Graduation Spotlight: Raleigh Kreis (BSM '24)

April 15, 2024



Name: Raleigh Kreis

Describe yourself in 15 words or less: An agile, analytical thinker with consistent, community-minded curiosity and a global worldview.

Fun fact: I was born in the Netherlands and was in 8 different countries before I turned 1, thanks to my Dad’s military service.

Hometown: Bellevue, Nebraska

Major: Finance and Political Economy

Favorite Business Course:

Climate Change, ESG, and Financial Markets with Professor Nishad Kapadia. This has been my first prolonged exposure to cutting edge research in finance that is grappling with dynamic contemporary issues and the broader effects of finance on the world.

Extracurricular Activities, Community Work and Leadership Roles During College:

- **European Horizons at Tulane**; *President, Communications Director*

Spearheaded member engagement, leadership strategy, consistent communication, and identification of important policy interests for events and publications for a group of 130+ students at Tulane's chapter of the student-led, Transatlantic policy incubator

- **Tulane Women in Business**; *Vice President of Public Relations*

Disseminated critical communication initiatives for social media and email for a club of more than 380 students to create events for professional education and networking with recruiters and alumni across a variety of business fields

- **Tulane College Scholars**; *Member, Committee Head*

Joined inaugural cohort of 50 second-year undergraduate students developing interdisciplinary interests, student-faculty relationships, and critical thinking about our broader society through a creative, academic, and social lens

- **Altman Program for International Studies and Business**

Selected as one of 20 scholars to join a specialized cohort that will graduate with a dual degree (150+ credits) in business and liberal arts while studying foreign language, international affairs, and business across the globe, in Mexico, Germany, Chile and Brazil.

- **Tulane Stamps Leadership Award**

Four-year annual scholarship recognizing exceptional students who exemplify leadership, perseverance, scholarship, service and innovation, providing the total cost of attendance and an additional enrichment fund

- **Puentes – Escalera**; *Service Learner Volunteer* – Fall 2023

Assisted local Latine students to identify opportunities after high-school and prepare important academic and organizational skills

- **Murphy Institute's Frankel Family Undergraduate Research Fellowship**

One of two senior students awarded funding for honors thesis research

- **Center for Global Education International Research Grant** October 2023

Supporting student-designed fieldwork trip in Buenos Aires, contributing to Honors Thesis on "The Political Economy of Tourism Gentrification in Latin America"

- **College Scholars Summer Fellowship** Summer 2022

Supporting transportation for summer studies at WHU Otto Beisheim in Germany

- **Altman Program Scholarly Engagement Grant** May 2022

Supporting attendance at the Yale European Horizons North American Summit

- **Newcomb Institute PLEN Grant** May 2021

Supporting attendance at the PLEN Global Policy workshop

Internships:

- **Ernst & Young (EY) – Structured Finance Consulting Intern** – Houston TX

Performed due diligence reviews for Commercial Mortgage Back Securitization (CMBS) transactions, analyzing third party reports and legal documents to ensure the accurate communication of deal collateral information

- **Pilar Frank O'Leary (PFO) Advisory Group – Research Analyst** – Remote/Washington D.C.

Conducted research on situation of Venezuelan refugees in Colombia and Ecuador for senior advisory firm to Hilton Foundation's initiative to benefit livelihood and early childhood development response programs

Post-Graduation Plans: Ernst & Young (EY) – Structured Finance Consulting Staff – Houston TX

Favorite business professor:

Professor Myke Yest is the reason I am a finance major. He manages to meet every student where they are at and to spark the curiosity and problem solving skills we all need to succeed. I remember my first course with him, Introduction to Financial Management, when my classmates perpetually bombarded him with our questions about the time value of money, the operations of the stock market, and many more topics. I could tell that Professor Yest (or 'Profe' as we like to call him) was excited by our willingness to engage with the topic. Beyond that class, his leadership, dedication to improvement, and personal character have been important examples for me throughout my time at Tulane.

What is the biggest lesson you gained from studying business?

One of my favorite professors, Dr. Candace Jens, highlighted in "Investments in Equities" the namesake men of the various models, factors, and ratios we were studying. The realization that the fundamental ways of understanding value, risk, and return have been thought up and tested by specific individuals in the not-so-distant past inspired me to think critically about every facet and test my own assumptions. The biggest lesson I learned in that class and throughout my business education is that our understanding of business, its forms, and purposes, should not be static, but instead grow and change to reflect our changing reality.

What advice would you give to a student looking to major in a business-related field?

Majoring in business involves exposing yourself to a specific culture and way of thinking. Prepare yourself to learn the language of business, like the specific terminology of marketing or accounting, and the thought processes that come along with it, from focusing on profit and costs to developing long term strategies. Business education prepares you for a specific mode of living, working, and thinking. I would recommend future business students understand the implications of engaging with that culture.

What has surprised you most about majoring in business?

I am most surprised by the extent to which I find myself thinking and communicating like a business professional, in ways I never could have imagined before majoring in business. I remember finishing my first semester in business school and considering

situations in my personal life or in the news with a new understanding of how to solve problems, how to manage people, and how to analyze costs and benefits. I surprised myself when, in casual conversation with friends, I found myself using terms like ‘opportunity costs’ and ‘dominant strategy’. (Clearly, business school made me a hit at parties.)

Looking back over your experience, what is the one thing you’d do differently in business school and why?

I have only recently discovered that my passion for finance goes beyond practical operations and the transactions and into the theories behind the models that finance professionals employ every day. This newfound curiosity, especially about the ways that finance is changing to reflect our dynamic world, makes me want to pursue a PhD in Finance. It also means that, given the chance, I would have wanted to spark this passion earlier and practice the intensive quantitative and data analysis skills I know I will need to speak the language of finance theory and research.

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

I am most proud of my experiences as a scholar in Tulane’s Altman Program in International Studies and Business which has allowed me to pursue a demanding course load that combines business, liberal arts, and foreign language. In my first two years at Tulane, I completed Freeman’s business core in an accelerated manner alongside my liberal arts major of Political Economy, studied both Spanish and Portuguese at an intermediate level, and developed intercultural competencies within a selective cohort. My global studies as an Altman Scholar in Mexico, Germany, Chile, and Brazil have equipped me with the skills to navigate ever-changing situations, solve problems within new and unexpected contexts, coordinate travel and logistics, and build relationships across linguistic and cultural backgrounds. My honors thesis on the Political Economy of Tourism Gentrification in Latin America is an extension and culmination of this international, interdisciplinary study. Studying abroad in 4 different countries, at 5 different institutions, was a personal and academic feat that has marked my entire undergraduate experience.

Which classmate do you most admire?

Sage Beleau is one of the coolest, kindest, and most hardworking individuals I have ever met. His passion for being present with people and opportunities in every

moment is what empowers his zeal to succeed today and tomorrow. I know he seeks out every chance to grow as a person and as a professional and to engage with new ideas. I have been honored to be his classmate for four years and to have become a friend and consistent supporter.

Who would you most want to thank for your success?

I want to thank my Mom, who has fielded a dozen phone calls when I was too stressed or full of self-doubt. She has always taught me how to prepare for the future I want, no matter what form that future takes, and how to take care of myself along the way. She has endured everything from jubilant announcements or pensive doldrums to the quotidian updates of college life. My Mom is the strongest example of how I hope to be: curious, caring, resilient. She was a meteorologist in the Air Force, excelling by her own merits in something of a 'boys club', before she became an amazing mother and then a high school science teacher. She has shown me how opportunities to learn, grow, and lead take different forms over the course of a lifetime. I am the luckiest girl in the world to have her as my momma.

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

- "The same thing we do every night Pinky: try to take over the WORLD!" But in all seriousness – I ultimately want my career to involve intercultural and international exchanges and to necessitate constant learning. Global Scope and Perpetual Curiosity are the top two goals of mine professionally.

"Raleigh is academically brilliant — she earned a prestigious full-tuition Stamps Scholarship to attend Tulane University — but she also demonstrates an exceptional grasp of complex global issues. As a member of Tulane's Altman Program in International Studies and Business, she wrote her thesis on gentrification in vacation destinations in Latin America. With her remarkable academic, extracurricular and professional experience, Raleigh embodies the very best of business education, and I know she'll continue to make waves at Ernst & Young."

Myke Yest, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education and Senior Professor of Practice in Finance,
A. B. Freeman School of Business, Tulane University