BIG DATA

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Big data means big business for those who can mine mountains of digital information to unearth insights about consumers, organizational strategies and more. Business Exchange explores four emerging big data trends from the perspectives of alumni, faculty and experts in this burgeoning field.

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May I Use Your Data?
Laura Hartman, Vincent de Paul Professor of Business Ethics, discusses ethical issues involving privacy, security and your data.

Four Tips for Effective LinkedIn Networking
DePaul career management experts provide advice for boosting your professional presence online.

How big is big data? Consider this: before you finish reading this column, Google will process more than 2 million searches, Web shoppers will spend more than $272,000 online, Facebook users will share more than 684,000 posts, brands will attract at least 34,000 Facebook “likes” and Twitter will host 100,000 tweets.

This deluge of digital activity happens every minute of every day. It’s part of the exponential growth of data stored in public and private—data that can now be measured in exabytes, or 1,000,000,000,000,000,000-byte increments.

Hidden in this sea of data is a treasure trove of competitive intelligence for businesses. For organizations able to analyze and interpret it effectively, big data can yield deep insights about customers, suppliers, employees and market trends that have the potential to drive innovation, boost productivity and fuel growth. However, big data also comes with big responsibilities for organizations to ensure the privacy and security of the people behind the numbers.

In our cover story and online coverage, we explore these issues through the lenses of alumni, faculty members and experts who are at the forefront of the big data revolution. The rise of big data also is having a big impact on the job market. A recent IBM survey of 900 executives worldwide revealed that a key challenge facing business is finding enough talent skilled in analyzing and interpreting big data. To help our students take advantage of these opportunities, Kellstadt will soon introduce new, specialized master’s degrees focusing on business analytics.

We hope you enjoy the new Business Exchange and welcome your feedback. Please send comments to Robin Florzak, Business Exchange editor, at rflorzak@depaul.edu.
Financier Warren Buffett Shares Wisdom With MBA Students

What’s it like to discuss careers, investing and the economy with Berkshire Hathaway CEO Warren Buffett? For MBA student Kate Stevenson, it felt like investing two hours to gain “the lessons of a lifetime.”

Stevenson and 19 other DePaul graduate business students were invited to query the “Oracle of Omaha” and tour several Berkshire Hathaway businesses during a visit to the multinational conglomerate’s Omaha headquarters in October. The students were chosen from more than 300 Kellstadt Graduate School of Business applicants who sought a chance to meet the renowned business leader, investor and philanthropist.

Buffett answered a wide range of questions during a two-hour Q&A session. He advised students to be true to themselves and follow their career passions. “Very few people succeed at something that doesn’t excite them…” he said. “Find a job you would do even if you were already rich and didn’t need the money. I’m 83 and still excited by what I do.” – Warren Buffett

Scholarships Expand for Alumni and New Graduate Business Students

DePaul is making graduate education more accessible for university alumni and new Kellstadt students by increasing its scholarship offerings. DePaul alumni who wish to earn another degree from their alma mater through the Double Demon Scholarship program begun last year can now apply the scholarships to graduate study at Kellstadt or six other DePaul colleges and schools. Alumni receive a 25 percent discount on tuition for master’s degree programs and select certificate programs.

Meanwhile, beginning this fall, new students who enroll in Kellstadt degree programs may be eligible for thousands of dollars in DePaul scholarships, with award amounts determined by each student’s academic profile.

For more information about scholarship award amounts, eligibility and deadlines, contact the Kellstadt Graduate School of Business office at (312) 362-8810 or kgsb@depaul.edu.

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The Driehaus College of Business plans Taxation (MST) tied for first place in A generous gift from Sheikh Faisal Bin opment in Qatar and the Middle East. entrepreneurship and business develop- DePaul-Qatar Collaboration Creates New Entrepreneurship Center

A generous gift from Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani of Qatar is paving the way for a collaboration that supports entrepreneurship and business development in Qatar and the Middle East. The Driehaus College of Business plans to launch The Sheikh Faisal Center for Entrepreneurship in the Middle East later this year. The center will bring an international dimension to DePaul’s renowned Coleman Entrepreneurship Center and help cultivate new generations of Qatari and U.S. entrepreneurs.

DePaul's undergraduate entrepreneurship program again made the annual list of the best colleges for entrepreneurs published by Entrepreneur Magazine and The Princeton Review. Thirteen of DePaul’s graduates business degree programs earned top-30 rankings among U.S. business schools in an international survey of 1,000 business school deans conducted by Paris-based education consulting firm Eduniversal.

Business Programs Receive High Marks in Three Rankings

The Driehaus College of Business was recognized for its academic excellence in these rankings this academic year:

- #1 in Kellstadt’s Master of Science in Taxation (MST) tied for first place in TaxTalent.com’s ranking of the best MST programs in the nation, based on a survey of tax firm hiring managers.
- #24 in Top 30 MBA Programs in the nation, based on a survey of business school deans conducted by Entrepreneur Magazine and The Princeton Review.
- #1 in First Driehaus Fellow Bin Jiang

By Margaret Hoag

First Driehaus Fellow
Bin Jiang

“I’m so lucky,” says Bin Jiang, talking about his appointment as the business school’s first Driehaus Fellow this academic year. Certainly that luck runs both ways, as Jiang has contributed excellent research and teaching as a management professor at DePaul since 2004. The five-year fellowship, funded by a portion of Richard H. Driehaus’ $30 million donation to the business school, supports the hiring and retention of extraordinary faculty.

“I was drawn to DePaul by the opportunity to work with our depart- ment chair, Scott Young, and other faculty on the business challenges that intrigue me, especially the complexities, both practical and ethical, in managing global supply chains,” Jiang says. “At DePaul, I’m part of a bigger ‘management’ discipline, and that keeps me open to ideas from other areas and colleagues. In many schools, the subsets of management are kept separate, but here we’re an intellectually collaborative group and I really like that.”

In the past 10 years, Jiang has won recognition for his scholarship, including prestigious best-paper awards from the Journal of Operations Management and the Academy of Management. But Jiang’s first love is teaching. “I agree wholeheartedly with DePaul’s philosophy,” he says. “Students are my number one priority.”

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The technology and data are the means to enable data for every man, woman and child on Earth by 2020. Drowning in numbers? We asked alumni, industry and officer at Acxiom, an international digital data created on the Internet. But for people who really creating more than two-thirds of the data in cyberspace a mountain of machine-generated data from smartphones, tablets and networked computers, plus supermarket scanners and other sensors, and what has come to be known as big data certainly lives up to its name. Big data is usually viewed in terms of aggregate numbers, such as millions of cell phone calls culled by the National Security Agency or billions of pages created on the Internet. But for people who really want to understand how this phenomenon can affect their business, professional and personal lives, it’s useful to reduce the term to its essence: fragments of our lives ensconced in digital code. “The businesses that will thrive in this space will realize that value and convenience to the consumer—to individuals—is at the center of this big data evolution,” says Sheila Colclasure, global public policy and privacy officer at Acxiom, an international digital data brokerage. “The consumer is the primary constituency. The technology and data are the means to enable businesses to meet the needs of the consumer. “Our job in the business world is to deliver value and positive brand experiences to the consumer,” Colclasure continues. “In relation to the technology and data used to do that, we’ve got to help consumers get an understanding of how it works and provide relevant choices and controls.” So, just how do we find value in this data-driven world as businesses and consumers without drowning in numbers? We asked alumni, industry and academic experts to provide their perspectives on the top four trends in big data.

**TREND ONE: DATA SECURITY IS EVERYONE’S JOB**

Hackers have gained access to more than 534 million personal records, including Social Security and financial account information, since 2005, according to the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse. In 2014 alone, more than 273 breaches have been reported, involving 22 million personal records.

If you think big-box retailers and credit card companies are the only ones who need to worry about this problem, think again. Anyone who collects consumer data—from corporations to mom-and-pop operations—must develop strategies for securing and using customer data properly. “Consumers want data about themselves protected, which means keeping it secured from unauthorized or unintended access. Consumers also want data to be used to create value, benefits and conveniences,” says Colclasure. Not all data are the same, however, and it is important to develop security practices that correspond to the type and sensitivity of the data. Good starting points include establishing formal policies and practices for securing sensitive data in transit, such as encryption policies, and implementing security industry standards advocated by the Payment Card Industry Security Standards Council when collecting and/or processing credit card payments. Businesses also must ensure security compliance for service providers and other third parties with access to internal systems. In December 2013, Target discovered that credit card data from 110 million of its customers had been stolen electronically. Media reports suggest the cybercriminals may have introduced their data-stealing malware into Target’s network through software used by one of Target’s vendors. “Companies should continually monitor their environment, as threats can originate from internal as well as external sources,” says Eileen T. Carlson (MBA ’85), director of information governance at Baxter Healthcare. “They need to think seriously about what services they outsource and what partners and vendors they engage. Regardless of how the breach occurs, the company is ultimately responsible, and it is their brand that is impacted.”
TREND TWO: THE AGE OF THE QUANTIFIED SELF

British scientist and Wolfram Research founder Stephen Wolfram began tracking all his emails in 1989. “One day,” he wrote in a prophetic blog post, “I’m sure everyone will routinely collect all sorts of data about themselves.”

One day is today. We are in the age of the quantified self. Big data is no longer the sole purview of businesses. More than one million people use the computational search engine Wolfram Alpha to analyze their Facebook data. More than 55 million Americans track their diet data. More than 500 users uploaded personal data for the world to see—pictures included. Shortly thereafter, Fitbit voluntarily stopped sales of the Fitbit Force, recalled the product and issued refunds.

Experts say businesses shouldn’t be threatened by consumers’ grasp of their own data, but embrace it as a way to improve their companies. Says Carlson, “If you’re coming up with ways to provide value to new and existing customers, consumers will want to do business with you. The general public will be more forgiving if you make a mistake and are viewed as a consumer-conscious company.”

TREND THREE: IMPROVING BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Increasingly, companies are looking inward and using aggregate data to improve their operations, experts say. For example, pharmaceutical companies are creating “e-pedigrees,” or electronic tracking dossiers, that follow products from the raw-materials-gathering stage through packaging and on to store distribution. The data are used not only to comply with drug regulations, but also to identify weak links in the supply chain. If a defective product is detected, companies can now pinpoint exactly which batch is the source of the problem, avoiding a mass recall. Other companies are improving their operations by using radio frequency identification (RFID) sensors to track their planes, trains and automobiles move through the supply chain in real time, and then using the data to improve delivery and production times.

Big data also is forcing companies to destroy old silos that keep internal departments from sharing information. “A startup company should be looking at implementing totally integrated systems and processes,” Carlson says. “Many companies segregate their sales force from their customer service organization. The sales force is not aware that a customer has called customer service multiple times for the same issue. Yet, the sales force starts telling the customer how important she is and that they want to build a relationship, while the customer is thinking, ‘If I am so important, why don’t you know that I called three times in the last month for the same issue?’”

TREND FOUR: EMERGING BUSINESS TECHNOLOGISTS

By all accounts, the team of well-educated attorneys who work with Colclasure at Acxiom are smart and capable. Yet, she has asked them to become students again: “Your challenge, I told my team, is to become technologists.”

For the last two years, Colclasure and her team have been immersed in understanding technology and what the data scientists are doing at Acxiom. They are not merely looking at data output, but at the architectural schematics of the data itself, combing through it bit by bit. No longer will they depend upon the IT crowd to interpret and protect the data. They are learning firsthand about the technology engineering necessary to parse big data.

Acxiom is not alone. Peers who work in compliance at high-tech companies “are saying they’ve got to apply analytical thinking to this space, and they need the technology skills to do it,” Colclasure says. This trend of merging skill sets—where understanding the creation, interpretation and protection of data is as essential as knowing profit and loss statements—has begun to affect the job market. According to a recent Manpower survey, about one in three jobs go unfilled because applicants lack the required technical skills.

That’s why DePaul’s Kellstadt Graduate School of Business offers an MS in Marketing Analysis and has partnered with the College of Computing and Digital Media to launch an MS in Predictive Analytics degree. Sue Fogel chairs the Department of Marketing, which offers both programs. “Graduates of these programs understand how data fits into creating best business practices, what all that data can tell a company and how it can affect a company’s decision-making process,” she says. “They are in high demand for everything from digital marketing to risk analysis to telecommunications.”

BIG DATA’S FUTURE

Big data as an industry is still in its adolescent phase—both enhancing and disrupting industries, lives and careers as it inserts itself into our daily life. The key to understanding big data personally, professionally and within business, our experts say, is to never forget its purpose—the individual customer.

J-P CONTRERAS
BUS ’97, MBA ’01

“Life logging” is creating new industries and opportunities... Companies that think entrepreneurially in this space will identify an analytical need for the data that hasn’t been served yet.”

ACXIOM

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SHEILA COLCLASURE
ACXIOM

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EILEEN T. CARLSON
MBA ’85

“Your challenge, I told my team, is to become technologists.”

DePaul Ethics Professor Laura Hartman discusses the ethical responsibilities of managing data at DePaulBusinessExchange.com
A Supportive Work Culture Helps Women to “Lean In”

Research co-authored by Assistant Professor of Management Alyssa Westring offers new insights into the debate sparked by Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg’s best-selling book about the need for women to “lean in” to their careers to succeed. Based on her research, Westring says, “If we truly want more women to ‘lean in,’ we need to focus on the larger context—to think hard about how to create workplace cultures where women have the opportunity to thrive.” Westring and her colleagues “made a remarkable discovery” when they surveyed 133 women physicians and biomedical researchers about work-family conflict.

The research found that supportive departments had four main characteristics: they recognized and appreciated nongroup aspects of life; provided equal access to resources and opportunities, such as administrative support, research space and funding and committee participation; addressed subtle and overt gender biases organization-wide; and were led by supervisors who actively supported women’s careers.

Insights Into the World of Business From Driehaus Faculty Research by Robin Florzak

Low Interest Rate Mortgage Financing Challenges Housing Market Rebound

Millions of households that purchased homes or refinanced mortgages during the last four years, when interest rates were at historic lows, could challenge a housing market recovery if long-term interest rates were to rise quickly in the coming years, according to research from the Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University. Increases in mortgage rates are expected due to continued pull back in the Federal Reserve’s quantitative easing policy, the study’s authors note. “This research shows that locked-in households will be reluctant to sell their homes and finance other purchases at higher interest rates,” says Patrick H. Hendershot, a senior research fellow at the institute, who coauthored the study with Jin Man Lee, the institute’s research director, and James D. Shilling, professor and the Michael J. Horne Chair in Real Estate Studies.

Joe Adams (BUS ’77, MBA ’79)
Residence Carol Stream, Ill.
Occupation Managing partner and CEO of McGladrey LLP, the fifth largest assurance, tax and consulting firm in the United States and the largest focused on middle market businesses and the entrepreneurs who run them. Accounting Today recognized Adams as one of its “Top 100 Most Influential People in Accounting” in 2013.
Education Adams attended St. Joseph’s High School in Westchester, Ill., before becoming a DePaul Double Demon. “My brother attended DePaul, and he was the primary influence on my choice to attend DePaul and to pursue an undergraduate degree in accounting. I also wanted to stay close to home to be able to work and earn the money to pay for my education.”

Adams’ advice for new alumni:

“Don’t be afraid to get out of your comfort zone or make a mistake; just be sure to learn from it.”

“Stay relevant. Learn something new every day, and impart your knowledge to and coach others.”

“Listen respectfully and challenge others about what can be better; then do your part to make it better.”

“Change is constant and accelerating—accept it and use it to your advantage.”

“The relationships you build at DePaul and the ones you build after you graduate can make all the difference. I had no idea where my career would take me, but with the help of some extraordinary mentors, I have been involved in some amazing things.”

Hispanic-Owned Businesses Bloom in Illinois

Hispanic-owned businesses are a small but growing force in the Illinois economy, according to a white paper sponsored by the Richard H. Driehaus Center for International Business in collaboration with the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Center for Hispanic Entrepreneurship. Hispanic-owned ventures account for just 5 percent of the state’s businesses, but their number grew by 43 percent, compared with 16 percent for all other companies, from 2002 to 2007. During that period, payroll for Hispanic businesses rose by 28 percent, eight times that of other businesses, according to the research, which was based on U.S. Census data.
Once Mentees, Alumni Give Back as ASK Mentors

By Jennifer Leopoldt

As a finance student at DePaul, Michael Kueker sought advice from others to help shape his professional life. “I knew that I couldn’t do this alone and that it would take much more than just me trying to put my career together,” he says. He took advantage of DePaul’s Alumni Sharing Knowledge (ASK) program, which has a volunteer network of more than 1,100 alumni and friends of DePaul who offer career guidance to students and alumni. After graduation, Kueker (BUS ’08) found a way to give back to the program that helped him: he transitioned from mentee to mentor.

“Becoming a mentor was my acknowledgment of how fortunate I had been to have my own mentors at the right times,” says Kueker, a bank examiner at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago and a member of the ASK Advisory Board. Kueker’s story isn’t unique. “The pay-it-forward spirit is very strong among ASK mentors,” says Gina Sian (CDM ’96, LAS MS ’13), ASK program director.

Originally created in the mid-1990s, the ASK network was drawn to ASK because the program gave him a perspective he couldn’t get from others in his life. His mother, an immigrant from the Philippines, wanted him to go into a health career, but he was drawn in a different direction. “I wanted to do business, and she didn’t know how to start a career in business. I thought [ASK] would be a great program to get insight and knowledge from someone else in the same industry,” he says.

Yankton had one mentor in particular who “went above and beyond” by advising him which classes to take for his honors finance track, helping him prepare for job interviews and providing other real-world insights into his career planning. “That’s what made me want to be a mentor now and do the same for current students,” says Yankton.

The ASK mentors come from a variety of backgrounds and all DePaul colleges and schools, across the United States and around the world. Students and alumni can reach out to potential mentors through ASK’s online database, and mentoring pairs can meet on their own time and interact through ASK events.

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Bryan Yankton (BUS ’11) was drawn to ASK because the program gave him a perspective he couldn’t get from others in his life. His mother, an immigrant from the Philippines, wanted him to go into a health career, but he was drawn in a different direction. “I wanted to do business, and she didn’t know how to start a career in business. I thought [ASK] would be a great program to get insight and knowledge from someone else in the same industry,” he says.

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That ASK mentors come from a variety of backgrounds, including multiple business disciplines, helped

Yuanyun (Ella) Peng (BUS MS ’10) when she turned to the program while job searching. “I was eager to talk to mentors who finished a similar program and were doing well in the type of job I was looking for. After talking to several mentors, they suggested that market research would be a good fit for my background as an international student,” says Peng, who is now a research analyst at Millward Brown.

Peng knew right away that the ASK program was the right fit for her. “As soon as I was a mentor, even while receiving help from mentors, I had made up my mind that one day I would become a mentor as well, giving back what I have to those in need,” she says.

Alumni don’t need special skills to become mentors, just a willingness to share their insights. “There is great power in storytelling, especially when it’s based on firsthand experience of successes and challenges,” Sian says. “ASK offers a perfect way for our alumni to contribute to someone else’s success simply through their words of wisdom and encouragement.”

For Yankton, the best part of being an ASK mentor is passing along what he has learned over the years. “If only I’d known all the information I know now back when I was still in school! I felt every bump that I ran into during college and my career application process, so I want to alleviate that for current students at DePaul by sharing my knowledge,” he says.

For Kueker, the highlight of the program is hearing back from students about how his guidance has made a difference. “It means a lot when you can see the impact you had on somebody in real time,” he says. He also likes watching his involvement come full circle: “Now I see that my mentees have become mentors to other students. It’s really satisfying.”
Visit alumni.depaul.edu to discover the many ways to connect with other alumni and the DePaul community.

‘60s

Richard H. Driehaus (BUS ’65, MBA ’70, DHL ’82) was featured on Crain’s annual list of Who’s Who in Chicago Business. He is president of Driehaus Capital Management Inc.

Dominic P. Gentile (BUS ’68, JD ’72) was appointed honorary consul for the Italian Republic. He is chairman of Gordon Silver’s government investigations and business crimes department.

Donald F. Kilburg, Jr. (LAS ‘68, MBA ‘74) and Rabbi Marc Wilson (LAS ‘70) have helped organize the “Year of Ahinsa,” a series of events around the 75th anniversary of Kristallnacht.

Robert A. Clifford (BUS ’73, JD ‘78, LL’83) was selected in 2013 as one of the Notable Members of the American Bar Association. Also in 2013, he was featured on Crain’s annual list of Who’s Who in Chicago Business and was selected as one of the Top 10 Illinois Super Lawyers. Clifford is a senior partner at Clifford Law Offices.

Miguel A. Valdez (MST ’74, JD ’78) joined W.T. Askins as managing director in its New York office. He has more than 35 years of experience in U.S. and international tax planning.

John J. Buttitta (BUS ’76, JD ’79) joined Greenberg Traurig LLP as a shareholder in its trusts and estates practice in the Chicago office.

Joseph M. Adams, Sr. (BUS ’77, MBA ’79) was featured on Crain’s annual list of Who’s Who in Chicago Business. He is managing partner and CEO of McIlhenny Trust (read more about Adams on p. 11).

Rick E. Rosa (MBA ’77) has been named president of the Chicago chapter of the National Association of Real Estate Brokers.

John W. Schoen III (BUS ’77) was promoted to senior vice president and chief financial officer at PTEC Inc. Schoen has served as the company’s CFO since November 2001.

William P. Kosar, Jr. (MBA ’78) joined the DePaul Board of Trustees. He is a managing director at JP Morgan Capital Corp.

Karen M. Atwood (MBA ’82) was appointed by President Barack Obama to serve as judge of the United States Tax Court for a term ending Sept. 3, 2028.

Mark A. Atwood (MBA ’82) was featured on Crain’s annual list of Who’s Who in Chicago Business. He is president of Health Care Services Corporation.

James Caltiri (MBA ’82) was unanimously re-elected as chairman of the Roehm-Boyce Owners’ Club, Lake Michigan Region, and will be coming out with a book on next-generation real estate, “Location, Location, Connectivity,” later this year.

Eugene A. Delaney (MBA ’82) was appointed to the board of directors at Sanmina, an integrated manufacturing solutions company that makes optical, electronic and mechanical products. Delaney is also a global civil and environmental engineering firm, where he also is a principal. He is a member of the Greely and Hansen Board of Directors, the Dean’s Advisory Council for the Richard H. Driehaus Center for International Business at DePaul and the CEO of Chicago United.

Bill Snow (BUS ’83, MBA ’84) is managing director at Jordan Knafel & Co.

‘70s

Charles H. Wurtzebach (BUS ’71) has been named George L. Ruff Professor in Real Estate Studies at DePaul University. Wurtzebach, who has been at DePaul since 2009, previously worked in industry as managing director and property chief investment officer at Henderson Global Investors Inc.

‘80s

Catherine M. King (MBA ’83) joined Band & Warner’s Gold Coast office as a real estate broker. She has extensive city knowledge as well as suburban expertise.

Francis M. Martinez (MBA ’84) is an associate judge in the 17th. Judicial Circuit.

The Hon. Joseph W. Nege (BUS ’81, JD ’84) was named James T. Ryan III (MBA ’87) was featured on Crain’s annual list of Who’s Who in Chicago Business. He is chairman, CEO and president of Wav Reiner Inc.

Lorrie J. Ziolkowski (BUS ’87) was promoted to senior marketing manager at Thornton Tomasetti. She was previously a marketing manager in the international engineering firm’s Chicago office.

John C. Robak, Jr. (BUS ’88) was named president of Greeley and Hansen, a global civil and environmental engineering firm, where he also is a principal. He is a member of the Greely and Hansen Board of Directors, the Dean’s Advisory Council for the Richard H. Driehaus Center for International Business at DePaul and the CEO of Chicago United.

Bill Snow (BUS ’83, MBA ’84) is managing director at Jordan Knafel & Co.

‘90s

Rosemarie S. Andolino (BUS ’90) was featured on Crain’s annual list of Who’s Who in Chicago Business. She is the commissioner for the department of aviation at the City of Chicago.

Michael T. Wolf (MBA ’94) was named vice president and chief counsel, corporations, at ADN PLC.

Tony W. Hunter (MBA ’93) was featured on Crain’s annual list of Who’s Who in Chicago Business. He is publisher, CEO and president of the Chicago Tribune Co. Also in 2013, Hunter was elected chairman of the Metropolitan Family Services board.

Investing in Financial Literacy

As a child growing up on the South Side of Chicago in the 1970s, Richard Smith (BUS ’77, MBA ’83) knew he wanted to be a “business man.” Yet, Smith struggled with variables and formulas, as well as with the stigma others placed upon him as the poor son of a cafeteria worker. He felt like he didn’t belong in the finance world.

Smith’s DePaul education helped him enter this world, and after 20 years of building his own investment firm, Smith created The Wall Street Program to help others follow in his footsteps. The free finance and investment education program teaches Chicago-area middle schoolers the ins and outs of finance and investing through virtual investment accounts set up on Yahoo! Finance. Nearly 1,000 students have gone through the program.

“I’m the type of person that if I learn something, I want to teach others,” says Smith. “I want the kids to know that despite having little knowledge of the finance world now, you can learn and make a good living in this area. I truly found that investing is a great way of building wealth and I want them to learn as much as possible.”
Forging Career Connections

Rob Pasquesi (MBA ‘10) began brainstorming a better way to foster professional relationships while he was studying entrepreneurship at DePaul. Now his idea of taking one’s online network offline has grown into NextIntro.com, a free website that helps young professionals form connections online and suggests ways for them to meet face to face.

The site allows members to create a personal page based on their LinkedIn profiles or from scratch. Members get emails suggesting other professionals they might want to meet, and the site even recommends nearby restaurants or coffee shops that could serve as meeting places. The site, which launched in 2013, now has nearly 10,000 members in Chicago, Boston, Denver and Austin, Texas.

Pasquesi, who works as an audit senior manager at a top-six international accounting and tax firm, credits DePaul’s business professors with helping him refine the website concept and putting him in touch with students. “When I started talking to college students and young professionals, they mentioned a need for receiving mentorships and understanding more about certain professions,” Pasquesi says. “A lot of current members saw the same problems in their careers, and suggested ways for them to meet face to face.”

‘10s

Herberto Cruz (BUS ‘10) was promoted to vice president of operations at Access Community Network. In addition, he was selected as one of six scholars for the American College of Healthcare Executives’ inaugural Thomas C. Dolan Executive Diversity Program.

Zack A. Hoeflalter (BUS ‘10) is an associate at Kiser Group, where he specializes in the analysis and disposition of Chicago multifamily properties.

Adam M. Short (MBA ‘12) was promoted to vice president of acquisitions at Golub and Co. in Chicago. He was previously senior director.

Developing Gifts: Joe Silich’s Measure of Success

Joe Silich (BUS ’92) is one of the preeminent wealth advisors in the nation. But he has never forgotten his working-class roots on the southwest side of Chicago or his first-generation college experience at DePaul. “DePaul allowed me to identify that gift inside of me—in my case, a gift for numbers,” he says. “My teachers helped me find it, nurture it, and build my knowledge. In the process, they helped me build confidence. That foundational education is a kind of ‘muscle memory’ that has served me well in my career and in life.”

As executive director at Morgan Stanley, he leads the Silich Group of wealth advisors for the firm. He has garnered numerous accolades throughout his career. He was named one of Barron’s magazine’s top financial advisors nationwide in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013. He makes frequent appearances on MSNBC, CNBC, Bloomberg and other media outlets. Throughout his career, he has been careful along the way to share his gifts and his success with the community.

At DePaul, Silich serves on the DePaul University Finance Committee. He works with the college to develop internship opportunities for students, and personally coaches and mentors DePaul students and young alumni.

His community commitments are numerous and wide-ranging. To name a few, he serves on the Chicago-based board of UNICEF, the Midwest Board of the USO, and the advisory board of Operation Homefront, which provides support for families of service members and wounded warriors across the country.

In 2010, as part of the Many Dreams, One Mission campaign, Silich established the Silich Family Endowed Scholarship for talented DePaul students in finance who, like him, grew up in Chicago and attended city public or parochial schools.

More than one-third of DePaul students are the first generation in their families to attend college. “I worked throughout school, as most DePaul students still do,” Silich says. “But I never lost sleep over midterms or finals or papers. What I did worry about was paying the semester tuition bill. I know what my education has meant to me. And I’ve seen firsthand the way that education can benefit their families and communities—that is how I measure true success.”

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