

Dean's Report  
2022/2023

# UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES



MARKETING CONSULTING  
TECHNOLOGY MANUFACTURING  
CONSUMER PRODUCTS  
FINANCE INVESTMENT  
GROW HEALTH CARE  
THE GOOD NONPROFIT  
IN BUSINESS™ CORPORATE  
INVESTMENT BANKING  
NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT  
FINANCE TECHNOLOGY  
CONSULTING HEALTH CARE

## UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

### MISSION

As a leading business school guided by the University's Catholic identity, the Mendoza College of Business seeks to grow the good in business to improve the human condition in an ever-changing society. Through impactful research and educational programs, we contribute to the formation of ethical business leaders who integrate the mind and the heart, and have the competence to see and the courage to act.



### Message from the Dean

Welcome! At the Mendoza College of Business, the 2022-2023 academic year has been filled with exciting changes to our top-ranked Undergraduate Studies program. We've launched new minors, new double-major options and most significantly, an entirely redesigned **Undergraduate Business Core curriculum** [↗](#), ushering in a new expanded vision as we prepare our students to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

We are a close-knit and vibrant community committed to our imperative to "Grow the Good in Business." This means that our faculty and staff are dedicated to the development of our students as servant leaders who contribute to human flourishing, cooperate with all stakeholders in solidarity and compete to become the best version of themselves — by the grace of God and with the help of others.

For more than a century, Mendoza has sought to be faithful to the charge of our founding dean, John Cardinal O'Hara, C.S.C., who wrote: "The primary function of commerce is service to mankind. Business has a code of ethics based very largely on divine principles. When this code is followed, commerce can and does advance civilization."

In this presentation, we'll share more about how we pursue this charge throughout the Undergraduate Studies program as well as provide a glimpse into life at Mendoza — the events, the accomplishments and the people whose stories are testimonies to the exciting things happening here as part of our commitment to Grow the Good in Business.

In Notre Dame,

Martijn Creemers  
Martin J. Gillen Dean  
Mendoza College of Business

# ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Mendoza has re-envisioned business education at Notre Dame to emphasize integration across disciplines; add opportunities for hands-on, real-world learning; and prepare students for a data-driven world.



## The New Core

Starting in fall 2022, undergraduate students at the University of Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business have increased flexibility in choosing their plans of study.

The College introduced a major redesign of its **Undergraduate Business Core** [↗](#) that reduced the number of required business classes almost by half from 49.5 credit hours to 25.5. The changes provide students with more opportunities to specialize in a secondary discipline, both in other colleges and within the business school, while maintaining the overall balance between liberal arts and business coursework.

The Business Core includes the business courses that all undergraduate business degree students must take regardless of their major. Importantly, all undergraduate students will still experience a foundational course from each business discipline.

The reduced number of core courses primarily involves the upper-level courses currently required; these in part have been replaced by nine new credit hours of business "broadening" electives that students will take in at least two departments outside of their own major's department.

The new Business Core also will enable further course innovation in the future, allowing faculty to offer new courses aligned with their academic and social interests.

*"A key objective has been to expand students' academic opportunities by significantly increasing the flexibility of their plans of study, while still giving them a comprehensive grounding in all business disciplines."* –Martijn Cremers, Martin J. Gillen Dean

## NEW BUSINESS CORE CURRICULUM PROGRESSION (CREDIT HOURS)

# 35-38

UNIVERSITY

# 34.5

COLLEGE (including 9 cr. hours of broadening courses)

# 21

MAJOR

# 24

NON-BUSINESS

## Integrated Analytics

The new undergraduate curriculum integrates analytics across the business disciplines and requires all business majors to take the new **Coding Fundamentals with Python** course by the end of their sophomore year.

## Deloitte Scholars Program

The Deloitte Scholars Program, a sponsored program of the **Notre Dame Deloitte Center for Ethical Leadership**, includes students who excel in their studies and wish to explore what it means to be an ethical business professional. Demand for the program has been so great that the Center added a second colloquium and developed an international version, bringing the total number of Deloitte Scholars to 50.

## Business Education and Society Program (BESP)

BESP launched with the mission to support interdisciplinary teaching, research and other scholarly activities to further the understanding of how business can contribute to integral human development. Led by a faculty of researchers and teachers with deep experience in business ethics, the program is developing a new undergraduate minor for fall 2023, Business and the Common Good.

## Double Major

The Mendoza College of Business leadership approved two new double majors in **Accountancy/Finance and Accountancy/Strategic Management**, which will be available starting with the current Class of 2026 business students. The double majors — a first for the College — limits enrollment to 50-100 students per year, based on available capacity.

## New Assistant Dean



**Andrew Wendelborn (MNA '12, ND '99)** was appointed as the assistant dean for Undergraduate Studies, responsible for leading the Mendoza Office of Undergraduate Studies and serving as the dean's designee for undergraduate student affairs. As a "Double Domer," Wendelborn is committed to the Catholic mission of the University and Mendoza's role as a business school within it.

He first joined the Mendoza Office of Undergraduate Studies in July 2019 as assistant director for advising and administration, providing academic counseling and guidance for undergraduate business students. He previously worked with the College's graduate business programs for five years.

## New Academic Director

**Amanda McKendree**, teaching professor of Management & Organization, was named as the academic director for Undergraduate Studies. Her role includes oversight of the undergraduate curriculum, especially in regard to the new Undergraduate Business Core. She also serves as the Arthur F. and Mary J. O'Neil Director of the Fanning Center for Business Communication.



*"Designing an integrated curriculum is important to Mendoza because it demonstrates a commitment to simultaneously pursuing analytic excellence while emphasizing a focus on ethics and Catholic Social Teaching. These commitments interplay with the business disciplines that serve as the foundation of our students' learning."*

—Amanda McKendree

## Impact Consulting Minor

The minor will be open to Mendoza students with the exception of those currently majoring in Management Consulting as of fall 2023. Students will work on a pressing societal problem through a multi-semester consulting engagement with domestic and international collaborators with the goal of making a transformative, positive impact.

## Minors at Mendoza

### For non-business undergraduates:

- Accountancy
- Digital Marketing
- Foundations of Business (College of Science students only)

### For Mendoza undergraduates:

- Business Technology
- Business and the Common Good (Fall 2023)
- Impact Consulting

### For all (business and non-business) undergraduates:

- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Real Estate

THE MENDOZA COLLEGE OF BUSINESS HAS BEEN **RANKED #5** FOR BEST UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS SCHOOLS BY POETS & QUANTS.

# ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



## Business Honors Program

Launched in 2021, the Business Honors Program led by director **Jim Otteson** was designed to be different from other honors programs. Instead of only considering academic achievement, the program also evaluates an applicant's desire to apply business for the good of society.

Offering colloquia, a mentorship program, tutoring services, volunteer opportunities and **more**, the Business Honors Program creates a community of like-minded undergraduate students as they learn from courses such as Why Business? and the Noble Vocation of Business to apply Catholic social thought in today's business world.



Before coming to Notre Dame, **Justin Caccavo (BBA '25)** completed an internship at Hudson Bay Capital, which confirmed his interest in finance. But after starting college, Caccavo realized there can be a stigma of greed or selfishness associated with being a finance major. Joining the Business Honors Program, taking the required courses and hearing from guest speakers at the colloquia allowed him to conceptualize how he could use business in a way that helps others.

*"It's so important to believe in what you're doing and know you're on the right path in life. The Business Honors Program is helping with that. It helped me see that finance can be a really good way to help people and contribute to society." -Justin Caccavo*

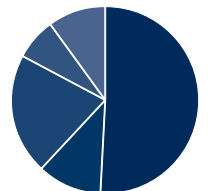
## BUSINESS HONORS PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS

**121** CURRENT STUDENTS

**14** COLLOQUIA HOSTED

Breakdown By Major  
Clockwise from top:

- 51%** Finance
- 11%** Accountancy
- 21%** Business Analytics
- 7%** Management Consulting
- 10%** Marketing



### Required Courses

- two introductory courses
- two intermediate courses (one in and one outside their major)
- one advanced course
- one capstone course

# BY THE NUMBERS

# 5

MENDOZA  
CENTERS & INSTITUTES

**Center for Accounting Research and Education** facilitates and supports academics domestically and internationally in the creation and dissemination of accounting knowledge.

**Center for Ethics and Religious Values in Business** seeks to foster dialogue and integrate the teaching of ethics in order to strengthen the Judeo-Christian ethical foundations in business.

**Deloitte Center for Ethical Leadership** disseminates innovative, targeted and accessible programming and research in ethical leadership.

**Fanning Center for Business Communication** provides instruction and guidance in all facets of human communication, from writing and speaking to listening and group and team interaction.

**Notre Dame Institute for Global Investing** seeks to be the preeminent university-based investment management research and education program in the world.

*"Our ultimate objective is to expand students' academic opportunities and improve their journey here at Notre Dame."* –Martijn Cremers

# 1,744

TOTAL ENROLLMENT  
OF SOPHOMORES,  
JUNIORS & SENIORS

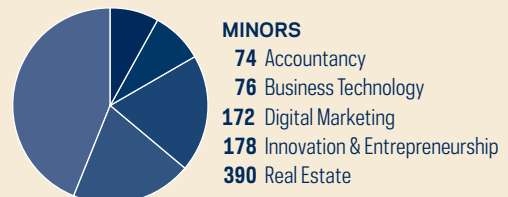
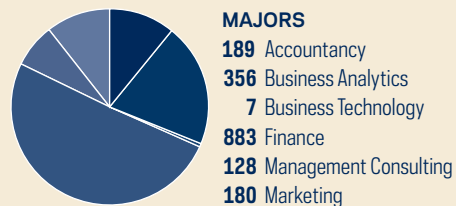
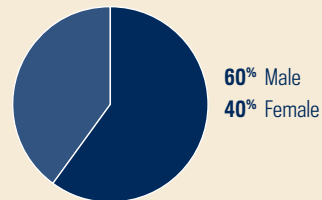
**UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES STUDENT PROFILE**  
(Based on sophomores through seniors as of fall 2022)

25% STUDENTS OF COLOR

46% HAVE ONE OR MORE MINORS

50% COURSEWORK IS IN  
NON-BUSINESS CLASSES

50% OF STUDENTS FROM THE  
CLASS OF 2024 PLAN TO  
STUDY ABROAD



636 MENDOZA UNDERGRADS  
(36%) HAVE A SECOND MAJOR  
OUTSIDE OF MENDOZA

566 CURRENT FIRST-YEAR  
B.B.A. INTENTS

# ENGAGED LEARNING

“Learn by doing” is woven into the undergraduate curriculum, as Mendoza students are challenged to think about how they can contribute to human flourishing through business.



## Innovation & Design Thinking

During halftime of the ND-Clemson football game in November, millions of viewers saw the impact of Management & Organization teaching professor [Wendy Angst's](#) Innovation and Design Thinking course when it was featured in a [“What Would You Fight For?”](#) ad.

The class' ongoing work with St. Bakhita Vocational Training Center in Kalongo, Uganda, has expanded to include the Innovation for Impact Club and dozens of Notre Dame alums, students, faculty and staff members committed to improving the outcomes for these women struggling with the legacy of the brutal Lord's Resistance Army.

Mendoza now offers three sections of Innovation & Design Thinking serving 100 students to teach them the fundamentals of design thinking while applying their business acumen, networks and skills to work on behalf of the Center. Additional opportunities included an application-only immersion course taking 12 students to Uganda over the 2022-23 winter break and a summer immersion that allowed 13 students to travel to Uganda to work on implementing prototypes. Students included current undergraduates as well as alums from 2020 and 2020, and Notre Dame MBA students.

Read about how ND and St. Bakhita students teamed up to open a [pop-up shop](#) on campus to support the training center.



## Climate and Ethical Business

Students from all majors had the opportunity to examine climate change through the disciplines of business ethics and economics in the new course Climate, Economics, & Business Ethics. Instructors **Jessica McManus Warnell**, [↗](#) associate teaching professor of Management & Organization, and **Eva Dziadula**, associate teaching professor of Economics, led the integration course, which focused on environmental and social justice implications of climate change, public policy, and impacts on global economies and communities among other topics.

*"Through teaching on sustainability, equity, and business ethics over the years, it has become increasingly clear that the grand challenges we face as a global community — particularly challenges to social and environmental sustainability — require multidisciplinary attention."*

—Jessica McManus Warnell



## Walk for Water Relay

During the 2022 ND Day, the Innovation for Impact Club hosted its first Walk for Water Relay to raise awareness and support tuition costs for the St. Bakhita Vocational Training Center in Kalongo, Uganda. The relay had students carrying five-gallon containers of water across the Hesburgh Library lawn to represent the twice-daily task young Ugandan girls experience to bring clean water to their families. The club is spin-off from Wendy Angst's undergraduate Innovation and Design Thinking course. [Read more](#) [↗](#)

## Business of Life

The **Notre Dame Institute for Global Investing (NDIGI)** [↗](#) gave a group of undergraduates the chance not just to hear from a world-famous author of a book on investing, but to actually travel to Peter Kaufman's California-based company headquarters to better understand the lessons of leadership, alignment and values that are key to operating a successful business.

Kaufman, chairman and CEO of Glenair, and author of *Poor Charlie's Almanack*, led Business of Life, a three-part series designed to reinforce ND's core values in the context of investing, business leadership and multidisciplinary thinking.

## Virtual Reality in the Classroom

**Tim Hubbard** provided his strategic management students with a one-of-a-kind exercise: acting out life as a CEO via virtual reality. For the first day of the undergraduate course, students were strapped into high quality, enterprise-grade virtual reality headsets to meet with a board of directors, make strategic decisions and explain their choices back to the board. The goal was to help students develop a



foundation before they analyze different case studies throughout the rest of the course.

[Read more](#) [↗](#)

*"Since most cases are written, students have to imagine the scenarios based on the text. With virtual reality, we can show them."* —Tim Hubbard



## A Community Built by Strangers

In August 2021, **Christian McKernan (BBA '23)** and **Marko Gural (ND '25)** were randomly assigned to nearby rooms in Notre Dame's Stanford Hall and formed a friendship based on their shared experience of growing up Ukrainian in the U.S. Together, they reminisced about attending Ukrainian school on Saturdays and Ukrainian Catholic Mass on Sundays. The events of late February 2022 only strengthened their bond as they sat together through late nights and early mornings monitoring breaking news from the war. For both, the impulse to do something, to help their homeland and fellow Ukrainians was impossible to ignore.

In the summer of 2022, McKernan and Gural found an opportunity to help refugees from the war in Ukraine. With the help of Notre Dame's Nanovic Institute for European Studies, they undertook service learning at the Office for Refugee Support at University Ignatianum in Kraków, Poland and at a refugee center operated by Centrum Wielokulturowe w Krakowie. [Read more](#) [↗](#)

# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

As a community that recognizes every person's intrinsic human dignity, Mendoza is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion as an essential part of its mission.



## New DEI Dean



Mendoza entered the new academic year with a purposeful focus on advancing the College as an inclusive and welcoming community. A significant move was the naming of **Kristen Collett-Schmitt** to the new position of associate dean for Innovation and Inclusion.

In this role, Collett-Schmitt is charged with advancing innovation across all programs — undergraduate and graduate. Responsibilities include the possible addition of new minors in Mendoza's highly ranked undergraduate program.

Collett-Schmitt has long been involved in diversity, equity and inclusion efforts at Mendoza and in the larger academic community. She led an innovative new program in professional development for women called **ND Elevate: Women in Leadership** and launched the **Grow the Good in Business DE&I Case Competition** where students are challenged to apply their business acumen to a real-life case.



### Women in Finance

The annual **Women's Investing Summit** [↗](#) hosted by the Notre Dame Institute for Global Investing features some of the top women executives in the investment industry today. In 2023, student, faculty and staff attendees from across the University also got to hear about investing from someone on the entrepreneurial side: Three-time Olympic gold medal skier Lindsey Vonn who served as the keynote speaker for the February 24 event.

### 50 Years of Women in Business at ND

The year 2022 marked 50 years since Notre Dame President Rev. **Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C.**, made the historic decision to admit women as undergraduates to the formerly all-male university. In the fall of 1972, the University admitted 125 female freshmen and more than 200 transfers. Today, women make up about 40% of the undergraduate class at Mendoza. **Read more** [↗](#)

### Broadening the Pipeline

In partnership with the Office of Pre-College Programs, Mendoza offered a leadership seminar to current high school students entitled, "The Power of Investing: Financial Literacy and the Miracle of Compound Interest." Led by finance teaching professor **Carl Ackermann** [↗](#), the 10-day seminar covering the fundamentals of finance was intended to help broaden the pipeline of women and underrepresented minorities interested in studying business.

### Black Excellence Award

**Daymine Snow (BBA '25)** received the Notre Dame Black Excellence Award in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy. The awards are part of the University's Walk the Walk Week, a week-long series of University, department and student-sponsored events designed to help us consider how faculty, staff and students — both individually and collectively — can take an active role in making Notre Dame even more welcoming and inclusive.

### Grow the Good Competition

For the first time, Mendoza undergraduate students were invited to participate in the College's **Grow the Good in Business DEI Case Competition** [↗](#). Competing in teams, the students were asked to apply their business knowledge to a case focused on financial inclusion and underserved markets.



### Coach Marcus Freeman: Faith and Leadership

Fighting Irish football coach **Marcus Freeman** shared his thoughts on faith, leadership and diversity during a fireside chat with the Mendoza community. **Read more** [↗](#)

*"I think there is power in young people seeing somebody maybe that they resemble in a position of leadership."*

-Marcus Freeman

# CAREERS AND LEADERSHIP

For more than 100 years, Mendoza has challenged its students to contribute to human flourishing through business. Whether that means a career on Wall Street, in data analytics or even starting a new business, our students graduate with an inspired vision for having an impact for the better.



Hallow founders (left to right): Alessandro DiSanto, Alex Jones, and Erich Kerekes.

## Hallow Be The Name

**Alex Jones (ND '15)** and classmates **Alessandro DiSanto (BBA '15)** and **Erich Kerekes (ND '15)** quit lucrative jobs to start Hallow, a prayer and meditation program that has quickly grown into the No. 1 Catholic app in the world.

Downloaded 3.5 million times across the globe, Hallow users have prayed about 100 million prayers with the app since the company was founded at the end of 2018.

Hallow means “to make holy,” and that’s the goal that the three co-founders set out to achieve — an unexpected mission for some lapsed Catholics that led to a transformation of their own faith lives as well. Their primary motivation for creating the app was the response from users — they didn’t expect to build a living this way.

One user said the app brought her back to Mass after 30 years away. Another said the meditation helped her find peace and overcome alcoholism. Jones said they couldn’t believe it when they reached 1,000 users and dreamed of doubling — never even considering millions of downloads.

“Every day, we’re just blown away by what God has been able to do through this thing,” Jones said. “It’s infinitely beyond our wildest expectations.” [Read more](#)

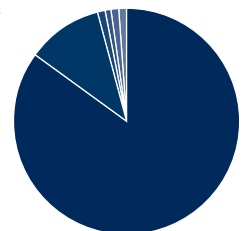
## CAREER PLACEMENT

(Source: ND First Destination Report for Mendoza Class of 2022)

**569** GRADUATES REPORTING:

Clockwise from top:

- 85% Employment
- 11% Education
- 1% Service
- 1% Military
- 1% Other
- 1% Seeking





### Accounting for Fashion

For nearly two hours, **Thom Browne (BBA '88)**, one of America's most successful designers of luxury fashion, talked to a packed Mendoza auditorium about how he built his now iconic brand. Browne, who's internationally famous for "reinventing" the classic men's gray suit, is the chairman of the Council of Fashion Designers of America, former GQ Designer of the Year and three-time winner of the CFDA Menswear Designer of the Year Award.

He has dressed the likes of LeBron James, Lizzo, Michelle Obama and many other celebrities. But perhaps a lesser-known fact is that Browne earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame — not in design, but in accountancy. His April 2023 talk, "By Design: Thom Browne on the Business of Fashion," was co-sponsored by the Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study, where he served as the 2022-23 artist-in-residence. [Read more](#)



### Finance Alums Leverage Degree in Variety of Careers

**Sam Squeri (BBA '17)** works as manager of production finance for Universal Theatrical Group, owned by NBC Universal. As a finance and a film, television, and theatre double major, corporate finance for the theater industry was the perfect blend of Squeri's interests. [Read more](#)

### Building a Brand

From the day he stepped on the campus of the University of Notre Dame in 2012, **Tommy Flaim (BBA '16)** knew he wanted to be an entrepreneur. His dream was not to be a tech unicorn, find a cure for cancer or make piles of money. He wanted to start a fashion brand. But looking good wasn't the driver of his dream. *Doing good* was. [Read more](#)

### Elevating Snack Industry Standards

**John Ghingo (BBA '94)** developed a passion for clean label foods after spending a large portion of his career in the snack food industry. He gained valuable experience working for leading brands such as Oreo, Planters and Sour Patch Kids. But it was his move into the natural and organic segment of the food industry that brought sustainability to the fore. As CEO of Whisps, he enjoys challenging industry conventions and supporting sustainable and transparent supply chains. [Read more](#)



### More than NIL

**Ayden Syal (BBA '17)** and **Brandon Wimbrush (BBA '19)** (shown above) got a jumpstart on creating NIL platform MOGL in 2020 before the NCAA had yet to impose regulations on what would become a feeding frenzy of companies eager to capitalize on the new industry. The co-founders have been able to create a business model that stands out in the quickly crowded field by focusing on empowering athletes who can pursue NIL opportunities for free.

Their MOGL platform operates as a matchmaker similar to LinkedIn, allowing athletes to share their interests and skills and businesses to list their campaigns and marketing opportunities. Today, the platform connects nearly 3,000 athletes with about 900 brands. And when it comes to growing the good in business, the company has made it a point to give back by focusing on educational resources and youth sports philanthropy, partnering with a nonprofit to help low-income families play youth sports. [Read more](#)

# COMMUNITY

Many a Mendoza student's story about why they came to Notre Dame starts with the words, "I've always." "I've always wanted to come to Notre Dame since I was a little kid." "I've always dreamed of becoming one of the Fighting Irish." "I've always wanted to make a difference in the world." "Always" describes the deep connection that students feel during their time on campus and for the rest of their lives. They come here to join a family and become part of the legacy.



## Positivity and Hope

The last thing **Andrew Daigneau (BBA '24)** remembers on that warm June night was giving his dad a fist bump as they went their separate ways on their motorcycles. Minutes later, a car swerved in front of Andrew. He braked and tried to turn, but it was too late.

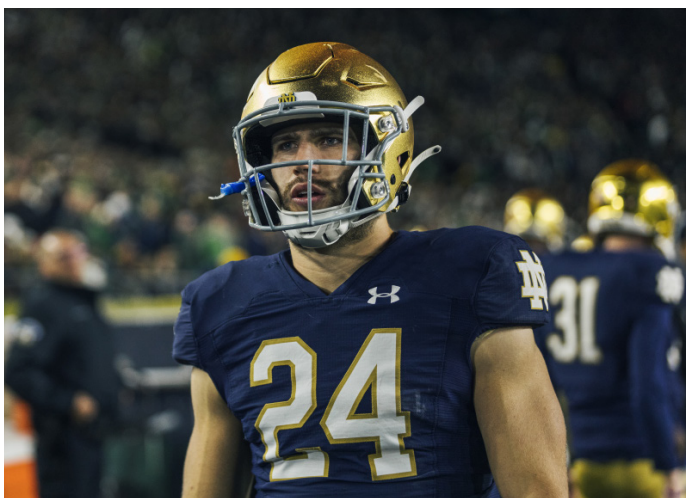
His bike hit the car and propelled him forward. His chin may have smashed into the roof, just below his full-face helmet. His injuries, almost too numerous to list, were catastrophic. His heart stopped for about 10 minutes. Even though the human body only holds five liters of blood, Andrew required 19 liters to save his life that night. Ultimately, the decision was made to amputate his right leg.

Since early on in his remarkable recovery, Andrew has had one driving goal: to return to Notre Dame so he could graduate on time and walk the commencement stage with his class.

Just a few short months later, Andrew was back in class, supported by a small battalion of classmates, administrators, faculty and "friends of Andrew" who made his return possible as he also negotiated the grueling process of physical recovery. Andrew Wendelborn, assistant dean of Undergraduate Studies at Mendoza, went to bat for him in a major way so he could return to classes part time, which is generally not allowed for students not in their final semester.

"I felt not allowing him would be detrimental to his recovery," Wendelborn said. "He was beating doctors' deadlines. I wrote a note on his behalf and said I wish I could bottle his spirit and share it with other students and people who struggle. It's a positivity and hope and joy I can't say I've seen very often."

[Read more](#) 



### 'Always Be Ready'

His grandfather's golden rule — "Don't do anything stupid" — seems to be working well for **Jack Kiser (MSA '23, BBA '22)**. The Fighting Irish linebacker has built a solid reputation as a "Swiss Army knife" type of player on the football field — adaptive, upbeat and ready for anything.

It's an attitude that's been an asset in negotiating challenges off the field, as Kiser, like his classmates, faced trying to attend school and carry on with life during the upheaval of the COVID pandemic.

After earning his BBA in business analytics in just three-and-a-half years, and with extra eligibility as an Irish football player, Kiser enrolled in the Notre Dame Master of Science in Accountancy program to be prepared for whatever the future might bring.

"With me not knowing exactly what I want to do, I thought it was a great pairing of my analytics in undergrad," said Kiser. "To be well-rounded and have all these skills that can really put me in any different situation that might arise in the future." [Read more](#)



### The Bus is Back

Thirty years after leaving Notre Dame to pursue an extremely successful football career, **Jerome "The Bus" Bettis (BBA '22)** returned to Mendoza to complete his undergraduate degree. His reason? To set an example for his kids and fulfill a promise to his mother made a long time ago.

[Read more](#)

### For the Love of Finance

It's a 30-hour journey from **Aray Beisenbayeva's (BBA '26)** home in Kazakhstan to the Mendoza College of Business where she is grateful to be studying finance, all thanks to the Notre Dame Institute for Global Investing. She previously attended NDIGI's virtual leadership seminar and took to the College's community and teaching atmosphere. Her love of finance developed during the COVID-19 pandemic and she even represented her country at the International Economics Olympiad, placing in the top 20 competitors in the world. Now, she's proud to sit in Carl Ackermann's Foundations of Finance class, who she originally met during NDIGI's summer program. [Read more](#)



### Healing Smiles: Fighting Pediatric Cancer With a Team Spirit

Lacrosse student athlete **Maxim Manyak (BBA '23)**, a finance and pre-professional health dual major from Sherman Oaks, California, plans to go to medical school and become an orthopedic surgeon. But a meeting with a young cancer patient inspired him to found the nonprofit Pediatric Pep Talk, "where a smile a day keeps the doctor away."

The app-based platform virtually connects children's hospitals, their critically ill patients (mostly children fighting cancer) and their families with athletes across the country, allowing the young patients to "join" a team. The players send the young patients encouraging video messages to bring them joy and make them smile.

"The reality is that we now work with four other universities, four hospitals, 72 teams and more than 2,300 athletes committed to providing at least 2,400 video smiles by May of 2024," Manyak said. "This will set us up for our goal to expand to 35 Power 5 conference schools, which means we should be able to deliver 21,000 smiles per year by May of 2025." [Read more](#)

