Jessica Irene Minkel (MBA '26)

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Name: Jessica Irene Minkel

Hometown: Katonah, NY

Program: Master of Business Administration

Concentration or Specialization: Finance and Analytics

Following graduation, what's on the horizon for you professionally?

Following graduation, I am excited to immediately apply the strategic, analytical, and leadership skills I've developed through my MBA to further elevate my impact in my role as Vice President of Enterprise Finance at Scholastic Inc. In the near term, my focus is on strengthening enterprise-wide financial planning, advancing data-driven decision-making, and continuing to build scalable frameworks that enhance visibility, accountability, and long-term value creation across the organization.

Looking ahead, I am equally motivated by the opportunity to contribute more broadly to the finance profession. Over time, I hope to leverage both my academic experience and nearly two decades of industry experience to help shape best practices in enterprise finance. Ultimately, my goal is to not only drive impact within my organization, but also to play a meaningful role in advancing the finance community as a whole.

Who was your favorite business professor and why?

Ryan Peters. He consistently pushed us to think like true graduate students through rigorous coursework and complex, real-world business problems, always raising the bar and encouraging deeper analysis. What stood out most was how he fostered thoughtful, engaging discussions during our weekly roundtables, creating an environment where ideas were challenged and perspectives expanded.

What was your favorite business course? Why was it your favorite?

Financial Policy and Valuation. This class elevated my critical thinking skills and forced me to think like an investor, connecting strategy, risk, and valuation into a cohesive narrative. I especially valued how it pushed me to move beyond the numbers and challenge my own assumptions, ultimately strengthening my ability to make more informed, forward-looking decisions in complex business environments.

What's the most important thing you learned at Freeman?

Perhaps the most meaningful takeaway from my time at Tulane is the reminder that education is a shared endeavor. Each of us arrived with different experiences, perspectives, and ambitions, yet we all contributed to one another's growth.

Younger students brought fresh ideas and bold thinking, while more experienced professionals offered practical insights and mentorship. Together, we created a dynamic learning environment where everyone had something valuable to offer.

Balancing career, family, and graduate school was not always easy, but it reinforced something deeply important: growth rarely happens in moments of comfort. It happens when we challenge ourselves, invest in others, and commit to becoming better versions of ourselves.

What’s your favorite New Orleans memory?

Receiving my acceptance letter. It was my first real connection to Tulane and the spirit of New Orleans. Vibrant, welcoming and rooted in community. That moment marked the beginning of a journey defined by the same energy of growth, connection, and possibility.