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THE 'MB8': HOW EIGHT MBA STUDENTS FORMED A SPECIAL BOND

Concordia's MBA program encourages networking relationships among students, but eight recent graduates took "community" to the next level, creating a close-knit group of friends and colleagues that went well beyond the classroom. The group, eventually nicknamed the "MB8," assembled naturally as members got to know — and like — each other in Concordia classes.

"I don't think I could have ever seen this coming," says Edward Janke, a manager at a local engineering company who enrolled in Concordia's MBA program at the same time as his now-wife, Tara.

Then Ed and Tara met fellow students Esther Choi, Michael Simons, Greg LeFever, Chris Sommers, and William and Jaime Buda, with whom they seemed to immediately gel. "And before you knew it, the MB8 was born," says Ed.

Chris Sommers, president of a family-owned business that makes flexible packages for pet and human food, entered Concordia's program to gain business experience. "There was a lot of synergy and learning in addition to the classroom," Chris says. "When you get a group like that, you don't get stuck in your own lane. You're forced to think differently."

Greg LeFever was the senior member of the group and gained the others' respect with his extensive entrepreneurial experience and real-world wisdom. "I did expect it to be practical and real-business-related, which is why I chose Concordia," he says. "I liked that professors showed up from work in the business world to teach classes. It turned out to be a great group of people, a highly intelligent group."

Jaime Buda, the wife of William, says they both came to Concordia determined to reset their careers and find jobs they liked.

"We had an amazing experience," Jaime says. "The group of friends really made a difference. It makes for good conversation, and the ability to get to know your classmates."

Another MB8 member, Esther Choi, enrolled in the program specifically to network, and found more than she was looking for. "We were all very ambitious people," Esther says. "It was a good group to uplift and motivate each other."

Ed reflects that "the piece that struck me as amazing about Concordia was how they were able to foster this kind of group relationship. It was phenomenal."

One MB8 member even hired another one. Michael Simons was the director of finance at a pizza chain who chose to attend Concordia for the networking possibilities. What he didn't expect was that the networking would be quite so immediate. He was in the job market after graduating, and Chris's flexible packaging company needed a vice president of finance.

"The very first person that jumped into my head was Michael," Chris says. "Everybody at the company loved him and now he's been here since January, and doing a great job."

Michael says he entered the MBA program expecting to build some relationships, but "didn't think it would be at the depth that it was. You're



reading books, taking tests, doing projects. When you're doing it among people you like being around, it makes it fun."

A number of MB8s have enjoyed promotions or better jobs since enrolling and graduating.

"I'm a very good example of how much an MBA can benefit your career," says Tara. "The second I graduated and updated my LinkedIn, I had people contact me. I got a job offer almost immediately. I made a pretty significant salary jump; it opened doors."

Jaime was promoted and gained significantly greater confidence in her own abilities at work as the business development manager for a consulting firm that helps cities and counties pursue opportunities for federal partnerships.

Even before graduating, Esther updated her LinkedIn information and a potential employer ran a keyword search that turned up her name.

"I hit 100 percent of the points," Esther says. "The hiring manager liked the fact that I was in the program. That was one of the reasons they hired me."

Esther is now the corporate compliance manager for a high-performance plastics company that supplies to medical device and aerospace companies.

"Godfather" Greg quit the company he was with, continued to run his own wellness company, started a for-profit LLC, then flipped it to a nonprofit — all while in CUI's program.

Today, the relationships continue with phone calls, group texts, barbecues, coffee dates and parties to celebrate weddings and birthdays.

More than a degree, the MB8 members "feel how special this experience was for us and how special our group is," Tara says. "I hope we set an example for other people to do this, because it really helps you get through the program." ■

To learn more about the Concordia University Irvine MBA program, please visit www.cui.edu/mba or call 949-214-3017.



MB8 '18 (left to right): Chris Sommers, Esther Choi, William Buda, Jaime Buda, Gregory LaFever, Tara Janke, Ed Janke, and Michael Simons.

It's not just what you know. It's who you meet.



“MB8” Concordia 2018 MBA graduates who organically formed their own cohort. From left, Michael Simons, Ed Janke, Tara Janke, Chris Sommers, Jaime Buda, Gregory LaFever, William Buda, and Esther Choi. Read their story at: cui.edu/MB8.

Choosing a school to help you advance in your career is a choice that turns on more than what you learn. Where you earn your MBA also impacts your future business network. The Concordia MBA program is designed to facilitate the kind of strong personal connections, networking, and career growth that come from a face-to-face program. While working together throughout the program, cohorts often develop as students encourage and support each other—academically and professionally.



MBA Mixer: Aug 13 • Classes Start: Aug 19 & Oct 14 • Info Night: Sept 5

CUI.EDU/MBA

Orange Coast College invites you to join us in welcoming our new President Dr. Angélica Suarez

*“I am honored to serve as the
11th president of OCC, the
largest community college
in Orange County and a
leader in transfer to four-year
universities across the state.”*



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ORANGE COAST COLLEGE RECYCLING CENTER FIRST IN THE WORLD TO ACHIEVE TRIPLE CERTIFICATION

The Orange Coast College Recycling Center is taking sustainability initiatives to a new level by becoming the first facility in the world to achieve LEED Gold certification, Sustainable SITES Initiative (SITES) v2 certification, and TRUE Zero Waste certification. This unprecedented milestone pays homage to OCC's commitment to sustainable practices on and off campus.

On July 22 U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI) CEO Mahesh Ramanujam presented an award to the College during a ceremony at the Ronnenberg Center for Environmental Sustainability Center that recognized the achievement. During the ceremony Ramanujam praised OCC for serving as an example in sustainable practices: "Your facility is optimized, it is well established, and most importantly it is serving as an example here in California, for the United States and for the rest of the world," he said.

OCC's Recycling Center was rebuilt in 2017, expanding on a popular community resource that first opened in 1970. In addition to more square footage, the new Recycling Center includes classroom space, increased parking, and men's and women's showers to encourage employees to commute by bicycle. The Center also includes planter beds and composting containers. Currently, the Recycling Center processes approximately 60,000 aluminum cans per day, and 20 tons of glass bottles per week. The Center also processes approximately 1,000 tons of paper per year.

OCC's Recycling Center is funded by the College's Associated Students, and students play a large role in developing the Center's strategic vision. According to Environmental Sustainability Coordinator Mike Carey, it was the Recycling Center's student interns and staff who did the legwork for all three certifications.

"All of this was driven by our students at OCC," says Carey. "The students have been engaged from the very beginning [of the construction process]. When we explained what LEED was, the students were the ones who said 'We have to do this as a LEED building, we just have to.' The same thing was true with SITES and TRUE Zero Waste. Make no mistake, this was done by the students, for the students."

Developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), LEED is the most widely used green building program in the world. The SITES rating system evaluates the sustainable performance of landscapes and the TRUE Zero Waste rating system enables facilities to define, pursue and achieve their zero waste goals.



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Learn Lessons in Mergers & Acquisitions You Can Apply in the Real-World

A certain mystique seems to surround the world of M&A. Even the most experienced corporate executives and savvy entrepreneurs have questions. *What are the steps and processes to acquire a company? What are the differences between corporate acquirers and private equity investors? How can I maximize the price of my company?*

In many ways, M&A is a layered process—a sophisticated game of chess. “Like anything in life,” says Jim Kuncel, Managing Director of Private Equity Finance at Byline Bank, “the more educated you are, the more you can maximize your experience.”

Each deal, whether you’re selling or buying, requires considerable business acumen, negotiation skills, and risk tolerance. Experts in M&A usually have years—if not decades—of experience, having overseen dozens of projects and multiple millions in equity.

Bring clarity to M&A

“The M&A space is complex,” Kuncel adds. “The more educated you are, the better you can navigate those complexities. If you’re a seller, you want to maximize value for sale. If you’re a buyer, you want to maximize your ability to ‘buy right.’ Understanding the process, the players and what you’re looking to accomplish are key in ensuring your success.”

Unfortunately, many training courses in private equity, banking, M&A provide this education at too high a cost. In addition, many are taught by instructors with only academic experience or limited experience as senior-level investors.

THINKdeal Training has changed all that. Our team demystifies M&A through real-world training led by senior industry executives. We give professionals the objective tools, resources, and practitioner insights required for the next deal.

“Having experience and knowledge about the M&A process will help you navigate these forces,” says Brandon Hinkle, Managing Director at Chicago Capital Partners. “It’s about surrounding yourself with people that you can trust and who have been there before.”

Who is THINKdeal Training for?

- Business owners or executives who want to learn the process of buying or selling a company

Learn directly from experts in M&A

We recognize that there are capable business owners who, despite their lack of experience in M&A, are still great entrepreneurs. Or business executives and managers—both in public and private companies—that are tapped to help out on deals but don’t know where to start.

THINKdeal Training provides comprehensive guidance in an intimate learning environment. Our team has extensive experience training the leading business schools, as well as new hires at the world’s top investment banks, consulting companies and private equity firms. Each year, we train many new investment bankers and private equity investors for the top firms on Wall Street.

We’ve found there’s no better teacher than senior-level industry experience.

Our team is made up of senior-level industry practitioners in corporate acquisitions, investment banking, and private equity. We’ve deployed capital in excess of \$6 billion across 200+ M&A and financing transactions throughout our careers. “We are strategic acquirers and private equity investors,” says Richard Park, Principal of Pelican Growth and Founder of THINKdeal Training. “We’ve shared our insights with leading business schools and professionals at the world’s top-rated financial institutions.”

Take a confident step toward your learning of M&A

If you’re interested in learning more about M&A, THINKdeal Training is a great place to start. In today’s competitive landscape, knowing the finance, accounting, and valuation is simply not enough.

That’s why we provide a rich understanding of strategy, including the nitty-gritty details around what buyers and sellers are looking for, the mergers and acquisition process, and the key players involved. Apply to join our intimate executive-level workshop in Irvine, CA on Nov 18-19. Please contact info@thinkdealtraining.com for more information.

THINKdealtraining

MERGERS + ACQUISITIONS SEMINAR

For Business Owners, Executives + Managers

Come take a confident step toward your understanding of M+A. We invite you to come learn directly from senior-level industry practitioners in an intimate environment. Leave with real-world tools, resources, and techniques you can apply immediately to your corporate strategy, next sale or acquisition.

[November 18 + 19 | 9am-4pm | Irvine, CA]

Space is limited and requires pre-approval



Richard Park
Principal
Pelican Growth;
THINKdeal Training



Brandon Hinkle
Managing Director
Chicago Capital Partners



Jim Kuncel
Managing Director
Byline Bank (NYSE)



Joshua Spizman
Associate Professor
of Finance, Loyola
Marymount University

Key Benefits

- + Receive update on current capital market and M&A trends
- + Understand key roles and players from the corporate, private equity, investment banking, and consulting perspectives
- + Learn key aspects of the sell-side (divest, sell) and buy-side (acquire, invest) processes
- + Obtain select analytical tools, templates and financial models used by practitioners

Who Should Attend

- + Business executives and managers who want to learn the process of how to buy or sell a company

What is THINKdeal Training?

- + A mission-driven financial education firm focused on M&A, private equity, investment banking, and investment research training
- + In collaboration with many of the top 50 U.S. business schools
- + We prepare professionals of the world’s top investment banks, consulting, and private equity firms
- + All contributors are senior-level industry executives sharing their insights via an intimately structured curriculum. We leverage lectures, case studies, Q&A, and interactive exercises

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Golden Opportunities *Career Education at Golden West College*



Golden West College (GWC) is built for what's next. Orange County's economy is moving fast, and career-educated professionals are commanding more demand than ever.

GWC is one of California's premier destinations for workforce-ready higher education. GWC students receive career-focused training from industry-expert faculty in their choice of 18 Future BUILT program sectors.

GWC's career programs are the proud recipients of 11 Strong Workforce Stars from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. We're committed to an accessible college experience leading to real, positive outcomes in employment, earnings, and advancement.

Get to know GWC

Golden West College offers dozens of workforce-relevant degrees and certificates, in 18 high-demand sectors. Find the Future BUILT career program that's right for you at goldenwestcollege.edu.

Career education is golden. And your future is bright.

- In the next 10 years, 34 of O.C.'s 50 fastest-growing occupations will require a career education.*
- Career education grads in California earn an average of \$66,000 per year, five years after attending.
- Every year, more than 17,500 jobs requiring a sub-bachelor's college education open up in Orange County, with not nearly enough qualified applicants to fill them.*
- According to the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation, 42 percent of the region's demand for these professionals will remain unmet in the next five years.**

*<https://www.ocbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Chase-Middle-Skills-report-for-web.pdf>
**https://www.mtsac.edu/president/cabinet-notes/2017-18/CCW_LAEDC_Report_092817.pdf

**BE INSPIRED.
BE EMPOWERED.
BE TRANSFORMED.**

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In 2018 and 2019, **Golden West College** was selected by the Aspen Institute as one of the **top community colleges** in the nation



Golden West College students who earn an associate's degree rank **first** in Southern California in **increased career earnings**



Since 1966, **Golden West College** Athletics has **won more state championships** than any other California Community College