

WOODBURY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Where Your Legacy Begins

Summer 2025 Newsletter



Reinventing Yourself

2025 SUMMER SPEAKER SERIES



This year, the School of Business organized its seventh summer speaker series. The series was broadcast between July 31st and August 13th, and the presentations focused on preparing optimally for advancement in a rapidly changing and surprising professional world.

The speakers were strong advocates for making a positive difference in life, and represented Woodbury alumni, faculty, staff, and members of the School of Business' advisory board.

Topics covered:

- Resume Building - *Kenia Agaton* - Coordinator, Career Services and Community Outreach
- The Power of Networking - *Sofia Toro* - Vice Provost, Enrollment Management
- Furthering your Education - *Avo Mkhitarian* - Chief Operating Officer
- Navigating Career Change - *Tina Alleguez* - Managing Law Partner
- How AI can Advance your Career - *Wendy K. Bendoni* - Chair, Marketing Department
- Knowing when to Change Careers - *Sheila Moore* - Finance Faculty

Woodbury's School of Business Organized Fourth Annual Alumni Reunion



Woodbury University's School of Business alumni reunion, held on June 26 2025, was a happy gathering of alumni from 1959 through 2024! It was heartwarming to see up-'n-coming and seasoned alumni communicate about a wide range of interests. Advice was shared, stories were told, memories were shared, email addresses and phone numbers were exchanged, and smiles were everywhere. The culinary treats from Bon Appetite were praised, and the attractions were of high appeal. There was a wide variety of silent auction items and raffle items, donated by members from the School's Advisory Board and Alumni Advisory Council, as well as the advancement director. A fantastic collection of African art drew many admirers and eager buyers.

Keynote speaker, Wendy K. Bendoni, DBA, shared her fascinating story about the way her Woodbury University School of Business degree shaped her desire to become one of the nation's most prominent trend and social media analysts with a vivid interest in Artificial Intelligence and how it affects the world of marketing.



This year's alumni awards were granted to the following recipients:

- **Armen Zabounian** (BBA Marketing, 2012)– *Distinguished Alumnus* (Grammy Award winner, February 2025)
- **Shawn Morey** (BSc. Finance/Management, 2011) – *Devoted Alumnus* - for his long-time mentorship to budding entrepreneurs at Woodbury
- **Andrea Bruno** (BBA Management, 2016) – *Devoted Alumna* - for her tireless and resilient efforts to make every Woodbury event a great success.

- **Greg Lippe** (BSc. Acct., 1967) – *Flamekeeper* - for his impressive track record as a community leader, and his work as the founding Chair of the WUSB Advisory Board
- **Ed Spiegel** (BSc. Acct., 1960) – *Flamekeeper* - for his ongoing membership in the WUSB Advisory Board and his performance as a Rotating Executive in Residence

Additionally, WUSB Advisory Board's past Chair, Jane Skeeter, LEED AP, was honored with a plaque and a gift for her many years of dedicated service to the board.

The WUSB team thanks all alumni and friends who helped make this event a success and hopes to continue this tradition for years to come.



WUSB Alumni Advisory Council Webinar



Artificial Intelligence is everywhere today, and it isn't going away! On May 21st, three School of Business alumni shared their impressions of the advantages and concerns surrounding artificial intelligence. This well-attended webinar was presented by Dr. Wendy Bendoni (Chair of Fashion Marketing and Marketing at Woodbury University' School of Business), Matthew Middleton (Financial Advisor at Woodbury University), and Mariya Palanjian (Founder & CEO of Globafly, Inc.). The presenters discussed recent developments in the field of AI; the use of AI from the consumer's perspective and how individuals can use AI in their own lives; and AI from the business owner's perspective and how entrepreneurs can utilize AI in their businesses.

Student Highlight:

Caia Cibils Daher discusses the benefits of a required Internship



A joint student team from Woodbury University and the University of Redlands conducted a great presentation in May about the importance of internships and undergraduate research at the University of Redlands Board of Trustees meeting. We're extending a special "Thank You!" to Fashion Marketing student Caia Cibils Daher from Woodbury University's School of Business, who attended virtually (visible on the screen), and eloquently shared her insights about the advantage of a mandatory internship to prepare students for professional performance.

Gratitude as well to University of Redlands students Noah Moeller, Giselle Magaña, and Jasmine Nunez. The conversation was moderated by Provost Dr. Adrienne McCormick, assisted by Jim Dusserre, Director Office of Career and Professional Development at the University of Redlands.

Alumni News

Kristy Armas earns Prestigious Awards

Kristy Armas (BS MGMT 1993, MBA 2013) attained the 2025 Woman of Achievement Award for her nonprofit work over the years as the philanthropy officer at the Union Rescue Mission Los Angeles. In addition, Kristy also was presented the Woman of the Year Award!!!

Kristy is known for her passion in developing individuals who seek to become better versions of themselves. Her journey has led her to working in different industries amongst various business cultures and philosophies. These experiences have equipped her to excel as a leader. Regardless of the industry or occupation held, Kristy has consistently left an added-value footprint as a trace of her leadership. Woodbury University congratulates this exemplary alumna with her stellar accomplishments!





Jocelyn Ramirez wins Naturally LA Pitch Competition

Jocelyn Ramirez (MBA, 2010) won the Naturally LA pitch competition in June, entailing the grand prize and audience choice, and she is getting ready to pitch the next round in Denver at Newtopia!

As a proud daughter of immigrants, she confessed that she wouldn't even be standing in that room if it wasn't for her parents' struggle for these opportunities.

Jocelyn is a chef, published cookbook author, New York Times recipe contributor, entrepreneur and advocate for healthy food access in her community. She founded Todo Verde, one of LA's acclaimed plant-forward Latinx food businesses, with a mission to create delicious and healthy plant-forward food inspired by her Latinx roots.

Prenny Yaghobi takes on board positions

In January 2025, **Prenny Yaghobi** (MBA, class of 2024) became an Advisory Board member for the Burbank International Film Festival (BIFF). Prenny's journey with BIFF began as a volunteer during the 2024 festival, and she now serves on both the Marketing and Volunteer Committees. Her membership on this board derives from her passion to gain hands-on experience across various areas of the film industry to strengthen her understanding of its many facets.



In February 2025, Prenny also became a member of the Board of Directors and the Co-Marketing Director for The WICT (Women in Cable Telecommunications) Network, SoCal. Prenny makes it no secrets that she is eager to expand her expertise in business, law, and entertainment and find meaningful ways to apply her skills.



Claudia Ukonu Cited in Financial Times

Claudia Ukonu (BBA Marketing, 2014) was recently featured in an article published by the Financial Times in partnership with Pictet Wealth Management exploring how women are redefining what it means not just to be present in wealth management, but to be in charge of how wealth is channeled, distributed, and used to shape the world around them.

"You can generate profits and returns while also making the world a better place, it's not trading off one or the other" states Claudia Ukonu in the article. Ukonu continues, *"One thing we're trying to demonstrate with the female investors and business founders that we're working with is that you can generate profits and returns while also making the world a better place. It's not trading off one or the other."*

Emil Davtyan Leads one of LA's "Best Workplaces"

D.Law, the law firm founded and led by School of Business alumnus **Emil Davtyan** (B.Sc. Business Finance, 2008), has been named to Inc.'s 2025 Best Workplaces list, honoring companies that have built exceptional workplaces and vibrant cultures that support their teams and businesses. This year's list, featured on Inc.com, is the result of comprehensive measurement and evaluation of American companies that have excelled in creating exceptional workplaces and company cultures—whether in-person or remote.

D.Law is an employment law firm dedicated to defending the rights of workers under California employment law. Mr. Davtyan also serves as a member of the School of Business' Advisory Board.



Faculty Highlights

Dr. Joan Marques and Dr. Satinder Dhiman Presented at AOM 2025

From July 25th and 29th Woodbury University's School of Business was well-represented through ten presentations, conducted by Drs. Marques and Dhiman. The conference was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, and the following presentations were conducted:



Dr. Joan Marques coordinated a panel symposium titled: "*Mindful Excellence: Impacting Individual and Collective Flourishing*," and served as moderator on a panel symposium titled, "*Sacred Spaces and the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future*". She coordinated a Professional Development Workshop (PDW) titled, "*Mindfulness in a VUCA World: Meditation Practices for Busy People*," entailing five meditation techniques presented by five presenters, Dr. Satinder Dhiman being one of them. She further co-presented a PDW with three external scholars, titled, "*Developing a Spiritual Research Paradigm Focused on Experience and Storytelling*." She also served as a distinguished speaker in a Caucus titled, "*Co-Creating Inclusive Academia: A Participatory Approach to Neurodivergent Scholars' Flourishing*".



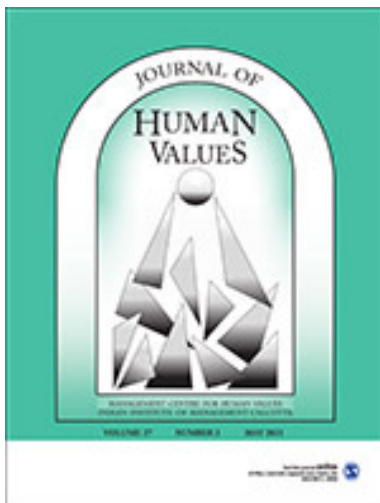
As outgoing Chair of the *Management, Spirituality and Religion Division* of the Academy, Dr. Marques was also involved in the division's promotional campaign for this conference, and the organization

and presentation of the organization's annual Business Meeting.

Dr. Satinder Dhiman participated in two PDW's titled, "*Spiritual Pilgrimage as a Source of Management Development*", and "*Mindfulness in a VUCA World: Meditation Practices for Busy People.*"

He also participated in two presenter symposia, respectively titled "*Dharma-Inspired Management: Bridging Spirituality, Ethics and Leadership*" (recipient of the MSR Showcase award), and "*Building and Developing Intuition: Bringing the Sixth Sense to Work to Solve and Resolve Issues.*"

The interactive symposia and professional development workshops (PDWs) were all very well-attended and received positive feedback from the visiting scholars and practitioners.



Dr. Joan Marques and Dr. Satinder Dhiman Publish in Journal of Human Values

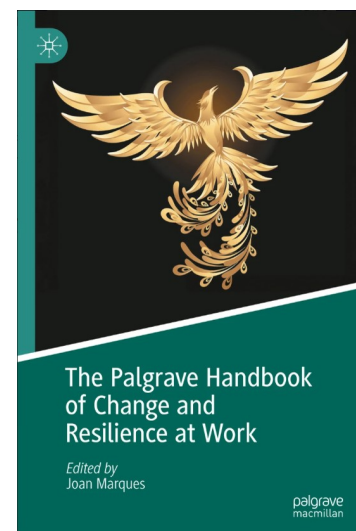
Dr. Joan Marques and Dr. Satinder Dhiman collaborated with five other scholars from the UK, Canada, and multiple US states, on a paper titled, "*The Maturation of Management, Spirituality and Religion as a Research Discipline.*" The paper is a comprehensive bibliometric analysis that examines the ontological development and epistemological evolution of the management, spirituality and religion (MSR) field, tracing its trajectory from nascent origins in management praxis to its contemporary position as a substantive domain of scholarly inquiry. The paper has been recently accepted following a blind peer review process, by the *Journal of Human Values*, a Sage journal.

Just Published: The Palgrave Handbook of Change and Resilience at Work **Editor: Joan Marques**

This handbook focuses on two critical aspects in today's professional environments: change and resilience.

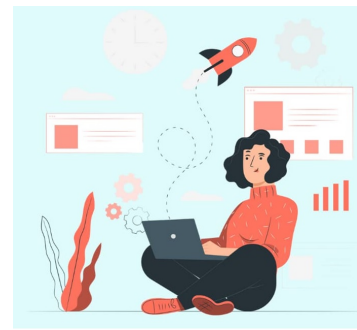
The book addresses three main themes:

- 1) Adapting to a changing work landscape, which explores the historical, societal, technological, and global factors influencing work environments
- 2) Leadership in times of flux, investigating leadership roles and strategies during organizational change, including communication tactics, ethical considerations
- 3) The transformative impact of leadership; and building resilience in the face of uncertainty, encompassing leadership and self-leadership, humor, collaboration, and adapting ancient traditions to modern challenges.



SUPPORT OPPORTUNITY: THE STUDENT ENTREPRENEURS SUPPORT FUND

Please consider supporting our student entrepreneurs by donating to the [student entrepreneurs support fund](#)! This fund honors and encourages the efforts of budding entrepreneurs, who are students at Woodbury's School of Business, or are members of one of the School of Business-headquartered professional student organizations.



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