

Annual Highlights



SDSU

Fowler College of Business
Charles W. Lamden
School of Accountancy

2023

Table of Contents

- 1** Director's Message
- 2** New Faculty
- 2** Spinardi Wins Rising Aztec Award
- 3** SDSU Students Offer Specialized Income Tax Assistance to the International Student Community
- 3** Yan Luo Promoted to Professor
- 4** SDSU Student-Athlete Sings National Anthem During Final Four Telecast
- 4** Professor Establishes Organization to Support Black Accountants
- 5** Education Helps SDSU Accounting Student Overcome Youthful Missteps
- 5** Beta Alpha Psi Earns Superior Ranking
- 6** Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy Hosts Innovative Student Soft Skills Luncheon
- 6** Lamden Student Awarded Prestigious Scholarship
- 7** Top Students for 2023
- 8** Identical Twin Sisters Find Career Success with Identical MSA Degrees
- 9** MSA Degree Propels Fowler Alumnus at Leading Biotech Company
- 9** Fowler Students Visit Germany to See Business Technology in Action
- 10** Filipinx Alumna/Lecturer Stares Down Stereotypes
- 11** MSA Degree Opens Door to Promising Career for New Grad
- 11** SDSU Accounting Grad Among 2022 Business Women of the Year Winners
- 12** Aztec Hall of Famer and Former NBA Player Parlays Accounting Degree into a Thriving Career
- 12** Award-Winning Lecturer Bids Farewell to the Fowler College of Business
- 13** Accounting Alumna Passes Her Passion for Education to the Next Generation



**Charles W. Lamden
School of Accountancy
Advisory Board**

From left: Stephen J. Brownell ('85, MSA), Doug Wright, Lee Duran ('82, Accountancy), Laura Roos ('91, Accountancy), Camille Alexander ('02, Accountancy), Ryan Kennedy ('11, Accountancy), Sam Mascareno ('92, Accountancy/'93, MSA), Jane Chau ('08, Accountancy), Jeff Wang

Director's Message

Dear Members of the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy Community:

I am delighted to reach out to you as we reflect on the exciting progress and initiatives underway at the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy. As we navigate through the 2022-23 academic year, I am inspired by the collective commitment and achievements of our faculty, staff, students and supporting community.

First and foremost, I am proud to announce strong enrollment numbers at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Such momentum is a testament to our outstanding reputation and the dedication of our faculty and staff in delivering a high-quality education. Additionally, our faculty published a total of six articles in top-ranked (elite) academic journals this past year, which is unprecedented in our history.

Our commitment to holistic education includes the incorporation of technology into our curriculum as well as training our students to become young professionals who can communicate effectively, work collaboratively and demonstrate leadership. To foster the demand for soft skills in the workplace, we have organized an annual luncheon where students can engage and learn about the growing need for these skills from seasoned accounting professionals. Additionally, our students are using the AI platform, PitchVantage, to sharpen their communication, resume and language skills before they transition into their chosen professions.

To continue our emphasis on integrating data analytics, generative AI and other technology advancements into our programs, we have taken steps to advance our Master of Science in Accountancy (MSA) program into a STEM major. This aligns with our priorities in providing students with the hands-on experience in the latest technologies employed by the Big Four accounting firms and other large organizations.

With a nod to our core values of diversity, equity and inclusion, we are incredibly proud to announce that assistant professor, Marcus Brooks, recently established San Diego's first chapter of the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA). NABA serves our local underrepresented communities by introducing the accounting profession to promising Black students and offering support and networking opportunities to Black accounting professionals in the San Diego community.

In closing, I wish to express my profound gratitude to each and every member of our community. Your belief, support and engagement are the driving forces behind our accomplishments and vision. Let us continue our collaborative journey, upholding the powerful legacy of the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy.

Warm Regards,



William E. Cole Director,
Charles W. Lamden School of
Accountancy
Fowler College of Business
San Diego State University



New Faculty



Aner Zhou

Aner Zhou, assistant professor in accounting, joined the faculty of the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy at the Fowler College of Business in 2023 after teaching and researching at California State University San Marcos for two years. While at CSUSM, she served as the faculty advisor for the school's Accounting Society.

Zhou earned her Ph.D. from the University of Southern California's Leventhal School of Accounting in 2021. Her areas of expertise include managerial and cost accounting and she currently teaches Cost Management (ACCTG 432) to undergraduate students.

Shijun (Tonni) Xia

Shijun (Tonni) Xia joined SDSU's Fowler College of Business as an assistant professor of accounting in 2023. He holds a Ph.D. in accounting from the University of California, Irvine, and an MBA in finance from Indiana University Bloomington. Prior to entering academia, Xia had been a professional accountant for over 10 years in the private sector, holding leading roles in different accounting functions, including accounting information systems, financial accounting, managerial accounting and tax planning.

Xia's research interests include disclosure, the consequences of accounting standards and emerging topics using Big Data. He teaches Analytics in Accounting (ACCTG 790) to graduate students at SDSU. He also has experience teaching Intermediate Financial Accounting II at UC Irvine.



Spinardi Wins Rising Aztec Award

SDSU accounting alumna, Kim Spinardi ('10) was one of five alumni of the Fowler College of Business to be honored as a recipient of the 2023 Rising Aztecs awards.

Spinardi is a partner at Hamilton Tharp LLP, Certified Public Accountants and Consultants, where she plays an active role recruiting for the firm. In addition to mentoring SDSU students through the Aztec Mentor Program and Aztecs Going Pro, she also raises funds for campus initiatives, colleges and student organizations. She currently supports the university as an SDSU Alumni lifetime member who also sits on the organization's board of advisors.

The Rising Aztec awards are bestowed biennially to SDSU alumni under the age of 40 who have demonstrated a high level of engagement with SDSU Alumni and other university programs and are representative of the university's colleges, areas of interest and diverse populations.



SDSU Students Offer Specialized Income Tax Assistance to the International Student Community

For over 40 years, students in SDSU's Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy have provided complimentary state and federal income tax assistance through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

In 2023, the 34 students enrolled in Doug Kelley's Field Study in Taxation (ACCTG 409) course, along with Kelley and two graduate assistants, volunteered to complete 333 returns for qualified taxpayers, primarily for international students and scholars.

"In years past, our VITA student and faculty volunteers noticed that many within our non-resident SDSU community were unfamiliar with U.S. income tax processes and needed some specialized assistance," said Kelley. "This year, the SDSU VITA volunteers were trained in accordance with Internal Revenue Service standards to focus solely on tax returns filed by international students and scholars."

Of the 37 VITA tax partners in San Diego County, SDSU's was the only program of its type with volunteers trained to serve international students and scholars.

In addition to performing a valuable community service, student volunteers in SDSU's VITA program get course credit, IRS training and significant real-world tax preparation experience, readying them for their chosen professions.



Instructor Doug Kelley discusses tax information with an SDSU student VITA volunteer

"We had a total of 37 volunteers (34 students, 2 graduate assistants, and myself). We processed 333 returns over 7 weeks (47 returns per week). Additionally, we provided advice or other guidance to approximately 50 additional people. From February 1 - April 15, I received 750 emails and sent an additional 800 emails."
- Doug Kelley, SDSU VITA Instructor



Yan Luo Promoted to Professor



The Fowler College of Business announced that Yan Luo was promoted from associate professor to professor starting in the fall of 2023.

Luo, the Goddard Faculty Fellow at the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy, is a passionate researcher in the areas of auditing, corporate disclosure, corporate governance and data analytics. Her research has been published in numerous top academic journals.

Since joining SDSU in 2014, Luo has taught courses in auditing and financial accounting at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

SDSU Student-Athlete Sings National Anthem During Final Four Telecast

Prior to the tip-off of the Aztecs' debut in the 2023 NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship semi-finals game against Florida Atlantic University on Saturday, April 1, fans witnessed the debut performance of another San Diego State student-athlete, but in a very unexpected way.

SDSU golfer, April Ranches, sang the national anthem with three other student-athletes, each representing the schools competing in the Final Four. The singing of "The Star-Spangled Banner" by the four student-athlete representatives has become a Final Four tradition in recent years.

Ranches, who earned both her bachelor's and master's degree in accountancy with the BMACC program in May 2023, was selected to sing the anthem after the NCAA notified the schools who made it to the Sweet Sixteen to submit video auditions for the anthem. Ranches submitted her video and was notified by the NCAA on March 21 that she was selected as the SDSU student-athlete to represent SDSU should the Aztecs make it through to the Final Four.

Both Ranches and the team made the trip to Houston after the Aztecs beat Creighton in the closing seconds of their Elite Eight matchup.

In the months since she completed her degree program, Ranches can still be seen on the SDSU campus working as a financial assistant for Aztec Shops. She also volunteers as an assistant coach for the SDSU's women's golf team as she prepares to launch her career as a professional golfer in December 2023.



Courtesy of San Diego State University Athletics



Courtesy of San Diego State University Athletics



Professor Establishes Organization to Support Black Accountants

According to the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy, there are nearly 673,000 actively licensed CPA in the U.S. By some estimates, fewer than 7,000 — only about 1% — are Black. The National Association of Black Accountants (NABA) was founded in 1969 to change that narrative.

San Diego's inaugural chapter of NABA was founded in December 2022 by Marcus Brooks, an assistant professor in the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy. Brooks started the local organization to promote the accounting profession to Black students within the San Diego region.

"NABA hopes to help diversify the accounting industry by introducing Black students to the many opportunities in the field, and to support current and aspiring Black accountants to get the educational and professional resources they need to succeed," said Brooks. "The San Diego chapter of NABA currently has about 35 members made up of 23 professionals and 12 students, the vast majority of which come from SDSU's Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy."



The San Diego chapter of the National Association of Black Accountants meeting included SDSU accounting professors Leon Chan (far left), Janie Chang (next to Chan) and group founder Marcus Brooks (checked shirt, middle right).

Education Helps SDSU Accounting Student Overcome Youthful Missteps

Jahaziel (pronounced HA-see-el) Sanchez, a San Diego native, knew that a “traditional” life wasn’t appealing to him and that he wanted to “explore life to the fullest capacity.”

“Unfortunately, my thrill-seeking nature distorted my world view and took me down a dark path,” he said. “I made some bad decisions that I’m not proud of.”

On his 22nd birthday, Sanchez made life-altering choices that resulted in his arrest on numerous armed robbery felony charges that could have meant decades in prison.



His eventual conviction on these charges was the lowest point in Sanchez’s life, but it was also a turning point. He knew that if he didn’t redirect his life immediately, he would spend some of his best years behind bars.

“I’ve always had a deep-rooted desire to learn and evolve,” said Sanchez, who had previously attended community college after his high school graduation. “Once I was on the inside, I decided to focus on personal growth by carefully navigating my new environment. I knew that any misstep could delay my release date and that’s where my relentless pursuit of furthering my education started.”

Sanchez’ quest to better himself propelled him to earn 10 associates degrees in everything from business to psychology while still behind bars and he was released from prison in early 2022 — four years earlier than his original release date.

Sanchez enrolled at SDSU as a junior majoring in accounting that fall. He said he chose accounting “because as an aspiring entrepreneur, I appreciate and respect accounting as the language of business.”

Sanchez is now in SDSU’s BMAcc program, which will allow him to earn both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees by the end of the 2025 spring semester. He’d eventually like to earn his Ph.D. in economics as he studies the relationship between criminal justice and the distribution of economic resources that are directed at social reform.

“I want to make sure that someone — anyone — who shares my past experiences understands that there are people who will support you and help you to succeed,” said Sanchez. “San Diego State University opened its doors to me and gave me a chance. I am grateful to be here today to share the new Aztec/entrepreneur chapter of my life.”

Beta Alpha Psi Earns Superior Ranking

The Beta Eta Chapter of Beta Alpha Psi (BAP) at SDSU was awarded “Superior Chapter” status by BAP’s national organization for the 2022-23 academic year. The award is given to select chapters that demonstrate outstanding performance in chapter operations, which include professional meetings, seminars, banquets and social activities with professionals.

Beta Eta has been ranked as a superior chapter at least 27 times since it has been formed in 1960. Accounting Professor Stefan Slavov, a former member of Beta Alpha Psi as a student at the University of Kentucky, is in his second year as the organization’s faculty advisor.



Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy Hosts Innovative Student Soft Skills Luncheon

The Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy is leading the way in holistic education, introducing a unique luncheon initiative aimed at honing students' soft skills. The Professional Soft Skill Luncheon series underscores the university's commitment to producing well-rounded graduates who excel in both technical and interpersonal skills.

With the accounting industry's demands being more than just quantitative prowess, the school has placed a spotlight on the softer aspects of professionalism such as communication skills, the ability to listen and attention to detail. The luncheon series invites students to interact with an array of guests, from advisory board members to job recruiters, with the objective of offering students a comprehensive understanding of real-world expectations and equipping them with the tools to meet them.



"We've always believed in nurturing the complete individual," said Jeff Wang, William E. Cole Director of the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy. "With the changing landscape of the industry, communication, collaboration and interpersonal understanding have become just as vital as any accounting principle. This luncheon series embodies that belief, and we're thrilled to see our students benefit from it."

The first Professional Soft Skills Luncheon was held on April 28, 2023, with three more luncheons scheduled for graduating seniors during the spring semester of 2024.

This entire endeavor was made possible thanks to the generosity of our donors who ardently support the school's vision," said Wang. "Their contributions not only finance these events, but also serve as a testament to the broader community's commitment to the success of the next generation of accountants."



Lamden Student Awarded Prestigious Scholarship

Anri Inoue, a student at SDSU's Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy, has been awarded a \$10,000 scholarship from the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (PCAOB). Inoue, who started her fourth year as part of the 5-year BMACC program in the fall of 2023, was nominated for the scholarship by Professor Yan Luo.

The scholarships are awarded annually to outstanding accounting students at accredited U.S. colleges and universities. Students eligible for the scholarship must demonstrate high ethical standards, demonstrate a financial need, have a GPA of 3.3 or higher and must be within the top third of their class.

Inoue, a native of Japan, will serve as a Los Angeles-based audit intern at PwC's Japan Business Network during the summer of 2024.



Top Students for 2023

Each year, the Fowler College of Business names the top students from each of the college's five departments. The Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy named Chloe Benoit (undergraduate), Thanh Dung Ha (Master of Science in Accountancy), and Brady Burcin and Matthew Cvar (BMACC) as the top students for 2023.

Benoit chose management information systems lecturer Kelly Shaul as her most influential faculty member, while Ha's most influential faculty member was Professor Emeritus Janey Chang (Accounting).

Professor Valerie Li (Accounting) was named as the most influential faculty member by SDSU's top international business student, Jennifer Gonzalez.



Professor Valerie Li (left) with 2023's top international business student Jennifer Gonzalez



Matthew Cvar – Matthew Cvar was recognized as one of two top students in the BMACC program shortly before he earned his degrees in the spring of 2023.

Before graduating from SDSU, Cvar studied abroad in Berlin during the spring of 2020 and was a member of the school's Student Accounting Society (SAS). His networking skills within SAS led to his internship at the San Diego office at RSM, and eventually to his current position as an assurance associate with the firm.

Thanh Dung Ha – The top Master of Science in Accountancy student for 2023 was Thanh Dung Ha. She chose accounting professor emeritus, Janie Chang, as her most influential professor prior to the ceremony.

Ha is currently a tax associate for the San Diego-based CPA firm of Lavine, Lofgren, Morris and Engelberg, LLP.



Chloe Benoit – Chloe Benoit was 2023's top undergraduate for the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy. She was also chosen as the top undergraduate for the Fowler College of Business.

After spending the summer as a banking and capital markets audit intern at PwC in New York City, Benoit is currently in the process of earning her Master of Science degree in the field of computer and information technology at the University of Pennsylvania.



Brady Burcin – After being named as one of the top BMACC students for 2023, Brady Burcin accepted a position with EY's tax service office in San Diego. He previously worked for the firm as an intern on two separate occasions.

While Burcin was in the process of earning his master's degree, he was a teaching assistant for Professor David DeBoskey's Financial Accounting Fundamentals (ACCTG 201) class. "I tried to be a mentor and resource for students as so many had previously been for me," said Burcin. "I can gladly say that I was able to have an impact on a number of students including one who recently accepted an offer at EY."



Identical Twin Sisters Find Career Success with Identical MSA Degrees

Claudia and Caroline Buchegger are identical twins with identical degrees. Both got their Master of Science in Accountancy (MSA) from the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy at the Fowler College of Business at San Diego State University.

However, the path they took to earn those degrees was not identical at all.

Claudia was the first-born twin and the first to attend SDSU. She enrolled as an accounting major during her freshman year in 2016 with the intent of becoming a certified public accountant (CPA). As an SDSU junior, Claudia enrolled in the 5-year BMACC degree program, where students earn both their bachelor's degree and MSA degrees simultaneously, giving them required 150 credit hours needed to sit for the CPA exams.



Claudia (left) and Caroline Buchegger

As Claudia was working toward her accounting degrees at SDSU, Caroline was working toward her mathematics degree at the University of California San Diego, which she completed in the spring of 2020. The following January, she enrolled in SDSU's MSA program and she joined Claudia as a student in the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy.

"I knew the Big Four accounting firms employed students from SDSU and that I would have a lot of career opportunities if I attended," said Caroline. "My sister told me how much she loved SDSU and the professors, so that definitely had a big influence on my decision to attend."

Claudia completed her BMACC program in December 2021, graduating as the top BMACC student for the 2021-22 academic year. She currently works at Viasat, a multi-billion-dollar global communications company located in Carlsbad, California in January 2023.

"My professors at SDSU prepared me well for a position in public accounting and it's the reason I landed a job as a tax associate right after I graduated," said Claudia, who has since become a licensed CPA. "As a corporate accountant at Viasat, I can attribute most of my knowledge and skills back to my education at SDSU."

Caroline, who graduated with her MSA in spring 2023, is currently an audit and assurance professional with Deloitte's San Diego office where she had previously worked as an intern.

"My MSA degree program was probably the main reason I got an internship with a Big Four accounting firm," said Caroline. "I received a job offer from them after my internship and I can definitely attribute all of this to earning my MSA degree from SDSU."

MSA Degree Propels Fowler Alumnus at Leading Biotech Company

After graduating from the University of California, Davis with a bachelor's degree in managerial economics in 2019, Jack Brady decided to continue his education by enrolling in the Master of Science in Accountancy (MSA) program at SDSU's Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy.



Brady, now a senior analyst for one of region's largest biotech firms, Illumina (NASDAQ: ILMN), shared his thoughts about why he pursued his MSA and some advice for those who are considering doing the same.

Q: What prompted you to pursue an MSA degree?

A: My education in economics provided me a comprehensive understanding of economic theory and practical business applications. That led to my interest in pursuing a more technical degree in accounting and financial reporting.

Q: Why did you choose to earn your MSA at SDSU?

A: I chose to study at the Fowler College of Business because of the reputation of the university and the networking opportunities at SDSU. I grew up in San Diego and I knew I wanted to pursue a career in business, so SDSU's network of business professionals in the accounting and finance industries has proven to be advantageous.

Q: Do you have any advice for those considering pursuing an MSA?

A: I encourage anyone interested in completing their MSA program at SDSU to acknowledge the hard work, dedication and sacrifice that goes into completing this degree. More importantly, the knowledge and the networking opportunities that can be gained throughout the program endlessly enhances your utility and credibility within the corporate workplace.

Fowler Students Visit Germany to See Business Technology in Action

Nine business students from SDSU's Fowler College of Business spent their spring break in Germany, where they got a first-hand look at how organizations utilize business systems in their day-to-day operations.

The students are in Nancy Jones' Managerial Accounting Fundamentals (ACCTG 202) class, which is a required course for all SDSU business students. Jones and Nancy Nicholson, director of SDSU's Charles W. Hostler Institute on World Affairs, accompanied the students to several stops where they observed how enterprise resource management (ERP) systems impacted operations in an international business setting.

While there, the group toured the Brügger factory in Lübeck, where they saw how grains, fruits and other ingredients were processed using both automation and manual labor to manufacture breakfast foods such as muesli and granola bars. The students observed the use of an SAP enterprise resource planning (ERP) system for the factory's accounting, scheduling and order processing operations.



The group wrapped up the trip with a visit to SAP's headquarters in Walldorf where they toured the organization and learned more about the technology from the company's management and staff.

"The travel experience was initiated with the expectation that students will gain a better understanding of manufacturing and business transactions in an international setting," said Jones. "This experience offers students a real-world glimpse into operations and systems they will likely encounter, and need to master, during their business careers."

Filipinx Alumna/Lecturer Stares Down Stereotypes

After earning her bachelor's degree from SDSU in 2005, Honey Lynn Samuelson Villalobos immediately started work at a local San Diego accounting firm. However, it was far from a perfect work environment. "The firm had only two women supervisors, no women in management and only white male partners. And of all those people, only one was a person of color," said Villalobos, whose mother is Filipino and whose father is Finnish/Swedish. "Whenever I asked any person in a leadership role for guidance, I was frequently answered with a backhanded comment related to me being a woman. I left that firm after a year-and-a-half because I wanted to grow in my accounting career, and it was clear to me that this would not happen in that firm's environment."

As she searched for a new position, Villalobos came to understand that prejudice was not just confined to her previous company. "Filipinx and other APIDA people have frequently been seen as immigrants or foreigners no matter how long we've lived in this country or even if we were born here," she said. "Friends who have referred me for professional positions have been asked about my language skills once the hiring management found out that I was half Asian."

Back to School

In 2016, Villalobos began working as an accountant for a local leadership training and development company. When the COVID-19 pandemic shut down many of the nation's workplaces in 2020, she found herself partially furloughed and she made a decision that changed her life: She re-enrolled at SDSU to earn her Master of Science in Accountancy (MSA) degree.

By 2020, things had changed in both the accounting industry and in the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy since she earned her bachelor's degree. "In the 17 years since my time as an undergraduate and a new accounting associate, I've seen an increase in diversity in the accounting industry with an increase in APIDA people in all areas of leadership," said Villalobos, who earned her MSA in December 2022. "When I earned my bachelor's degree, there were no minority women teaching my accounting courses at SDSU and now there are several. Since I've returned for my master's degree, I have been inspired by two wonderful Asian women professors and graduate advisors (Yan Luo and Janie Chang). They are successful women who teach great courses, have their Ph.D.s and have families. I didn't realize how much I needed to see them as examples, but I hope to serve as an inspiration to other women of color in helping them attain their goals that they may not see possible."

Progress is at Hand

Although Villalobos — now a lecturer in SDSU's Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy and senior tax accountant at Correia & Associates — has seen the progress that APIDA people have made in recent years, she still sees and hears painful reminders of prejudice. "I get comments about how well I speak English," she said. "When I'm questioned about my heritage, it makes me feel like I don't belong."

However, Villalobos noted that while there has been some awkward and even painful situations for her as an APIDA woman, she is still hopeful for change.

"Can we overcome this 'foreigner' stereotype? I absolutely think it's possible, but as we have seen, it will take time," she said. "For example, the first accounting firm I worked for looks so different now with underserved minorities and women in prominent roles. It's wonderful to see change, but we need to see it from our leaders in government as well, leading by example from the top down."



MSA Degree Opens Door to Promising Career for New Grad

While a bachelor's degree normally requires 120 academic credits, the additional 30 course credits needed to fulfill the CPA licensing prerequisites has shaped accounting firm labor demands and university curriculums in California since the requirements became effective in 2014.

This is what motivated aspiring tax professional, Thanh Dung Ha ('23, MSA), to enroll in the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy at San Diego State University's Fowler College of Business to earn her Master of Science in Accountancy (MSA) degree.

Ha, who earned her bachelor's degree in her native Vietnam, chose to earn the necessary 30 credits for the CPA licensure at SDSU because of the university's "esteemed reputation as a strong business school, particularly within the school of accountancy."

"The MSA program equipped me with a comprehensive understanding of accounting principles, tax regulations, financial reporting and advanced auditing techniques," said Ha. "Additionally, the extensive alumni network in the San Diego area offered excellent networking opportunities by connecting me with professionals who shared a common educational background and career path."

In January 2023, Ha began working at San Diego-based CPA firm Lavine, Lofgren, Morris and Engelberg, LLP. as an intern in the firm's tax department. Following the completion of her MSA degree program in May 2023, she accepted an offer to work at the firm as a full-time tax associate.



Thanh Dung Ha on the SDSU campus after earning her MSA degree



SDSU Accounting Grad Among 2022 Business Women of the Year Winners

In their November 28, 2022 issue, the San Diego Business Journal (SDBJ) honored San Diego State University accounting graduate, Kelly Feuillet, as one of 15 Business Women of the Year. Feuillet earned her bachelor's degree from SDSU in 1998.

Feuillet, the controller and senior director of financial reporting for the San Diego Foundation, was honored for her leadership in the financial administration of the organization's work in funding and distributing over \$250 million to San Diego-based nonprofit organizations.

A veteran of the U.S. Navy, Feuillet is a licensed CPA and has an extensive record of leadership in various local companies and nonprofit organizations.



Aztec Hall of Famer and Former NBA Player Parlays Accounting Degree into a Thriving Career

Former NBA player and Aztec Hall of Famer Joel Kramer is a living example of why it is so important for college athletes to complete their college degrees.

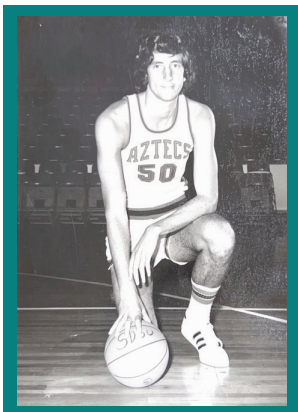
Now the CEO of Associated Asset Management, LLC (AAM) in Tempe, Arizona, the 6' 7" Kramer was a star forward for the Aztecs from 1973-78. He was also a two-time Aztec MVP, and the old Pacific Coast Athletic Association's (PCAA) player of the year during his senior year in 1978. All the while, he was working on earning a bachelor's degree in accounting.

However, Kramer's accounting degree wouldn't play a role in his immediate career plans since the Phoenix Suns had chosen him in the third round of the 1978 NBA Draft.

After five years with the Suns, Kramer left the NBA at the end of 1982. Following a single year playing professional basketball in Israel, he left his life as a professional athlete for good.



Joel Kramer is currently the CEO of Associated Asset Management in Tempe, Arizona



Kramer played forward for the Aztecs in the mid-1970s. He was elected to the Aztec Hall of Fame in 1997

Shortly thereafter, he and his family settled in Phoenix where he began utilizing the skills learned in SDSU's classroom in what would become a thriving post-basketball business career with the Phoenix branch of CBIZ, an accounting, insurance and financial advisory firm. Kramer worked at the company for nearly 40 years before retiring in January 2023 as managing director, but he continues his role with AAM where he's worked since 2005. Kramer is also a practicing certified public accountant (CPA).

Kramer has some words of advice for today's student athletes who are considering following his path into professional sports. "Only an elite few enjoy a long career as a professional athlete, and in all honesty, this was not something that I expected and I was lucky," said Kramer. "Even more than talent, there's a degree of luck — the right coach, injuries and timing, for example — that you have little control over during your sports career. So, take advantage of your education and have a backup plan to secure your future."

Award-Winning Lecturer Bids Farewell to the Fowler College of Business

At the end of spring semester 2023, the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy bid farewell to lecturer Nancy Jones who helped spearhead the college's up-to-the-minute business analytics technology curriculum.

Jones joined SDSU's faculty as a lecturer in the fall of 2013, becoming an integral part of Fowler's efforts to make students proficient in the use of business analytics systems through instruction in SAP software and other accounting information systems that are currently used in organizational settings.

It was Jones who initiated the university's participation in the SAP University Alliances, and she will continue to coordinate that effort, as well as several other academic activities at SDSU during her retirement.



Accounting Alumna Passes Her Passion for Education to the Next Generation

Growing up in the village of Hopkins, Belize, Bernadette Griggs was used to living in a home with no running water or electricity. But that didn't stop the young math whizz from graduating high school at 15 and dreaming of a better life.

"As a brave 17-year-old, I traveled to the U.S. — alone," said Griggs, now the chief financial officer for Jewish Family Service of San Diego. "I left my mom, dad and five siblings to join some extended family members who lived in Los Angeles."

Griggs was in Los Angeles only a few years before she sensed better opportunities further south. In 1982, she moved to San Diego where she carved out a niche for herself working in the accounting departments of three different community colleges.

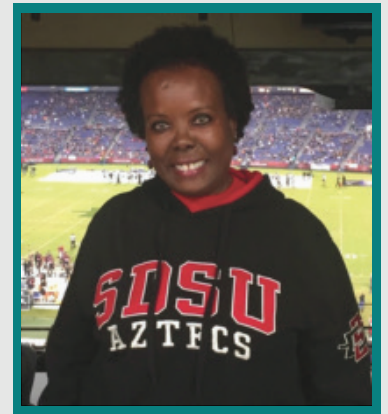
Working in the public education system for many years made Griggs realize she needed to complete her bachelor's degree if she wanted to move forward on a professional level.

But that proved to be no easy feat. After Griggs earned her associate's degree in accounting from San Diego City College, she enrolled in what is now the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy as an adult learner, taking classes at night while raising two young sons and maintaining a full-time job.

It took nearly six years to complete her courses at SDSU, but Griggs earned her B.S. in accounting in 1995. Although that was 28 years ago, she still uses some of the things she learned at SDSU today, especially one lesson that was under-appreciated at the time.

"Working in teams was my least favorite activity while I was in school, however, I now see the value in teamwork in completing projects, having the diversity in thoughts, and getting input results in better outcomes," said Griggs. "Hard work, long hours, dedication and multitasking was required to earn my bachelor's degree and I've adopted that philosophical work ethic throughout my life. A job well-done requires that you give 100%."

Griggs, who later earned a master's degree from National University, has passed along her passion for education to sons Rasan Sampson ('08, mechanical engineering) and Jameel Sampson ('16, kinesiology), both of whom are proud SDSU alumni. And she's made no secret of the fact that she would like her grandson, Jett Sampson, to attend SDSU, adding a third generation to the family's Aztec legacy.





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