Outgoing GBC president leaves legacy of progress

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One night last spring, Albin Soares (MBA ’13) was working at his computer when he got a text message from one of his colleagues on the Graduate Business Council, the Freeman School’s student government organization.

“Hey, you need to calm down for the day,” the message read.



Outgoing GBC President Albin Soares (MBA '13) earned a reputation as one of the most active presidents in the organization's history.

Soares puzzled over the message for a second before realizing what it was about.

“I looked and I had sent out 74 emails that day,” laughs Soares, the outgoing president of the GBC. “So I was like, ‘Okay.’”

Days like that weren’t unusual for Soares, who earned a reputation among faculty and staff as one of the most active, involved presidents in recent GBC history. From working with faculty to revamp the MBA program to making sure that the television in the GW2 lounge stayed tuned to CNBC, no issue was too big or too small for Soares, who brought boundless enthusiasm and unrelenting tenacity to the job.

“Over the last year, I think I spoke with Albin more than I did with my associate deans — or my wife for that matter,” quips Dean Ira Solomon. “While I can’t say that I agreed with every idea Albin brought to me, there’s no question his extraordinary drive and determination made Freeman a better school. One just needs to look at his record of accomplishment to see the profound impact he had on the Freeman School.”

Over the course of the year, Soares’ achievements included establishing a discussion lounge for graduate students, bringing in a host of guest speakers, and lobbying successfully for the creation of an experimental “offboarding” program to provide graduating students with a formal send off. When he found out that alumni participation in giving was one of the criteria used in ranking surveys, he succeeded in getting not just a pledge but a check from almost every member of the 2013 graduating classes.

Perhaps most prominently, Soares co-chaired with Dean Solomon the task force dedicated to rewriting the Freeman School’s mission statement and core values during the recent strategic planning process. In that respect, he played a substantive role in defining the Freeman School’s direction for the next five years.

“There’s not one big, bright, shiny thing I accomplished as GBC president, but I can say we chipped away at a lot of things that needed to be done,” Soares says of his tenure as president. “I think that’s what I’m most proud of.”

A native of Southern California, Soares worked a variety of jobs — including stints in the entertainment industry, as a Mercedes-Benz salesman and as a legislative aide to U.S. Rep. Charles Boustany — before deciding that he needed an MBA to pull everything together and give him the skills to get to the next level. Since graduating in May, Soares has relocated with his family — his wife, Elizabeth, and 11-month-old son Bennett — to the San Diego area, where he hopes to launch a business idea he developed at the Freeman School, but as an alumnus and a new member of the Freeman 50, the Freeman School's young MBA advisory board, he plans to remain involved with the Freeman School for many years to come.

"We've had some really stellar professors, some who have been life changing," Soares says. "That's probably the thing I liked best and it's probably the thing we all liked best about the Freeman School. Having a small class, everyone knew each other's names. We've gone on three international trips together, we've worked on projects, done team building. I hope that that bond continues as we all move on with our careers."