Notable Graduates: Melanie Mercier MBA '23

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Name: Melanie Mercier

Degree Program: Executive MBA

Hometown: San Francisco, CA

Fun fact about yourself:

I attended Tulane with my daughter, Caroline! While she just successfully completed her Sophomore year, I completed my MBA. It was an absolute privilege and so much fun to share our academic journeys on Tulane's campus. Oh, and although I'm a New Orleans native, I live in San Francisco, CA and traveled every other weekend to attend classes in person at Tulane.

Why did you decide to get your master's degree?

I've been successfully self-employed as an experiential marketing events professional for most of my career while enjoying flexibility to raise my two kids. As soon as I became an empty nester, it was the perfect opportunity for me to invest in my own higher education to learn, grow, gain more strategic and practical business knowledge, master executive leadership skills, and expand my network, career, and professional relationships.

What was your favorite course and why?

Management Communications with Ron Dulek was by far my favorite course. So many meaningful and practical a-ha moments – from learning strategic and sensitive communications to the magic of storytelling – through a brilliantly immersive and experiential course-design in six short weeks.

Who is your favorite business professor? What made them special?

Quite honestly, I can't choose one favorite, but I must mention a few: **Ron Dulek** for his amazing storytelling and life lessons, his validation of me as a writer, Pecha Kuchas, learning to 'Squeeze The Juice', and the most inspiring nickel that brought me to tears and will be with me wherever I go in life. **Russ Robins** for his wittiness, endless support, and sincere encouragement in helping me believe I can do statistics – and did I ever! I credit Russ' encouragement early in the program for ALL my success thereafter. **Tamia Gordon** for her commanding presence, impressive lifetime dedication to service, her effortless knowledge of business law, impeccable social graces, warmth and wicked sense of humor, former U.S. Marine/Tulane EMBA grad/current Judge, I could go on. If I had a do-over, Tamia would have inspired me to go to law school. **Rita Kosniak –** just wow – she is a force in negotiations and delivered a truly transformational learning experience. I will always remember to ask the most important question: 'Why?'.

Did you participate in any extracurricular activities, community work or leadership roles at Tulane?

Does Chief Campus Mom to my daughter and her friends count? :)

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I live in San Francisco and love yoga, hiking the pacific coast trails with my dog, Dixie, riding at SoulCycle, enjoying live music, and anything related to great coffee, food & wine.

What is your past work or internship experience?

I'm an independent consultant with deep expertise in experiential marketing and corporate event strategy, design, content development, and full-service event production for live, virtual, and hybrid events. My career began in the fast-paced, high-performance culture of retail at Gap Inc. I also held a past role with BlackRock's Global Creative Services.

Where will you be working after graduation?

After graduation, I will continue doing my best work wherever I go. My goal is to pivot and expand into building a more sustainable, purpose-driven career to make a bigger social impact and create positive change in the world. I'm open to new opportunities.

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

My top two professional bucket list items are to be in a global role and work with world leaders.

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

I'm most proud of receiving a nomination from Tulane's chapter of Beta Gamma Sigma (BGS) to join the prestigious international honor society for business students. I had been so focused only on achieving my personal best, I had no idea I'd be among the top 20% of my graduating class. I'm truly honored to be recognized for my academic performance and achievements.

If you were talking to someone who was considering Freeman, what would you tell them?

Run, don’t walk! Freeman will expand your mind, your worldview, and offer the most wonderful community of supportive, kind, intelligent, like-minded, and diverse leaders who are all focused on contributing to business success (and your success!). I’ve never loved learning more than I have while being part of Tulane’s Freeman School of Business.

What are your favorite things to do in New Orleans? Do you have a favorite New Orleans memory?

My favorite things to do in New Orleans are happy hours and dinners after class with my cohort or local friends and family, and Homecoming weekends at Tulane. My favorite memory was being in San Francisco with other Tulane students, parents, and alumni cheering Tulane on for the thrilling and historic Cotton Bowl win!

Where do you hope to be in five years?

I hope to be somewhere amazing and enthusiastically unexpected in five years. Because if someone had told me five years ago, I’d be graduating with an MBA from Tulane, I’d say they were lying. But here I am. I can’t wait to be at the next great destination as the one today.

What are your tips for balancing coursework, work, and your personal life?

Enjoy the journey! Surround yourself with very supportive family and friends. Carve out a lot of quiet time for studying and coursework. Apply what you’re learning at work. Celebrate all the wins and the lessons along the way. Get outside and exercise. Most importantly, be a collaborative teammate – a major key to success in the Executive MBA program.