

Bears of a Higher Degree

by Kristin Todd Stires

Baylor's Hankamer School of Business offers a variety of graduate degrees. Whether it's an MBA degree, joint or specialized degree, candidates are sure to find a degree program that incorporates a balance of theory and application, which will further their education and bolster them as business professionals. We caught up with these alumni to see how their graduate degrees have served them within their careers.





With an undergraduate degree in Marketing, Adrian Gorena had not planned on working in the tech industry; however, a new program offered at the business school quickly changed his mind.

"I remember seeing fliers around Hankamer for the new MSIS program reading, 'No experience needed.' I thought maybe I should look into that," he laughed. "But on a serious note, at that time the information technology (IT) field was growing rapidly and so was its job market."

With the IT industry expanding, before the imminent dot-com bust, Gorena took advantage of the opportunity and became a member of one of the first Master of Science in Information Systems (MSIS) classes at Baylor. The MSIS program was approved in May 1997 and offered that following fall semester.

"The School saw a trend and was reacting to demands of the business world," he said. "It was a smart and important move for Baylor to begin offering the program."

After earning his MSIS degree, Gorena was hired by Compaq, which then merged with Hewlett-Packard (HP). He has been with HP, headed by CEO and Baylor alumnus Mark Hurd, ever since and serves as manager of the company's e-commerce operations in Latin America and Canada.

"My team consists of people in Brazil, Mexico, Canada and the U.S., and we oversee day-to-day operations of HP's e-commerce transactions," he said. "We make sure all web content, pricing, product information and promotions are correct, which also means collaborating with the sales teams."

Gorena said his time at Baylor provided a platform for working in that team environment.

"At Baylor, I learned the importance of working in groups," he said. "I may not have known it at the time, but in the real world you are never working alone. My success in corporate America depends on my ability to work efficiently with others."

Gorena is a believer in the career diversity and many opportunities that the IT industry offers.

"You don't have to be passionate about being technical, but you do have to be passionate about the industry," he said. "This industry provides so many different career paths, whether it's programming, marketing or sales. It is all about being adaptable."

Gorena said companies expect a "higher quality of employee" when that employee holds a master's degree. He also emphasized the importance for students to have a focus when pursuing that degree.

"When you pursue a master's degree, you definitely have to be dedicated," he said. "You commit

time, funds, and then you later commit to a career with that degree training. For me, that career has been through my work at HP."

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of computer and information systems managers is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2018.

"Corporate America is really competitive," Gorena said. "Companies need individuals who are highly educated, well-versed and trained. This is a great industry to be in as we prepare for the next wave of technological advances—IT isn't going away anytime soon."



"The School saw a trend and was reacting to demands of the business world."



Adrian Gorena BBA '98, MSIS '99
Hewlett-Packard / Manager, Latin America/Canada e-commerce

In accounting, numerical accuracy is indispensable—especially when you work for the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD).

Before launching her career, Carmelita Chadwick earned an undergraduate and graduate degree through Baylor's five-year Master of Accountancy (MAcc) program, while simultaneously completing Baylor's Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program.

"I had actually planned on attending the University of Alabama," she said. "However, I decided to attend Baylor after visiting the campus and earning an ROTC scholarship."

Through her time in the MAcc program, Chadwick said she realized the versatility of an accounting degree.

"Some people hold the misconception that accounting is boring work," she said. "It was actually the program at Baylor that opened my eyes to the many careers (in government and the private sector) you can have through studying accounting."

Chadwick also learned the importance of time management through her enrollment in the MAcc and ROTC programs.



Carmelita Chadwick BBA '98, MAcc '99

U.S. Department of Defense / Senior Budget Analyst

"Balancing the demands of the MAcc program and ROTC proved challenging during my undergrad years," she said. "I learned that it was important to plan and maintain a disciplined schedule. This lesson has remained with me."

Chadwick became an active duty commissioned officer and served six years in the Air Force after graduation. With both her parents having also served in the Air Force, she was no stranger to military life. During her service, Chadwick was stationed in California, Kuwait, Iraq, and Kyrgyzstan (to name a few), with her final destination in Washington, D.C., at Bolling Air Force Base.

After her time in the Air Force and working a few years in the private sector, Chadwick now works in one of the world's largest office buildings: the Pentagon. She serves as a senior budget analyst for the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense Comptroller, specifically on the Contingency Operations team. In this capacity, she functions as the senior analyst for the Cost of War reporting and Overseas Contingency Operations (formerly Global War on Terrorism - GWOT) budgeting.

"Since serving in Iraq and other contingencies, I wanted to get involved in

reporting the cost of war and formulating war and disaster-related budgets," she said. "Our every day purpose is to provide the timeliest and best analysis we can for senior level decisions."

Operating a multi-billion dollar budget requires extensive management, and Chadwick has dealt with regulations throughout her active duty career to now joining the administrative side of military operations.

"During my service in the Air Force as an on-the-ground forward deployed

making in accounting has become more important than ever as white-collar crimes and scandals continue to shake the business world. Chadwick stressed the importance of understanding business ethics and using them when making decisions.

"At Baylor, I feel like the emphasis on ethics helped prepare me for decision making throughout my career," she said. "The business world is not always black and white—there is a lot of gray area. Especially in the accounting field, questions arise all the time and you want to respond

"At Baylor, I feel like the emphasis on ethics helped prepare me for decision making throughout my career."

comptroller, we poured over DoD financial management regulations for help with making informed decisions," she said. "Now I'm the one actually writing these regulations for others to follow when engaged in supporting contingency operations."

Following financial regulations takes a conscious effort, and ethical decision

ethically in the right way, in a way that can withstand audit, and that your conscience is comfortable with at the end of the day."



MBA-Healthcare '05

Lesley Freeberg

Director of Operations, Surgical Services / Children's Medical Center of Dallas



through different hospital departments, interacted with hospital executives and board members, and really got a feel for the health care industry. From there I was able to launch my health care career."

After four years at Valley Baptist, Freeberg joined Children's Medical Center of Dallas as director of operations for surgical services.

"I work with surgical leadership to establish the strategic direction of our surgical services through the discovery of clinical and market needs/trends and implementation and growth of programs," she said. "To accommodate this growth, our goal is to strive

for continuous improvement by driving efficiency and effectiveness in operations in order to make the surgical experience for our children and their families as easy and pleasant as possible."

Through her role of supporting surgical leadership and acting as liaison between the surgical services and Children's administration, Freeberg understands the big picture of contributing to a health care system.

Since attending South Texas High School for Health Professions, Lesley Freeberg has held an interest in the health care industry. Originally on a pre-med path, she eventually found her niche through pursuing business and health care administration.

Freeberg attended the University of Texas at Austin and earned a BBA in Marketing and Finance from the University of Texas at Brownsville. She was able to gain significant work experience before returning to graduate school.

"I had the opportunity to work four years after college before graduate school," she said. "I knew I would go back to school, and the timing worked out perfectly."

She was contacted by Col. Scott Garner, coordinator of the Robbins MBA Healthcare Program, about the new program being offered at Baylor. Through the program, candidates earn an MBA degree with a focus in health care administration.

"When Col. Garner approached me about the program, a light bulb came on, and I knew this was the career path I wanted to pursue," she said. "The program was the perfect blend of business and health care, and turned out to be one of the best decisions I've made."

Freeberg joined the inaugural class for the program. As part of the curriculum, candidates

complete a seven-month health care organization sponsored residency.

"I completed my residency at Valley Baptist Health System in Harlingen, Texas," she said. "One of my major projects was to establish an outpatient geriatric psych unit from start to finish.

This included all aspects of program development, from Medicare approval and building out a physical space, to recruiting physicians and staff and seeing our first patients walk in the door."

Freeberg's success in her endeavors led to a job offer with Valley Baptist upon completion of her residency. She returned to Baylor, finished her MBA degree, and went right back to work as the organization's director of corporate services, later becoming the director of planning.

"The residency experience was invaluable. I gained working knowledge while applying theory from class curriculum," she said. "I rotated

"I knew I would go back to school, and the timing worked out perfectly."

"Not many organizations have a joyful spirit like a children's hospital does," she said. "I encounter something daily at work that makes me smile. It really gives me perspective on life, and I know I am impacting the lives of our patients and their families."

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