
(senior, supply chain management)
West Des Moines, Iowa
A silver lining

STORY: MEREDITH FRANCOM | PHOTOS: SUBMITTED BY IVY STUDENTS

How the pandemic opened a door for Ivy students

Necessity is the mother of invention.

When COVID-19 changed the career development landscape, there was a real push in the Ivy College of Business to make sure students weren’t missing out.

“These students have lost some of the opportunities to network, and we really wanted to offer something that was non-credit, free, and fulfilled a student’s desire to add to their professional development toolbox,” said Wieland.

This program ticked all the boxes.

“We’ve constantly heard from our recruiting managers that they are looking for three skillsets: problem solving, communication, and leadership,” said Wei Zhang, Kingland Faculty Fellow in business analytics and co-director of the program. “These essential skills are important for our students’ future success. This series focused particularly on leadership skills by giving students first-hand access to key decision makers.”

The hope is that this seminar series will have a lasting impact beyond the pandemic.

We are grateful to our speakers,” said Zhang. “With their busy schedules, these leaders have spent a significant amount of time preparing lectures and teaching our students. This experience benefits our students professionally and personally. These leaders bring real-life experience. Throughout the lectures, the speakers talked about how to deal with adverse events and what to do when things don’t go your way. Many of them spoke about not only their successes, but their failures, and what they learned from them. All of them have huge hearts and give back to our community. Our students found them very inspiring.”

The program featured Iowa State University alumni who hold executive leadership positions, including:

- **Balan Nair** (’89 electrical engineering, ’94 MBA); president, CEO, and director of Liberty Latin America, who discussed leading through a setback or challenge

- **Dan Houston** (’84 marketing); chairman, president, and CEO of Principal Financial Group, who discussed the balance between proactive and aggressive leadership

- **Mike McBreen** (’88 chemical engineering), chief operating officer at Rad Power Bikes, who talked about failing forward

- **Ann Madden Rice** (’79 accounting), president of Abbott Northwestern Hospital and senior vice president of Allina Health System, who discussed leadership in healthcare in a pandemic

- **Michelle Book** (’83 accounting), president and CEO of the Food Bank of Iowa, who talked about leading through high change
All Ivy College of Business students were invited to apply for the leadership seminar. The pool of applicants was very competitive. In the end, 24 students were chosen for this unique experience. Here’s what some of them had to say.

**MICHELLE NGUYEN**  
**FUTURE BANKING MAVEN**  
**CAROL STREAM, ILLINOIS**

“I was really taken aback by the fact that these leaders are super relatable. It definitely opened my eyes to what it means to be a successful executive. Through this leadership seminar, I sat face-to-face with high-power executives, listening to their personal experiences. It was really impactful. I will use these lessons for the rest of my life by applying their advice in my academics, personal life, and career.”

**MACKENZIE RICE**  
**FUTURE ACTUARIAL WHIZ**  
**BETTENDORF, IOWA**

“When I heard about the Emerging Leaders program, I jumped right on board. I thought it would be a good way to learn about leadership in a way that could help me move forward in my career. The things I’ve learned will help me have a positive impact. This is especially important for women in a field that’s more male-dominated. The skills I learn now, I can easily put into effect after graduation.”

**EMILY MATULAC**  
**FUTURE C-SUITE EXECUTIVE**  
**AMES, IOWA**

“I was really inspired and motivated to make a change in my leadership style and outlook on life. Several of the executives said they lead by serving the people who work for them. It’s interesting to see how my perspective has changed.”

**DAVID PEÑA MEDINA**  
**FUTURE ACTUARY AT PRINCIPAL**  
**DES MOINES, IOWA**

“The seminar is a really good opportunity to have during the winter. When I saw that Dan Houston was going to be a part of the program, I was very intrigued to say the very least because I really want to work at Principal. I always had a stereotype in my head of what a CEO is like. I always thought the business world was very cutthroat, but these executives speak about the idea of empathy and making sure that people have what they need to be successful. They’re so freakin’ awesome!”

**MADISON BOEHLKE**  
**FUTURE MARKETING MASTER**  
**HUGO, MINNESOTA**

“In this program, I’m surrounded by students who have the same drive as I do — people who want the same success story. It’s driving all of us to do better. This program is a step up from anything I’ve done in the past. I even plan to contact my new network if things come up. I know there are people who will answer my questions. It’s really cool to be so connected.”
Meet the president

Claire Rogowski, president of Ivy Student Council 2020–21

HOMETOWN
Prospect Heights, Illinois

MAJORS
Accounting and finance

ANTICIPATED GRADUATION
May 2022
I have fallen in love with everyone and everything at Ivy. From the professors, administrators, and students, everyone values each other.”

Q Can you tell us about yourself and why you chose Iowa State University?

My family is from Iowa. From a young age, I knew I wanted to go out of state, and Iowa was like a second home. Touring Iowa State was a big beautiful campus, but it felt like a small school atmosphere. The Ivy College of Business had so much to offer me, and it was a college on the move, which I loved during my tour. It just seemed like the best fit for me and for my future.

Q What are you involved in at Iowa State?

Ivy Student Council and Beta Alpha Psi

Q Why did you choose business?

Everyone in my family has/had business careers, which made me want to explore business opportunities and strive to be a businesswoman. When I came to Iowa State, I was very excited to use the skills I already had and, most of all, grow in all aspects of business skills to be successful. Meeting people and knowing from a young age I wanted to be a business student has helped me flourish into the businesswoman I am today, laying a strong foundation for my future.

Q How would you describe your experience at the Ivy College of Business so far?

I have fallen in love with everyone and everything at Ivy. From the professors, administrators, and students, everyone values each other. Attending a school that makes you feel welcomed and appreciated makes going to school more comfortable and, most of all, students like myself are interested in what we are learning and doing. With my three years of experience, I am happy to say I have pursued the goals I would never have imagined would come true. Ivy has excellent resources so students can accomplish their goals. Overall, my experience has been world-class. Without going to this fantastic business school, I would have never taken the amazing classes, met phenomenal professors and students and, most importantly, never would have achieved the goals I have thus far.

Q Did anything surprise you about majoring in business or your specific major?

I honestly was surprised by how interested faculty and professors were for me to succeed in their course. Each professor I have had at Ivy has always wanted me to be the best. It is impressive how Ivy has a sense of community from professor to student relationship and how close my relationships with my professors have grown and still last even after taking their desired course.

Q What would you like people to know about the Ivy College of Business? Would you recommend it for future students?

I would like everyone to know that Ivy is a college on the move and growing at a rapid pace. They are offering many opportunities for students — from classes, clubs, and jobs. This is a college where you can attend and succeed. Ivy faculty want the best for their students and will make sure every student has a feel for the business field and possibly pursue a major at the college.

Q Is any one person having a significant impact on you while at the college?

Tara Fisher, an academic advisor, has impacted me the most as she is the advisor for Ivy Student Council. I joined Ivy Student Council during the second semester of my freshman year, which has influenced me ever since. She always encourages all members to be involved, to go outside their comfort zone. I give her all the credit for being elected for my presidency position and encouraging me to strive to be the best in this role.

Q How did you get involved with Ivy Student Council?

I knew I wanted to be involved as a freshman. I didn’t have a set major at the time and wanted to join a club that arched over all majors so I could meet students from all across Ivy. This club gave me a better idea of what I wanted as a major, and I couldn’t be happier. Probably my best decision thus far in college.

Q Why choose a leadership position?

I wanted to challenge myself to do something I wasn’t comfortable with. I had some leadership positions in high school and didn’t know how leadership in college would go. Now I can say it is incredible and has made me grow into the best version of myself and meet so many people. Most of all, I want to make a difference during my term while making a lasting impact on the college.

Q Isn’t that a large time commitment?

Yes, but it is the most rewarding experience. Every day I can challenge myself and meet others in and outside of the college. It has helped me immensely to be better at many traits like time management and communication. Balancing my time with the presidency has never been overwhelming. Having effective communication, time management, and staying disciplined while also being responsible in this role will all better my future and allow me to be successful.

Q What are your future plans?

As an accounting and finance major, I would love to graduate with 150 credits to take CPA exams and pass before my public accounting career. I ultimately want to live and work in Chicago, Illinois.
Celebrating alumni and friends

Each fall, the deans of Iowa State University have the opportunity to highlight the successes of a handful of alumni and friends at the annual Honors & Awards Ceremony, hosted by the Iowa State University Alumni Association.

“It’s one of my favorite events of the year,” said Raisbeck Endowed Dean David Spalding. “Each fall, I am humbled and honored to recognize some of our closest friends and alumni. I am always impressed by their career paths, their successes, and their willingness to share their experiences with our students.”

As a result of COVID-19 restrictions, the Honors & Awards program was postponed until spring. The 2020 class of honorees are being celebrated during a virtual event on April 7. Those from the Ivy College of Business are featured below.

JOHN D. DEVRIES SERVICE AWARD

Established in 1985 to recognize individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service to the Ivy College of Business.

SHERI BANDLE

('78 ACCOUNTING) EDEN PRAIRIE, MINNESOTA

Sheri Bandle’s passion for numbers and travel merged perfectly for a lifetime career with Cargill. In high school, she knew she loved numbers and business, but she wasn’t sure which path to choose. At Iowa State University, she selected accounting, a degree that has offered many unique opportunities in one company.

At Cargill, she started with an internal auditing position, which allowed her to travel in the United States and internationally as much as 70 percent of the time. She enjoyed that role for about 15 years and then explored new roles, always learning and growing along the way. She was excited to have international business travel responsibilities. In one position, she commuted from Tokyo, Japan, for six months. Bandle is currently the hedge room manager, where she helps coordinate Cargill’s trading on the Chicago Board of Trade.

Her relationship with the Ivy College of Business has been one of service. She has devoted 15 years as a member of the Department of Accounting Executive Advisory Council. In that role, she provides valuable expertise in her field, which helps lead the department.

Earlier in her career, she was instrumental in recruiting Iowa State students to employment with Cargill. Her passion for recruiting students as well as her connection to the accounting department led her to support the Bandle Faculty Fellowship in Accounting. Bandle is an avid Cyclone fan and says her years at Iowa State were among the best in her life.
Established in 2009 to honor contributions from valuable corporate partners or individuals who are not Ivy College of Business graduates. The award honors Russ and Ann Gerdin, who made the lead gift for the Gerdin Business Building. Neither attended Iowa State University.

DEAN HUNZIKER
AMES, IOWA

A lifelong resident of Ames, Dean Hunziker is a broker and owner of Hunziker and Associates, a family-owned business since 1952. His family history with Iowa State University is long and he’s proud to say his parents are alumni. Hunziker graduated from Ames High School and initially enrolled at Iowa State University, unsure of his future. Even though he did not graduate, Hunziker is a strong supporter of the university and the Ivy College of Business. He is a member of two Ivy College of Business Executive Advisory Councils — for the master of real estate development program and the Department of Management — where he provides his professional expertise to college leaders so student curriculum can meet the needs of industry. He is also on the Board of Governors for the Iowa State University Foundation and proudly supports Cyclone athletic programs, a student scholarship, and funding for the director of graduate education position for the master of real estate development program at Ivy.

Hunziker has worked hard his entire career, first working in a bank and as a vacuum cleaner salesman where he realized his passion for sales, which led him to a successful career in real estate. Hunziker has been involved throughout the community, including the Ames Economic Development, the Board of Realtors, Ames Home Builders, Ames Seed Capital, Ames Noon Rotary, United Way, and others. He was named Realtor of the Year by the Ames Board of Realtors in 1989.

Established in 1985 to honor distinguished alumni who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in life beyond the campus.

CRAIG HART
('78 ACCOUNTING) WELDON SPRING, MISSOURI

Craig Hart started his career in a traditional accounting role and quickly moved to the food processing industry, where he spent the majority of his career. His experience included working in several senior finance and accounting management positions. For 20 years, he was employed at Tyson, where he worked his way up to chief accounting officer. It was always his desire to be the chief financial officer at a major corporation, a dream he realized when he accepted the CFO position at Packers Sanitation Services (PSSI), which provides sanitation and food safety services throughout the United States and Canada. He worked at PSSI for the last seven years, until his retirement in January.

Hart and his wife, Cheryl, enjoy giving back. They have invested in the newly completed Gerdin Business Building expansion as a way to give back to the Ivy College of Business. The couple believes in the college mission and vision and want to support student success.

Established in 2009 to honor contributions from valuable corporate partners or individuals who are not Ivy College of Business graduates. The award honors Russ and Ann Gerdin, who made the lead gift for the Gerdin Business Building. Neither attended Iowa State University.

TINA FREESE DECKER
('00 FINANCE) GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

Tina Freese Decker knew early on she wanted to make healthcare simpler. She majored in finance as an undergraduate student at Iowa State University, where her passion for math, science, and business helped her excel. She then launched on a dual master’s program in health administration and industrial engineering at the University of Iowa. This education prepared her well for roles in healthcare finance, strategy, and operations — and her current role as president and CEO of Spectrum Health Systems.

As chief executive officer, Freese Decker oversees an $8 billion health system comprising more than 30,000 team members, 14 hospitals, a medical group, and a health plan with more than 1 million members.

While a student at Iowa State, Freese Decker was active in the Sigma Kappa sorority and the Iowa State Marching Band. She chose Iowa State because the campus felt like home. She knew she could be successful here, learn, and go out into the world prepared to thrive.

Known today as a change agent with a track record of forging strong community partnerships, executing innovative strategies, and fostering a people-focused culture, Freese Decker is routinely interviewed on national podcasts and invited to serve as a guest speaker. Her recent accolades include Grand Rapids Business Journal’s 50 Most Influential Women in West Michigan (2020) and Modern Healthcare’s Top 25 Women in Healthcare (2019).

PAULA NORBY
('78 ACCOUNTING) DUBUQUE, IOWA

Paula Norby’s accounting degree has provided her with the strong foundation she needed to navigate a successful career with her family business. Originally working in the area of public accounting, in the 1990s, Norby joined the family business her grandparents started. As owner and controller at Norby Distributing Company, Norby has overseen a variety of business-related roles over the years. She has watched her industry and farm-related retail change. Along with her family, she led the company in adapting their business to continue meeting the needs of their customers. Today, they still appeal to farmers, but they have grown their customer base to include the general public and have 11 stores in Iowa and Kentucky.

Norby has been a member of the Ivy College of Business Dean’s Advisory Council since 2018, where she provides valuable business advice and leadership for the college. She supports student scholarships and is passionate about making college affordable and accessible for all students. While attending Iowa State, Norby was a Cyclone aide, treasurer and secretary of Delta Zeta sorority, and a member of Student Advisory Council for industrial administration and Varieties.
Best MBA streak continues

The Ivy College of Business professional master’s programs have a lot to celebrate this year with continued brand recognition and enrollment numbers going up, up, up!

Each fall, the Des Moines Business Record asks readers to select the “best of” in many categories, including CEO, MBA program, company to work for, and other categories. The Ivy MBA was rated the Best MBA Program in Des Moines for the third year in a row.

“We are delighted to receive this honor again,” said Raisbeck Endowed Dean David Spalding. “At the Ivy College of Business, we work tirelessly to provide excellence at every level. This vote of confidence shows us that we’re on the right track. We look forward to continuing to provide high-quality education for working professionals across Iowa and the Midwest.”

Leaders at the college go to great efforts to make sure programs work for busy professionals. After conducting focus group interviews, the professional MBA program was adjusted this year to a hybrid model, delivering in-person learning one night a week instead of two in order to better meet the needs of working professionals.

Not only does the public see value in the professional MBA program, the enrollment increased significantly this year in the full-time program.

“As many business schools are eliminating full-time MBA programs, or moving them online, we are experiencing all-time high enrollment for both the MBA and master of finance programs,” Spalding said. “Our program has a lot to offer, and we are excited to have so many students participate.”

This year’s MBA cohort includes both concurrent students from across campus and experienced professionals from around the world. Domestic students mostly hail from the Midwest, while international students are natives of China, India, Nigeria, and Canada.

“We were initially concerned that the limitations placed on international students would negatively impact our master’s programs,” said Sarah Wilson, director of professional master’s student services. “However, we were still able to create a diverse cohort. We look forward to welcoming international students who deferred enrollment because of COVID-19 next year.”

The MBA and master of finance program students are part of higher enrollment across the board. With a final count of 405 registered for Ivy graduate programs, this is a banner year.

“The record enrollment is a testament to the Ivy brand,” said Spalding. “As a top business school, we offer students the opportunity to learn from experienced faculty in a state-of-the-art facility. We are delighted to have so many students put their faith in an Ivy education.”

Courses in the professional MBA program are taught by the same internationally known faculty who teach in the full-time program on the Iowa State University campus in Ames, Iowa. Students can start the program year-round and can complete it in two or two-and-a-half years. The Ivy MBA is designed for busy professionals who are ready to advance their career, whether seeking a new job, a promotion, or to climb the corporate ladder. Learn more about the Ivy MBA and other professional master’s programs: busgrad@iastate.edu.
Student support

Students thank their donors

During the Forever True, For Iowa State campaign, donors have established more than 1,000 scholarship funds at Iowa State University. As we near the end of this historic $1.5 billion fundraising effort, it’s easy to see the tremendous impact of these gifts. The following three inspiring students in the Ivy College of Business are just a few of the thousands who have benefited greatly from the generosity of Iowa State donors.

MAKENNA MCDONALD

AWARD – SCOTT JOHNSON AND JULIA LAWLER SCHOLARSHIP IN BUSINESS

“Thank you for this opportunity! This scholarship has truly affected me positively and has made the burden of college expenses bearable. A gift like this to one student is a lot, but to give them to multiple students is truly remarkable. I will forever be grateful for your support! I truly cannot thank you enough.”

PERLA NUNEZ

AWARD – ASPIRING WOMEN IN BUSINESS SCHOLARSHIP

“Thank you so much for funding this scholarship. I will make sure to take advantage of every opportunity that is presented to me at Iowa State University. I am beyond honored to be selected as a recipient for this scholarship. I think it is very important to represent women in business or any field. It not only empowers women but builds a stronger society and workforce. It amazes me that there are donors who are willing to encourage that potential.”

MIKAYLA WINTER

AWARD – VORBRICH FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP

“Thank you for believing enough in education to help me further mine. Thank you for being kind-hearted enough to donate earnings you worked hard for. Iowa State has always been a home for me and will forever be a special place in my heart. I am beyond blessed you think I am worthy enough of this scholarship and will continue to use my knowledge to help forward the Iowa State and Ames community.”

Are you interested in supporting future Cyclones? Visit our website to learn more about how your gift will help shape the Ivy College of Business for generations to come: ivybusiness.iastate.edu/giving.
‘50s
Samuel Hanna (’53 industrial administration) I am 89 years old and retired since 1992. I was employed by the Aluminum Company of America for 35 years. My last assignment was manager of production control and transportation at the Davenport, Iowa, production facility. I am currently living on Skidaway Island, Georgia, and enjoying my retirement.

‘70s
Bruce Hamilton (’73 accounting, industrial administration) I am transitioning into semi-retirement after 33 years as a sole practitioner CPA firm. Looking forward to spending more time building my HO scale model railroad, traveling, and spending more time with my wife, Deb, also recently retired. I still serve on the Accounting Advisory Committee.

‘80s
Julie Buclez (’86 marketing; minor in fashion merchandising) After graduating from ISU, I moved to New York City and worked in capital markets for Samuel Montagu, a British merchant bank. The bank was taken over by HSBC and transferred me to London and Moscow. In the meantime, I met my wonderful French husband and had four fantastic children.

‘90s
Kevin Bennett (’87 accounting) I have officially retired after working for American Family Insurance the last several years. Both of my kids have now graduated from Iowa State, Zachary (’17 computer engineering) and Sara (’20 accounting). My wife, Sue, and I plan to travel.

‘00s
Ryan Houck (’03 marketing) I started a gift box company with my wife, Ashley (also an ISU grad), two years ago and it’s turned into a million dollar company. We run it outside of Ames, near Nevada, on our acreage. We have been able to provide jobs for 10 people.

‘05s
Ted Casady (’06 supply chain management) In 2015, after nine years working for a defense contractor in Phoenix, Arizona, my family and I moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, to settle and raise our family. I joined the Wells Fargo strategic sourcing team to support armored courier, express mail, branch operations, and cash vault services for the Wells Fargo enterprise.

‘06s
Andrea Fellows (’06 marketing) I am a public affairs specialist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and supervise all internal employee and executive communications. I have been working COVID-19 since the first day of the response, and am currently working on transition comms for the new administration.

‘10s
Sara Lyle (’10 MBA) I joined Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield in January 2020 in the role of human resources business partner. In this role, I lead human resources initiatives for the chief financial officer and the chief information and digital officer.

Model title: Alumni Voices

Kate Douglas (’92 marketing; minor in environmental studies) In September, I took the position of director of commercial sales for Upcycle and Company, a startup based out of San Diego that produces a sustainable, active fertilizer that regenerates the soil, can reduce irrigation by 15%, and positively affects climate change by sequestering carbon.

Mark Melsa (’96 management information systems) In December, I was promoted to the position of senior vice president of technology at Wellbeats. In this position, I lead the engineering teams for the organization responsible for development, data, and quality of our SASS platform.

Jennifer Heiden (’02 marketing, international business) I recently joined Herc Rentals as a national account manager. My husband, Colton (’02 transportation and logistics), and I live in Parker, Colorado, with our two kids, Cade (13) and Shae (11). We also own and operate Iowa Meats – Colorado and Seasonal Refresh, an online home décor shop. Go Cyclones!
it’s great to give back to the company that started my supply chain management journey.

Jaimie Williamson (‘10 accounting) I am a controller for PURIS, which is a plant-based proteins company. I have welcomed two beautiful children, Mia (2) and Aubrey (1) with my partner, Christopher Weigle.

Jason Geiken (‘11 MBA; minor in marketing) In March of last year, I started a new job as vice president for advancement at Arkansas Tech University.

Peter Renzo (‘11 marketing) I’m entering my fifth year as owner of a Des Moines metro “staple” restaurant. Cosi Cucina Italian Grill originated in 1993, in Clive. I bought the business at the beginning of 2017 when I was only 27 years old and have worked nonstop for four years to “rejuvenate” this great establishment.

Alexandra Sheley (‘11 accounting) 2020 was a big year for my family! In January, we welcomed our mini Aussie pup, Charlie. In August, I married my wife, Kylea Sheley (‘11 athletic training), and in November, I was promoted to VP of finance and controller at Dakota Resources, a nonprofit organization in South Dakota.

Allie Prusa (‘13 marketing, journalism) After graduation, I moved to downtown Chicago with my husband. We loved the big city, but couldn’t wait to be back home. Within a year, we were back in Ames. I now am the marketing director at United Way of Story County and tell my boss all the time that I have my dream job!

Jonathan Roberts (‘13 MBA) After earning my MBA, I moved to Chicago to pursue a career in the solar PV industry with SoCore Energy. I am now vice president of development with Soltage, a renewable energy provider. I still live in Chicago with my wife, Lorraine, and daughter, Eve. We are expecting a son in April.

Kayla Brugman (‘14 MBA) Since graduating, I have enjoyed multiple roles with the Bayer Crop Science marketing team, including my current expat assignment with environmental science in Lyon, France. Here, my husband, BJ Brugman (‘12 agricultural business), and I enjoy an afternoon hike in the Alps.

Seth Serhienko (‘15 accounting) In 2020, I was promoted to audit manager at Widmer Roel in Fargo, North Dakota. I was also one of 29 young CPA leaders from around the country who was selected and graduated from the 2020 AICPA Leadership Academy.

Omar Al-Ajlouni (‘16 MBA) In December 2020, I was promoted from associate to consultant at Boston Consulting Group (BCG). I joined the BCG Dubai office in fall 2018. Since then, I worked across various practice areas, primarily in corporate finance and strategy, financial institutions, and public sector.

Kara Boyle (‘16 finance, marketing) I am the talent and business development specialist for Midland Power Cooperative in Boone, Iowa, and have been working there since I graduated in 2016. In December 2020, I graduated from Northwest Missouri State University with my MBA in general management.

Kyle Wolcott (‘16 marketing, management) Upon graduating, I moved to Wichita, Kansas. I started in the sales development program and most recently became an aftermarket sales manager for Textron Aviation. Wichita has the nickname of “The Aviation Capital of the World” and in December 2019, I finished my private pilot license.

Josh Hewitt (‘17 marketing) I am currently still working in the music industry where I handle all of the marketing for Wooly’s and First Fleet Concerts in Des Moines, Iowa. I also help manage and organize Hinterland Music Festival. I will be getting married to my beautiful fiancée, Meredith, in 2021.

Cassidy Corey (‘17 supply chain management) Since graduating from Iowa State, I have moved to Denver, Colorado, where I work for Johnson Controls, Inc. as a program coordinator and am working on pursuing my PMP certification. Since moving to Colorado, my significant other and I have adopted a puppy, Sterling, who is our pride and joy.

Daniel Ralston (‘17 supply chain management; minor in German) I live and work in Des Moines, Iowa, with my wonderful wife, Elli Cassabaum (also a graduate of Iowa State). I have recently left my corporate job at Ruan Transportation (really enjoyed my time there) to start my own business called Des Moines Gaming Club. It will be a video games and esports venue.

Jack Ermisch (‘19 accounting) I started an e-commerce small business selling fashion online through apps and social platforms. My business Instagram has reached over 25,000 followers and a YouTube channel teaching others about the business that just passed 7,000 subscribers. Recently passed $100,000 Poshmark profit.

Andrew Freed (‘19 management information systems) After graduating at 20 years old in December 2019, I landed a job at Xpanxion working as a build engineer. I’ve been beyond lucky to have such great co-workers in a fantastic working environment that I hope will aid me greatly in my career in IT!

Anna Bjornstad (‘20 accounting) I met Levi Ballard at Beta Alpha Psi during my time at ISU. This November, he proposed to me. After the easiest “yes” of my life, we cannot wait to continue our accounting love story and marry next spring. We wouldn’t be together without all that the Ivy College of Business did for us. Thank you!

‘20s

Need to update your contact information? Visit bit.ly/3qHwIHD.
Meet Keesha Ward

Keesha Ward (‘18 MBA) is a successful business owner, community builder, life coach, and student influencer who embraces life’s ups and downs as part of the journey.

A natural entrepreneur, Ward planned her first venture in middle school, a restaurant called KiKi’s Little Italy. But, when she came to Iowa State University to learn how to make her dream of becoming a restaurateur a reality, she discovered she had a different dream — family services.

In the midst of this realization, Ward was dealing with the loss of her grandfather, she missed her four-year-old brother who she had helped raise, and she wasn’t prepared to balance the rigor of an 18-credit-hour class load with the time requirements of her two jobs.

“I was an A student in high school, but I was not prepared with the study skills I needed for college,” said Ward. “I didn’t know how to study. I didn’t realize the true cost of college, and I didn’t want to ask for help. I was excelling at work, but I was failing in school.”

When the semester ended, Ward found herself on academic probation, so she dropped out and went to work full time as a lead infant teacher at University Community Childcare in Ames, Iowa.

Five years later, she returned to college as a non-traditional student. She finished her bachelor’s degree and started work in human resources at Iowa State, serving the student-parent population through the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) initiative.

With this experience under her belt, Ward’s entrepreneurial instincts were reactivated and she started planning her first business — a chain of high-quality childcare centers. To give herself the know-how to pull it off, she set her sights on an MBA.

“‘We all know you don’t need an MBA to be a small business owner,’” Ward said. “‘But I wanted the advanced knowledge and connections. When I got to the MBA program, I said to myself, ‘Oh yeah! This is what I need around me. This is exactly where I’m supposed to be.’”

Her new knowledge led to new opportunities and new ideas. She launched her first venture, a photography business called Ward Creative Studios, from her living room.

“This was where my MBA training came in,” Ward said. “I remember thinking, ‘Keesha, sit your tail down and develop your marketing plan and a budget.’ That was three years ago.”

Since that time, Ward Creative Studios has doubled its bottom-line every year. Ward has started another venture, Vegan Knees, a one-on-one coaching service that provides plant-based nutrition counseling.

Ward is dedicated to more than her own entrepreneurial goals. She also encourages and motivates students to learn from her experience as the assistant director of alumni relations at Drake University — bringing her own story full circle.

“I teach first-year students about time management, stress management, getting adjusted to college, and asking the right questions. It’s probably surprising for people to connect the two. I was a failure in undergrad, I knew nothing, and I dropped out, but here I am today teaching first-year students.”

For Ward, her life choices are all about building community.

“All of these things are connected to building relationships and being part of the community,” Ward said. “I love helping people move in the direction they’re trying to go. Whether that’s in front of a camera, coaching someone about their nutritional goals, or helping a first-year student take their first steps, I want people to feel good. I want them to feel confident.”

How did we learn about Keesha? She sent us an update for Alumni Voices. We hope you will do the same! Send your submission to michelea@iastate.edu.
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