



2005



2006



PRESIDIAN



2008



2011



Spring 2015 Cohort 1 turns 10!



2012



2015





Military Vets Continue to Serve as Presidians

By Michael Hsu, Staff Writer

During her time as a US Air Force linguist, Michaela Johnson (C22) studied North Korean warplanes and flew on support missions over Afghanistan, listening to the Taliban in her ear. While serving in the US Navy, Farris Galyon (C19) was on a ship in the battle group that responded to the Somali pirates made infamous in the 2013 film *Captain Phillips*. And, during a 20-year career in the US Air Force, Sean Middleton (C2) served on bases all over the world—from Germany to Bosnia and from Albania to Guam.



I feel like everyone at Presidio has a really unique story; there are a lot of non-traditional students that I feel like I fit in with.”

-Michaela Johnson

Their globe-hopping journeys eventually brought all of them here to Presidio Graduate School. At PGS, a growing contingent of military veterans continues to add to the immense diversity of perspectives and experiences that make the student body so dynamic and vibrant.

“I feel like everyone at Presidio has a really unique story; there are a lot of non-traditional students that I feel like I fit in with,” said Michaela, who went from zero experience with Asian languages to full fluency in Korean after 63 weeks during her training at the Defense Language Institute. “I’m usually the weird one, but it seems like almost everybody in my cohort is non-traditional in their life experiences, and that just makes things that much richer.”

Farris, who earned a commission as a surface warfare officer and served for 2.5 years in the close confines of the cruiser USS Leyte Gulf, certainly recognizes a tight-knit community when he sees one. The atmosphere of PGS, in fact, reminds him of a different kind of spirited camaraderie.

“When I was younger, I used to enjoy going to church,” Farris reflects. “But the thing I loved most was not Sunday school or the lessons or anything like that. I liked going for the fellowship, and every time I went there was a collection of like-minded individuals who were excited about the same things and it was very supportive. In a lot of ways, I get that sense from the Presidio community.”

Professor Dwight Collins, a founding faculty member of PGS and himself a veteran who served in the US Air Force during the 1970s, notes that it’s logical for veterans to seek out that kind of community—and to find it at PGS.

“Presidians are bound together by our mutual belief in—and commitment to—sustainability values,” Dwight observes. “The

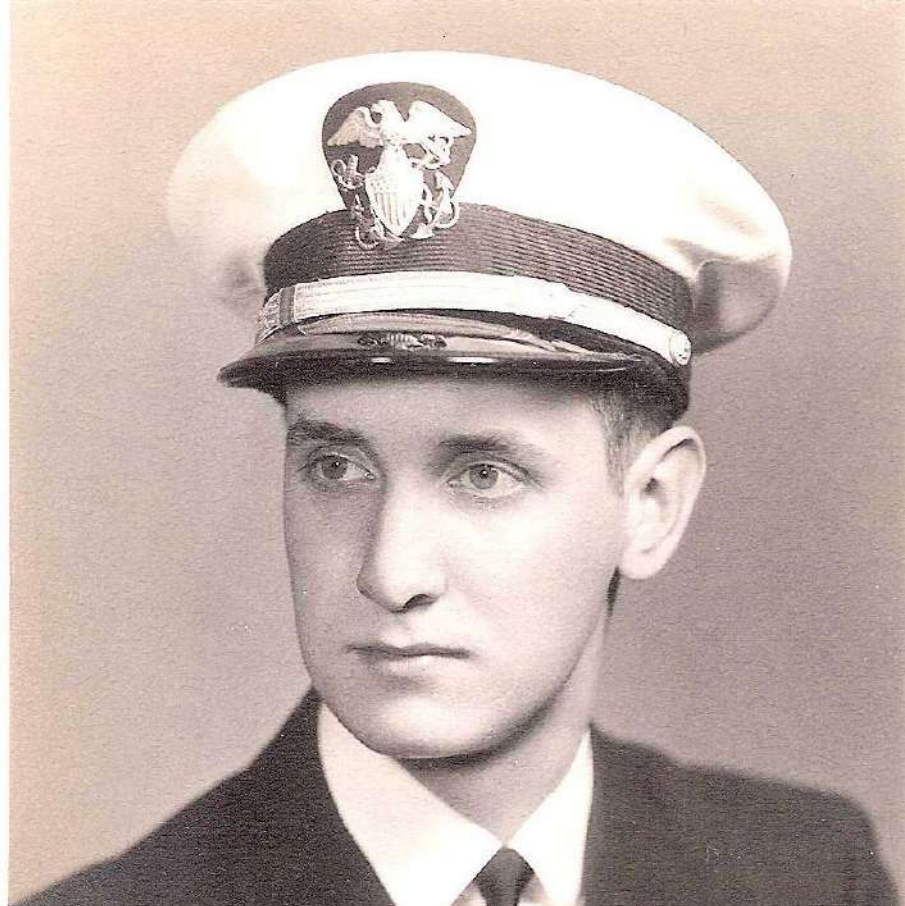
result is that we operate as members of a tribe, working together, caring for one another, teaching one another, and helping fine-tune one another’s strengths. Our military vets come to us knowing how it feels to be a member of a tribe with its intense personal loyalties—many times cemented in combat.”

That sentiment is shared by PGS’s founder, Richard M. “Dick” Gray, himself a World War II Navy veteran who served in the invasion of Normandy. “The value we share is that the team comes before the individual,” says Dick. “There is no limit to what we can get done in the world if we don’t care who gets the credit.”

Sean, the longtime airman, understands the power of human connection and loyalty. Nearly every male in his family has served in the armed forces—and it was one of his grandmother’s final wishes that he enlist as well. Then, after a much-traveled military career, Sean did six months of research and ultimately chose PGS for his graduate program, because it offered “one of the first MPAs in sustainable development.”

Farris was originally circumspect about attending PGS because of its relative youth as an institution. When he first heard about PGS, he was still in Manama, Bahrain, serving as an operations officer in the maritime security division of the Fifth Fleet. “The more I heard about it, I couldn’t discern whether it was really skillful marketing or what,” Farris says. “You could certainly imagine a cynical military officer being a little wary of a school in San Francisco he’d never heard of.”

However, as in Michaela’s case, Farris got a whole-hearted personal recommendation from



a friend who was attending PGS. Both Michaela and Farris enrolled shortly after their first interactions with PGS alums and staff. “I feel like a lot of MBA programs are super-competitive and kind of exclusive—you feel like you have to stack up on your own,” Michaela says. “But at Presidio, it’s very inclusive, and everyone supports each other and encourages each other and includes each other in everything.”

An added encouragement for veterans is PGS participation in the Yellow Ribbon Program—a provision of the post-9/11 GI Bill. Participating schools that offer this veterans-only scholarship have their contribution matched, dollar for dollar, by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs. For many vets pursuing a graduate degree, this program would cover their entire tuition.

“I can tell you straight up that the Yellow Ribbon program was ultimately one of the primary vehicles that enabled me to attend Presidio,” says Farris, who also worked as an Environmental Defense Fund Climate Corps Fellow with the US Army energy team at Fort Bragg in 2014.

As Dwight notes, veterans bring a special kind of maturity to the school—as well as exception-





al planning skills, extraordinary leadership abilities, and a way of looking at the world that only a military background could provide. Sean, for example, had a unique view of the progression of the sustainability movement—as he went from air traffic controller to flight procedures engineer to operations director.

He saw how the air force became the first branch of the military to install recycling bins on its bases. He saw how flight procedures were changed to allow for continuous descent and climb, which saved fuel. And he saw how engineers carefully designed aerodromes to minimize the impact on Native American land and neighboring communities.

“Believe it or not, the [US] Air Force is one of the most sustainable forces among all our defense agencies or defense directorates,” Sean says. “We always looked at sustainability as the way to move forward—with everything from energy to fuel to the design of our facilities.”

His experience in the military—along with his PGS MPA degree—have prepared Sean for his fulfilling work as a senior air quality planner for the Houston/Galveston Area Council.

As for current students Farris and Michaela, they plan to pursue careers in financial services/capital management and international development, respectively. And while they formulate the specifics of their future plans, they continue to enrich—and be enriched by—the passionate learning environment at PGS.

“It’s difficult for me to imagine a better follow-on experience to the military, than I’ve had at Presidio,” Farris says.

Michael Hsu is a Berkeley-based writer who enjoys lobbing softballs in his free time. During interviews, however, it’s all hardball.



Previous spread: Farris Galyon on the bridge of a Navy ship. Opposite page from top left: Associate Dean Dwight Collins and PGS Co-Founder Dick Gray at PGS Commencement 2014. Dick Grey in his Navy uniform from World War II. Farris in *The Business of Sports and Sustainability*. Above: Michaela Johnson in her Air Force uniform with friends. Michaela in *Principles of Sustainable Management*.

ACTIVIST/ANALYST

Donna LaSala embodies her own paradigm as an effective change maker

By Michael Hsu, Staff Writer

By her own description, Presidio Graduate School Professor Donna LaSala is a “very, very passionate Sicilian woman” whose New York upbringing explains how she can talk “for two hours without taking a breath” at a bracingly rapid-fire rate of speech.

Given all that energy, it’s hardly surprising that Donna, who is retiring this summer as the City of Berkeley’s Director of Information Technology, has amassed an impressive portfolio of accomplishments—and lessons learned that she applies directly to her classes at PGS.

As Berkeley’s IT director since 2007, Donna has been responsible for the strategic planning, financial management, and successful operation of the technology services and programs for the city (including the coordination of over 150 different software systems). As an adjunct faculty member at PGS, Donna teaches Public Sector Finance; Information Management, Technology & Policy; and Research Methods & Policy Evaluation.

Presidian caught up with Donna (but only just barely) to hear about her work at PGS, her Berkeley achievements, and her future plans.

PRESIDIAN: Why did you get involved at Presidio Graduate School?

DONNA: I decided to join PGS because I was excited by the opportunity to bring real-world, practitioner insights into the curriculum that could help shape the next generation of public sector leaders and partners.



I had repeatedly experienced difficulty finding qualified applicants for public sector leadership positions and private sector partners who truly understood how government works. It dawned on me that I could play a meaningful role in helping alleviate the problem by contributing to the education of MPA, MBA, and—especially—dual MPA/MBA students. That got me excited! What a great way to transform my frustration at not finding qualified applicants into meaningful action!

PRESIDIAN: What are some things that you wish those people knew about how government works?

DONNA: There are two categories of things that were bothering me very deeply about applicants—particularly in the last decade. One was a lack of systems thinking: folks had a lot of knowledge—very discrete sets of knowledge. But the folks that we were interviewing didn't really have a very good rubric or frame of mind for how all of these discrete bodies of knowledge really work and interact in a systems-thinking perspective. They don't understand how all the parts connect and work like gears in a system.

Second, and more specifically, I often encounter both in applicants and in students very extreme viewpoints such as, "Government should be run more like a business" or "Government is government and that's the way government will always be." What I think those assertions belie is a lack of understanding around the ways in which the mission of government and the mission of a private sector entity are very purposefully different.

PRESIDIAN: How would you explain those differences?

DONNA: It begins with the way we steward our resources around risk. Fundamentally, private firms profit from risk. So they really are, in some sense, risk seekers. But government's charge is to steward public resources; they are supposed to hold onto capital holdings. When you think just from a finance point of view, that is a very, very different perspective and mission.

The other area of response is: private sector market failures are exactly what government

is supposed to be working toward addressing. Government gets in there and tries to address certain externalities—and that frustrates the profit-seeking motives of private firms. And then we get into this almost "name-calling" type of interaction.

When students engage in that debate without a clear understanding of why that debate is even happening, I think we do ourselves a disservice as change agents in the sustainability realm. I'm so passionate and so excited about educating our MPA/MBAs in that public/private partnership space to understand and speak "Government" and to speak "Private Sector"—and be able to bridge that gap.

PRESIDIAN: One of your oft-repeated PGS mantras calls for the cultivation of "activist" and "analyst" skills. Can you elaborate?

DONNA: My experience is that Presidio attracts a lot of activist energy because people care and believe and want to make change. Where we get into some imbalance is where we send folks into the workforce with all of this activist energy but not a lot of skill in steeping their thoughts and their narrative in sensible analytics. So, in my experience, I've seen bright, fresh graduates come into my organization and they don't really understand the business of government and how the hard work gets done.

So if you have strong activist narrative skills and strong, hardcore quantitative analytical skills, that means you not only know how to figure out what the story really is, you also know how to tell that story in a way that inspires. Sometimes you change people's minds or hearts by using activist energy—and sometimes by using analysis.

The uber lesson—the macro lesson—in that is you've got to be able to have a nuanced approach to meeting people where they're at. You can't pull people to meet them where you're at; you've got to go and meet people where they're at.

The other metaphor I use with my students is we need to give you that box of 64 Crayola crayons with all of the different colors—and the sharpener. You might walk into graduate school

with the box of 24 crayons. But you get out of here with the box of 64.

PRESIDIAN: PGS Experiential Learning (EL) projects give students many of those crayons. Last year, Presidians contributed 1,500 hours of work in launching the open data portal for Berkeley. This year, a couple of your students are doing financial modeling and data visualization for the city's Climate Action Plan. What makes PGS EL projects unique?

DONNA: I think it's unusual in the extent to which students are actually doing the work and producing it in its final form. They're not producing a draft. My impression is that, in most EL projects, folks go off into the field and they do maybe 60-70% usable work—and then it's modified by practitioners, and then presented to council. These students' work is actually going to be what hits the dais, what hits the legislative body.

And, personally, working with students on EL projects has been some of the most rewarding work of my career. Presidians bring unparalleled humility and commitment to the work they perform. Working with such dedicated and aspirational students has reinvigorated my commitment to public service. After 16 years in the public sector, that sort of reaffirmation is more valuable than words can truly convey!

PRESIDIAN: Looking back on your career, what are the accomplishments you are most proud of?

DONNA: I'm getting a little choked up over this...I helped initiate and develop a curriculum for the leadership development program at the City of Berkeley, which really honed in on those quantitative and qualitative skills that our internal staff members need to grow their own careers. About 30% of my staff right now have been promoted into their positions. I'm super proud of that. You're not an employee in my department without getting some education value-add! In many ways it was the precursor to me getting involved at Presidio.

On the operational side, the two things that are coming instantly to mind are. One, I've really gotten the city to change its approach to invest-

ing in IT infrastructure. When I first got here, we didn't have any capital replacement funds for IT. But I was able to convince not only our Council and the City Manager but also department manager colleagues that IT really needs to be invested in like we do traditionally for public works capital infrastructure, like storm drains and streets. So, early on, I started comparing IT to public works—IT is the public works of the future!

The other thing is I helped found the 311 Call Center [to address questions on municipal services]. After we moved the 311 Call Center into



IT is the public works of the future!"

-Donna LaSala

the IT department, representatives now answer 95% of the calls, with a 5% or less abandon rate, and 55% first-call resolution on all types of community calls that come into the City of Berkeley. I am so proud and honored that I had a chance to do that, because that is not a traditional IT role. But the call center really does connect the dots between the community feedback about how our systems are working and the systems we put in place.

PRESIDIAN: So what's next for you, after you retire from the City of Berkeley in August?

DONNA: I've really longed for the opportunity to devote more time to the Presidio. I feel like I do a good job as an instructor but there's more I can do—having more hours to devote to crafting and giving feedback on EL projects, developing the curriculum, and going to educational conferences rather than IT director conferences. Teaching brings me an incredible amount of joy.

So I'm going to dive into the Presidio—but first I'm going to take a couple weeks off. I feel like I've been working at warp-speed for the last 16 years!

Raley's



THE DOUGH-GOODER

*Raley's Meg Burritt seeks to change the world,
one grocery run at a time*

By Michael Hsu, Staff Writer

Meg Burritt (C9) wanted to open a bakery. A bakery that was “local, sustainable, and quality.” A bakery that sourced every ingredient—down to the sugar and the flour—as locally as possible. A bakery that was meaningfully integrated into the fabric of the community—as opposed to just being “a place where you go to get a cupcake.”

But then Meg went to Presidio Graduate School to pursue an MBA in sustainable management. “I went to Presidio to learn how to run a small business, and I left Presidio learning that I should never run a small business,” she laughs.

For Meg, finding out that minding the minute details of running a small business didn’t suit her skill set was only one revelation. At PGS, she also discovered her passion for making a broader impact on the food industry as a whole—from farm to fork.

In May 2014, she was named the Director of Wellness and Sustainability for Raley’s Family of

Fine Stores—a Northern California-based company that operates 118 grocery stores (under the brand names Raley’s, Nob Hill Foods, and Bel Air Markets), as well as Food Source outlets and Aisle 1 gas stations.

“We’ve never had a director of sustainability at Raley’s before, so my job up until now has basically been trying to figure out what my job is,” Meg jokes.

In her current role, Meg has three main responsibilities. She manages the natural/organic food items, health and beauty care products, and over-the-counter medication merchandising in “center store.” She sets the corporate strategy for sustainability, which includes marketing Raley’s efforts and building partnerships to realize those initiatives. And she’s also devising a long-term plan to position Raley’s as a “wellness destination” under the leadership of health-minded CEO Michael Teel, the grandson of the Raley’s founder, Thomas P. Raley.

That's a lot on Meg's plate. But she says the first and most fundamental step is educating and training Raley's 13,000 employees—from the truck drivers in the company fleet to the people stocking shelves at night. Communicating the “what/so what/now what” of Raley's sustainability program to its diverse internal stakeholders is “the most important [task] to get perfectly right,” says Meg.

“Even though I head a ‘sustainability department’ of two people, sustainability is actually a department of 100% of the company,” Meg explains. “I can't execute anything without the operations team. I can't distribute a more sustainable product without the distribution team. I can't train anyone without the learning and development team. I can't communicate what we're doing internally or externally without our comms and marketing and Public Relations team. So everybody has to work together, and that's really 90% of my job—creating relationships and getting people to collaborate and work together on things they've never worked on before.”

She credits her PGS experience with giving her the tools to build coalitions and bring people from disparate backgrounds together (Meg was student representatives president at PGS). She says PGS also showed her the importance of inculcating an ethic of sustainability within corporate structures that have wide-ranging reach.

“Everything I'd been learning at Presidio had been teaching me how to create change at institutions like Raley's,” Meg reflects. “We have 118 stores and each store has thousands of people who shop in them and each time they walk down our aisles or interact with our team members—that's an opportunity for us to influence [their] behavior and create sustainable change. And so that's really the biggest impact that we can make as Presidians.”

Meg's work in sharing sustainability expertise and values at Raley's got a boost when she was named as a 2014 First Mover Fellow of the Aspen Institute. Through this leadership development program aimed at “intrapreneurs” (people pushing change within large organizations), the fellows are afforded access and connections to senior executives at their respective companies.

The First Mover Fellows work on projects that create value for their company while creating positive social impact.

Knowing that approximately 30% of food grown in America is wasted, Meg is currently forming a plan for Raley's to put that food waste (e.g., “imperfect” fruits and vegetables) to good use—especially at stores adjacent to “food deserts.”

“I thought: ‘Wouldn't it be amazing if we can find a way to reduce some of the waste that we have in our supply chain and connect it with people who don't have access to fresh food?’” Meg says. “That way we use our retail vehicle for good on both sides of the equation.”

In some ways, that “retail vehicle for good” isn't too far from Meg's original dream of a neighborhood bakery that dispenses wholesome treats and positivity. Through a grocery chain like Raley's, Meg hopes that quality food can be made more accessible for even the most price-



sensitive consumers—like the budget-conscious Mom with a couple of young kids.

“She wants to feed them the best products, and she knows that the best products might be the organic apple as opposed to the conventional apple, but she might not be able to afford that every time,” Meg explains. “My personal vision—and I think it's really aligned with where we're trying to go as a company—is to get to the point where we can offer more of that to more people, and therefore create a bigger swath of change.”

Opposite page: A headshot of Meg Burritt. Above: Meg in a field for a Raley's commercial shoot.



BY EXECUTIVE ORDER

Governor Brown appoints Matt Henigan California's Deputy Secretary for Sustainability

By Michael Hsu, Staff Writer

When Matt Henigan (C10) was a freshman at Pitzer College, a professor asked him the question that would end up shaping his academic and professional life.

“What is the question you’re in school to answer?”

As a child, Matt was the kid with the lemonade stand raising funds to save the rainforest, so as a college student, the answer sprang to mind immediately

“Why is the environment so screwed up and

what do we need to do to fix it?” Matt recalls. “That clarity and direction allowed me to choose classes, build a major, and set me on a course.”

It’s a course that has now led Matt to an appointment by California Governor Jerry Brown in August 2014 as Deputy Secretary for Sustainability at the California Government Operations Agency.

Matt’s job is to coordinate the projects that fulfill Gov. Brown’s Executive Order B-18-12, a directive issued in 2012 spelling out sustainability benchmarks for all departments under the



Opposite page:
A headshot of
Matt Henigan.
Above: Matt
being sworn in at
the Government
Operations
Agency offices
in the Jesse
Unruh Building
in Sacramento;
he was sworn
in by Marybel
Batjer, Secretary
of the California
Government
Operations
Agency. Photo
credit: Ken Hunt,
Department of
General Services.

“Gov Ops” umbrella (including the Department of Technology, Department of General Services, and Department of Human Resources, among others).

“The Executive Order is like a wish list,” Matt explains. “If Presidio students had sat around and come up with sustainability goals for the state, this would be it.”

In other words, Matt works to “green” the state of California’s facilities, fleet, and processes. On any given day, he might be studying financing mechanisms (such as power purchase agreements) for solar and wind power, laying the groundwork for electric vehicles and charging stations, figuring out how to attain LEED certification for state buildings, or finding ways to improve energy efficiency and boost the use of renewable energy.

Thus far, one of his key accomplishments is pushing through a requirement that all new

buildings and major renovations participate in the statewide Savings by Design program, which provides rebates and technical assistance for projects that are more energy-efficient than code dictates.

Clearly, Matt’s previous positions at Sustainable Works—a Santa Monica-based nonprofit that partners with businesses to make their practices more sustainable—have provided invaluable experience in implementing these initiatives. But it was the Presidio Graduate School MBA program that taught Matt how to persuade decision makers in the state bureaucracy.

“I was the biggest eye roller when it came to ‘soft skills’—I thought they were such a waste of time,” says Matt, remembering his PGS management classes on teamwork and leadership. “But, coming out of school, that’s what I’ve used the most! How do you get a team moving in the right direction—especially when you have no specific authority over anyone? You use the



For two years, Presidio trains you how to make the business case for sustainability, and now that's basically what I do every day."

-Matt Henigan

art of persuasion and consensus building. The things that we worked on in those soft skills classes have been absolutely essential."

In fact, a big part of Matt's job entails getting directors and deputy directors across the various departments to take a slight pause from their many important responsibilities and consider how they can go green. Not surprisingly for Presidians, Matt will usually get their attention by offering "win-win" advantages.

"They might not be worried about the energy bills—or even particularly their carbon footprint—but maybe they've got a maintenance backlog," he explains. "So you say, 'Well, these brand-new lights last forever, and your maintenance guys will be able to do something else with their time.' And they'll say, 'Great, sign me up!'"

What Matt does—in the oft-repeated mantra of PGS—is "present the business case."

"For two years, Presidio trains you how to make the business case for sustainability, and now that's basically what I do every day," he says.

On an even larger scale, the state of California—by demonstrating the feasibility of sustainable practices—makes a compelling case for corporations and industries to follow suit.

"When the private sector sees that the state is jumping in and doing it in their own operations, they know that the technology has been vetted; it's not some off-the-wall idea," Matt explains. "If the very deliberative state government installed this type of technology, or is using these building techniques or these financing mechanisms, you can be sure that it's been well-examined and that it's not some fly-by-night, flash-in-the-pan type of thing."

This "walk the walk" modeling approach grabbed headlines nationally in March, when President Obama signed an executive order directing federal agencies to slash greenhouse gas emissions by 40% compared to 2008 levels and to increase energy use from renewable sources by 30%.

"That's right up my alley; that's exactly what I'm working on," Matt laughs. "My wife says we're not moving to D.C., though."

Good thing. We need Matt—and his lifelong dedication to finding answers to seemingly intractable environmental questions—right here in California.



THE GAME CHANGERS

By Michael Hsu, Staff Writer

While we fantasize about a dream matchup in next year's Super Bowl 50 at Santa Clara (Oakland Raiders vs. San Francisco 49ers, anyone?), there will at least be a dream team of Presidio Graduate School alums working to support the Super Bowl 50 Host Committee in their goal to make the Big Game as sustainable as possible.

PGS has become a Contributing Partner of the Host Committee, and has provided the services of three of its best and brightest: PGS Research Affiliates Laura Waters (C10), Erik Distler (C13), and Izabel Loinaz (C12).

Neill Duffy, co-chair of the Host Committee's sustainability subcommittee, approached PGS Professor Allen Hershkowitz about getting some extra people-power to realize their ambitious goals. But, given a tight timeline (Super Bowl 50 is on February 7, 2016), they were seeking experienced advisors who could hit the



ground running.

It just so happened that Allen had three talented and energetic TAs for his Business of Sports and Sustainability class—who had helped develop the course from the beginning. They devised an approach that would give lift to the Host Committee's sustainability efforts, provide the trio with invaluable experience, and elevate the standing of PGS.

"When you think of all the sustainability impacts that come with hosting such a big event, to me it's a no-brainer that a school like Presidio Graduate School would be involved," says Erik, who also works as a consultant in the Sustainable Business Solutions practice at PwC.

"Presidio was the first graduate program to offer a certificate around sports and sustainability, so it's about trying to secure our position as a leader in higher education on this topic," adds Izabel, who is the CEO of her own sustainable business consultancy, Spring Partners Inc. "By aligning ourselves with a brand like Super Bowl 50, we're keeping company with the leaders in the field."

When the trio began their work in January, one of their first tasks was understanding the role of the Host Committee. The Host Committee is responsible for all the festivities that surround the football game—the Super Bowl City in San Francisco, the activities and parties for fans, the

transportation corridor leading to Levi's Stadium and around the region, and more.

"It's more than just a one-day game; there are events leading up to the game--and after the fact--that go on for weeks and months," says Laura, who also works at Blackbaud on corporate social responsibility tracking software.

In fact, one of the primary objectives of the Host Committee is to ensure that the social good of Super Bowl 50 lingers long after the stadium lights dim. In pursuing this "net-positive" legacy, the Host Committee is disbursing grants to nonprofits and changemakers through its record-setting philanthropic 50 Fund, working to reduce climate change impacts, and striving to use resources and materials in the most responsible manner.

That's where the PGS team comes in. Erik, for his part, is developing environmentally conscious sourcing guidelines in five key areas: transportation, temporary power, food, water, and waste.

Laura is setting up software to track sustainability metrics that will help the department heads better understand their influence in their areas of execution, while Izabel is establishing metrics and methodologies for measuring and reporting the sustainability impacts of their work.

"This Host Committee has been very clear about wanting to be the most socially aware host committee to date," Laura says. "The goals are for this Super Bowl to be the most shared, the most participatory, and the most giving Super Bowl. They want to pass on a stronger sense of responsibility to future host committees."

Another goal, of course, is to pave the way for the Bay Area to host future Super Bowls. And the trio of PGS Sports and Sustainability TAs are pioneers in ensuring PGS will remain heavily involved.

"When we are done with this initial period of time with Super Bowl 50, the intention is to hopefully create this pipeline for opportunities for interns to come through and expand the potential of this project," Laura says.

As a result, the mission and passion of PGS can be seen by—and hopefully inspire—the greatest possible audience. After all, sports, as the subject of so many great stories, can also be leveraged to tell the sustainability story.

"Sports as a model for social change has been proven over and over, with baseball being a frontrunner on racial integration," Izabel notes. "Now, it's only natural the environment start to come into the picture."

"It's about 'How can we leverage something as powerful as sports—and the powerful following of sports—to talk about what are, quite frankly, more important global and regional environmental and social issues?'" Erik adds. "Sports, to me, is a platform from which we can do this. There's no other place where people gather to the 10,000s, to the 20,000s, to the 100,000s at a time, in one place, for one purpose."



Setting the Standard

Presidians at SASB are building the infrastructure for better investing

By Michael Hsu, Staff Writer

The Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) has the herculean mission of developing and disseminating 80+ standards across 10 sectors—spanning the full spectrum of industries from sectors including Transportation, Health Care, Services, and Technology & Communication. Deb Martin (EC8), SASB’s Associate Director of Stakeholder Engagement, works with and within all of them. Alongside fellow Presidian Katie Schmitz-Eulitt (EC5), SASB’s Director of Stakeholder Engagement, Deb reaches out to and assembles industry working groups that help guide the development of the standards. *Presidian* sat down with Deb to discuss SASB’s big hairy audacious goal, the challenges SASB faces, and how her time at Presidio Graduate School prepared her for this role.

PRESIDIAN: Tell us how a standard is developed, from start to finish.

DEB: Each standard takes a year to develop. It starts in research using an evidence-based approach, and then it goes to the first vetting phase by the stakeholders, represented by industry working groups balanced across corporate, market, and public interest

participants. The feedback from the working groups is then used to develop the draft standard, which is put through a 90-day public comment period.

The “final” step is the release of a provisional standard for a minimum of one year. The reason why SASB issues provisional standards is to allow companies and investors to test-drive the standards, and provide feedback on their utility.

PRESIDIAN: What is your team’s role in pulling together those industry working groups?

DEB: For each sector, it’s our job to learn that sector, to really dig deep, and to leverage the many channels that we have to bring key people to the table. Our work can’t be done without the help of those partners. For example, we have 150 advisory council members. We purposely built that to be vast, because we’re a small standard-setting organization with about 30 people. For us to really socialize the standard, we need people out there who are leaders within their industry and have wide networks. That’s the way we do this—a lot of heavy hitting from our team, and a lot of assistance from those who are in the marketplace. It takes a village.

PRESIDIAN: Each quarter your team moves on to another sector. How far along are you in this process?

DEB: Right now we just wrapped up our working groups for “Consumption II.” The Consumption sector is our largest sector; it encompasses 15 industries so we had to break it into two different groups. Consumption II is mainly focused on retailers—food retailers, drug retailers, speciality, e-commerce.

We will embark on the last two sectors in 2015: Renewable Resources and Alternative Energy, containing 8 industries; and Infrastructure, containing 11 industries. We hope that by Q1 of 2016, all of the standards, for all of the sectors, will be released in their provisional form.

PRESIDIAN: What are some of the challenges SASB has encountered?

DEB: It’s hard work; it’s change. We’re doing something that hasn’t been done before. If this was easy work, it already would’ve been done.

Not everyone is in agreement with our approach. I would liken this to the days when [the Financial Accounting Standards Board] FASB was created in the ’70s. There was a lot of pushback in the early days of FASB. “It’s going to cost too much.” Or “it’s going to take up too much time.” Or “investors aren’t asking for this.” If you go back in time, it’s a lot of the same arguments. That’s what we’re facing today. It’s not easy being on the front edge of change.

PRESIDIAN: How are you working to overcome those obstacles?

DEB: What we’re trying to do at SASB is just be very laser-focused on creating standards. As far as their uptake, that’s going to be for the marketplace to decide. The way we influence adoption is mainly through this vast group of supporters that we are amassing. Those are the folks that ultimately need to make the change happen. It’s a challenge for a standards-setting organization to then try to influence corporations; we need to educate companies and investors—that’s the part we play. We need to provide tools that make this as easy as possible, including an online feedback tool, a materiality map, and a standards navigator.

PRESIDIAN: Why is SASB’s work so important in creating a more sustainable future?

DEB: We’re still in a world where sustainability is decoupled from financial reporting, but I’m pleased to see this move toward integrated reporting. I see SASB as the key solution for the U.S. capital markets to take what already exists in financial reporting and find a way to incorporate essential nonfinancial data. Investors need to see both sides to make better decisions.

I also see SASB’s work as making sustainability more mainstream, so this isn’t something that only the top companies are doing but it’s really something that’s embedded into the way all corporations are managed—and the way investors are evaluating them.

PRESIDIAN: You were in the Executive Certificate program in 2010. How did your experience at PGS prepare you for your current position?

DEB: My time at Presidio taught me to be a systems thinker. If “sustainability” is just housed within a sustainability department or with a sustainability director who’s trying to bolt that onto an organization, that’s not systems thinking, that’s not a holistic strategy.

One of the powerful things that I learned at Presidio, and what is needed for the implementation of SASB standards, is a collaborative approach: an alignment across several functions, involving teams associated with finance, legal, sustainability, compliance, and investor relations. You have to break the barriers between those groups and speak to them in the language that they understand.

I think the other big takeaway from the Presidio program is that it helped build my confidence to be a courageous change agent. I didn’t just have an “educational” experience; I had a transformative experience. I realized I can be a force of change within an organization.

I think that’s echoed by other Presidians, including Katie and Darcie Renn (C17), a recent Presidio grad who is a research associate at SASB. We’re big fans of Presidio here at SASB!

Michael Hsu is a Berkeley-based writer specializing in puns, parables, e-mail marketing, feature writing, and words that rhyme with “orange.”

Top: Kate Drane presents at the PGS Capstone Showcase in May 2011 with teammates Lindsey Herrema (C11), Jenn Coyle (C11), Jake Blackshear (C11), and Heath Cox (C11). Below: Jenn, Kate, Lindsey holding Barley “the Can Dog,” and Jake Blackshear in front of their mobile canning unit.

INDIEGOGO

No Good Idea Should Stand Alone

By Michael Hsu, Staff Writer

Kate Drane (C11) can't stand to see people stand by themselves.

It's this bit of sympathetic kindness that led Kate to a life-changing conversation and, eventually, her current position as the head of design, tech, and hardware at Indiegogo, a San Francisco-based leader in the crowdfunding industry.

Back in the fall of 2008, Kate was wandering an Idealist Graduate School Fair in Chicago when she saw a woman standing by herself at a booth. Acting upon her impulse for Midwestern niceness, Kate struck up a conversation with the woman. Seena Berg, then the director of admissions for Presidio Graduate School, introduced Kate to the PGS degree programs and its hybrid online-residency structure.

For Kate, who was looking to make a transition from



O-GETTER



her steady job at a law firm, PGS was a revelation.

“I was like, ‘Wait, what? You’re telling me I can stay in Chicago but go to one of the most beautiful places on Earth once a month and learn about sustainability and then bring those lessons back to my community?’” Kate recalls. “This is the most amazing thing I’d ever heard of in my life!”

One week later, Kate applied to PGS. And in the fall of 2009, she enrolled in the MBA program and found herself surrounded by peers who were “all kinds of crazy, amazing, smart, talented, passionate, driven, kind, and thoughtful.” She encountered people who were living the life they wanted—and creating the world they wanted.

“When I was in Chicago my life was just so boring, and I chose it to be boring,” Kate reflects. “I had a 40-hour-a-week job, and it was pretty predictable, and I didn’t take a lot of risks. I thought that that’s what life was. And then I went to Presidio and just met all of these people who were incredible and had all of these incredible experiences.”



There shouldn’t be gatekeepers to great ideas coming off the ground; if somebody has a great idea and has an audience that cares—those should be the things that propels somebody to success.”

-Kate Drane

Kate has always shown an enterprising spark (even as a junior-level assistant at the Chicago law firm, she took the initiative to mastermind and launch a recycling program for the office). But it was PGS—and the vibrant San Francisco social entrepreneurship community—that unlocked her innate potential for creating and inspiring positive change.

Alongside her dynamic classmates at PGS, Kate started the bike club, co-founded PresidioSpace (a physical “student union” space for Presidians to network and

collaborate), and helped launch Quickfire by Design—a consultancy that facilitates sustainability and strategy solutions.

And, for her capstone project, Kate teamed with Jenn Coyle (C11), Lindsey Herrema (C11), Jake Blackshear (C11), and Heath Cox (C11) to found The Can Van—an environmentally-friendly mobile canning line to serve the 100 breweries found within a two-hour radius of San Francisco and beyond. As an efficient way for small breweries to work around the prohibitively high costs of running their own canning lines, the Can Van has filled more than 1.5 million cans for companies such as Anchor Brewing and Headlands Brewing Company.

The Can Van also introduced Kate to the world of crowdfunding. Even though the Can Van’s Indiegogo campaign fell short of its goal, she says the platform gave them invaluable exposure to potential supporters—and led them to their primary investor.

“The investor only invested in ‘boozy enterprises founded by women,’ and we fit that very unique niche!” Kate explains with a laugh.

In 2012, however, Kate sought the stability of a full-time job. And, because she had become a passionate evangelist for Indiegogo during its Series A round of venture funding, a director at Indiegogo, Erica Labovitz, encouraged her to apply for an opening there.

A contract-to-hire gig led to a full-time position at Indiegogo, and Kate—in typically creative and “Presidio” fashion—crafted her responsibilities to match her strengths. In January 2013 she was promoted to director of design, tech, and hardware—leading the growth and business development of those verticals.

In the last year, she’s given a TedX talk, spoken in the UK Parliament after Sir David Attenborough, sat on a panel with Shaquille O’Neal at SXSW, established a Chicago branch office for Indiegogo, and guided a 1,000% growth in the technology category at Indiegogo. But Kate says she’s most proud of



the role her team plays in shaping the nascent crowdfunding industry, which grew from \$1.5 billion in 2011 to \$5 billion in 2013.

“For us we’re all about democratizing access to capital,” she explains. “There shouldn’t be gatekeepers to great ideas coming off the ground; if somebody has a great idea and has an audience that cares—those should be the things that propels somebody to success.”

Citing the success of Indiegogo campaigns for Solar Roadways, the Breathometer, the Go Key, and URB-E, Kate says crowdfunding empowers ordinary folks and entire communities to make their visions a reality.

“I consider myself to be a VC of the people,” she says.



Ever the tireless catalyst, Kate helps connect those people with the tools, partnerships, and funds they need to start something amazing. In other words, she works to make sure no brave soul with a bright idea ever has to stand alone.

From top: Kate shakes hands with Shaquille O’Neal after sitting on a panel with him in the What’s Trending Lounge at SXSW 2014. Kate speaks at TEDx Embarcadero in October 2012. Kate with her team at Indiegogo, hosting their first ever Demo Night in September 2014. Kate with Sir David Attenborough after speaking in front of Parliament in London, England for the first ever UK Crowdfunding Day in 2013.



Power Play

Is smart energy possible in Afghanistan?

By Michael Hsu, Staff Writer

In her grandfather's hometown of Qarabagh, a farming community flanked by dusty deserts on one side and the Koh-e-Baba mountains of central Afghanistan on the other, Aseya Kakar (C21) met a woman who was suffering from lung cancer caused by the smoke from her cooking fires.

"In our world, where we have so much technology and access to so many resources, why should someone develop lung cancer because of cooking every day?" asks Aseya, the winner of Presidio Graduate School's fall 2014 Big Idea Prize, which awards a full-ride scholarship to a student with a visionary sustainability proposal.

Aseya's trip to Qarabagh in 2011 compelled her to choose the town as the proposed site for her big idea: the installation of fixed-dome biogas digesters that transform animal and human waste into fertilizer and natural gas for heating and cooking.

She says she will draw upon her experience implementing the biogas digesters at Mpaka Refugee Camp in Swaziland in August 2013—when she was an undergraduate at Wartburg College (Iowa). In this Clinton Foundation sustainability project, Aseya and two of her classmates worked with refugees to build and maintain the biogas digesters. She drew inspiration from seeing the refugees—displaced by war and unrest across the continent—unite under a shared purpose.

"I wanted to call it a peace project, because it was not just about providing renewable energy, but also about bringing them together," Aseya explains. "We saw someone from Somalia passing bricks to someone from the north part of Somalia, or from Sudan; they set aside their conflicts and worked together to create a common resource."

The underground biogas digester, which can provide a 500-person community 8 hours of energy per household per day, is challenging and audacious project. But Aseya, who just graduated from Wartburg in May 2014, says that the MBA/MPA Dual Degree program at PGS can provide the skills, knowledge, and personal connections necessary to bring the concept to scale around the world. Like a true Presidian, where others harbor doubt, Aseya has looked for people to help her on the path of possibility.





Aseya Kekar (C21) and two classmates from Wartburg College travelled to the Mpaka Refugee Camp in Swaziland in August 2013 and helped the refugees build biogas digesters. Photos courtesy of Aseya Kekar. Linda Nkosi, Daniel Sopdie “Melindza Sustainability Project For Peace,” Mpaka Refugee Camp, Swaziland, August 2013.



“You always need a mentor, whether it’s a friend or a teacher, who will show you what you can do to improve,” Aseya says, noting that it was Professor Scott Fullwiler (who serves on the faculty of both Wartburg and PGS) who encouraged her to apply to PGS and pursue her dream of bringing a cost-effective, renewable energy source to her home country.

With a new president elected and the political situation apparently stabilizing in Afghanistan, Aseya is sanguine about the possibility of working on the ground in Qarabagh. And even if security concerns prevent her from going there herself, she hopes to partner with an NGO to implement her big idea—and

grow an even bigger hope.

Aseya says biogas digester technology holds promise to not only promote Afghanistan’s self-sufficiency but also to encourage education among young people in agricultural areas who are currently unable to study at night due to a lack of power for lighting.

“For the past 14 years, we’ve been provided funds and there’s been a ‘spoon-feeding’ of civilians—basically creating a dependence on foreign aid,” Aseya says. “My goal is to not only provide the people with resources but to provide them with technical knowledge, work, and jobs.”

Talking Trash

PGS checks in with Austin’s award-nominated waste diversion planner

By Michael Hsu, Staff Writer

Amanda Rohlich (PA2), the waste diversion planner for the city of Austin, Texas, fully recognizes that not many people dream of working in the realm of landfills and compost bins.

“Only a few people who are involved in this field—resource management, materials management, waste, and recycling—actually chose to do it,” explains Amanda, noting that many facilities are run as family businesses. “It kind of chooses you.”



Only a few people who are involved in this field—resource management, materials management, waste, and recycling—actually chose to do it. It kind of chooses you.”

-Amanda Rohlich

For Amanda, the choice was made after she moved back home to Austin after graduating from Presidio Graduate School in 2012. She was at a career expo pursuing other opportunities when she approached the Austin Resource Recovery department’s booth to inquire about expanding the city’s curbside compost collection.

“I had it in Oakland, and it was so convenient!” Amanda says. “You take for granted all the ways that

the Bay Area is so progressive.”

Impressed with her MPA background and passion, the staff told Amanda about the waste diversion planning position—and she has served in that capacity ever since.

On the business outreach team in the strategic initiatives division, Amanda supports Austin’s overall zero-waste goal (diverting 90% of waste from landfills by 2040) by engaging the city’s business community. In addition to pioneering new programs such as commercial composting, Amanda works with companies on compliance with the city’s universal recycling ordinance.

“Implementation of ordinances can be a sticky subject for businesses;



it's not always what gets them going and gets them excited," Amanda concedes.

But she has been able to rally allies in the commercial space through recycling rebate programs, recognition programs for early adopters and trailblazers, and her own personal understanding of the demands of the private sector.

This planning job, in fact, is Amanda's first in the public sector—all her previous jobs had been in small business development. With a background in metalsmithing, Amanda worked for jewelry-making companies before a volunteer service trip to organic farms in South America in 2008 inspired her to make a change.

"All of my jobs up to that date had been really focused on providing luxury goods and services to wealthy women," Amanda reflects. "And I was just looking for a little more diversity in my workplace and a move in a direction where my impact could reach a little bit further. And that's where I identified that I might enjoy working in the public sector."

Above: Amanda Rohlich (right) in an advertisement by the City of Austin. Next page: Amanda and her team at a phone bank at a local TV station answering recycling questions.



In 2010, she enrolled in the MPA program at PGS, where she was immediately impressed by the “mojo” of her classmates. She found them to be as supportive as they were brilliant.

“It felt nice that I could turn bright red and do a terrible presentation and still get a lot of love and care and encouragement to get up and do it again,” Amanda recalls.

She says PGS cultivated a safe space to explore ideas, foster teamwork, and develop innovative

partnerships. And that same collaborative ethic permeates the city of Austin’s workplace culture—in which cross-departmental meetings and learning are actively encouraged (she regularly checks in with PGS alumnus Zach Baumer (C4), who serves as Austin’s climate program manager).

“My job has this really narrow ‘waste diversion planner’ title, but my duties are by no means narrow,” Amanda says. “I have to give kudos to Austin because they’re really looking to be the best-managed city

in the country, and they’re really great at bringing people together and finding ways to work out of those silos.”

Imbued with the values of her PGS education and the spirit of her fellow Presidians, it is no surprise that Amanda was nominated this fall for Austin’s PRIDE Award as an example of the city’s commitment to public service and engagement, responsibility and accountability, innovation and sustainability, diversity and inclusion, and ethics and integrity.



PRESIDIAN



Fall 2014
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