



# Sophomore Career Connections

*Linking the Liberal Arts to the World of Work*

January 18-20, 2019

# Vassar

## About Sophomore Career Connections

Vassar's Career Development Office (CDO) and Office of Alumnae/i Affairs and Development are delighted to welcome you to Vassar's fifth annual *Sophomore Career Connections*, a program of networking and professional self-discovery.

Vassar's *Sophomore Career Connections* is designed to introduce second-year students to the vast array of career options available to liberal arts graduates. Drawing on the expertise of one of Vassar's very best career resources—our alumnae/i, parent and friend mentors—we hope to help students complement their liberal arts education with industry-specific knowledge, tap into the extensive Vassar network, and focus on their professional development in a supportive environment. Making these connections will serve sophomores well as they begin to consider not only summer internship options, but also life beyond Vassar.

We extend our sincere thanks to the 90+ alumnae/i and parents who have generously offered their time to mentor over 250 students and lead 17 industry-specific career clusters over the course of the weekend. It is our hope that the mentors will also enjoy this opportunity to impart their advice and expertise, and make new connections of their own.

*Sophomore Career Connections* is made possible by the generous support of Carol Ostrow '77, P'09, '15 and Michael Graff P '09, '15.



*Sophomore Career Connections* is planned and organized by the offices of Career Development and Alumnae/i Engagement at Vassar College.

## ***Keynote Speaker***

**Caterina Fake '91**

**Co-founder/General Partner,  
YesVC**



### **The Unicorn, the Zebra and the Cockroach: *Strategies for Survival in a World of Perpetual Disruption***

Caterina Fake is the Co-founder and General Partner of Yes VC, a pre-seed and seed stage fund investing in the U.S. and Europe. Previously, she was Founder Partner at Founder Collective, served as Chairman of Etsy and was the Co-founder of Flickr and Hunch, acquired by Yahoo and eBay, respectively. Yes VC invests in scalable social systems, brands that embody cultural movements, and founders who recognize the opportunity in the rising power and affluence of women. Caterina sits on the boards of Public Goods, the Sundance Institute and McSweeney's, and has received honorary doctorates from RISD and The New School. An advocate for online community over "social media," Caterina has worked throughout her career to humanize technology.

## Friday's Featured Speaker

**Gretchen Eng '12**

**Comedian, Consultant, and Former Arts Administrator**

***Finding Your Liberal Arts Buffet  
in the Real World***

**-or-**

***Eating What You Love (Including  
Some Vegetables), Post-ACDC***

After a daily diet of arts administration for five years, Gretchen Eng left her position to pursue a flavorful array of jobs, from the lucrative to the pro-bono. Food analogies aside, she feels you must carry your liberal arts persona with you into the workforce and do the thing you cannot live without. In this session, students will participate in a series of exercises that illuminate how confidence comes from within. Students will leave inspired to show their networks what they like to put on their plates.



## Sunday's Featured Speaker

**Darys Estrella '92**

**Independent Consultant and Speaker**

***12 Habits of Highly Successful  
Vassar People***

Success is traditionally seen as a ladder that never ends, something you need to keep trying to reach, something that is always in the future. With this presentation, students will look at success in a very different way. Darys Estrella will share with students what she wishes she had known at their age, that would have helped her better navigate the workplace.



# Program Schedule

## Friday, January 18

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1:00 – 3:00pm	Villard Room	<b>Student Registration</b> <i>Check-in once for the entire program.</i>
3:00 – 4:00pm	Villard Room	<b>Student Orientation &amp; Introduction to Networking</b> <i>Facilitated by the CDO staff.</i>
4:00 – 6:00pm	Alumnae House	<b>Mentor Check-in</b>
4:15 – 5:45pm	Villard Room	<b><i>Finding Your Liberal Arts Buffet in the Real World -or- Eating What You Love (Including Some Vegetables, Post-ACDC)</i></b> <i>Featuring Gretchen Eng '12</i>
6:00 – 7:30pm	ACDC/ Gordon Commons	<b>Student Dinner</b>
6:00 – 7:00pm	Alumnae House Living Room	<b>Welcome Reception for Mentors</b> <i>An opportunity for Vassar alumnae/i and parents to network with one another.</i>
7:00 – 9:00pm	Alumnae House	<b>Dinner and Mentor Orientation</b> <i>Facilitated by Carol and Michael Ostrow</i>

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## Saturday, January 19

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8:00 – 9:00 am	ACDC/ Gordon Commons	<b>Mentor and Student Breakfast with LinkedIn Headshots</b> <i>A professional photographer will be on hand to take LinkedIn headshots throughout the day.</i>
9:00 – 9:45am	UpC	<b>Keynote</b> <i>Featuring Caterina Fake '91 Introduction by President Bradley.</i>
10:00 – 11:15 am	Rockefeller Hall	<b>Career Cluster Session I</b>
11:30 am – 12:45pm	Rockefeller Hall	<b>Career Cluster Session II</b>
1:00 – 2:15pm	ACDC/ Gordon Commons	<b>Lunch with Breakout Topic Discussions</b> <i>Students will have the opportunity to dine with mentors and connect over a shared interest. See page 9 for a list of topics.</i>

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## Saturday, January 19, cont.

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2:30 – 3:45pm	Rockefeller Hall	<b>Career Cluster Session III</b>
4:00 – 5:30pm	Villard Room, Rose Parlor, CC MPR	<b>Mentor and Student Networking Reception &amp; Business Card Exchange   LinkedIn Headshots</b> <i>During this reception, students will have the opportunity to practice their networking skills with mentors in a safe environment. A professional photographer will also be on hand to take LinkedIn headshots for students and mentors.</i>
6:00 – 7:00pm	ACDC/ Gordon Commons	<b>Student Dinner</b> <i>Students are invited to enjoy dinner and reflect upon the day.</i>
6:00 – 7:00pm	Alumnae House Living Room	<b>Mentor Reception</b> <i>Network and unwind with the other mentors while reflecting on the day's events.</i>
7:00 – 9:00pm	Alumnae House Dining Room	<b>Mentor Dinner</b> <i>Dinner with remarks from President Bradley.</i>

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## Sunday, January 20

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9:00 – 10:00 am	ACDC/ Gordon Commons	<b>Mentor and Student Breakfast by Career Clusters</b> <i>Students are encouraged to eat breakfast with mentors in the career cluster that most interests them, make some final connections, and gain further advice.</i>
10:15 – 11:15 am	Villard Room	<b>12 Habits of Highly Successful Vassar People</b> <i>Featuring Darys Estrella '92</i>
11:15 am	Villard Room	<b>Program Conclusion</b>

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While the program formally concludes on Sunday, additional programming will be offered for all students on Tuesday, January 22, and throughout the semester (see next page for details).

Check [careers.vassar.edu/news/calendar](https://careers.vassar.edu/news/calendar) for the latest career-related events.

## Tuesday, January 22

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12:00 – 1:00pm	Rockefeller Hall Room 200	<b>Workshop: Resumes and Cover Letters</b> <i>Preparing to apply for internships? Applications will require that you submit a resume and cover letter. Come learn what to do (and what not to do) when writing resumes and cover letters so that your documents will stand out from the crowd.</i>
1:00 – 2:00pm	Rockefeller Hall Room 200	<b>Workshop: Jumpstart Your Internship Search</b> <i>Get an overview of all the resources available to help you land an excellent summer internship and develop your action plan.</i>
2:00 – 3:00pm	Rockefeller Hall Room 200	<b>Workshop: Tapping into the Vassar Alumnae/i Network</b> <i>More than 70 percent of jobs/internships are unadvertised and only accessible through networking. It's never too early to begin networking with Vassar alumnae/i – one of Vassar's best career resources. Strategies for identifying, contacting, and following up with your network (in person and online) will be covered in this workshop.</i>
3:00 – 4:00pm	Rockefeller Hall Room 200	<b>Workshop: Handling the Five Most Difficult Interview Questions</b> <i>When going into an interview, it's important to know what questions to expect and how to approach them. Preparation is key. Come learn about the five most difficult (and common) interview questions asked by employers and how to prepare for them.</i>
12:00 – 4:00pm	Rockefeller Hall Room 201	<b>Walk-in Resume and Cover Letter Reviews</b> <i>CDO staff will be on hand to provide on-the-spot resume and cover letter reviews. Bring hard copies or your laptop.</i>
7:00 – 8:00pm	Rockefeller Hall Room 200	<b>Workshop: GoinGlobal Webinar</b> <i>GoinGlobal is a career and employment resource for internships and jobs in the U.S. and abroad, including country and city guides, H1B visa information, an employer directory, and internship and job postings. In this webinar, GoinGlobal will review their career tools and resources and provide examples and best practices for locating international internship and job opportunities.</i>

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## Wednesday, January 30

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5:00 – 6:00pm	Rockefeller Hall Room 200	<b>Vassar-Connected Summer Experiences That Make a Difference</b> <i>Program directors and past program participants will give a brief overview of some Vassar-funded summer programs and opportunities, including Ford, URSI, Burnam, Tananbaum, the Internship Grant Fund, and many more. Sponsored by the Office for Fellowships and Pre-Health Advising and the Career Development Office.</i>
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## Career Cluster Locations

Each career cluster will take place three times on Saturday. As indicated on the program schedule, the sessions start at 10:00am, 11:30am, and 2:30pm on Saturday. All sessions will take place in Rockefeller Hall, and each career cluster will be held in the same room for all three sessions.

See the following index for room assignments:

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Room in Rockefeller Hall</i>
<b>Advertising/Marketing/Public Relations</b>	212
<b>Artists</b>	Political Science Lounge - 109
<b>Arts Administration</b>	Math Lounge -305
<b>Business/Entrepreneurship</b>	101
<b>Consulting</b>	201
<b>Education</b>	210
<b>Entertainment/Media</b>	307
<b>Environment/Sustainability</b>	304
<b>Financial Services</b>	308
<b>Government/Public Service</b>	112
<b>Health/Medicine</b>	203
<b>International Affairs/Global Careers</b>	312
<b>Law/Legal Services</b>	310
<b>Nonprofit/Social Justice</b>	210
<b>Scientific Research</b>	200
<b>Technology</b>	104
<b>Writing/Publishing</b>	301



# Lunch Breakout Topics

Each breakout discussion will take place during lunch on Saturday, January 19. As indicated on the program schedule, the meal will begin at 1:00pm and run till 2:15pm. All sessions will take place in ACDC Gordon Commons. Students should plan to go to the topic that interests them most; table hopping between topics is permitted.

See the following index for a list of breakout topics.

## *Lunch Table Topic*

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**Business School**

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**Entrepreneurship**

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**Fellowships/Year of Service Opportunities**

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**Help! I Don't Know What To Do**

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**International Students in the U.S. Workplace**

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**Interview Horror Stories**

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**Law School**

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**LGBTQIA in the Workplace**

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**Medical School**

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**Race in the Workplace**

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**The Student-Athlete Experience**

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**Transitions in the Workplace**

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**Translating the Liberal Arts Experience (Transferable Skills)**

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**Women in the Workplace**

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**Working Abroad**

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## Mentors by Industry—Career Cluster Index

Although many of our alumnae/i and parent mentors work in fields, professions, and organizations that span more than one industry, we have assigned each mentor to a primary career cluster. The table below matches our 17 designated career clusters with the 3–7 mentor representatives who will lead these sessions.

Our mentors represent some of the available paths in a given industry. While the career path that interests you most may not be represented, our mentors are nevertheless eager to discuss your options and interests.

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Mentor</i>	<i>Position Title and Employer</i>
<b>Advertising/Marketing/ Public Relations</b>	Nana T. Baffour-Awuah '14	Strategist, Consumer Dynamics
	Anne Green '93	Principal & Managing Director, G&S Business Communications
	Kira Fisher '10	Brand Strategist, Twitter
	Joe Lozito '93	Managing Director, Accenture
	Angelica Periera '14	Assistant Manager, International, Clean Beauty Collective
	Chrissy Persico '95	Head of Consumer PR, Google
<b>Artists</b>	Gretchen Eng '12	Freelance Consultant and Instructor, iO Theater, Roosevelt University
	Alexandra Evans '13	Production Crew/Actor, Gibney Dance/Freelance
	Evan Joseph '92	Photographer, Evan Joseph Studios
	Scott Mendelsohn '93	Actor, Freelance
	Andrea Negrete '15	Actor + Teaching Artist, AEA + Creative Arts Team
	Charley Young '09	SAG-AFTRA/AEA/BMI Actress, Singer, Writer, Charley Girl LLC

*Career Cluster Index continues*

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Mentor</i>	<i>Position Title and Employer</i>
<b>Arts Administration</b>	Charmaine Branch '14	Curatorial Fellow, The Museum of Modern Art and The Studio Museum in Harlem
	Heather Cohn '03	Development & Community Engagement Director/Producing Director, En Garde Arts/Flux Theatre Ensemble
	Pamela Epstein '99	Assistant Director, NYC Cultural Affairs
	Alisa Martin '85	Vice President, Educational Operations, Tenement Museum
	Niya Nicholson '14	Director of Development & Chief of Staff, Jose Limon Dance Foundation and MOVE(NYC)
	Carol Ostrow '77 P'09, '15	Producing Director, The Flea Theater
<b>Business/ Entrepreneurship</b>	Tushar Agarwal '14	Project Management Senior Analyst, PwC
	Alejandro Dinsmore '15	Founder/CEO, EEVO
	Deborah Macfarlan Enright '82	President & CEO, The Macfarlan Group
	Caterina Fake '91	Co-Founder/General Partner, YesVC
	Patricia Lee-Hoffmann P'21	Founder, Triage Consulting Group
	Geraldine Laybourne '69	Entrepreneur, Katapult
<b>Consulting</b>	Mario Arthur-Bentil '10	Senior Consultant, Deloitte
	Jonathan Hong '16	Senior Associate, BDO USA, LLP
	Steven Kauderer '85	Consultant, McKinsey and Company
	Samantha Mignotte '09	Senior Consultant, Deloitte Consulting

*Career Cluster Index continues*

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Mentor</i>	<i>Position Title and Employer</i>
<b>Education</b>	Corinne Alfeld '92	Research Analyst, National Center for Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education
	Deborah Brand '96	High School Principal, James I. O'Neill High School
	Kyle DeAngelis '15	Teacher, New York City Department of Education/P.S. 153 Jonathan D. Hyatt Elementary School
	Wendyliza Gonzalez '93	Bilingual Speech-Language Pathologist, New York City Department of Education
	Erika Lenore Kurt '02	President & CEO, Small World Initiative
	Matthew Wheeler '12	Assistant Director, Career Services, Wheaton College (MA)
<b>Entertainment/Media</b>	Nancy Abraham '87	Executive Vice President, HBO Documentary and Family Programming, HBO
	Joshua Poole '04	VP, Programming & Development, Levity Entertainment Group
	Harrison Remler '14	Chief Operating Officer, Visionary Music Group
	Britta von Schoeler '97	President, Broadway Video Enterprises
	Sam Wootton '10	Cinematographer, IATSE Local 600
<b>Environment/ Sustainability</b>	Nikola Alexandre '14	Restoration Fellow, Conservation International
	Shamar Bibbins '95	Senior Program Officer, The Kresge Foundation
	Kevin Terry Lee '14	Managing Director, EDF+Business, Environmental Defense Fund
	Victoria Mills '86	Green Business Associate, SF Environment (San Francisco Department of the Environment)
	Jeremy Shiman '10	Designer, WRNS Studio

*Career Cluster Index continues*

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Mentor</i>	<i>Position Title and Employer</i>
<b>Financial Services</b>	Kwasi Benneh '00	Managing Director - Fixed Income Division, Morgan Stanley
	Richard Bi '06	Private Equity Investor, The Blackstone Group
	Darys Estrella '92	Consultant and Speaker, Independent
	Tom Fogarty '92	Investment Analyst, Ballast Asset Management
	Michelle Foreman '15	Assistant Vice President, Merrill Lynch
	Jesse Graff '15	Corporate Development and Strategic Finance Associate, Compass
	Michael Graff P'09, '15	Managing Director, Warburg Pincus, LLC
	George Putnam S'75	Managing Partner, New Generation Advisors, LLC
<b>Government/ Public Service</b>	Alexandra Lowe-Server '14	Legislative Assistant, United States Senate, Office of Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
	Carolee "Carol" Belkin Walker '79	Deputy Director, Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State
<b>Health/Medicine</b>	Charmaine Chan '93	Designated Institutional Official and Osteopathic Recognition Program Director, Nazareth Hospital
	Arthur Seiji Hayashi '91	Director of Medicine, The Human Diagnosis Project
	Lauren Herlihy '06	Licensed Psychologist, Hospital for Special Care
	Emilie Koepke Gibbs, PA '99	Physician Assistant, Newtown Center Pediatrics
	Janel L'Official '03	Physician, Northeast Medical Group, Yale New Haven Health
	Nick Page '15	Research Consultant, The Lewin Group
	Lauren (Stein) Shiman '10	Neighborhood Health Evaluator, Center for Health Equity, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

*Career Cluster Index continues*

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Mentor</i>	<i>Position Title and Employer</i>
<b>International Affairs/ Global Careers</b>	Jeremy Arthur '10	Policy Advisor, U.K. Mission to the U.N.
	Fardeen Chowdhury '13	International Economist, Overseas Private Investment Corporation
	Laura Kennedy '73	Ambassador (ret), Foreign Policy 4 America
	Nicholas Marmet '10	MBA Candidate, Cornell University, SC Johnson Graduate School of Management
	Marcia Ocomy '82	Advisor/Consultant, Independent Advisory Services
	Thomas Szymanski '09	International Relations Officer, United States Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs
<b>Law/Legal Services</b>	Shari Leventhal '85	Special Counsel, Sullivan & Cromwell
	Ezra Roth '10	Litigation Support Manager, Herbert Smith Freehills LLP
	Ned Schodek '97	Partner, Shearman & Sterling LLP
	Pedro Sepulveda '14	Immigration Paralegal, New York Legal Assistance Group
	Deborah Steinberg '14	Equal Justice Works Fellow, Health Law Advocates
	Jason Wu '07	Staff Attorney, The Legal Aid Society
	<b>Non-Profit/ Social Justice</b>	Nyah Berg '15
Jenna Kronenberg '13		Engagement Associate, Physicians for Reproductive Health
Christine Robinson '79		Senior Advisor/Senior Consultant, Ford Foundation
Spencer Tilger '14		Public Affairs Manager, Immigration Equality

*Career Cluster Index continues*

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Mentor</i>	<i>Position Title and Employer</i>
<b>Non-Profit/ Social Justice (cont.)</b>	Pamela Vogel '12	Research Fellow, Media Matters for America
	Maria Paula Zapata '13	Associate Director of Education Programs, Conexión Américas
<b>Scientific Research</b>	Tré Artis '15	Graduate Student, Harvard Medical School and Boston Children's Hospital
	Donnele Daley '06	Surgical Oncology Fellow, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
	Lauren Klein '05	Analytical Chemist, Air Liquide Advanced Materials
	Luc Peterson '06	Physicist and Group Leader, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
	Allan Powe S'91	Health Care Writer and Editor, Think Deep Consulting
<b>Technology</b>	Alison Abreu-Garcia '08	Senior Developer, Linked by Air
	Gard Little '83	Research Vice President, IDC
	Dennis Slade '91	Manager, Software Engineering, Scholastic
	Erik Snow '12	Systems Engineer, Takeda Oncology
	Nina Vyedin '11	Senior Engineering Manager, Microsoft
	Matthew Williams '91	Data Scientist / Startup Founder, WD[creative analytics]
<b>Writing/ Publishing</b>	Charles Kim '92	Publisher, Six Foot
	Gabriella Mongelli '16	Editorial Assistant, Penguin Random House
	Matthew Ortile '14	Managing Editor, Catapult, Black Balloon Publishing
	Irene Wielawski '73	Health Care Writer and Editor, Independent





# **Mentors**

## **Bios and Advice**

## Nancy Abraham '87

Executive Vice President,  
Documentary and Family Programming, HBO  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: History



Nancy Abraham is Executive Vice President of Documentary and Family Programming for HBO. She is responsible for the development and production of HBO Documentary Films and Family programs, and has worked on over 100 documentaries during her tenure, many of which have garnered

awards, including the Primetime Emmy, News and Documentary Emmy, George Foster Peabody Award, Alfred I. DuPont Award, and Academy Award. Prior to joining HBO's documentary division in 1995 and becoming Vice President of Documentary Programming in 1998, Abraham was Director of Film Acquisition, acquiring programming for HBO's international channels. She also spent three years in Budapest as Director of Programming for HBO Hungary, HBO's first international venture, and previously worked at Bravo cable network in acquisition and production capacities. Abraham served for 10 years as a board member of Restless Development, a youth-led international development organization; is on the board of the Independent Feature Project (IFP) in New York; and serves on the Advisory Board for Witness.

### Advice to Students

You never know where something may lead you. Many careers are not a straight path. Mine certainly wasn't! Take opportunities and learn from them, even if what you learn is that you don't want to pursue that path any further. Everything is grist for the mill, and it's as much about the people you meet along the way as it is about the knowledge you gain. Be open to unexpected and off-beat possibilities, but always remember to course-correct if you feel you need to navigate back to what you really want.

## Alison Abreu-Garcia '08

Senior Developer, Linked by Air  
Brooklyn, New York

Major at Vassar: Computer Science

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/alisonag/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/alisonag/)



Alison Abreu-Garcia is a full-stack developer, interested in the intersection of technology, art, and education. She currently works as the Senior Developer at Linked by Air, a design and technology agency that works with museums, universities, and publications. Prior to that, she worked at

the Whitney Museum of American Art as their lead developer for five years, and spent another five years freelancing for a range of clients, including the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Anita Borg Institute for Women and Technology, Alison Bechdel, and the Film Society at Lincoln Center. She has taught Creative Computing, an intro to JavaScript, at Parsons School of Design.

### Advice to Students

Use Vassar's liberal arts curriculum to your advantage; study other fields that can be applied to your primary major. Having an interdisciplinary perspective is incredibly valuable. Never stop learning, and always ask questions. Be honest when you don't have an answer, but be confident in yourself to seek it out. Be kind and genuine to everyone you meet. Be thoughtful in your communication, and proofread everything before you send it. Be open to new opportunities. Sometimes your dream job is the one you didn't know existed yet.

## Tushar Agarwal '14

**Project Management Senior Analyst,  
PricewaterhouseCoopers  
Columbia, South Carolina**

**Major at Vassar:** Neuroscience & Behavior

**Advanced Degree:** MBID, Biomedical Engineering,  
Georgia Tech

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/tuagarwal/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/tuagarwal/)



Tushar Agarwal is a Project Management Senior Analyst at PricewaterhouseCoopers, focusing on health industries. His work involves strategy and business development in new and existing technologies, products, services, and models for health-care provider and payer organizations, and

pharmaceutical and life science companies. Before PwC, he worked in a variety of professional capacities: Research Assistant and Postgraduate Associate at Yale University, Analyst at KP Ventures, Analyst at Propel Orthodontics, Consultant for Habitat for Humanity, Market Strategy Assessment Intern at Emory/Georgia Tech Translational Fund, Mentor Chair for Yale CBIT's Annual Healthcare Hackathon, and co-founder of Yale's Environmental Solutions Accelerator. Since 2017, Agarwal has also been involved in the creation of a nonprofit focused on bringing awareness to the social determinants of health for the homeless through photography, fashion, and a sense of community.

### **Advice to Students**

Always be a student. Career-wise, interest-wise, and in life. Make sure to make the most of your past experiences, build on them, and continue to learn as you move forward.

## Nikola Alexandre '14

**Restoration Fellow, Conservation International  
Washington, DC**

**Major at Vassar:** Environmental Studies

**Advanced Degree:** Master of Forestry, Ecological Forestry, Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies; MBA, Economic Development, Yale School of Management

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/nikola-alexandre-848a5353/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/nikola-alexandre-848a5353/)



Nikola is the Restoration Fellow at Conservation International (CI), where he is working to scale up the restoration of the earth's degraded ecosystems by building strategic inter-organizational partnerships and supporting environmental managers working on the ground. At CI, Nikola's work ranges

from the technical (developing best-practice guiding documents on how to effectively restore ecological functions in ecosystems from tropical forests to dry rangelands) to the programmatic (building a restoration working group to oversee the development of tools and methods that support CI's field staff). He combines the strong ecological science base Vassar gave him with skill sets in applied forestry and program management he developed while pursuing his graduate education. Nikola is also an avid social justice worker, community builder, and an unrelenting advocate for LGBTQ and racial equity. He is also an afrofuturist and a firm believer in the need to take an active role in disrupting the status quo to build a better world.

### **Advice to Students**

Build up expertise in an area, but make sure it's something you're passionate about. Try to put aside the incessant whispers of people telling you what you should do, and trust yourself enough to follow those passions that make you want to show all the way up in life. Remember, eventually you're going to have to do something for eight hours a day every day for decades, and you'll enjoy it far more if you're doing something you care about. Learn a little bit about a lot (enough to ask smart questions), and learn a lot about a little bit. Your community doesn't need another technocrat; it needs informed dreamers and empaths who can understand the world through a thousand lenses.

P.S. Skip those intro courses.

## Corinne Alfeld '92

Research Analyst, National Center for Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, DC

**Major at Vassar:** Psychology

**Advanced Degree:** MA, Developmental Psychology, George Washington University;

PhD, Educational Psychology, University of Michigan

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/corinne-alfeld](https://www.linkedin.com/in/corinne-alfeld)



Corinne Alfeld is a Program Officer at the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the research arm of the U.S. Department of Education. She oversees grants to education researchers who are focused on improving education systems across the U.S. Prior to this position, she conducted her own

research in both academic and nonprofit settings. She has a deep commitment to finding and promoting the types of education opportunities that support students—particularly those who face challenges due to their backgrounds or circumstances—to form and achieve meaningful education and career goals. Her specialty area is career and technical education (CTE), which can be a way for all high school students (regardless of career path) to explore options and learn skills through programs of study that lead to postsecondary education and, eventually, result in valuable career credentials. She created and promoted the CTE topic area at IES and just launched a CTE research network whose mission is to increase the number of rigorous impact evaluations of CTE programs to inform policy and practice.

### Advice to Students

My top piece of advice is to read all of the VC mentors' advice (including from previous years) because they are all insightful and helpful! In addition, seek out information and advice from people who are already working in fields that you are potentially interested in. Prior to choosing my own career path, I did "information interviews" with individuals whose jobs I might like to have someday. Not only did they inform me what the job was like, but they led me to many connections that I have kept since then. And don't be afraid to change jobs if you feel your skills are not being used or valued; keep looking for the right fit that capitalizes on your skills/interests and challenges you to grow!

## Jeremy Arthur '10

Policy Adviser, United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations  
New York, New York

**Major at Vassar:** Psychology

**Advanced Degree:** MPP, University of Oxford

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/jeremy-arthur-profile/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jeremy-arthur-profile/)



Jeremy represents the UK Mission at the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). He has a particular focus on financing for sustainable development, where he liaises with member states and international stakeholders such as the OECD, World Bank, IMF, and Asian Development Bank. He

also leads on science, technology, and innovation at the UN, where he writes and negotiates resolutions that promote technology investments in developing countries. Prior to the Mission, Jeremy worked as a risk-management consultant for Ernst & Young and Struensee & Co. At Struensee, he focused on public-sector improvement with special attention to organizational change. This provided him the opportunity to observe and engage governments in China, Denmark, Singapore, and the UAE.

### Advice to Students

Whether it's auditing a class, taking an internship, joining a club, or even reading a book you've had your eye on, experience as much as possible. It's only through experience that we discover what motivates us and brings us satisfaction. And don't worry about figuring out "what you want to do for the rest of your life"—it's just as helpful (and more realistic, frankly) figuring out what you don't like and crossing those off your list!

## Mario Arthur-Bentil '10

Data Scientist/Senior Consultant, Deloitte  
Washington, DC

Major at Vassar: Economics

Advanced Degree: MBA, Johns Hopkins

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/marioarthurbentil](https://www.linkedin.com/in/marioarthurbentil)



Mario is Data Scientist and Senior Consultant at Deloitte, currently working for government clients in the Human Capital Division. His work involves using analytics to give insight on workforce problems such as retention, recruitment, and staff planning. After graduating from Vassar, Mario worked as

a research assistant in the Federal Reserve Board. Some of his research included American household economics and mobile banking trends. After the Federal Reserve, Mario was a consultant at EY, where he helped with audit readiness for the U.S. Army's big assets such as their helicopters and missile launchers. He then decided that he wanted to be more involved in data analytics, so he left his job at EY to enroll in a three-month data science program at General Assembly, where he learned how to use Python to do machine learning, prior to accepting his current position.

### Advice to Students

Be vocal about what you want, and don't feel intimidated to reach out to those who have access to that. Regardless of what job you're in, make the time for professional development (online courses, workshops, etc.) and track your growth.

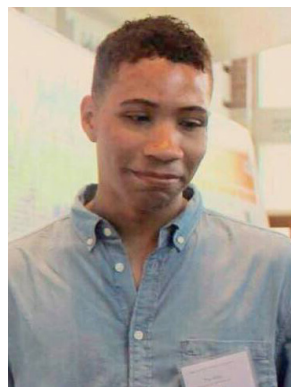
## Tré Artis '15

Graduate Student, Harvard Medical School and  
Boston Children's Hospital  
Boston, Massachusetts

Major at Vassar: Biology

Advanced Degree: PhD, Biology and Biomedical Sciences,  
Harvard University

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/treartis](https://www.linkedin.com/in/treartis)



Tré Artis is a molecular biologist and currently a PhD graduate student at Harvard Medical School in the Biological and Biomedical Sciences program. His research is being carried out at Boston Children's Hospital and focuses on elucidating epigenetic mechanisms underlying blood-cell development

and disease, with specific interest in blood stem cells and therapeutics. Tré is a recipient of the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, and currently a director of a high school science and medical outreach program. Prior to graduate school, Tré completed a competitive two-year postbaccalaureate fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania, where he researched the molecular and physiological effects of prenatal exposure to plasticizers such as BPA and DEHP. His passion for biology started at Vassar and developed through experiences such as working in labs, in the Greenhouse, and on the Farm/Eco Preserve. Additionally while at Vassar, he was Captain of the Varsity Fencing team, an ALANA Center mentor, and involved in House Team. Tré's career mission is to diversify science and encourage more minority students to pursue careers in STEM.

### Advice to Students

Mentorship is a crucial factor to success at any stage of your career. Try to identify and cultivate relationships with faculty who can serve as thoughtful, caring, and invested mentors to you (they may not be in your department). Your mentor can help guide you, but also serve to support and advocate for you. Lastly, keep in contact with mentors when you change institutions, because they care and will always be invested in your success.

## Nana T. Baffour-Awuah '14

Strategist, Consumer Dynamics  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Psychology

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/ntbaffourawuah/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/ntbaffourawuah/)



Nana T. Baffour-Awuah is a Strategist with Consumer Dynamics, a brand strategy and innovation consultancy in SoHo, New York. He works on projects at the intersection of creativity and strategy, helping to unearth insights that translate into marketing and communications strategies or products

that drive business for clients such as Colgate, Keurig, iRobot, and Weight Watchers. When he's not working, he's either reading himself into a Wikipedia rabbit hole, chasing some new horizon, or spinning words into essays, articles, and blogs. As far as word spinning goes, you can find some of his thinking on *Brand Quarterly*, *Huffington Post*, *New African* magazine, *BuzzFeed*, Vassar's alumnae/i website, or his newest passion project, "Göldwit," an Instagram-blog where he celebrates stories about Africa that he finds fascinating. (Curious? @goldwit.africa.) Nana currently serves on the Board of Directors of the AAVC, a singularly gratifying and humbling opportunity to stay connected to Vassar.

### Advice to Students

Trust in the journey, and try to appreciate and enjoy it as much as you can.

The most consistent advice I've heard from older, much wiser people is: Worry less; don't sweat the small stuff; enjoy life more. Relax. It's going to be okay.

It's not always the easiest advice to take, so I'll add: Do your best, and be yourself in the most excellent way you know how. Then let it go. And forgive yourself when you fall.

## Carolee "Carol" Belkin Walker '79

Deputy Director, Office of Website Management,  
Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State  
Washington, DC

Major at Vassar: Economics

Advanced Degree: MLA, Johns Hopkins University

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/carolee-belkin-walker-31a13712](https://www.linkedin.com/in/carolee-belkin-walker-31a13712)



Carolee Belkin Walker is a career professional at the U.S. Department of State. Currently, Ms. Walker manages the State Department's flagship website, State.gov, which serves millions of web visitors each year and is a critical platform for the Department's public affairs mission. Walker's

team of writer/editors and web-publishing specialists develops web materials across the full range of foreign policy topics that communicate and amplify U.S. foreign policy positions, goals, and initiatives. Previously, Ms. Walker served as the Abduction Branch Chief for Europe and Africa in the Office of Children's Issues and the Deputy Division Chief in the Department's Office of American Citizens Services with chief responsibility for countries in the Near East and South and Central Asia. Ms. Walker has served on numerous crisis task forces, including the Haiti and Japan earthquake crisis task forces and the Egypt and Libya unrest task forces, and served a brief consular assignment at the U.S. Embassy in Kingston, Jamaica. Her memoir, *Getting My Bounce Back*, was published in spring 2018.

### Advice to Students

It's not possible to overestimate the value of developing and leveraging skills that cross professions and vocations—especially communication skills like writing and public speaking. Also, cultivating a good work ethic, such as showing up on time and giving every job 100 percent of your effort and attention—regardless of whether you feel the position is beneath you—will have a huge impact on your ability to network and achieve upward mobility in your career. No matter how much knowledge and skill you possess, at some point you have to show up and do the work. That's also a great way to learn.

## Kwasi Benneh '00

Managing Director, Morgan Stanley  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Physics

Advanced Degree: MBA, Stanford Graduate School of Business



Kwasi Benneh is a Managing Director in the Fixed Income Division of Morgan Stanley. Kwasi joined the firm in 2005 in the commercial real estate lending group based in New York.

He currently runs all large loan originations and private loan distribu-

tion in the commercial real estate lending platform, with previous roles in origination and distribution of private market debt. Morgan Stanley provides approximately \$20 billion annually in financing, which is either retained on the firm's investment portfolio or is securitized in the capital markets.

His day-to-day responsibilities include managing teams that analyze real estate credit risk and also meeting with prospective Morgan Stanley clients.

Previously, Kwasi worked in the Investment Banking Division of Citigroup as an Analyst in the Telecommunications M&A Group, helping advise institutional clients on mergers and acquisitions transactions in the telecommunications industry.

Kwasi earned a bachelor's degree from Vassar College in Physics and an MBA from the Stanford Graduate School of Business in 2005.

### Advice to Students

Never too early to start networking. Job opportunities are getting more competitive, so the earlier you start in your college years, the better.

## Nyah Berg '15

Education Equity Organizer, ERASE Racism  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: English and Educational Studies

Advanced Degree: MA, Education Policy, Teachers College, Columbia University

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/nyah-berg-189642112](https://www.linkedin.com/in/nyah-berg-189642112)



Nyah Berg is the Education Equity Organizer at the nonprofit organization ERASE Racism. The organization strives to achieve greater racial and socioeconomic equity for Long Island schools and communities. Ms. Berg works on policy advocacy and research efforts for her organization and

has spearheaded their Student Voices Campaign program.

She holds a Master of Arts from Teachers College, Columbia University in education policy and social analysis with a specialization in education law. Her graduate education equips her with a depth of education-policy knowledge as well as research, policy-analysis, and evaluation skills. With her experience and her passion for education equity for all students, Ms. Berg continues to create comfortable spaces for uncomfortable conversations that advance the mission of eliminating segregation in public school education on Long Island. She also works to create programs, workshops, and other activities for students' voices to be heard by educators and policy makers on issues that matter most to them.

### Advice to Students

"Just because something works, doesn't mean it can't be improved" (quote from Shuri, *Black Panther*).

I often find in several fields people lack innovation because they fail to see a broken system as traditionally defined. There is always room for improvement in our professions, and our education doesn't stop after college. In striving to be our best, we have to challenge ourselves to search for ways to improve continuously.

## Richard Bi '06

Principal, Blackstone  
New York, New York

**Major at Vassar:** Physics

**Advanced Degree:** MEM, Dartmouth College;  
MBA, Harvard Business School

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/richardbi](https://www.linkedin.com/in/richardbi)



After a brief stint as an R&D Engineer at IBM, Richard spent his entire career in finance and investment management, and is currently a Principal in the Private Equity Group at the Blackstone Group, a New York-based investment firm. Prior to Blackstone, Richard was a Vice President at FFL

Partners and an Associate at Hellman & Friedman, two San Francisco-based private equity firms, and also previously worked in investment banking and distressed-debt investing. Richard has evaluated and executed investments across numerous industries and has served as board member or board observer for portfolio companies in enterprise software, fintech, health care, education, and industrial technology. In addition to a BA from Vassar, Richard also received a BE and MEM from Dartmouth College and an MBA from Harvard Business School.

### **Advice to Students**

Always be humble.

Be willing to take risks and deal with uncertainty, but maintain a long-term perspective on your career.

With each job/opportunity, especially early in your career, focus on acquiring and enhancing your skills above all else.

While “follow your passion” is a good advice, it doesn’t always come easy; be ready to put real thought and hard work into developing your passion over time.

In the long run, relationships matter more than intelligence. Take a genuine (not utilitarian) approach to networking, and treat everyone you meet with respect and sincerity.

## Shamar Bibbins '95

Senior Program Officer, The Kresge Foundation  
Detroit, Michigan

**Major at Vassar:** Science, Technology, and Society

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/shamarbibbins/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/shamarbibbins/)



Shamar Bibbins serves as Senior Program Officer for Environment at The Kresge Foundation. Shamar’s engagement in environmental issues spans over 20 years. In her current role, Shamar manages a portfolio of grants that support community-based nonprofit organizations seeking to influence local

and regional climate resilience planning, policy development, and implementation while reflecting the priorities and needs of low-income people. She also plays a lead role managing Kresge’s national initiative at the intersection of climate change, public health, and equity. Prior to Kresge, Shamar served as Director of National Partnerships for Green For All, a national nonprofit dedicated to building an inclusive green economy strong enough to lift people out of poverty. At Vassar, Shamar majored in Science, Technology, and Society. She received distinction on her senior thesis, “Race, Class, and Environmental Justice.” She took her environmental work internationally under the auspices of a Fulbright Fellowship to Japan, where she conducted field research on the social and environmental implications of Japan’s Minamata disaster.

### **Advice to Students**

Use your time at Vassar to try out a lot of different things. This will help deepen your understanding of what you truly enjoy and what you are good at. The demands and pressure of college are real, and at the same time, it is one of the rare times in your life when you actually have time to explore. Take advantage of field work, internships, leadership opportunities, etc. During my senior year while writing my thesis, I decided to step out of my comfort zone and interned for the sports department with the Poughkeepsie Journal. It allowed me to strengthen my writing skills and spoke to my love for sports. Grow comfortable doing what you love and enjoy, and the money will follow.



## Charmaine Branch '14

Curatorial Fellow, The Museum of Modern Art and The Studio Museum in Harlem  
Brooklyn, New York

**Major at Vassar:** Art History

**Advanced Degree:** Masters in Modern Art: Critical and Curatorial Studies

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/charmaine-branch](https://www.linkedin.com/in/charmaine-branch)



Charmaine Branch is a Joint Curatorial Fellow with the Studio Museum in Harlem and the Museum of Modern Art, where she has worked on multiple projects, including exhibition planning and permanent collection management. In May of 2018, she completed a master's in the Modern Art: Critical and

Curatorial Studies program at Columbia University, where she focused on modern and contemporary art of the African diaspora in the Americas. She has also held the position of Russ Berrie Fellow and Assistant to the Director at the Wallach Art Gallery, where she curated the site-specific installation *It is Here, It is Now, I Am* by artist Leslie Jiménez. Upon graduating from Vassar College in 2014, the Art History Department awarded Charmaine the Weitzel Barber Art Travel Prize to conduct research in Mexico and Peru. She also received a 2015 Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In the future, Charmaine plans to advance her art historical research in a PhD program and to continue her curatorial career.

### Advice to Students

It is easy to get caught up in the competitive nature of many careers, especially when you are emerging in your field. I believe it is important to remain genuine in your demeanor and approach to work as you pursue your professional goals. The connections you make with your peers are as important as those you make with your superiors, because the people working alongside you in entry-level positions will be your colleagues as you move forward in your career.

## Deborah Brand '96

High School Principal, James I. O'Neill High School  
Highland Falls, New York

**Major at Vassar:** English

**Advanced Degree:** MA, Educational Administration and Supervision, Rutgers University

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/debbie-brand-a2118349/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/debbie-brand-a2118349/)



Debbie Brand has been an educator for the past 22 years, filling many different roles in private and public schools throughout the country. She has worked as High School Principal, Assistant Principal, English Department Chair, English teacher, Girls Varsity Basketball Coach, and club advisor in schools from New Hampshire and Louisiana to New Jersey and New York.

As an English teacher, Ms. Brand taught diverse high school-level classes and students. During her 10 years as an administrator, she has led myriad initiatives, including but not limited to developing STEM programs, formulating plans for a capital project, creating Writing Centers, chairing professional development committees, acting as the Middle States Coordinator, overseeing curriculum development, facilitating transitional programs for new students, implementing 21st-century technologies in the classroom, and coordinating community-outreach programs. Her present work near West Point Military Academy has afforded her the opportunity to work with military families and officials and to coordinate with State Ed in developing guides through the Interstate Military Compact for families impacted by relocation.

### Advice to Students

Details matter in everything you do—whether you are networking or getting dressed for your first day of work or going on a date, you will often distinguish yourself by being attentive to the little things. Putting forth extra energy toward a project or making sure your cover letter is polished or being more attentive during a conversation can be the difference in determining the paths you get to pursue. Your life will not turn out exactly as you plan it to, and that can be a really good thing. Taking heed of the seemingly insignificant gestures and moments, though, can help ensure that those unexpected twists and turns take you where you want to go.

## Charmaine Chan '93

**Designated Institutional Official and Osteopathic Recognition Program Director, Nazareth Hospital Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

**Major at Vassar:** Anthropology-Geography

**Advanced Degree:** Doctor of Osteopathy  
Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/charmaine-chan-7819b8a5/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/charmaine-chan-7819b8a5/)



Trained as a family physician, Dr. Charmaine Chan took the long way to medicine. She worked abroad in Indonesia with the Maguire Fellowship after graduation, then did her post-bac premed while working with Medicaid in Massachusetts, where she learned the importance of quality improvement

in medicine. She trained at St. Joseph Medical Center in Reading, PA, then went on to fulfill her National Health Service Corps Scholarship obligations on the Navajo reservation in Shiprock, New Mexico. Subsequently, she worked as a civilian in the military for one year prior to getting called back to work with students at her medical school, the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. She currently works at Nazareth Hospital in NE Philadelphia, where she is the DIO (Designated Institutional Official) who oversees all the residencies at the hospital, as well as the Osteopathic Recognition Program Director. For her clinical duties, she sees patients in the short-term rehab unit in the hospital. She loves engaging with the community and establishing bridges, especially working with underserved populations.

### **Advice to Students**

Open your heart to do different things that interest you. Take classes with professors who are known to be fantastic, even if you are not majoring in that specialty. Reach out to people whom you think are interesting. You never know what you will learn, or what doors will open for you. You may find, like I did, that the skills and perspectives and connections that you acquire on your life journey will end up benefiting you on your career path, even if they seem irrelevant at the time. And *never* let anybody tell you that you cannot do something. If they say that to you, take it as a challenge to prove them wrong!

## Fardeen Chowdhury '13

**International Economist, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC)  
Washington, DC**

**Major at Vassar:** Economics

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/fardeenchowdhury](https://www.linkedin.com/in/fardeenchowdhury)



Fardeen is an International Economist working for OPIC, the U.S. Government's Development Finance Institution. He has been in federal service since his graduation, first starting his career at the U.S. Department of the Treasury as a financial analyst, where he worked with the

newly created Financial Stability Oversight Council created by the Dodd-Frank Act. He moved to OPIC in pursuit of his interests in finance and international development. His primary role is leading the Strategic Evaluations initiative, which focuses on the development impact of OPIC's portfolio, conducting deep-dive reviews of projects that are of interest to the agency. His daily responsibilities change throughout the fiscal year as the demands of both the White House and Congress change, but range from authoring policy reports to conducting on-site analyses of projects OPIC has invested in. In his free time he does fund-raising and consulting for a nonprofit he began in DC that focuses on reducing food insecurity.

### **Advice to Students**

Try to meet as many people as possible as early as you can. During my freshman year, I was dead set on pursuing medicine. Two years later, I was trying to figure out how I could graduate with enough credits in economics for my degree to be competitive for internships in finance. I wouldn't have made the change or known more about fields outside of what I was set on without networking constantly and meeting as many people as I could. The world is full of opportunities and career paths that aren't easily seen; ask around, and really find something you love.

## Heather Cohn '03

**Development & Community Engagement Director/  
Producing Director, En Garde Arts/Flux Theatre  
Ensemble**

**New York, New York**

**Major at Vassar:** Latin American Studies

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/heather-cohn-theatre/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/heather-cohn-theatre/)



Heather Cohn is a theater producer, director, and fund-raiser. She is a co-founder and the Producing Director of Flux Theatre Ensemble, an off-off-Broadway company founded in 2006. With Flux, Heather has produced 27 full productions, including 16 world premieres. She is the

director of nine Flux productions, with playwrights including August Schulenburg, Erin Browne, Kristen Palmer, Kevin R. Free, and Johnna Adams. She served as Assistant Director to Austin Pendleton on Johnna Adams's *Gidion's Knot*. She has also directed with companies including Rattlestick, Lark Play Development Center, Cherry Lane, the EstroGenius Festival, and Planet Connections. As a fund-raising professional, Heather currently serves as Development Director and Community Engagement Coordinator for En Garde Arts, an off-Broadway site-specific company, and prior to that worked in development for Epic Theatre Ensemble, New York Theatre Workshop, The Pearl Theatre Company, and Theatre Communications Group. She's an alum of the Women's Project Theater Producers LAB and a board member of the League of Professional Theatre Women.

### **Advice to Students**

Find the people and colleagues you trust, like, and want to spend time with! The rest falls into place. Be wary of unpaid internships, as they are often just trying to get free labor. Make sure you ask for what you need because if you don't ask, you definitely won't get it.

## Donnele Daley '06

**Surgical Oncology Fellow,  
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center  
New York, New York**

**Major at Vassar:** Physics and Mathematics

**Advanced Degree:** BE, Engineering, Dartmouth College;  
MD, Medicine, Penn State College of Medicine



Donnele Daley is from Kingston, Jamaica, and attended Vassar as an international student. While at Vassar, Donnele participated in the dual-degree program in Engineering at Dartmouth College, and upon graduating from Vassar she matriculated at Dartmouth, earning a bachelor's in

Engineering. She went on to attend medical school at the Penn State College of Medicine, after which she completed her residency in general surgery at the New York University School of Medicine. During her time at NYU, Donnele also completed a two-year research fellowship in gastrointestinal oncology. Her research focused on studying the tumor microenvironment in pancreatic cancer to identify new targets for treating the disease. She is currently a Surgical Oncology Fellow at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in NY. Her clinical interests include the surgical management of gastrointestinal and hepatobiliary cancers, and as a surgeon scientist, she continues to conduct research in tumor immunology.

### **Advice to Students**

Ultimately, you must enjoy what you do. Find an area that excites you, that you are passionate about, and pursue it. The journey you take to pursue this passion may be challenging and may require a lot of dedication; however, it will be worth it if it truly brings you joy.

## Kyle DeAngelis '15

Teacher, New York City Department of Education/  
P.S. 153 Jonathan D. Hyatt Elementary School  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Psychology



Kyle DeAngelis '15 is the fourth-grade mathematics teacher at P.S. 154 Jonathan D. Hyatt, a New York City elementary school located in the Bronx. Previously, he worked as a lead pre-kindergarten teacher at the Sugar Hill Museum Preschool in Manhattan, an initiative of Broadway Housing

Communities, a community-based nonprofit. He has also interned at the American Federation of Teachers in Washington, DC, where he worked on projects relating to a variety of issues in education.

During his time at Vassar, DeAngelis worked as a teaching assistant at the Wimpfheimer Nursery School and participated in a number of Education Department programs, including VAST, VELLOP, and Exploring Science at Vassar Farm. In 2014, he was selected for the Ford Scholars Program, through which he collaborated with Professor Christopher Bjork to develop a new senior seminar on contemporary education reform. That same year, he was a recipient of the National Science Foundation's Noyce Teacher Scholarship and was the 2015 recipient of Vassar's Edith Glicksman Neisser Prize for excellence in child study and child development.

### Advice to Students

If you're an aspiring educator, take full advantage of the many tutoring and pre-service teaching opportunities that will allow you to work with students while you're still at Vassar. You'll gain valuable experience, learn more about the profession, and most importantly, begin developing your teaching craft. Additionally, cultivate good relationships with your professors. Good teachers are made, not born, and it is through the mentorship of the outstanding educators in our own lives that we grow into the teachers we want to be.

## Alejandro Dinsmore '15

Chief Executive Officer, eevo  
Brooklyn, New York

Major at Vassar: Neuroscience and Behavior

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/alejandrodinsmore/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/alejandrodinsmore/)



Alejandro is the CEO of eevo, a virtual reality software company that has raised over \$2M in venture funding to build tools that enable companies to scalably create and publish interactive VR experiences. eevo was co-founded by several other Vassar graduates and we signed our first incorporation documents

at the Retreat. Prior to eevo Alejandro has worked in enterprise b2b software for the last 5 years and he started his first company when he was a sophomore. Before getting involved with startups, Alejandro studied Neuroscience and analytical philosophy at Vassar College. He was also on the Rugby team for 2 years.

### Advice to Students

Really spend time thinking about what city you want to work in and what kinds of things make you happy. Don't get too fixated on just the job itself, as your environment, quality of life and your peers will often impact whether you will be successful at the job. Also, early 20s are a great time to try different things out and experience as much as possible and take risks. It is much harder to find free time as you get older.

## Gretchen Eng '12

Freelance Consultant and Instructor, iO Theater,  
Roosevelt University  
Chicago, Illinois

**Major at Vassar:** Music

**Advanced Degree:** MPP, Education Policy,  
Vanderbilt University

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/gretchen-eng/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/gretchen-eng/)



Shortly after graduating in 2012, Gretchen learned the ins and outs of the arts nonprofit world by serving an operational role in the Music Administration Department of Lyric Opera of Chicago (where she interned between her sophomore and junior years at Vassar).

Overseeing everything

from international orchestral and vocal auditions to off-site concerts and union artist payroll, her day job in the world of classical music afforded her the opportunity to nurture her love of comedic performance by night. Since July 2017, she has been a freelance artist and instructor, teaching and performing improv comedy all over the world while also serving as a management consultant in many and varied business sectors. She also works as a voice-over artist, serves as adjunct faculty at Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts, has directed a small children's choir for the past six years, and is overseeing the development of youth and teen programming at the famed iO Chicago Theater, where she performs and teaches on a near-nightly basis.

### Advice to Students

Have a liberal arts outlook on the "real world"; try out whatever piques your interest in the years following graduation, but use a day job to vet what is really important to you. If a hobby becomes something you're deeply passionate about, there are too many hours in the day not to dedicate yourself to it, in addition to paying your rent. Make your own opportunities, hustle, and apply the empathy and critical thinking you learn at Vassar to every pursuit. Don't sell yourself and your talents short; think of your abilities as a commodity, not simply as a means to generate artistic (or social) clout. Be patient and kind to yourself, and amplify the voices of those less privileged than you whenever possible.

## Deborah Macfarlan Enright '82

President & CEO, The Macfarlan Group  
Nashville, Tennessee

**Major at Vassar:** Political Science

**Advanced Degree:** MBA, Stephen Ross School of Business;  
Ed.D., Education Policy, Vanderbilt University

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/deborah-macfarlan-enright/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/deborah-macfarlan-enright/)



Skilled in strategic planning, investor development, board development, community engagement, communication and outreach, donor stewardship, leadership development, event management, and programming, Deborah Macfarlan Enright enjoys a successful track record of collaborating with

social-impact entrepreneurs and organizations.

In addition, she serves as a lead of a social-impact incubator in the Nashville area, supporting start-ups from inception to launch. Deb is an acclaimed communicator and coach adept at uncovering potential in individuals and groups, strengthening their abilities to increase their impact on the community. Her current clients here and abroad serve in areas including: workforce development for formerly incarcerated individuals, immigrants and refugees, children's literacy, youth development, children with special needs, school administrative leadership, teacher development, and human trafficking. In addition to service on local Middle Tennessee boards, Deb currently serves on the AAVC Board as the Vice President for Strategic Planning. Before all of this (and children), Deb fronted a jazz trio touring the East Coast and Caribbean. At Vassar, she was a Raymond Avenue Rambler and a member of the renamed Matthew's Minstrels.

### Advice to Students

Be open to discovering the new, the unique, and the different.

Listen to the stories of friends, families, and complete strangers.

Travel to understand.

Seek out ideas, people, movements, and organizations who will improve the world.

Take on the challenge of continuous learning throughout your life.

Have fun!

## Pamela Epstein '99

**Assistant Director, Community Arts Development,  
NYC Department of Cultural Affairs  
New York, New York**

**Major at Vassar:** American Culture

**Advanced Degree:** PhD, History, Rutgers University

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/pamela-epstein-a5920813](https://www.linkedin.com/in/pamela-epstein-a5920813)



Pamela Epstein is the Assistant Director in the Community Arts Development unit at the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA), where she has worked for over seven years. She first came to DCLA as the recipient of the American Council of Learned Society's Public

Fellows Program, a two-year position funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Prior to this fellowship, she taught American history for seven years at Rutgers University-Newark and was the Deputy Director at Big Onion Walking Tours. Before receiving her PhD, she began her career at the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, followed by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. In her current role, Pamela helps run a grant program, Building Community Capacity, that provides the space and tools for arts and cultural stakeholders in low-income neighborhoods to develop sustainable networks, deepen understanding of existing assets, and coordinate actions that use arts and culture to address issues affecting their communities. She also co-chairs the agency's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Working Group.

### **Advice to Students**

Take the time while you're here to think about what you want to accomplish, not what you want to do. Knowing what you'd like to achieve in your life will help you determine the best way for you to use your own skills, talents, and enthusiasm to get there, because there are always many routes to reaching a goal. Most jobs aren't fun all day every day, and there will be ups and downs throughout your career, but if you have a purpose, you'll be better able to weather even the toughest times.

## Darys Estrella '92

**Author, Speaker, Darys Estrella  
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic**

**Major at Vassar:** Hispanic Studies

**Advanced Degree:** MBA, University of Michigan

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/darys-estrella/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/darys-estrella/)



Ms. Estrella is an international speaker, author, and expert in capital markets and sustainability. She received her BA from Vassar College and her MBA from the University of Michigan. At 27, she was Vice President at Deltec Asset Management in the Emerging Markets division, covering

Latin America. From 2002 to 2007, she was VP at Goldman Sachs & Co. in the Fixed Income, Currencies, and Commodities division. In 2007, having worked on Wall Street for 15 years, she returned home to the Dominican Republic to be the CEO of the Dominican Republic Stock Exchange, being the first woman in Latin America to occupy such a position. From 2012 to 2017, she was VP of Corporate Sustainability for INICIA, an asset management firm in the DR. Since September 2017 she has been on her own, traveling the world giving conferences.

In 2008, she was selected as a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum, being the only Dominican woman with this distinction. She was a Vassar Trustee from 2013 to 2017, and is a mother of three, a marathoner, and a biker.

### **Advice to Students**

Find your passion. Be yourself. Never lose your authenticity. Take risks. You don't know what you are capable of until you try. Stay humble. Never, ever sell your soul. Integrity is a must.

## Alexandra Evans '13

Production Crew/Actor, Gibney Dance/Freelance  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Drama

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/al-evans/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/al-evans/)



Alexandra has always been passionate about theater, working both onstage and off since high school. While at Vassar, she did work study through the Drama Department as a Theatrical Journeyman. That experience allowed her to start working after graduation as a technician and board operator

for several theater companies in NYC, including The Movement Theatre Company and the National Black Theatre. She now works part time at Gibney Dance in downtown Manhattan as a member of the production crew, assisting in hanging lights and running the light and sound boards for their dance performances, while also pursuing her career as an actor.

### Advice to Students

Don't procrastinate! If you know what you want to do, start making choices that will allow you to pursue your goals now. It's never too early (or too late) to follow your dreams. Be willing to invest time and money into your career. Always be kind and respectful toward your co-workers; it's a small world!

## Kira Fisher '10

Brand Strategist, Twitter  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Political Science

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/kirafisher/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/kirafisher/)



Kira translated an obsession with all-things-Internet into an always-interesting career. She has seven-plus years of digital advertising experience on both the social platform (Tumblr, Twitter) and publisher (BBC, Gawker Media) side. Currently at Twitter, she serves as a creative consultant for Fortune

500 companies, educating and inspiring them as they create immersive advertising activations on the platform. Fifty percent of her work varies, from campaign-activation ideas to educating partners on Twitter Content Best Practices, while the other 50 percent is just keeping up with whatever is resonating with the masses. She works with a wide variety of clients, ranging from Dining, CPG, Media and Entertainment as well as Financial verticals. She also started a meme on Tumblr, Sad Desk Lunch, and almost got a blog-to-book deal. (Almost). Outside of the office, she travels to outer NYC boroughs for dumplings.

### Advice to Students

Build real and authentic relationships with everyone—from your higher-ups to even the receptionists and junior-level employees. Your career is a long game, and you never know where anyone will end up and how they can connect you in the future. Kindness is key. And don't eat lunch at your desk—take a break and get a breath of fresh air.

## Michelle Foreman '15

Assistant Vice President, Merrill Lynch  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Economics

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/michelle-foreman-61472482/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/michelle-foreman-61472482/)



Michelle is an Assistant Vice President on the Managed Solutions team for Merrill Lynch. In her role, Michelle is responsible for the High Net Worth channel of the Merrill Lynch Investment Advisory Program, which provides clients with a streamlined approach to investment solutions in

order to meet specific priorities and needs through a goals-based investing model. Michelle leads and implements initiatives to strengthen the \$40 billion strategic relationship between Merrill Lynch and U.S. Trust by finding program and platform solutions to drive revenue flows in the High Net Worth space. Michelle is also the co-founder and Programming Chair for the New Jersey chapter of the Inter-Generational Employee Network (IGEN NJ), a network designed to promote generational diversity as a necessary component of an inclusive corporate environment by raising visibility, driving awareness, and encouraging opportunities for employees at Bank of America.

### Advice to Students

Learn how to speak and write clearly and concisely so that you are able to effectively communicate with peers of varying levels of seniority. In my experience, it seems that the majority of junior professionals lack the ability to articulate their observations and solutions in a structured, concise, and persuasive manner; their opinions are often discounted or ignored because of this fact alone. When someone delivers an opinion with confidence and conviction, they come across as knowledgeable and intelligent—someone others want to work for and emulate. It is easy to learn hard-skills, especially in a classroom setting, but soft-skills are more difficult to develop and one of the first things people notice.

## Wendyliza Gonzalez '93

Bilingual Speech-Language Pathologist, New York  
City Department of Education  
Bronx, New York

Major at Vassar: Psychology

Advanced Degree: MS, Speech-Language Pathology,  
New York Medical College

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/wendygslp/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/wendygslp/)



Wendyliza Gonzalez, M.S. CCC-SLP, TSSLD-BE, is an ASHA-certified, New York City-based, bilingual speech-language pathologist with seven years' experience serving the pediatric population in public schools, private practice, and acute-care inpatient facilities.

Gonzalez has extensive knowledge of feeding

therapies and specializes in assessment and curriculum-aligned treatment approaches for bilingual children with speech and language delays, learning disabilities, and medically complex diagnoses. She currently provides group and individual therapy to children in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade in the South Bronx. In addition, she works collaboratively with other disciplines to manage school-wide Response to Intervention (RtI) and literacy support initiatives, including an after-school literacy program for English as a New Language (ENL) students. Gonzalez draws from her past work experiences in health care and social services to inform her practice, and currently holds a position on the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's (ASHA) Multicultural Issues Board. She is a graduate of the Teacher's College, Columbia University Bilingual Extension Institute, as well as ASHA's Leadership Development Program.

### Advice to Students

Take the time to nurture your interests. It goes without saying that you should take care to make those connections with alums and potential mentors in your field of interest. And yes, of course, definitely take all those classes that will make you a great candidate on paper and a formidable presence within your scope. But above all, don't forget to spend time exploring what brings you happiness. You will often find that those experiences connect you to your industry, guide you to new opportunities, and, ultimately, make you good at what you do. Work hard, stay up-to-date, be kind, build good relationships, and show the work to back yourself up.



## Jesse Graff '15

Corporate Development and Strategic Finance  
Associate, Compass  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Mathematics

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/jesse-graff-475a18154/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jesse-graff-475a18154/)



Jesse Graff works as a Corporate Development and Strategic Finance Associate at the SoftBank-backed real estate technology company Compass, where he focuses on mergers and acquisitions, organic expansion, and investor relations. At Compass, Jesse has helped close

seven transactions to date, and was an integral part of the Series F fund-raise that brought Compass' valuation to \$4.4 billion. Prior to working at Compass, Jesse spent two-and-a-half years working at Deutsche Bank as an Investment Banking Analyst in the Global Consumer Group. During his time at Deutsche Bank, Jesse helped various public and private companies raise capital through both the equity and debt markets, and also provided advisory services for multiple acquisition and divestiture opportunities.

### Advice to Students

Take every interview you can get—even if it is for a job you don't like. You can practice an interview with friends and family and teachers all you want, but there is nothing like the real thing. Every interview you take is another step toward perfecting your "bag of interview answers." By the time you do land the interview for your ideal job, you can draw on your past experiences and absolutely nail it.

## Michael Graff P'09,'15

Managing Director, Warburg Pincus  
New York, New York

Major in College: Economics

Advanced Degree: MS, Finance, MIT



Michael Graff has been a Managing Director at Warburg Pincus, a private equity firm, since 2003. He leads the firm's aerospace investing group. He is Chairman of Extant Aerospace, Wencor Aerospace, and Consolidated Precision Products and is a Director of TransDigm and Allied Universal

Security. Prior to joining Warburg Pincus, Graff was President of Bombardier Aerospace in Montreal, and prior to Bombardier, he was a partner at McKinsey & Company in New York and London. In addition, Graff is a member of the board of The Flea Theater in New York and is Chairman of the Board of USA Water Polo.

### Advice to Students

Find something you love to do and try to make a living doing it.

Never use more words than necessary to get your points across.

## Anne Green '93

**Principal & Managing Director,  
G&S Business Communications  
Richmond Hill, New York**

**Major at Vassar:** English

**Advanced Degree:** MA, 19th Century American Literature, New York University

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/anne-e-green/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/anne-e-green/)



Anne Green brings more than 25 years of experience in the public relations field to her role as Principal and Managing Director of G&S Business Communications. She most recently served as President and CEO of CooperKatz & Company, Inc., which was acquired by G&S in 2018. She

has led strategic communications programs for clients across multiple industry sectors. As MD of the G&S New York office, Anne is responsible for strategic direction, people, growth, and operations. She appreciates the opportunity to stay hands on with clients, and provides strategic leadership for the integrated account teams supporting such clients as Coldwell Banker Real Estate and its parent company, Realogy; Fiserv; and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. She was named a PRWeek “40 Under 40” in 2010. She was included in the PRWeek *Global Power Book* in 2015, 2016, and 2017, and on the PR News list of “Top Women in PR” in 2015. Anne serves on the boards of the PR Council, the Alumnae/i Association of Vassar College (AAVC), and LifeWay Network ([www.lifewaynetwork.org](http://www.lifewaynetwork.org)).

### **Advice to Students**

The changing nature of our world requires the ability to think dynamically across sectors and boundaries. Now more than ever, we need people with intellectual curiosity who can quickly absorb new concepts and subject matters and make vital big-picture connections. This is exactly what a Vassar College education cultivates. While you may not always fit perfectly into a single career box, be intentional in building the narrative of how your liberal arts background will bring the kind of perspective, curiosity, insight, and energy that employers of all types are seeking. And remember—in a job as in life, the satisfaction you receive is often linked to the engagement and enthusiasm you invest.

## Arthur Seiji Hayashi '91

**Director of Medicine, The Human Diagnosis Project  
Washington, DC**

**Major at Vassar:** Studio Art

**Advanced Degree:** MD, Medicine, Albert Einstein College of Medicine

MPH, Family and Community Health, Harvard School of Public Health

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/seijihayashi/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/seijihayashi/)



Dr. Hayashi is the Director of Medicine at the Human Diagnosis Project, a worldwide initiative using machine learning and collective intelligence to improve health-care access, quality, and affordability. He is also a board-certified family physician at a community health center in Washington,

DC. Dr. Hayashi is an experienced leader in primary care, quality improvement, and health policy at the local and national levels. Prior to Human Dx, he was Executive Vice President for Transformation and Innovation at Unity Health Care, which serves 100,000 medically vulnerable patients in DC. He was also Chief Medical Officer for the Bureau of Primary Health Care, a \$5 billion federal program that cares for 26 million individuals across the U.S. Dr. Hayashi has spent a decade in academia teaching and conducting research on clinical medicine, public health, and health policy at Georgetown University and at George Washington University. He has served on numerous committees and boards, including the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Committee on Housing, Health, and Homelessness.

### **Advice to Students**

Surround yourself with people you love and people who love you. The grounding and support will enable you to grow and thrive in anything you do. Find what you love to do and look for opportunities to do more of it. When you love what you do, you will spend more time doing it; only then can you become great at it. When you do what you love well, and with the people you love, you're going to be happy. Isn't that our goal in life?

## Lauren Herlihy '06

Licensed Psychologist, Hospital for Special Care  
New Britain, Connecticut

**Major at Vassar:** Neuroscience and Behavior

**Advanced Degree:** PhD, Clinical Psychology,  
University of Connecticut

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/lauren-herlihy-ph-d/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/lauren-herlihy-ph-d/)



Lauren Herlihy discovered her passion for child psychology while studying in Costa Rica for her Junior Year Abroad at Vassar. As a neuroscience and behavior major, interest in clinical care and rigorous research led her to a research assistantship at the Child Study Center at Yale doing fMRI and

intervention research in autism. She went on to complete her PhD in clinical psychology at the University of Connecticut. Lauren's research focused on reducing racial/ethnic and socioeconomic barriers to the diagnosis and treatment of autism. Returning to the Yale Child Study Center for internship and post-doc, she pursued additional training at the Inpatient Psychiatric Unit for Children and Pediatric ED. Her extensive experience with autism and passion for working with families and children in severe psychiatric crises led to her hiring at the Hospital for Special Care as Clinical Psychologist for the first and only autism-specific inpatient psychiatric unit for children in Connecticut. Lauren's commitment to social justice, family empowerment, and evidence-based practice is apparent in all areas of her life.

### **Advice to Students**

Never underestimate the power of your liberal arts education, especially in science/health-care fields. To paraphrase a brilliant Vassar professor of mine, Kate Susman, from my Senior Neurobiology Seminar: the science you are taught today may be incorrect in a year; so seek to become excellent critical thinkers and discerning consumers of research. Critical thinking and analysis, in addition to being held to high standards for writing, will set you apart from your peers and is a truly unique attribute of the Vassar education. Always remember the passions that led you to where you are, whether that's helping others, or engaging in scientific discovery, or confronting injustice.

## Jonathan Hong '16

Senior Associate, BDO USA, LLP  
New York, New York

**Major at Vassar:** Urban Studies

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/jonathan-hong-2112a072/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jonathan-hong-2112a072/)



Jonathan Hong is a Senior Associate with BDO USA, LLP's New York practice. As a tax consultant focusing on multinational entities, he is responsible for conducting market research and delivering economic analyses, substantiating the profitability of his clients. He has worked with clients in numerous

industries, including financial services, consumer products, automotive parts, and software development. During his time at BDO, Hong has performed intellectual property valuations worth \$133 million, structured real estate acquisitions of \$196 million, and created cost allocation models segmented by business lines. Furthermore, he is responsible for the pipeline and backlog projections for the Northeast and Atlantic regions of the group. Hong also serves on the nonprofit board of Urban Pathways, an affordable-housing provider in New York City. He leads the pro-bono consulting arm of the board, currently working with the COO to develop an automatic dashboard to give predictive analytics supporting the organization's growth.

### **Advice to Students**

Every time you join a new company, engage a new client, or learn a new skill, invest the time up front to learn the ins and outs of the team or project, and have a reason for everything that you do. There will always be a learning curve, and the more time you invest up front, the easier it will be to navigate inevitable issues that arise. Leverage your Vassar experience to push boundaries. Be curious and take the time to question assumptions and norms while always paying attention to detail. Anything worth doing is worth doing well.

## Evan Joseph '92

Photographer, Evan Joseph Studios  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Studio Art, English

Advanced Degree: MPS, Interactive Telecommunications,  
New York University (NYU)

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/evanjoseph](https://www.linkedin.com/in/evanjoseph)



Evan Joseph is an aerial, architectural, and interior photographer based in New York. He creates iconic images for the world's top tourism, hospitality, and real estate brands from the Empire State Building to the World Trade Center, from the Ritz Carlton to Aman Resorts. Evan's work is regularly featured

in *Architectural Digest*, *Elle Decor*, and *Town & Country*, and four books of his photography have been published; the most recent, *New York from Above*, was called "luscious eye candy" by the *New York Times*.

He has captured the premier projects of today's leading architects as well as the private homes of celebrities, crafting visual stories that reveal the distinctive character and romance of each space. Evan is known for his obsessive commitment to light and composition as well as his innovative technical precision in both photography and post-production. Evan's fine-art prints have been shown in the Venice Biennale for Architecture, and he has had four solo gallery exhibitions in NYC.

### Advice to Students

To craft a creative career, always be on the lookout for every possible opportunity to show what you can do, and then do the job professionally—and then go beyond the expected. It's not always possible to aim in a straight line, and you don't even have to know what your goals are, but say "yes" to everything that's even close to your dream, and keep saying "yes" to every project that gets you a little closer and closer each time. You may end up in an unexpected, but familiar, place even better than you could have imagined.

## Steven Kauderer '85

Consultant, McKinsey and Company  
Englewood, New Jersey

Major at Vassar: American Culture

Advanced Degree: MBA, Yale School of Management

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/steven-kauderer-87374b92/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/steven-kauderer-87374b92/)



Steven is a partner in the New York office of McKinsey & Company, focused on financial services and insurance. He works with a wide range of companies to help them achieve profitable growth, with a particular emphasis on advanced analytics and digital disruption, as well as customer experience

and employee engagement. He consults in areas of strategy, organization, and operations. Steven works with both large global organizations as well as fintech start-ups across North America, Europe, and Asia. Prior to joining McKinsey, he was a partner at Bain & Company. Steven started his career out of Vassar working as an insurance underwriter at Chubb Insurance Company.

### Advice to Students

My primary advice is to explore many different fields, industries, and types of jobs. Try to meet different people, including leveraging the Vassar alumni network. Speak with people and sit down with them to get a sense of what they do, and a sense of the culture of their organizations.

Ultimately, it is important to find your spark. Discover what excites you and motivates you to make an impact. Look for places and opportunities that give you energy. Find something that enables you to be challenged to keep learning and growing, where there is a strong focus on personal and professional growth, and where mentorship and apprenticeship can help you to reach your full potential.

## Laura Kennedy '73

**Ambassador (retired), Foreign Policy 4 America  
Washington, DC**

**Major at Vassar:** Asian Studies

**Advanced Degree:** MA International Relations,  
American University

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/laura-kennedy-a4325a13/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/laura-kennedy-a4325a13/)



Ambassador (retired) Laura Kennedy spent almost four decades in the U.S. diplomatic service. Kennedy focused on the former Soviet Union; conventional, nuclear, and biological arms control; and nuclear nonproliferation. Her assignments included Ambassador to Turkmenistan,

Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament (Geneva), Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, and Deputy Commandant of the National War College. Since she left the Foreign Service in 2015, Kennedy was elected to the American Academy of Diplomacy and joined the boards of the World Affairs Council-DC, Foreign Policy 4 America, the Arms Control Association, and the Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation. She has lectured at a number of academic and government institutions. Since leaving public service, Kennedy has actively supported several political campaigns. She benefited from her own mentors and has tried to pass along what she has learned to others.

### **Advice to Students**

Public Diplomacy is one of five career tracks in the U.S. Foreign Service. But constructing a public narrative is important in any field, so I try to always think about what and how to present to others what I am doing, have done, or may do. What one does in a diplomatic career is often private, so deciding what to share is key. Communication skills are vital in any profession but must be tailored to your audience (bullet points and PowerPoint for the military, more free-flowing and speculative for a diplomat, how to translate nuclear nonproliferation for high school students). Take advantage of the immediacy and reach of Twitter without wincing later over that late-night tweet. Experiment with different media and voices.

## Charles Kim '92

**Publisher, Six Foot  
New York, New York**

**Major at Vassar:** French and Asian Studies

**Advanced Degree:** MA, French Literature,  
New York University (NYU)

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/charles-kim-atb5046/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/charles-kim-atb5046/)



Charles Kim '92 is the publisher of Six Foot, a multimedia entertainment company based in Houston and Los Angeles, where he oversees a line of art books, novels and graphic novels, limited editions, and more. His favorite responsibility is acquiring and publishing a line of children's books focusing

on diversity and the authentic representation of women, people of color, the LGBTQIA community, and the environment. He is the former Associate Publisher of The Museum of Modern Art in New York, where he oversaw a list of 30 books per year. At MoMA, he began the only children's book line published by an art museum in the United States; these books have since been published in over 80 editions in 13 languages. He previously served for nine years as the Editor-in-Chief and Director of Publications at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, where he established the museum's first independent publishing imprint and founded *Design Journal* magazine. At Vassar, Charles was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to France.

### **Advice to Students**

This is a time of immense self-reflection, change, and upheaval within many arts and cultural institutions. They are trying to become more multicultural and diverse, inside and out; to engage more with underserved communities; and to make themselves look more like the increasingly heterogeneous populations they serve. There are wonderfully exciting, fulfilling, creative, challenging, and financially sustainable jobs available within these institutions. Take the opportunities presented to you to touch people's lives and be a part of the change.

## Lauren Klein '05

Analytical Chemist, Air Liquide Advanced Materials  
Branchburg, New Jersey

Major at Vassar: Chemistry

Advanced Degree: PhD, Chemistry, Rutgers University

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/lauren-klein-juneau-abaaaa41/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/lauren-klein-juneau-abaaaa41/)



After graduating from Vassar in 2005, Lauren moved on to a materials-science focus in graduate school, growing germanium nanowires by a chemical vapor deposition (CVD) process for use in various semiconductor devices. She trained primarily as a microscopist, focusing in scanning electron

microscopy and transmission electron microscopy. After graduate school, she worked as an analytical chemist for contract laboratories Evans Analytical Group and Alliance Technologies before returning to the semiconductor industry with Air Liquide Advanced Materials. ALAM specializes in developing new gas and liquid phase precursor molecules for CVD and ALD processes within semiconductor fabs. The analytical group is responsible for screening and elucidation of new molecules, as well as method development for quality control as processes are scaled up and move to high-volume manufacturing.

### Advice to Students

It is okay if things don't go exactly as you thought they would. Be open to taking different paths, and recognize that not everyone you meet will have taken the same journey to get to the same place.

## Emilie Koepke Gibbs, PA '99

Physician Assistant,  
Newtown Center Pediatrics  
Newtown, Connecticut

Major at Vassar: German Studies

Advanced Degree: Masters in Physician Assistant Studies



Emilie Gibbs has been a physician assistant (PA) for over 15 years. Her parents, who ran their own primary-care practice, encouraged her to follow this path of medicine, as it allows for a balance between a personal life and a demanding career. After graduating from Vassar, she worked for two

years as a medical assistant to gain the health-care experience required for PA school applications. In 2003 she joined her parents' practice, where she provided comprehensive medical care to children and adults. This included diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic illnesses, physical examinations, vaccinations, prescribing medications, and counseling for medical and behavioral conditions. In 2014, Ms. Gibbs accepted a position as a medical provider at a school-based health center. Here she provided care to students at a local high school, which allowed them to receive treatment without missing classes. Unfortunately, due to funding issues, the program was cut. Currently, she is working at a small pediatric office in Newtown, CT. Along with general pediatrics, the practice focuses on care for children with special needs.

### Advice to Students

"Listening to your heart, finding out who you are, is not simple. It takes time for the chatter to quiet down. In the silence of 'not doing' we begin to know what we feel. If we listen and hear what is being offered, then anything in life can be our guide. Listen." —Author Unknown

I had this quote up on my wall at Vassar, and it is still one of my favorites. When life gets hectic or overwhelming, remember to slow down and reflect on what will bring joy, balance, and purpose to your life. Then find a way to reach this goal while staying true to yourself.

## Jenna Kronenberg '13

Engagement Associate,  
Physicians for Reproductive Health  
New York, New York

**Major at Vassar:** Independent

**Advanced Degree:** MS, Nonprofit Management,  
The New School

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/jennakronenberg](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jennakronenberg)



Jenna Kronenberg has been involved in the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors since graduating from Vassar, building on her college internship and extracurricular experience with social justice-based organizations. After working at the JCC Manhattan, she enrolled in the New School's

nonprofit management master's program, focusing her studies on philanthropy and health care. She gained an even greater understanding of this field through experience at the Reproductive Health Access Project and the Overbrook Foundation, from both the funder and fund-raiser perspectives. Prior to the completion of her degree, she was hired at Physicians for Reproductive Health, which brings health-care professionals' distinctive voice and expertise to the debate on reproductive health care. Now, as the Junior Associate for Engagement, Jenna works to advance Physicians' strategic fund-raising and constituent development priorities. Jenna is a member of Nu Lambda Mu, and while at Vassar was involved with CARES, Davison House Team, and VRDT.

### Advice to Students

Sometimes it can feel like there's pressure to find the "right" career immediately after college, but that's very rarely going to happen. Don't feel discouraged if you don't know what to do, or if you don't land your dream job right away. You already have an advantage because you're entering the work field with a liberal arts degree—analytical thinking and good reading and writing skills will take you a long way. The trick is figuring out how to translate your skills into different fields, so you'll be able to figure out what you like and dislike. Ask lots of questions, reach out to alumni and other mentors, and don't forget your own, unique voice. You're not alone in this process.

## Erika Lenore Kurt '02

President & CEO, Small World Initiative  
New Haven, Connecticut

**Major at Vassar:** International Studies

**Advanced Degree:** LLB, Law, McGill University;  
BCL, Law, McGill University

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/erikakurt](https://www.linkedin.com/in/erikakurt)



Erika is President and CEO of the Small World Initiative (SWI), an innovative discovery-based education program initiated at Yale University to inspire students in the sciences while addressing one of the most pressing global health challenges of our time: antibiotic resistance. In this role, she leads the program

on its mission to retain students in the sciences, increase scientific literacy, improve behaviors related to antibiotic resistance, and provide a unique "crowdsourcing" drug discovery model. Through the program, students hunt for new antibiotics in soil. Since most antibiotics come from soil bacteria, this approach harnesses the efforts of thousands of student researchers in the quest to find new candidates to replenish the antibiotic pipeline. Over the past five years, the program has rapidly grown to include more than 300 schools in 15 countries.

In addition to leading SWI, Erika is a Fellow at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, focused on their scientific education efforts. Previously, Erika was a Strategist for LGT Venture Philanthropy, dedicated to improving health outcomes in emerging markets.

### Advice to Students

"Failure should be our teacher, not our undertaker ... Failure is something we can avoid only by saying nothing, doing nothing, and being nothing."

—Denis Waitley

It is so important to dare to fail and not be intimidated by failure early on. Learning to embrace failure as your teacher and as part of the process will lead you to success. Along the way, don't forget to celebrate the small successes and enjoy the journey. Remember that if you get stuck, simply the passage of time and persistence will open up new possibilities.

## Janel L'Official '03

Physician, Northeast Medical Group,  
Yale New Haven Health  
Rye Brook, New York

**Major at Vassar:** Psychology

**Advanced Degree:** MD, Albany Medical College



Dr. L'Official has been practicing family medicine for over six years. She has spent most of her career caring for underprivileged families in underserved communities and is passionate about ensuring access to care for all. She completed her internship at Harbor-UCLA, where she cared mostly for

undocumented patients and their families, and then went on to finish her residency at Montefiore Medical Center, working in the underserved communities of the Bronx. She was one of eight physicians in her class to graduate from the Family and Social Medicine program, which encourages physicians to be social advocates for their patients. She cares for patients ranging from newborns to seniors, and her scope of practice spans everything from acute care and chronic illness to wellness visits. She received the National Health Scholar Award for her dedication to providing care to disadvantaged populations. She has helped implement various initiatives and quality standards to improve the health of patients. Currently, she is working to build a family practice in Rye Brook, NY.

### **Advice to Students**

Take advantage of the various courses and experiences offered to you by Vassar. Your college years are the time to explore your interests and move beyond what is comfortable. Use those experiences to challenge yourself and grow. There is no one “right” path to any career choice, but your knowledge and experiences add unique value to whatever path it is you take.

## Geraldine Laybourne '69

Entrepreneur, Katapult  
New York, New York

**Major at Vassar:** Art History

**Advanced Degree:** MS, Elementary Education,  
University of Pennsylvania

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/geraldine-laybourne-608a1426/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/geraldine-laybourne-608a1426/)



Geraldine Laybourne is a serial media entrepreneur. Gerry was a cable-programming pioneer in the 1980s and '90s: she led the team that created Nickelodeon and Nick at Nite. She also served as President of Disney/ABC Cable Networks from 1996-1998, where she ran cable programming for the Walt Disney

Company and its ABC subsidiary. She founded Oxygen Media, a 24-hour cable-television network for young women, where she served as Chairman and CEO until she sold it to NBC Universal in 2007. She is currently Chairman and co-founder of Katapult Studio, a technology start-up company for the creative generation. She serves on the board at 9 Story, Betaworks Studios, and Vital Voices, and she is on the Board of Trustees at Vassar College. She and her husband, Kit—a teacher, producer, and author—have two children and four grandchildren.

### **Advice to Students**

In a world where we honestly do not know how to think about the future of work, the very best thing you have going for you is that you were trained to think and question. That will serve you well. When you are trying to find your path, don't forget to question how, what, and why the field you are in does things. Especially in media, disruptive ideas that challenge conventional thinking often win.



## Kevin Terry Lee '14

Green Business Associate, San Francisco  
Department of the Environment  
San Francisco, California

Major at Vassar: Biology

Advanced Degree: MEM, Business & Sustainability,  
Yale University

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/kevinterrylee/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/kevinterrylee/)



As the Green Business Associate at SF Environment, Kevin Terry Lee works with businesses throughout San Francisco to lower their overall environmental impact while helping them increase cost savings. He helps businesses focus on energy efficiency, water conservation, toxics

reduction, and zero-waste efforts. Furthermore, Lee assists companies in realizing business opportunities and strategies that can come from sustainability programming. Lee earned a Master of Environmental Management (MEM) from Yale University's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Using his background in environmental and science research, and experience in strategic communications, he aims to drive greater engagement in climate and sustainability initiatives through collaborative learning and partnerships. At Vassar, he studied biology and geography (environmental land-use planning and analysis). Lee was named an Emerging Leader by GreenBiz (2017), a JUST Scholar by the Living Future Institute (2017), and a Net Impact Scholar (2016) by Net Impact. Lee also sits on the advisory board of CommunityGrows, a San Francisco-based nonprofit focused on making healthy eating and community gardens accessible to youth in underserved neighborhoods.

### Advice to Students

Advice I wish I'd received as a Vassar sophomore:

1. Don't be on time—be early. That's how you make yourself memorable.
2. Create a LinkedIn profile now. Add all your friends and acquaintances.
3. Use a reliable planner/calendar to keep track of your to-do list.
4. Go to professors' office hours and ask questions.
5. Have hobbies. Cherish those late-night campus hangouts. Eat cider donuts from Adams. These all become great talking points for future networking conversations. They also keep you sane.
6. Vote.

## Patricia Lee-Hoffmann P'21

CEO Emeritus, Triage Consulting Group and  
CEO Flutter Eyewear, Triage Consulting Group and  
Flutter Eyewear  
San Francisco, California

Major in College: Business Administration

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/patti-lee-hoffmann-5a0b814/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/patti-lee-hoffmann-5a0b814/)



Patti is a serial entrepreneur with a successful track record of building companies that: (1) produce critically necessary and beautiful products that customers enjoy purchasing again and again; (2) have happy employees; and (3) benefit the communities in which they operate.

She cofounded two companies, Triage Consulting Group and Flutter Eyewear. Triage is a 700-person health-care firm that consults with hospitals nationwide. Flutter designs and manufactures a bespoke collection of reading glasses, and its flagship store is online.

For the last 15 years, Triage has been on the list of best companies to work for in America and was the first large company to be green-certified in San Francisco.

Patti is a Governor on the Board of the SF Symphony. In that capacity, she is responsible for bringing music education to all 96 public elementary schools and providing resources and mentorship to all 42 middle/high school bands and orchestras in the SF Unified School District. She also serves on the Leadership Council of Futures Without Violence.

Her career began as a CPA.

### Advice to Students

1. In all your communications, stand out by being your original self; don't use templates.
2. Research the companies at which you most want to work, and let them know at least three unique reasons why you want to work with them.
3. If you don't get an offer, follow up with the interviewer with whom you feel you had the most rapport, and ask for feedback.

## Shari Leventhal '85

Special Counsel, Sullivan & Cromwell  
Englewood, New Jersey

**Major at Vassar:** Political Science

**Advanced Degree:** JD, Georgetown University Law Center

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/shari-leventhal-93217ab](https://www.linkedin.com/in/shari-leventhal-93217ab)



Shari Leventhal is a member of Sullivan & Cromwell's Financial Services Group. She focuses her practice on regulatory enforcement matters and external and internal investigations. She has substantial investigative and trial experience in matters involving economic sanctions, financial

fraud, cross-border payments, cybersecurity, money laundering, and the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

Prior to joining S&C in 2016, Shari was the Deputy General Counsel and Senior Vice President responsible for the Enforcement, Litigation, and Investigations Division of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York's Legal Group. In that role, she represented the New York Fed in many complex litigation matters. Shari was involved in investigations relating to consumer protection, mortgage-backed securities, the FX market, LIBOR, and balance-sheet manipulation.

From 1992-1998, Shari served as an Assistant United States Attorney with the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York.

Shari regularly lectures to audiences from the American Banking Association, the U.S. Treasury Department, the Department of Defense, the Department of Justice, foreign central banks, and trade associations.

### Advice to Students

There are many ways to change the world—sometimes in big ways and sometimes small. If you follow your passions, you will find your way. Take advantage of your four years in this special place, and know that Vassar will prepare you to take risks and to succeed.

## Gard Little '83

Research VP, International Data Corporation  
Boston, Massachusetts

**Major at Vassar:** Cognitive Science

**Advanced Degree:** MBA, High Technology, Northeastern University

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/gard-little/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/gard-little/)



Gard Little is Research VP for International Data Corporation's Global Services Markets and Trends team, with programs that focus on business and IT consulting, systems integration, and product engineering professional services.

His core research on digital transformation includes analyzing customer demand and vendor offerings for building new business processes, organizations and systems using cloud, business analytics, enterprise mobility, and social business technologies. Gard's most current research includes an emphasis on emerging service opportunities related to the Internet of Things and cognitive systems. Previously, Gard worked as a business and IT consulting executive for over 20 years at PwC and its predecessor, Coopers & Lybrand. While at PwC, he coauthored *Information Leadership*, which described his work with CIOs and senior executives on creating teams to manage their information assets more strategically. Recently, he's been lucky enough to not only work for IDC in Paris, France, for a year, but also to make it back to the U.S. with increased responsibilities at the same firm.

### Advice to Students

Be very clear on the specific skills you want, or have, and make sure they match the opportunity at hand. Likewise, try to match with roles where your personality type will do best.

## Alexandra Lowe-Server '14

Legislative Assistant, United States Senate,  
Office of Senator Kirsten Gillibrand  
Washington, DC

**Major at Vassar:** Science, Technology, and Society  
**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/alexandra-low-server-02433668/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/alexandra-low-server-02433668/)



Alix Lowe-Server serves as a Legislative Assistant to U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY). She is the senator's lead advisor on judiciary and civil rights issues and health, education, and welfare policy. In this role, she develops policy proposals, drafts and negotiates legislation, secures stakeholder support, and

briefs and staffs the senator during speeches, Senate hearings, and other relevant events. Lowe-Server has worked in Senator Gillibrand's office since September 2014, where she has served in several legislative positions working on issues related to agriculture and nutrition, women, immigration, and the judiciary. Originally from Philadelphia, Lowe-Server moved to Washington, DC in the summer of 2014 after graduating from Vassar. During that summer, she interned for U.S. Senator Bob Casey, and as a student, held internships with Planned Parenthood, the American Red Cross, and the Philadelphia Mayor's Internship Program.

### **Advice to Students**

Don't feel like you need to be on a set path or take specific classes for a certain career, and don't be afraid to try a class or take an internship that doesn't totally fit within the parameters of what you think you want to do. Be curious and try out the things that interest you. In DC, where everyone was a political science major, it's great to meet someone who has a completely unexpected background. The beauty of Vassar and a liberal arts education is that you are developing your skill set as a critical thinker and writer—don't get bogged down in taking a pre-law or political science path if you're interested in math or theater.

## Joe Lozito '93

Managing Director, Accenture  
New York, New York

**Major at Vassar:** Computer Science  
**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/joelozito](https://www.linkedin.com/in/joelozito)



Joe is the Digital Delivery Lead for Accenture Digital in the Northeast Region, based out of New York City. In that role, Joe oversees the execution of all digital programs for Accenture Digital, ensuring that those programs are set up for quality delivery for Accenture and their clients.

Prior to Accenture, Joe spent 10 years at Publicis Groupe, first at Digitas, leading their North American Technology team, then as CTO of Rosetta, and finally as Operations Lead for the newly formed SapientRazorfish, creating a unified North American delivery capability that was responsible for all digital output at the agency.

Earlier in his career, Joe was the first Technology Director at J. Walter Thompson, helping to build the "digital@JWT" capability from its infancy in 1999.

Joe has over 20 years of Delivery and Operations experience, bringing software development to the digital marketing space at scale. Joe has watched the web grow from its early incarnations to a dominant business medium. He is fluent in most web languages, as well as a little Spanish and Italian.

### **Advice to Students**

Do what you can to do what you love.

Establish yourself; create your brand; create your leverage model.

Manage up and manage down.

Find the next you.

## Nicholas Marmet '10

MBA Candidate, Cornell University,  
SC Johnson Graduate School of Management  
Ithaca, New York

**Major at Vassar:** Russian Studies

**Advanced Degree:** MA, Russian Studies, European University at St. Petersburg (Maguire Fellowship); MBA, Cornell University, SC Johnson Graduate School of Management

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/nicholasmarmet/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/nicholasmarmet/)



Nicholas is a second-year MBA candidate at Cornell University's SC Johnson Graduate School of Management. Before attending business school, he pursued the passion for Russian studies that he first developed at Vassar. After graduating in 2010, Nicholas was awarded Vassar's Maguire Fellowship for Study

Abroad and earned a master's in Russian Studies at the European University at St. Petersburg. Nicholas then worked for Eurasia Foundation in Washington, DC, where he supported projects to foster the growth of small- and medium-sized enterprises in the former Soviet Union. He then worked at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, Russia, as a Special Advisor to the Vice Rector for International Affairs. At Cornell, Nicholas pivoted into CPG brand management. He worked at Danone this past summer and will be returning after graduation as an Associate Brand Manager in the company's yogurt business unit. Outside of work, Nicholas is a passionate ski mountaineer and competitive ultramarathoner.

### **Advice to Students**

Explore what you're most passionate about, and keep expanding the scope of your interests. See everything as an opportunity to learn and make meaningful connections with the people you work with.

## Alisa Martin '85

Vice President, Educational Operations,  
Tenement Museum  
New York, New York

**Major at Vassar:** Psychology

**Advanced Degree:** MA, Industrial/Organizational Psychology, New York University

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/alisammartin>



Alisa Martin, Vice President of Educational Operations at the Tenement Museum, is a Senior Arts and Cultural Administrator and Project Consultant with expertise working in organizations to align internal operations and product offerings with their strategic goals and branding efforts. Alisa

led Brand Management and Visitor Services at the Brooklyn Museum, and has served as an adjunct faculty member at Baruch College and The New School. Alisa has led cross-functional teams through change management, process improvement, and audience research initiatives. Her consulting clients include the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Lincoln Center Education, BAM Local Development Corporation, and Columbia University. Before shifting her focus to the arts, Alisa spent the early years of her professional life in marketing, service quality, and human resources at MetLife and American Express. She is a graduate of Vassar College and New York University.

### **Advice to Students**

Follow your curiosity, and practice going outside of your comfort zone. Grades aren't everything, but try to do as well as you can. Look for internships, campus jobs, and summer jobs that help you learn more about what you may want to do after you graduate. Use your connections to help open doors, but expect to do the work to keep the doors open. Stay in touch with favorite professors; they may end up being lifelong mentors and friends.

## Scott Mendelsohn '93

Actor, Freelance  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: English

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/scott-mendelsohn](https://www.linkedin.com/in/scott-mendelsohn)



Scott Mendelsohn is a theater actor in New York City. Recent roles include the killers (Mowbray, Welsh Captain, and Exton) in Shakespeare's *Richard II* at Walking the dog Theater; Captain Lemuel Gulliver in Thornton Wilder's *Youth* at the Michael Chekhov Studio;

Paul in Sondheim's *Company* at the Philipstown Depot Theatre; and the lead in *Jonah, a Liturgical Choreopoem*, based on the biblical story, written for West End Synagogue. Other roles include Amos Hart in *Chicago*, Ali Haim in *Oklahoma*, and Cliff in *Deathtrap*.

Scott has also had a parallel career in workforce development/career education, including five years of developing internships for high school students in a variety of career programs.

### Advice to Students

Face your fears, work with people who are better than you, ask for help, and fail often. It took me a long time to do this—I often looked for shortcuts or safer ways to pursue my interests. Once I began trusting myself to fail and recover, doors opened.

For artists, making money and making art are usually separate activities—even if you are making money in your field. The world is a much stranger and gentler place than I imagined when I graduated.

## Samantha Mignotte '09

Senior Consultant, Deloitte Consulting  
Washington, DC

Major at Vassar: Economics and Political Science

Advanced Degree: MPA, Development Studies,  
Princeton University

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/samantha-mignotte-a2a1b51a](https://www.linkedin.com/in/samantha-mignotte-a2a1b51a)



Samantha is a Senior Consultant at Deloitte's Public-Sector Consulting Practice, where she works with government agencies and multilateral donors on enterprise strategy, performance management, and program evaluation. Prior to Deloitte, Samantha worked with the World Bank's Independent

Evaluation Group, focused on poverty alleviation programs. She also served as a graduate intern for both the United Nations Bureau of Development Policy and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) East Africa Division. Immediately after graduating from Vassar, she served as a Research Associate for the Small Planet Institute. Samantha holds a master's degree in Public Affairs—Development Studies from Princeton University. At Vassar, she majored in economics and political science and was a Public Policy and International Affairs Fellow (PPIA).

### Advice to Students

When I was trying to figure out what to do after college, my biggest fear was that I would make one choice that would irreparably alter my future career. After a lot of panic and worry, I learned that it's normal to switch jobs, it's okay to change industries, and even top CEOs are still trying to figure out what comes next for their careers. All of that is to say, don't worry too much about finding the perfect role right away. Just choose a job in an industry you think is interesting, where you can grow and learn more about where you want to be.

## Victoria Mills '86

Managing Director, EDF+Business,  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Boston, Massachusetts

Major at Vassar: Italian

Advanced Degree: MA, International Affairs, European Studies and International Economics, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS)

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/victoria-mills-7310392/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/victoria-mills-7310392/)



Victoria has two decades of experience partnering with companies to achieve environmental results. She leads EDF's work with companies to align their public policy advocacy with their sustainability goals. Previously, she led EDF Climate Corps, an innovative fellowship program that has helped

hundreds of organizations cut costs and emissions by managing energy strategically. Since the program's launch in 2008, EDF Climate Corps fellows have identified \$1.6 billion in energy savings for public- and private-sector organizations in the United States and China. She has also led EDF's partnerships with companies in the consumer products, transportation, information technology and paper and packaging sectors.

Prior to joining Environmental Defense Fund, Victoria was Director for Europe in the Massachusetts Office of International Trade and Investment. She has also held management and business development positions in the environmental technology and software industries.

### Advice to Students

Think about your career - like the rest of your life - as a continuous process of discovery, challenge and accomplishment. The path will likely zigzag and take you to unexpected places.

When you're thinking about jobs, it's useful to ask yourself three questions. What skills do I want to apply, and what new skills do I want to learn? What substantive knowledge do I want to apply, and what new knowledge do I want to gain? And in what setting do I want to apply that knowledge (e.g., private sector, government or NGO, small or large)?

The most important thing is to find work that excites you, taps into your greatest gifts, and makes you feel useful and valued.

## Gabriella Mongelli '16

Editorial Assistant, Penguin Random House  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: English

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/gabriellamongelli/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/gabriellamongelli/)



Gabriella Mongelli is an Editorial Assistant at G.P. Putnam's Sons, an imprint of Penguin Random House. In addition to acquiring her own list of titles, she supports the Editor-in-Chief of Putnam and the President of the Putnam, Dutton, and Berkley imprints. In her role, she evaluates, acquires, and

edits books for publication, with a focus on literary fiction, upmarket commercial fiction, and narrative nonfiction. In addition, she acts as the in-house liaison between authors, production, design, and managing editorial departments, as well as sales, marketing, and publicity teams. At Putnam, she has worked with fellow Vassar alumna and New York Times bestseller Chloe Benjamin, bestseller Steven Rowley, cartoonist and essayist Cathy Guisewite, and the estates of Sue Grafton and Philip Kerr. She also edits novelists James L. Haley and Sharon Kay Penman. Prior to joining Putnam, she was an Editorial Assistant at Little, Brown & Company, focusing on serious nonfiction, biography, and literary fiction, and worked with critically and commercially acclaimed authors including bestsellers Beth Macy, Sam Kean, and Brad Stone, among others.

### Advice to Students

Be open to any opportunity that presents itself. Connections, both personal and professional, can be found in the unlikeliest of places, whether it be through professors and classmates or neighbors, internship partners, and friends of friends. It might be a student organization or a conversation in the dining hall that sparks a lifelong interest and leads to exciting new paths. Vassar is a great environment to discover new ways of thinking, so take advantage of the rich campus life to expand your network and feed your curiosity. If given the chance, take courses outside of your core interests, join new activities, and enjoy every moment of the experience.

## Andrea Negrete '15

Actor + Teaching Artist, AEA + Creative Arts Team  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Drama and English

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/andrea-negrete-2aaa9076/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/andrea-negrete-2aaa9076/)



Andrea Negrete is an actor/facilitator/collaborative creator from the border of Texas and Mexico. Recent credits include: *The Opportunities of Extinction* (Cherry Lane), *Tell Me A Story* (CBS), *Independent Study* (The Tank), and *Saints Go Marching* (Signature Theatre).

She's represented by

FSE. She's part of the Creative Arts Team at CUNY, where she's dedicated to developing the social/emotional literacy and critical-thinking skills of young people. She started an online platform called -ismo to highlight creators/activists of underrepresented communities and is their Arts/Multimedia Editor and Director of Social Media Relations/Marketing. After Vassar, she jumped into the NYC theater scene on an artist-hustle budget, thousands of miles away from her family, and with no connections to the industry. Despite all this, she has begun to build a career. She is enthusiastic about offering support to students from underrepresented communities. As someone in the intersection of multiple identities who had to navigate many of these institutional spaces without experience or support, she knows how confusing, lonely, and overwhelming it can be.

### Advice to Students

Don't be afraid to go after what you want, but be realistic about what it will entail. Check in with yourself often. Don't compare yourself to anyone. It is easy to fall into the trap of comparison in an education system that demands we all meet certain markers at roughly the same time. That all falls away after you graduate. Be gentle with yourself. Save your money. Be mindful of your privileges, and give back when you can. Jump in. Trust your gut. You'll be fine.

## Niya Nicholson '14

Director of Development & Chief of Staff,  
Jose Limon Dance Foundation and MOVE(NYC)  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Psychology, Africana Studies and  
Educational Studies

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/niya-nicholson-44a75073/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/niya-nicholson-44a75073/)



Niya Nicholson is dedicated to intersectional, equitable, and sustainable social justice work within the arts and cultural sector. For the past four years, she has served the arts field as a mission-driven fund-raiser with entities like Gibney and MOVE(NYC), and as a dance and social justice

advocate with Dance/NYC. With her skill set, Niya has provided freelance development services to national and international artists and emerging companies. Her commitment to arts advocacy proved impactful as Co-Chair for the 2017-18 Dance/NYC Junior Committee—founding its first Mentorship Program—and as an inaugural member of Dance/NYC's 2018-19 Symposium Programming Committee and its Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Harassment. Niya is honored to be a 2018-19 mentee with the Dance/USA Institute for Leadership Training, a highly competitive, nationwide leadership program. Niya is currently the Director of Development with the José Limón Dance Foundation and Chief of Staff of MOVE(NYC).

### Advice to Students

As your passions and interests become clearer and more streamlined over time, continue to be curious, and act on that curiosity with integrity and commitment. Cultivate relationships with a diversity of people, and take on as many learning opportunities as possible (e.g., internships, volunteering) to support your aspirations. As the late Maya Angelou said, "People will forget what you said; people will forget what you did; but people will never forget how you made them feel." Stay true to yourself and allow yourself to evolve. Don't be afraid to build your own table if a seat is not offered to you at an existing one!

## Marcia Occomy '82

Advisor/Consultant, Independent Advisory Services  
Chicago, Illinois

Major at Vassar: English Literature

Advanced Degree: MA, Public Policy,  
University of Chicago

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/marcia-occomy-10062628/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/marcia-occomy-10062628/)



Marcia Occomy has 20+ years of global development and strategy experience with Deloitte Consulting LLP and KPMG/BearingPoint Consulting as a Specialist Leader in the Strategy and Operations consulting area. As a trusted advisor to governments in transition, she has led various economic-growth

and governance projects focused on strengthening national government financial affairs and infrastructure. This involves building or rebuilding the Ministry of Finance, Central Bank, Tax Authority, and private-sector engagement and development. This work is important to ensure that the reconstruction and recovery needed for long-term stability is sustainable while preparing a country for foreign direct investment and economic growth. She has lived and worked extensively in the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe serving as a Chief of Party, Team Leader, and Senior Advisor on projects primarily financed by USAID. During her tenure at Deloitte Consulting, Ms. Occomy served on the leadership team for a USAID-funded global health systems project contributing to the development and implementation of integrated approaches to strengthening health systems.

### Advice to Students

Study abroad can change your life. The world is so interconnected that even students who do not envision international jobs will benefit from exposure to other cultures. In addition to studying and interning overseas, there are service opportunities (alternative spring break), paid options (Peace Corps), and openings closer to home (volunteering with refugees). Learn a second language.

## Matthew Ortile '14

Managing Editor, Catapult, Black Balloon Publishing  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Media Studies and English

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/matthewortile](https://www.linkedin.com/in/matthewortile)



Matthew is an editor and author. Currently, he's the managing editor of Catapult magazine. He edits and publishes essays, short stories, and columns from emerging and established writers, while acting as the editor-in-chief's deputy and leading the magazine team in New York.

Previously, he worked at *BuzzFeed* for four years, where he was the global publishing lead for *BuzzFeed International* and the founding editor of *Ortile*, growing the country readership to 1.3 million on social by the end of his tenure. As a writer, he's published essays for *BuzzFeed News*, *Out*, *Into*, *Details*, and *Self*, among others, and performed his work at the Asian American Writers' Workshop, the ACE Hotel, and the Bell House. He's writing a book called *The Groom Will Keep His Name*, a collection of essays on sex, power, and the model minority myth, forthcoming from Nation Books/Hachette.

### Advice to Students

Be kind! Be kind to your peers, your mentors and managers, your juniors and your reports. You never know where folks will end up and when you'll need a helping hand. Competition is fun, but solidarity is even better.



## Carol Ostrow '77 P'09, '15

Producing Director, The Flea Theater  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Drama

Advanced Degree: MFA, Yale School of Drama



Carol Ostrow is Producing Director of The Flea, the award-winning off-off-Broadway theater located in Tribeca. She was Producing Director of New York's Classic Stage Company as well as the founder and Producing Director of the Powerhouse Theater at Vassar, now

entering its 34th season. Ostrow has been an adjunct professor of theater at Vassar, Chatham College, and McGill University. She holds a BA from Vassar and an MFA from the Yale Drama School. She was elected to the Vassar College Board of Trustees in 2015, and is a member of the Board of Advisors to the Yale Drama School. For The Flea, Ostrow has produced 17 seasons of cutting-edge world-premiere productions and has been responsible for the sound fiscal management and strategic growth of the theater's \$1.8-million budget, programs, and initiatives, including the Bats, the emerging resident company of actors, now over 130 strong. In 2017, after a successful capital campaign, The Flea moved to a new home and opened a brand new \$25 million three-theater performing arts complex.

### Advice to Students

Follow your heart, but think with your head. There are a lot of options for your work life out there, but you have to know what you want in order to go for it. Remember that life is long, and careers take time to build. Sometimes it's not a straight shot. You cannot choose your boss, but if you find a good one, cling. Like a cherished teacher or coach, that person in charge can become a guide for life and a colleague, too. Developing relationships is as important as building your resume. Remember that your professors at Vassar are people, too, who can provide you with career advice. Don't be afraid to ask them about what they did to get where they are today.

## Nick Page '15

Research Consultant, The Lewin Group  
Washington, DC

Major at Vassar: Neuroscience and Behavior

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/nick-page](https://www.linkedin.com/in/nick-page)



Nick Page directly supports the National Director of Purchased Long Term Services and Supports for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). In this role, he writes policy and improves operations, coordinates with internal VA and external government and private stakeholders, and supports field staff

at the 150 VA Medical Centers nationwide, all in support of a \$2.5 billion budget. As a Research Consultant for The Lewin Group, Nick also helps provide data and policy analysis for VHA's Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care. At Vassar, Nick used the pre-med track as a base for his course selection, interested but not set on being a clinician. Learning about public health outside of class and with Vassar's Primary Care Progress late in college opened up the world of health policy and operations, which he continues to explore.

### Advice to Students

Find organizations or people who share or can grow your passions, and frequently engage with and take a genuine interest in them. You will enjoy the career development process greatly, and find that opportunities fall into your lap.

Regularly and honestly evaluate your career path regarding how work environment, scope of work, and lifestyle compare to your ideal combination at that time.

Keep a journal.

## Angelica Periera '14

Assistant Manager, International,  
Clean Beauty Collective  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Film Studies



Angelica Periera is the Assistant Manager for International Sales and Marketing at Clean Beauty Collective. Since graduating from Vassar, she has focused her career on consumer goods, working for companies with sustainable practices and corporate social responsibility in mind. Working in the beauty

industry, she is passionate about helping others embrace their own unique beauty and inherent gifts. Angelica spent three years as the National Education Manager for Ouidad, a luxury hair-care company that focused solely on textured and curly hair, where she was able to travel the country, taking on a segment of beauty that was historically ignored. Training stylists and clients how to properly care for and treat curly hair, she taught individuals to embrace natural beauty and learned herself the value of sharing knowledge to subvert social stereotypes. Clean Beauty Collective, where she holds her current position, plans to lead the Clean Beauty movement by leveraging their 15 years' experience as pioneers in beauty with their clean fragrances and by expanding into other categories.

### Advice to Students

Don't be afraid of trial and error. While you are young with minimal responsibilities, this is the time to try something and walk away if you find it doesn't suit you. Be open to unexpected opportunities, and you might just find something you never knew you really loved.

## Chrissy Persico '95

Head of Consumer Public Relations, Google  
Brooklyn, New York

Major at Vassar: Psychology

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/chrissy-persico-a5903027](https://www.linkedin.com/in/chrissy-persico-a5903027)



Chrissy leads Google's consumer public relations team, responsible for introducing editors and writers across a wide range of publications to Google's many products, including Google Search and Maps to Google Home and Pixel phones. Before coming to Google she was on the other side of the business, writing

and editing for publications and brands spanning the media world including Time Inc., ABC News, AOL, the New York Daily News and Interview magazine. Early in her career, she was a studio assistant for the photographer Annie Leibovitz.

### Advice to Students

Create stretch goals in your career, and expect more of yourself. Even if you don't hit those goals 100% of the time, you'll be surprised at how many times you do.

It took me a long time to recognize my value and trust my instincts at work, and once I did it all became much easier.

Say more in less time.

## Luc Peterson '06

**Physicist and Group Leader,  
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory  
Livermore, California**

**Major at Vassar:** Science, Technology and Society; Physics  
**Advanced Degree:** MA, Astrophysical Sciences, Plasma  
Physics, Princeton University;  
PhD, Astrophysical Sciences, Plasma Physics, Princeton  
University

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/lucpeterson](https://www.linkedin.com/in/lucpeterson)



Dr. Peterson is a physicist and group leader at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, where he has conducted research since obtaining his Ph.D. in Plasma Physics at Princeton University in 2011. As a member of the inertial confinement fusion program at the National Ignition Facility, he

conducts theoretical and computational studies of the physics of nuclear fusion, data analytics, high frequency computing and artificial intelligence. What started with a summer internship after his sophomore year at Vassar has led to a career of using the world's largest supercomputers to search for the holy grail of modern physics: fusion energy. Dr. Peterson has authored over 25 scientific publications, has appeared as a TV commentator on NOVA, and currently leads Project Merlin, which aims to augment computational and experimental workflows with machine learning.

### **Advice to Students**

Don't be afraid to say yes to something you don't know how to do (yet!). A liberal arts degree is extremely useful in the sciences: since cutting edge research isn't spelled out in a textbook, much of my day-job is writing, speaking, talking, and critical thinking. Finally, recognize the help you receive along the way and reach back to assist those who follow you.

## Joshua Poole '04

**Vice President of Programming & Development,  
Levity Entertainment Group  
Los Angeles, California**

**Major at Vassar:** Psychology  
**Advanced Degree:** MS, Television Production,  
Boston University

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/joshpoole/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/joshpoole/)



Josh is currently Vice President of Programming and Development at Levity Entertainment Group, where he works across the production, management, and live-performance divisions to develop original series and formats for television. Prior to joining Levity, Josh was VP of

Development at Above Average, Broadway Video's digital-first studio and production company. At Above Average, Josh oversaw the development and production of hundreds of videos and series, ranging from short-form series for Snapchat to half-hour projects for Comedy Central, YouTube Premium, and more. Before that, Josh worked in political fund-raising and publishing, then decided to go back to grad school after nearly dying many times while backpacking in South America.

### **Advice to Students**

Don't let indecision paralyze you. Even if you have no idea what you want to do, just pick a direction and run at it hard.

## Allan Powe S'91

**Educational Consultant, Think Deep Consulting  
Brooklyn, New York**

**Major in College:** Biochemistry (UPenn)

**Advanced Degree:** PhD, Biological Sciences,  
Rockefeller University

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/allanpowe/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/allanpowe/)



Allan Powe, a native New Yorker, earned a bachelor's degree in biochemistry at the University of Pennsylvania and a doctorate in biological sciences at Rockefeller University in New York. His PhD thesis work used fruit fly (*Drosophila*) genetics to study how photoreceptor neurons

choose their specific identities. Allan's postdoctoral work at the University of Missouri used a combination of genetics and biophysics to study CFTR, the protein defective in people with cystic fibrosis (CF). Afterward, he worked for about 12 years in drug discovery at various biotechnology companies, including Vertex Pharmaceuticals in San Diego, CA. There, Allan was a part of their cystic fibrosis team that developed the latest round of CF drugs, now showing great promise in clinical trials. While doing volunteer outreach at Vertex, he found a new calling: teaching science. Over the past year, Allan has been exploring a new career in science/STEM education through his work as a New York Academy of Sciences' Scientist-in-Residence at local public schools and as the Electives Coordinator for the EDGE Movement NYC mentoring program.

### **Advice to Students**

Follow your bliss. Joseph Campbell was right! Doing what you love and what excites you helps with powering through the inevitable difficulties you'll face, regardless of what path you take.

Find good mentors! They are invaluable for helping you to see possibilities and perspectives you would otherwise not consider.

Toot your own horn. You have to be your own advocate, because no one else is obligated to do that for you. You are your own PR department.

Finish and ship. As Seth Godin has often said, the final product does not need to be perfect—it just needs to be good enough.

## George Putnam S'75

**Managing Partner, New Generation Advisors, LLC  
New York, New York**

**Major at Vassar:** History and Science

**Advanced Degree:** MBA, Harvard Business School;  
JD, Harvard Law School



After completing a combined JD/MBA program, George Putnam worked for a large law firm based in Philadelphia for six years, including a stint in the firm's London office. While there, he worked on a large bankruptcy case and became fascinated with the business side of bankruptcy. After leaving

the law firm, George started a small publishing company to assemble and publish information about bankruptcies and turnarounds. A few years later, he began a hedge fund that invests in bankruptcy and distressed securities. Today the fund manages about \$750 million. George is also an outside trustee of the Putnam Group of Mutual Funds, and he has served on numerous nonprofit boards.

### **Advice to Students**

Don't get locked into something you don't enjoy—always keep your eyes open for opportunities that line up well with your interests and skills.

## Harrison Remler '14

Chief Operating Officer, Visionary Music Group  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Political Science



Harrison Remler is the Chief Operating Officer of Visionary Music Group. The boutique management company and independent record label—home to Logic, Jon Bellion, Quinn XCII, Chelsea Cutler, Jeremy Zucker, ayokay, and 6ix—has emerged as one of the most innovative and impressive

companies in the music business. As the force behind Grammy-nominated hip hop artist Logic and multiplatinum singer/producer/songwriter Jon Bellion, VMG was one of the first artist-management companies to translate free music into business verticals across live, recorded music, merchandise and branding. Remler oversees all execution for the company across creative, touring, live production and more. Recent successes include execution of artist visions on live TV performances such as the 2017 VMAs (Logic), 2018 VMAs (Logic), and Logic's arena/amphitheater tour.

### Advice to Students

Don't think twice about what other people think of you when you are chasing your dreams. Being an entrepreneur is exciting, scary, thrilling, and emotional. Always surround yourself with people who inspire you. Nothing is more valuable than a relentless work ethic.

## Christine Robinson '79

Senior Advisor/Senior Consultant, Ford Foundation  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Psychology

Advanced Degree: Master's Degree, Applied Psychology, University of Pennsylvania;

PhD, Social Policy, Brandeis University

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/stillwatersconsultation/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/stillwatersconsultation/)



Christine Robinson works on systems, organizational, and policy development at local, statewide, regional, and national levels. She has provided senior leadership and consultation to the nation's leading foundations on strategic articulation, program development, the formation of collaborative

ventures, and the structure, launch, and implementation of local, statewide, regional, and national initiatives. Equity and social justice have been at the center of her life's work. Affiliations include the Ford Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, and several philanthropic organizations. She served as Director of the Division of School Age and Adolescent Health for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and was intimately involved in the establishment of the statewide network of school-based health centers, the first violence-prevention coalitions in the U.S., and the first multicultural HIV/AIDS coalition in the U.S. Robinson is trained as a community/developmental psychologist, and her substantive interests include equity, structural opportunity, and systems thinking; addressing health, economic, and education disparities; cocreating improved outcomes for marginalized populations; pluralistic coalitions; bringing theory to practice; disability and inclusion.

### Advice to Students

You might give some thought as to who you are, where you have been, and where you might go. Over time I have come to see the deep value in many childhood and adolescent experiences. Many were not pleasant, but they were deeply meaningful. Work that gives a sense of purpose, meaning, and mattering may be one of the greatest gifts any of us are granted. The threads can be braided together to create a coherent and beautiful picture. Creativity matters, passion matters, deep thinking matters, and so much is possible. What makes your heart sing? Build upon your assets: your experience, your talents, and your insights. Each of us has a unique gift.

## Ezra Roth '10

Litigation Support Manager,  
Herbert Smith Freehills LLP  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Religion

Advanced Degree: MBA, Management, Baruch College

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/ezra-roth/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/ezra-roth/)



Ezra Roth has managed the entire life cycle of the e-discovery process across four law firms for the past seven-plus years. Currently, as a Litigation Support Manager at Herbert Smith Freehills LLP (HSF), he is instating e-discovery best practices, consulting on business strategy, and building a litigation

support team to integrate with HSF's international litigation support network. Roth consults attorneys regarding data governance, litigation holds, case management, and the collection, processing, review, production, and presentation of documents. Roth especially enjoys consulting on analytics, and a type of AI called predictive coding or Technology Assisted Review (TAR), which can help prioritize or cull what is often a dizzying amount of documents for legal review. Most recently, Roth directed an e-discovery project with a \$1 million budget regarding a solar panel company sued for fraud. For leisure, Roth has completed three-plus years of religion fellowships with the Drisha Institute; over summers he plays competitively with the New York Croquet Club; and he plays pop music on the piano monthly at a church's soup kitchen.

### Advice to Students

While at Vassar, study what you find fascinating and do well. If you have the option, write a thesis. Participate in college clubs and sports as much as possible because their leadership, character-building, and fitness opportunities are unrivaled. Socialize and have fun as much as possible in college, and pursue and nourish friendships to last long past graduation. Prioritize going to plays and music performances on campus, and don't skip the Loeb. Take advantage of nature in and around Vassar.

For post-graduation, survey what industries interest you most, then participate in field work and internships in those industries; however, while professional skills are important, virtues come first. Don't romanticize work too much, as you should always have multiple passions.

## Ned Schodek '97

Partner, Shearman & Sterling LLP  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Art History and Psychology

Advanced Degree: JD, Cornell Law School

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/nschodek/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/nschodek/)



Mr. Schodek, a partner in Shearman & Sterling's Financial Restructuring & Insolvency practice, has extensive experience representing debtors, creditors, financial institutions, hedge funds, acquirers of assets, purchasers and sellers of claims, and other parties in interest in large and complex prepackaged,

prenegotiated, and traditional Chapter 11 bankruptcies, out-of-court workouts, debtor-in-possession financings, adversary proceedings, and broker-dealer liquidations. He also advises financial institutions in closing out and structuring new derivatives transactions with distressed entities. Mr. Schodek began his career at Shearman & Sterling in 2002 and is a former Co-Chair of the New York City Bar Association's Courts and Legislation Subcommittee of the Committee on Bankruptcy and Corporate Reorganization.

### Advice to Students

A successful college experience and career beyond requires hard work, dedication, and sacrifice. On the professional front, it also requires a strong network, so always keep track of and stay in touch with people you meet. You never know when you can help them or they can help you.

## Pedro Sepulveda '14

Immigration Paralegal, New York Legal Assistance Group

New York, New York

**Major at Vassar:** Biochemistry and Jewish Studies

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/pedrosepulvedajr/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/pedrosepulvedajr/)



Pedro Sepulveda is an immigration paralegal in the LegalHealth Unit at the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG). He staffs free immigration clinics in public hospitals in the Bronx and Queens, working with community members as well as hospital patients with severe medical conditions and/

or who have been the victims of crime, domestic violence, and torture. Before joining NYLAG, Pedro researched and produced gene therapies for use in surgeries, clinical trials, and toxicology studies at Weill Cornell Medicine/NewYork -Presbyterian. Pedro has served on the board of Mayday Space, a social-justice hub and movement center serving the local Bushwick community as well as NYC's at-large activist community. Pedro graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Biochemistry and Jewish Studies.

### **Advice to Students**

It's okay not to know where you're going or even where you are in life. If you're in this boat, allow yourself to feel some kindness and self-love. There's so much time in life to figure out your next steps, however big or small, no matter what anyone says. If you need help, don't be afraid to seek it out. The strongest people I know have all sought help at some point or another.

## Jeremy Shiman '10

Designer, WRNS Studio  
New York, New York

**Major at Vassar:** Mathematics and Music

**Advanced Degree:** Master of Architecture, UC Berkeley

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/jeremy-shiman/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jeremy-shiman/)



After graduating Vassar with a dual degree in math and music, Jeremy proceeded to pursue a career in neither, at least not directly. His multifaceted interests drew him toward architecture and the built environment. Jeremy received his Master of Architecture degree from the University of

California, Berkeley, focusing on sustainable design. He currently works as a designer at WRNS Studio in New York City, where his work ranges from designing new buildings to working on interior renovations for clients varying from major technology companies to high schools. He recently worked on the award-winning Janet Durgin Guild & Commons at Sonoma Academy. Jeremy is also part of the internal "green team" at WRNS, helping to set company-wide sustainable design goals and standards. Across these projects, he is constantly exploring the impact buildings have on the environment through their construction and operation, as well as how material and design choices affect human health and well-being.

### **Advice to Students**

When you aren't sure what you should do, just keep doing something. It's never easy to find the "perfect" thing for you to be doing, if that's even possible, but if you keep doing things that you care about, you will continually move toward something that fits. It can be a hold-over—something to keep you busy while you are working toward a larger goal—a stepping stone, or a path that is a complete about-face. You don't need to know where you want to end up, but if you can choose a direction to start and always find goals to work toward, no matter how small, you're making progress even when it doesn't feel like it.

## Lauren (Stein) Shiman '10

Neighborhood Health Evaluator, Center for Health Equity, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
New York, New York

**Major at Vassar:** Mathematics

**Advanced Degree:** MPH, Epidemiology and Biostatistics, University of California, Berkeley

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/lauren-shiman](https://www.linkedin.com/in/lauren-shiman)



After majoring in mathematics and completing premedical requirements at Vassar, Lauren Shiman gained work experience in medical research and other health-related settings before finding her way to public health. Lauren pursued a Master of Public Health degree from the University of California, Berkeley,

graduating in 2015 with a concentration in epidemiology and biostatistics, and then worked for several years as a consultant at Harder+Company research, evaluation, and needs-assessment projects. Presently, Lauren is a researcher and evaluator at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Her work focuses on making injustices visible, through data and storytelling, to incite action by community members, organizations, and policymakers. Working at the intersection of health and the social and economic contexts that create healthy environments, Lauren has the opportunity to work across public-health disciplines including education, sexual health, housing policy, and maternal and child health.

### Advice to Students

Talk to as many people as you can about what they do and how they got there. Informal conversations and informational interviews can be extremely important ways to explore professional fields that you might be interested in. Keep in touch with the people you connect with, and allow the relationships to develop over time if you can. You never know what you may learn about the kinds of jobs that exist and what skills and experience you need to get them. You might even be connected to internship or employment opportunities if you're lucky!

## Dennis Slade '91

Manager, Software Engineering, Scholastic  
Brooklyn, New York

**Major at Vassar:** Computer Science

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/dennisladejr/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/dennisladejr/)



Dennis Slade is a Software Engineering Manager in the web/application development space. Working primarily with open source cloud technologies, he specializes in the management, implementation, and support of large-scale, object-oriented web-based systems. His 25+ years in the industry include

work at IBM, Ogilvy & Mather, the Financial Times, Oracle/Sun, Citibank (Switzerland), and now Scholastic, where he recently led the successful redesign and re-release of BookFlix, a popular children's reading application. He has also worked at a number of deceased start-ups, including Freeverse, a pioneering AI-based gaming company founded by fellow Vassar alums.

Dennis is a frequent guest panelist on topics related to technology, LGBTQ organizing, being "the only black guy in the room," and Doctor Who. He lives in Brooklyn, NY, with his husband and their many Apple devices.

### Advice to Students

Never be afraid to say, "I don't know" or "Could you explain that further?"

Everyone asks "what"; fewer ask "how," and fewer still "why." You will get far by asking the "why."

Telling a compelling, convincing story is more powerful than listing facts and figures. Always lead with your story.

The less you try to please everybody, the more people you will please. Especially yourself.

Make career decisions based first on personal growth potential, then on how it helps your family, and lastly on the company's needs. You and your family should always come first.



## Erik Snow '12

Systems Engineer, Takeda Pharmaceuticals  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Major at Vassar: Physics

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/eriksnow](https://www.linkedin.com/in/eriksnow)



Erik is a Systems Engineer at Takeda Pharmaceutical, where he develops laboratory automation robotics to perform high-throughput drug-discovery screening for oncology research. Using his broad experience with mechatronics, software, and rapid-prototyping methods, he brings new biological and

cell-based experiments to fruition quickly by building robotic systems to automate the drug-discovery process. After Vassar, Erik found the laboratory automation field after being inspired by the Robotics Competition independent study senior year. He spent two years at HighRes Biosolutions, an engineering firm that develops modular robotic systems for automating pharmaceutical and biochemical laboratory processes, where he was able to travel the world developing and installing robotic systems for clients. Erik also spent a few years at PerkinElmer, Inc., developing an automated microscope for performing multispectral imaging of tissue samples for cancer immunotherapy treatment development. He recently returned to the pharmaceutical field and is helping Takeda push the boundaries of cancer treatment by automating their drug-discovery efforts.

### Advice to Students

Take advantage of the breadth and diversity of the classes and programs available at Vassar, because your career will not necessarily follow your major. The beauty of a liberal arts education is in making cross-discipline connections, and you may find interest and inspiration in programs you never anticipated

## Deborah Steinberg '14

Equal Justice Works Fellow, sponsored by Fidelity Investments and Mintz Levin Cohn Ferris Glovsky & Popeo, P.C., Health Law Advocates  
Boston, Massachusetts

Major at Vassar: Psychology

Advanced Degree: JD, Georgetown University Law Center

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/deborah-steinberg-b4822536/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/deborah-steinberg-b4822536/)



Deb Steinberg is an Equal Justice Works Fellow at Health Law Advocates in Boston, MA. After graduating from Vassar in 2014, Deb worked at the Health Policy Commission in Massachusetts in the Office of Patient Protection. She attended Georgetown University Law Center, where

she interned at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the U.S. Department of Justice, the National Health Law Program (NHeLP), and the DC Superior Court. As a licensed attorney in Massachusetts, Deb is working on a two-year project-based fellowship, where she is providing direct legal representation, community outreach, and policy advocacy related to increasing access to mental health-care among low-income and other vulnerable populations. Her Vassar activities included VSA President (and Noyes House President!), The Listening Center, set design for student theater, and working as a docent at the FLLAC.

### Advice to Students

Ask questions. Know that everyone around you is as lost and confused as you are, but that some are better at hiding it. Advocate for your own needs, because no one else will do it for you. Never settle, and use rejection letters for arts and crafts.

## Thomas Szymanski '09

**International Relations Officer,  
United States Department of Labor,  
Bureau of International Labor Affairs  
Washington, DC**

**Major at Vassar:** Political Science and Sociology  
**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/thomas-szymanski-21432b66/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/thomas-szymanski-21432b66/)



Thomas Szymanski is an international affairs expert with extensive experience furthering U.S. foreign policy objectives both on the ground and through strategic engagements. He currently conducts research and makes policy recommendations for the Bureau of International Labor Affairs on issues

relating to child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking in sub-Saharan Africa. Prior to his current role, Thomas spent over five years working as an International Program Specialist at USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). While at FAS, Thomas negotiated and managed nearly \$200 million of cooperative agreements with foreign governments for agriculturally focused economic development projects. Although Thomas's FAS portfolio was global in nature, the majority of his work focused on the expansion and modernization of agricultural value chains in Africa. In 2016, Thomas spent the summer working at the U.S. Embassy in Accra, Ghana, providing agricultural policy and program recommendations to senior U.S. Government leadership in Benin, Cameroon, Ghana, Liberia, and Nigeria. Prior to joining FAS, Thomas served in the Peace Corps as a Rural Community Health Volunteer in Benin from 2010-2012.

### **Advice to Students**

Strive to be proactive, not perfect. Try not to fall into the trap of agonizing for hours (or days) on crafting the "perfect" introductory email or cover letter. Rather, act quickly and confidently when reaching out to potential employers or people who are in positions that you are interested in learning more about. Anticipate what questions might be asked of you, and be clear, concise, and specific about what your objective is in reaching out and what your goals are.

## Spencer Tilger '14

**Public Affairs Manager, Immigration Equality  
New York, New York**

**Major at Vassar:** Geography  
**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/spencer-tilger-44760445/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/spencer-tilger-44760445/)



Spencer Tilger is Immigration Equality's Public Affairs Manager, overseeing communications and media relations for the nation's leading LGBTQ and HIV-positive immigrant rights organization. Prior to joining Immigration Equality, Spencer lived in Mexico City, where he researched the impact

of the drug war on migrant rights for a network of human rights journalists. Previously, he worked in programming and communications for the Urban Design Forum in New York City, promoting dialogue on how to design a better city for all New Yorkers.

Spencer was a 2016 Ann Cornelisen scholar in Guatemala studying Spanish and social movements, and received the 2014 Erica Leshan Taterka Scholarship to work with the Rural & Migrant Ministry's Youth Arts Group in the Hudson Valley.

### **Advice to Students**

Allow yourself the freedom to explore the opportunities available to you, and try not to worry about developing skills that you think can help you get a job. The problem-solving, analytical-thinking, and writing abilities you are naturally developing at Vassar open up an almost infinite number of career paths.

## Pamela Vogel '12

Research Fellow, Media Matters for America  
Washington, DC

Major at Vassar: Urban Studies

Advanced Degree: MA, Sociology and Education,  
Columbia University Teachers College

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/pamvogel/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/pamvogel/)



Pam works as a Research Fellow at Media Matters for America, a progressive nonprofit media watchdog in Washington, DC. Her daily work includes a combination of rapid-response writing and analysis for an online audience and managing deep-dive research projects. Her subject-matter focus areas are local

news; media's coverage of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape; and intersectional and inclusive reporting. She has worked at Media Matters since 2015, originally serving as the group's Education Policy Program Director.

Pam occasionally represents Media Matters' work in organizing meetings with progressive allies, at public events, and in media appearances, including on several NPR programs this year. Her media analysis and research have been cited in major publications such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *New Yorker*, *Politico*, NBC News, and others.

Pam previously worked in the nonprofit and public sectors, completing a policy internship in the Obama White House in 2014. After graduating from Vassar, she earned a master's degree in sociology and education from Teachers College, Columbia University.

### Advice to Students

My number-one piece of advice is to leave campus! Of course I learned a lot in classes—and even more from talking one-on-one with professors—but I still believe that spending afternoons in Poughkeepsie with the community work-study program taught me infinitely more. I was able to develop deep relationships in the community, find a mentor I'd otherwise have never met, and gain real-world experience. It's very easy to spend four years within the boundaries of Raymond Avenue, but resist that temptation. Instead, learn how to apply the theories you study in the classroom to help real people every day. Do what you can to keep your world big; it will help you to practice empathy and to think practically.

## Britta von Schoeler '97

President, Broadway Video Enterprises  
Brooklyn, New York

Major at Vassar: Psychology

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/brittavonschoeler](https://www.linkedin.com/in/brittavonschoeler)



Britta von Schoeler heads Broadway Video Enterprises—the division charged with amplifying the company's portfolio of brands, including *Saturday Night Live*, across all media. Von Schoeler helms strategic planning and partnerships for Broadway Video Entertainment's programming library. Her

portfolio of projects ranges from global distribution of traditional media—including the production of new formats—to leveraging Broadway Video's family of talent and intellectual property for sponsorship and branded content opportunities, to experiential executions such as live tours and exhibits, to the creation of product lines. Most recently she launched *Más Mejor*, a premium comedy studio powered by Latino voices. Prior to joining BVE in 2001, von Schoeler worked for BBC Worldwide Americas, Inc., Golden Books Family Entertainment, and Discovery Communications.

### Advice to Students

Consider what you want your life to be like when you're 40, and pick a career that can help you attain that vision. In what city do you want to live? What work-life balance is right for you? Do you like to travel? Do you like the comfort of knowing what the path to success in your role is, or do you like to be more entrepreneurial and chart your own course? Knowing these answers can help point you in a specific direction. Once you know what that direction is, get out there and talk to as many people in the profession as you can. Don't be afraid to work all resources!

## Nina Vyedin '11

Senior Engineering Manager, Microsoft  
Boston, Massachusetts

Major at Vassar: Music

LinkedIn: <http://linkedin.com/in/vyedin>



Nina is an engineering and product manager at Microsoft in Boston, working on software tools for mobile development. She cut her teeth in the start-up world as a technical product manager at Xamarin, a developer tools company that sold to Microsoft in 2016. She's held a variety of roles

throughout her career, including software engineer, product manager, project manager, technical writer, and more—all while working alongside some of the best folks in the industry. In addition to writing code, she's currently an interviewer on Microsoft's diversity hiring initiative, which seeks to realize the company's commitment to diversity and inclusion in tech. Nina is passionate about leveraging technology and innovation practices in the service of building better communities. You can follow her on various media at [keybase.io/vyedin](http://keybase.io/vyedin).

### Advice to Students

Advice is hard because everyone's story will be different, and I know that some opportunities were available to me that aren't as readily available to others, and vice-versa. If I had to give advice to my former Vassar self, I would remind myself that many doors are open to me and that my career and future aren't going to be decided by the classes I take, the major I choose, or the grade I get on the next paper or problem set. You're surrounded by a wealth of resources and curious people, and every day is a chance to learn or make something new. Do with that what you will.

## Matthew Wheeler '12

Assistant Director, Career Services,  
Wheaton College  
Norton, Massachusetts

Major at Vassar: Women's Studies and Sociology

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/matthew-f-wheeler/](http://linkedin.com/in/matthew-f-wheeler/)



Matt Wheeler is an Assistant Director of Career Services at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts. In his role, he oversees a structured career-readiness program, manages an internship funding program, and works to engage and advise first-year students on career development topics.

Prior to his time at Wheaton, Matt's experience included a brief stint in private-sector recruiting, three years in residential life at a large state university, and the honor of serving as Vassar's first Post-Baccalaureate Fellow in Career Development. At Vassar, Matt studied Women's Studies and Sociology and was actively involved in Residential Life for three years and on VSA Council for one.

### Advice to Students

If you're not sure what you'd like to do next, start doing something—anything. We learn our interests, strengths, skills, and preferences through experience, so go get some! Join a club, get a campus job, volunteer in the community, apply for an internship, or anything else that gets you trying and doing something new. And take advantage of the wonderful resources at Vassar, like the CDO! Talking through those new experiences with someone trained to help you identify how they connect to possible new paths is a wonderful experience, and you may be surprised at what insights you unearth when you don't try to process all that information alone.

## Irene Wielawski '73

Health Care Writer and Editor, Independent  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Society and Law

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/irenewielawski](https://www.linkedin.com/in/irenewielawski)



Irene Wielawski is an independent writer and editor specializing in medical and health policy topics. Previously, she was a medical writer for newspapers, including the *Providence Journal* (RI) and the *Los Angeles Times*, where she served on the investigations team, exposing health-care

fraud. Honors include two team Pulitzer Prizes, a Pulitzer finalist citation for medical journalism, and the Penney-Missouri Award. Her independent work (see [www.irenewielawski.com](http://www.irenewielawski.com)) has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Health Affairs*, *Modern Healthcare*, medical journals, and health policy anthologies, among other outlets. She has also produced pediatric medicine segments for public television and edits research manuscripts. Wielawski is a founder of the Association of Health Care Journalists ([www.health-journalism.org](http://www.health-journalism.org)), the nation's leading professional organization of journalists covering health, medicine, science, and U.S. health policy. Her current work focuses on how research and policy theories translate into practice, particularly as they relate to people whose access to good-quality medical care is compromised by poverty, cultural or language barriers, geography, and health-system complexity. She's a singer and gardener on the side.

### Advice to Students

Polish your presentation and writing skills. Every profession needs people who can communicate ideas effectively and, as you advance in your career, this obligation will only grow. Vassar's course offerings provide many opportunities to hone analytical skills and to learn how to present arguments and conclusions in a clear, concise, and engaging way. Take advantage of them and you'll be ahead of the pack, whether your interests run to law, business, science, the arts, teaching, or technology. Be adventurous, too. Try out courses and activities that go beyond your natural interests. You'll be surprised at how valuable these "dabblings" can be down the road, both professionally and personally.

## Matthew Williams '91

Data Scientist / Startup Founder,  
WD[creative analytics]  
Flemington, New Jersey

Major at Vassar: Cognitive Science

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/Matthewwilliamsdataservices](https://www.linkedin.com/in/Matthewwilliamsdataservices)



Matt Williams is founder of and the Lead AI Architect for WD Creative Analytics, profiled in the 2017 book *Journey to Data Scientist* by Kate Strachnyi.

WD Creative Analytics builds analytics big and small including cognitive systems, video analytics, data visualizations,

algorithm development, and data management projects. The company has team members in New York, Austin, and Bangalore, India-based AI partner Mantra Labs (<https://www.mantralabsglobal.com>).

Matt has developed learning, responsive enterprise data algorithms and search applications for such companies as LexisNexis, Adobe Systems, and Wyndham Worldwide, where he won the IT Innovation Award in 2009.

Matt cofounded the Hoboken, NJ-based makerspace MakerBar (<http://makerbar.com>) as the first Education Director, creating a free Minecraft Technology class for local schools. He's also currently a Senior Data Scientist at Ascensus, mentoring a new team of data scientists in the practice of good data science, including natural language processing and machine learning with tools including SPSS and SQL.

Matt also created a wildlife bat-monitoring project profiled here: <https://abc7ny.com/399378>.

### Advice to Students

I always tell people to make the most of the wide variety of courses in college; for instance, I blended art with science each semester—like programming and film theory, or linguistics and music. My best advice is to cast a wide net, and focus on what you really like doing.

## Sam Wootton '10

Cinematographer, IATSE Local 600  
Brooklyn, New York

Major at Vassar: Film

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/samwootton/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/samwootton/)



Sam started in New York City as an office production assistant in TV. He transitioned to the camera department on HBO's *Girls*, where he trained as a camera assistant in a rigorous studio environment. Within several years, Sam had developed a small network of like-minded filmmakers.

He began shooting small projects on the side, which evolved into short documentaries, music videos, and commercials. As a cinematographer, he is responsible for working with the director to place the camera for each shot. He also collaborates with a crew of lighting technicians to design the lighting for scenes. He joined the International Cinematographers Guild in 2017 and continues to work on feature documentaries and commercials.

### Advice to Students

The network you create opens lots of doors. Try opportunities even if they don't seem like the perfect fit. Show up on time, learn quickly, be proactive; people notice. You may meet somebody who knows somebody who can help you find the next (better) job. Word of mouth goes far. But often, progress takes time!

## Jason Wu '07

Staff Attorney, The Legal Aid Society  
New York, New York

Major at Vassar: Independent: Ethnic Studies

Advanced Degree: JD, UCLA School of Law

LinkedIn: <http://linkedin.com/in/jason-wu-2b60467>



Jason Wu is a staff attorney at the Legal Aid Society's Harlem Community Law Office, where he represents low-income communities of color to preserve and expand affordable housing. He represents tenant groups in cases against their landlords involving building-wide repairs, tenant

harassment, and illegal rent increases, and works to preserve and expand affordable housing cooperative homeownership in formerly distressed and city-foreclosed properties. He is currently a Trustee for the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys, UAW 2325, where he serves on the union's executive board. Jason is a graduate from UCLA School of Law, with a specialization in Critical Race Studies. While in law school, he served as Co-Editor-in-Chief of the *Asian Pacific American Law Journal*, and held legal internships with Advancing Justice-LA and the Sylvia Rivera Law Project. In 2018, the National LGBT Bar Association named Jason one of the 40 Best LGBT Lawyers Under 40.

### Advice to Students

"When I dare to be powerful—to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid." —Audre Lorde

## Charley Young '09

SAG-AFTRA/AEA/BMI Actress, Singer, Writer,  
Charley Girl LLC  
New York, New York

**Major at Vassar:** Drama, French and Francophone Studies

**Advanced Degree:** MA, Liberal Studies, Screenwriting, Dartmouth College

MFA, Acting, Actors Studio Drama School

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/mscharleyyoung/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/mscharleyyoung/)



Charley Young was born in San Diego, California, and raised on the Gulf Coast of Florida. As a child, Charley always loved to perform for people, whether it be through music, acting, or writing. She always knew that she wanted to dedicate her life to entertaining. Her dedication to her career led her to

opportunities to perform on Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, in the White House, and at the Austrian Embassy in Washington, DC, before graduating high school. Charley has recently performed at Webster Hall, the Duplex, American Beauty NYC, Vinyl Music Hall, and the Bitter End. Charley has also appeared in award-winning independent films.

### Advice to Students

Don't be afraid to veer from the beaten path. Have faith in yourself and your abilities, even if it doesn't seem as though things are coming together as you would like them to. Keep an open mind and be genuine whenever you meet a new person. You never know how you could help them or how they could help you. Most importantly, stay positive. Life can be hard and uncontrollable, but your perception and attitude is always up to you.

## Maria Paula Zapata '13

Associate Director of Education Programs,  
Conexión Américas  
Nashville, Tennessee

**Major at Vassar:** English

**Advanced Degree:** M.Ed. in Learning, Diversity, and Urban Studies, Vanderbilt University's Peabody College of Education

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/mariapazapata/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/mariapazapata/)



Maria Paula Zapata is the Associate Director of Education Programs at Conexión Américas, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to create opportunities where Latino families can belong, contribute, and succeed. Maria Paula oversees programs and supports staff that serve Latino families

in Nashville, including middle school after-school programs; college access programs for first-generation immigrant and refugee students; family engagement workshops; and support services for unaccompanied minors. Prior to this role, Maria Paula led Conexión Américas' family-engagement work, coordinating Spanish language workshops that helped Latino immigrant parents navigate the U.S. school system, advocate for their children, and support learning at home.

Maria Paula is also a resource for local schools and universities. She has served on panels and led trainings that focused on topics including culturally responsive family engagement strategies, aiding undocumented students, and working with immigrant communities.

As a first-generation immigrant herself, Maria Paula is deeply connected to her work and passionate about educational equity and working with the Latino community—all passions that began while studying education at Vassar.

### Advice to Students

For me, finding the work I felt truly passionate about meant finding an organization where my identity was respected, valued, and viewed as an asset. Invest time and take classes that help you figure out who you are, what is important to you, and what values you want to live by. All this can help guide where you fit in the workplace. Once you find that fit, dedicate yourself fully! Also, if you are thinking about grad school, you will be exceedingly well prepared. The rigor of Vassar academics is real!







# Career Guidebook Definitions

## Resumes

Strong resumes are targeted to a specific opportunity and bring out a candidate's key credentials, skills, interests, and accomplishments. Generally limited to one page in length, a resume should provide contact information, summarize your educational and professional history, and highlight additional skill sets and leadership capabilities. To get help with your resume, drop by the CDO at any time between 2:00 and 4:00pm, Monday through Friday. The CDO's Resume Writing and Job Search Correspondence Guide provides useful tips on format and content, and provides examples of successful resumes.

## Cover Letters

Cover letters are persuasive documents that highlight a candidate's skills, knowledge of the employer, and ability to contribute to the organization. Simply put, a cover letter is an opportunity for you to interpret your resume and highlight why you are a strong candidate. The CDO's Resume Writing and Job Search Correspondence Guide provides useful tips on format and content, and provides examples of successful cover letters.

## Interviews

Interviews are two-way conversations through which employers evaluate a candidate's skills, motivation, goals, and personality. Usually granted to applicants who stand out on paper, interviews help an employer determine whether an individual would be a good fit for their organization. Interviews also allow applicants insight into potential workplaces. To learn more about polishing your interviewing skills, contact the CDO to schedule a mock interview with a career counselor.

## Networking and Informational Interviews

One of the best ways to explore career options and plan your job search is to talk directly with people who work in fields that interest you. Informational interviewing adds a dynamic, personalized dimension to your career research—and can help you approach your internship in a strategic, focused manner. Vassar alumnae/i have a strong track record of helping current students advance their career goals. Use our networking resources (on the opposite page) to learn more about a specific industry, occupation, or organization; get advice on how to break into or advance in a given industry; or explore graduate and professional school programs.

## Thank-You Notes

Thank-you notes are expected by employers and networking contacts as an appropriate method to extend your appreciation for an individual's time and attention. It is also a strategic way to emphasize your professionalism and differentiate yourself. Always follow up with a thank-you note (or email) after every professional interaction.

# Career Guidebook—CDO Resources

## The Career Development Office

The Career Development Office (CDO) helps students and alumnae/i envision and realize a meaningful life after Vassar. We support members of the Vassar community as they explore their interests, define their career goals, and seek their next opportunity for personal growth and professional development. Located in Main-South (Room 170), CDO staff can help you find internships, review resumes and cover letters, network effectively, and prepare for interviews. The office also offers career assessment and graduate/law school advising services, hosts regular workshops and on-campus recruiting events, brings employers and graduate schools to campus, and administers internship funding. To take advantage of these resources, schedule a half-hour appointment with a career counselor—or visit the office between 2:00 and 4:00pm, Monday through Friday, for a drop-in appointment.

## Online Internship Resources

The CDO operates, subscribes to, and recommends a number of useful online resources for internship searching. We encourage you to begin your internship search with Handshake, Vassar's job and internship database. In addition to highlighting specific internships, a number of our resources offer informational (often industry and company-specific) content and advice on finding internships outside the U.S. For a full list of recommended online resources, consult the Internship Resource Directory. Mentors: If you wish to post an internship opportunity, please contact the CDO hirevassar@vassar.edu with the pertinent details.

## Networking Tools

*Sophomore Career Connections* is not your only opportunity to network with members of the Vassar community. As a student or alumna/us, you have access to the Vassar network through a handful of convenient online tools. VassarNet, a new online mentoring and networking platform powered by PeopleGrove, launches in January 2019. The Alumnae/i Directory, operated by the Office of Alumnae/i Affairs and Development (OAAD), allows you to search for and (professionally) contact nearly 40,000 Vassar graduates. Nearly 20,000 Vassar graduates currently use LinkedIn; set up a free account to connect with people who inspire you.

## Funding Opportunities

Many internship programs are unpaid or underpaid. To help make financially inaccessible opportunities a reality, the CDO administers a number of funds every year. Through the Internship Grant Fund (IGF), a need-sensitive program open to students from all class years, the CDO supports students participating in low-pay and unpaid summer internships. Whether you require assistance to cover rent for the summer, or simply need a transit card to get from your home to the office, consider applying to the IGF after rolling admissions open in March. Open to juniors only, the highly competitive Tananbaum Fellowship helps 20 juniors find their dream summer opportunity through comprehensive career coaching and a generous stipend. See the websites of the CDO and the Office of Fellowships for more information about these and other Vassar funding opportunities.

To access links, please visit the electronic program booklet at:  
[careers.vassar.edu/explore-and-plan/sig-programs/sophomores.html](http://careers.vassar.edu/explore-and-plan/sig-programs/sophomores.html)



*Sophomore Career Connections* is planned and organized by the offices of Career Development and Alumnae/i Engagement at Vassar College.