

# The Bottom Line

News from the Nathan M. Bisk College of Business

Fall 2022

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## Message From Dean Theodore Richardson

First, let me extend a warm welcome (back) to campus to all students, faculty and staff for the fall 2022 semester.

As we strive to return to normal, more business events are slated to engage students, faculty and staff in meaningful learning opportunities. The Bisk College of Business continues to leverage our accreditation results to improve our curricula, and we are working relentlessly alongside the COB advisory board to enhance our recognition in the community.

weVENTURE Women's Business Center remains a prominent entrepreneurial support organization, providing services to students and the community, while the Center for Innovation Management and Business Analytics evolves our roles in cryptocurrency and blockchain and leads the community in business innovation. The Center for Ethics and Leadership is actively planning new events to engage the university and community in current business ethics topics.

We are eager to partner with all of Florida Tech's academic colleges to teach our students the business, innovation and leadership lessons required in a comprehensive education that develops well-rounded professionals ready to thrive in the "real world."



Respectfully,  
Theodore R. Richardson III, Ed.D.  
Dean, Bisk College of Business

## Panthers on the Rise

### Laura Donson '12 M.S.

Laura Donson '12 M.S. of Naval Supply Systems Command Fleet Logistics Center in Jacksonville, Florida, was awarded the Department of Defense's 2021 Richard Ginman Award for Contingency Contracting Officer Excellence.



### Monique Picou '93 MBA

Monique Picou '93 MBA was named to the Ryan Companies US Inc. board of directors. Ryan is leveraging Picou's experience in supply chain operations and product and technology strategy as it expands its footprint in new markets.



### Steven Farris '18 MBA

Steven Farris '18 MBA was promoted to senior principal project manager at Northrop Grumman Corp. and was accepted to Florida Tech's DBA program.



### Donville Tomlinson '20 MBA

Donville Tomlinson '20 MBA recently joined Microsoft Corp. as a senior business program manager supporting industry solutions delivery.



### Thomas Parrett '11 MBA

Thomas Parrett '11 MBA recently took the helm of C Pathe as president/CEO. C Pathe is a specialized engineering, design and manufacturer of static, dynamic and augmented reality displays for the retail sector.



### Col. Darrel Williamson '76, '85 M.S.

Col. Darrel Williamson '76, '85 M.S., (retired) was awarded the Office of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service as the state chair of the Colorado Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.



## Our University. Our Future. Game On!

### SAVE THE DATE: DAY OF GIVING NOV. 10, 2022

Join us in celebrating Florida Tech's eighth annual Day of Giving, during which alumni, parents, faculty, staff and students from across the globe come together to support Florida Tech. The university has planned a full 24 hours of fun, featuring famous alumni, game shows and online games.

**Did you know you can donate directly to the Bisk College of Business? Visit [dayofgiving.fit.edu](http://dayofgiving.fit.edu) for all the details.**

## Alumni Spotlight

### BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION ALUMNA NAMED LMS DEVELOPMENT DRIVER

#### Loghan Ashline '21

Loghan Ashline '21 is the newest development driver for Larsen Motorsports (LMS).

Ashline, 22, graduated in December 2021 with her bachelor's degree in business administration and took a full-time position at Palm Bay-based LMS. On Feb. 28, the company announced that she was the 11th development driver in its history.

As such, she will undergo training and education with the goal of becoming a licensed jet dragster driver.

Ashline's hometown and upbringing suggest she was destined for this. She was born in Mooresville, North Carolina, a town of about 38,000 known as "Race City, USA," for its deep ties to NASCAR. Both of her parents worked in motorsports during her childhood, and her father still works as a safety engineer in motorsports. Attending races and car shows quickly became her favorite pastime, especially with her father and grandfather.

Ashline met LMS co-founders Chris and Elaine Larsen in 2017. She visited Florida Tech, toured the LMS facility and attended her first jet dragster race. Needless to say, she fell in love with everything the company and the university had to offer. She started her undergraduate degree in the fall of 2018.

Starting as an intern, Ashline was able to learn the ins and outs of the business and marketing side of LMS. She was promoted to a paid position at the company in early 2019, which included traveling to races for the full season to assist with marketing, specifically, photography. From 2019 to 2021, she was the traveling photographer for the race team, among other jobs. In 2020 she started learning

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—Loghan Ashline '21

the crewing process for a jet dragster. By 2021, Loghan was the newest crew chief for then development driver Josette Roach.

While she plans to go back to Florida Tech for her MBA, Ashline decided it was important to pursue her jet dragster license.

“Being a part of the development driver program at LMS is beyond a dream come true. This is my opportunity to try something entirely new and hopefully get licensed to learn,” Ashline said. “God has been so gracious to put me on this path with the Larsens and the rest of the team.”

Ashline is well prepared for this next step, added Elaine Larsen, co-founder and president of LMS. “She has literally touched every aspect of on-track race operations, first as a photographer, then as a crew chief, and now as a development driver. These elements amount to the perfect formula for Loghan's success at LMS.”



# DOUBLE COB ALUMNUS AND BASEBALL STANDOUT USES EDUCATION TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OTHERS

By Jerry Durney

For Florida Tech pitcher Boris Villa '21, baseball has been a part of life since the day he was born. Growing up in Barranquilla, Colombia, as the son of a former minor league player-turned-scout for the New York Mets and Texas Rangers, Villa saw firsthand many aspects of life inside professional baseball.

Name a major leaguer from Colombia, and odds are that Villa not only knows the player, but he has some type of kinship with him. Among his closest acquaintances on the diamond are Tampa Bay Rays pitcher Luis Patiño and Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher José Quintana, a former All-Star whom Villa credits with helping him earn Second Team All-Sunshine State Conference and ABCA/Rawlings All-Region honors following the 2021 season.

Those up-close experiences allowed Villa to see the other side of the sport. About 10% of all minor league baseball players eventually make the major leagues. Even those with “generational talent” or “can’t-miss prospects” sometimes don’t make it to “The Show” for any number of reasons.

For young players who come from South America and the Caribbean, the goal is not only to make the majors but to earn the kind of money that can be impactful for their families and communities for generations. This can lead

them to develop a singular focus on their sport, often foregoing an education. When those dreams don’t become reality, these young men are left at square one.

“I saw it a lot,” Villa says. “After two years, they got released, and then they didn’t even have a high school degree, so they didn’t have anything to lean back on.”

Seeing so many of these stories caused Villa, who graduated with his bachelor’s in business administration in 2021 and his MBA this summer, to look inward and wonder what he could do to change it. While he chases his own dreams of one day reaching the big leagues, in 2017, Villa helped to create Fundación Inspira Colombia (Inspiration Foundation Colombia) and Top Prospects Colombia.

The goal of the two organizations is to help create exposure for athletes across all sports in Colombia to enable them to eventually earn a scholarship to a school in the United States and receive an education that will help provide a second career after their playing days come to an end.

Villa, who was named the Bisk College of Business’ Outstanding Student of the Year the past two years, sees the long-term benefits of a college education, like the careers they can pursue following graduation. This will allow

scholar-athletes to eventually create change for good in their communities and inspire others to do the same.

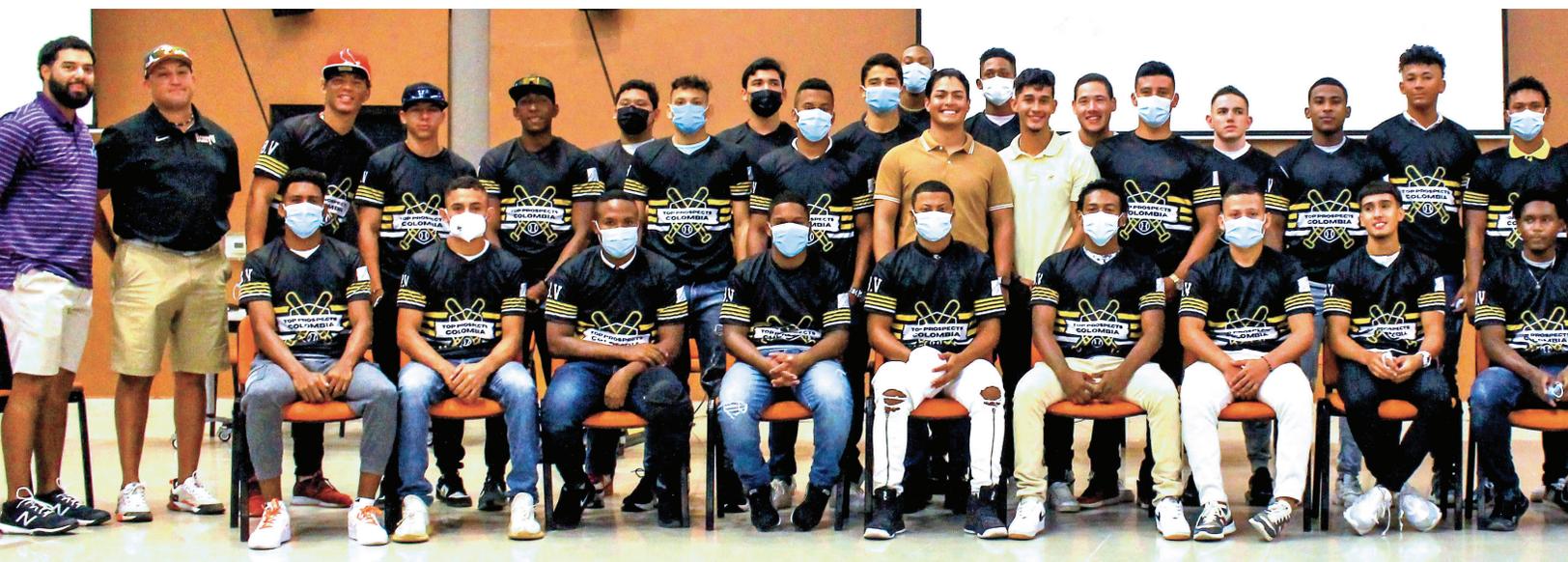
“I want people to be able to help their hometowns also because they’re going to go back with a degree that they can use to better their family and neighbors, as well,” he says. “So, they have another option that’s going to allow them to make money.”

Part of what drove Villa to lead these two organizations was his first experiences in America while attending junior college.

“I just wanted to give more young athletes the opportunity that I was experiencing here,” Villa says. “When I came here, to the United States, I was like, ‘Oh, this is awesome!’ So, I just wanted to pass it on.”

Florida Tech has already seen the results of Inspira firsthand with two of Villa’s fellow Barranquilla natives and COB students, designated hitter Diego Garcia and pitcher Andres Tapia.

“Since I came to Florida Tech, it has been a great experience,” Tapia says. “Meeting new people, studying in a foreign country and playing baseball at a high level. It’s one of my biggest dreams, and I’m really enjoying my time here. Now, I’m supporting Boris with his



program through Inspira and helping those guys that have the talent to come study and play baseball here, in the United States.”

“It has been a great experience, and I feel that all my expectations have been met,” says Garcia, who has been friends with Villa since childhood. “I couldn’t ask for a better education than the one that I’m receiving from Florida Tech. Now, I’m also part of the project, and we will continue helping people, just as he helped me, to find a place in the United States to play baseball and get a higher education.”

Panther baseball head coach Jeff Tam has attended multiple showcases in Colombia. What stood out the most to him was how much of a role model Villa has already become among his peers.

“It’s the fact that these kids that are only two, three, four years younger than Boris and the way they look up to him and the way they treat him with the utmost respect,” says Tam, a former major league pitcher. “They realize what he’s doing and what he has in place down in Colombia trying to find those guys homes for baseball and school. They look at him in a different light, and I think they appreciate what he’s doing.”

While Villa’s Panther career may have come to an end in May, he will continue to pursue his dream of reaching the major leagues and becoming colleagues with those who have helped mold him into the athlete he is today. Regardless, he has already made a difference, creating a brighter future for so many from his homeland.

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—Boris Villa '21



## Happenings

### WENDLING WINS COB DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Kelle Wendling '93, '97 MBA, received the 2022 Nathan M. Bisk College of Business Distinguished Alumni Award.

Having grown up in a small Rhode Island town, Wendling first moved to the Space Coast to pursue her undergraduate degree at Florida Tech. During that time, she accepted an internship with Harris Corp., today L3Harris Technologies Inc., where she has remained ever since, rising through the ranks for about 30 years.



Today, Wendling is president of Mission Networks within L3Harris Technologies' Aviation Systems segment, overseeing communications and networking solutions for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and international and national service providers. Having started as a technologist, the transition to corporate leader proved challenging, but with flexibility, drive, a positive company culture and several supportive mentors, she was up to it.

Still involved with her alma mater, Wendling spoke at the 2019 IMPACT Summit, weVENTURE's annual leadership conference focused on empowering women in the workplace. Her advice: Don't shy away from opportunity.

"That means own it. Have your responsibility. Have an opinion. ... We need to be stronger for ourselves and for others."

### MCCHRYSTAL TALKS RISK AT F. ALAN SMITH LECTURE SERIES



Stan McChrystal, the retired U.S. Army four-star general who led Joint Special Operations Command and later oversaw U.S. and international forces in Afghanistan, offered advice for students and insight into risk as he visited the Florida Tech campus and spoke at the F. Alan Smith Distinguished Lecture Series.

McChrystal is a senior fellow at Yale University's Jackson Institute for Global Affairs and co-founder and CEO of McChrystal Group, a leadership consulting firm where he advises senior executives at multinational corporations on navigating complex change and building stronger teams.

His presentation, "Understanding Risk and Mastering the Unknown," tapped into his most recent bestseller, *Risk: A User's Guide*, published in October 2021.

"How do we think about risk? When I was growing up, I always thought of risk as the function of the probability of something happening and the consequences if it does. If I climb up on the roof, what's the probability I fall off. If I fall off, what's the likelihood I am going to get badly hurt?" he said, adding that if probability rises and consequences stay low, or if consequences go up and probability was low, he assumed, "I wasn't going to be that unlucky person."

"But many times when both the consequences and probability of something went up, it got my attention. Suddenly, I bought insurance, I did what I could to mitigate it, I wore body armor—any number of things, depending up on the situation that was involved."

We are all, McChrystal said, experts on risk because we live with it from birth to death. That is not the same as being skilled at dealing with it, however. He cited the COVID-19 pandemic, to which we could have applied lessons learned in the 1918 Spanish flu, the polio vaccination push of the 1950s and, maybe most of all, the 76-page after-action report from a 2019 federal tabletop exercise exploring how a potential pandemic would play out.

"Yet almost none of the things we learned were executed in our response," he said.

"So, I am going to tell you I think we have a risk problem," McChrystal continued. "But I don't think that risk is necessarily the external thing we worry about. I am going to tell you, I think the greatest risk to us is actually us. It's our inability or unwillingness to prepare for and deal with risk effectively. Now, that's pretty sobering."

### WEVENTURE WBC HOSTS ANNUAL IMPACT SUMMIT



On Aug. 25, nearly 300 business owners and entrepreneurial leaders from across industries attended weVENTURE Women's Business Center's 2022 IMPACT Summit leadership development conference.

The annual networking and training event was hosted at the Hilton Garden Inn Cocoa Beach Oceanfront and featured inspiring speakers and breakout sessions followed by a networking luncheon.

The opening session featured the keynote address from Shari Elia, head of global business development at Amazon Web Services, during which she spoke about ways companies of all sizes can foster a culture of innovation. Participants then chose one of three breakout session tracks: personal development, communication or business strategy. Finally, the morning concluded with a panel discussion featuring two local entrepreneurs who dove into the "Shark Tank" program as seen on TV and emerged with golden tickets.

"This conference is designed specifically for female entrepreneurs and professional women from across all industries," said weVENTURE WBC executive director Kathryn Rudloff. "By offering three tracks for the breakout sessions, we wanted to allow everyone to have the opportunity to attend training directly applicable to their own career and work."

## FLORIDA TECH TEAM WINS FIRST PLACE AT IACBE CASE COMPETITION

Florida Tech students won first place in the IACBE Spring 2022 Live Case Competition for their business plan involving the Ohio-based pizza restaurant company Donatos.

The competition was offered in conjunction with the annual conference celebrating the 25th anniversary of the International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE) in Costa Mesa, California. It featured seven university teams challenged to develop a business strategy for Donatos that would build brand awareness and relevance among the 10- to 25-year-old demographic known as Gen Z.

The teams spent five weeks in March and April researching and applying best practices across marketing, social media communications, finance and corporate social responsibility. They also met directly with the Donatos marketing team and a franchise owner to understand the company and its strategy. The Florida Tech team also visited an Orlando Donatos to experience the company's signature 100-piece pepperoni pizza.

Florida Tech's team of Daniel Aizenberg, Farran Barker, Joshua Brathwaite and Nolan DeMayo produced a three-point plan: enhance the Donatos reward program (renamed ARK for Acts of Random Kindness to focus on customers and the community); offer Instagram and Discord social media campaigns; and introduce a cryptocurrency "round-up" investing program using the RoundlyX tool.

One of the judges was so impressed with the presentation that he contacted one of the Florida Tech students, Muth said. They are now discussing potential internship opportunities.

"The case study competition is a unique way for students to hone their critical thinking and communication skills in preparation for a career in business," said Phyllis Okrepkie, IACBE vice president of operations and an adjunct faculty member at Florida Tech who attended the conference. "As an IACBE staff member and faculty member, I am incredibly proud of the work that the Florida Tech team did to win the 2022 CapSource-IACBE Case Study competition."

## PATEL PARTNERS WITH ALUMNUS AT BRPH TO TEACH DATA LITERACY

This summer, Florida Tech partnered with BRPH to offer Data Visualization, a new graduate-level course. Jignya Patel, COB assistant professor and director of the Business Applied program, collaborated with Dave Mercier '86, '92 MBA, to solve an employee utilization problem for a fictitious 25-person architecture and engineering company.

"I thoroughly enjoyed partnering with Dr. Patel to offer a real-life case study to the students. Dr. Patel's and the students' enthusiasm made the learning experience fun, motivating and rewarding," Mercier said. "The students were engaged, and their final report out on the project far



exceeded my expectations. Several of the students would stay after a three-hour class to continue the discussions about business intelligence."

Working in teams, students used leading data analytics and visualization tool Microsoft Power BI to prototype datasets, implement data models and develop data visualizations to create a dashboard for senior management's decision making.

"I found these two classes (business analytics and data visualization) really insightful," said Giacomo Bandini, an MBA student who took the course. "I'm sure they are going to be super valuable for my future. Moreover, the projects that involve actual companies always bring a lot of value to me."

## FORTUNE NAMES FLORIDA TECH ONLINE MBA AMONG TOP 100

For the second consecutive year, Florida Tech's online MBA program has been ranked among the nation's best by *Fortune* magazine.

This year, Florida Tech was one of just six Florida universities on the exclusive list, which featured just over 100 online MBA programs nationwide.

"To help guide the next generation of business leaders, *Fortune* found online MBA programs that not only see their graduates land good jobs, but also have a track record of placing alumni into the highest echelons of the Fortune 500," *Fortune*'s Lance Lambert wrote in an article accompanying the rankings.

The *Fortune* rankings join a host of accolades for Florida Tech's online business programs, including in *U.S. News & World Report*'s 2021 Best Online Bachelor's Programs, The *Princeton Review*'s Top 50 Online MBA programs and *Great Business Schools* list of top online cybersecurity MBA programs.

## STUDENTS PLACE SECOND AT INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMPETITION

COB students Tommy Nguyen, Joshua Brathwaite, Sebastien Cayemitte and Chad Blasius comprised the Florida Tech team, advised by instructor Tim Muth, that won second place in a recent International Business Case Competition sponsored by Georgia State University's Center for International Business Education and Research.

During the competition, teams from colleges in Texas, Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina, Washington, D.C., and Florida prepared 15-minute videos with their recommendations regarding Uzbekistan's bottled water industry and the competition between multinational companies (Nestle, Coca-Cola) and local companies (Family Group, Hydrolife). The top three teams then conducted 25-minute live Zoom presentations to a panel of judges from industry and academia.

Florida Tech's team proposed a three-part solution to increasing Family Group's market share: brand value by standardizing quality and utilizing traditional packaging design; a bottled water subscription plan for families; and a retail/wholesale partnership involving private labeling.



**Nathan M. Bisk**  
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## Doctor of Business Administration Program Update

### DBA STUDENT ON JUGGLING LIFE AND GRAD SCHOOL

In its September/October 2022 issue, *EverythingBrevard.com* magazine published “The Challenging Juggle of Graduate School,” a first-person piece by Kathryn Rudloff, executive director of weVENTURE Women’s Business Center and a current Florida Tech Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) student. In the piece, Rudloff discusses reasons for pursuing a graduate degree—necessity, growth, pivoting, the economy—the evolving workforce, balancing work, family and school life, and essentially, how she does it all.

“Personally, I’m embracing my dirty house, teaching my kids to do their own laundry and empowering my staff to do more without me micromanaging them,” Rudloff says in the piece.

She also describes why Florida Tech’s DBA program structure works for her.

“While online virtual programs have come a long way and are proving to be popular, some students (like me) prefer in-person opportunities to engage directly,” she says. “The Florida Tech DBA program is designed as an executive program, meaning we spend one weekend a month together for in-person instruction. The rest of the month is self-paced, working through the mountains of reading and writing assignments.”

Her 4:30 a.m. wake-up six days a week, constant multitasking and family-friend-fun time sacrifice is not always easy, she says, but as her husband and favorite podcast title often remind her, “We Can Do Hard Things.”

“We all take on hard things every single day. But that means we have also already survived our hardest, worst day ever, which should give us confidence that we can take on today’s challenges, too,” Rudloff says. “While I am only one year into the program and question daily the sustainability of the pace I am running, so far I am making it work.”



### AOM DOCTORAL CONSORTIUM

Congratulations to Eric Demirjian '08 M.S., a DBA student who was recently accepted into the Academy of Management (AOM) Annual Worldwide Conference, CTO Division, Doctoral Consortium, for which only one candidate from each school was selected.

### RECENT PUBLICATION: NUCLEAR POWER MARKETING

Congratulations to DBA student Steve Dansky on the acceptance of his paper, “Marketing Challenges for the Next Generation of Nuclear Power: Has Deregulation Eliminated the Nuclear Option?” Dansky and professor Andrew Cudmore submitted the paper, which has been accepted for publication in *IEMS Conference Proceedings*.