

May 2022

**Spring/Summer 2022**

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### **Recommended Citation**

(2022) "Spring/Summer 2022," *Business Exchange*: Vol. 1: Iss. 17, Article 1.

Available at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/bx/vol1/iss17/1>

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# BUSINESS EXCHANGE

A PUBLICATION FOR DRIEHAUS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

SPRING/SUMMER 2022

**REAL-WORLD  
CONSULTING PROJECTS  
PREPARE STUDENTS  
FOR CAREERS**



**DEPAUL UNIVERSITY**

**DRIEHAUS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**



# Business Education Reimagined

This July the Driehaus College of Business will welcome Sulin Ba, the Treibick Family Endowed Chair in information technology at the University of Connecticut, as our new dean. Professor Ba and I are working closely on a leadership transition that supports the continuing success of our college, and she looks forward to joining DePaul, connecting with our alumni and getting to know the Chicago business community. I invite you to read more about our incoming dean in this issue.

Reflecting on my tenure as interim dean, I'm thankful to have had the opportunity to lead a college community that cares so deeply about our students and the DePaul mission. With support from our alumni and the business community, we have overcome many challenges caused by the pandemic and advanced student success in a number of ways:

**Reimagining our curriculum.** Our faculty will launch a revised bachelor's in business program this fall with guidance from alumni and business leaders on the skills that make graduates successful. The updated program emphasizes analytical skills for data-based decision-making, entrepreneurial thinking that drives innovation, and socially responsible leadership. Experiential learning opportunities—such as the real-world student consulting projects highlighted in this issue's feature story—continue to be an important part of all of our programs, giving students a chance to apply the skills they've learned. In the coming year we also plan to expand opportunities for alumni and others to refresh their professional skills through new certificate programs offered by our Hay Center for Leadership Development.

**Leveraging technology to enhance learning.** DePaul has invested significantly in new classroom technologies,



and our faculty members have embraced training that empowers them to teach engagingly in person, online and in hybrid modes. We are offering courses in a wider range of modalities that provide students the flexibility they need to complete their business education while fulfilling work and family responsibilities. This spring our college launched a Business Education in Technology and Analytics (BETA) Lab to accelerate the infusion of technology into our courses, research and community collaborations.

**Elevating student and faculty engagement.** We are focusing more resources on delivering a personalized, engaging and compassionate educational experience to our students through a new role at our college, associate dean for student success; fresh collaborations with DePaul's admission and student affairs offices; and faculty mentoring programs.

**Strengthening business and alumni connections.** This academic year I've worked with our Business Advisory Council to re-envision the role of this group of prominent alumni and business leaders in supporting our college and its students. Their recommendations provide new ideas for engaging council members in the life of our college and leveraging their insights and connections to benefit our students. We're proud to profile alumnus Brian Ruben, one of the council members who helped lead this initiative, in this issue.

I leave the leadership of the Driehaus College of Business in good hands and with confidence about the future.

Thomas Donley  
Interim Dean  
Driehaus College of Business

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On the cover: Marketing Consulting Club faculty advisor James Mourey (second from left) with student members Timothy Tran, Julia Adams and Faith Ramos. (Photo by Kathy Hillegonds)

## Scholarship Honors Legacy of Professor Sandra Shelton

Last fall the Driehaus College of Business lost one of its most influential faculty members. Sandra Shelton, an accountancy professor who mentored PhD candidates of color across the nation, died on Oct. 4. Shelton taught auditing and corporate governance at DePaul for 27 years, and as one of the founding members of the nonprofit PhD Project, she encouraged students of color to become business professors, including several who now teach at DePaul. In 2016 she was named KPMG/Neil F. Casson Endowed Professor of Accountancy in recognition of her contributions to business education and the accounting profession. DePaul has established the Sandra Shelton Memorial Scholarship to honor Shelton and carry on her legacy. Learn more about Shelton's lasting impact and the scholarship at [give.depaul.edu/SandraShelton](https://give.depaul.edu/SandraShelton).



Sandra Shelton (Photo by Kathy Hillegonds)



## Revised Bachelor's in Business Degree Curriculum Debuts This Fall

The Driehaus College of Business has reimaged its [Bachelor of Science in Business \(BSB\)](#) core curriculum with input from employers about the knowledge and skills they seek when recruiting graduates. Debuting this fall, the revised program begins with three new courses—Business Fundamentals and the Entrepreneurial Mindset, Business Analytics, and Business for Social Good.

"By completing this series of courses early in the program, students gain an immediate understanding of how business organizations operate and the range of potential career fields they can pursue, while developing highly marketable analytical skills and a mindset for becoming innovative, socially responsible business professionals," says Thomas Donley, interim dean of the business college. The revised program also provides more flexibility for students to take electives and add minors tailored to their individual career ambitions.

## School of Accountancy & MIS Names New Director

Hui Lin, an associate professor and international program administrator, has been named the next director of the School of Accountancy & MIS. Lin will assume her new role July 1. A member of the school's faculty since 2008, Lin led the college's international degree and study abroad programs as director of the Driehaus Center for International Business this academic year. She also serves DePaul as an associate director of regional initiatives, focusing on student recruitment and alumni engagement in China. Lin's teaching and research expertise is in knowledge management, accounting information systems and internal controls.

"My priorities as director will be to attract more students to accounting, ensure resources and support for our faculty and staff, and engage and collaborate with our alumni," Lin says. She succeeds Ray Whittington, who will return to teaching full time after serving two tenures as director of the school, before and after his 10-year run as dean of the business college from 2006 to 2017.



Hui Lin (Photo by Kathy Hillegonds)





Incoming DrieHaus College of Business Dean Sulin Ba was introduced to the Chicago alumni community at a spring business alumni reception that attracted nearly 300 attendees. (Photo by Kathy Hillegonds)

## Sulin Ba Appointed DrieHaus College of Business Dean

**S**ulin Ba, a higher education leader dedicated to fostering research, interdisciplinary collaboration and global learning, has been appointed dean of the DrieHaus College of Business, effective July 1.

Ba is currently a professor and the Treibick Family Endowed Chair in information technology at the University of Connecticut. In her nearly 20 years at UConn's School of Business, she has held multiple leadership roles, most recently as the associate dean of academic and research support. She also served as the executive director of the Connecticut Information Technology Institute and faculty director of the Center for International Business Education and Research.

"Sulin immediately impressed me with her deep understanding of today's higher education landscape," says Provost Salma Ghanem. "She recognizes what a leading business school like DrieHaus must do to develop our students into talented global citizens who can make positive changes in the world. Her collaborative leadership style, visionary ideas and dedication to inclusive learning will without a doubt benefit DePaul University."

As associate dean, Ba championed faculty research. She successfully implemented new policies and procedures to increase productivity and incentivize high-quality research. In order to better support junior faculty, she



Sulin Ba joins the DrieHaus College of Business as dean on July 1. (Photo by Jeff Carrion)

**"SHE RECOGNIZES WHAT A LEADING BUSINESS SCHOOL LIKE DRIEHAUS MUST DO TO DEVELOP OUR STUDENTS INTO TALENTED GLOBAL CITIZENS WHO CAN MAKE POSITIVE CHANGES IN THE WORLD. HER COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE, VISIONARY IDEAS AND DEDICATION TO INCLUSIVE LEARNING WILL WITHOUT A DOUBT BENEFIT DEPAUL UNIVERSITY."**

—Provost Salma Ghanem

initiated and implemented the business school's first mentoring program. Ba also launched several initiatives to foster collaboration across campus. Recognizing the importance of preparing students for the global economy, she led the development of dual-degree programs in business, Spanish and German studies. Each program includes a semester abroad at a partner university, as well as an overseas internship component.

As innovation plays an increasingly important role in the U.S. economy, Ba made it a priority for students to have more opportunities to engage in entrepreneurship and experiential learning programs across UConn and outside the university. She is a founding member of the board of directors for Innovation Place Hartford, an initiative jointly funded by the State of Connecticut and other public and private sectors to catalyze technological innovation. As part of the board's work, she brought together UConn's Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, the University of Hartford, Trinity College and other organizations to launch several entrepreneurship programs, such as the InsurTech Accelerator and Ignite Hartford. Both programs are embraced by students as well as major insurance companies in Hartford.

"Universities can and must be engines of innovation for society. Business education is at an inflection point," Ba says. "With its strong connection to the vibrant Chicago business community, the Driehaus College of Business has an outstanding foundation to be on the forefront of the rapidly changing business education landscape, to be a driver of economic growth and social mobility. I am honored to be the next dean of the Driehaus College. I look forward to working with the talented faculty, staff and students to elevate the college to even further levels of success."



Interim Business Dean Thomas Donley welcomed Sulin Ba to DePaul by presenting her with a Driehaus College of Business jacket. (Photo by Kathy Hillegonds)

Strengthening diversity and inclusion among faculty, staff and students is a high priority for Ba. Through fundraising at UConn, Ba created a mentorship program to help underserved high school students find a pathway to college.

"There is great alignment between my experience and DePaul's dedication to making education accessible to all," Ba says. "I am eager to continue working toward providing inclusive access to a world-class business education."

An award-winning researcher who publishes regularly in leading academic journals, Ba is an honorary distinguished professor at the School of Management at Fudan University in Shanghai, China. She also has previously served as a distinguished visiting professor at University of Mannheim in Germany, as well as an assistant professor in the Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California. She has a PhD in management information systems and a master's in library and information sciences from the University of Texas at Austin. Ba earned her bachelor's degree in library and information sciences from Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, China.

Ghanem thanked Thomas Donley, who has served as interim dean since July 2020, for leading the college through one of the most challenging periods for DePaul and higher education due to the pandemic. "I am incredibly grateful for all he has done to support our faculty, staff and students during these challenging times. The Driehaus College of Business is poised for much future success, thanks to his leadership."





# Real-World Consulting Projects Prepare Students for Careers

By Jaclyn Lansbery

Anissa Patterson (seated fifth on the left) and DePaul sports business classmates review fan letters as part of a customer service consulting project for the Chicago Cubs baseball organization. (Photo by Kathy Hillegonds)

Anissa Patterson (BUS '21) took her first sports management class at the Driehaus College of Business three summers ago. At the time, Patterson was earning a business administration degree and unsure of what field she wanted to pursue, but she had always been an avid sports fan. So when she learned about a business class that would allow her to work directly with the Chicago Cubs organization, she signed up immediately.

During the eight-week class, Patterson gained a first-hand look at what it would mean to work as a consultant who provides expertise for a specific problem. Students in the undergraduate course, taught by Andy Clark, director of DePaul's sports business program, partnered with the Chicago Cubs Service Excellence Program and became "secret shoppers" who tested the quality of all aspects of the professional baseball team's customer service. The class showed Patterson not only what it would be like to work in the sports industry, but also how to identify and solve problems for organizations.

"It was really nice to be treated like a professional during my experiential learning classes with Professor Clark," Patterson says. "It wasn't just making a presentation in class—you're presenting to real execs who work in the industry. That was a great experience to have and to put on a résumé, and it helped me get a job."

Today, Patterson works as the client services coordinator in partnerships for the Chicago Wolves, a professional ice hockey team playing in the American Hockey League. She credits her classes not only for helping her gain marketable skills and experience but also for helping her learn how to communicate with multiple

stakeholders who have different perspectives, a skill that consultants must utilize when taking on projects.

"When you are consulting with someone," she says, "you have to make sure you're communicating on a level that everyone understands."

## Growing Demand for Consulting Skills

Since 2012, the number of management consultants working in the United States has continued to increase every year. According to Statista, which specializes in market and consumer data, 734,000 consultants worked in the U.S. in 2020. Although consultants can provide a range of expertise, graduates with business degrees offer a blend of teamwork skills and business acumen that employers often seek. According to a Graduate Management Admission Council survey, 95% of consulting sector recruiters said they expected to hire MBA graduates in 2021.

Given this demand, the Driehaus College of Business is actively preparing students to enter the workforce poised for consulting careers or to use consulting skills to increase their success within organizations. A recent college survey found that 76% of the faculty incorporate consulting, case studies and other real-world projects into classwork.

Associate Professor of Marketing James Mourey serves as faculty advisor of the student DePaul Marketing Consulting Club, which has taken on consulting projects for companies ranging from alumni-owned startups to national companies, such as Philz Coffee. He also teaches a marketing capstone course that challenges student

teams to propose solutions to organizational problems outlined in business cases for well-known companies and brands.

Exposure to real-world client work through classroom and student organizations “transitions our students from passive students to active, prepared practitioners of our discipline,” Mourey says.

Mourey, who worked as a consultant in Los Angeles before completing his doctorate, says he believes business students bring a different, holistic perspective as a function of their education and training.

“Importantly, though, having experience lends credibility that is important for consultants,” he says. “Formal education is one thing, but getting your hands dirty in your discipline exposes you to myriad issues, challenges and problems people in your field face, as well as potential solutions that work or don’t work, all of which makes you an informed resource in a consulting role.”

## Solving Human Resources Challenges

For Rachel Collins (MBA ’21), gaining hands-on experience meant learning more about the human resources industry through a consulting lens. For several years Collins worked in a variety of events and sales roles and eventually found her passion for working with people in human resources. She came to DePaul after hearing about the human resources graduate program and decided to pursue an MBA.

To gain more real-world experience, Collins decided to enroll in a consulting skills course, taught by Associate Professor Jaclyn Jensen, which allows students to work on quarter-long projects with real clients. In winter 2021, Collins worked with four other students to help United Airlines develop a hiring and retention framework for the Chicago-based airline’s human resources division. Collins worked closely with United Airlines HR professionals to identify their needs and then interviewed several of the organization’s employees. At the end of the class, Collins and her team presented their findings to United Airlines’ chief learning officer.

The project, although challenging at times, helped her become more comfortable with leading interviews and problem-solving. “Sometimes in consulting, the company you’re helping thinks they know what the issue is but in reality there may be a lot of underlying issues,” says Collins, who now works in talent acquisition for a Chicago-based trading firm. “I think that kind of came up in this project, and that was a big challenge for us. It made us learn to be flexible and be willing to [initially] fail. But sometimes that’s okay because it means you’re getting closer and closer to the end result.”

## Consulting Expertise “A Big Differentiator”

As a graduate of DePaul’s Sales Leadership Program, Matt Almeranti (BUS ’18) had an opportunity to utilize consulting skills early in his career. Almeranti credits his



Rachel Collins (MBA ’21) worked on a student consulting project for United Airlines’ human resources division.



A class project inspired Matt Almeranti (BUS ’18), now a LinkedIn regional account manager, to become a sales professional. (Photo by Mike Nowak)

experience in an analytical sales course for preparing him for his current role as regional account manager for global clients at LinkedIn.

The undergraduate course challenged students to address a business case scenario in which they were consultants tasked with persuading 3M corporation to buy Salesforce software. While the case was hypothetical, the students had to make a presentation to actual Salesforce employees who came to their class. Almeranti says his experience with the class was “single-handedly the biggest differentiator I had coming out of college,” igniting his passion for sales and teaching him to apply consulting skills in his career.

Although his current role at LinkedIn is in sales, Almeranti says it’s important to be seen as a collaborator with expertise that clients can rely on. “When you are working at a company like LinkedIn where you’re so strongly positioned in the market, coming off as a consultant and a trusted advisor and a problem-solver is much, much more impactful than someone who is trying to jam product down someone’s throat the entire time,” he says.

As a consultant, “if you build trust, you can earn responsibility and really scale your career, whether that be for internal projects or externally with customers,” he says.



A portrait of Brian Ruben, a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light blue shirt. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm lighting.

# Alumnus Brian Ruben: “Paying It Forward Is the DePaul Way”

By Nadia Alfadel Coloma

As an advisory council task force chair, Brian Ruben is helping the business college re-envision how it can engage the strengths, talents and industry connections of alumni and friends on the council. (Photo by Kathy Hillegonds)

When Brian Ruben (MSA '95) started his graduate program at the School of Accountancy & MIS nearly 30 years ago—right around the time he began working at [Deloitte](#) in Chicago—he wasn't sure which direction he wanted to take in his professional career. He chose accounting because “it's the language of business and every organization needs a good accounting function.” But something sparked for him in the DePaul classroom as he listened to guest lecturers talk about their careers.

“It was inspiring to hear directly from professionals in accounting and learn how they navigated their careers and built their networks, because I was at a stage where I needed to do that from scratch,” Ruben says. “It made an impression on me, seeing a successful professional share their knowledge and having access to that knowledge. That's something DePaul does really well, leveraging business connections to bring real-world experiences into the classroom.”

Fast-forward years later and Ruben is the one speaking to DePaul students, sharing lessons from his own career journey. Whether he's in the classroom as an adjunct instructor or guest lecturer, or at a student event as a panelist or recruiter for Deloitte, where he is currently an audit and assurance partner, Ruben is an active and influential business alumnus, following a mantra of

“giving back” that he says is the DePaul way.

“I know so many alumni who continued to stay connected to DePaul after graduating, giving back through service or dollars, and over the course of my career, I've benefited from the time many of these people have taken out of their busy careers to mentor me,” he says. “Now that I'm in a stage in my career where I feel like I can make a difference, I feel a responsibility to do so.”

Ruben is a proud donor and champion of DePaul. He helps recruit DePaul students and even led a fundraising initiative as part of the university's annual [Blue Demon Challenge](#) in 2021. His efforts helped raise more than \$300,000 (and counting) from individuals and the Deloitte Foundation to fund student scholarships and faculty support.

“It was a great way to bring DePaul alumni together at Deloitte and very exciting to see hundreds of alumni in offices around the country rally around something we all have in common,” he says.

Most recently, Ruben supported DePaul's participation in a Deloitte MADE (Making Accounting Diverse and Equitable) initiative, the Deloitte Foundation Accounting Scholars Program. This [scholarship program](#), for students pursuing a fifth-year master's in accounting, is part of an

**"MY CONNECTIONS WITH DEPAUL HAVE BENEFITED MY PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS IN MANY WAYS. IF I CAN BE HELPFUL AND PROMOTE DEPAUL AND GIVE BACK INSIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDENTS WHO ARE SITTING WHERE I ONCE SAT, THAT'S REALLY SATISFYING AND REWARDING FOR ME. I HOPE I CAN INSPIRE OTHERS TO DO THE SAME."**

–Brian Ruben (MSA '95)

effort to increase representation of racially and ethnically diverse students in accounting.

Ruben also has helped faculty members incorporate the latest business innovations into the curriculum. When DePaul Finance Associate Professor [Lamont Black](#) approached Ruben to collaborate on designing a course on blockchain, Ruben obliged, bringing in his blockchain Deloitte colleagues to provide the knowledge and coaching needed to help develop the course, which is now in its third year.

"I love that DePaul faculty aren't lecturing out of a book and are truly dedicated to being at the forefront of the most cutting-edge information to bring back to students," he says. "I think it's important to contribute to that, as a business professional, for the next generation."

One of Ruben's most long-standing contributions has been his service on the Driehaus College of Business Advisory Council, a 60-member group of business leaders who offer industry insight and resources to the college. Ruben has been involved in the council for 10 years, and in his role as a council task force chair this academic year, he has been instrumental in re-envisioning how the business college can engage the strengths, talents and industry connections of council members to support the college and its students.

Encouraged by a former mentor, who also happens to be a DePaul alumnus, Ruben has used his time on the council not only as another way to give back, but also as an opportunity to expand his own professional experiences.

"Through all these experiences, I've learned so much about myself, the challenges that academia and universities face, and how to help another organization grow. It's not all just about giving, giving, giving. That's certainly a priority, but you also have to get something in return," says Ruben.

"My connections with DePaul have benefited my personal and professional success in many ways. If I can be helpful and promote DePaul and give back insights and opportunities to students who are sitting where I once sat, that's really satisfying and rewarding for me. I hope I can inspire others to do the same."



**"I remember my freshman year when I had no idea how to pay for college or how financial aid worked. Then I received a scholarship that really helped me focus on my education instead of worrying about student loan payments. DePaul saved me when I needed financial help, and it's made my educational experience ten times better!"**

**—Yuliya, Finance (BSB)**

When you donate today to the Driehaus College of Business, you help students like Yuliya focus on their studies and not the financial burden.

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