

Student Biographies

Sowmdeb Sen (Marketing) - *ssen1@kennesaw.edu*



I will be joining the Marketing discipline and my research interests are in the ESG & Signaling theory, Advertising Efficiency and Consumer Behavior. I work as an investment management professional and teach part time. I would like to pursue a teaching carrier on a fulltime basis after I complete my PhD. I grew up in Mumbai, India and have 3 separate masters degrees each in Mathematics (Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai), Economics (SUNY, Buffalo) and Mathematical Finance (University of Southern California). I have lived across 5 different states in the US. Georgia is my home for the last 15 years. I am a certified hypnotherapist and a state licensed massage therapist. On weekends, I like to spend time with my wife, 3 human kids and my 150lb English mastiff puppy.

Lee Shinaberger (Accounting) - hshinabe@students.kennesaw.edu



Lee Shinaberger (Accounting)

I am excited to join the rest of Cohort 14 as we begin our journey through the PhD program.

I am a Senior Lecturer in management and decision sciences at Coastal Carolina University. I typically teach four sections of business statistics and one section of decision analysis each semester. I am pursuing a PhD to create opportunities for advancement in academia.

I earned a BS in mechanical engineering from the University of Pittsburgh and an MBA from the University of South Carolina. In addition, I have taken coursework in accounting at Coastal Carolina in preparation for the PhD program. I am interested in research concerning base erosion and profit shifting, i.e., tax avoidance effects.

Before entering academia, I worked in the electronics industry. I designed production machines, then managed the launch of a product line of supercapacitors. I also implemented an IT solution to replace a paper-based quality control system for military and medical products.

I live in Myrtle Beach, SC with my wife Jenn. Prior to the pandemic Jenn and I were active in an improv comedy troupe, where we performed 2-4 nights per week for tourists and locals.

Our other hobbies include travel, sharply reduced lately. Our favorite trips have been to China to present workshops on faculty development in Xiamen and Harbin as part of the Sino-American Cooperation in Higher Education and Professional Development

(CHEPD) program. We hope to resume those the program when Covid restrictions end.

Owen Chilongo (Information Systems) - ochilong@students.kennesaw.edu



My name is Owen Chilongo and I live in Austin Texas. I moved to Austin from Kennesaw to attend McCombs Graduate School of Business at the University of Texas at Austin. After graduating from McCombs, I started working in the technology industry at Oracle and then transitioned into consulting working for KPMG implementing Oracle supply chain applications and I currently work at IBM as a Product Manage.

I obtained my undergraduate degree in Political Science (BSc) from Kennesaw State University and later obtained my graduate degree in Technology Commercialization (MSc) from the University of Texas at Austin.

My area of discipline in the PhD in Business Administration at KSU is Information Systems with a research interest in understanding the impact augmented, virtual and extended reality technologies will have on influencing the future retail storefront.

I'm an avid marathon runner with a life goal of running in all six major world marathons (Tokyo, Berlin, London, Chicago, New York, and Boston Marathons). I run marathons so as that I can eat bread and to also have an excuse to visit new cities. I'm a fervent Manchester United football (soccer) fan and I especially enjoy travel, seafood, bread and blues music.

I was born in Zambia, and this is where I spent my formative years until moving to the United States. All my extended family still lives in Zambia and whom I get to visit every other year. I consider Kennesaw to be my second home as I have fond memories of my time here, as it's a place where I met lifelong friends during my undergraduate studies. This is why I'm excited

on my return to KSU as a PhD student in Business Administration.

Nicole Thomas (Marketing) - nthom112@students.kennesaw.edu



Nicole A. Thomas

Marketing & Communications Strategist

Program Discipline: Marketing

Hello. I am Nicole A. Thomas, a Marketing & Communications Strategist and Founder of the Nicallyss Creative Group. My professional background includes marketing, communications, DEI and corporate social responsibility roles with the NBA's Houston Rockets, the Four Seasons, Southwest Airlines and FedEx. I am also an adjunct instructor for the MBA program at Christian Brothers University.

A life-long learner, I earned an MBA from the University of Memphis. Both my Masters in Public Administration and Bachelors in Marketing are from Texas Southern University, in Houston. I also have certifications in Diversity and Inclusion from Cornell University, as well as Strategic Communications from the University of Texas at Austin. My program discipline is marketing.

Curiosity has led me to travel to more than 12 countries solo, where I love to photograph people, culture and architecture. I have 4 nephews that love to spoil and give back to their parents. Community impact and philanthropy are part of my core values. I have served on several nonprofit boards and led investments of more than \$50 million in nonprofits around the world.

Katie Harris (Accounting) - *kharr337@students.kennesaw.edu*



My name is Katie Harris and I currently work as a lecturer of accounting at Sam Houston State University. Both my undergraduate degree in accounting and master's in finance were obtained from Sam Houston State University (Huntsville, TX). I am a licensed CPA in the State of Texas and actively involved with both the Becker CPA and CMA exam review in various capacities. My husband owns two pediatric dental practices near our home in Montgomery, TX, and I am the controller for both offices.

My academic discipline while working towards my PhD at KSU will be accounting. My professional experience is largely in audit. I enjoy financial accounting and reporting and outside of tax, I find all things accounting incredibly interesting. Income tax accounting was my only B in accounting, and believe me, I worked hard for that B. The material flew over my head, and I may or may not still be somewhat traumatized! My RIO centered on the implications of the current expected credit loss model on the loan provision process for banks. My primary motivation was the newness of the standard and potential research opportunities. While initially I had very little experience in this area of accounting, I quickly realized how fascinating and complex the banking industry is. I enjoy learning and find the whole process equal parts overwhelming and fascinating. I am certainly interested in pursuing this topic but also open to other topics and areas as well.

I grew up in a small town in East Texas called Colmesneil with approximately 600 people and one yellow blinking light. My

graduating class was a whooping 38, and I am the first person in my family to earn a college education. I believe in the power of an education to change lives because it certainly changed mine. My mother instilled in me a strong work ethic. She encouraged me to pursue my passions and to never let my doubts or insecurities control my willingness to give any pursuit, everything I have. I am incredibly blessed with the knowledge that for the whole of my mother's life, I was loved beyond measure. My husband, Brad, and I have been married for 19 years and we have four beautiful children, Brad II, Gabi, Sam, and Eve. I love to read and I have never read a book that I did not like (except income tax accounting).

Francis Owuor (Information Systems) - fowuor@students.kennesaw.edu



Francis Agot is a Special Agent with the United States Army Criminal Investigations Division.

Francis holds a Bachelors of Arts degree in Accounting and Mathematics (B Arts), a Master's in Business Administration (MBA-Finance) and a Masters in Professional Accounting (MPA).

Francis is a Certified Public Account (CPA), Certified Forensic Accountant (Cr. FA), Certified Internal Auditor (CIA), Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE) and Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA).

Francis has an over 10 years experience and interest in Auditing, Forensic Accounting and Fraud Examinations and is Pursuing a PhD in Business Administration with an Emphasis in Accounting.

Matthew Maylath (Accounting) - mmaylath@students.kennesaw.edu



My name is Matthew Maylath, and I am currently Associate Director of Accounting for the charitable foundations of Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Georgia. My academic background includes a B.A. in French from Purdue University, an M.S. in Accounting also from Purdue, and an M.B.A. from Georgia Southern. Also, I am a licensed C.P.A in the state of Georgia. My concentration in the PhD program is Accounting. Within the area of accounting, I am very interested in research that examines the interplay between financial accounting information and investor decision making (e.g., the effects of exogenous shocks on the quality of accounting information and the resulting impact on investors), as well as research that considers the impacts of emerging technologies on the field of accounting (e.g., how blockchain technology and automation will impact the accounting profession).

I very much enjoy traveling both domestically and abroad, and I have had the opportunity to visit France, Germany, and China several times, along with several other destinations. I am also an avid foreign language learner, and I have studied French, Portuguese, and Mandarin Chinese intensively, while at the same time dabbling in other languages such as German, Russian, and Japanese. My professional life began with an interest in becoming a reference librarian, but I later developed a passion for finance and accounting that has kept me in the accounting field for over 15 years. My wife Tuyin is a professor at Georgia Southern, and we have enjoyed making Statesboro our home for the past five years or so, after moving to Georgia from Indiana.

Tuyin plans to join me in traveling to most of the PhD program residencies to keep me company, provide moral support, and get a change of scenery from life in quiet Statesboro.

Deidre Tilley (Marketing) - *dtilley8@students.kennesaw.edu*



My ultimate academic goal is to be a Dean of a School or College of Business. I currently work at Auburn University as a Student Services Coordinator for the Online MBA program. Previously, I worked at Columbus State University for 13 years in various roles within the Turner College of Business. I have a diverse academic background: BS in Broadcast Journalism from Georgia Southern University. An MPA (Master's of Public Administration) from Columbus State University, an MBA (Master's of Business Administration) also from Columbus State University. My discipline in the Ph.D. program is Marketing. I have always been interested in Marketing since taking a few courses during my undergraduate journey. The research area that I am most interested in is the analytics of Social Media Marketing and the Marketing of Higher Education.

I am divorced with three “adult” children (all girls 24, 22, and 18). My ex-husband and I are still good friends (this seems strange to some people but normal to us). I like to spend time with my family and friends just doing fun stuff (creating memories and having a good time). I am an active member of my sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Some interesting yet crazy things that I've done in my 40s: completed the Soldiers half-marathon and the two Spartan races (sprint and the super) wanted a trifecta but didn't have any motivation left in me after the super.

I love animals and my life reflects that, I have two cats: Seven and Vision, and two dogs: CoCo (black lab) and Zeus (Siberian husky). I make crafts in my “free” time and sometimes I sell

them, but mostly I just like to create things (probably another reason I like marketing...the creative aspects). I like to travel, and I have been to Costa Rica, Panama, Aruba, Ireland, Cabo, Playa Riveria, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic. I was scheduled to go to Uganda on a mission-type trip, but it was canceled due to Covid. Hopefully, I can get to Africa soon.

Lesya Stallings (Accounting) - *lstalli8@students.kennesaw.edu*



My name is Lesya Stallings, I currently live in Boise, Idaho, and I am pursuing a career in academics as a university tenure-track faculty member. I hold a bachelor's degree in accounting from University of Nebraska and a master's degree in accounting from University of St. Thomas in Minnesota. I have work experience as a real estate accountant with CBRE and as a tax accountant with PwC and Deloitte. I have also taught financial accounting as an adjunct professor at Boise State University. My academic discipline in the Ph.D. program is accounting. My research interest is in financial accounting, particularly the usefulness of financial accounting standards and corporate disclosure to capital market participants.

My husband is a financial accounting professor at Boise State University, and he inspired me to pursue a Ph.D. and become a professor as well. I am originally from Ukraine, and I have traveled to many countries around the world. My three favorite countries that I have visited, other than Ukraine and the United States, are Brazil, Italy, and Iceland. When not working, exercising, and traveling, I enjoy spending time with my family in the foothills of Boise with the many outdoor activities offered here. I am excited to join the KSU Ph.D. program and to be a member of Cohort 14, and I am looking forward to meeting all my new colleagues!

Mari Sifo (Management) - msifo@students.kennesaw.edu



Hello, Cohort 14 and esteemed PhD faculty! I am Mari Sifo. I am currently the CHRO at SWM International and I take pride in being an HR executive who drives business results through the unique intersection of strategy, talent, and culture. I am a proud graduate of Florida A&M University, where I obtained both my bachelor's and MBA. My area of focus in Management. After 20 years of practical application, I am excited to dive into theory and the recent phenomena in the field, especially topics like burnout and the psychological contract between employer and employee.

I have lived in three continents and been responsible for employees across five continents. This has helped satiate my passion for travel and learning. My husband and I live in Smyrna, GA with our two boys Ian (12) and Ethan (9). Together, my husband (a sickle cell warrior) and I created a scholarship fund for students in Nigeria with Sickle Cell Disease. Our goal is to show young people living with sickle cell a life of opportunity and hope outside their current circumstances. As a family we love travelling, watching movies, and chiding each other about our favorite English Premiership teams. We've been homeschooling and working full time the last two years, so I'm excited that we will all be going back to school together in August!

Joseph Washburn (Information Systems) - jwashbu2@students.kennesaw.edu



I'm Joseph Washburn and it is my pleasure to meet all of my fellow students, faculty and staff of KSU. I spend my days working for CSI Laboratories in Alpharetta, GA which recently became a Fulgent Genetics company (NASDAQ: FLGT). I am the Senior Director of Clinical Laboratory Operations, which entails oversight of around 120 lab staff across 5 clinical departments conducting medical testing primarily around cancer diagnosis and prognosis. I hold a Bachelors in Science from the University of Michigan in Cell and Molecular Biology and completed my MBA at Eastern Michigan University. Now, at KSU, I am pursuing a PhD in Business Administration - Information Systems. My interest in the discipline revolves around the human psychology, organizational behavior and information system interactions as companies desire to automate evermore.

My personal interests currently include playing pickleball whenever I can, working on finishing my basement (along with 25 other unfinished home DIY projects), and mentally checking out while playing Diablo III on the Xbox. I have a family of 5, including a son at Georgia Southern, another son heading into 12th grade, and a daughter heading into 10th. Our best adventure thus far has been a 3 week trip out west with our Camper, visiting the Badlands in SD, Yellowstone National Park, swimming in the great salt lake in UT, Zion National Park, Lake Powel and the Grand Canyon. I am looking forward to another adventure to build memories with Cohort 14 at KSU.

Jenna-Lyn Roman (Management) - jroman10@students.kennesaw.edu



My name is Jenna-Lyn (Jenna) Roman and I'm an organizational psychology consultant and coach. Some of my recent jobs have included leadership roles in the retail sector, training and development intern with New York City Transit, teaching assistant opportunities at two R1 institutions, and two research assistant positions. My recent academic pursuits include an MS degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from Baruch College, City University of New York. I also earned a BA in Psychology with a minor in Leadership Studies from the University of South Florida. At KSU, I will be in the Management discipline largely. I was drawn to this concentration because of its strong ties to organizational psychology and the fact that many of the frequently cited, seminal papers in organizational psychology tend to come from scholars who are affiliated with business schools and more specifically, management programs.

I'm originally from Hunterdon County, New Jersey and miss visiting home very much. We are looking forward to our vacation this summer at Biltmore. The last opportunity we had to get away was the summer of 2019. I've been an equestrian for the past 35 years and currently own, Sonny, a 19 year old Quarter Horse that I've had since he was born. I am an ardent fan of Thoroughbred horse racing and the Philadelphia Eagles, which means everyone else in my family is too! Our family is currently looking forward to adopting our next rescue dog. My husband and I met when we were both music management students at William Paterson University in New Jersey quite some time ago.

We are the parents of an active three year old son and we live in Atlanta. We are members of The Temple in Atlanta and are mindful that our son understands and embraces his cultural and religious background. My husband serves in the U.S. Air Force Reserve which requires its own extensive pre-planning for him and our family around duty weekends, trainings, and other extended time away from home. My husband is investigating accompanied Air Force tours at the European bases that would allow for cultural emersion for our family.

Melissa Cunningham-Sereque (Information Systems) - *mcunni48@students.kennesaw.edu*



Melissa-Anne Cunningham-Sereque, MBA (Mac) is the President/Owner of Motivation & Achievement Concepts, Inc.; a career development company specializing in Resume Writing, Job Search Training, Interview Training, and Cover Letters. The MAC office is in Spartanburg but has clients in over 20 states and 8 countries. She is a fierce defender of equitable pay practices whose legislative advocacy has been featured in media from local and state outlets to ABC National News, and globally in the Associated Press.

Her 2018 TEDx Talk titled, “If you’re my boss, who’s running hell? Why social issues are actually good for business” is available on youtube at: <https://youtu.be/3G9kdSyq-e4>. Mac has an MBA in International Finance and a BS in Exercise Science & Business Administration. Before launching her company, Mac was a Branch Manager for a Fortune 500 International Staffing Firm, and has over 15 years of Specialized Workshop Leadership, Coaching, & Training in tandem with a career in Public Accounting, and Non-Profit Management. She has served as Adjunct Professor at the Johnson College of Business & Economics at USC-Upstate, specializing in HR Management, Organizational Management, and Innovation & Entrepreneurship.

TRAVAREIS Bryant (Accounting) - *tbryan85@students.kennesaw.edu*



I am an experienced Tax Director with significant professional and senior-level management experience.

I have an undergraduate and master's degree from Auburn University.

I am a licensed Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in Georgia.

Accounting is the academic discipline that strikes my interest. Specifically, my research areas of interest are business taxation and corporate governance. I intend to research how business taxation affects the decision-making process on where capital is deployed in the US and internationally.

Dierio Matanda Moke (Marketing) - dmatanda@students.kennesaw.edu



My name Dierio MATANDA MOKE. I work at Fox Factory as a cost accountant consultant. I hold an MBA from Georgia Southwestern States University. I am enrolled in Marketing since I am excited to hone my marketing abilities, contribute to a research function, and subsequently generate findings that will aid in conducting business in a developing nation, considering the multiple challenges in such countries. I've held senior roles in international corporations such as DHL Express, British American Tobacco, and Airtel Bharti.

I am married with six children. In my spare time, I like playing soccer, practicing Judo, and playing guitar. While in the program, I will try my best to learn as much as I can and be an excellent advocate for Kennesaw everywhere I go.

Brad Eskridge (Marketing) - beskridg@students.kennesaw.edu



Hi! My name is Brad Eskridge, and I am currently an Instructor in the Marketing Department at Bradley University. I teach our Introduction to Business, Principles of Marketing, and Professional Selling courses and coach our two-time National Collegiate Sales Competition Champion Sales Team. I earned my B.S. and MBA in Marketing from Bradley and am beyond excited to continue my education in the Marketing track of the Ph.D. program here at Kennesaw St. Of specific research interests are Professional Selling, sales enablement, and sales rep optimization. I love traveling internationally (I serve as both an Instructor and Program Coordinator for our Study Abroad office), playing golf (my handicap is a little higher than I'd like these days), and going to Disney World (this summer will mark the thirty-seventh trip down for me)! However, my real passion is being a husband to my beautiful wife Jessica and father to our three awesome children: Hadley (age 9), Havenley (age 7), and Hartley (age 1). I look forward to meeting and working with you all!