

BUSINESS MATTERS

College of Business Alumni News

March 2017



How we're connecting with Portland's business community

In a February 2017 interview with the *Portland Business Journal*, Dean Mitzi Montoya had the opportunity to discuss the college's efforts to expand the Portland footprint.

The interview with Managing Editor Erik Siemers covered topics including the college's plan to increase engagement with OSU alumni and the business community writ large through the WeWork headquarters in downtown Portland.

In just 16 months, the Portland setup is piquing the community's interest – not just with stories such as this – but also in partnerships centering on the location:

"I like the concept because it's a great location surrounded by hundreds of startups. ... A business school is a professional school and should be connected to the industry and the state. Doing it through spaces like WeWork creates great access. At the Portland headquarters, our alumni staff are located there, as are our recruiting staff, and

some services like alumni engagement events," Montoya said to Siemers.

For example, WeWork provides collaborative learning space for students in our Portland MBA hybrid program (80 percent online and 20 percent in person). As well, Innovation Management MBA students with an idea for a startup are eligible for scholarships and grants, in addition to the community office space at WeWork.

Portland-based venture capital firm Elevate Capital has further pledged as much as \$50,000 in seed funds to qualifying entrepreneurs in the OSU Portland MBA program. This is part of the Launch Corps initiative, a program to build support for minority and women entrepreneurs.

Launch Corps offers every conceivable and individualized support for

working professionals to earn their MBA – and launch their businesses. In addition to funds, scholarships and mentoring resources, the MBA research project is the actual business plan of the student. Launch Corps at WeWork is the perfect storm for achieving educational goals as well as startup goals.

In addition to the academic angles of the

WeWork space, it serves as a community hub for Beavers and friends. Guest speakers and panelists for (and from!) our community of alumni and business partners frequently network at events hosted at WeWork.

It's the right time and place for the Portland location: "Alumni come for the relevance to their industry,

while students may come because it's part of their studies. But they're also networking and learning to connect with other professionals, which is how they find their next job," Montoya explains.

We expect more great things to happen there in the years to come, and we hope to see you there soon!

[READ THE ARTICLE HERE: BIT.LY/PBJ-MONTOYA](http://bit.ly/pbj-montoya)



IN THE NEWS

Read about alumni and faculty at business.oregonstate.edu/business-matters

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Oregon State
UNIVERSITY

Full-time everything? No problem.

Support system helps keep Ecampus business student moving forward

Todd Van Hess found himself in a predicament a few years back: He had served in a management position at a large cable company near Portland, Ore., for more than a decade, but he didn't have the opportunity to move up any further without a college education.

Well, that's what a new CEO had said.

He could settle and stay in his current position or he could do something about it.

He decided to do something about it.

"This is something that you can show a commitment to. You can show that you finished it. You can show that you excelled at it, and I think that's what employers are looking for," Todd says.

Despite being away from the classroom for more than a decade, Todd took a leap of faith and enrolled in Portland Community College to get his start.

He knew he ultimately wanted a bachelor's degree in business because that's what made sense for his future job outlook, he says. So he looked further into his options.

He discovered that Oregon State University offers a business administration degree online that directly aligned with his career aspirations and family lifestyle. And

it didn't hurt that he was already a huge Beaver fan, football season ticket holder and, not to mention, his parents had met at OSU years ago.

After making a few calls and working with OSU College of Business Academic Advisor Lindsay Niemeyer, he learned that some of the classes he was taking at PCC wouldn't transfer to OSU.

Together, they created a plan and he enrolled in the OSU Degree Partnership Program.

"I LEARN SOMETHING NEW EVERY TERM. I THOUGHT I KNEW ALL OF THE ANSWERS, BUT THE COURSE WORK DEFINITELY SHEDS A LOT OF LIGHT ON SOME OF THE BIGGER PICTURE ITEMS."

"It was a great program. All my credits transferred automatically," he says. "I was able to make sure that I was working efficiently in all my school work and everything I was doing was going right toward my bachelor's degree instead of taking classes I didn't need."

Now a full-time student pursuing a business administration degree delivered online by Oregon State Ecampus, Todd says the flexibility is key.

"Learning online fits into my life's demands," he says. "It allows me to spend time with the family, go to work and take the dog for a walk because I'm not sitting in a lecture class. It allows me to attain the same goals without uprooting everyone's life that we had established already."

And he says what he's learning in class is already making him a better employee – and in turn, a better prospective leader in the future.

"I learn something new every term," he says. "I thought I knew all of the answers, but the course work definitely sheds a lot of light on some of the bigger picture items."

Todd says he now understands the theory behind his company's business decisions, the terminology to explain the theory, and he's learning to make business plans to improve future processes.

So when his company's CEO left and it was no longer required to have a bachelor's degree to earn a promotion, Todd found himself in another predicament.

He could drop out of school or continue on his higher education path and set a precedent for his children. He chose the latter.

"I wanted to set an example that if their dad could do it, so could



"My wife is behind me 100 percent. My parents are behind me 100 percent. I went back to school and my mom's like, 'I'll buy your books.' I'm in my mid-30s and my mom's buying my books. It's rad," Todd says.

they," he says. "I know I want my children to go to college and in the future, they'll need to go to college, so how can I preach that to them without a college degree?"

And with a full-time job, full-time course load and full-time family responsibilities, Todd says his support system is what keeps him motivated to continue moving forward day after day.

"My wife is behind me 100 percent. My parents are behind me 100 percent. I went back to school and my mom's like, 'I'll buy your books.' I'm in my mid-30s and my mom's buying my books. It's rad," he says.

"My boss, my boss' boss, his boss' boss asks me how my degree is going. Everyone is really supportive. Everyone thinks it's important. I'm really lucky."



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For a complete list of OSU alumni events visit osualum.com

Wednesday, April 19:

Portland Business Roundtable:
Scoreboard to Boardrooms

Wednesday, April 26:

SOLVE: The Workplace of the Future
Portland

Wednesday, May 4:

State of the University Address
Bend

Alumna inside a “best place to work”

E&J Gallo Winery senior analyst Leslie Mak says it’s the corporate culture – not the employee discounts – that inspires love for her job.

Let’s just say this – it does sound glamorous to work in the wine industry. But it’s another thing to work for the largest winery in the world, which also is a three-generation, family-owned business. That’s called prestigious. Finally, why not add some modern accolades, and be a part of a company honored with Glassdoor’s “Employees’ Choice Award, Best Places to Work” in 2017?

If you’ve not guessed, we are talking about Modesto, Calif.-based E. & J. Gallo Winery. From among 600,000 companies in Glassdoor’s corporate data files, Gallo is included with the likes of Google, Facebook, Apple and Forrester, as corporations known for employee satisfaction.

“THE ALCOHOL BEVERAGE INDUSTRY CAN BE GLAMOROUS, BUT IT TAKES A LOT OF HARD WORK TO PRODUCE, MARKET AND SELL OUR PRODUCTS SUCCESSFULLY.”

In addition the Glassdoor’s “Best Places to Work,” Gallo was also recognized by Glassdoor in September of 2016 as a top company for employee culture. “Because this recognition was the result of

our employees makes it particularly important and meaningful,” said Michelle Lewis, vice president of global human resources. She added, “We appreciate the honest feedback our employees provide at all levels to make Gallo a better place to work every day.”

For the occasion of Gallo Winery’s no. 47 ranking, we talked to Leslie Mak, a senior analyst and College of Business 2012 graduate with a B.S. in marketing. Mak says there’s much more than employee discounts on products inspiring the employees’-choice style reviews for the Glassdoor ranking.

“I consider Gallo to be the best place to work because I am always valued and empowered as an employee,” she said. “I work with wonderful people, and I do love our products. The alcohol beverage industry can be glamorous, but it takes a lot of hard work to produce, market and sell our products successfully.”

The winery’s efforts to emphasize employee satisfaction stem from strategic and innovative decisions that have built the 6,500-employee global business.

The Gallo portfolio includes more than 80 unique brands, ranging from small-batch luxury vineyards to high volume productions; such brands include Barefoot Cellars, Orin Swift, Gallo Family Vineyards and Columbia Winery in Washington. Additionally E. & J. Gallo Winery imports from prominent winemakers around the world. This includes Don Miguel

Gascón and Alamos in Argentina, Whitehaven in New Zealand, Las Rocas and Martín Códax in Spain and Brancaia and La Marca in Italy. Gallo’s LUX Wines is the U.S. importer for highly acclaimed Italian producers such as Allegrini, Jermann, Pieropan and Renato Ratti.

Its history of solid business decision-making includes embracing current trends such as corporate sustainability initiatives and old-fashioned controlling the means of production: Gallo was the first U.S. winery to receive the ISO 14001 certification, a rigorous benchmarking standard for companies to reduce environmental impacts. Gallo also has owned the Gallo Glass Company since 1958, the state’s largest glass plant which uses 25 percent of all recycled glass generated by California.

Equally inspirational – from our perspective – numerous Oregon State University graduates are employees of the winery. Beginning with Gallo Chairman of the Board Robert Gallo, ’56, and Jim Coleman, Co-Chairman, ’58, the company reports about 40 alumni across the organization, making OSU the sixth largest alumni base at the company, and the biggest base from outside the state of California. The company recruits business students and last year hosted a College of Business regional alumni event in Modesto.

Mak, who was hired into the Gallo Management Development



Program after a meetup at the Oregon State University Career Fair, started as a sales rep in the Portland area, and currently conducts analysis to support the marketing of the Gallo spirits portfolio.

Mak calls her career trajectory with Gallo a great opportunity, and she’s grateful that Gallo is investing in her as an employee. The company encourages rotations on different teams in order to develop skills and work cross functionally to better prepare employees for manager positions. She is president-elect of Gallo’s Women of Wine organization, where the mission is to unlock the potential of all female employees to achieve company objectives. There also are opportunities to receive support for graduate studies.

“I am interested in getting my MBA while continuing to work at Gallo. Who knows, being back at Oregon State could be within the realm of possibility,” Mak said.

POINTS OF PRIDE



More than 400 **volunteers** engage with the College of Business every year.



Our Oregon State **Investment Group** manages a \$2.2M portfolio.



The College of Business is ranked 29th internationally in **operations management** empirical research on the SCM Journal List.

On a quest for the cure

MBA student Eric Vela turns to Oregon State to help manage HIV vaccine efforts.



Eric Vela says the ability to easily interact with classmates and faculty is a primary benefit of the hybrid MBA in Organizational Leadership track.

Imagine you were just hired to manage a \$28 million vaccine program that could be a cure for HIV.

Read that sentence again, and let the enormity of the scenario sink in for a moment.

Then imagine that, after taking the job, you acknowledge that you don't have the skill set to perform your duties as well as you'd like.

If your first instinct would be to panic and run for the hills, you're not alone. Eric Vela doesn't get rattled easily, though.

In 2014, he was hired by Oregon Health & Science University to help lead a multimillion dollar program "at the leading edge of a process that might eliminate HIV from humans," according to OHSU President Joe Robertson.

Eric's new job was enormous in importance and scope: He's in charge of the \$28 million Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grant, coordinating bicoastal manufacturing efforts and transferring vital research findings between various labs and institutions.

Even though he has more than 16 years of experience in infectious

disease research – with a specialization in virology – his background in business and leadership was somewhat lacking.

"When it came to management, finance, leadership – the things you need in order to properly manage a project of this magnitude – I had never really been trained," he says.

Eric had no illusions that the HIV vaccine program would pause until he honed his skills. So he turned to Oregon State University to pursue an MBA in Organizational Leadership, a program that combines online course work with in-person classes in Portland.

The program is offered by Oregon State's College of Business and delivered by Oregon State Ecampus. It's designed to deliver adult learners practical knowledge and skills in a flexible format that fits the lifestyle of working professionals.

For Eric – who previously worked with the Obama administration to investigate the nation's Ebola outbreak – the MBA course enables him to increase his value to the HIV vaccine program every day.

"I'm not learning something to file away for a later date – I'm learning it and applying it to my job later that same day," he says. "The classes are teaching me how things work in the real world."

Eric Vela says the ability to easily interact with classmates and faculty is a primary benefit of the hybrid MBA in Organizational Leadership track.

That's significant because of how acutely involved he is in so many aspects of the project. He manages the timeline, budget and program deliverables, as well as the production of data and a portion of the research. His extensive experience in regulatory science makes him an expert of sorts when working with the Food and Drug Administration.

On top of it all, Eric manages personnel, makes lab equipment purchases and keeps himself apprised of additional funding opportunities that could aid research efforts.

What makes his job easier is the ability to lean on Oregon State's MBA faculty members for guidance – for class and for work.

"I'll call or email them and say, 'I'm dealing with this. Is there a resource you can point me to?'" he says. "I'll get a response almost immediately that says, 'Try reading this case study. This is what I experienced when I first started managing a team.'"

"The instructors are very engaging and easily accessible. It's allowed me to reach a sort of potential that I wouldn't be able to on my own."

The vibrant learning community is also a product of constant collaboration online among his classmates. The rigorous Oregon State course work invites group discussion in a variety of formats.

"I think I've learned as much from my classmates as I have from the professors because the majority of us are professionals," Eric says. "They're bringing their own experience from their businesses, and

"I'M NOT LEARNING SOMETHING TO FILE AWAY FOR A LATER DATE – I'M LEARNING IT AND APPLYING IT TO MY JOB LATER THAT SAME DAY. THE CLASSES ARE TEACHING ME HOW THINGS WORK IN THE REAL WORLD."

we can see what's happening in real life as opposed to just reading about concepts in a book."

Eric's life is filled to the brim with responsibility, at school, home – where he raises boer goats on his farm – and especially work. Few people ever play a prominent role for such an important global cause. In the ideal outcome, the HIV vaccine program will someday help save millions of lives worldwide every year.

And the Oregon State MBA student who says he once knew nothing now stands at the forefront of everything.

"We're gaining a lot of publicity because of the possibility of this vaccine. We're still years away from knowing if it's even safe to test in humans, but it's showed a lot of promise," says Eric, who expects to graduate with his MBA next spring. "It's a really exciting thing to be a part of."

In **BUSINESS MATTERS**, our alumni newsletter, we share information about College of Business people, events and engagement opportunities.

You are a valued ambassador for Beaver Nation, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Please send your news or story ideas to businessalumni@oregonstate.edu

For questions or information:

Maria Schell
Director of Advancement
maria.schell@oregonstate.edu
541-209-0117