Graduation Spotlight : Max Yazdian (BSM '24)

April 15, 2024



Name: Max Yazdian

Describe yourself in 15 words or less:

Passionate, devoted to family and friends; works tirelessly to achieve goals.

Fun fact:

I hit a buzzer beater in high school to become the first student team to ever beat the faculity team in our yearly homecoming game.

Hometown: Nashville, TN

Major: Finance

Favorite Business Course: Private Equity and VC

Extracurricular Activities, Community Work and Leadership Roles During College:

- First place finish in Hedge Funds course competition
- Club President for the Tulane Sports Business Association
- First place at ASU Mock NBA Competition
- Selected member of TAMID
- Top 4 finish in Goldman Sachs Stock Pitch Competition
- Volunteer at New Orleans Federal District Court
- Volunteer for Lycée France as an elementary school tutor and after-care program leader
- Associate Editor for the Hullabaloo (school newspaper)

Internships:

- Kiva Capital Partners
    - Analyst
    - San Francisco (remote)
- Paysafe
    - M&A Intern
    - Montreal
- Papaya Payments
    - Intern
    - Los Angeles

Post-Graduation Plans: Undecided.

Favorite business professor:

Bill Hudlow is my favorite business professor. While he was an incredible teacher and professor in the course I took with him, that is not why he is my favorite. While many teachers preach the fact that they care about you beyond the classroom, Bill Hudlow goes out of his way to make sure that fact is true. Bill is there for me whether I have a academic question, career question or life question. Throughout my time around Bill, he has repeatedly shown me that he truly cares about his students and will do anything to help them. He works harder than any professor I know to make sure you succeed both in and out of the classroom.

What is the biggest lesson you gained from studying business?

The biggest lesson I learned from studying business is that creating value for customers and stakeholders should be the core focus of any company, not short-term profits. A business that provides genuine value can succeed over the long run.

What advice would you give to a student looking to major in a business-related field?

Go out of your way to make connections with both your professors and the other students in your class. You never know who may go on to do big things, and the more relationships you can build with your peers the better off we will be.

What has surprised you most about majoring in business?

The number of different options you have once acquiring a business degree. I knew that getting a degree in business would allow me to begin my career in a great place but never could have imagined the amount of opportunities it would present.

Looking back over your experience, what is the one thing you'd do differently in business school and why?

I would have gone out of my way to make better and deeper connections with my professors. While I was able to make many connections with fellow students, and some strong connections with professors, there were some professors I was just never able to build a relationship with. Looking back, I wish that I had made more of an effort to get to know them on a personal level.

Which academic, extracurricular or personal achievement are you most proud of?

Last year, I wanted to get involved with Tulane's Sports Business Association. I reached out to the listed president, only to find out the club had been completely inactive for over two years. I ended up taking over the program and transforming it into one of the most active clubs at Tulane. I entered some top members of the club into the Syracuse Sports Analytics Competition and finished second, beating out every Ivy League school. This success caught the eye of the administration, and I was able to secure funding to send a team to similar type competitions around the country. I created an application, then interviewed top candidates to compile a team to travel the country and compete in high-level sports business competitions, all funded by the university. I was also set up with coaches from the Tulane Law School,

who helped me learn how to interview, lead a team, and succeed against tough opponents in these competitions.

Which classmate do you most admire?

My first friend at Tulane was the affable Danny Zinn. As a finance major, Danny brought his mathematical mind and business savvy to every conversation. But more importantly, Danny's kindness, loyalty, and infectious positivity drew me to him right away. From late night study sessions where he generously helped explain difficult concepts, to weekends exploring New Orleans together, Danny made my transition to college life so smooth. His outgoing nature allowed him to connect with everyone around him, while still remaining devoted to the friends he made early on at Tulane. I feel lucky to call Danny a true friend. His humor and selfless support continue to make him one of the most treasured people in my life.

Who would you most want to thank for your success?

My dad immigrated to the US when he was a child, forced to escape his homeland due to a conflict out of his control. When he came to America, he knew no English, no other students, and was the odd man out. However, through hard work and a huge heart, he became a smashing success. The best thing about my dad is how he has aged to me. Once I arrived at college, friends relayed losing innocence about their once-heroic parents. Many of my friends expressed their feelings that they no longer see their parents as superheroes but as humans living their normal lives. However, while I heard many peers begin to find flaws in their parents, getting older has only strengthened my belief that my dad really is a superhero. Growing up, like many kids, I thought my dad was the coolest guy in town. Whether it was throwing around a football, going to sporting events together, or even just watching TV, there was no one I wanted to be around more than my dad. He was always telling me stories from his childhood or business trips, and I was enamored that someone so cool and well-liked could be my dad. While illusions of perfection went away with age, the imperfect man that is my dad became even more impressive. As I grew older and saw the tremendous responsibility on his shoulders, the fact that he was such a present dad and a positive influence on my life became even more impressive. Even after being exposed to a broader world at school, the work ethic, charm, and kindness my dad showed is like no other. To go from flying across the country and working tirelessly all week to putting his full attention into my mom, brother, and me is truly amazing. He never once used life's external factors as an

excuse not to be a dad, even though he had every reason to do so. He instead decided that he would not only dedicate his all to his career but would do the same for his family, a choice that I have learned is not made by many, especially those as successful as my dad. The energy and effort he put into everything he did has rubbed off on me, and I hope to one day follow in his footsteps. However, that's not the only reason my dad is the biggest reason for my success. I have always admired how well-liked he is. Everywhere we went, someone would stop and chat, and we would even joke that he was the "Mayor of Nashville." However, age gave me clarity that his popularity stems not from business success but because of his heart. Whether he is speaking with a CEO or an intern, he gives the same level of respect and care to every conversation he is a part of. He embodies compassionate leadership, empowering others through conscientious listening, empowering advice, and impactful action. Simply put, he improves lives. And for me, he sets the bar for the type of honorable, devoted, and loving man I strive to become.

What are the top two items on your professional bucket list?

- Put my all into everything I do.
- To live in NYC