

Bulldog B.I.T.E.

BUILDING INNOVATION BY TRUMAN ENTREPRENEURS



ELEVATOR PITCH COMPETITION

FINALS

Thursday, November 16, 2023
1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

sponsored by



On-Campus Support provided by

THE SCHOOL OF
BUSINESS



THE OFFICE OF
ADVANCEMENT

Bulldog Pitch Day Participants

Kirksville High School

Adi Baumgartner	Ryan Hollon	Wilson Randeris
Tonya Biston	Ryan Kelly	Lucas Reinsch
Daylee Buster	Grace LaBeth	Brooklynn Rouse
Trystan Campbell	Logan Lehmann	Chad Roxas
Cronan Carrier	Levi Martin	Meia Shahan
Megan Colyer	Ellen McNeely	Jack Thomas
Ruby Cordray	Anthony Modaff	Gage Tuck
Lucas Fossum	Simon Mollick	Andrew Williams
Baylee Gashwiler	Makenna Murphy	Garrett Williams
Meradith Heimer	Pari Patel	
Jersey Herbst	Camden Perry	

Bulldog B.I.T.E. Finalists

Saron Gebremichael and Nahom Jember

Truman State University

Saron: Freshman, Computer Science Major, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Nahom: Freshman, Business Administration Major, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mohammed Abdikebir, Krishna Chebolu and Habib Nasir

Truman State University

Mohammed: Senior, Computer Science Major, Harar, Ethiopia

Krishna: Senior, Math Major, Hyderabad, India

Habib: Junior, Computer Science Major, Karachi, Pakistan

Hinako Kaneda

Truman State University

Sophomore, Business Administration Major
Saitama, Japan

Trenton Kiesling

Truman State University

Senior, Double Major: Business Administration and Music
Independence, Missouri

Tomás Orjuela Munoz

Sophomore, Double Major: International Business Administration and Economics
Bogotá, Colombia

Audrey Gilmore

Senior, Business Administration Major
Liberal, Kansas

FINANCIAL AWARDS

Bulldog Pitch Day and Bulldog B.I.T.E. awards are provided through the Villhard Innovation Fund at Truman

This year's first place award for the Bulldog B.I.T.E. Pitch Competition is the Amanda Gioia Excellence in Entrepreneurship Award and is provided through a generous gift from Truman alumna and Bulldog B.I.T.E. finals judge, Amanda Gioia ('93)

FINAL ROUND JUDGES

Kabir Bansal ('10)



Kabir is from Kirksville, Mo., and is one of five members on the Kirksville City Council. Kabir has served as a senior analyst with Mass General Brigham and Fiserv, where he has specialized in data analytics and process improvement. He is an active member of Fellowship Baptist Church in Kirksville. Kabir graduated from Truman State University with a Bachelor of Science in business administration.

Chris Geisert ('92)



Chris has more than 30 years of marketing and entrepreneurial experience at various levels and from various perspectives. Chris also spent 2 ½ years as the VP of Marketing and Managing Director of Tradebot Ventures where he led marketing and oversaw review of start-up investment opportunities.

His experience includes 5 years as CMO of Lockpath, a cloud-based software company focusing on governance, risk and compliance management, 3 years as the Vice President of Marketing for XIKAR, the world's leading premium cigar accessory company, and other entrepreneurial ventures.

He experienced life on the agency side of the table with Kansas City based full-service agency Barkley where he led an integrated team creating marketing solutions for clients. The team included specialist in online marketing, customer retention, experiential and event marketing, and public relations, as well as traditional advertising. His main client while at Barkley was Build-A-Bear Workshop.

Prior to Barkley, Chris spent 5 years as the Director of Brand Promotions and Sponsorships for America Online, Inc. While at AOL, he directed and managed promotions and sponsorships around CPG and media cross-promotions, sales-oriented promotions, sports, charitable and music sponsorships, and leveraged AOLTW (AOL Time Warner) assets to achieve brand-building goals.

Currently Chris lives in Liberty, Mo., with his wife, Kara ('93), and is the General Manager of Stash House MO, the leading manufacturer and distributor of medicinal and adult use cannabis products in Missouri. Chris graduated from Truman State University with a Bachelor of Arts in communication.

Amanda Gioia ('93)



Amanda has been with Mastercard for more than 20 years and has held a variety of leadership roles for the company, including serving as vice president, Technology Risk Management, Communications and Partnerships; vice president for Information Technology Service Management and vice president for the Worldwide Communications Team at MasterCard, where she was responsible for managing and implementing internal communications, leadership communications, and philanthropy for the company's technology organization.

Prior to joining Mastercard, she was an account executive with Kupper Parker Communications and a senior marketing coordinator for Sverdrup Civil, Inc.

Gioia is the Board President of the St. Louis Area Foodbank and a board member of Autism Speaks. She is a member of the Advisory Board for the School of Communications for Webster University and a member of the Truman State University Foundation Board of Directors.

She has participated in several innovation activities with Truman, including the Bulldog B.I.T.E. competition since its inception. In 2019, she was selected as the Bentele/Mallinckrodt Executive in Residence at Truman and in 2022 she was recognized with the Distinguished Service Award. Gioia has a Master of Arts in media communications from Webster University and a Bachelor of Arts in English literature from Truman State University.

Hannah Magee ('13)



Hannah owns a suite of small hospitality industry businesses in Weston, Mo., including Weston Wine Company, The Royal Deluxe Cocktail Lounge, Weston Stagecoach, Radio Weston, and the Itty Bitty Marketing Committee. Her team was recently awarded two "Best of Kansas City" distinctions by Pitch Magazine for Best Bachelorette Party Location and Best Winery Event.

Outside her businesses, Hannah serves as the President of the Little Theatre of Weston and a member of the Weston Chamber of Commerce. In her spare time, she attends culinary school, drinks entirely too much wine, and reads trashy romance novels. Hannah graduated from Truman State University with a Bachelor of Arts in communication.

Dane Stangler ('01)



Dane is managing director of strategic initiatives at the Bipartisan Policy Center. He is also a senior advisor at the Global Entrepreneurship Network. Previously, he was president and chief policy officer of Startup Genome and vice president of research and policy at the Kauffman Foundation. He graduated with a B.A. in English from Truman State and J.D. from University of Wisconsin.

QUALIFYING ROUND JUDGES

Amy Gryder ('97)



Amy is inspired by driving the creation of cohesive, digital-first customer experiences. With 15 years of global and domestic product management and user experience design work, her empathy-based approach to product ensures her teams are solving the right problems in the right way. She is a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt, a Certified Usability Analyst™, and a passionate advocate for inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.

She works remotely, and lives in Saint Charles, Mo., with her husband, son, and two dogs (her older two kids are already away at college). Amy earned her Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Truman State University and her Master of Arts in leadership and organizational development from Saint Louis University.

Chris LeBeau ('05)



In 2005, while at Truman, Chris took the Business School's entrepreneurship program without any real motivation to become one. For the next 14 years, he worked in healthcare and finance in various strategic planning, business development, and marketing roles.

Meanwhile, he became passionate about mixology. In 2019, spurred on by a book arguing that cocktails can trace their origin to just 6 drinks, Chris built a program to teach his friends how to make good drinks with ease. Not long into the pandemic, Chris began receiving requests for virtual cocktail classes from around the country.

In March of 2021, Decoding Cocktails became Chris's full-time pursuit. As he likes to say, most people bartend in college and then move on to a "grown-up job." He did it in reverse. Chris's clients range from group birthday parties to corporate team builders, with emerging demand from neighborhood bars and restaurants that want to launch easy-to-execute cocktail programs.

Chris graduated from Truman State University with a Bachelor of Arts in business administration.

PRACTICE ROUND JUDGES

Bryce Cardwell



Bryce is the new small business counselor at the Northeast Missouri Small Business Development Center and Missouri Rural Enterprise and Innovation Center. He received his Master's in business administration from Northwest Missouri State University. He was formerly employed at Truman State University as a career counselor and at Northwest Missouri State University as a financial aid counselor. He is also a licensed real estate agent.

Laci Cook ('03)



After 15 years of business ownership in a completely different industry, Laci opened Sip Downtown in February 2021. Sip offers handcrafted cocktails, wines, small plate dining, and live music in a sophisticated and cozy atmosphere that will leave you planning your next visit.

For almost 20 years, Laci has been a noteworthy leader in the Kirksville community. She was the recipient of Kirksville's "5 Under 40" Award and named the 2019 Kirksville Daily Express "Person of the Year." She serves on the City of Kirksville's Tourism Board and the Kirksville Area Chamber of Commerce Board and volunteers for many other organizations throughout the community. Laci graduated from Truman State University with a Bachelor of Science in agricultural science, with an emphasis in business.

Rashmi Prasad



Rashmi serves as dean of the School of Business at Truman State University. Prior to coming to Truman, Rashmi was academic vice-president for the College of Business at Western Governors University. His duties included setting the vision and managing the portfolio for one of the largest business schools in the country, enrolling more than 42,000 students nationwide and graduating more than 10,000 students in 2019. Under his leadership, the

College of Business attained initial accreditation with the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs.

Prior to WGU, Rashmi served as dean of the College of Business and Public Policy at the University of Alaska Anchorage. UAA and CBPP were renowned for extensive community engagement receiving the Carnegie classification for community engagement. He led the College of Business and Public Policy through its maintenance of accreditation with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. Rashmi served key public institutions and business associations in the state of Alaska, including providing support to the Governor's Housing Summit, expert testimony to the Alaska Legislature, serving as an advisor

to the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, and serving as a board member of the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce.

Rashmi was a faculty member at the University of Alaska Anchorage for 16 years holding the rank of Professor of Business Administration. He completed his baccalaureate and master's degrees at the University of Michigan and University of Illinois, respectively, before completing his Ph.D. at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. In his professional life, he has been a dedicated educator, frequently honored by students, peers and alumni for the quality of his teaching and student advising. His primary research focus has been business ethics, inter-cultural management, and health systems administration. As a researcher and scholar, he has contributed chapters to numerous books and published articles in notable journals such as Business and Politics, Governance, and The Journal of Business Ethics. In 2014 he presented one of the first management studies at the International Symposium on Contemplative Studies in Boston, an inter-disciplinary conference attracting leading researchers from every field.

Anastasia Tiedemann



Anastasia is the executive director of Kirksville Regional Economic Development Inc. and Missouri Rural Enterprise and Innovation Center. She has more than 20 years of experience in marketing and entrepreneurial education. She holds a B.A. in communications from the University of Pittsburgh and began her career at WQED, Pittsburgh Public Television, followed by Hawthorne Direct in Iowa. She then spent almost 15 years at

The Professional Education Institute in their suburban Chicago location, working behind-the-scenes in the planning, execution, and compliance of numerous television marketing campaigns and provided support to their personal coaching programs and e-learning initiatives. Anastasia resides in Kirksville with her husband, Nate, and their 5 children.

About Bulldog B.I.T.E. and Bulldog Pitch Day

With the financial and professional support of Doug ('94) and Diane ('95) Villhard, Truman State University is proud to present the finals for both Bulldog B.I.T.E. and Bulldog Pitch Day. Both competitions follow an elevator pitch format. Bulldog Pitch Day is for high school students, and Bulldog B.I.T.E. is for college students.

In an elevator pitch competition, presenters outline a concept or idea for a product, service, or project in a short period of time, typically from 30 seconds to three minutes. The length of the pitch mirrors the time spent waiting for and riding an elevator in a high-rise building. The purpose of the pitch is to spur the interest of a potential investor or financial backer.

About the Sponsor

Villhard Growth Partners is a St. Louis-based growth buyout firm that invests in, partners with and grows strong, tech-enabled businesses and health care services companies. They focus on lower market transactions in which they can invest alongside aggressive, entrepreneurial teams that share their passion for growing and building great businesses.

About the Community of College Entrepreneurs (CCE)

The Community of College Entrepreneurs at Truman State University is a student group that fosters the spirit of entrepreneurship on campus by promoting a network of innovative mindsets from various backgrounds. They promote entrepreneurial endeavors that lead to building wealth at a young age and advance new ideas that benefit the community. They also host campus-wide events featuring notable entrepreneurs to demystify what it takes to begin a successful business.

