WOODBURY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Where Your Legacy Begins

Winter 2026 Newsletter

OPPORTUNITY FOR LA RESIDENTS WHO ARE *NOT* CURRENT WOODBURY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Alumni, family members and friends are welcome to sign up

Interested in obtaining or polishing your entrepreneurial skills? Consider our 8-week bootcamp that will be rewarded with a certificate from Woodbury University's School of Business.

Read all about it on the flyer and sign up before all places are taken!
Please forward this opportunity to anyone you think may want to benefit from it.
Use the QR Code on the flyer or click here to sign up.

CONNECT & REFLECT:
A BACK TO CAMPUS HAPPY HOUR

On Thursday, January 22, 2026, the School of Business organized its Spring semester edition of "Connect & Reflect", a semesterly event in which current students and faculty meet with alumni and aspiring students. The purpose of this event is to get to know one another better and to learn about various intra and extracurricular activities within the School of Business.

Not only was it nice to see many new and familiar faces, but the fun experienced by all attendees spoke volumes. There were interesting ice-breaker games, great prizes, and there was good food. On top of it all, current students and alumni were able to network and establish a number of valuable connections for their career progress. Connect & Reflect is a School of Business initiative that is held at the beginning of each Spring and Fall semester.

The School of Business' Advisory Board demonstrated once again its dedication toward supporting our students. Ten members signed up in this ninth annual Spring cycle of the Rotating Executive in Residence Program. Each executive on this semester's roster donates three hours per week to meet with Woodbury students on a one-on-one basis, and assist them with career advice, resume reviews, mentorship, and any other professional development issues that might arise. Depicted above are the executives for this semester.

WUSB's rotating EiR program has been operational since Fall 2017. The advantages of this program have been described in various outlets, including AACSB's Insights.

School of Business Spring Faculty Best Practices

On February 11, the School of Business faculty held its recurring semester-based "Faculty Best Practices" meeting. The session was guided in sections led by Professor Satinder Dhiman, Professor Adam Wood, and Dean Joan Marques. The main points of attention were the use and guidance of AI in the classroom, and the mid-cycle AACSB accreditation operations. The AI-generated representation above provides an impression of the collaborative atmosphere during the brainstorm and evaluation sessions. Below is a brief overview of the discussion points.

AI Attention Points

- Ensuring that students relearn soft skills
- Practicing caution in building AI agents
- Unlearning obsolete aspects and opening ourselves to new things
- Using common sense: practice critical and creative thinking
- Embedding conversations and hands-on exercises in classes
- Setting guardrails for the use and citation of AI

AACSB Highlights

- Preparing reaffirmation application report
- Updating faculty qualification requirements for 6-year cycle
- Defining the participating faculty
- Closing the loop strategies
- Solidifying our societal impact based on our mission statement and our selected focus point

AACSB ACCREDITED

Now accepting applications for Fall 2026.
Click **here** for application information.

Welcome to Our New Advisory Board Members

Sonya Kay Blake is a visionary leader, economic development strategist, and passionate advocate for business growth and community empowerment.

Since becoming President & CEO of The Valley Economic Alliance in 2020, she has led transformative initiatives that have strengthened the San Fernando Valley's economy, advanced policies that enhance quality of life, and fostered collaboration among business, government, and community leaders.

Roubik Golanian is the City Manager of Glendale since 2021. As such, he serves as the chief advisor to the City Council, providing direction in the development and formulation of policies, goals, and objectives, and keeping them informed on important community issues.

Roubik has decades of progressively responsible work experience, including Senior Civil Engineer, City Engineer, Deputy Director of Public Works, Director of Public Works, and Assistant City Manager.

Courtney Padgett is the Assistant City Manager of Burbank since 2023. She is a strategic and results-driven public sector executive with over 20 years of progressive leadership experience in city management, public safety operations, and technology modernization.

Courtney has a proven record of driving organizational performance, fostering collaboration, and leading transformational initiatives that enhance service delivery, fiscal stewardship, and community engagement.

Dr. Michael Ritterbrown is the Glendale Community College Vice President of Instructional Services. He holds this position since 2015.

As such, he oversees the planning, development, organization, and implementation of all credit, noncredit, and not-for-credit instructional and instructional support programs, including: supervision of deans, division chairs, faculty and staff, and library services on two campuses; the coordination of

Eric Shain is Vice President, Production Finance at Disney ABC Cable Networks Group. He holds this position since 2008, overseeing both the internal and external financial aspects of development and production of both short-form and long-form original programming for Disney Channel, Toon Disney, Jetix, SOAPnet and ABC Family.

A Certified Public Accountant, Shain joined Disney in 2001 and was, up to 2008, Executive Director, Production curriculum development, review, and certification; the oversight of enrollment management and scheduling; budgeting and resource allocation; and staffing for academic, managerial, and classified positions.

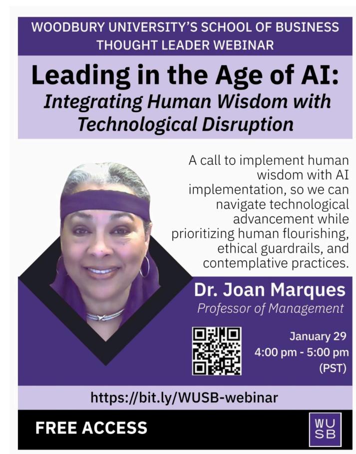
Finance, Disney ABC Cable Networks Group. His responsibilities included oversight of finances for the Group's short-form projects and supervision of its on-air promotion production team and department overhead.

GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The Walt Disney Company

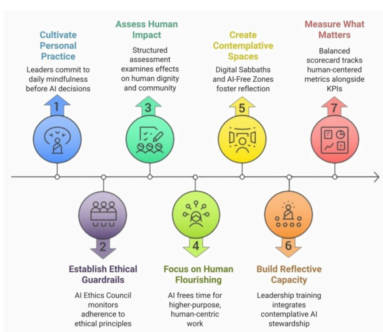
Thought Leader Presentations

Joan Marques Presents: Leading in the Age of AI



On January 29th, Dr. Joan Marques, Dean and Professor of Management, presented the first thought leader webinar for this calendar year.

The emphasis of this talk was primarily on preserving the human aspect in the world of work, and constructing ethical guardrails to ensure responsible use of AI tools. She reviewed the way AI is reshaping the global business landscape, and highlighted some of the strong AI adopting industries, including healthcare, manufacturing, financial services, retail, transportation, IT, and legal.



Dr. Marques pondered on the mixed messages that are being published about the effects of AI on human employment and discussed some of the main reasons why companies adopt AI at an increasing pace. She then highlighted the core tension areas between AI and human performance, entailing speed versus reflection, efficiency versus meaning, and automation versus human dignity.

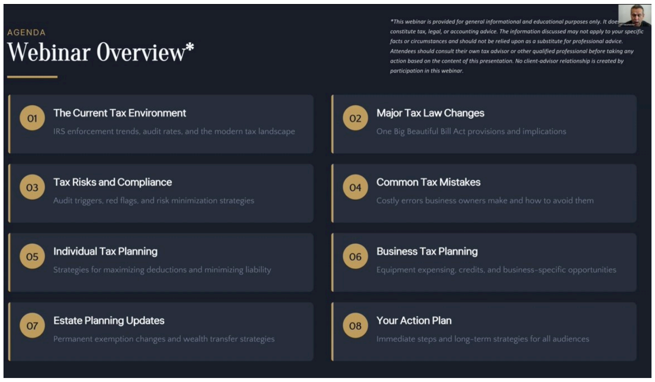
Dr. Marques also warned for the cost of mindless AI adoption and introduced a seven-step Awakened AI Leadership plan, encompassing, 1) Cultivating Personal Practice, 2) Establishing Ethical Guardrails, 3) Assessing Human Impact, 4) Focusing on Human Flourishing, 5) Creating Contemplative Spaces, 6) Building Reflective Capacity, and 7) Measuring What Matters.

The presentation can be viewed here

Jeff Neumeister Presents: Today's Tax Landscape

In this timely webinar Mr. Neumeister, a seasoned CPA, entrepreneur, and forensic accountant, discussed recent tax law changes, common mistakes, and compliance issues, emphasizing the importance of strategic tax planning over mere compliance. He explained the impact of the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" on tax deductions, audit risks, and the role of AI in future IRS operations. He covered tax planning opportunities for individuals and businesses, including Section 179 expensing, harvesting tax losses, and the benefits of estate planning.

Mr. Neumeister further discussed audit rates for different business structures, noting that sole proprietors face a higher audit risk than S-corps or partnerships. He then covered recent tax law changes and addressed the complexities and limitations of new tax deductions, emphasizing the importance of understanding reporting requirements and thresholds.



Jeff provided a comprehensive overview of tax planning and compliance, covering topics such as deductions, audits, bookkeeping, and estate planning. He recommended that homeowners consider itemizing deductions if they have significant expenses like mortgage interest, property taxes, and charitable donations. Jeff encouraged attendees to reach out with any follow-up questions and provided his contact information for further assistance.

The entire presentation can be viewed here.

Student Spotlights

Jenna Peysakovich (accounting) recently embarked on a new leadership role: President of Woodbury University's Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization chapter! As such, she will be in the lead of organizing the Baron Business Plan competition and its accompanying dinner. Jenna will be supported by the CEO Advisor, Dr. Paul Sabolic, who has done an outstanding job in the past years in

Madelaine Garcia recently started the fascinating journey as an intern at Sony Pictures Television in the Nonfiction Department! As such, Madelaine will get the opportunity to learn from an accomplished and inspiring team.

With her eyes on a future in the entertainment industry, this internship will provide Madelaine great hand-on guiding the student leaders toward excellence in planning, organizing, leading and controlling. Jenna ensures to expand her knowledge in her study area of interest as well. She is currently an intern at Ara Haddadian CPA, a company specializing in Modern Cloud Based Accounting and Tax Solutions.

experience, and serve as a great opportunity to build her network in the industry! Sony Pictures Television Inc. is a television production and distribution studio and the television arm of Sony Pictures Entertainment, the film studio subsidiary of Sony Group Corporation.

Alumni Updates

Woodbury University now has a strong alumni representation in Saudi Arabia! Started as a Whatsapp group by Abdullah Alzahrani (BBA MRKT, 2019), the group quickly grew to 148 members, largely through the assistance of Abdulraouf Albaijan (BBA MGMT, 2014; MBA 2016), who also served as the spokesperson for the Saudi student organization while a Woodbury student. Aldulraouf took the lead in bringing the current group together in a physical gathering. The members enjoy the opportunity to meet their fellow Woodbury University alumni from different years and different majors. They are enthusiastic about this networking opportunity, with several driving multiple hours or even catching airplanes to attend the gathering. The first meeting yielded a team of 33 participants, and the intention is to make the gatherings recurrent with the next one scheduled for November 2026.

Ruslan Oskenali (MBA, 2009) has assumed the role of Chairman of the Management Board at LLC Kazakhmys Corporation, Qazinform News Agency cites the company's press service.

Aside from his Woodbury degree, Oskenali holds a degree in international law from Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. Over the years he held high-level executive positions at major international and national firms, including Kazakhmys, General Electric, and Alstom.

From March 2024, he served as the Procurement Director at Qarmet, where he was credited with optimizing supply chain processes and driving strategic development. As a member of the Management Board, he also played a key role in making strategic decisions on general management issues.

Source: https://qazinform.com/news/kazakhmys-appoints-new-board-chairman-040c12

Mariya Palanjian (BBA, 2001 | MBA, 2004) has been appointed Interim Vice President of Marketing and Communications for the University of Redlands. As such she is responsible for leading the University's collective branding, marketing, and communications initiatives while partnering with enrollment leaders across the institution to support student recruitment and retention.

Mariya Palanjian is a serial entrepreneur with extensive expertise in city-takeover marketing and tech startups, bringing together a proprietary process that harnesses community-centered + 360° Tech marketing campaigns. A leader with a strong entrepreneurial vision, Mariya has built and scaled four successful startups, collectively generating numerous jobs and earning recognition in the broader media landscape. Throughout her career, she has led complex marketing initiatives that bridge strategy, creativity, and performance, with a particular focus on aligning brand, audience insight, and outcomes.

Kelly Wong (BBA, 2005) has been recognized as one of the 2026 Forbes Top Women Wealth Advisors Best-in-State. The annual ranking of Forbes | SHOOK Best-In-State Women Wealth Advisors highlights women across the country with proven and prestigious track records. Forbes' rankings were compiled by SHOOK Research, which uses a rigorous methodology combining quantitative and qualitative data, including interviews with candidates nominated by their firms.

As a private financial wealth advisor, Kelly is responsible for working with high-net-worth clients to assist them in effectively managing their wealth, first by identifying each client's unique goals then coordinating a team of specialists to implement custom, comprehensive investment plans to help accomplish those goals.

Christopher Teringalian (BBA, 2010 | MBA, 2011) accepted a new role as Vice President, Preferred Banking Relationship Manager II at City National Bank. A seasoned executive in the banking wortld, Christopher held positions at JPMorgan Chase (VP and Business Relationship Manager), US Bank (Asst VP and Branch Manager), Union Bank (Sr. Relationship Banking Manager), and Wells Fargo (Branch Manager).

The role of a VP Preferred Banking RM II involves managing high net worth relationships and ensuring that clients receive and execute on the right advice. This includes engaging clients in meaningful conversations about their finances and taking active interest in their financial well-being.

Anita De (BBA, 2021 | MBA, 2022) has accepted a new, dynamic position as Assistant Vice President at Mission Valley Bank in the Community Development and Relations sector. She did so after a 5-year spanning successful career at the Burbank Chamber of Commerce, which started as an internship, and blossomed into the position of Director, Communications and Membership Services,

Founded in 2001 and located in Sun Valley, CA., Mission Valley Bank is a full-service, independent, commercial bank specializing in SBA loans – Business Expansion, AR Financing – Lines of Credit, Term Loans, Treasury Management, Specialty Banking and Merchant Services.

Rozalia Hovhannisyan (MBA, 2025), who started on an internship at the Burbank Chamber of Commerce, recently accepted a full time administrative position at this dynamic workplace, becoming the Chamber's Director of Marketing and Operations. In this position, Rozalia will focus on the organization's marketing leadership, comprising brand positioning and messaging, digital marketing and campaign strategies.

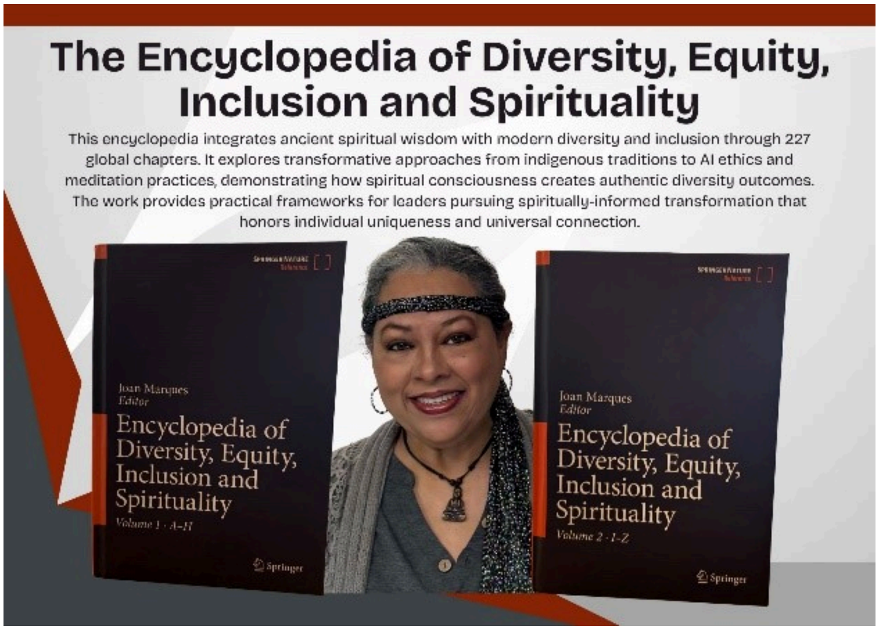
The Burbank Chamber of Commerce remains a steady and highly valued partner of our School of Business. The Burbank Chamber brings together local businesses, entrepreneurs, and community leaders to connect, network, and grow in the dynamic and vibrant community of the Media Capital of the World.

Armen Zabounian Accepts School of Business Alumni Award for Exceptional Accomplishment

In February, **Armen Zabounian** (BBA Marketing, 2012) honored his Alma Mater with a service visit, whereby he took part in an alumni panel to share his experiences as a former Marketing student in Woodbury University's School of Business. The School of Business Dean and the Marketing Chair took this opportunity to hand over Armen's "*Distinguished Alumni Award*", a well-deserved token of appreciation for Armen's musical achievement of winning a Grammy Award in February 2025. Armen, who is known professionally as Peyote Beats, received the Grammy Award for his work on Doechii's album "Alligator Bites Never Heal," which won the Best Rap Album at the 2025 Grammy Awards. Armen has thus far collaborated with numerous artists across pop, R&B, and rap, including Tyga, French Montana, and Jhene Aiko.

Faculty Updates

Dr. Marques Publishes the Encyclopedia of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Spirituality



In December 2025, *The Encyclopedia of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Spirituality* was published through Springer-Nature academic publishing company. This major reference work (WRW) has been initiated and edited by Dr. Joan Marques supported by a team of about 15 co-editors.

This encyclopedia integrates ancient spiritual wisdom with modern diversity and inclusion through 227 chapters, contributed by scholars from around the globe. It explores transformative approaches from indigenous traditions to AI ethics and meditation practices, demonstrating how spiritual consciousness creates authentic diversity outcomes.

The work provides practical frameworks for leaders pursuing spiritually-informed transformation that honors individual uniqueness and universal connection.

Dr. Bendoni Organizes a Series of Fieldtrips and Professional Lectures

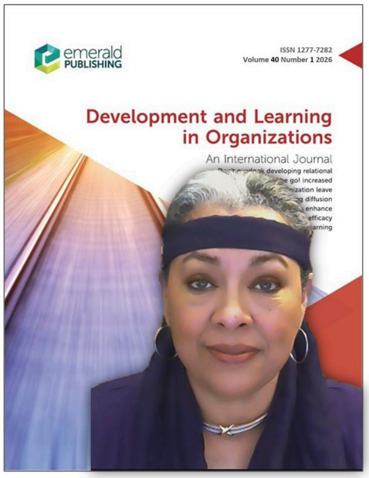


In the Fall of 2025, Dr. Wendy Bendoni organized her annual Field Experience course, offering a cohort of Marketing and Management students insightful visits to and conversations with executives from a variety of industry. The students visited, among others, the Walt Disney Imagineering Campus and got a close insight into how deeply creativity is woven into every aspect of the Disney brand. They met with Kathleen Wehn, an E- Commerce Specialist for Mickey's of Glendale, the exclusive retail store designed "for Imagineers, by Imagineers". The students also met with George Heras, Sr. Marketing Specialist at Insights, and an expert in full-spectrum production lifecycle management. Heras oversees projects from concept and pre-production to post-production and digital distribution.

Another major highlight was the meeting with Tania Sarin, a Woodbury Fashion Marketing alumna who evolved her brand over the years and is now a renowned social media influencer with close to a million followers. Similarly impressed were the students by the connection with Mario Moreno Sears, VP of Global Loyalty Programs and a strategic leader behind the H&M Membership Loyalty Program across the Americas.

Dr. Marques Publishes in Development and Learning in Organizations

Dr. Joan Marques recently published a short paper titled, "*The effect of change on learning and development: an education-based proposal*" in Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal.



This article addresses the urgent need for higher education reform in response to evolving student demographics and learning preferences. The author critiques universities' resistance to change despite facing declining enrollments, increased competition from corporate training programs, and shifting student populations where non-traditional learners have become the norm.

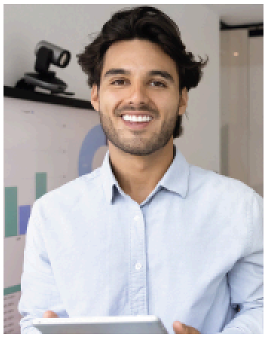
The proposed solution is an innovative "stackable degree" model where students earn certificates by completing topic clusters aligned with their interests, eventually accumulating 120 credits for a bachelor's degree in their focus area or interdisciplinary studies. This approach offers faster professional development, immediate credential recognition through digital badges, and greater learner autonomy.

Implementation challenges include institutional inertia, faculty concerns about departmental restructuring, accreditation pressures focused on traditional four-year completion rates, and potential employer skepticism. The author recommends using Bridges' change management framework—emphasizing Purpose, Picture, Plan, and Part—to facilitate stakeholder buy-in and successful organizational transformation in academic institutions.

CORPORATE OPPORTUNITY FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN EARNING A HIGHLY ACCREDITED MBA

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT OUR
WOODBURY **RISE MBA** SCHOLARSHIP?

Woodbury presents the only business decision that pays you back in MBAs.



Woodbury University is proud to offer our RISE MBA Scholarship at a 30% discount for companies that enroll 10 students.

This Fall, every incoming MBA student is eligible for our RISE MBA Scholarship! Our MBA students automatically receive a $22,000 scholarship, which enables them to complete the core program for just $35,000! And when an organization brings together a group of 10 people who hold a Bachelor's degree, Woodbury will trigger an additional 30% tuition reduction on the core program for each of the group members. That makes getting an MBA not only convenient but affordable as well.

The best part? It doesn't matter what their incoming GPA is. Every student starting the Woodbury School of Business MBA in **Fall 2026** will receive this scholarship.

All our Business programs are AACSB accredited—the highest business accreditation possible—ensuring that you will have a better position in the job market upon graduating.

*CORE MBA is 9 courses.

RISE MBA DETAILS

CONTACT FOR CORPORATE DETAILS

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WOODBURY UNIVERSITY
FOUNDED IN 1884

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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.


Emphasis on High Quality and Readily Applicable Education
AACSB
ACCREDITED
ACBSP
ACCREDITED
Granted to Less Than 5% of Business Schools Globally
Rigor in Education and Continuous Improvement
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Cultivating Innovative Leaders for a Sustainable Society