Notable Graduates: Matthew Yam BSM '23

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Name: Matthew Yam

Degree Program: Hometown:Fun fact about yourself:

I interned for a startup incubator in Wellington, New Zealand, during my gap year before college.

Why did you decide to major in business?

I believe that change and innovation are driven by entrepreneurship. Majoring in business helped me to see that there are endless avenues to career and personal success. There’s no one right answer. Furthermore, combining my business degree with a liberal arts education has helped me better understand the intersections of economics, politics and business.

What was your favorite course and why?

Though not part of the Freeman curriculum, my favorite course was Intro to Design and Creative Thinking, taught by Professor Tiffany Lin. The course taught creative problem-solving, visual communication and fundamentals of design that allowed students to develop a better understanding and appreciation of the world around us. It helped me to be more present, more mindful of spaces we exist in, and more curious about exploring my everyday environment.

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

Rob Lalka has been a wonderful mentor for me throughout my time at Tulane. He is an excellent professor and leader. I took his year-long venture accelerator course, where students team up to build businesses that solve problems our generation is facing. Rob starts the class every year by having students write down their most important values, and we use these values to guide the decisions we make throughout the year. Rob pushes his students incredibly hard, allowing us to reach goals we didn't think we could achieve. He tailors his lessons to meet our needs and makes sure that his lessons are relevant to current events, whether that means bringing in successful tech investors or drawing from his experience sitting on multiple boards to do mock board meetings.

Outside of the classroom, I had the opportunity to work with him on his upcoming book, "The Venture Alchemists," and got to see how passionate Rob is about ethical decision-making in business and technology. I deeply admire how Rob works incredibly hard while making sure to put deep care and thought into his family and relationships.

Rob cares about his students. Despite his busy schedule, he always makes the time to chat with students to help them reach their goals. He has helped me to envision the person I want to grow in to.

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

During my time at Tulane, I served as a student fellow at the Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Vice President of Professional Development for Tower and Crescent, President of Freeman Student Government, Brotherhood Chair for Alpha Kappa Psi, and Coordinator for the Freshman Leadership Program.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Watching and playing basketball (go Lakers!), ocean swimming, reading, cooking, and I've recently gotten really into fishing at City Park. I saw someone catch a gator last time I went.

What is your past work or internship experience?

Summer 2022: Summer Analyst, Goldman Sachs, New YorkSummer 2021: External Affairs intern, Propeller, New Orleans Spring 2021: Marketing Intern, Medici Group, New York (remote)

Where will you be working after graduation?

I'll be working as an Investment Analyst at the Tulane Endowment in Darien, Conn. I'll be living in NYC and am excited to stay connected with the Tulane community in the city! Couldn't leave Tulane behind just yet!

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

I'd love to start my own business and work abroad in Asia at some point. I was planning to study abroad in Shanghai and Singapore during my junior year, but programs were shut down due to Covid. It's still on my bucket list!

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

I'm proud of graduating from the Altman Program. I was able to take 156 credit courses in pursuit of a dual degree while maintaining above a 3.7 GPA. I did this while working multiple jobs, being an active leader in student organizations, and enjoying my time in New Orleans. Thanks to the program, I even got to complete two wonderful study abroad trips in Mexico and Italy despite challenges with the pandemic.

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

Do it! And be very intentional about taking advantage of all the Freeman resources outside of the classroom.

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

There are so many things I love about New Orleans. Hanging out in City Park, eating pho at Lilly’s Café or Singleton’s Mini-Mart, sharing stories over crawfish and beers, and dancing on Bourbon Street. My favorite New Orleans memory was summer after my sophomore year, when I lived with three of my best friends and interned at a local non-profit, Propeller. I got a taste of living in New Orleans as more of a resident, rather than a student. I learned about and contributed in a small way to important social issues during the day and enjoyed all the wonderful summer fun at night.

Where do you hope to be in five years?

Finishing up grad school, running my own company, in good health, and spending quality time with family and friends.