

## Crowdfunding on Campus Extends Development's Reach



CROWDFUNDING, THE SHORTHAND TERM for using the Internet and peer-to-peer networks to raise money, is moving to campuses nationwide. The University of Texas at Dallas, under the initiative of Marcus Baker, director of Development and Alumni Relations in the Naveen Jindal School of Management, has created Impact UTD, a portal for faculty, staff and students to raise donations for projects affiliated with the University.

The results in just the first six months were astounding. As of March 1, University students and faculty had launched 14 projects (nine of which were from the Jindal School), raised \$101,000 and processed 870 transactions. Even better, from a

long-term development standpoint, 28 percent of donors were current students and another 37 percent were families, friends or "supporters" of students. Alumni represented 19 percent of donors and faculty/staff, 16 percent. The most common amount donated: \$25. "This is such a great way to tap into the extended University family," said Erica Yeager, Jindal School's assistant dean of Development and Alumni Relations. "Students are donating to these funds—and because the minimum gift is just \$5, it allows students the opportunity to feel important to the cause at a very modest level."

Danielle Quiggins, an accounting senior, spearheaded an Impact UTD project to pay for

travel and registration costs to the 2016 Cambridge Business and Economics Conference, in July 2016. The initial goal was to fund three students. Their appeal hit its stretch goal in only 45 days and now can send four students. If the fund continues to garner donations, it will be used to help additional students attend this summer's conference in England by creating a student travel scholarship fund.

"The most surprising thing I discovered was the power of multiple people chasing one goal," Quiggins said. The account she and her class started has been 191 percent funded with 117 donors. "We have had a great amount of support

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from family, friends and the community,” she said. “We have a class of 34 students who were working hard to meet these goals and support their fellow students.”

Baker said donors are acknowledged in traditional ways—with a letter from the dean, the University development team and a tax receipt. No development fees are assessed on donations made through Impact UTD. This important distinction sets University-based appeals apart from commercial applications (such as Go Fund Me), which collect anywhere from 7 percent to 15 percent in service fees.

Equally as beneficial, the Impact UTD platform serves as an entry point for students, nurturing them into lifelong givers. Students typically are a tough crowd to pull into traditional development programs.

Shawn Stark, an MBA student, started another fund for travel expenses to a different conference. “The most surprising thing that I discovered ... was some people thought it was a scam, and they needed more information before they would be willing to give,” he said. “Secondly, doing an email campaign really helped, whereas social media was almost a waste of time to help get donations.”



One particular Jindal School crowdfunding drive, for an endowed scholarship in memory of Executive MBA student Ruben Mesa, who died in a boating accident just two weeks after his graduation, was so successful that in just one month, it was 110 percent funded with 71 donors (see page 6). Other Jindal School Impact UTD drives helped fund student trips to conferences and a clothes closet for

students needing interview-appropriate apparel. That particular fund reached \$7,500, more than 200 percent of its target goal.

“Students with strong networks do really well with this sort of fundraising,” Baker said. “They can reach family members and friends who wouldn’t typically be inclined to donate to a university.” Since those students also often stand to benefit from the specific crowdfunded goal, it’s a powerful incentive for potential donors.

For more information on Impact UTD, visit [impact.utdallas.edu](http://impact.utdallas.edu).

## New Scholarship Created by Chinese Students, Alumni and Friends

The Jindal School launched a new initiative to create the Chinese Leadership Scholarship. The goal was to raise \$12,500, which, when combined with eligible matching funds, established the first University endowment to benefit Jindal School students who completed their preparatory education in China as they pursue their dreams of graduating from UT Dallas.

“Our hope is that the scholarship will allow students educated in China to focus on learning, along with adjusting to a new culture thousands of miles from home, instead of worrying about tuition and other expenses,” said Jason Liu BS’01, MS’06, advisor of UT Dallas’ Chinese Alumni Network and one of the first donors to the scholarship. The kickoff event for the Chinese Leadership Scholarship was held last

September, with more than 130 Chinese students and alumni in attendance.

“We mainly leveraged WeChat, a popular social media platform in China, to let more students and alumni know about the scholarship and encouraged them to make a donation,” said Hua Bai, marketing and information technology and management graduate student and student worker in the Jindal School Office of Development and Alumni Relations. Donations from students, alumni, faculty and staff were also received via Impact UTD.

During Dean Hasan Pirkul’s visit to Beijing and Shanghai last October, he shared his vision for the endowed scholarship and how it would strengthen the ties between China and the U.S.



*Back Row:* Hua Bai MS’15; Dongyu Li, marketing and community manager of Foundry Club; Courtney Echols, assistant director of Development and Alumni Relations; Zhao Wang, president of the Chinese Alumni Network; Jason Liu BS’01, MS’06, advisor of the Chinese Alumni Network; Dean Hasan Pirkul. *Front Row:* Erica Yaeger, assistant dean of Development and Alumni Relations; Mary Guan, director of the MS in Accounting program.

# Funds Create Opportunities for Donors and the Jindal School

ASK ANY DEAN, research center director or manager of an academic unit what they need most to be successful and one answer is consistently heard—more unrestricted resources. With unrestricted funding, a dean or department chair can use those funds to meet the most acute need of the school or department each and every year.

Several years ago, UT Dallas and the Jindal School took a major step towards building a stronger base of unrestricted support by offering donors a new gift option called *Opportunity Funds*. An Opportunity Fund is an unrestricted, permanently endowed fund that gives a department, program or center the resources necessary to fund their greatest need. This gift is invested—never spent—and each year a distribution is made to a donor-chosen program or area. Investment earnings above the dividend rate are reinvested to help the endowment value grow over time, keeping pace with inflation and maintaining the endowment's spending power. By pooling the income generated by multiple Opportunity Funds, deans and directors may enable students to travel to academic conferences, pay for upgraded research equipment, supplement scholarships to recruit competitive students or bring distinguished artists to campus.

Debi Carter BS '93, a successful commercial real estate broker and executive vice president at Hudson Peters, was looking for a way to give back to her alma mater in a meaningful way. She and her husband established the Debi and George Carter Opportunity Fund for Real Estate, the first one for the real estate programs. "My degree from UT Dallas gave me the skills and credentials necessary in a highly competitive industry," Carter said. "Investing time and money in higher education is an investment that pays back not only to the student, but also to the community. We are happy to be able to offer financial assistance to students in the real estate programs, giving them the opportunity to achieve their full potential."

Alumnus Roy Snodgrass BS'03 felt the same way in creating the Roy C. Snodgrass IV Opportunity Fund. "As an alumnus, I'm an enthusiastic supporter of the Jindal School and its talented students," he said. "I decided to establish an opportunity fund as a way to support its students and programs, as well as invest in the future value of my own degree."

## Opportunity Fund Quick Facts

- May be established with a minimum investment or pledge of \$10,000 payable over five years.
- May be fulfilled in cash, gifts of stock or through a bequest.
- May be designated to a school, department or center.
- Employee matching 1-1 gift programs may be used to fulfill a pledge.
- You name the fund. (For example, your name, in honor or memory of a loved one, in honor of a favorite professor, etc.)
- The principal of all Opportunity Funds becomes part of the long-term capital base of the Jindal School and will exist in perpetuity.

Jeremy Vickers, executive director of the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (IIE), believes unrestricted funds are vital to the future of the institute. "With the support the IIE has received from our generous donors, we've created many engagement points for students to prepare to launch new businesses," Vickers said.

Haynes and Boone, an international corporate law firm headquartered in Dallas, recently established an Opportunity Fund in support of the IIE. "We believe the Opportunity Fund helps the IIE to grow the ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship in the North Texas region," said Julie Nickols, partner at Haynes and Boone. "The IIE plays an important role in developing the ideas of UT Dallas students and faculty and in creating a culture of innovation that is critical to our regional economy."

As the Jindal School celebrates its 40th anniversary, it aims to establish a minimum of 40 new Opportunity Funds to ensure continued excellence and permanent support to the school for the next 40 years and beyond.

For more information on establishing an Opportunity Fund, visit [jindal.utdallas.edu/give](http://jindal.utdallas.edu/give).

Save the Date: 40th Anniversary Celebration on April 14

[jindal.utdallas.edu/jsom40](http://jindal.utdallas.edu/jsom40)

# Bank Executive Makes an “Investment” in JSOM Students’ Future

GREG LEWIS DIDN'T ATTEND THE NAVEEN JINDAL SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT or any other program at The University of Texas at Dallas. Yet he's made a personal contribution to a Jindal School scholarship fund.

“When I see a great investment, I love to be a part of it,” said Lewis, executive vice president for strategic sales and marketing with Texas Capital Bank. “I don't view my giving as a donation, but as an investment in the future of our business community in North Texas. I believe UT Dallas has some of the best and brightest students and hands-on professors that I have experienced.”

Happenstance first led Lewis to the Jindal School. “I had a meeting with my sales representative from Tom James [a custom suit and shirt maker]. He brought a young lady along on the call, and she exhibited very strong sales and networking skills and asked questions beyond her years,” Lewis recalled. At the meeting's end, Lewis asked where she learned how to sell, and she told him about JSOM's Professional Sales concentration and then introduced Lewis to its director, Dr. Howard Dover.

“I have been active in the program ever since,” said Lewis, who serves on the JSOM Sales Advisory Board. “It was the product of the program that sold itself and motivated [Texas Capital Bank] to get involved, as well as donate to the school.” It was a good fit for Texas Capital, he said, as the bank is “committed to identifying and partnering with early career talent who have an entrepreneurial mindset.” The bank has hired a Professional Sales alumna and has a summer internship program for JSOM sales students.



Greg Lewis volunteering at a Jindal School Speed Sell session.

When at UT Dallas, Lewis said he's impressed by the caliber of students, how prepared they are for real work situations and the skills they're learning. “I have seen students with confidence and sales capabilities that rival people who have been in professional sales for five to 10 years,” he said. Lewis wants his investment to “give students an opportunity to get involved in the sales program without having to worry about the cost of the classes.”

“The sales program is suited for all students, regardless of their majors or career interest,” he said. “It builds their confidence and helps them learn to interact, negotiate and communicate value regardless of the career they pursue.”

# Giving Back and Paying it Forward

ESTABLISHING THE DESAI FAMILY FELLOWSHIP is just one thing Sejal Desai MBA'99 has done to improve the lives of others. Since her graduate school days at UT Dallas, she worked for several years with STARTech, a tech incubator; was partner in a program that encourages children to study science and pursue higher education; established a social business that connects international travelers with agencies in India needing volunteer help; has served on the philanthropy council for North Texas Food Bank; worked in community engagement for a real estate firm; and now is program director at Entrepreneurs For North Texas (EFNT), a Communities Foundation of Texas program, "curating programs for about 100 small- to mid-size companies in DFW that are interested in taking an active role in our community by giving and volunteering."

Prior to starting her MBA, she was with Ernst & Young in Mumbai, India, working in corporate advisory services, doing mergers and acquisitions, business valuations and more. "I believe in diversifying one's personal portfolio," Desai said, noting that she's simply applying theories learned in finance and investment to real life.

Establishing the fellowship, she said, recalled her days as a Jindal School student in 1998-99, when scholarships helped finance her own studies. Her MBA and the contacts made while in the Full-Time MBA program "helped springboard me into a well-established career and life in Dallas. The primary reason for establishing the Desai Family Fellowship was to offer similar opportunities to other young students who are beginning to pursue their dreams.

"Relatively speaking, it's a small drop in the ocean," Desai said. "However, if these fellowships are able to impact the lives of a few worthy yet needy students, and their careers and lives can be changed, then it's a positive impact." She knows professors can change young lives. "Some of the faculty took a keen interest in my future and



made connections for me that have truly impacted my life in many ways," she said. "It was on account of the confidence and support of Dr. Ram Rao and his introduction to a new up-and-coming tech incubator that I began an unpaid internship with STARTech toward the end of my first semester. Within a matter of a year and half, I was part of the founding team."

Desai sees a common thread between her work life and her donation to the Jindal School. "I have always had a keen interest and passion for philanthropy and volunteerism. The amount of time and money we give, however, varies based on the stage of life." This dedication to philanthropy is woven through her personal "career lessons":

- Spend a majority of your day doing something you are passionate about.
- Define success for yourself and be happy with your own definition. Do not let others define success for you.
- Be grateful at every stage in your life.
- Hope for some early failures as they will teach you a lot.
- Count your wealth in terms of the number of meaningful relationships you have built, not money in the bank.
- If you were lucky, pay it forward.

Desai has done just that.

# EMBA Class of 2015 Creates Memorial Scholarship to Honor Ben Mesa



*From left: Classmates Tom Allred BS'12, EMBA'15; Kilynn Sommer EMBA'15; Ben Mesa EMBA'15; and Jeff Steele EMBA'15 celebrated after graduating last spring.*

MEMORIES OF THE LATE RUBEN "BEN" MESA EMBA'15 WILL LIVE ON thanks to a fundraising effort led by the Executive MBA 2015 class. Ben's former classmates raised funds for a scholarship to honor the dedicated father who died in a boating accident on Grapevine Lake just two weeks after his spring 2015 graduation. Thanks to their hard work and generosity, \$34,000 was raised; \$25,000 is needed to establish an endowed scholarship. The EMBA 2015 alumni used the University's crowdfunding platform, Impact UTD, for the fundraiser.

Ben's sons, Zachary, 17, and Aidan, 14, were the first to donate.

"Zachary and Aidan are thrilled to have something so great be part of their dad's legacy," said Ben's fiancée, JoAnne Blanchette. "Initially, the family wanted to establish something that the boys could be part of to honor their father. When UT Dallas stepped up to do this, we were so emotional because Ben believed in education. Both the boys wanted to help pay it forward to others that saw the same value by contributing to the scholarship."

Ben adored his sons, making it to all of their football, baseball and lacrosse games. His love of sports also lit up his relationship with JoAnne, who said the couple disagreed about only one thing—baseball. He loved the New York Yankees; she is a Boston Red Sox fan.

Ben was raised in Silver City, New Mexico. After his family moved to Salt Lake City, Utah, he earned his accounting degree from the University of Utah. Ben worked for J.C. Penney in Salt Lake City and was subsequently transferred to the corporate headquarters in Plano. Most recently, he served as director of accounts payable at Heartland Automotive Services and had just earned his EMBA from UT Dallas last May.

"Tragedies like this have a way of bringing groups together, and it has helped strengthen the bonds within the EMBA class of 2015," said Jeff Steele EMBA'15. "Ben was a big part of the personality of our class and one of the people that really made our class weekends an unforgettable experience. We felt that the best way to preserve his legacy was to establish an endowment that would continue to assist students who are furthering their education at UTD."

Ben's classmates hope that the scholarship in his name will inspire the Naveen Jindal School of Management student who receives this educational support. By endowing the scholarship, Ben's memory will live on in perpetuity.

# Emersons Strengthens Partnership with Jindal School through Internships and Scholarships

EMERSONS COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE, a professional property management and real estate services company, further enhanced its relationship with the Jindal School by pledging a \$1,000 scholarship for each of the next five years. The Emersons Commercial Management-Keith L. Colvin Scholarship will be open to undergraduate or graduate accounting or real estate students with financial need. Emersons has provided internships to more than 25 Jindal School students over the past few years, giving the students valuable hands-on experience.

"My internship with Emersons was instrumental to where I am currently in my career," said Adam Spinn BS'09. "It provided experience and opportunity that I don't feel I could

have received anywhere else. From real-world experience that helped immensely on the CPA exam to the opportunity to stay on and move up within the company, where I am currently VP of finance, I could not have gotten this far this fast without the internship at Emersons."



But the students aren't the only ones who have benefited from the company's partnership with the Jindal School. "These students shared an eagerness to learn, and to contribute to the growth and success of our company, but it is

we who are the richer for having shared their unique and diverse perspectives," said Keith Colvin, former CFO with Emersons, who oversaw the internship program. "It was my distinct pleasure to have had a hand in the careers of so many fine young people from such varied backgrounds."

For Emersons, creating a scholarship at the Jindal School was simply the next step in the partnership. "We have been very happy with the interns who have worked for us, so creating this scholarship was our way of giving back," said Matt Price, Emersons co-founder, who credits the internship and the scholarship he received in college for much of his success. "Interns are instrumental for small businesses, so we are happy to help students any way we can."

## Invest in Career Success



The Jindal School's Career Management Center (CMC) partners with employers to prepare students for the professional world and to facilitate connections through diverse events, programs, workshops and on-campus recruiting services. You can invest in the career success of Jindal School students and generate awareness for your brand by naming\* one of the CMC's spaces.

### INTERVIEW ROOMS

There are 14 private, professional interview settings for on-campus recruitment of Jindal School students. In a typical year, employers conduct more than 1,000 interviews in these rooms.

\$15,000 per room for a naming term of three years.

### SEMINAR ROOMS

In addition to serving as event space for networking receptions, these two rooms provide ample space for coaching students in every aspect of launching a career.

\$25,000 per room for a naming term of three years.

\*Naming subject to approval by the UT System Board of Regents.

For more information, contact Laura Madden, 972-883-5052 or [laura.madden@utdallas.edu](mailto:laura.madden@utdallas.edu)



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## We're looking for a Jindal School alumnus to send to New York City. And we mean business.

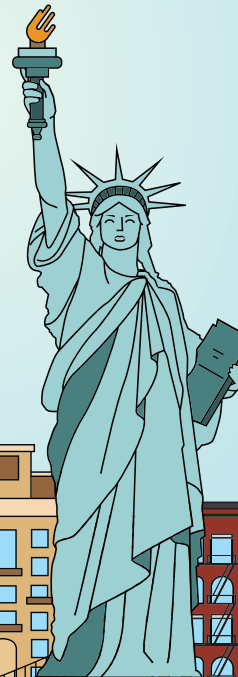
This year marks 40 years of business excellence for **The Naveen Jindal School of Management** at UT Dallas, and we are celebrating by connecting with our alumni worldwide. As an anniversary gift from us, we're sending one lucky alumnus and a guest to the city that is the center of commerce with the most famous skyline on earth.

Share your contact information and employer's name before **April 30** to be entered to win a long weekend in New York City, complete with airfare for two, a three-night stay in the New York Hilton Midtown, dinner, the choice of a Broadway show and **Wall Street Experience Tour**.\* Each entry will receive a free Jindal School business card holder.

[jindal.utdallas.edu/nyc](http://jindal.utdallas.edu/nyc)

Let us know so we can keep you informed about local alumni events and Jindal School news as we embark on the next 40 years of success.

\*The prize is taxable and current UT Dallas employees are not eligible to participate.



## Aspire

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