

success stories

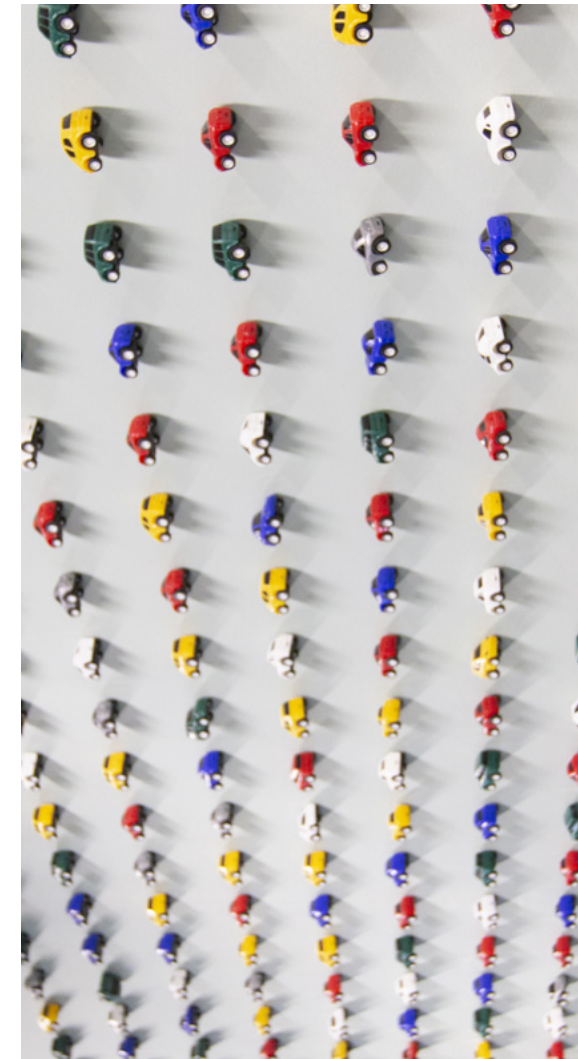


UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
HORN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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success stories

HORN ENTREPRENEURSHIP



carvertise

Mac Nagaswami ('14)
Greg Star ('14)
(center left and right)

Carvertise is an advertising company that pays everyday drivers to place removable advertisements on their cars. With clients like Discover, AAA, Lyft and Buffalo Wild Wings, Carvertise surpassed \$1 million in revenue in 2016.

Started by UD alums Mac Nagaswami and Greg Star while they were still students, Carvertise has been a prominent figure in the Delaware startup community for many years.

“The true value of Horn to Carvertise has been the amazing relationships formed with the faculty, staff and board behind the initiative. From advice on raising capital to a warm introduction to a prospective client, the level of pull and reach that

Horn can provide is second to none. This is a network that you truly want to become a part of.”

In the future, Carvertise will push creative boundaries, provide more powerful analytics and expand into new markets like the DC metro area.

reviresco

Micah Petersen ('17)

Founded by Micah Petersen, Alex Chiodo and David Dinerman in 2014, Reviresco seeks to help U.S. military veterans transition back into society. Initially, the social venture raised money and awareness by running across the country, collecting donations and having conversations with the people they met on their journey. In 2017, Reviresco ran from New York City to Miami in just three weeks, making stops along the way to host educational events in local communities.

In total, the team raised approximately \$35,000, but more importantly they talked with more than 10,000 people about their message.

“The mentors and overall environment inculcated within me the confidence to go after my entrepreneurial dreams, make mistakes, learn from them and come out better on the other side,” said Micah. “Without Horn Entrepreneurship, I would never have been able to build Reviresco into the nonprofit it has become, and I would never have been able to understand the true spirit of entrepreneurship.”

In 2016, the Reviresco team participated in the Summer Founders program and developed a repeatable and scalable revenue model. As a result, they are now paid as motivational speakers delivering their message of support to veterans as they integrate into civilian life.

“In May, I commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army as an infantry officer. Before beginning my training at Fort Benning, I will spend a year in China pursuing a second master’s degree as one of 125 Schwarzman Scholars from around the world.”



I was very fortunate that Horn Entrepreneurship taught me the lean startup principles prior to joining Gore. It really gave me a leg up in helping with the innovation initiative at Gore.

austin crouse

Entrepreneurial Studies ('15)
W.L. Gore & Associates

As an undergraduate, Austin Crouse pursued a venture called ProjectedU alongside his business partner, Ben Rapkin. The team prototyped and implemented a system to communicate important information to students through classroom projectors before their classes started. The system worked as planned, but once graduation came, the pair went on to their respective full-time jobs.

Austin now works for W.L. Gore & Associates as a mechanical design engineer. As part of its innovation team, Austin uses evidence based startup principles for new business development efforts.

“I was very fortunate that Horn Entrepreneurship taught me lean startup principles prior to joining Gore. It really gave me a leg up in helping with the innovation initiative at Gore.”

daphne vantine



Entrepreneurship & Technology Innovation ('18)
HelloTeam

Like many young students coming into their college experience, Daphne Vantine had little conviction of what she truly wanted to do. By embracing new opportunities, Daphne was able to carve a path that is uniquely hers.

“I came into UD as an exercise science major,” said Daphne. “I had a great relationship in high school with my coaches and trainers and it inspired me to try to get into the community professionally.”



Horn does an excellent job of making people feel welcome and giving them the stage to do what they want, to grow and still be comfortable.

Daphne had chosen her college path based on her high school interests, but quickly changed course after her initial experiences.

Daphne then decided to apply to the Entrepreneurship and Technology Innovation (ENTI) major in the Lerner College of Business and Economics. “It was a leap of faith, I was a little uncertain if it was for me, but I thought ‘why not experiment?’”

Though Daphne was hesitant to take the first step into entrepreneurship, she was able to find inspiration and support from her parents and past experiences. As a Cape Cod native, the budding entrepreneur spent many of her summers with her family on the coast collecting driftwood (“No cable and WiFi got me out of the house!”). The collected driftwood became unique, authentic art pieces that she hand painted. By combining her interest, skill and passion for her creations with a newfound entrepreneurial skill set, she started Daphne Rae Cape Cod in 2015. The pieces are sold through her personal Etsy, an e-commerce platform for artists.

“The public speaking opportunities I had after becoming more involved with Horn really helped me step outside of my box and grow personally and professionally,” said Daphne. “Horn does an excellent job of making people feel welcome and giving them the stage to do what they want, to grow and still be comfortable.”

Upon graduation Daphne moved to Boston to pursue a position with HelloTeam, a talent management platform. The Massachusetts native plans to remain in Boston for the immediate future.

As a member of the Entrepreneurship Club’s executive board, Becca Leisher was in charge of recruiting entrepreneurs for a weekly speaker series called Free Lunch Friday. Throughout her time in the position, she brought in startup founders and CEOs to share their stories. The Club credits a lot of its growth to Becca’s commitment to find generous and fascinating guests on a weekly basis. Now, Free Lunch Friday consistently attracts more than 50 students from all across the university every Friday.

“Horn Entrepreneurship has been the largest influencer of not only my entrepreneurial and professional growth, but also my personal growth. Horn Entrepreneurship helped me learn who I am and who I want to be by providing a likeminded, supportive, ambitious community and the tools, mentors, skills and knowledge to turn my passions into my work and lifestyle. The Horn students were my closest friends from college, and we continue to challenge and support each other. We talk every week to exchange ideas, advice, and connections. What meant the most to me was having faculty and students who believed in me. It gave me the confidence to pursue my ideas and not hesitate to try something new if one idea didn’t work.”

Since graduating, Becca works as the member services coordinator at InnerCity Weightlifting in Boston.

Class
of
2016

becca leisher

“ICW helps at-risk youth leave gang violence to pursue careers in personal training and fitness. The relationships students build with their clients, who work at Google, Amazon, Biogen and other leading companies in Boston help connect them to professional opportunities beyond training. We work with the 1 percent of Boston’s population driving 50 percent of violent crime, and our program is remarkably effective, so as we scale, we hope to significantly reduce crime in Boston. We are expanding to Philadelphia, Chicago and LA over the next few years as well. My position is to support our clients, driving growth through sales, marketing, community building and customer service. I intend to stay with ICW for a long time, and I hope to grow a member services team under me.”

Becca continues to stay in touch with entrepreneurial students and grow her network through her side project, 1Drive, “a community of leaders from student entrepreneurship communities across universities such as UD, MIT, UVA, Boston University, University of Denver, and many more. Our goal is to collaborate to improve and grow our entrepreneurship clubs, connecting tomorrow’s entrepreneurial leaders in the process.”



marcus whitchett

Entrepreneurship & Design ('16)
Raytheon Engineering

Marcus Whitchett was a part of the inaugural class of the master’s degree in entrepreneurship and design. During his time as a graduate student he worked on projects like the Challenge Locator platform and gave a TEDx talk. Since graduating, he landed a job with Raytheon working at its Tucson, Arizona site.

“Horn Entrepreneurship armed me with the soft and hard skills that were transferable in acquiring a position with Raytheon. During my hiring process, I found myself networking and interviewing with various people throughout the company. I realized that every interview or discussion was really just me pitching my product (myself as a potential employee) to investors (my employer). It completely shifted my train of thought; I became more of a salesman than an engineer!”

theraV

Amira Idris ('16)
Entrepreneurship & Design



“

Without Horn Entrepreneurship, I don't believe I would have pursued TheraV as a business, especially at this stage in my life.

Amira Idris's business concept, TheraV, was born after she took an undergraduate biomedical engineering class. She spent time shadowing medical professionals caring for people with amputated limbs. Speaking with patients, she saw how hard it was for amputees to live with "phantom limb pain," an occasional excruciating pain occurring at the amputation site that can hinder mobility and prevent sleep.

After looking into the problem, Amira invented a line of apparel that integrates a wearable garment with vibration technology. Her research and testing demonstrate that vibrating helps increase blood circulation and tissue activity, relieving pain. This technology reduces the cost of therapy, and more importantly allows patients to get a good night's sleep for the first time in years.

"Horn Entrepreneurship has been very instrumental in helping me get to where I am today. When I initially came up with the concept for the TheraV product, I was a biomedical engineering student that didn't know about entrepreneurship or consider it as a path at that point in my life.

"Participating in the Horn Entrepreneurship pitch competitions as an undergraduate was my first introduction to the program. Since my first pitch competition, I have taken my concept of TheraV through multiple Horn Entrepreneurship programs, and that has equipped me with the validation, resources, such as funds, workspace, mentors and environment I needed to explore my idea as a real business.

"My first business address was the Venture Development Center, and I developed my business out of that space. Without Horn Entrepreneurship, I don't believe I would have pursued TheraV as a business, especially at this stage in my life."

Since graduating with a master's degree in entrepreneurship and design in 2016, Amira has been working full-time on launching TheraV's first product.

geoswap

Jason Bamford ('17)
Keith Doggett ('17)
Jordan Gonzalez ('17)
(from left to right)

Developed by biomedical engineer Jason Bamford, GeoSwap is a mobile application that allows users to know everything happening around them in their city. After meeting in the Summer Founders program in 2016, the GeoSwap team tripled in size to include CTO Keith Doggett and CMO Jordan Gonzalez.

GeoSwap was the official app of SantaCon New York, a massive event where people dress up in Santa suits and visit bars throughout the city. The team placed first in the student track during the 2017 Hen Hatch competition. During the spring of 2017, they landed their first clients, Delaware Tourism Office and Delaware State Parks.

Linda Parkowski, Delaware's director of tourism, said, "GeoSwap is going to make it easier for visitors and residents to find fun things to do here in Delaware, adding pins that are branded with Delaware Tourism and Delaware State Parks logos."

After graduating, the trio moved to Wilmington to continue working on their venture at 1313 Innovation.

"Horn Entrepreneurship was incredibly influential in getting the three of us to where we are today. To start, they gave us the Summer Founders program, which is where we all joined up as a team. And the 24-7 access to the Venture Development Center that we got as a result of being in the VentureOn Program helped because it allowed us to have a legitimate place to meet at night, on the weekends and with clients."



cj meyer

Entrepreneurial Studies ('15)
KPMG Consulting

CJ Meyer works for KPMG as a management consultant specializing in data analytics and visualization. When he's not working, CJ mentors young leaders and advises nonprofit organizations. He's found the entrepreneurial process highly beneficial in his current work environment.

"Horn Entrepreneurship provided an incredible learning experience. The emphasis on the evidence-based startup methodology and validating your ideas before building is something that I have applied to practical problems that I face at work. For example, we are migrating to a new IT system, and instead of making assumptions on what the best method is, we built out a prototype and validated our assumptions through user interviews."

nikhil paul

Class of 2009
Presentr

Nikhil is the CTO of Presentr, a smart presentation skills coaching platform that helps teams speak, present and sell more effectively.

Prior to working for Presentr, Nikhil had his own startup, NfoShare, an employee engagement tool. He participated in DreamIt Venture's Class of 2014, and NfoShare had a variety of impressive clients like General Electric Capital, Samsung and the city of Philadelphia.

Regarding his time at Horn, Nikhil says, "I was also able to start my first startup by working for a year out of the Venture Development Center, and I'll always be super appreciative of that."

When he's not working Nikhil leads team-building Bollywood dance workshops.

palina ivanova

Entrepreneurial Studies ('17)

Deloitte



“Currently, I live in Arlington, Virginia where I am a Consultant in Deloitte’s Government and Public Service Advisory practice. As a Consultant, I work with clients to help solve some of their most complex challenges. My goal is to integrate design thinking and a lean methodology to effectively identify client problems, generate deep insights, and drive innovative solutions.

“Previously, I was the Executive Director of the Pete du Pont Freedom Foundation in Wilmington, Delaware. Although I was in this role for less than a year, I gained invaluable leadership experience and benefited greatly from a multitude of challenges that put me out of my comfort zone.”

Though Palina was an accounting major during her time as a student, she was on the founding team of a startup called Revive, an app to help women revitalize their wardrobes. She spent many long nights in the Venture Development Center working on the service with a team of three other women. They brought the idea to Hen Hatch in 2017, where the team won \$12,000

As an undergrad, Palina was conducting research on entrepreneurial ecosystem development. Her research continued in Barcelona where she explored Barcelona’s unique entrepreneurial ecosystem and had the chance to interview various stakeholders in the community. Her insights led her to present a TEDx Barcelona talk on how a city might build a successful entrepreneurial ecosystem.



I give a lot of
credit to
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next challenge.

“First and foremost, Horn Entrepreneurship introduced me to two of my most influential mentors throughout my college experience: Dr. Dan Young and Vince DiFelice. Dan has been the type of mentor that has provided me with numerous opportunities that challenged me to get out of my comfort zone. These opportunities were critical to helping me become more confident in myself and engrained in my passion for entrepreneurship.

“Vince has also been a prominent force in helping me learn about the entrepreneurial process and better understand entrepreneurial judgement. Without his mentorship and encouragement, Revive would’ve just been an idea that simply lived in our minds. He taught me a lot about the lean startup methodology and the importance of simply getting out the door and talking to your customers. He helped our team lay the foundation onto which we have grown and continue to learn from.”

While she initially saw herself as an entrepreneur after graduation, she is discovering the power of intraprenurship and the sheer value of bringing an entrepreneurial mindset to any job. “It’s a matter of being courageous, bold, and thinking outside the box,” Palina states.

“I am genuinely excited to work in a large company. Especially after coming from an organization where I was the only employee. It’s often perceived that when you’re in a large company, you’re just a number. I’ve come to realize this is only true if you let it be. I believe that you are the captain of your own ship. You are in charge of making your presence, knowledge, and expertise known, sincerely valued, and sought after. In this space, the value proposition you are selling is not that of an idea but that of yourself. You must be able to articulate how you’re unique and the value you bring to the table. I give a lot of credit to my experience at Horn for making me feel well prepared and equipped to take on this next challenge.”

lendEDU

Spending night after night in the Venture Development Center, Nate Matherson and Matt Lenhard built ShopTutors, a site that simplified the process of hiring a tutor. After winning Hen Hatch in 2014, the team brought their idea to the Iowa Startup Accelerator, an intense 90-day business development program.

Three weeks in, the duo pivoted. Burdened with student loan debt, Matherson saw how difficult it was to compare student loans in a transparent way. Out of the realization came LendEDU, an online marketplace for student loan financing that now saves users a total of \$12,000 on average.

After graduating from Y Combinator—the esteemed accelerator program whose graduates include Airbnb and Dropbox—Nate and Matt kicked their business into high gear, generating more than \$1 million in revenue in 2016. LendEDU has been featured in The Wall Street Journal, Business Insider, The New York Times, The Huffington Post, Bloomberg and TechCrunch. They now have nine full-time employees, all University of Delaware graduates.

Nate Matherson (‘16)
Matt Lenhard (‘16)

“When we won Hen Hatch in 2014, we received over \$5,000 in funding. This funding gave Matt and I the ability to work on our business in a real way. We participated in VentureOn, which gave us an incredible place to work. Matt and I worked full-time on LendEDU in the Venture Development Center for over a year. Along the way, Dan and the rest of the Horn Entrepreneurship team helped us network, gain intros and gave us confidence,” states Nate Matherson.

In the future, LendEDU plans on expanding the business to help consumers with more personal finance decisions by allowing them to compare financials including bank accounts, auto loans and credit cards.

tali cohen

Entrepreneurial Studies ('16)
Deloitte

As a co-founder of Udwell, an off-campus housing startup, Tali Cohen got firsthand experience running a company during her time as an undergraduate student. She and her partner, Yael Bloom, built a website to help students understand all of the different housing options available to them in the surrounding area.

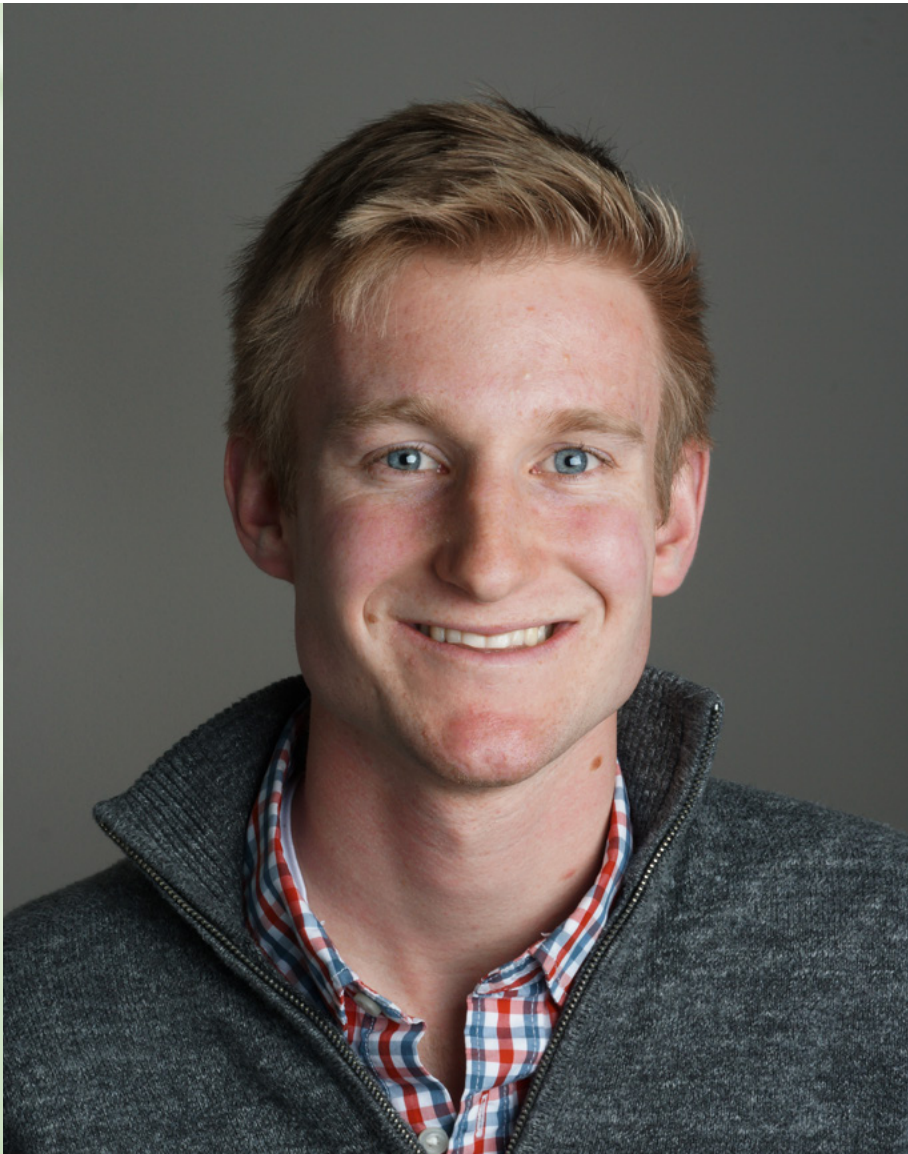
“Horn Entrepreneurship was a big factor of the success I had with the company I co-founded, Udwell. The programs helped me grow and provided me with incredible resources and the push that I needed to expand and start making a profit off of my business.”

The Udwell website is still in operation and has since been passed on to current entrepreneurship students to continue running the company. Tali now works as a business technology analyst at Deloitte in its Consulting Practice. Though she’s starting to “miss the start-up life,” Tali enjoys her job at Deloitte and credits her time with Horn as a huge factor in landing the role in the first place.

“Having Udwell to talk about and my experiences with Horn Entrepreneurship really set me apart from other candidates. The innovation and the excitement that I was constantly surrounded with by being part of Horn Entrepreneurship drove me to have passion and work harder at everything I did. I think that was very apparent while I was interviewing.”



The programs helped me grow
and provided me with incredible
resources and the push that
I needed to expand and start
making a profit off of my business.



dualschool

In May 2017, Zachary released his first book, “The World Changer’s Handbook: A Young Person’s Guide to Creating an Impactful Life”.

“The book is based off what I learned in my time at Horn Entrepreneurship. It takes entrepreneurial principles and applies them to living a meaningful life more generally. As president of the Entrepreneurship Club, I learned so much about helping people pursue their passions. That experience served as the inspiration to write a book.”

After graduating in 2017, Zachary started working for Horn Entrepreneurship doing special projects in marketing and youth programs. He was able to put his enthusiasm for entrepreneurship education into action by creating workshops and blog posts that introduce young people to the power of innovation.

“Horn Entrepreneurship is doing big things and I’m excited to be a part of the team driving forward the future of education.”

Today, Zack serves as the director for Dual School, a program designed to provide high school students with tools and resources to pursue projects of personal importance.

Zachary Jones

Entrepreneurship & Technology Innovation ('17)
Dual School



adam breese

Entrepreneurship & Technology Innovation ('16)
Frontier Technologies

Since graduating as an Entrepreneurship & Technology Innovation major from Horn Entrepreneurship in 2016, Adam Breese has found an intrapreneurial niche working for a local technology firm. He gets to engage in creative and entrepreneurial thinking in his current role as a marketing manager at Frontier Technologies.

“I collaborate directly with the CEO and the president of my company every day, and they constantly push me to challenge their assumptions, diverge with new ideas, and actually try those things until they fail, and then try something else. There really is a culture of intrapreneurship.”

Always looking for his passion, Adam had trouble finding an academic discipline that felt like a strong fit. It wasn't until he stumbled upon the new entrepreneurship major in 2013 that he found that perfect place. Adam says, “I finally got the opportunity to study something that actually made me excited to go to class. Because class wasn't just watching a PowerPoint or reading from a textbook – it was getting out of the building and learning by doing.”

Though he works full-time, Adam still finds time to pursue startup ventures. The first is a company called Audonate, a mobile app to round up purchases to the nearest dollar and automatically donate the difference to a nonprofit of the consumer's choice. The other is Hoodfi, a startup to bring public, outdoor wifi to a neighborhood near you through crowdfunding. For every funded Hoodfi project, they will donate the same service to an underserved neighborhood.

Adam says, “I have about 500 other ideas rolling around in my head that I can't wait to validate or invalidate.

“Horn gave me the educational foundation of evidence-based entrepreneurship and design thinking that drives every business decision I make. I literally can't imagine life without it.”

yael bloom

Entrepreneurship & Technology Innovation ('16)
Indeed

As an undergraduate, Yael Bloom saw the need for better off-campus housing resources. She teamed up with Tali Cohen to build Udwell, a startup that provides a detailed list of apartments in and around Newark, Delaware. In her first role after graduating, Yael worked as an account executive at Yelp, a crowd-sourced review platform for businesses and services, and found her entrepreneurial experience crucial in performing her job duties.

“I work with so many businesses that are just starting out. When I help them with their business concepts, their customer segments and their channels, I always use what I learned through Horn Entrepreneurship and my experience running Udwell.”

In the summer of 2017, Yael started a new role as a sales support coordinator at Indeed.com, one of the largest job sites in the world. She points to her time as a student as being instrumental in standing out during the interview process.

“In my interview experience I was asked how comfortable I am in an entrepreneurial environment (i.e. changing roles, pivoting ideas), and I was able to give direct examples of how Horn Entrepreneurship taught me how to do this.”

According to Yael, her job requires a lot of communication, and she’s grateful for all of the times she had to pitch Udwell as an undergraduate. Yael has a strong understanding of what makes a good presentation, and she uses those skills on a daily basis.

“Right now I’m working at JPMorgan Chase in the Corporate Analyst Development Program. It is a two-year program, and each six months we rotate to a new job and core discipline. Horn Entrepreneurship has helped me immensely with setting myself apart from my peers. The presentation and networking skills I developed in college have given me a competitive edge in the firm. Most importantly, the creativity and leadership have been my biggest assets. Leading meetings, creating visually appealing slide decks for senior leadership and leading individuals who are double my age all have come easily due to the skills I developed at Horn Entrepreneurship.”

Jaclyn emphasized that an education with Horn Entrepreneurship is much more than your typical classroom experience.

“Horn Entrepreneurship taught us beyond anything a textbook could teach. We graduated from Horn with real-world experiences and skill sets including networking, professionalism, recognizing your passion and realizing your sense of self. I felt confident leaving the program knowing I had a unique college experience that taught me to work hard and never let reality keep me from attaining my dreams.”

Though she’s not working at a startup, Jaclyn still has many ideas in her head and says she’s trying to keep up with some entrepreneurial side projects for the future.

jaclyn anninos

Entrepreneurship & Technology Innovation ('16)
JPMorgan Chase & Co.

john lowman

Class of 2016
Mimetas Inc.

John Lowman first got involved with Horn Entrepreneurship through a senior design project for his biomedical engineering major. His team was working on a device to reduce narcotic abuse in hospitals. John threw himself into the world of entrepreneurship by entering the Hen Hatch competition with his team and receiving mentorship from a variety of experts.

After pitching their startup to a panel of judges, John and the rest of the JADE Biotech team won \$16,800 in the 2016 competition. They also gained admission to the pre-accelerator program, Summer Founders, to continue working on their idea. Although the idea didn't turn into a profitable venture, John's experience learning about the medical industry landed him a job as a business developer at Mimetas, a fast-growing biotech startup that has developed a novel platform for physiological tissue modeling.

"The past year has been the most transformative of my life, and none of it would have been possible without the endless mentorship and support that I've received from Horn Entrepreneurship.

Being coached up into an entrepreneur has added a completely new dimension to my ability to make a real impact on the world!

Being immersed in a startup atmosphere, and developing a degree of expertise in the biotech space specifically, has been invaluable for both my personal and career growth. Between the job offers that I was considering before and after my time with JADE, I saw a tremendous increase in the amount of responsibility that I'd be entrusted with at a new company, along with a substantial increase in compensation as well!

I'm also 100 percent confident that I'll hit the ground running thanks to everything I learned at Horn! I'm excited to continue learning, growing and making an impact in the biotech startup space, and you can bet that JADE won't be my last shot at a startup launch!"



curing



cube

Farhad Baqi has always been one to seize opportunity. After tapping into the support of Horn Entrepreneurship during his junior year, Farhad started a venture with two dentists, one of which is his brother. This startup was built around Curing Cube, a device that speeds up the curing process of dental molds.

“Horn did everything for me. They taught me the importance of having an entrepreneurial mind and then furthered my knowledge by allowing me to practice being an entrepreneur.”

In 2016, the Curing Cube team won more than \$13,000 from the Hen Hatch startup funding competition and gained admission into the prestigious pre-acclerator Summer Founders program.

“Horn offered endless resources for me to delve into the world of entrepreneurship that I otherwise wouldn’t have had. They gave me a space to work out of, mentors to help me along the process and even startup funds to help the venture get off the ground. In addition, the classes were outstanding in helping me understand the theory and fundamentals of entrepreneurship and starting a new business.”

Since graduating, Farhad continues to work on Curing Cube, but his focus has shifted toward starting Blue Hen Dental, a series of dental offices across the state.

“In the next year I will be working on developing both Blue Hen Dental and Curing Cube. After that, I will be working on starting branch number two, three, four... ten of Blue Hen Dental. Our goal is to provide the most efficient, high-quality and affordable dental care to every member of the Delaware community. We won’t rest until we reach that goal!”

Farhad Baqi

Entrepreneurship & Technology Innovation ('17)
Blue Hen Dental

thomas mulligan

When he graduated from Horn Entrepreneurship in 2016 with a concentration in computer science, Thomas Mulligan enrolled in Rutgers Medical School. A few months later, Thomas decided to stop studying medicine and pursue a side project of growing a following on Twitch.tv, a popular website for streaming video games. In just nine months, he’s grown a successful and profitable channel that supports his livelihood. He attributes a lot of his success to skills he learned with Horn Entrepreneurship.

“A lot of the things I used along the way to be successful were things I’ve learned from Horn Entrepreneurship. If something wasn’t working, I knew I had to pivot to change up how I would appeal to more people. They taught me useful skills about branding, customers and taking chances. Without my knowledge from Horn Entrepreneurship, I strongly doubt I would have been as successful.”

Entrepreneurship & Technology Innovation (16)
twitch.tv



eff.Y.bee

Alyssa Kuchta ('12)

After traveling abroad with Students for Haiti, Alyssa found her passion and started selling unique handmade jewelry to fundraise for earthquake relief in Haiti. She taught herself how to make jewelry and started her own business in 2011.

“Since graduating from the University of Delaware in 2012, I have been focused on growing my company full-time. I moved to a studio in the East Village, NYC in 2014 where eff.Y.bee is headquartered.”

Alyssa works closely with her team to manage a vibrant campus ambassador program. The program has been instrumental in building a community around her brand.

“Over the last five years, we have grown to having campus brand ambassadors at over 75 universities and are now sold in over 80 nationwide retailers.”

Alyssa oversees jewelry design and production, fulfills wholesale and online orders, travels for trunk shows and trade shows and comes up with creative content for marketing campaigns. She’s grateful that Horn Entrepreneurship provided her with startup capital and connected her with a UD graduate who has been a close mentor and advisor over the past four years.

“Horn Entrepreneurship was essential to my success. The countless resources, mentorship and connections that were provided to me while a student at the University of Delaware helped build my confidence and prepare me to take my business from just a ‘big dream’ to a real business. It’s been an incredible journey, and I feel so grateful for the ability to pursue my passion!

Horn Entrepreneurship at UD has truly built an incredible community that genuinely cares about supporting and helping one another. It’s taught me to also build a community within my business that reflects those values, and I am so proud to have been a part of it.”



matt phifer

Class of 2018
Performance Physical Therapy and Fitness



Matt Phifer found his way into entrepreneurship on a whim. The exercise science student was introduced to Horn Entrepreneurship through a seemingly trivial conversation with a friend that ended up being critical to Matt’s future development.

“I was introduced to Horn Entrepreneurship through a friend who described a place where people were trying to build something cool in their free time.”

The atmosphere and community Matt found at the Venture Development Center, the collaborative workspace for Horn, immediately inspired him to spend more time in the building. He soon found that he couldn’t keep himself away.

“As soon as I stepped in here, I fell in love with the place,” said Matt with a laugh. “The constant

movement and problem solving; people are in here everyday not because of a school project, but because they are motivated to make something special.”

Matt participated in the Summer Founders program, a pre-accelerator for student ventures. The first few weeks of the program had a profound effect on Matt’s outlook.

“Slowly, after developing connections and relationships with the mentors and students involved, your mindset and thought process changes,” said Matt. “Instead of looking at things at face value, you look at them and ask, ‘How can I make that better?’”

Matt already had a job as an aide to physical therapists at Performance Physical Therapy and Fitness. The young entrepreneur was able to

approach his supervisor and present his ideas for a rejuvenated Fitness Center, with a full marketing plan and customer validation to strengthen his proposal.

“The company had never had anyone run the Fitness Center, but after pitching my idea they decided it might be time to have someone. I was able to fill a position that never existed and right now we are up 44% in revenue from the Fitness Center.”

The exercise science major turned entrepreneur was able to create his own opportunity and success by looking at situations through an entrepreneurial lens and by asking himself how he could improve his surroundings. Matt continues to apply his new perspective and is currently developing new ideas to further improve the performance of the Fitness Center.



garry johnson

Entrepreneurial Studies Minor ('17)
Entrepreneurship & Design (18')

Garry Johnson has a passion for teaching young men about the power of entrepreneurship. In 2016, he started leading a mentoring program called Raising Kings that has a mission to change the image and expectations of young men and boys of color. Garry also launched an annual event called the I Have a Dream Pitch Competition in Wilmington, Delaware. The competition provides an avenue for young men to share their ideas in front of a crowd and raise funding.

Though Garry studied exercise science as an undergraduate, he spent a great deal of time working in the Venture Development Center. He participated in First Step Grand Challenges, a partnership between Horn Entrepreneurship and the College of Health Sciences, for three years learning how to develop sustainable solutions to address societal problems.

“Horn Entrepreneurship provided me with the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to get all of my creative ideas off the ground. The experiences and opportunities that presented themselves from engaging in various Horn programs has made all the difference. Long nights in the Venture Development Center helped, too.”

After completing his undergraduate degree in May 2017, Garry enrolled in Horn Entrepreneurship’s master’s degree in entrepreneurship and design.

i don't give a fork

Leigh Ann Tona

Entrepreneurial Studies ('12)

If you're from the Delaware area, you've probably seen the I Don't Give a Fork truck at a local festival. Leigh Ann Tona has been running the truck since graduating in 2012. She has appeared all over the state at events from technology meetups to the Firefly Music Festival. In addition to running the truck, Leigh Ann opened Fork in the Road Cafe in 2016.

"I took several classes at the University of Delaware that taught me a lot about the evidence based startup method, which I think really helped me in that first year of food trucking. I also had some awesome professors, such as Matt Terrell, who encouraged me to go for my idea even though I was a 21-year-old with no professional kitchen experience. He encouraged me to enter the Idea Pitch competition in November 2011 where I won \$1,000. That really pushed me to start the truck for real. Winning was more of a validation for my idea, and I would have never pitched my idea if it wasn't for those professors."

In the future, Leigh Ann hopes to expand her catering business, open up a small burger restaurant and start teaching. She says those aspirations may be many years away; so for now she's just going to keep on trucking!



danilo vicioso



Entrepreneurial Studies ('18)
LDV Capital

Danilo Vicioso always envisioned himself running startups and finding new, innovative ways to do business. The New York native graduated from the University of Delaware in 2018 with an economics degree and minor in entrepreneurial studies from the Lerner College of Business and Economics, but his entrepreneurial spirit was on display long before that.

"I started Authentic Ink Graphs when I was in high school and knew I wanted to study and learn more about entrepreneurship," said Danilo. "I didn't put much thought into it, I just knew I wanted to be in business."

Authentic Ink Graphs is a signed memorabilia company that collects autographs in person to provide the highest quality product. Danilo started and pursued the venture when he was a high school student and quickly became more invested in the startup when he entered college.

"When I was 19, I decided to pursue Authentic Ink Graphs full-time," said Danilo. "I moved to Los Angeles, grew my monthly revenue from \$10,000 to \$80,000 but then decided to return to UD and finish my degree."

Danilo took those lessons into his interactions at the Venture Development Center, the innovative co-working space for Horn Entrepreneurship.

"The amazing community at the Venture Development Center inspired positive change and growth for me; Horn was incredible in providing an environment to talk to people and learn from meaningful connections," said Danilo. "I would love

to be able to repay future entrepreneurs by giving them the time and opportunity to talk through their ideas and goals with me."

"After seeing so many of my friends and classmates struggle with career decisions I knew there could be a better way to prepare them for the future," said Danilo. "Horn Entrepreneurship gave me the opportunity to teach my own course in fall 2017 and it's easily one of the most meaningful things I've ever done."

Danilo also offered some parting advice for budding entrepreneurs, or anyone looking to make their mark on the world.

"I think it's important to fail forward, learn by making mistakes, and to do that you just need to get out there and try things, embrace opportunities. Try to understand on a deeper level what what you're going after and make it happen."

matt wilens

Entrepreneurial Studies (18')

For Matt Wilens, entrepreneurship was the final piece of the puzzle, the component of his education that connected the dots and solidified the value of his degree.

“Looking back at the start of my journey into entrepreneurship, after a bunch of switching around other business majors, it is easy to see just how impactful it was for me,” said Wilens. “Even the intro course was really impactful in changing my perspective on how to solve problems.”

Wilens added an Entrepreneurial Studies minor to supplement his marketing degree. The business major was keen to add something to differentiate his degree and skill set.

“I have always seen myself as an ideas guy, that’s why I went into marketing after bouncing around,” explained Wilens. “The Entrepreneurial Studies minor felt like the perfect avenue because it teaches how to apply your ideas anywhere, whether that’s in a corporate setting or elsewhere.”

The process of idea to action had a profound effect on Wilens, who was able to perfect the process throughout his studies.

“The intro course got me started on a dedicated habit of coming up with ten new ideas a day,” said Wilens. “But it’s so much more than that. It used to be, ‘I don’t know where to go from here, or even start,’ but now, my brain has done a total flip and I can go about growing and improving things.”

Wilens developed much more than just his ideation skills. The E-studies student was able to grow his confidence speaking to people and presenting his ideas in an attractive way.

“Entrepreneurship is applicable to all areas of life,” said Wilens. “It has taught me that I can create and optimize my skills anywhere, and has helped so much with the work I am doing now.”

Wilens now works for Daymond John, a Shark on ABC’s Shark Tank, and a world renowned serial entrepreneur. Wilens is working as a Client Growth Specialist for Daymond on Demand, an entrepreneurial training program developed by the famous entrepreneur. The recent UD graduate is working to grow the customer base of the new training program while also working to implement customer feedback into the evolution of the product.

“It’s so easy to get trapped in the idea that entrepreneurship is just creating your own business,” said Wilens. “It’s so much more; you can be entrepreneurial within a company and create more value. That’s what makes the curriculum so special at the University of Delaware, it’s actually flexible and completely tailored in every aspect to be able to apply entrepreneurship tenets.”

Wilens only wishes he had more time: “Entrepreneurship really goes under the radar, but it’s an amazing skill set to develop and gets you prepared to fail fast.”

opportunity & impact

Opportunity relates to the recognition that

as the pace of change in the world continues to accelerate, the value of an entrepreneurial skillset continues to increase;

all University of Delaware students need access to relevant and empowering entrepreneurship education programming;

the locus of learning does not need to reside in the classroom; rather, it can sit between experiential learning inside the classroom and a robust array of enrichment activities and venture support programming outside the classroom;

alumni and members of the broader community can and should be engaged in the development and delivery of entrepreneurship education offerings.

Impact relates to the recognition of

aligning key stakeholders around a compelling purpose – student empowerment through the manifestation of an entrepreneurial mindset;

building programming for efficiency, growth and sustainability and iterating rapidly based on evidence;

creating and maintaining a culture that is open, collaborative, innovative and meritocratic;

optimizing the impact of entrepreneurship education on students, the University and the broader community.



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