Notable Graduates: Abby Whitman MBA '23

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Name: Abby Whitman

Degree Program: Professional MBA

Hometown: Palmetto, Florida

Fun fact about yourself:

Growing up I raised various livestock ranging from swine, dairy and beef productions through Future Farmers of America (FFA). I am passionate about sustainable agriculture which is why I studied Agricultural Business at the University of Tennessee.

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

After completing my undergraduate studies, I knew I wanted to continue expanding my knowledge on business communication and principles. I ultimately wanted to ensure that I understand all the complexities surrounding starting a business, working a corporate job, and mastering valuable skills that I can use to advance my career. Tulane offered engaging, complex and analytical courses that would be lucrative in this current job market. It has been such a great experience learning from Tulane's educators and gaining a network of amazing people across all industries. This has been my biggest challenge, but most rewarding!

What was your favorite course and why?

It is so hard to pick just one! Negotiations with Angelo De Nisi was one of the most engaging, learning how to negotiate business deals through conflict solution. Global Leadership with Carmelo Turillo, working in teams to create solutions for a company in Spain recreating a business plan and offering valuable advice to company executives. Another great course is New Venture Planning with Jane Cooper. Professor Cooper taught us to go through all the motions of working with startups and engaging a group of entrepreneurs. As a class, we worked hands on with startups guiding them through the process of building a brand, engaging consumers, and developing a viable plan for long term success.

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

Carmen Weigelt. I learned much from having her in Strategic Management and Management of Technology and Innovation. Professor Weigelt has taught both subjects with such knowledge and experience, and it truly shows. I thoroughly enjoyed collaborating with different groups on projects ranging from in depth case analysis to participating in group discussions on the evolution of technology. Professor Weigelt has taught me valuable problem-solving skills.

Any extracurricular activities, community work or leadership roles at Tulane?

Yes, several! I served on the Graduate Business Council as Vice President of Administration; engaging students and faculty on the upcoming events at Tulane, the Freeman School and within the New Orleans community. I also served as President of Tulane Toastmasters, teaching undergraduates and graduates valuable business communication skills relating to public speaking, oral and written presentations, interviewing tips, and perfecting the art of speaking to large groups. I was also asked to join the Freeman Graduate Graduation Committee to develop new ways to increase graduate involvement and increasing engagement with current students and alumni. I also served as PMBA Representative my first year at Tulane.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I love traveling and spending time with friends, whether that be going to a try a new restaurant or shopping!

What is your past work or internship experience?

During my program, I worked locally at Pied Nu. Learning from a well-established luxury boutique woman-owned and operated for over 10 years. I was able to network with local Tulanians as well as gaining skills on how to operate my own business.

Where will you be working after graduation? Include company, location, title.

Currently still seeking full time opportunities in areas relating to business consulting, project management, and private equity. After this major milestone, I want to take some time to reflect and prepare for my next chapter of life, wherever that may lead me!

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

1. Produce change and create fulfillment - I would love to educate more people on agricultural processes and developments. Taking my different areas of knowledge and intertwining that with my career (wherever that may be!)
2. Building lasting professional relationships - Proving my worth through my work. Prioritizing my work relationships is the most important to me and especially that recognition from my peers gives me the fuel to do more.

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

This year I was awarded the Freeman Leadership Award and the Dean’s Service Award. I am overjoyed and proud of where I started and where I ended at Tulane. I thank the faculty, staff, and fellow peers for the recognition!

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

Just do it. Tulane has created such a sense of community within me. I found that all my professors truly care about your success and want to help you reach your goals. I gained a profound sense of professionalism and a whole new confidence after completing the program.

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

I love exploring the city and trying out new restaurants with friends! My favorite memory of New Orleans would have to be Mardi Gras. Coming from never have celebrated to now being involved in all the festivities! Never have I experienced anything like it before!

Where do you hope to be in five years?

In five years, I hope to be well established in the industry I enter and creating a lasting impression. I want to become a leader in my industry and create an example for those around me. I hope to be happy and creating a brand / name for myself.

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

The course load at Tulane can be challenging, but manageable. Make sure to get enough sleep and optimize your tasks for school, work, and personal. Prioritize what is most important in the moment and place all other factors on the back burner for the time being. Continue to work for what is front of you and always remember the end goal.