



BRYANT UNIVERSITY WOMEN IN FINANCE AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

2024 Annual Edition

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Inaugural Women in Finance and Leadership Retreat

Women in Business Retreat opens up communications, paths in finance

By Stephen Kostrzewa June 5, 2024



Alexandra Clegg, chief investment officer for Magna Hospitality Group, provides information and advice to students from both Bryant University and local high schools at the inaugural Bryant University Women's Business Retreat.

At first, there were a few awkward moments at the inaugural Bryant University Women's Business Retreat. Around one table, a mix of Bryant students, local high school students, faculty, and industry professionals had only just met each other, and the gulfs between their lives and ages and levels of experience seemed wide.

But then Alexandra Clegg, chief investment officer for Magna Hospitality Group, asked the table a simple question: "What brought you to the event today?" Slowly but steadily, her tablemates began to open up: For some, it was to receive an introduction to a field they knew little about. For others, it was the opportunity to learn more about potential careers. Others, still, were looking for guidance and advice as they took their first tenuous steps into a wider world.

What united them, however, was an excitement to make new connections and share a day devoted to building relationships and networks for young women in business.

After just a brief conversation, it turned out, they weren't so different after all — and that's exactly how Retreat organizer, Senior Lecturer of Finance and Director of Bryant's Financial Planning Program Mara Derderian had planned it. By bringing together such a diverse group, she said — and mixing the audiences at the tables — everyone came away with not just new friends but a new outlook as well.

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“When you can learn from a wide range of personal experiences and perspectives, it doesn’t just help you understand the world around you better, it helps you understand yourself a little better too,” explained Derderian, who is spearheading the university’s initiative to develop and support women in finance leadership. By taking the students out of their comfort zone, it broadens their horizons.

As North Providence High School student Molly Witt noted, “I just think it’s really cool because we’re all able to share our passions with each other, and not just our passions, but who we are.



“An event like this gives you people to talk to about what you care about, and to look up to,” she said. Kelly Lannan, senior vice president of Emerging Customers for Personal Investing at Fidelity Investments, discussed the importance of managing your financial destiny and the joys of a career in the finance field.

The four-day Women’s Business Retreat was dedicated to building those strong relationships, both on campus and off. Twenty-two undergraduate women from Bryant – some Finance majors, other just interested in learning more about the field – shared the first day of the Retreat with 80 young women from Rhode Island high schools, including East Greenwich High School, North Providence High School, Pawtucket High School, The Lincoln School, and LaSalle Academy.

Also on hand alongside Derderian were Bryant faculty members – including Sr. Lecturer of Finance Maura Dowling, Assistant Professor of Finance Leila Zbib, Ph.D., and Professor of Finance Asli Ascioğlu, Ph.D. – and a host of professionals eager to help guide the next generation.

The idea for the on-campus event, says Derderian, came from her work teaching basic finance education to high school students, with Bryant Finance students helping to deliver the lesson plan.



There’s power in community, she stated – and that community can be especially powerful for young women. “There’s such a huge gender split and inequality really between male and female in the finance industry,” she said. “So, I wanted to develop programming that might be of particular interest to young women.

“What we’re trying to do with this Retreat is build camaraderie, build confidence, and build networks so that everyone can be the best that they can be, whatever they decide to do, and whoever they work with,” said Derderian.

When she put out the call for speakers at the event, she was overwhelmed by the response, including representatives from Fidelity, Magna Hospitality, and CVS Health. “The Retreat is a beautiful example of community support and outreach,” Derderian noted. “You’ve got some of the largest employers in Rhode Island and great community partners working with educators to help young women to excel.”

Gaining perspectives

Over the course of a packed day, the attendees heard from a wealth of experts in a variety of areas. Morning speaker Kelly Lannan, senior vice president of Emerging Customers for Personal Investing at Fidelity Investments, discussed the power of financial education and the joys of a career in the finance field. “Financial services is one of those few industries where you can see how your work affects people’s lives,” she notes.



Two panels featured representatives from CVS Health, with panelists in careers ranging from finance to marketing to HR. They discussed making the transition from college to industry, finding internships, creating successful cover letters, displaying confidence in job interviews, and standing out as a new employee.

In her keynote address, Clegg discussed her industry, the power of financial education, and secrets to success. But she also shared an earnest look at her career. Chief among them: You can excel while still being yourself. “I realized that I do not have to emulate the behavior of the men around me; I can do everything in my own style,” she told her audience.

Panelists from CVS Health offered professional development advice as well as information on pursuing a wide range of careers in business.

The day’s programming, said Derderian, aimed to let the students know there was a space for them in finance, no matter their interests. “We hope that when they leave the Retreat, all of the attendees say to themselves, ‘I can do great things,’” she explained. “But we also want them to do great things that are meaningful to them and align with their dreams.”

First-year student Monica Garbacz '27 is still deciding whether to major in Accounting or Finance, but she knows that financial education will be important, whatever her future career holds. “It was really impressive hearing from such a wide range of speakers,” Garbacz said. “Some of the areas they talked about, like real estate finance, I didn’t even know existed before today.”

Finance major Andrea Cortes '26 was excited to speak with the CVS representatives about potential internships in the finance field, but she also appreciated the opportunity to meet so many potential role models. “I was really excited to learn more about all of the women involved in the industry,” she said.

This past fall, Cortes, with Derderian’s encouragement, attended the Women in Alternative Investments Career Forum in New York City, where she filled a notebook with information and advice — and, just as crucially, began to develop her personal network. “It’s really important to make connections as early as you can, because it sets the tone for so much of what you do later on and after you graduate,” she noted.

Sharing the day

For Witt and her North Providence High School friends Caroline Ricci and Shannon Fillmore, the day offered a chance to get a head start on their futures. Derderian had previously visited their Business Management 101 class to discuss financial education and when they learned of the Retreat, they leapt at the chance to learn more. “We were super inspired by what she had to say, and eventually our whole school got the word, so now we have a whole bunch of kids coming,” explained Witt.



Fillmore is planning to study animal behavior in college but knows that finance will still be an important part of her life. “This isn’t really an area I had ever necessarily considered but today is helping me to gain a deeper aspect of the business world,” she said.

The Bryant students were thrilled to welcome the young visitors. “I really enjoyed talking with them and getting to know them a little bit – and it was really cool how they’re already interested in these areas and are starting to make plans for the future,” said Monica Garbacz ’27.

Among the high school students on campus that day was Cortes’s younger sister, Alexandra. Andrea admitted to being a little jealous that she’s getting a head start with all of this important information and connections so early on, she said with a laugh – but only a little. After all, who doesn’t want the best for their little sister?

“I’m really glad she’s taking part in this, and she’s having these opportunities now,” Cortes said. “Because it’s going to help her so much later on.”

Exploring and coming full circle

For the Bryant students, the on-campus gathering was the kick-off to four days of exploration and discovery. The next morning, they traveled to New York and took a walking tour of Wall Street and the New York Stock Exchange. They also visited financial firms including Goldman Sachs, Bank of America, and Black Rock where they connected with finance professionals, many of them Bryant graduates.

A networking reception aided them in finding mentors and important allies within the university’s 50,000-strong alumni network.

The goal of the trip was to turn an ethereal future into something real. “It makes it something they’ve not just heard about, but something that they’ve experienced. It makes these ideas much more impactful and gives them something concrete to pursue,” says Derderian.





Bryant students, faculty, and staff pose with the famous “Fearless Girl” statue in New York City.

In addition to their visits, the group also attended a seminar with leadership learning and executive coach Tamara Nemo, received tips on women’s style in the workplace from fashion stylist Gayle Perry, and spoke with neuroscientist Nicole McLaughlin, Ph.D., an associate professor of psychiatry and human behavior at Brown University, about the importance of selfcare and wellness as they begin their careers.

On the last day of the Retreat, the Bryant students visited Northern Lincoln Elementary School, where they shared their own stories with the fifth-grade class and offered advice to the college students of tomorrow. Sara Hutchings-Schwartz, programs manager at Junior Achievement of Rhode Island, helped them prepare.

“A lot of people are afraid of math and finance because they don’t have those mentors and those models in their lives,” she noted. “You could be a powerful match for those roles.”



A member of Bryant’s newly formed chapter of Twelve Points Academy, a national organization dedicated to advancing financial literacy throughout local communities, Garbacz was eager to pay her knowledge and experiences forward, noting that financial literacy wasn’t part of the curriculum for her growing up. “These topics are so important, and they affect everyone’s lives. If these students start now in high school, they’ll be so much better prepared,” she suggested.

“I feel so thankful for everything I’ve learned at Bryant this past year as a first-year student, and this is a chance to share it,” Garbacz added.

IMPACT BOSTON

Students explore sustainable practices in finance, management, development

By Sarah Francis March 25, 2024

It's 8:30 on a chilly February morning and a group of Bryant students, alongside their College of Business faculty mentors, are scattered around the model room on the ninth floor of Boston City Hall for the first site of the IMPACT Boston field trip.

The massive space, part of the Boston Planning and Development Agency, is home to a 1:40-scale replica of more than two acres of the city, from Beacon Hill to the South Boston waterfront. Crafted from basswood, the sprawling 3D model is regularly updated and sports true-to-life details, from tiny elephants at the Franklin Park Zoo to the city's infamous traffic.

It's a wide-lens geographic introduction to the "sustainable community" theme of this annual IMPACT Boston trip. Management Lecturer Valerie Leduc and Finance Senior Lecturer Maura Ann Dowling designed this experience with input from student leaders from the Real Estate Association, the Women's Network, and the Society of Human Resource Management. The purpose of IMPACT Boston is to explore and directly experience the impact of financial decisions on the health and sustainability of the whole community. Throughout the trip, professional speakers share observations and opportunities about what they've learned through long-term experience.

This 3D city model offers an orientation in urban development before the group moves on to the next stop: Dudley Neighbors, Inc. (DNI), which sits on the border between Roxbury and North Dorchester. As a Community Land Trust, DNI owns and leases properties, and is the steward for 98 permanently affordable homes, farm sites, parks, and commercial properties.



Students and faculty at "The Embrace" in Boston Common.



Inside the Boston Planning and Development Agency, students view a 3D model of the city of Boston.

The speaker is Sharon Cho, DNI's enthusiastic director. Cho describes how the Roxbury neighborhood is like a lot of working-class and immigrant communities that suffered from chronic disinvestment and redlining. In DNI's case, however, the residents drafted a master plan in the 1980s to guide revitalization of the neighborhood, which allowed families to remain in affordable homes and not be displaced by gentrification.

"The market-driven model is destroying communities," says Dowling. "We have to keep neighborhoods in the center of decision-making."

Today, Roxbury is a thriving community with initiatives that range from street fairs and community gardens to land development. Cho illustrates these and other highlights on the walking tour of the Dudley Triangle neighborhood, pointing out a colorful "Unity through Diversity" street mural painted by artists and a lush greenhouse, managed by the Food Project. "It shows change can be made if you put energy into it," Cho says.

It's nearly noon, and the tour is already making an impression. "I'm so happy I came," says Human Resource major Sarah Beachman '25. "I especially liked Dudley and seeing how HR applies to that kind of project, and the importance of diversity and inclusion in making these projects successful."

A half-mile walk later, lunch is served at Merengue Restaurant, a popular Dominican eatery on Blue Hills Avenue painted in cheerful Caribbean oranges and greens. Over fragrant dishes of Spanish rice, chicken, and pork, Karen Kelleher, president of the BlueHub Loan Fund, shares how she's dedicated her career to improving underserved communities through lending and community development. Kelleher oversees more than \$100 million in annual lending and manages \$640 million in community development loans.

Before law school, she spent a year in Roxbury, a predominantly Black neighborhood, teaching low-income students. “It was incredibly challenging and rewarding,” Kelleher says. Then, while in law school, she saw a big difference in the opportunities available to her versus her students. “It just didn’t sit well with me.” It motivated Kelleher to work in housing policy and shaped her mission to foster equity in her community. One insight she shared from her career: “When you’re in finance, you don’t always meet the people you help.”

Then, it’s on to Boston Common to learn about “The Embrace,” the city’s latest public art installation. The bronze, 20-foot sculpture celebrates Coretta Scott King and Martin Luther King, Jr. shortly after Dr. King won the Nobel Peace Prize in the wake of the successful Montgomery Bus Boycott. “The Embrace” was created by MASS Design Group, a Boston firm founded with the understanding that architecture plays a critical role in supporting communities and expanding access to design that is both healing and hopeful.

Washington Village in South Boston is the next stop. A modern, mixed-use community with an industrial vibe, the nearly five-acre site is being developed by Core Investments’ CEO David Pogorelc ’85, a Bryant alum. Pogorelc’s motto is “it’s a community, not a commodity” when working in existing neighborhoods as well as developing new ones. Architect and Senior Development Manager Art Campbell meets the group at the cozy Cannonball Cafe to share the history and wisdom learned from the years-long real estate development project.

“But how hard was it to buy all this land?” one student asks. “A nightmare,” Campbell replies. Some students are on their third IMPACT Boston visit and are noticing the changes that unfold each year. Other students are on their first visit. Campbell then takes the group for a walk around the community to see upcoming changes, fielding questions along the way.



Students in Roxbury.



Cannonball Cafe

An hour later, the bus pulls into Gilly's House, where the group is welcomed by Founder and Executive Director Barbara Gillmeister. She informs the students of the conversion of the 15-year vacant nursing home into the homey nonprofit residential facility housing men in recovery. Gillmeister and her husband, David, launched Gilly's House in Wrentham, Massachusetts, after the death of their son, Steven, from an overdose.

As the group thanks Cannonball Cafe proprietor Rachel Lazar for her gracious hospitality, she shares that she is appreciative of Pogorelcs' investment in her dream to open a cafe in this community.



Gilly's

Gilly's, located in a residential neighborhood, is staffed on-site 24 hours and the demands of fundraising are constant. After a pizza and taco dinner with Gilly's House residents, a man who is 29 years into his recovery shared his story. It's a thoughtful final stop on IMPACT Boston's day-long journey.

This is the third year that Finance major Drew Dubois '24 has participated in the tour. "Each trip has been worthwhile because it gives a different perspective from what you usually get in class," he says. "Profit isn't just dollars and cents; it's about reinvestment."

Industry Conference

Earlier this year, financial planning track students Sarina Ramchandani and Layce Hermans, along with Professor Leila Zbib had the privilege of attending the Commonwealth Summit for Women, held at the St. Regis Hotel in Santa Barbara, California. Bryant University is the first university partner hosted at this extraordinary seminar. At this event, women financial advisors from all around the country gathered to discuss past experiences, have their questions answered, and look towards the future to see how the industry will be changing.

Starting with the general session on the first day, attendees heard stories from women advisors who have been leading the industry for over 20 years, successful business owners discussing their professional journey as well as general tips on how to lead a successful career as a woman in a male dominated field. There were also many opportunities to network and speak with these women to hear about their personal experiences and gain invaluable advice. This event allows our students to elevate their knowledge of the financial planning industry and ideally utilize this experience as they continue both their academic and professional journeys.



Boston Career Day

By Eileen Hayes '07, First Vice President, Third Party Models Lead, BlackRock

The power of our network throughout our career helps pave our path, open opportunities and can really make all the difference in our journey.

Investnet Institute On Campus held our Second Annual Boston Career Day with over 100 students from Bryant University, Babson University and Bentley University (the 3 B's) and over 50 professionals across our industry. This inspiring event was hosted by MFS Investment Management at their beautiful space in Boston, MA. It was a powerful day filled with amazing connections being made.

The highlight of the day was hearing from our exceptional panelists, Jeff Saef, Managing Director at BlackRock, Brooks Freiderich, Principal Director at Investnet and Michael Oliveri, Partner at PWC. Our panelists shared their professional journeys, invaluable advice and experience in the process.

Following the panel discussion, students attended small breakout sessions where they had an opportunity to meet with industry professionals for more informal and intimate conversations about the wealth management and investment management industries. These breakout sessions further provided students with superb networking opportunities.

Thank you to our sponsors Investnet, Inc State Street Global Advisors Natixis Investment Managers Charles Schwab John Hancock Investment Management for making the day possible and to my incredible Investnet Institute on Campus board for being so passionate to help the next generation of talent in our industry have the tools and resources to be as successful as possible.



Community Outreach

The Lunch in Learn Series was developed by the Financial Planning Association of Rhode Island (“FPA-RI”) in partnership with Bryant University to educate high school students about the field of financial planning and its numerous career opportunities. Our FPA-RI participants are joined by Bryant University students currently enrolled in a CFP Track program as part of their undergraduate work in visiting local high schools to discuss becoming a Certified Financial Planner. The combination and variety of Lunch and Learn presenters will give high school students a comprehensive overview of the process of being a CFP and what ultimately the profession can be for those interested in becoming financial planners. We have received the generous support of Chick Fil A that will bring with us lunch for all the students in attendance.

We visited four local high schools this spring. Student feedback has been fantastic.

- “I really enjoyed the Lunch and Learn because it was a way to fully understand the variety of opportunities through a financially focused education.” - Farrah, East Greenwich High School
- “The Lunch and Learn was a conversation and open environment that provided young women in our Invest in Girls program to be both educated and empowered. Empowering financial literacy conversations for women can profoundly impact their economic independence, confidence, and ability to make informed financial decisions, leading to greater financial security and wealth. The Lunch and Learn was the perfect place for this to occur.” - Dessa, East Greenwich High School
- “In the Lunch and Learn I learned some financial tips I did not know before such as the ‘72 Rule’ which indicates when your money would double.” -Sunny, East Greenwich High School



With perseverance, Andrea Cortes '26 plans for a future in finance while giving back

By Stephen Kostrzewa, November 6, 2023



Finance student Andrea Cortes '26 keeps a notebook of everything she learned at this October's Women in Alternative Investments Career Forum. There are notes on the people she met, summaries of the advice they gave, and information on how to pursue potential career paths. The most important entry, though, is a simple quote from one of the panelists: "If you're in the room, you deserve to be in the room."

That message had a special resonance for the conference attendees — 200 college students, MBA students, and other women beginning their careers in finance — all of whom were working to break into a male dominated-field, Cortes notes. "We talked about how the world was changing and how we could be part of that change," she says.

Finding a community of support

The first Bryant representative chosen to attend the conference, Cortes, a first-generation college student, pursued the opportunity the same way she's pursued others in her life — with equal parts determination, humility, and an eagerness to explore. "When they first asked us to go into the ballroom to start the conference, all I could think was, 'This is the big moment,' " she remembers.

The connections she's made have helped her to rise to the occasion. "Every single day I think about my parents, and everyone else who has helped me come such a long way. I want to make them proud," she says.

Cortes found her first Bryant connection in her North Providence High School accounting teacher, alumnus James Isabella '88. "He'd tell us Bryant has such amazing programs and employers are always seeking Bryant students," she says.

Intrigued, Cortes, who knew she wanted to study business, chose to apply early action. With the help of her parents and Isabella, she learned to navigate the college application process, from forms to financial aid. Bryant's was the first acceptance letter Cortes received, much to her excitement, she remembers. But, noting the enormity of the decision, and the cost, she and her family wanted to keep their options open.

When Accepted Students Day came around, however, her heart was clear. "There was just a different vibe here," Cortes recalls. Visiting with some of her friends, she was excited to show off the campus. "I told them, 'Oh, this is Salmanson Dining Hall! This is the gym! This is Fisher Student Center,'" she recollects with a smile.

"When I finally got the acceptance email, I was so excited. It was a real 'oh my gosh' moment."

Her parents didn't say it at the time, but they knew the decision had been made. "My mom told me a couple months later that when my dad saw me at Bryant that day, he told her, 'Yeah, she's going to school here,'" says Cortes, who commutes to campus.

A commuter student, Cortes started at Bryant a week early, taking part in the University's 4MILE (Multicultural and International Leadership Experience) program, an orientation designed for incoming international and domestic multicultural students. At 4MILE, she made friends with incoming students from all over the world and was introduced to the university's Multicultural Student Union.

"It was such a great experience and in one week I learned so much about Bryant and other cultures and the importance of diversity," she says.

Her professional network expanded during her first year too. Cortes, who decided to major in Finance and minor in Accounting and Italian, received an invitation from Lecturer in Finance Mara Derderian to a series of lunch discussions with other women students studying Finance at Bryant.

"I was the only freshman, and the other girls were all seniors," says Cortes. "It was a little scary at first, but it was really nice talking with them and realizing this could be me in three years."

Looking ahead and giving back

Looking ahead and giving back

During the summer, Derderian offered another opportunity: a sponsored trip to the seventh annual Women in Alternative Investments Career Forum, organized by the Women's Association of Venture and Equity, in New York City. "I wrote in my application that I wanted to learn more about all of the opportunities in front of me," says Cortes. She was also intrigued by the focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion, which has become an important interest for her.

More than 600 applicants applied for only 200 spots at the conference. "When I finally got the acceptance email, I was so excited. it was a real 'oh my gosh' moment," Cortes notes. Derderian, she says, was thrilled for her as well.

When the forum concluded, Cortes returned to campus energized. "It felt good to be in a roomful of other girls with the same goals, and it really helped me to build my network," she says.

She's also eager to explore the field of private equity, which she learned about at the conference. "I really like how they talked about the relationships you form in that area and how you're able to work with other people," Cortes notes.

"I'm focused on being successful in the future, but I remember the people who got me here."

That doesn't mean she's stopped exploring, though. This semester, Cortes joined Bryant's Finance Association, which helps to expand students' knowledge of the financial industry and connect them with alumni in the field. One of the most recent meetings brought alumni working at Dell Technologies back to campus.

Pickleball Fun!

In April, several students attended an off-campus evening filled with friends and fun. Bryant women came together for an evening at a local pickleball center where we received a lesson and then had the opportunity to play matches with each other. It was a great opportunity to make new friends, get to know our finance professors and learn the #1 sport in the country!



Senior Spotlights

From Voicing a Little Girl's Dream To Achieving It

By Lucie Castagne Student-Athlete June 3, 2024



Left to Right: Dr. Inge-Lise Ameer, Myself, and President Ross Gittell, Ph.D.

Reflecting on my journey fills me with a deep sense of gratitude. Looking back over ten years ago, I was a young girl in France, mesmerized by American college basketball on TV, which I would watch with my older siblings. Those images of crowds and high-stakes games stuck with me and sparked a dream. Curious, I began researching American universities and the lifestyles of college athletes. My drive for success both on and off the court, opened my eyes to the limitations of the French system for student-athletes, which often leads young and ambitious individuals to compromise their aspirations. These observations paired with my passion gave me a clear sense of direction. At thirteen, not only did I set these three ambitious long-term goals, but I also boldly to voice them:

1. To be a **student-athlete** in the **United States**
2. To play **division 1 basketball** & Obtain a **full scholarship**
3. To earn a **degree** from a **prestigious university**

Following the loss of my father in 2012, our family faced profound challenges. While devastated, basketball became my sanctuary. It offered me an education, a purpose, and a path to independence. My journey led me from leaving home at fourteen to pursue basketball at the national level in France, to earning my degree as a Division 1 student-athlete at Bryant University.

Achieving this goal required hard work, dedication, and strategic decisions. Even at a very young age, I saw every choice as a step toward my future. For Christmas, I asked my mom for books that would help me learn and grow. I chose long-term goals over short-term pleasures, preferring basketball camps over family holidays. These small decisions became habits of discipline, paving the way for bigger ones:

- At fourteen, I moved out of the family home to attend a boarding school, allowing me to become a better player and gain time efficiency.
- At sixteen, I transferred to a new high school located on the opposite side of the country. I lived with a host family which allowed me to move forward in my basketball journey.

- At seventeen, I seized the chance to join Putnam Science Academy, an athletic preparatory school in the United States. Leaving France this early meant to quit high school without a diploma, a risk that I was willing to take for the opportunity at stake. I spent the following two years learning English, teaching myself AP courses to obtain college credits, and training hard to secure an athletic scholarship as an undersized guard.
- At nineteen, I accepted an offer from Bryant University, where I was able to pursue my dreams.



Bryant provided a safe environment where I was able to fully concentrate on self-improvement in all aspects. Given my background, I initially felt out of place attending a private business school. Nonetheless, I gradually learned to adapt, drawing strength from this incredible community that I will be forever thankful for.

On May 18th, I graduated Suma Cum Laude from Bryant University with a Bachelor of Business in Finance and Information Systems Analytics. I received the W Roger Babson Commencement Award, presented to a graduating senior who is distinguished within the University community for his or her character, orderly mind, sound judgment, and systematic business habits. I also earned the Research and Engagement Day Ambassador award for my research with Asli Ascioğlu and my initiatives with Laura Kohl to push the university at the forefront of undergraduate research. I am also proud to have graduated as a member of the International Business Honor Society Beta Gamma Sigma, the International English Honor Society Sigma Tau Delta, and the National Leadership Honor Society Omicron Delta Kappa.

While being a student-athlete required a significant time commitment, Bryant allowed me to gain valuable professional experience. I first worked at the Office of International Student and Scholars under the guidance of Kaoru Paganelli and Emily Collins Garcia. Later, I became a peer tutor and earned my CRLA Level II (certification for International Tutoring), thanks to Kelley Tiarks and Stephanie Carter. At that time I also volunteered as the Chair of European Countries and Treasurer of the International Student Organization. The summer leading to my junior year, I received a fellowship grant from Bryant University Amica Center for Career Education, allowing me to intern in Spain at Grupo Vesilen Investments, where I acquired skills in both business and Spanish under Bernard Lonis' supervision. The following year I continued to grow and developed leadership abilities as a captain of the Women's Basketball Team. The next summer, I found myself needing ankle surgery, which unfortunately meant I couldn't pursue the internship I had been hoping for. However, determined to make the most of my time in France, I enrolled in the FinTech Summer Program at HEC Paris. Throughout my senior year, I served as the Financial Market Center Assistant, founded the Bryant Research Association, and volunteered as Treasurer for the Creative Writing Club. I gained experience in Asset Management by serving as a Portfolio Manager for our \$2.8M student-managed fund while also interning at WealthCare Investment Partners, a Registered Investment Advisor ("RIA"), and earning my Securities Investment Essential Exam.



I have a lifetime ahead to study and work, but only a limited time to play the sport I love at its highest level. When I fully commit to it, I am confident in my ability to excel. Although I was initially set to pursue a Master of Science in Financial Economics at the esteemed Johns Hopkins University Carey Business School, I chose to extend my basketball career for another year—a decision I embrace wholeheartedly. I have accepted a full athletic scholarship from the University of Central Florida, where I will compete in the Big XII, one of the nation’s most competitive leagues. What better way to conclude my collegiate athletic journey than at the pinnacle of competition?

While my passion for finance and economics remains unwavering, this year presents an opportunity to develop the intangible and transferable skills—discipline, resilience, communication, and the ability to thrive under pressure. More importantly, it pushes me beyond my comfort zone, where true growth takes place. During this time, I will be pursuing a Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies, allowing me to explore my varied interests and complete a thesis.

I am immensely grateful to everyone who played a role in this journey— family, coaches, friends, teammates, their parents, and those kind souls who helped me in countless ways; from driving me places, to keeping gyms open so I could practice in the summer, to welcoming me to their homes. I am especially thankful to Xavier Calvaire, both a mentor and a father figure who believed in my dream when it seemed unattainable and has supported me since day one.

Above all, I must acknowledge my mother, the most deserving and brave one. While raising a family on her own, she allowed me to dream without barriers. I’m extremely thankful for her unwavering support, incredible strength, and unconditional love.

Looking back, I’m amazed at how things have unfolded. This experience has taught me the immense power of voicing dreams. Thank you to everyone who has been a part of my story, and thanks to “mini me” for having the courage to believe in a brighter future and for transforming hardship into motivation. There is still so much room for growth as I continue to embrace the joys and challenges of this journey of self-discovery and development.



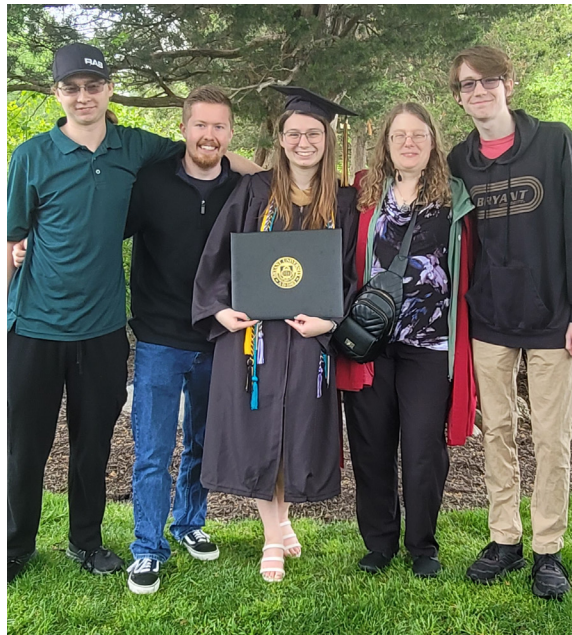
Senior Spotlights

Audrey Jones '24

After four years of hard work, I am happy to announce that I graduated Magna Cum Laude from Bryant University with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a concentration in Financial Services and a minor in Professional and Creative Writing. By following Bryant's financial planning track within the Financial Services concentration I am also thrilled to have completed the first step of becoming a Certified Financial Planner CFP®.

I was also honored to be the recipient of the Jack H. Rubens Leadership in Finance Award. This commencement award is awarded to a graduating senior who has demonstrated outstanding performance in academics, service to the finance department, and enthusiasm and leadership in extracurricular activities related to finance.

As I reflect on my time at Bryant, I am grateful for all the support I have received from the faculty, staff, as well as my friends and family. With this being said, I am excited to start the next chapter in my life as a Series 7 Registered Financial Professional at Equitable Advisors in their Retirement Benefits Group.



BRYANT ALUMNI GET INVOLVED

Bryant alumni are the University's largest constituency, and your involvement supports our success by providing valuable expertise to our students. Alumni support in the classroom, providing both internship and permanent employment to Bryant students as well as serving as advisors for our curricular and strategic initiatives. Beginning in Spring 2025 we will be launching a women's mentorship program and are seeking Bryant alumni to participate.

Please complete the attached form to volunteer your time to support our Women in Finance and Leadership programming.



If you are unable to volunteer your time but would still be interested in supporting our programming, kindly use the link below to make a donation that will directly support our initiatives.



Finally, make sure you are following Bryant Alumni news through our webpage and social media presence. And ensure you update your information with our alumni office via the links below:

Bryant Alumni Connect: <https://alumni.bryant.edu/s/1434/rd18/interior.aspx?sid=1434&gid=1&pgid=1322>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bryantalumni/>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/bryant_alumni

X: <https://twitter.com/bryantalumni>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/bryant-university-alumni/>

Website: alumni.bryant.edu

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