

# BUSINESS EXCHANGE

A PUBLICATION FOR DRIEHAUS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

FALL/WINTER 2020

**BUILDING CAREER  
RESILIENCE**

DePaul helps business alumni like Paloma Mendoza (BUS '20) stay career competitive.



**DEPAUL UNIVERSITY**  
DRIEHAUS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

# Making This a Year We Can be Proud of

This academic year has begun unlike any we have experienced before at DePaul. Keeping our community safe—our first priority—compelled the university to substantially limit face-to-face classes, on-campus activities and residence hall living for students this fall and winter. All of our business courses are online, delivered in modalities that blend synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Our faculty have stepped up to embrace online teaching, and we are investing even more into faculty training and new classroom technologies to support the success of our students. These efforts build on DePaul's decade of experience in online teaching and learning. Over the summer, 50 more of our business faculty members completed the DePaul Online Teaching Series, an award-winning program that teaches faculty best practices for engaging students in online classes. The college also has partnered with the university to upgrade our Loop Campus classrooms with teleconferencing and recording technologies that not only fulfill our immediate need to deliver courses safely and effectively online, but also better position us for the future by offering students more flexibility in how they learn.

Outside of the classroom, the university and our college have expanded remotely delivered career services and engagement activities for both students and alumni. Remote career coaching, webinars, networking events and a wealth of online resources are helping Blue Demons launch and advance their careers in a tough economy. This issue's main feature focuses on how new graduates and seasoned alumni are building career resilience with this support.

For many of our students, this is an extraordinarily difficult time. The pandemic-driven recession has affected their ability to afford a DePaul education as well as their future



job prospects. DePaul did not increase tuition this academic year, waived many fees, and increased financial aid, but there is still great need.

That's why, as the college's new interim dean, I am making fundraising for scholarships and strengthening student career mentoring top priorities this year. We've made a good start with several recent generous gifts from alumni and foundations. You can join in supporting students by giving to the recently launched [Now We Must: The Campaign for DePaul's Students](#). I also encourage you to give back by mentoring our students and connecting them to internships and careers.

Another important issue we are addressing involves DePaul's long-standing commitment to foster diversity, inclusion and equity. To support this commitment, I am working with faculty and staff on our college's Diversity and Inclusion Committee to expand the presence of underrepresented groups at all levels, from students to faculty, staff and administration.

We face many challenges this year, but our commitment to the DePaul mission remains strong. With your support, we can make this academic year one we will all be proud of.

Be well.

Thomas Donley  
Interim Dean



## Business College Refreshes Curricula

The business college introduced [new programs this fall](#) and is revising others to make its curricula even more current. A new entrepreneurship major in the Bachelor of Science in Business (BSB) program debuted in September, as did a business minor for nonbusiness majors. Core classes in the BSB are also being revamped to provide a greater focus on business analytics. Other new programs include a revised MBA program that emphasizes analytics and experiential learning, an online MBA in hospitality leadership and an MBA in business analytics.



Alumnus Joe Adams

## Generous Gifts Support Scholarships and Fellowships

Recent generous gifts from DePaul alumni and foundations are supporting student success and faculty excellence at DePaul's business college:

- RSM US Foundation and RSM US LLP employees, including alumni, [made a matching gift totaling \\$1 million](#) to establish two RSM fellowships at the School of Accountancy & MIS. Joe Adams (BUS '77, MBA '79), RSM managing partner and CEO, spearheaded the fundraising effort. The fellowships support efforts to attract and retain outstanding accounting faculty. Associate Professor Mary Mindak has been appointed as the first RSM Fellow.
- The estate of the late Lyndell C. Ayres Jr. (BUS '59) gave nearly \$500,000 to the college. The gift will make an immediate impact this year as scholarship awards to students who are experiencing economic hardship due to the pandemic.
- First Midwest Bank has provided a [\\$500,000 gift](#) through the First Midwest Charitable Foundation to the John L. Keeley Jr. Center for Financial Services, which provides co-curricular programming for finance students. Over the next five years, the gift will allocate resources to diversify the Keeley Center's student cohorts through outreach, targeted programming, scholarship support and internship placements at the bank.

## College Recognized in Rankings

The business college recently received rankings that recognize the quality and achievements of its entrepreneurship program and the diversity of the college's graduates. Poets & Quants, an online news source for prospective business students, ranked the college's entrepreneurship program [No. 40 in the world](#) for MBA students. Diverse Issues in Higher Education's "Top 100 Degree Producers" [recognized DePaul business programs](#) in 54 categories of its annual survey, which ranks the top 100 colleges nationally by the number of graduates of color produced in each academic discipline.



## Academic Departments Merge

The college's finance and real estate departments have merged administratively to create the Department of Finance and Real Estate. The merger helps the college meet reaccreditation standards and provides students with more opportunities for cross-disciplinary study. Degree programs and centers associated with the two disciplines remain unchanged. Thomas Berry (MBA '77), a longtime finance faculty member who also served as associate dean, was appointed chair of the merged department.

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Business College Social Media



Cover photo by Kathy Hillegonds



## Building Career Resilience

DePaul helps business alumni stay career competitive

By Robin Florzak

Like many Class of 2020 graduates, Michael J. Smith had to pivot his career plans last spring because of the pandemic-driven economic downturn. Smith was looking forward to joining KPMG as a tax data and analytics associate in June. But on the eve of earning his master's in business analytics, Smith received word that KPMG was delaying start dates for new hires until January 2021.

Despite the setback, Smith remained confident because he knew he had a strong ally to help him navigate his next career step: DePaul. DePaul business students and alumni "have access to a tremendous amount of resources" that support career searches and advancement, says Smith, resources that include personalized career coaching.

Smith asked the [Kellstadt Career Management Center](#) (CMC), which helped him land the position with KPMG, for assistance in finding an interim data analytics role until his new start date. A CMC career coach helped Smith "identify the right opportunities for me and network with a purpose," he says. "I broke my strategy into three steps: create an elevator pitch, analyze the market and identify my target companies and

Paloma Mendoza (BUS '20) (in beige sweater) got her foot in the door of advertising firm FCB during a class visit. (Photo courtesy of Andy Clark)

audiences." Smith identified industries that would need data analysts, even in a tough economy. With election season in full swing, he added political parties to the list.

The strategy paid off. Smith was hired as deputy state data director for the Republican Party of Wisconsin in July. The position was a perfect fit for his need to deepen his data analytics experience before beginning his assignment at KPMG, which remains committed to bringing him on board in 2021. "I feel extremely honored and valued during such uncertain times."

Since the pandemic hit in March, the CMC, which supports graduate business students and alumni, and the [DePaul Career Center](#), which serves undergraduate business students and alumni, have been expanding their resources to help Blue Demons stay competitive in a dramatically altered labor market. The centers offer alumni remote career coaching, webinars on job search strategies and online networking, as well as a wealth of web-based [resources](#), including [Handshake](#), a comprehensive career services portal that provides job and internship listings, as well as information about career events.

One of the DePaul Career Center's newest initiatives is

**For alumni who are midcareer professionals, DePaul certificates and graduate degrees have become an attractive option to advance their careers in a competitive market.**

a job search club for alumni and new graduates "to talk about challenges people are facing and share goals and questions," says Karyn McCoy, the center's assistant vice president. "It's a way to let people know they are not alone." McCoy also recommends the CMC's new skills labs created to help graduates think about upskilling, as well as the [Alumni Sharing Knowledge](#) (ASK) Network as a nexus for alumni to share career insights.

At the business college, faculty, departments and centers are stepping up to connect students and new graduates to career leads through an extensive network of alumni and industry connections. [Certificate](#) and [graduate](#) degree programs are also available for alumni to build career resilience, especially if they have been out of school for a while. "We encourage alumni to return to refresh their skills and see our college as a resource for growth throughout their professional life," says Interim Business Dean Thomas Donley.

Business faculty—and their contacts in Chicago's business world—offer a fruitful networking resource. Paloma Mendoza (BUS '20) got her foot in the door at the global advertising firm Foote, Cone & Belding (FCB) in July with the help of Andy Clark (MBA '87), the sports business program director.

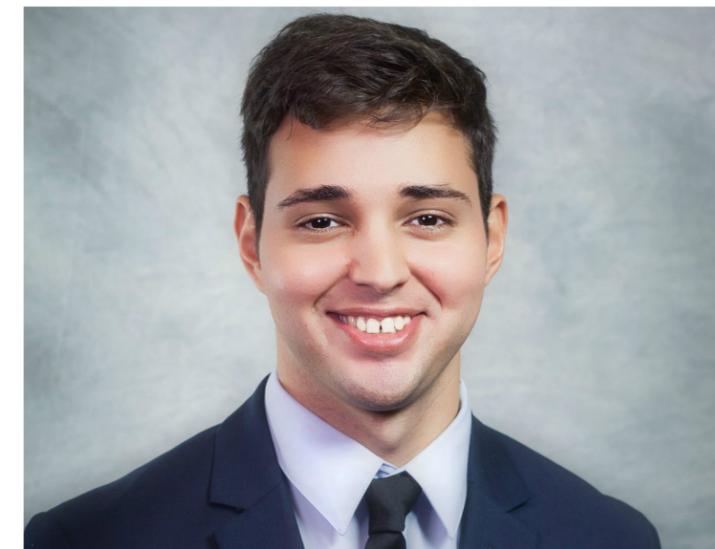
Mendoza became interested in advertising agency work as a student in Clark's sports sponsorship marketing class, which visited FCB's Chicago office to discuss Super Bowl ads with executives last winter. In the spring, when she learned that FCB was offering virtual account management internships, she applied. "Mentioning Professor Clark's name and my class experience visiting FCB definitely helped," she says. Mendoza landed the coveted internship, which pairs her with a FCB account director mentor and puts her into consideration for future job openings.

"She did a fantastic job of following up with FCB and secured a very tough-to-get internship, especially in this environment," Clark says. "I think Paloma's story represents the very best of what a DePaul education offers."

For alumni who are midcareer professionals, DePaul certificates and graduate degrees have become an attractive option to advance their careers in a competitive market. "At least 35% to 40% of our students are DePaul alumni or family members of alumni," says Jurate Murray (MBA '02), associate



Michael J. Smith (BUS MS '20) received personalized career coaching to land an analytics position in the spring.



Alumnus Omar Ortiz prepared for a promotion by earning a DePaul marketing strategy certificate.

director of the [Kellstadt Marketing Center](#), which offers a wide range of advertising and marketing certificate programs for professionals to refresh their skills.

Omar Ortiz (BUS '17), marketing manager for Neighborhoods.com, completed the center's content marketing strategy certificate program online in March to prepare for a recent promotion. "I thought it'd be a great idea to further sharpen my skills and solidify myself as an expert," he says.

Upskilling for Andrew Catanese (BUS '14), club and theatre ticketing manager for C3 Presents, meant enrolling in DePaul's MBA in hospitality program this fall. Offered entirely online, the program gives Catanese the flexibility to continue working remotely from Austin, Texas, for C3, a nationwide concert promoter. "I've been out of school six years, and I think that's a big gap as far as new techniques," says Catanese, who hopes to run his own music venue in the future. "I am excited to further my education in the hospitality program."

# Political Pioneer Bushra Amiwala Reclaims Her Voice

By Jaclyn Lansbery



Alumna Bushra Amiwala, seen above with Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, is part of a wave of women making their voices heard in politics. (Photos courtesy of Bushra Amiwala)

Two years ago, Bushra Amiwala's (BUS '20) candidacy for the Cook County Board of Commissioners captured the attention of national media outlets and won her a place in the PBS docuseries "And She Could Be Next." In one scene, the documentary shows Amiwala addressing a room full of young volunteers in a small Skokie, Ill., restaurant.

"If I get elected," she says. "I would be the first Pakistani Muslim woman to ever hold office in the United States."

At 20 years old, Amiwala lost her election to longtime incumbent Larry Suffredin. A week after her loss, Suffredin invited Amiwala to breakfast and encouraged her to run for the Skokie Board of Education.

"He said, 'You can't let this movement and mobilization that you had go to waste. You have to keep going,'" she says. She took his advice, and in 2019, Amiwala was elected to the board and is currently serving a four-year term. "Skokie has had such a profound impact on me and my education and upbringing, and it was my way to give back to the community that has done so much to shape who I am," she says. Amiwala's win made her the youngest Muslim elected official in the country.

Since 2015, the number of women of color who have run for office and been elected has increased dramatically—up 40% in Congress and up 38% in state legislatures, according to a report released by the Women Donors Network.

In August, U.S. Senator Kamala Harris was nominated as the Democratic vice-presidential candidate. She was elected as the first woman and the first Black and South Asian American vice president of the United States.

"I think a lot of us just didn't think that this kind of change would be possible for someone who had a particular background. Now they are stepping up to the plate and realizing, yes, there is space for us in the political realm if we choose to get up and do something about it," says Amiwala, who began working for Google as a large customer sales associate following graduation in June. "I do want to make sure it's not just a token type thing, that it's not just the identity politics behind it, that they truly are the best to represent their communities right now in this time."

During Amiwala's first election run, which placed her and other women candidates on the cover of Time magazine, she noticed a trend in news stories documenting her campaign. During interviews, journalists rarely asked about her ideas as a candidate and instead focused on her identity as a Pakistani Muslim woman.

Amiwala says she has combated the stigma attached to identity politics by reclaiming her own voice when she can. "It's being very intentional about what I choose to put out there and how I choose to amplify my own voice," she says. "It's speaking out against every instance where I do sort of feel like my identity and what I look like is at the forefront instead of my actual policy ideas or change I hope to bring forth."



Tony LoSasso (photo by Kathy Hillegonds)

# Nationally Recognized Health Expert Tony LoSasso Returns to DePaul

By Jaclyn Lansbery

As a DePaul undergraduate student in business, Tony LoSasso (BUS '91, MS '93) never thought about getting a master's degree. Then, the late Ashok Batavia, who served as a professor of economics at the Driehaus College of Business, encouraged LoSasso to pursue a master's degree at DePaul.

"It all started with DePaul and having people like Ashok push me in this direction, showing me that there was this direction, because I didn't even know it existed," says LoSasso, who was the first in his family to attend college. "I've been really fortunate to have people help me along the way. I certainly would not have found my own way."

LoSasso rejoined the DePaul community in 2019 as a professor of economics and Driehaus Fellow. "I'm really excited to be back. It's a tremendous thrill," he says. A nationally recognized expert in health economics, LoSasso teaches graduate and undergraduate health economics courses. His award-winning research spans several dimensions of health and labor economics, health policy and health services.

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—Tony LoSasso (BUS '91, MS '93)

Currently, LoSasso is working with the Kellstadt Graduate School of Business to launch a DePaul MBA concentration in health care markets and analytics, which is scheduled to debut in January 2021. The concentration will prepare students to work in the health insurance industry and in health consulting and government positions.

LoSasso's interest in health economics was spurred by the federal health reform efforts of the 1990s, which occurred while he was earning a PhD from Indiana University Bloomington.

"I'm somebody who has always been interested in the policy side of things, and, of course, health economics is ripe with policy interest and relevance," he says. "It was an untapped market for research, and then new and more data, and more powerful computers that could crunch data, became available."

An area of particular interest for LoSasso is health insurance benefit design and the impact it has on health care utilization and health outcomes. One of his most recent research pieces, which he has yet to publish, utilized data to examine premiums within the health insurance market for small businesses.

In the classroom, LoSasso uses research to help students better understand the course material.

"I don't think students often think that most of their faculty at DePaul are active researchers and scholars trying to push the boundaries of science," he says. "So in addition to being informative about the subject matter, bringing my own research into the classroom can be of interest for students to get a sense of where research ideas come from, how they germinate and how they ultimately become published articles."

# Food Bank Executive Offers Crisis Leadership Advice

By Nadia Alfadel Coloma

The Chicago Food Depository adjusted its operations to meet both growing need and new pandemic safety measures.



Sheila Creghin

**I**f I'd had a crystal ball," says Sheila Creghin (MBA '84, JD '89), reflecting on when the coronavirus pandemic erupted in the United States back in March, "I would have made sure we were extra stocked up on shelf-stable food items and hygiene supplies."

But there is never a sure way to know when a crisis beyond your control is going to strike and rattle the way you run your business. As vice president of operations at the [Greater Chicago Food Depository](#), Creghin found herself, like many leaders of organizations affected by COVID-19's challenges, in a sink-or-swim situation.

The Greater Chicago Food Depository, dubbed "Chicago's Food Bank," distributes food to communities in need throughout Chicago and Cook County. Its large facility sits on a spacious lot on the South Side of Chicago, a hub that distributed more than 93 million pounds of food in the last year to a network of 700 community partners. "The demand for food has increased by upwards of 50% because of the pandemic," says Creghin. "Many of the people we serve work in industries that were greatly impacted by the virus, like restaurants, so they were out of work and unable to buy food."

Before COVID-19, the depository served as many as 800,000 people per year. Now, Sheila says, visits to local food pantries have more than doubled. By the time their fiscal year ended in June 2020, they had distributed 18 million pounds more food than the previous year because of COVID-19 and its economic impact.

"The crisis has disrupted so many aspects of our business model and operations. For instance, we're big advocates of client choice, in respecting the dignity of people by allowing them to pick like they would at a grocery store what items they want to take home to their families," explains Creghin. "COVID-19 has forced us to scrap that model to avoid a high-touch atmosphere and resort to distributing boxes of food that we have had to package ourselves."

Acquiring the food itself has been another challenge. "We've struggled with procuring nonperishable foods because of how much people have been buying off the shelves," says Creghin. "We're trying to obtain a variety of foods, but at the same time we're also just trying to make sure we're continuously getting food out into the communities, especially those that have been direly affected by this crisis."

Creghin and her team of roughly 100 employees comprising drivers, warehouse workers and facilities

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—Sheila Creghin (MBA '84, JD '89)

staff have been working long hours throughout the pandemic to meet the increased needs of their clients. Implementing social-distancing guidelines and other protocols to keep employees safe has required adapting to new processes. Drivers who transport food to communities, for example, are no longer accompanied by an assistant who helps to unload the food. As a result, the depository has had to invest in equipment to help its drivers safely unload hundreds of pounds of food from trucks on their own.

"It's been challenging, but a crisis also offers learning opportunities," says Creghin. "It forces you to examine the systems you have in place and come up with new and creative ways to get the job done. I've empowered so many of my team members during this time, and it's been inspiring to see them rise to the occasion with incredible leadership and dedication under such difficult circumstances."

Creghin shared these tips for crisis leadership:

- **Listen and communicate.** Communication during a crisis is critical, especially when you are managing people in different roles and at different levels. Listen and be empathetic to the needs and concerns of your employees so you can support them in their new working environment. Listen for feedback because some people may have access to data or information that can help drive better decisions. You also need to make sure everyone understands the plan on how to move forward. Sometimes you may feel like you are overcommunicating, but during a crisis, things can change quickly and frequently, so constant communication is important.



Demand for food at the depository has increased about 50% since the pandemic hit.



Food bank workers are packaging food under safety protocols (photos courtesy Chicago Food Depository).

- **Be flexible.** When you create your crisis management plan, realize that you may have to change that plan at any time depending on how the crisis evolves. Make sure your team also is ready to adjust course if the situation warrants it.
- **Stay calm.** As a leader, if you overreact or appear overly stressed, you make your team nervous and stressed. Approach the crisis with a calm, level head and recognize that you set the tone for how your team handles the situation at hand. I always say, "Today we're going to do our best and do as much as we can, and tomorrow is another day." That's all you can do during a crisis: face each day as it comes.

# NOW WE MUST.

The Campaign for DePaul's Students

Philanthropy

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