



Fall 2021

Business & Liberal Arts

ALUMNI Newsletter

Dear BALA Alumni,

We are excited to share our bi-annual newsletter and thrilled to report that our first Alumni Newsletter garnered much positive feedback! Many of you reached out to us to reconnect or to offer your time to speak to our BALA students. We are grateful to you for beginning to develop internship opportunities in your organizations. These connections are crucial to strengthening both our alumni outreach and our internship program.

Thanks to your genuine willingness to give back to BALA, we have launched our **BALA Speaker Series**. This is a unique opportunity for us to welcome BALA alumni to relate professional journeys, share experiences, and speak candidly with current BALA students. These events are virtual for now, but we hope to move to both in-person and online starting in the spring.

Our first of three events for the Fall semester was held on Wednesday, October 13th and featured Isaac Rozenfeld of Amazon Web Services and Jesse Shapiro of EY (formerly Ernst & Young), who were friends and classmates in BALA 20+ years ago. They generously shared their time and unequivocally discussed their career paths. More importantly, they explained how, at almost every turn, the skills they learned in BALA were relevant in the real world. Our second speaker, Victoria Drake, was just as warm and forthcoming as she described her road to taking on the role of in-house counsel at Nikon. A 2013 graduate of BALA, who majored in history, Victoria spoke candidly about moving from the non-profit world into law school, answered specific questions from students, and graciously offered to speak with BALA students interested in pursuing a career in law. Thank you, Jesse, Isaac, and Victoria!

Our final event this semester will be on Thursday, November 18th, with Anika Chowdhury, a Production Coordinator with DreamWorks Animation. A more recent graduate, Anika is from an entirely different industry. This clearly demonstrates that our graduates pursue a wide range of professional paths. This unique BALA approach is valuable to share with our current students. Our Adjunct Lecturer and Internship Advisor, Arda Nazerian, deserves much thanks for connecting with BALA alumni and for organizing these [events](#).

Other news that we would like to share is our **new BALA curriculum**. Given the ever-evolving business environment, we have updated our courses and requirements to ensure successful entrance into careers. BALA is now a 21-credit minor that consists of six required core courses and one elective. This new elective focuses on [Leadership and Business](#) and can be selected from a wide range of courses across multiple departments. We believe that these changes will allow more flexibility in scheduling and provide a more rewarding academic experience for our students.

As the demand for our courses is increasing, we are thrilled to welcome two **new additions to our BALA adjunct faculty**: Jamaal Glenn and Diane Shults. [Jamaal Glenn](#), who teaches BALA 200/Entrepreneurship & Innovation, is a Director at Schmidt Futures, a social impact investment firm backed by former Google Chairman & CEO Eric Schmidt, where he leads the organization's entrepreneurship programs and venture capital investing. He is also the founder of Glenn Media Group, a boutique consulting firm. A board member of various organizations, including the Council on Foreign Relations, the Progressive Policy Institute, and LION Publishers, Jamaal received his MBA from the Stanford Graduate School of Business, an MPA from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, and BA from the University of Missouri. [Diane Shults](#) is the Associate Director of Alumni and

Employer Relations at Queens College and is teaching BALA 101/Business & Society. A professional with 25 years of experience in the financial services industry focused on human resources, Diane also serves as adjunct faculty of Co-Operative Education in Queens College's Center for Career Engagement and Internships. She earned her BA in Psychology from Queens College, an MS in Industrial Labor Relations & Human Resources Management from the Zicklin School of Business at Baruch College, and is a Certified Professional Coach.

In other faculty news, we are pleased to announce that adjunct faculty, [Susan Kuhn](#), has been selected as an **Andrew W. Mellon Transformative Learning in the Humanities (TLH) Faculty Fellow**. In true BALA culture, this opportunity will be shared with BALA students in her Critical Thinking class next spring. The CUNY-wide TLH initiative aims to transform the classroom by focusing on how students learn and by supporting faculty as they make their classrooms student-centered. Fifty-one scholars were selected from all 18 CUNY campuses. Students in classes taught by Mellon scholars will be designated as Mellon Student Fellows, will be recognized in their contribution to an equitable democratic future, and will receive Metrocards as compensation. In addition to experimenting in the classroom itself, both Faculty and Student Fellows will produce a project to share with the community-at-large during the semester.

Adjunct faculty, Arda Nazerian, has also been awarded a Queens College service-based learning grant under the **"[We Learn so We May Serve](#)"** initiative. She is transforming a BALA internship class to incorporate the concepts of corporate social responsibility (CSR) by creating shared value and community engagement. In addition to their internship requirements, students in the "Working to Learn; Learning to Serve" course will be required to participate in four seminars during the Spring 2022 semester where these concepts will be explored more closely using both current events and case studies. If your organization has a robust CSR platform and would like to learn more about how you can contribute to this important innovative effort, please reach out directly to Arda at arda.nazerian@gmail.com.

We're excited to share that Queens College has received a three-year, \$446,500 award from the **Blackstone Charitable Foundation to implement Blackstone LaunchPad (BLP)**, an entrepreneurial skills-building program for students. The initiative is especially timely with Queens College's [new business school](#). Students enrolled in the BALA course, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, under the instruction of BALA professors, Jamaal Glenn, Charles Kelly, and Steven Leventhal, will have opportunities to participate in business pitch competitions, ventures, conferences, workshops, and speaker series. Click [here](#) to read more.

Queens College has also been presented with a grant from the [Stevens Initiative](#) for a virtual exchange program, **Global Scholars Achieving Career Success (GSACS)**. A total of \$750,000 has been awarded to nine institutions to connect students from five CUNY colleges to university students in Morocco, Palestinian Territories, Jordan, and Egypt. During this two-year program, students work together on experiential learning projects that explore UN Sustainable Development Goals within their local and international communities, as well as engage in career development. Adjunct faculty, [Jill Carvajal](#), was selected to facilitate a GSACS module in her Principles of Marketing course with her international faculty partner this Fall.

Finally, we are proud and thrilled to announce that our very own BALA Director, Dr. Schiro Withanachchi, is the first recipient of the **[Presidential Faculty Award for Diversity and Inclusion](#)** presented at the [State of the College Address & Excellence in Teaching Awards Ceremony](#). Congratulations to Schiro on her achievement and her ongoing efforts to continuously improve our already wonderful BALA minor!

As we continue to enhance our BALA Alumni Newsletter, we would love to hear from you about your own professional achievements, milestones, or other news you'd like to share! Please reach out to us at BALA.department@qc.cuny.edu.

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