

FALL 2022

# GCU Alumni

## 2022 | Under 30 List



# Table of Contents

## COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Spencer Bazz.....	4
Sabrina Boever.....	5
Rosaura Carrillo Garcia.....	6
Cierra Chamot.....	7
Taylor Combs.....	8
Levi Conlow.....	9
Tabitha Daly.....	10
Sydney Daniel.....	11
Lindsey Fatherley.....	12
Ray Gibson.....	13
Nathan Jonas.....	14
Jarrold May.....	15
Festus Makolle.....	16
Shelby Milburn.....	17
Kyle Monticone.....	18
Lauren Pierson.....	19
Braeden Scheer.....	20
Lakaysha Scott.....	21
Thomas C. Varkey.....	22
Omar Vasquez.....	23
Austin Walker.....	24
Brannon Walters.....	25

## COLLEGE OF ARTS AND MEDIA

Clarissa Galaviz.....	27
Steffan Stewart.....	28

## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Jerome Garrison.....	31
Morgan Goering.....	33
Kyra Shields.....	35

## COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Kristopher Acevedo.....	37
Luke Amargo.....	39
Emerald Artist.....	41
Damien Augustine.....	42
TJ Bryson.....	43
Cathleen Daly.....	44
Dominique Dominguez.....	45
Zachary Hoffert.....	46
Mikayla Holst.....	47
Alexis Rustan.....	49

## COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONS

Sheila Martinez.....	51
Kyle Schrag.....	52
Lindsay Wall.....	54
Shianne Watkins.....	55

## COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

Stephen Arnold.....	57
Yuri Bonilla.....	58
Zachary Merhavy.....	60
Rebekah Russell.....	62
John Varkey.....	63
Vy Vo.....	64
Colton Zeitler.....	65

## COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY

Aaron Bolton.....	67
Bri Sanborn.....	68

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COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS





## Spencer Bazz

**COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Finance and Economics, 2019

**CURRENT ROLE** Relationship Manager at Trinity Capital

**INDUSTRY** Venture debt, equipment financing, warehouse lending, angel investing

**ADVICE** Build meaningful relationships, friendships and experiences. Above all else, just have fun! Be ready to work hard when you graduate.



## Sabrina Boever

COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Accounting, 2020

**CURRENT ROLE** Senior Associate at Henry & Horne

**INDUSTRY** Tax preparation and consulting for small businesses and their owners, as well as for other high net-worth individuals

**BIO** I graduated from GCU with my bachelor's degree in accounting in 2020 and went on to earn my master's degree in taxation from Arizona State University while working part-time for Henry & Horne, LLP as a tax associate.

After graduation, I was hired on as a full-time associate and started studying to become a certified public accountant (CPA). After earning 150 college credits, obtaining 2,000 hours of work experience and passing four rigorous exams, I officially received my CPA license in February 2022.

Now that I have my license, my career has taken off. I was recently promoted to senior associate at Henry & Horne and am excited for the opportunities this role will bring. Outside of work I enjoy running, playing the piano and spending time with my friends and family. My faith in Jesus is the foundation of who I am and is the reason for my career's success so far. I am truly blessed!

**ADVICE** Learn how you best manage the pressures of life now, rather than later. Someone once told me that "the pressure we feel from life's circumstances is external, whereas the stress that so often follows is internal." The further you get in your career, the more pressure and responsibility you'll have, which can quickly turn into a mountain of stress if you're not careful. If you want a long and successful career, it's crucial to find a way to decompress every day and let yourself rest. Working hard to succeed in your career is necessary but it shouldn't come at the price of your health.



## Rosaura Carrillo Garcia

**COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Business Management, 2020

**CURRENT ROLE** Entrepreneur Program Coordinator at the Better Business Bureau, Pacific Southwest

**INDUSTRY** Entrepreneurial support

**BIO** I graduated from GCU with my bachelor's degree in accounting and business management in 2020 and went on to earn my master's degree in nonprofit leadership and a certificate in social impact strategy from the University of Pennsylvania.

I work for the Better Business Bureau as part of the innovation and entrepreneur programs team. I serve as the community impact analyst, with my work supporting and empowering entrepreneurs and small businesses. My focus is on the social impact measurement for my team's programs. I also serve as secretary on the board of the Arizona Coworking Alliance, which encourages support for local coworking spaces.

With a passion for creating and inspiring equitable change in historically underrepresented and underserved communities, I advocate for equity, inclusion and social justice. My personal mission in life is to empower and equip others to reach their potential through knowledge and professional and personal development. Outside of work, I enjoy traveling to new cities and experiencing different cultures through food. I also love spending time with my family, dog Luigi and cat Luna.

**ADVICE** Be authentically you! Don't be afraid to embrace who you are or to ask for help. Take advantage of all the opportunities offered to you. Lastly, live in the moment and take it one step at a time!



## Cierra Chamot

COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with an Emphasis in Entrepreneurial Studies, 2017

**CURRENT ROLE** Manager at Extreme Faith Productions

**INDUSTRY** Production and promotion

**ACCOLADES** Featured on ABC15, West Valley View and San Tan Sun newspapers for the Cookies 'N' Cocoa event

**BIO** I work as the assistant director for Extreme Faith Productions, a Christian concert Production and promotion company in Phoenix. I run events across the country while getting to see how God is moving through the ministry. After losing my best friend in a car accident, I founded Cookies N' Cocoa, an event that combines her passions and provides family friendly events that share the joy and hope of Christmas while benefiting students from the valley. When I'm not working, I enjoy competitive country swing dancing, outdoor activities, spending time with family and friends and living the great adventure to the fullest.

**ADVICE** Pursue your dreams! Don't let anyone tell you they're too big or impossible because you can accomplish anything you dream of when you surround yourself with the right people and have the right mentality. Don't let the setbacks discourage you, keep pressing on. Oftentimes the best view is after the hardest climb.



## Taylor Combs

**COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**

**DEGREE** Master of Science in Business Administration, 2019

**CURRENT ROLE** Controller at Comfort Systems USA Southwest

**INDUSTRY** Construction

**BIO** I earned my bachelor's degree in accounting at University of Northern Iowa in 2014 and my master's degree in business administration at GCU in 2019. I am also a licensed CPA in the state of Arizona. Since taking my first accounting class in high school, I've known I wanted to be an accountant. To me, this field is about integrity, being truthful and doing the right thing even when it's difficult – accountants don't just do math all day!

I started in the construction industry after graduating in 2014 and am still here today. I began as a staff accountant with the goal of becoming a controller. I always try to be the best at my job and give it my all, which has allowed me to work my way through the ranks to the controller position.

I've always believed that there is a plan for my life and that my time would come at the right moment. There have been many signs given to me along the way to keep me going on the correct course. My biggest accomplishment was becoming a controller at 27 years old. I made many sacrifices along the way including not spending as much time with my family and friends as I wanted to, not getting enough sleep and working full-time while studying full-time.

I enjoy my current role because every day is different and I'm constantly learning. I believe knowledge is power and there will always be something more to learn. I could not have gotten to where I am today without my faith and following the path put forward for me.

**ADVICE** My question for current GCU students is: Why not you? If you set big goals for yourself and put your mind to something, what will stand in the way of making that happen? Work with your whole heart and do whatever it takes to get there, and you too can be exactly where you want to be. There is nothing that sets me apart from you. If I can do it, you can too.





## Levi Conlow

COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

**DEGREE** Master of Science in Leadership, 2019. Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurial Studies

**CURRENT ROLE** Co-Founder and CEO of Lectric eBikes

**INDUSTRY** Transportation, technology, entrepreneurship

**BIO** Born and raised in Lakeville, MN, I'm the 26-year-old co-founder and CEO of Lectric eBikes, a direct-to-consumer electric bike company based in Phoenix with 100+ employees (25 of which are GCU alumni). Lectric eBikes is the fastest growing electric bike company in the United States and has sold over 185,000 bikes in its first three years.

Lectric is currently on track to help electrify more Americans in 2022 than General Motors, Ford, Rivian, Nissan, Volkswagen and Audi combined. Most of this growth is being powered by the success of Lectric's most popular electric bike, the Lectric XP, which in 2021 was the third most popular EV in America only behind the Tesla Model 3 and Model Y.

Outside of my work at Lectric, I'm a committed philanthropist with active projects around the globe. I also serve as a board member and mentor for Arizonans for Children.

**ADVICE** Use your time wisely – it's your most valuable currency. As a college student, you have access to a wealth of information including courses, professors, mentors and peers. Leverage all your resources when developing your short- and long-term goals. Take time to complete a personal inventory regarding your unique skills, interests and abilities. Make sure your goals are centered around your passions. Most importantly, take time to dream big! Your journey will be filled with hurdles, obstacles and even failure, but these challenges provide you with a unique opportunity to hone your skills and prepare you for future success. Finally, enjoy the journey and take time to reflect on your accomplishments while recognizing those who helped you along the way. Then, pay it forward. My final piece of advice is to come be an employee or intern at Lectric. We are always looking for awesome people to join our team!



## Tabitha Daly

COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Finance and Economics, Minor in Business Management, 2020

**CURRENT ROLE** Family Wealth Associate at TFO Phoenix, Inc.

**INDUSTRY** Financial advising

**ACCOLADES** 2021 Schwab Impact Young Advisor Panelist

**BIO** Prior to attending GCU, I earned my associates degree in business from Everett Community College as a Running Start student. Once at GCU, I was involved in the Honors College, Finance and Economics Club and the CFA Institute Challenge, while working at Grand Canyon Beverage Co. and interning for a local investment advisory firm.

Since graduation, I've joined TFO Phoenix as a family wealth associate, where I help families connect their wealth and purpose. At TFO Phoenix, I have been a key member of the recruiting team, working closely with GCU's finance department to recruit fellow Lopes, and with TFO Life Academy, a next-generation financial education program working primarily with client families and local schools. I'm also actively pursuing additional professional designations and will be sitting for the certified financial planner (CFP) exam this summer.

**ADVICE** Build meaningful connections. It's not difficult to reach out to people in the field or roles you're interested in, but the best way to stand out is by asking meaningful questions and being the most prepared.



## Sydney Daniel

**COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**

**DEGREE** Master of Science in Business Administration, 2019  
Bachelor of Science in Marketing, 2017

**CURRENT ROLE** Designer II for NV5

**INDUSTRY** Marketing, design

**BIO** I remember the exact moment I walked across the stage to receive my MBA and looked into the crowd and thought, "Wow, I can do anything." It's because of the confidence GCU gave me that I am where I am today. I'm currently a contracted electrical distribution designer for the city of San Diego, where I work to help prevent/reduce wildfires throughout the county. Although I did not receive my degree in electrical engineering, I did receive an extreme work ethic from the Colangelo College of Business, which is the reason I have my job.

I've had to obtain several licenses to design electrical circuits and have put in countless hours to pass the exams and become qualified for this field. If it weren't for GCU showing me how to work hard, be confident and go after what I want, I would not have the role I do today. I would not be who I am or where I am today without my experience and the support I walked away with from GCU.

**ADVICE** It won't always be easy, but it will always be worth it; don't give up.



## Lindsey Fatherley

COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Business Management, 2014

**CURRENT ROLE** Ford Experience Manager (Cocoa, FL and Select Dealer Region) at Ford Motor Company

**INDUSTRY** Automotive, sales

**BIO** I'm an eight-year automotive professional and passionate leader that believes in leading by example and servant leadership. I take pride in completing tasks with diligence, order and design for our future business needs. Since graduating from GCU in 2014, I've had the opportunity to hold seven positions in five states over eight years. Each position and location have prepared me for the next opportunity at Ford Motor Company and I wouldn't trade the journey for anything. I look forward to what's next!

**ADVICE** Don't be afraid to be yourself as you go into the career world. Companies and corporations desire real, authentic leaders, so don't filter yourself down or feel like you can't be yourself. Some of the best projects, teams and days in my professional setting were filled with people getting to be themselves and bring their best ideas. Next, don't lose focus on the person or the people. It's easy to get focused on tasks or lists, but remember it's important to keep the people around you and your customers top of mind in the hustle. If you lose sight of them, you will likely miss the mark on what you are hoping to achieve as an individual, leader or organization. At the end of the day, when the music stops, we're humans doing business with other humans and we need each other.



## Ray Gibson

**COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**

**DEGREE** Master of Science in Data Analytics, 2020  
Bachelor of Science in Accounting, 2018

**CURRENT ROLE** Tax Partner at London Bridge Group

**INDUSTRY** Accounting, finance

**ACCOLADES** Enrolled Agent Status, Internal Revenue Service

**BIO** My experience in this field began through an internship and full-time employment at the big four accounting firm, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). During my tenure at PwC, I worked with the wealth management tax service industry. Most of my time was focused on the trust outsourcing experience servicing major financial institutions. I provided clients with traditional fiduciary compliance services for trusts, estates and charitable trusts and helped with preparation of information returns. I also drafted IRS and state jurisdiction correspondence to resolve any filing or payment issues.

In 2022, after obtaining my enrolled agent (EA) status, the highest credential the IRS awards, I decided to branch off from PwC and explore my entrepreneurial spirit. During my journey, I gained life experience, professional growth and creative control and learned new things about myself along the way. Ultimately, my journey has led me to my current role at Khalsa McBrearty Accountancy, a local CPA firm in midtown Phoenix specializing in individual, partnership and corporate tax returns, including returns for U.S. businesses and individuals residing abroad.

**ADVICE** Take the time to learn your strengths and weaknesses, then go get 'em. Good luck, Lopes!



## Nathan Jonas

**COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Marketing, 2018

**CURRENT ROLE** Medical Device Delivery Associate

**INDUSTRY** Medical Devices

**BIO** I never thought I would go to college, especially since nobody in my family ever graduated from a university. I'm proud to say I'm a first-generation college graduate. I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do after high school, so I started slowly by taking an introductory college course at a community college. That class helped me open my eyes about myself and motivated me to sign up for more college courses. I took multiple classes with different focuses like EMT, teaching and social work. It wasn't until I took a marketing class that I realized that's what I wanted to major in.

I worked through my four years of college and think having real-world experience during that time has helped me in my career. It wasn't easy juggling a full-time job and going to school, but it's all been worth it. I worked at Amazon during my time at GCU and stayed with the company for a short time after I graduated but have since worked for Banner Hospital and Stryker. I'm not exactly where I want to be, but I can say that my struggles have gotten me where I am today, and I am thankful for that.

**ADVICE** The more you know, the more you show and the more you grow.



## Jarrod May

**COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**

**DEGREE** Master of Science in Accounting, 2019  
Bachelor of Science in Accounting

**CURRENT ROLE** Senior GL Accountant at HomeSmart Global Headquarters

**INDUSTRY** Account management

**BIO** During my undergraduate program, I was the communications officer and vice president of the Accounting Society on campus while also working as a property accountant at Vereit, Inc. Upon graduation, I went on to work at RSM US LLP for four years as a senior assurance associate and currently work at HomeSmart as a senior GL accountant.

My guiding principles are my faith in Jesus Christ and my family's generational example of hard work and excellence. Over my education and career, I've been fortunate to encounter people that have valued my career and that have given me opportunities for growth and the chance to mentor and train others.

**ADVICE** My advice to current students is the advice that Dr. Ed Slover challenged me with during my final semester. He told me I have two options: the easier path or the harder path. I was free to choose either, but regardless of my choice, I knew which one was the more rewarding.



## Festus Makolle

**COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**

**DEGREE** Master of Science in Business Administration with an Emphasis in Finance, projected 2022  
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, 2019

**CURRENT ROLE** Mortgage Loan Advisor at Freedom Mortgage

**INDUSTRY** Financial advising

**BIO** Born and raised in Togo, West Africa, I came to the states to continue my education. I graduated with my bachelor's degree in 2019 and am currently finishing up my Master of Science in Business Administration with an Emphasis in Finance. I recently accepted a management program role with First Bank, which is a privately held bank based out of Colorado with a mission to serve the valley of the sun in all aspects of banking and financial needs. Outside of work I enjoy the outdoors and watching the Arizona Cardinals.

**ADVICE** Stay focused and keep going no matter what. Consistency is the key and never settle for less. In this life, a lot of things can be taken away from you but not your education.





## Shelby Milburn

COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

**DEGREE** Master of Science in Accounting, 2020

**CURRENT ROLE** Senior Auditor at Henry+Horne

**INDUSTRY** Financial services

**BIO** I'm an audit supervisor at Henry+Horne, one of the top public accounting firms in Arizona. I started my career with Henry+Horne as an intern during my senior year at GCU, and I am proud to say I continue to climb the corporate ladder nearly four and a half years later. At GCU, I received a bachelor's and master's degree in accounting. Although I am an accountant by trade, I am fortunate to have a career that allows me to simultaneously pursue one of my biggest passions: people. I am a team-oriented individual who enjoys uplifting others and developing those around me through training, coaching and mentorship. My dream is to become a partner in Henry+Horne's audit practice by the age of 35!

**ADVICE** 1. Do not underestimate the power of relationships and connections. 2. The best and most life-changing moments come after a period of being uncomfortable. 3. Find someone whose life you want, pick their brain and don't stop working toward your dream until you get there.



## Kyle Monticone

COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

**DEGREE** Master of Science in Business Administration, 2020  
Master of Science in Leadership, 2020  
Master of Science in Public Administration, 2020

**CURRENT ROLE** Manager of Strategy and Grants at University Medical Center (UMC) of El Paso

**INDUSTRY** Hospital administration, non-profit

**ACCOLADES** Leadership El Paso Class of 2020  
Third place in a national case competition for healthcare administration sponsored by Cornell University, 2020

**BIO** As the strategy and grants manager for UMC, the region's only level one trauma, community and non-profit hospital, I collaborate with the hospital's administration to develop short-term and long-range strategic goals for the organization. I'm also responsible for advising, identifying, reviewing and developing organizational strategies to support growth objectives.

I joined the UMC team in 2017 as an administrative fellow and am currently a doctoral candidate in healthcare administration at Trident University. I earned my bachelor's degree in nutritional sciences from Texas Tech University and hold four master's degrees: a healthcare administration degree from Texas State University and degrees in business administration, public administration and leadership from GCU. I was also part of the Leadership El Paso program in 2020.

**ADVICE** Education does not stop after graduation. Seek out opportunities to develop, learn and grow and don't be afraid to fail. Success is dependent on one's internal satisfaction and acceptance.



## Lauren Pierson

COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Accounting, Master of Science in Accounting, 2019

**CURRENT ROLE** Certified Public Accountant Tax Supervisor at BeachFleishman PLLC

**INDUSTRY** Public accounting and consulting

**BIO** I am an Arizona native and grew up in the small town of St. Johns in northern Arizona. I have been lucky enough to call the Valley my home for the past ten years with my husband, Daniel and our fur-baby Stella. Growing up, it was a dream of mine to attend Grand Canyon University. When it came time to apply to colleges, there was only one school I could picture myself attending. I attended GCU for both my bachelor's in accounting and my master's in accounting. I loved my time at GCU and met some of my best friends there. In fact, one is even my coworker now. I learned a lot from my professors who not only gave me the technical knowledge I needed but also provided me with real-world knowledge from their personal experiences in the accounting industry. Thanks to one professor, Kelly Damron, I realized I wanted to go into public accounting. Through GCU's Meet the Firms event, I obtained my first accounting internship with a public accounting firm in Phoenix called BeachFleishman PLLC. I recently celebrated my fifth year with the company and am now a tax supervisor. In my role, I help businesses and individuals stay compliant with their necessary tax filings and consult with them to plan for the future — whether that be ways to reduce future tax liabilities, succession planning, etc. I work primarily in our construction segment, helping general contractors and subcontractors located throughout the Southwest.

**ADVICE** I believe that success comes from hard work and dedication and that if you stay committed to your goals, they will soon become realities. That being said, I think it's vital that you remember to slow down and reap the rewards of all the work you put in. Everything in moderation! Developing a strong work-life balance is a great skill I am still working on.



## Braeden Scheer

COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Business Management, 2019

**CURRENT ROLE** Director of Product Management at SmartRent

**INDUSTRY** Product management, product development

**BIO** Since joining SmartRent, the world's leading enterprise smart building platform, in 2019, I've led the company's software product experiences and oversee the development, launch and scaling of their core products and solutions. In addition to building the product operations and product management functions from the ground up, I've played a vital role in innovating new solutions that solve prevalent pain points in the smart building space. SmartRent has grown from a private startup with 20,000 apartment units to a publicly traded company with 350,000 apartment units since my start. I'm looking forward to bringing together solutions to forge a robust platform that creates delightful experiences for property managers, residents and guests alike.

**ADVICE** Build relationships with your peers and faculty and lean all in to the vast array of opportunities at GCU. The people, projects and activities you experience will grow you personally, spiritually and professionally. You'll truly get out of GCU what you put in, so go all in and you will be pleasantly surprised to see what happens.



## Lakaysha Scott

**COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Business Management, Minor in Communications, 2020

**CURRENT ROLE** Client Relationship Associate at Vanguard

**INDUSTRY** Client service, new hire coaching

**BIO** I've spent over a year with Vanguard serving clients and coaching new hires in my department. One of the most exciting opportunities I've had with Vanguard was being able to serve as an anchor coach to help virtually train new hires in the Philippines.

**ADVICE** Bloom where you are planted and make lots of connections! God will give you the strength, wisdom and guidance you need to make the right decisions, so be sure to seek Him daily. Things will get challenging at times, but remember you got this and God's got you! So, stay focused and embrace the journey ahead.



## Thomas C. Varkey

COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Biology with an Emphasis in Pre-Medicine,  
Minor in Business Management, 2017

**CURRENT ROLE** Resident Physician, Neurology at the University of Arizona COM Phoenix

**INDUSTRY** Health care

**ACCOLADES** The 2020 Excellence in Public Health Award from the U.S. Public Health Service, Spring 2020  
The Quintuple Threat: The Teresa and Elliot Frohman Multiple Sclerosis and Neuroimmunology Prize, Fall 2020  
Election to the Gold Humanism Honor Society, Fall 2021  
Highest Student Volume for Office Hours, Fall 2017  
Outstanding Senior Award by election of the faculty and deans, Spring 2017  
Distinguished Achievement Award by election of the faculty and the deans, Spring 2016  
Academic Excellence by election of the faculty and the deans, Spring 2015  
First place Debate, CSULB Tournament, Spring 2015  
Finalist Impromptu Speaking, Spring Championships, Spring 2015  
First place Extemporaneous Speaker, CSULB Tournament, Spring 2014  
First place Impromptu Speaker, CSULB Tournament, Spring 2014  
Octofinalist Individual Debate, LSU Tournament, Spring 2014

**BIO** After earning my degrees at GCU, I went on to receive both a Doctor of Medicine and Master of Education in Educational Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin in 2022. My aspirations are to be a physician-scientist working in the fields of neurology and neuroscience. I currently have 31 peer reviewed publications available to read or soon to be released in the fields of medicine, medical education, neuroscience and neurology.

**ADVICE** Accept any and all opportunities that come your way. My launch into academic publishing came because of talking with the professor teaching my vestibular neurology lecture at the Dell Medical School. The professor, Dr. Elliot Frohman and his wife, Teresa Frohman, PA-C became my mentors and lifelong friends teaching me how to write, explaining the details of being a neuroscientist and encouraging my character development over the years. The opportunity to learn from them has changed my life and made me into the man that I am today. If you are offered an opportunity, take it — you never know where it's going to lead.



## Omar Vasquez

COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Marketing and Advertising, 2021

**CURRENT ROLE** Visual Merchandising PLC Coach at Nike

**INDUSTRY** Tax preparation and consulting for small businesses and their owners, as well as for other high net-worth individuals

**ACCOLADES** Nike community ambassador for the city of Tempe/Guadalupe, February 2020  
Sanya Richards-Ross Award for Nike's Most Valued Team-Member, June 2018

**BIO** During my time at GCU, I was a proud member of the Thundering Heard Pep Band and member of the Delta Mu Delta business honors society. Since graduating, I've spent the past few years at Nike developing my leadership skills to build a winning team.

**ADVICE** Don't be afraid to take risks, continue to challenge yourself and make yourself uncomfortable. We can only grow and learn by doing things outside of our daily habits. Be confident in yourself and your abilities, but always remember to be gracious and humble.



## Austin Walker

COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Sports Management, 2015

**CURRENT ROLE** Managing Director of VisionFuel

**INDUSTRY** Management, brand strategy

**ACCOLADES** Diamondbacks President's Council, August 2017  
Diamondbacks Leadership Academy  
Outstanding Senior in the Colangelo College of Business

**BIO** I currently serve as the managing director of VisionFuel, which is the global philanthropic arm of Cardon Development Group, a real estate development company founded by Don Cardon in 2002. Before this, I spent five years working in the front office for the Arizona Diamondbacks.

As the managing director of VisionFuel, I oversee all aspects of the business including brand strategy, events and a variety of charitable giving initiatives. Among these include the launch of the L.O.P.E.S. Academy at GCU for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities, a life skills curriculum for teens and various partnerships with local churches. I also oversee the marketing efforts for Cardon Development Group and assist with a variety of real estate development projects.

**ADVICE** Never stop learning, foster the important relationships in your life and lead with humility and grace. Someday, your formal education will stop but that doesn't mean learning stops. Be a sponge, ask questions and get as many tools in your toolbox as you can! It's also incredibly important to let the people in your life that matter know they matter. Life is busy and can be stressful but at the end of the day, our personal and professional relationships drive us forward. Lastly, as you climb the "corporate ladder," remember where you came from. Don't let a job, however small or irrelevant, be beneath you. Lead with integrity, humility and grace and you'll be amazed where you go.





## Brannon Walters

COLANGELO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Finance and Economics, 2021

**CURRENT ROLE** Investment Operations Specialist at Ronald Blue Trust

**INDUSTRY** Finance

**BIO** I started my career in the finance industry in 2020 while still enrolled at GCU. During my senior year I was offered a position as a financial analyst with Divergent Business Consulting, working on cash flow and treasury modeling for a company that was about to go public. Upon graduating with my degree in finance and economics, I transferred to my current position as an investment operations specialist at Ronald Blue Trust, where I work on the client facing side of investment trading and other implementation tasks of the financial planning process.

While at GCU, I sat for and passed the Securities Industry Essentials (SIE) exam in December 2020. I recently sat for the Certified Financial Planner (CFP) exam in July 2022. I'm currently on track to be able to use those marks by the time I turn 23.

I'm also very involved in multiple church groups with Christ's Church of the Valley (CCV), and I am in the works with leadership to start up a personal finance class catering towards young professionals. Additionally, I'm a member of the Financial Planning Association of Greater Phoenix.

**ADVICE** Get involved, meet new people and try new things! I would not have ended up where I am today without putting myself out there my junior and senior years. By talking with professors and getting career advice, I got involved with the Finance and Economics Club as well as the CFA Institute Challenge. All the events and staff on campus are a resource for you in your journey, so utilize them while you can!

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COLLEGE OF ARTS & MEDIA





## Clarissa Galaviz

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND MEDIA

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Arts in Digital Film with an Emphasis in Production, Honors College, 2017

**CURRENT ROLE** J.D. Candidate at Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law

**INDUSTRY** Law

**ACCOLADES** David S. Ruder Prize recipient at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law  
Scholarship recipient at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law  
Outstanding Adjudicator Award nominee (multiple times) at Chicago Debates  
Hispanic Scholarship Fund Scholar  
Washington Media Scholar  
Shining Star at the State of Arizona  
Graduated Summa Cum Laude

**BIO** After graduating from GCU with a bachelor's degree in digital film production as part of the inaugural Honors College class, I went on to study law at Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law, where I'm currently in my third year. While at GCU, I was involved in ASGCU, Alpha Psi Omega, International Club, Alpha Chi, DFP Club, the inaugural Future Alumni Board, NSCS and Lambda Pi Eta. I also worked on the LopesVision Team under Hap Hopper. Despite starting out in media work, I later transitioned to legal and policy work, which brought me to law school.

During law school, I completed two legal internships serving as a research assistant and teaching assistant. This summer, I am working as a summer associate at a law firm. In law school, I've been involved in Diversity Coalition, the Student Bar Association, Collaboration for Justice, International Law Society, International Refugee Assistance Project, Latinx Law Students Association, OUTLaw, Wigmore Follies and Student Effort to Rejuvenate Volunteering. I also serve as the symposium and external relations editor of the Northwestern Journal of Law and Social Policy.

In my community I have volunteered with Just the Beginning — A Pipeline Organization as an associate board member and mentor. I've also volunteered with several other nonprofits and immigration clinics. I'm firmly committed to giving back to the community, emphasizing pro bono work and empowering first-generation students as part of my work as a future lawyer. I stay in touch with my creative side and recently participated in an art exhibition at a Northwestern University gallery.

**ADVICE** Take as much initiative as you can, and pursue what you're passionate about. Seek out mentors, give back and empower others.



## Steffan Stewart

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND MEDIA

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Fine Arts in Digital Design with an Emphasis in Animation, 2014

**CURRENT ROLE** Founder, Brand Strategist and Creative Director at Bridge PHX

**INDUSTRY** Design and advertising

**ACCOLADES** Named #1 Branding Agency in Phoenix by Clutch two years running  
Named Top Branding Agency in Phoenix by Expertise  
Indigo International Design Award recipient  
dotCOMM Award recipient  
Clios International Design Award recipient  
Best of Creative Showcase at Phoenix Design Week  
Logo work featured in Logo Lounge, a collection of the world's best logos voted by a panel of the world's most renowned logo and brand designers  
Indigo International Design Awards shortlist for Best Brand of the Year

**BIO** After graduating from GCU in 2014, I immediately started my career in the creative field working as an in-house graphic designer at a design shop in Tempe, Arizona. There, I worked my way up to art director, while also joining the board of directors of the Arizona chapter of AIGA (the world's largest design community organization) as the design chair. At AIGA I helped with local events and tackled creative event and ad design. Because of this role and the community I became a part of allowed me to leave my full-time job to pursue a freelance career in 2016. In early 2018, I started my own branding and creative agency, Bridge PHX, with my partner, Colton Barry.

I've also taught design thinking at GCU, lectured at ASU and GCU, led annual student portfolio reviews and currently mentor students in my free time. Since starting Bridge PHX, I've led a variety of projects with notable clients including Harkins Theatres (designing their 2021-22 Loyalty Cups), U.S. Army, NASA, Amazon, American Express, Town of Gilbert, Grand Canyon University and more. We're also now in talks of rebranding Southwest Gas and Mattel's new adventure park currently being built in Westgate. This has all been accomplished within four years of operation, solely between myself and my partner, Colton.



I have a passion for both excellence and giving back to the community, which has helped me get to where I am today with GCU being an integral part of both my personal and professional development. In my free time I enjoy playing soccer and basketball, collecting trading cards, watching anime and playing video games.

**ADVICE** Don't be afraid to take risks. Failure is part of the process and anything worthwhile will require a good bit of stumbling before you reach your destination. For design students in particular, don't take classes or class projects for granted. Every project is an opportunity for growth and while classes are important, the real magic happens outside the classroom — in your free time. You should always challenge yourself to try something new, go to local creative events, join AIGA, seek out mentors, make friends, collaborate, etc. My personal design projects landed me my first industry job and both the relationships and personal portfolio I grew along the way allowed me to do what I love!

# GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY®

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION





## Jerome Garrison

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education with an Emphasis in Physical Education, 2015  
Bachelor of Science in Education with an Emphasis in Exercise Science

**CURRENT ROLE** Athletic Director of Glendale Preparatory Academy and Assistant Commissioner of GH Athletics

**INDUSTRY** Athletics, education

**BIO** After graduation I signed to play professional basketball with a club in Spain, but my playing career was cut short due to health complications of a close family member. Upon returning to the states, I embarked on my first role as an athletic director at Imagine Schools in Avondale in 2016. During my tenure, I built and expanded the school's athletic program to 23 teams consisting of over 200 athletes in three years. I drove major corporate capital sponsorships to invest in developing their athletic program and facilities.

After my tenure with Imagine, I was hired by Glendale Prep as the director of athletics, where I lead a robust program of skilled young athletes and talented coaches and aim who strive for excellence both academically and athletically. Since my arrival in May 2019, the athletic department has seen tremendous growth – adding three new high school sports – and the program has won numerous awards. The department now consists of 38 teams and more than 60 coaches and volunteers.

I have developed a strong sense of devotion for giving back and currently serve on the College of Education Consortium Board of GCU to develop tools and resources for educators across the Valley. I also serve in my local church providing youth athletics for students in the community. Motivating and inspiring student athletes to strive for excellence in all things, that's the goal.

**ADVICE** Find your purpose. It's not just a slogan, it's a way of life. Finding your purpose should be your number one focus once you depart GCU. Everyday should be an opportunity to seek out what the Lord has for your life. In this life, none of us are promised



tomorrow. I often reflect on the thought, “What if today is it?” This thought, along with seeking my own ultimate purpose, is what drives me daily. It drives me to serve at the highest level possible. It drives me to give above and beyond financially. It drives me to work until I’m exhausted, and it allows me to love with no judgement. Life will bring new challenges and battles that will indeed be hard to endure. But, if you’re focused on finding your purpose in this life, you **WILL** persevere. My encouragement to all of you is to stick close to the Lord. Never walk in front of Him, and make sure you’re never falling too far behind. Stay in step with Him and His greater plan and you will not only find your purpose, but you will be abundantly blessed along the way.





## Morgan Goering

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

**DEGREE** Doctor of Education in Teaching and Learning, projected 2022  
Master of Arts in Instruction and Curriculum, 2017

**CURRENT ROLE** Assistant director of Student Services at Hennepin Schools

**INDUSTRY** Education

**ACCOLADES** Licensed by IIRP to present full-day professional developments in The Introduction to Restorative Practices, Using Circles Effectively and Restorative Conferencing. Initially trained in following as well as: Family Engagement, Motivational Interviewing and Games and Team Builders for Circle Readiness  
Trained by One Circle Foundation to facilitate Boys and Girls Council, which are now implemented as a PBIS Tier II intervention at Truman  
Microsoft Innovative Educator who has built district wide technological capacity within restorative and PBIS systems  
Trained in PBIS Tiers I, II and III by the San Bernardino County Department of Education  
Unconscious and Implicit Bias Training, presented by Tia Martinez with Academy for Professional Excellence  
Trauma Informed Care and Practices Training, presented by expert contracted by FUSD

**BIO** As an educator, I strive to support the success of all students. I entered education in 2014 as a high school mathematics teacher and transitioned to middle school math. In my third year of teaching, I became department chair and pushed my department to begin using student-centered learning models paired with strong relationship building to change our student outcomes.

Success on this front led me to explore more ways to build success of students. This search resulted in becoming the tier II positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) coach on my campus. To empower and give students the chance to succeed, the school sites need to provide students with opportunities and interventions to better their academics and behavioral choices. As the coach of a team that created a platinum system of supports, recognized by the state of California, I was recruited by district leadership to a new role: climate and culture coach (CCC).

Whether a student has behavioral or social-emotional issues on their record, I enable



teachers and the PBIS team to monitor, assist and build systems for the students. Creating positive relationships with their teachers and peers provides a path to a successful academic experience. My current role allows me to oversee systems being created and used by staff and to help them see the methods that will help our students. I aspire to expand my area of effect to enable more teachers and students to be successful.

**ADVICE** Staying true to your passions and morals are what makes the difficult times worthwhile.



## Kyra Shields

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

**DEGREE** Master of Arts in Communication with an Emphasis on Education, 2019  
Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education

**CURRENT ROLE** Teacher at Sun Valley Academy

**INDUSTRY** Education

**ACCOLADES** GCU Exemplary Student Teaching Award, 2019

**BIO** I was born in Racine, Wisconsin and moved to Arizona in 2006. I graduated from Deer Valley High School in 2017 with 42 college credits and an LNA certificate. I graduated with my bachelor's degree from GCU in December 2019. I went on to complete my master's degree at GCU in May 2021. I have always had a passion for helping others and teaching them. I strive to lead my students in the directions that will make them successful.

**ADVICE** We strive to achieve things we desire in life. We are all just dynamic people. We each have our own capability to complete numerous different objectives and goals at our own pace. Don't sell yourself short out of fear for moving forward or moving too slow. Hard work comes from within. Challenges come into your life to either make or break you. It is up to you to determine what and how that will transpire.

GRAND CANYON  
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COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES





## Kristopher Acevedo

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**DEGREE** Master of Arts in Communication with an Emphasis in Education, 2019

**CURRENT ROLE** University of Southern California (USC) Doctoral Candidate – Educational Advisor, Adult Education and Noncredit

**INDUSTRY** Education, activism

**ACCOLADES** Bruce Walter Scholarship – Rossier School of Education at USC, January 2022  
Ray Lee Morris Endowed Scholarship – Rossier School of Education at USC, August 2021  
Moyssset Family Endowed Scholarship – Latino Alumni Association at USC, August 2021  
Hispanic Scholarship Fund Scholar, June 2021  
Town and Gown Scholarship at USC, May 2021  
Testicular Cancer Foundation Summit Scholarship, April 2021  
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership: K-12 Concentration Program Impact Scholar at USC, January 2021  
Associate Faculty Recognition in Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences at Riverside City College, October 2020  
Bayless Individual Student Leadership Award at UC Riverside, May 2016  
The Cardenas Market Foundation Scholarship at UC Riverside, May 2016  
César E. Chávez Scholarship: Continuing the Legacy at UC Riverside, April 2016  
Chancellor's Honors List at UC Riverside, January 2013 – June 2016  
UC Riverside Dean's Honors List, January 2013 – June 2016  
UC Riverside Highlander Honor Roll, January 2013 – June 2016  
The Walmart Dependent Scholarship, September 2012

**BIO** Growing up, I lived with my mother, two uncles, three aunts, grandmother and five younger siblings, all in a one-bedroom apartment in San Diego. No one in my family had ever gone to college, as graduating from high school was a challenge itself, and for some, impossible. Nevertheless, thanks to my family's support and belief system, I became the first in my family to go to college and graduate with two professional degrees, thus leading the pathway for my family to pursue higher education.

I earned my bachelor's degree in ethnic studies with a minor in education from the University of California, Riverside (UCR) and my master's degree in communication from GCU. Now, I'm working on my Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership with a Concentration in K-12 Leadership in Urban School Settings from the University of Southern California (USC).

That said, as the Riverside City College educational advisor for adult education and noncredit, an associate faculty member for Communication Studies and faculty mentor for the Puente Club, LGBTQIA+ Association for Student Success and Equity Program,



and the student-parent club, I understand having a commitment to diversity means recognizing and valuing the rich heritage that everyone brings inside and outside of the classroom to enrich our educational environment.

As a first-generation Mexican American, oldest sibling, cancer survivor and dismissed collegiate student-athlete (due to academics) who previously experienced homelessness, I have tutored, mentored, advised, instructed and supported foster, disconnected and homeless youth.

Through these activities I have improved learning opportunities and outcomes in urban settings while addressing disparities that affect historically marginalized groups. My life goal is to provide educational guidance along with communication skills for all students in order to prepare them for transfer to four-year universities, as well as offer opportunities for personal enrichment and lifelong learning. My position has allowed me to close equity-gaps, solve educational and financial barriers, stay institutionally focused, remain systematically aware and provide equity minded practices in meeting diverse adult student needs based on their histories, giving them access to online resources and different starting points.

Additionally, I have addressed inequities that interfere with learning opportunities and outcomes for first-generation adult students of color as I promote diversity, inclusion, social justice, anti-racism and racial equity while dismantling racial barriers and pipelines within the city of Riverside, CA. Overall, I plan to ensure educational equity by creating student-centered programs that will encourage adult learners of color to overcome past obstacles, master current job-related skills and enroll in colleges and universities.

**ADVICE** Those who say they can and those who say they can't are usually both right. "You, me or nobody is gonna hit as hard as life. But it ain't about how hard ya hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward. How much you can take and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done." – Rocky Balboa. I'm proud to share my academic, professional and personal struggles with my students to provide inspiration and encouragement to never give up!



## Luke Amargo

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**DEGREE** Master of Science in Psychology with an Emphasis in Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 2016  
Bachelor of Arts in English Literature, Minors in Design and Entrepreneurial Studies, Honors College

**CURRENT ROLE** Entrepreneur Program Manager at Better Business Bureau, Phoenix Chapter  
Director at Startup Grind Phoenix, Adjunct at Grand Canyon University, Special Duty Officer at the U.S. Navy Reserve

**INDUSTRY** Management, entrepreneurship

**ACCOLADES** First Place Pitch Prize at Arizona Institute for Digital Progress  
First Place Pitch Prize at PHX Mobile Festival  
First Place Pitch Prize at Smart City Hack Barcelona/Best Solution  
First Place Pitch Prize at GCU Colangelo College of Business Canyon Challenge  
First Place at GCU Honors College Symposium  
Second Place Pitch Prize at Moonshot  
Third Place at BioAcel Healthcare Innovation  
Top-64 SXSW  
Semi-Finalist at Arizona Collegiate Venture Competition  
Street Pitch Presenter  
\$20,000 Successful Kickstarter (Thoreson Watches)  
Goodbarber MVP Development for iOS + Android Play  
Organizer and presenter at House of Genius  
TEDxGrandCanyonUniversity Founder/MC  
ACEL Member/Panelist for Entrepreneurship  
GCU Colangelo College of Business Discover Student Pitch Judge  
Presenter for the Smart City Hack in Barcelona, Spain and Pan-Pacific S. in Wuhan, China

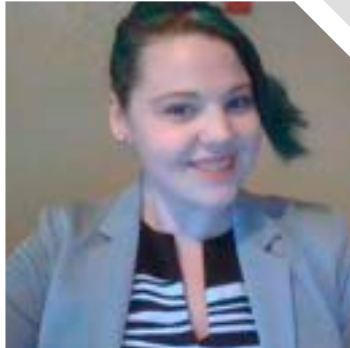
**BIO** I graduated from GCU with my master's degree in psychology in 2018 and my bachelor's degree in English literature at the Honors College. While there, I worked as an honors program manager.



I currently work as an entrepreneur program manager for Better Business Bureau, a GCU adjunct and a special duty officer in the Navy Reserves. I have diverse experience with multiple startup and employee awards and currently volunteer my time with Startup Grind Phoenix, where I serve as the Phoenix chapter director.

**ADVICE** Get a double major or a minor (or two!). Start something – a club, group, event, trip, startup – gain experience as you learn and be okay to fail! Remember, if you have a lot of hard skills, you need to get soft skills. If you have soft skills, you need to get hard skills. Call your loved ones – time is limited.





## Emerald Artist

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**DEGREE** Master of Arts in History with and Emphasis in Higher Education, 2021

**CURRENT ROLE** Adjunct History Instructor at Tarrant County College

**INDUSTRY** Education

**BIO** After working at various levels of education including early education, K-12 and higher education, I realized that I could make the most difference and feel most at home teaching higher education. This brought me to GCU with the clear goal of graduating with my master's degree to pursue a career as a history instructor with Tarrant County College (TCC), the place I began my college experience and where I had built a network of mentors in the history department over my years as a supplemental instruction leader. Within months of graduating, I fulfilled that dream and joined TCC's history team as an instructor at the beginning of the following academic school year.

**ADVICE** Don't just accept your classes as content to be learned. Even in an online class, go beyond the assignments to get to know your classmates and instructor. Build up that network of references, as those relationships can assist you in your career path beyond the classroom.



## Damien Augustine

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**DEGREE** Master of Arts in English with an Emphasis in Education, 2020

**CURRENT ROLE** Community Research Specialist at the University of New Mexico's Prevention Research Center, Adjunct Faculty at San Juan College and President of Counselor Chapter House under the Navajo Nation Government

**INDUSTRY** Educational research, tribal politics

**ACCOLADES** Youngest Official of Counselor Chapter House, Navajo Nation Chapter Government

**BIO** I'm 29 years old, Diné (Navajo) and am "Yucca Fruit Strung Out in Line Clan," born for "The Mexican Clan," with my maternal grandparents of the "Red Running into the Water Clan" and paternal grandparents of the "Sleep Rock People Clan." I grew up in Counselor, NM, a small community that is laced with patches of sage brushes and Indian wildflowers on the eastern side of the Navajo Nation Reservation.

I currently split my time between Farmington and Counselor, NM. I come from a line of Navajo traditional practitioners and Navajo herbal medicines and am fluent in the Diné language. My schooling includes a Liberal Arts Degree from San Juan College, a Liberal Arts Degree from The University of New Mexico and a Master of Arts Degree in English with an Emphasis in Education from GCU.

I've held many jobs from writing for newspapers to executive management, but the ones I love the most include teaching English at San Juan College as adjunct faculty and being an elected public servant as President of Counselor Chapter House, a local government under the Navajo Nation Government.

**ADVICE** No matter what background you come from, continue to strive for your success. One day, it's all going to be worth it. When you feel down, just remember how far your journey has taken you so far. Look at nature, look at loved ones and just admire all the things and places your education will take you. Dream big yesterday, today and forever. I leave you with my thoughts and prayers and my favorite quote: "To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment." – Ralph Waldo Emerson



## TJ Bryson

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**DEGREE** Master of Arts in Communication with an Emphasis in Education, 2020

**CURRENT ROLE** Director of Operations at Moneywise Wealth Management

**INDUSTRY** Wealth management

**BIO** I'm the director of operations for Moneywise Wealth Management in Bakersfield, CA. I have used my knowledge and experience to grow through the company after starting in the administrative realm and now work alongside the company CEO, financial advisors and marketing and account coordinators to facilitate all operations support and logistics. My "grace under fire" and quick-learning ability pair well with my detail oriented, go-getter attitude in helping the company stay organized and efficient.

My background includes working with companies ranging from construction to event planning and I possess a unique blend of multi-tasking and positive, contagious interpersonal skills with an emphasis in marketing, administration and account coordination.

While on my path to become a teacher, I found Moneywise in 2018 and was instantly won over by the opportunity to help make a difference in people's lives through a different form of education — financial education. By working with Moneywise, I am continuously inspired to help people empower themselves to take control of their own financial success. After completing my bachelor's degree, I went on to graduate with my master's from GCU in 2020.

Outside of the office I enjoy spending my time with family, friends and two very special corgis. I can be found either horseback or at a beautiful winery on California's central coast.

**ADVICE** Every late night and early morning will be worth it; every sacrifice and challenge presented paves your way to success.



## Cathleen Daly

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**DEGREE** Master of Public Administration with an Emphasis in Government and Policy, 2020  
Bachelor of Arts in Communications, Honors College, 2017

**CURRENT ROLE** Blogger, Speaker and Brand Consultant at Discovering Daly LLC and Marketing Specialist II at Wanzek Construction

**INDUSTRY** Entrepreneurism, digital media, marketing

**ACCOLADES** 2021 Arizona Influencer of the Year nominee  
GCU Outstanding Senior of the Year Award, 2017  
Graduated Summa Cum Laude, Bachelor of Arts in Communications, Honors College, 2017

**BIO** I'm a multi-passionate creative professional whose work is primarily influenced by my diverse marketing and communications experiences in fashion, non-profits, film and television production, government, real estate, higher education and construction. I graduated summa cum laude with my bachelor's degree and also earned my master's degree from GCU.

I also manage my own business and blog, Discovering Daly, LLC. Through my blog and social media channels, I share my various passions and write about personal discoveries in life to encourage others to pursue discovery in their own lives, as well as partner with businesses, creatives and local events. Through my business entity, I work with personal branding and business clients in discovering their unique voices through consulting and speaking and training events.

In life and work, I am an avid learner, a believer that an attitude of gratitude is always in style and lead by my core values of authenticity, creativity, growth and consistency. As a strategic thinker and creative problem solver and communicator, I use my versatile experience to efficiently and effectively execute on the steps needed to achieve a brand's vision-at-large. I have a passion for being connected to my community and with deep ties to the world of adoption, I am also involved in foster care issues and adoption awareness on a local and global scale. To learn more about me, visit [DiscoveringDaly.com](http://DiscoveringDaly.com).

**ADVICE** Work hard, be kind to everyone, have fun, ask lots of questions and embrace every opportunity that comes your way. Remember, learning happens both inside and outside the classroom. Don't be afraid to pursue a new extracurricular activity or join an on-campus organization that you never thought you'd be interested in or have a conversation with someone outside your circle. You'll look back and be grateful for the connections you made, the lifelong friendships you formed and what you learned from the journey.



## Dominique Dominguez

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**DEGREE** Master of Science in Professional Counseling

**CURRENT ROLE** Program Clinical Director/Licensed Professional Counselor at Best Behavioral Healthcare

**INDUSTRY** Behavioral healthcare and counseling

**BIO** I'm a licensed professional counselor (LPC) and am also recognized by the National Certified Counselor Certification (NCC). I am currently the program clinical director for a nonprofit mental health facility, Best Behavioral Healthcare. I obtained my master's degree in professional counseling at GCU. With my degree I've been able to thrive in this field and am just getting started!

I also started my own mental health social media page on Instagram @mindfully.mental, which helps to spread mental health awareness and tips. As I tell my clients, mental health is the first step toward your healing journey and it would be an honor to walk alongside you. Happy healing!

**ADVICE** School is hard. Life is hard. Nothing worth having comes easy, so choose "your hard." When you push past that mental block, the possibilities are endless. I promise you just have to have that you vs. you mindset. Good luck! "Mastering others is strength. Mastering yourself is true power. To the mind that is still, the whole universe surrenders." – Lao Tzu



## Zachary Hoffert

**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**DEGREE** Master of Public Administration, 2021

**CURRENT ROLE** Academic Supervisor at ETR

**INDUSTRY** Education

**ACCOLADES** North Valley Labor Federation (NLVF) – Election Endorsement  
CSEA Chapter 98 – Election Endorsement  
Treasure Island Job Corps Innovator Award, 2020  
10th Congressional Merit Award, 2014

**BIO** After graduating from the University of Nevada, Reno in 2017 with a degree in political science, I became a teacher for special education students teaching government. After a few years of teaching, I was hired as an education analyst for the Department of Labor's Job Corps. In 2020, using my experience in government and teaching, I successfully ran for a position on my city's local school board. Serving as a local trustee, I understand just how vital local government is to communities.



## Mikayla Holst

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Justice Studies, 2020  
Master of Science in Criminal Justice with an Emphasis in Legal Studies, 2022

**CURRENT ROLE** Legal Assistant at Earl & Earl, PLLC

**INDUSTRY** Law

**ACCOLADES** Bronze Presidential Volunteer Service Award by the Corporation for National and Community Service

**BIO** Born and raised in Colorado Springs, I decided during my senior year of high school to take a leap of faith and enroll at GCU. I began my studies in August 2017 and over the next three years, started my college career in forensic science, later transitioning to justice studies. Upon transferring, I devoted myself to the courses and developed a deep love of the adjudication system, which became my chosen career path.

I spent my summers interning for the Fourth Judicial District Attorney's Office and gaining valuable experience. During my second summer of interning, I received the Bronze Presidential Volunteer Service Award by the Corporation for National and Community Service for my time and dedication serving the judicial branch. In 2019, I returned to GCU for my senior year, which was my most intense year yet – I loved every minute of it.

During my final semester at GCU, I applied to earn my master's degree, all while graduating with honors. In June 2020, I spent my time job searching and awaiting my graduate studies program with eager anticipation. In late June, I applied for a position as a legal assistant in a personal injury law firm and was offered the position immediately. In fact, Ryan T. Earl, Esq. was very impressed with the drive and dedication to the legal profession that GCU had helped instill in me.

While studying and soaring through my courses, I worked hard to learn my position in the civil field and prove myself as a young, educated female with considerable potential. Many times, the information I was learning at work crossed over with the education I was gaining at GCU. I earned a pre-litigation caseload while continuing my work on both district and federal level litigation cases as well as the occasional



criminal defense matter. Currently, I work with the same law firm in Colorado Springs and am aspiring to be a litigation paralegal.

**ADVICE** Whatever you do, don't give up on your dreams and your passions. Find something that ignites a fire in your soul and go after it with everything you've got. No matter what people tell you, what you tell yourself or what circumstances surround you; you can, and you will reach that goal. Never stop dreaming, never stop going towards that career or next step in your life.





## Alexis Rustan

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Psychology, 2020

**CURRENT ROLE** Support Coordinator

**INDUSTRY** Disability counseling

**BIO** I'm a 27-year-old, single mom to a beautiful almost 6-year-old with autism, ADHD and DD Delay. I completed my bachelor's degree through GCU in 2020. With my degree and work performance, I was promoted from a direct support professional to support coordinator at an agency providing support to adults with mental and/or physical disabilities. I am now graduating with my master's in psychology and hope medical school is in my future, as my goal is to become a psychiatrist.

**ADVICE** When you feel like giving up, reflect on the progress you have made. Believe in yourself. It will not be easy, but it will be worth it.

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COLLEGE OF NURSING & HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS





## Sheila Martinez

COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS

**DEGREE** Master of Science in Nursing with an Emphasis in Nursing Informatics, 2018  
Bachelor of Science in Nursing, 2015

**CURRENT ROLE** Registered Nurse at Mayo Clinic Hospital and Adjunct Faculty at GCU

**INDUSTRY** Health care

**ACCOLADES** Daisy Award Nurse, December 2019

**BIO** Becoming a nurse was the biggest accomplishment of my life! I faced many trials during my schooling and wanted to quit at times when the stress was too much to bear. It's the honest truth, but I am so thankful and blessed I kept going. Applying to GCU was the best decision I made. They offered so many services to their students, and I took advantage of many that greatly helped me succeed — Chapel was one of my favorite parts. I quickly enrolled to earn my master's at GCU and graduated in 2018.

The best thing about my Master of Science in Nursing is that I can use it to teach, manage or go into informatics. My future has many avenues now that I have obtained my MSN. My experience includes working for most of the major hospital systems in the valley as well as travel experience during the pandemic. Today I am working as a registered nurse at Mayo Clinic Hospital and teaching as a critical care adjunct faculty member at GCU. Go Lopes!

**ADVICE** Do not be afraid to fail. Some of the greatest people I have worked with and learned from have failed multiple times in their school or career. Do not listen to other people when they tell you something is not worth it or too hard. If you want it, go for it again and again until you get there. Never in a million years did I think I would have a master's degree in nursing with the experience I have now.

Try new things, you will never know what you're capable of until you try it. You never know, you might just fall in love with part of your future career you never dreamed of doing. Be patient with others, you never know what battles the people beside you face. We are all human behind our work badges. Most importantly, be patient with yourself. It can be frustrating to have a plan and have it not work out the way you envisioned. Be flexible and resilient, as these qualities will greatly benefit you in all that you do.



## Kyle Schrag

COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Nursing, 2016  
Master of Science in Leadership and Management, Western Governors University,  
projected 2023

**CURRENT ROLE** Clinical Manager

**INDUSTRY** Health care

**ACCOLADES** High school salutatorian graduate, 2010  
GCU SNA Silver awarded student, 2016  
AZSNA/SNA, 2016  
Magna Cum Laude Honors Graduate, 2016  
Magnet Nurse, 2016-2018  
Beacon Awarded Nurse, 2016-2018  
Daisy Nominated Nurse, 2019  
Best Team Player, awarded by Neuro Trauma ICU Banner Thunderbird Medical  
Center, 2020  
Recognized by Banner Health for going above and beyond during a pandemic, 2021  
Spotlighted by Phoenix ABC for creating a COVID-19 memorial garden for patients,  
2021  
Charge nurse of a top critical care/neurosurgery/medical facility, BTMC, 2020-2021  
Trauma Care After Resuscitation (TCAR) Certified  
Trauma Nursing Core Course (TNCC) Certified  
American Association of Critical Care Nurses Member  
Emergency Nurse Association Member  
BCEN Member

**BIO** I'm a dog dad to three beautiful rescued pit bulls and travel the country working as  
an intensive care unit (ICU) nurse. I started my life born into drug and sex trafficking,  
living on and off the streets as a child, but I was determined to use that to help others.

I have worked in many specialties including in-patient labs during nursing school, but  
I spent a lot of my career in the ICU. As a charge nurse in ICU, I led nurses through  
the toughest grips of the COVID-19 pandemic all while helping to start a Neuro  
Trauma ICU with other teammates. As a manager of multiple departments, I worked  
to create policy and procedure that reflected evidence-based practice in healthcare  
settings, give and create jobs to 25 new individuals and create an environment for  
employees to further their careers and education, helping many to their next step.



I have held many shared governance positions and helped create an entire hospital-based shared governance. I built my foundation in magnet hospitals, Beacon Awarded ICUs and served in hospitals from rural areas to inner city populations.

I have my bachelor's degree in nursing, having graduated from GCU with honors and am an active Student Nurse Association member. I'm nationally certified as an advanced trauma care nurse by the Society of Trauma Nurses. I have also completed multiple nationally recognized courses in neuro, trauma, heart and quality improvement. I am currently an MSN student and have achieved and maintained ATCN, TNCC, TCAR and NIHSS. I am also a part of AACN, SNA, STN, ENA, ANA and NCBSN nursing associations.

**ADVICE** You are loved, and you belong. Above all else, act in kindness and you will end up where you belong. Choose humanity and you will always make the right decision. You're worthy and deserving of everything you want. Access to your peace is a privilege. Others' opinions of you are not your business and you will always be a gift to this universe regardless of them. Choose your path and know that you owe no one anything, including explanations. Your life will change and that is the beauty of this universe. Love yourself in all aspects of your life and you will never forget your beauty.



## Lindsay Wall

COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Nursing, 2020

**CURRENT ROLE** Senior Associate at Henry & Horne

**INDUSTRY** Clinic Nurse and Tobacco Treatment Specialist

**ACCOLADES** Five-star card at current hospital  
Honors and dean's list  
Member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars

**BIO** I'm a 27-year-old medical oncology nurse navigator assisting patients with smoking cessation. I help patients navigate their cancer for treatments, side effects, comorbidities and communication with other specialties. Outside of work, I love live music, baking and camping.

**ADVICE** Remember why you started and let that motivate you to achieve your dreams!



## Shianne Watkins

**COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS**

**DEGREE** Master of Science in Nursing, 2020  
Bachelor of Science in Nursing, 2017

**CURRENT ROLE** Health care

**INDUSTRY** Tax preparation and consulting for small businesses and their owners, as well as for other high net-worth individuals

**ACCOLADES** 4.0 Honors Award

**BIO** I'm a registered travel nurse and completed my BSN and MSN in nurse education at GCU. I also volunteer in multiple charities and fundraisers annually, while mentoring student nurses and current nurses to thrive in their careers.

**ADVICE** Work hard, stay motivated. Follow your dreams. Utilize the power of prayer as you strive through life. Enjoy every moment that life has to offer you.

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COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY







## Stephen Arnold

**COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY**

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science Biology with an Emphasis in Pre-Physician Assistant, 2016

**CURRENT ROLE** Emergency Medicine Physician Assistant at Redington Fairview General Hospital

**INDUSTRY** Health care

**ACCOLADES** Maine Association of Physician Assistant Director at Large

**BIO** I graduated with my bachelor's degree in pre-physician assistant studies in 2016, and I currently work in an underserved rural emergency room in central Maine. GCU has given me the tools to be successful in my career and to serve the people in my community.



## Yuri Bonilla

**COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY**

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Biology with an Emphasis in Pre-Pharmacy, 2015  
Bachelor of Science in Forensic Science, 2015

**CURRENT ROLE** Epidemiologist 2 (Public Health Informatics Specialist 2) and Adjunct Faculty – Online Instructor

**INDUSTRY** Research, biomedical and health informatics

**ACCOLADES** SUN Award by the Associate Director of Writing Centers and Online Tutoring Programs, September 2016, October 2016, December 2016, February 2017 and February 2018  
Student Poster Award, April 2018  
Third Place, Arizona State University at Mayo Clinic Scottsdale Campus's 4th Annual Student Poster Session  
Most Valuable Player recognition by Maricopa County Department of Public Health, March 2020

**BIO** I'm the first person in my family to earn undergraduate and graduate degrees. I earned my Master of Science in Biomedical Informatics from Arizona State University, along with my concurrent bachelor's degrees in biology from GCU. I also earned my associate in arts, associate in science and associate in general studies degrees from Phoenix College.

My journey to the biomedical and health informatics field began at GCU during a Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen) tour with the GCU Arizona HOSA – Future Health Professionals. At the tour, I learned about bioinformatics in the context of pharmacogenomics and personalized medicine.

My interest and curiosity for the field continued to grow through projects that focused on improving human health along with several biomedical and health informatics focused internships. Later, I found my purpose in academic teaching and public health. After graduating from GCU, I worked in several academic roles including as an adjunct instructional assistant at the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Since November 2018, I have been teaching health informatics courses to graduate students as an adjunct faculty online instructor at the College of Nursing and Health Care Professions.



In January 2019, I started a career in public health as an epidemiology data analyst contractor for Maricopa County Department of Public Health, where I focused on evaluating the effectiveness of a substance use prevention program offered in Maricopa County jails. When that project ended, my role transitioned to focus on communicable diseases including influenza, RSV and COVID-19. Later, I went to work for the North Dakota Department of Health as a data analyst on the COVID-19 response. I was promoted to a health equity epidemiologist role, where I led and coordinated two non-infectious disease health focus area grant funded projects.

Currently, I work as a public health informatics specialist with the Washington State Department of Health's Office of Immunization. I apply public health informatics principles to various data integration and interoperability projects focused on disparate vaccine preventable diseases data sources, including working on the COVID-19 vaccine response. My biomedical and health informatics career has come full circle, allowing me to impact the lives of diverse populations by improving health outcomes through data.



## Zachary Merhavy

**COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY**

**DEGREE** Master of Science in Biology with an Emphasis in Education, 2019  
Bachelor of Science in Biology with an Emphasis in Pre-Medicine, Honors College, 2018

**CURRENT ROLE** Medical student at Ross University School of Medicine

**INDUSTRY** Health care

**ACCOLADES** Pre-Matriculation Course – Honors Completion, Ross University School of Medicine, 2021  
Award of Excellence, Congress of Future Medical Leaders, 2021  
President’s Cup Nominee, Alpha Chi National Honors Society, 2020  
Michael Flachmann Scholarship, Alpha Chi National Honors Society, 2019  
Outstanding Service to the National Council, Alpha Chi National Honors Society, 2019  
Medical Reserve Corp Recognition, Arizona HOSA: Future Health Professionals, 2019  
Gold Barbara James Service Award, Arizona HOSA: Future Health Professionals, 2019  
Service Project Recognition, Arizona HOSA: Future Health Professionals, 2019  
HOSA Advocate Award, GCUAzHOSA, 2019  
First Place in Community Awareness, Arizona HOSA: Future Health Professionals, 2019  
Member Participation Award, GCUAzHOSA, 2019  
Graduate Fellowship Grant, Alpha Chi National Honors Society, 2019  
Platinum Member Award, Arizona HOSA: Future Health Professionals, 2018 – 2019  
Outstanding HOSA Chapter, International HOSA: Future Health Professionals, 2018 – 2019  
Gold Chapter, International HOSA: Future Health Professionals, 2018 – 2019  
First Place in Medical Innovation – Original, International HOSA: FHP, 2018  
Distinguished Achievement Award, GCU Honors College, 2018  
First Place in Medical Law & Ethics, AzHOSA State Leadership Conference, 2018  
First Place in Medical Innovation – Original, AzHOSA State Leadership Conference, 2018  
Outstanding Senior Award, Grand Canyon University, 2018  
Distinguished Leader Award, GCUAzHOSA, 2018  
Platinum Chapter, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, 2018  
Star Chapter, Alpha Chi National Honors Society, 2017 – 2019  
Student Researcher Grant, American Scientific Affiliation, 2017 – 2019  
Largest International Collegiate Chapter, HOSA: Future Health Professionals, 2017 – 2018  
Exceptional Commitment Award, Honors College, 2017  
Exceptional Dedication Award, Alpha Chi National Honors Society, 2017  
Gold Chapter, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, 2017  
Second Place, Honors College Project Management Fellowship, 2017



First Recipient of the Dean Nomination Scholarship,  
GCU Honors College, 2016 – 2018  
Project Management Fellowship Completion, GCU  
Honors College, 2016 – 2017  
Student Delegate to attend the AAMC Minority Student  
Medical Career Fair, 2016 – 2017  
First Place in Medical Innovation, AzHOSA State  
Leadership Conference, 2016  
First Place in the P.A.C. Boot Camp, GCU Honors College, 2015  
Engineering RWDC State Achievement Award, Arizona State, 2014 – 2015

**BIO** I received my master's and bachelor's degrees from GCU and am currently a medical student at Ross University School of Medicine, where I'm working to complete a dual Doctor of Medicine and Master of Public Health. I expect to graduate in 2025 with my wife, Cheney Merhavy, who is also a GCU alum. I currently have over 25 scientific publications available online or in peer review. My aspirations are to be a physician-scientist working in the fields of anesthesiology, immunology and microbiology.

**ADVICE** Don't be afraid to take opportunities as they come. So many of the best things to happen to me in college were because I always tried to jump into the unknown and push myself out of my comfort zone. You'll never know how much you can truly accomplish if you don't push yourself every once in a while and see what you're capable of. By putting myself in situations that opened opportunities for me, I met my wife, made lifelong friends, learned new skills, made a positive impact in the lives of others and so much more. So, if there's one thing I can suggest to you, challenge yourself to see what you're capable of by taking those opportunities. GCU is the perfect place for you to do this.



## Rebekah Russell

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Forensic Science

**CURRENT ROLE** Senior Optical Specialist Lead at Visionworks of America

**INDUSTRY** Health care

**BIO** I currently work as an optics supervisor while pursuing my master's degree at University of Florida. I work full time to afford my master's program and have had the privilege to volunteer at the Maricopa Medical Examiner's Office to get more hands-on learning related to the things we learn each day. I'm excited to learn more about this field in my master's program and cannot wait to start working!



## John Varkey

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering, Minor in Cyber Security, 2020

**CURRENT ROLE** Electrical Engineering Graduate Student at The University of Notre Dame

**INDUSTRY** Engineering

**ACCOLADES** Honeywell CEO Leadership Award Co-Finalist (US Space & Rocket Center), April 2016  
Distinguished Achievement Award by Election of the Faculty and Deans, Spring 2018

**BIO** I'm a highly motivated electrical engineering student gaining hands-on experience and leadership development during graduate school tenure. I'm a technologically skilled individual with a history of implementing department-wide solutions to queries posed by deans and university officials to increase the quality and effectiveness of pre-existing digital systems. I possess the ability to thrive under pressure within constantly changing environments and effectively lead team members towards a shared goal of excellence.

**ADVICE** Get involved and meet other students. You never know who might be a lifelong friend!



## Vy Vo

**COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY**

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Biology with an Emphasis in Pre-Pharmacy, 2019

**CURRENT ROLE** Adjunct Instructor at Grand Canyon University

**INDUSTRY** Education, pharmacy

**BIO** In 2019 I graduated from GCU with my bachelor's degree in biology with emphasis in pre-pharmacy. During my gap year preparing for the Pharmacy College Admission Test (PCAT), I had the opportunity to teach a general chemistry lab at GCU during the heights of COVID-19 in 2020. That experience inspired me to pursue the Master of Science in Chemistry with an Emphasis in Education. I have taught lab for about two years now and find excitement every time a new semester begins. I will be graduating with my master's degree by the end of 2022 and will walk that stage with pride and joy that I have made it this far!

**ADVICE** It's never too late to change majors if you're not happy. Do the very best you can and never give up on what you're pushing for!





## Colton Zeitler

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Science in Biology with an Emphasis in Pre-Medicine

**CURRENT ROLE** Medical student at the Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine

**INDUSTRY** Health care

**BIO** I'm currently a medical student at the Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine in Glendale, AZ and an active member of the Snyder-Robinson Foundation, a foundation built on the study and community of those with the ultra-rare genetic disorder Snyder-Robinson Syndrome. Research has quickly become a passion of mine and I continue to write and edit publications with my friends in attempt to improve the lives of others and positively contribute to the healthcare field. I briefly worked as an instructor's assistant for the College of Science, Engineering and Technology at GCU before starting medical school. I largely owe my success to my supporting family, loving wife and friends.

**ADVICE** Don't wait until the day before the test to get help! Professors and instructor's assistants love working with students and their guidance will undoubtedly help you. Seek help as soon as something becomes confusing. Also, be a good student and read the book, read the chapter before coming to class, complete as much practice material as you can and love what you're studying!

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COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY





## Aaron Bolton

COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Arts in Worship Arts, 2018

**CURRENT ROLE** Worship Pastor at Gateway Scottsdale

**INDUSTRY** Theology

**BIO** I'm a worship pastor in Scottsdale, AZ who's passionate about Jesus, people, writing music and cooking food. I was born in Los Angeles and grew up in Washington before moving to Arizona in 2014 to attend GCU. I have been on staff at my church, Gateway Scottsdale, since graduating. I love getting to serve, lead and point people to Jesus.

**ADVICE** Spend your time growing your relationship with Jesus, every single day. Build His kingdom instead of yours. (Matt 6:33)



## Bri Sanborn

COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY

**DEGREE** Bachelor of Arts in Christian Studies with an Emphasis in Youth Ministry, 2018

**CURRENT ROLE** Connections Pastor at Desert City Church

**INDUSTRY** Theology

**BIO** I attended GCU from 2014 – 2018 and graduated with a degree in Christian Studies with an Emphasis in Youth Ministry. During my time at GCU I spent multiple years working in the College of Theology and interned at local churches. During my senior year I accepted a role as the children's director at Paradise Church.

In 2020, I completed my Master of Science in Human and Family Development from Arizona State University. Like many during COVID-19, Paradise Church went through staffing difficulties, leaving me as one of the last full time staff members. This led to a church merger between Paradise Church and Desert City Church, where I was a core leader in the integration of the two congregations. Since the merger, I have taken on the role of connections pastor at Desert City Church in Phoenix. As connections pastor, I oversee mission work, guest experiences and events and am part of the preaching team.



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