

WOODBURY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Where Your Legacy Begins

Fall 2024 Newsletter



School of Business Initiates 8th Annual Executive in Residence Service

WUSB - Rotating Executives in Residence – Fall 2024



9/12: 9:00am – 12:00pm	9/18: 11:00am – 2:00pm	9/24: 12:00pm-3:00pm	10/3: 9:00am – 12:00pm	10/15: 11:00am-2:00pm
 Sundeep Vaghasia President and CEO, VBanks Management, Inc. Real Estate & Hospitality Professional	 Wayne Ward Sr. VP & Regional Manager, Greater Southern California West Region California Bank & Trust	 Noam Lotan Investor and Financial Advisor Mentor to multiple privately held Technology Companies	 Nick Mitchell Executive Vice President, Chief Legal Officer, Logix Federal Credit Union	 Shawn Morey Entrepreneur Realtor and Principal Broker, Dwell Real Estate group
10/24: 12:00pm-3:00pm	10/30: 11:00am-2:00pm	11/5: 10:00am-1:00pm	11/14: 12:00pm-3:00pm	11/20: 9:00am-12:00pm
 Nowell Grossman Senior VP, Production Finance, NBC Universal Television	 Emil Davtyan Founder and CEO, D.Law	 Ed Spiegel CEO and major shareholder, Cast & Crew Entertainment Services (Ret.)	 Mary Akpovi Founder CEO, Mary Q. Akpovi, CPA, Inc.,	 Ahdee Abramson Serial Entrepreneur Founder, Poi Ventures, Educator

This fall marks the 8th year that the School of Business has successfully completed its semester-based *rotating Executive in Residence program*. The program is aimed at offering business and other interested Woodbury students access to local professionals for insights, career advice, and mentorship. Ten Board members from a wide range of Los Angeles-area companies generously donated their time for one-on-one sessions with students to answer career-focused questions. Along with sharing their valuable experience, they assisted students in establishing connections in the industries in which they work, including entertainment, real estate, banking, accounting, investment, non-profit industries, and others.

The EiR program has been successfully implemented since fall 2017 and is currently in its eighth consecutive year. The benefits of this program have been described in various outlets, including [AACSB's Insights](#).

DIVERSE VOICES RISING 2024



Diverse Voices Rising: Celebrating Women in Leadership

2024 marks the second year that the School of Business organized “Diverse Voices Rising”, an event focused on celebrating leadership. This year’s event focused on women’s leadership, and brought together members from a variety of professions, backgrounds, and generations to honor the International Day of the Girl and to celebrate & polish their leadership skills.

The evening had multiple attractions that were highly appreciated, such as a great opportunity for networking, which was optimally utilized; break-out sessions on entrepreneurship and resume building; the opportunity to get professional headshots taken, delicious food, and a strong panel of female leaders from the local community, interviewed by School of Business Dean Joan Marques. The panelists are projected below.



Sonya Blake
President & CEO
The Valley Economic
Alliance



Alondra Lopez
Senior Field
Representative for
Assemblymember Laura
Friedman, District 44



Jamie Keyser
CEO
Burbank Chamber
of Commerce



Mariya Palanjian
CEO Globafly &
Create Why



Tina Odjaghian
TBI Lawyer, CEO
Odjaghian Law Group

Accounting Department Organized Meet the Firms 2024



As has been the case every Fall semester, the School of Business' Accounting Department held its annual *Meet the Firms* event, this time again in virtual format. The choice for this format was based on enabling representatives from a variety of firms to attend optimally.

The firms that participated in this year's event were: Ernst & Young, LLP; Hutchinson and Bloodgood, LLP; Internal Revenue Service (IRS); Moss Adams, LLP, Kelly & Partners, LLP, and Mark Cohen CPA & Tax Services.

Aside from the external executives, several Woodbury alumni attended the session and shared insights into the accounting profession. Among the alumni were, Jeff Neumeister (Kelly & Partners), Ruxandra Badilas (Ernst & Young), Catrina Blackwell (Moss Adams), and Yuriana Aguirre (IRS). The firm representatives provided insight on the various positions that could be aspired, the



advantages and challenges to expect, Artificial Intelligence and its effects on the accounting profession, and described a "typical day in the life of an accountant", which turned out to be not so typical after all. Several of the company reps shared their contact information for the students to use if interested in an internship or job.

The Creative Minds Conference 2024



On Thursday, November 21st, the eighth annual Creative Minds Conference was held in the Fletcher Jones' Auditorium. This event, which is considered one of the School of Business' flagship events, is a joint initiative from the

School's Advisory Board, the Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization (CEO), and the Dean's Office. This was the third year that students from local community colleges were invited to attend, and thereby network with business leaders and participate in the "*So You Think You Can Sell?*" contest. A large group of students from Pasadena City College and Los Angeles Valley College contributed to the contest by enthusiastically showing off their selling skills.



"So You Think You Can Sell" brought about the amusement it never misses to instill in the audience, as they listened to the widely diverse one-minute sales pitches of the brave participants. Between the two rounds of the selling contest, there was a round of Kahoot!, which enabled all participants to compete for some appealing gift baskets.

The judging panel consisted of advisory board members, Ahdee Abramson and Lilit Davtyan; incoming board member, Tina Alleguez; Alumni Advisory council chair Sofia Toro, and alumna Rhonda Garrett.

All prizes were sponsored by members of the School's advisory board.



The Community College winners were:

1. Jake Hofman (\$500.00) – sponsored by Nick Mitchell
2. Hank Lam (\$250.00) – sponsored by Neil Sherman
3. Yousef Elhawary (\$250.00) – sponsored by Ed Spiegel
4. Daniel Tomelic (\$100.00) – sponsored by Nick Mitchell

The Woodbury University winners were:

1. Hannah Waldron (\$1,000.00), sponsored by Ahdee Abramson
2. Aca Xie (\$750.00), sponsored by Emil Davtyan
3. Oliver Landers (\$500.00), sponsored by Neil Sherman
4. Norlyn Hooriani (\$250.00), sponsored by Noam Lotan
5. Ana Valencia (250.00), sponsored by Nick Hacopian



The bonus prize, a two-night staycation at the Hampton Inn, valued at \$500.00 and sponsored by Sundee Vaghashia, was won by Charbel Slaibi. All participants of the contest were eligible for this prize.

The videoclip to the left presents a snapshot of the 2024 Creative Minds Conference



The School of Business is proud to announce its newest advisory board member, Lilit Davtyan.

Lilit is a distinguished leader and visionary in the fields of technology, performance marketing, digital transformation, and financial consulting. For the past 10 years she served as the Chief Executive Officer at Phonexa, a leading performance marketing software company with over 200 employees.

Lilit's leadership has been pivotal in scaling Phonexa's impact and success.

In addition to her role at Phonexa, Lilit is the Founder of DrHR, an AI-powered HR platform that transforms human resources through cutting-edge technology. She also founded Davella, a financial consulting firm renowned for its strategic insights and client-focused solutions. Her expertise extends to digital transformation through her partnership with Alon Sera, where she helps businesses navigate and implement comprehensive digital strategies. Lilit's influence in the industry is further evidenced by her involvement with various prestigious organizations. She serves as an Executive Board Member of R.E.A.C.H and is an active member of Forbes Business Counsel, Jonathan Club, and Chief.com. Additionally, she holds a key position on the Board of the Jonathan Club Executive Women's Forum, advocating for women's leadership and professional development. A Certified Public Accountant licensed by the California Board of Accountancy, Lilit holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Woodbury University (2012) and a Master's Degree in Business Tax from the University of Southern California.

STUDENT NEWS

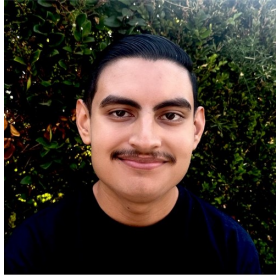


In the first week of November, CEO President, Erandy Miranda Peregrino, and Vice President, Nick Ruiz, both Management students in the School of Business, had the opportunity to attend the 41st Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization Global Conference in Tampa, FL. The two student leaders had the chance to network with like-minded individuals who share their passion for entrepreneurship and innovation. At this memorable event, they were able to witness the Global Pitch Competition and get a glimpse of future products and services that will be coming to the market over the next few years.



Erandy Miranda Peregrino

Erandy and Nick enjoyed listening to the many stories and tips on what it takes to become a successful entrepreneur. The topics covered keys to networking, marketing, and even manifestation, these talks allowed the attendees to envision the aspects of being a well-rounded individual and utilizing that to their own business advantage. Every year, the trip to Tampa is sponsored by CEO club advisor and entrepreneur faculty, Dr. Paul Sabolic, who also



Nick Ruiz

guides the Woodbury CEO chapter in organizing the annual Baron Business Plan competition in Spring.

ALUMNI NEWS



Uriel Ávila (MBA, 2016), recently accepted the position of Sr. ERP Business Analyst Supporting Finance at *Rocket Lab*, an end-to-end space company that delivers reliable launch services, spacecraft, satellite components, and on-orbit management.



Narine Galstian (MBA, Int'l Bus.), Chief Marketing Officer with SADA, was recently recognized as "Woman of the Week" by the Women of the Channel. She was invited to the LA Times' *"Breaking Through Barriers: Women Leading Marketing Innovation"* as one of four inspirational women in their 2024 forum and leadership awards event.



Armen Zabounian (BBA Marketing, 2012) has produced the track "Boiled Peanuts" on DoeChii's album "Alligator Bites Never Heal", which has been *nominated for a Grammy* in the category Best Rap Album.



Amy Malkchyan (MBA, 2017) started a new position as Sr. Manager, Medicare Advantage Marketing at *UCLA Health*, the public healthcare system affiliated with the University of California, Los Angeles, comprising a number of hospitals, UCLA School of Medicine, and an extensive primary care network in the



Jansen Lagman (MBA, 2012) recently accepted the position of National Account Manager at *Celebrity Cruises, Inc.*, offering a luxurious experience with modern ships, upscale accommodations, diverse dining options, and curated itineraries to captivating destinations worldwide.



Preni Barseghian (BBA, Accounting, 2019) was recently promoted to Senior Director at *MDRT* (Million Dollar Round Table), a global, independent association of the world's leading life insurance and financial services professionals from 85 nations and territories and more than 700 companies.



David Manikad (BBA, 2021; MBA, 2022), recently started his position as Licensed Real Estate Agent at *Luxury Collective*, a digital marketing agency focused on growing small businesses digital presence.



Meg Mananian (MBA, 2015), has been nominated as “Inspirational Women” at the 2024 Forum and Leadership Awards. Meg is the Chief Revenue Officer at MMR Consulting.



Roderick Harris Wright (BBA, Management, 2022), recently started a new position as Supply Manager at *Airbnb*, which operates an online marketplace for short-and-long-term homestays and experiences in various countries and regions.



FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Thought Leadership Presentations



“Parables of Leadership: Timeless Wisdom for Today’s Leaders” was the first talk in the thought-leadership series of this semester. This presentation happened on August 29 with **Dr. Dhiman** sharing parables from a wide variety of origins as a means to illustrate the important lessons attentive listeners could learn while enjoying the comforting atmosphere of storytelling. He thereby demonstrated the value of interpretation through conscious mental processing. This proven teaching methodology has been successful due to the reflective value of the stories’ content.

“Career Paths with Your Accounting Degree” was the topic of **Dr. Brett Kawada**’s well-received webinar, held on September 26. Dr. Kawada, who is widely connected with accountants in a variety of fields in- and outside of the US, invited a number of his associates to discuss the path toward their current area of focus in the accounting profession.

This forthcoming approach of revealing the multitude of options for those interested in the accounting field, was much appreciated, as it provided ample insights of options that might not have been entertained before.

“Collective Intelligence: Marketing for Creative Industries” was the title of Prof. **Wendy Bendon**’s webinar, held on October 24. Wendy explored how modern businesses succeed by leveraging collaboration and diverse expertise across multiple fields. Instead of operating in isolation, these ventures benefit from shared knowledge and innovation, which drive growth and adaptability in today’s competitive landscape. In the context of business innovation, collective intelligence thrives when behavioral economics principles are applied to understand and improve how groups make decisions.

Faculty Colloquia



The School of Business continues to organize its faculty colloquia to provide faculty a way to share their ongoing work and potentially inspire others toward collaboration.

On September 24, three scholars from the School of Business conducted presentations on the following topics:

Dr. Joan Marques (left) presented **“Artificial Intelligence and DEIS”**, in which she evaluated the most common advantages and concerns of Artificial intelligence as it relates to diversity, equity, inclusion and spirituality.

Dr. Brett Kawada (Middle) presented **“Tangled Titles”**, a fraud and internal controls case examining and verifying that rebate amounts related to real estate transfer are appropriate.



On October 29, scholars from Fashion Design and Liberal Arts presented on the following topics:

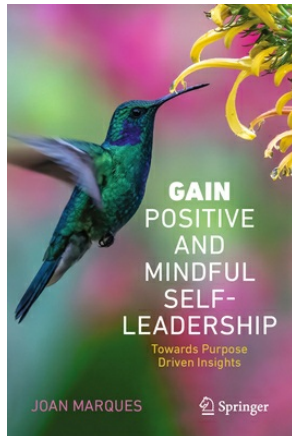
Dr. Sofi Khachmanyany (sitting- left) presented **“The Iconography of Catholicos’ Vestments in Armenian Medieval Miniature Painting”**, based on her book of the same name. She thereby discussed the structure, symbolism and historical development of religious vestments of the Catholicos-the head of the Armenian church.

Dr. Eugene Allevato (sitting – right) presented his postdoc project, **“From Socratic Maieutic to Freirean Problem-Posing: Evolving Pedagogical Strategies in Education”**, in which he explores how student engagement and critical thinking can be fostered through

Dr. Satinder Dhiman (right) presented “**Being Good and Being Happy: Eudaimonic Insights from Plato’s Republic**”, in which he explored pathways to human flourishing through virtuous living.

pedagogical strategies, tracing a path from the Socratic method of Maieutic to Freirean problem-posing. He highlighted how these approaches encourage students to actively participate in their own learning by questioning, reflecting, and engaging in critical thought.

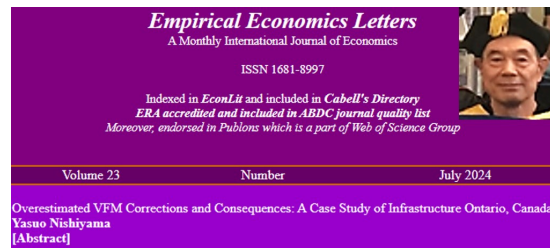
Dr. Joan Marques Published GAIN Positive and Mindful Self- Leadership



In September 2024, Dr. Marques’ most recent single-authored book, “GAIN Positive and Mindful Self-Leadership” was published through Springer, one of the world’s foremost academic publishers. The book is written in an informational tone, and proposes a new model, GAIN (**G**enerating, **A**ppreciating, **I**nternalizing, and **N**ewness) that can shift the negative thinking patterns with which many of us find ourselves struggling in today’s society. This book uses mindful practices to shift these negative thought patterns into constructive ones that reveal personal purpose and growth, and thus, positive self-leadership and development.

Dr. Yas Nishiyama Published in Empirical Economics Letters

Dr. Yasuo Nishiyama recently published a scholarly paper, following a peer review journal, in Empirical Economics Letters, Vol. 23, Iss. 7. The paper is titled, “*Overestimated VFM Corrections and Consequences: A Case Study of Infrastructure Ontario, Canada.*”



The Abstract of the article is included below:

For public infrastructure projects, public-private partnerships (PPPs) have been popular alternatives (and adopted) to traditional public procurement because of expected cost savings to the public sector. Expected cost savings derive primarily from risk transfer, i.e., transferring project risks (such as construction delays) to the private sector under PPP. There exists widespread criticism of overestimated risk transfer that results in favoring PPP over traditional procurement. Using the data of past PPPs administered by Infrastructure Ontario, Canada, and correcting possible overestimated risk transfer, this paper provides valuable insights into whether these past PPPs might not have been qualified as PPP delivery.

Professor Bendonì Coordinated Rodeo Drive Mentorship Project

Wendy Bendonì's *Innovation Think Tank* class for Marketing & Fashion Marketing

students enjoyed an unforgettable experience during a private lecture with world-renowned French contemporary artist *Richard Orlinski*. Known for his bold sculptures featuring clean lines, geometric shapes, and vibrant colors, Orlinski shared his expertise in blending art and marketing through collaborations with global brands such as Porsche, Hublot, Steve Aoki, and F1.



With over nine million followers, Orlinski continues to innovate, including his upcoming DJ performance with Marshmello at F1 Las Vegas on November 21st. The class also had the privilege of meeting *Scott Prescott*, founder and CEO of Auto Vault, a luxury vehicle concierge service. Prescott discussed the intersection of luxury automobiles and premium service, offering insights into the meticulous care and management required for elite car storage.

Additionally, *the Rodeo Drive Committee* president provided an in-depth look at luxury retail and career insights, highlighting Rodeo Drive's role as a global fashion and luxury hub. The visit coincided with the *Rodeo Drive Celebrates Fashion* event, which featured an outdoor exhibition of Orlinski's colorful resin animal sculptures displayed along the iconic palm-tree-lined street and within the Beverly Wilshire, A Four Seasons Hotel. This unique experience gave students a firsthand understanding of marketing, art, luxury retail, and high-end concierge services, showcasing the seamless integration of creativity and business innovation.



Dr. Joan Marques has taken on Chair Position of the Academy of Management's MSR Division

As part of a five-year commitment following a leadership election process, Dr. Joan Marques has recently taken on Chair's position of the Management, Spirituality and Religion (MSR) division of the Academy of Management. The Academy of Management (AOM) is the preeminent professional association for management and organization scholars. AOM's Divisions and Interest Groups (DIGs) reflect a broad range of member interests within 26 management disciplines. The MSR division, which currently consists of more than 650 members globally, actively advances the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion and encourages members to identify and eliminate barriers for greater equity.



Dr. Marques was elected into the MSR Leadership team in 2021, where she first served first as the Professional Development Workshop Chair, followed by the Scholarly Chair, the Chair-Elect, and currently, Chair in 2024-2025. Her last formal role in the leadership team will be as Past-Chair in '25-'26.

SUPPORT OPPORTUNITY: THE WOODBURY UNIVERSITY SOCIAL JUSTICE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Woodbury University has launched a [Social Justice Scholarship Fund](#) that provides scholarships to undergraduate students from underrepresented groups. This scholarship, as well as the [School of Business' Dean's Fund](#) and the [Atlas Diversity and Inclusion Fund](#) financially assist students who are in need of support in obtaining their higher education with us. Your kind support is very much appreciated.



Emphasis on High Quality and Readily Applicable Education



Granted to Less Than 5% of
Business Schools Globally



Rigor in Education and
Continuous Improvement



Cultivating Innovative Leaders for a Sustainable Society



Woodbury University School of Business | 7500 N. Glenoaks Blvd | Burbank, CA 91504-1052 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!