WHAT HAVE YOU ENJOYED MOST ABOUT BEING A PROFESSOR AT USC LEVENTHAL?
There is nothing as rewarding as sharing my broad knowledge and experience in the classroom with students. One of the values of being a USC Leventhal student is that the professors provide a combination of conceptual framework and case study orientation, so students learn how to look at the big picture. I enjoy how USC Leventhal professors teach conceptual approaches to particular problems, but students also learn real-world aspects of business so they can blend both theory and practice.

WHAT ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGES YOU HAVE SEEN AT USC LEVENTHAL OVER THE PAST 42 YEARS?
Forty-two years ago, USC was called “University of Spoiled Children.” But now, people call it “University of Smart Children.” For the national rankings, USC’s accounting school has moved from 20th to the top five during that period.

I came to USC in early September 1975. At that time, the Department of Accounting only had about 10 faculty members. Now we have more than 50 faculty members. In 1978, the Department of Accounting became the School of Accounting, and in late 1980, our undergraduate accounting program and master of accounting program started being ranked in the top five in the nation. We also moved into the School of Accounting building. In 1990, the School of Accounting changed its name to the Leventhal School of Accounting. I am very proud of our outstanding faculty members and amazing staff members. That is a major reason why I stayed at USC for so long.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST CAREER ACCOMPLISHMENT?
I am most proud of receiving the 2012 American Accounting Association’s (AAA) Outstanding Service Award. AAA recognized my extraordinary work over many years in building deep links between the AAA, its members and Chinese accounting professors in the USA and in China. I established the Chinese Accounting Professors Association of North America (CAPANA) in 1976. In 1995, I helped to...
A MATCHING GIFT CELEBRATES LIFE AND COMMUNITY

Scott Porter ’94/MBA ’14 and pop musician Jimmy "Taboo" Gomez come together with their kids’ school for USC Norris

A double Trojan with degrees from Leventhal and Marshall, a CPA and a partner with Ernst & Young’s Advisory Services, Scott Porter ’94/MBA ’14 is certainly good with numbers. He recently helped turn a $1,000 gift for the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center into $3,000.

The story of that financial magic is really about family and community — his kids’ elementary school and USC. And he’s here to tell it with help from USC Norris, where he was successfully treated for cancer five years ago.

On May 24, Porter was a special guest at an assembly at Mayfield Junior School in Pasadena, where his daughter Brielle presented a check for $1,000 to USC Norris from funds raised by her eighth-grade class of 2017.

With his family, Casandara ’94 (a Leventhal grad and director of finance at USC), and children Brooke and Carson, in the assembly, Porter chatted genially, with a warm smile and the confidence of a winner.

"I initially thought, ‘I’m not going to see my kids get through elementary school,’" he said.

A MATCHING GIFT CELEBRATES LIFE AND COMMUNITY

After a number of surgeries and a battery of tests over the course of a year, Dr. Casey O’Connell at USC Norris gave him the good news.

"She told me I wasn’t going to die a horrible death," Porter recalled. His cancer was successfully treated at USC Norris in 2012 and 2013, and his quarterly checkups since then have all been clean bills of health.

Now, Porter was attending an assembly just days before Brooke’s eighth-grade graduation. It was a showcase of the charitable work of the K-8 students, when a dozen nonprofits selected by the eighth-graders were presented with checks. All of the organizations receiving donations had touched a student or member of the Mayfield Junior School community in some way.

But he was not only accepting a check on behalf of USC Norris, he was also matching it, along with another parent of two children at Mayfield Junior School who had been successfully treated for stage two testicular cancer at USC Norris — Jaime “Taboo” Gomez, a member of the musical group the Black Eyed Peas. Gomez’s own experience with cancer drove him to become an ambassador for the American Cancer Society. In 2017, he released a new single, “The Fight,” as an A MATCHING GIFT CELEBRATES LIFE AND COMMUNITY, CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

understand, support, empower and educate

The Leventhal Leadership Program is a resource committed to increasing diversity in the Leventhal School of Accounting at USC and the accounting profession. It is designed to understand, support, empower and educate rising minority students at community colleges in their pursuit of a four-year degree.

understand, support, empower and educate, continued on page 10
Leventhal Hosts PwC Color Brave Event

On Friday, Feb. 10, USC Leventhal hosted the flagship PwC Color Brave Campus Dialogues event, a groundbreaking luncheon that brought together PwC professionals, faculty and students to engage in roundtable discussions about diversity and inclusion. Associate Professor Zivia Sweeney and her student workers collaborated with Marshall Admissions, Leventhal staff and a PwC team to execute an exciting event that was attended by more than 120 people.

The two-hour event took place at the Founders Room at the Galen Center, where after checking in, all participants enjoyed a delicious lunch provided by USC Hospitality. Dean Holder kicked off the event by welcoming everyone and thanking PwC, as USC was one of a select number of universities chosen to host this event.

After an introduction by Rod Adams, PwC U.S. talent acquisition leader, participants enjoyed a panel discussion featuring Mike Dillon, PwC chief diversity and inclusion officer; Martha Ruiz, PwC tax partner; and Professor Sweeney, a PwC audit alumna. The diverse group of panelists shared their thoughts in a Q&A on creating an inclusive working and learning environment.

Then, participants engaged in discussions with their tablemates. Discussions were moderated by a trained PwC professional and were supported by a Leventhal faculty member. Groups of eight to ten participants discussed questions that included:

- What are the personal and professional benefits of being more color brave?
- What can I do to build trust with others who are different from me?
- What actions can I take to support inclusion on campus?

The conversations lasted about half an hour, and Rod Adams brought the discussion full circle by encouraging students to share their takeaways with the full group. This was truly the most powerful part of the event. Listening to students and professionals share how their perspectives had changed and how they plan to create inclusive spaces inspired everyone in the room.

Following the event, participants were invited to a PwC reception and networking event at Town & Gown. As students talked and laughed with professionals and enjoyed delicious appetizers and new PwC gifts, they continued the social justice-driven conversations they had begun earlier in the day. It was clear that the event was a success!

Geetha Somayajula ‘18
Marshall School of Business
Thornton School of Music
Presidential Scholar

USC IN THE UK

MAcc and MBT students make inaugural trip to London and Dublin

Leventhal MAcc and MBT students visited London and Dublin in March as part of ACCT 526: Global Accounting Experience, in which they studied cross-border transactions in the global economy, examining accounting, legal and tax environments, economic and political systems, and cultural differences.

Graduate students have had the opportunity to travel to China since 2013. This new itinerary expands their options for studying international markets.

Why London and Dublin? “Brexit,” said Professor of Accounting Dan O’Leary. “If the UK leaves the EU, then Ireland will be the only English-speaking country in the EU. Brexit is expected to have a huge impact on business.”

O’Leary and Tom Ryan, professor of the practice of accounting, led visits to Ernst & Young (London and Dublin), IASB (International Accounting Standards Board), Shell, U.S. Embassy in Dublin, Workday and Accenture. The group also visited the London School of Economics for a presentation by a faculty member and discussion with students.

“The visits to Ernst & Young were fabulous,” O’Leary said. “They provided two really interesting sessions — one at the Center for Excellence in Dublin and one in their London office.”

Matthew Merrell MBT ’17 enjoyed both the cultural excursions, including a visit to the Tower of London and a hike in Dublin (see photos), and the learning experiences.

“I learned about international relations between the U.S. and Ireland at the U.S. Embassy in Dublin,” Merrell said. “I learned about the potential tensions between Ireland with its low tax rate and the Trump Administration wanting to bring earnings from U.S. companies back to the U.S.”
establish the Chinese Accounting Professors Association (CAPA) in China. I have been the vital link between AAA and CAPA by inviting one or two AAA presidents, presidents-elect, immediate past presidents or outstanding accounting researchers to serve as CAPA’s Annual Conference keynote speakers for many years. Later CAPA merged with the Accounting Society of China (ASC). In 2001, I helped to create an MOU between AAA and ASC to develop academic exchange and cooperation in teaching and research.

CAN YOU TALK ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE AS MBA PACIFIC RIM INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT EDUCATION (PRIME) PROGRAM CHINA COUNTRY DESK OFFICER BETWEEN 1997 AND 2013?

In 1996, the USC Trustee approved President Steven Sample’s internationalization strategy with a focus on Pacific Rim countries. As a result, in the spring of 1997, Marshall School of Business started a GABA (Asia) International Context of Business course, which was required for all Marshall MBA students. It is also called the Pacific Rim International Management Education (PRIME) Program. I am proud and honored to have been the first Chinese American professor to help launch this program for USC.

Too often, Americans overlook Chinese cultural values, assuming American values can automatically be applied to business strategies in China. As USC’s first China Country Desk Officer of the Marshall MBA PRIME Program, I equipped students to become future global managers. In particular, my China-bound professors learned about Chinese culture, business etiquette, negotiation style, language and politics. I have enjoyed preparing and accompanying MBA students as they visited firms in China for the past 20 years.

CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUR WORK AS FOUNDERING PRESIDENT OF THE CHINESE ACCOUNTING PROFESSORS ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA?

China abolished the debt and credit double entry accounting system during the 10 years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). During that period, all university professors (including accounting professors) had to go to the countryside to learn from farmers. In contrast, in 1976 in the U.S., I established the Chinese Accounting Professors’ Association of North America (CAPANA) with about 30 members. Now it has over 500 members. Almost 20 years later, in 1996, the AAA merged with CAPANA. I spent one week at Shanghai Fudan University teaching China’s first 26 university MBA programs’ accounting professors on how to teach financial accounting and management accounting courses. That same year, I also helped accounting professors from 60 Chinese universities establish the Chinese Accounting Professors Association (CAPA). Almost every year, I invited one AAA president or past president-elect to be a keynote speaker at the AAA annual conference in China. In addition, I also presented research papers on Chinese accounting or management issues.

Furthermore, I lectured with six other Marshall professors at the Chinese Communist Party School in 1998. I also advised the Ministry of Finance when the China National Accounting Institute (CNAI) opened in Beijing and Shanghai in 2001. The mission of the CNAI is to train China’s CFOs at large state-owned enterprises and senior level CPAs in various Chinese accounting firms. The institute offers a variety of accounting, finance and management courses for CFOs and CPAs, enterprise senior managers, financial professionals and senior government officials.

AS AN EXPERT IN BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT IN CHINA, YOU’VE TALKED TO STUDENTS A LOT ABOUT BUSINESS AND CULTURE IN YOUR CLASSES AND AT THE LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION. WHAT IS YOUR BEST ADVICE FOR GRADUATES PLANNING TO WORK IN OR WITH BUSINESSES IN CHINA?

In my PRIME course, I teach Marshall MBA students to be fluent in Chinese — not the language, but the culture. I pepper my lectures on doing business in China with discussions of history, philosophy and social studies. It’s all part of my belief that ongoing internationalization of the business curricula is essential to the program’s success.

For example, the following are major business negotiation characteristics of Chinese negotiators:

1. Chinese negotiators are more concerned with the means than the end, with the process more than the goal.
2. Chinese thinking tends toward a more holistic processing of information.
3. The Chinese place a premium on individuals’ social capital on relationships within their own group.
4. Chinese tend not to think sequentially and individually.
5. Chinese bargain intensely over price.
6. In China, courtesy and trust characterize all meetings with friends, but not with strangers.
7. The Chinese basic decision-making priority sequence is as follows:
   (1) Relationship, (2) Reason and (3) Law

   While the American basic decision-making priority sequence is the exact opposite:
   (1) Law, (2) Reason and (3) Relationship.

My advice for graduates planning to work in or with businesses in China is to understand more about Chinese culture, negotiation style, economics, and politics.

YOU HAVE PUBLISHED FIVE BOOKS AND MORE THAN 50 ARTICLES IN PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS. WHAT ARE YOUR REASONS FOR PUBLISHING, AND HOW DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN THEM?

My major area of expertise is management accounting and control systems with applications to Chinese firms. My second area of expertise is computer controls and audit. I became interested in management accounting because my Ohio State University Ph.D. dissertation is in budgeting and management performance. In 1981, I spent six months at KPMG’s Los Angeles Office as the faculty resident to learn computer controls and audit, which has become my second area of expertise.

WHAT ARE YOUR RETIREMENT PLANS?

I plan to travel more and get more involved in church activities, such as teaching Sunday school and preaching in small Chinese churches in Southern California.

CAN YOU SHARE SOMETHING PERSONAL THAT YOUR COLLEAGUES MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I almost didn’t attend a university because I went to a commercial high school where I was expected to be an entry-level bank clerk after graduation. I had an uncle who saw potential in me, and he convinced my parents to allow me to take the university entrance exam in Taiwan. I ended up scoring really high on the exam so that I was accepted into National Taiwan University, the No. 1 ranked university in Taiwan. I enjoyed studying in a university setting so much that I obtained my MBA from the National Chengchi University in Taiwan, my Master of Science degree in accounting and information systems from UCLA, and my Ph.D. in accounting from the Ohio State University.

WAS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANTED TO SHARE?

I want to thank all my colleagues for all their support and for being a part of my 42-year career here at USC. Last but not least, I would like to thank Dean Bill Holder for nominating me to be the recipient of the AAA Outstanding Service Award in 2012 for my contributions to improving communication and understanding between accounting professors in the U.S. and in China.

USC and KPMG Partner in Master of Accounting with Data and Analytics Program

USC will be among the select group of top accounting and business schools partnering with U.S. audit, tax and advisory firm KPMG LLP in its new Master of Accounting with Data and Analytics Program. A first-of-its-kind collaboration, the program will offer full scholarships, education and hands-on experience for some of the nation’s most qualified accounting students employed by KPMG.

The Master of Accounting with Data and Analytics Program will mirror some of the hallmark features of two existing programs: the USC Leventhal School of Accounting and the Data Sciences and Operations Department within the USC Marshall School of Business.

“Through our Master of Accounting with Data and Analytics Program, we can provide students with a world-class learning experience in a dynamic and ever-evolving field,” said John Owens, professor of accounting and management, USC College of Business Administration.

The curriculum combines foundational accounting, information systems and analytics courses, followed by electives in data science and analytics.

Coursework includes:
- Data Analysis and Visualization
- Systems for Data Analytics
- Auditing Through Information Systems
- Probability and Uncertainty and Statistical Decision Making
- Data Mining for Business Intelligence
- Fraudulent Financial Reporting

USC and KPMG Partner, continued on page 18
get you about five weeks in one class today, but who's counting? Degree from the University of Southern California for $512. That will when tuition was $4 a unit. That's $64 a semester. Imagine, a example, was $12 a unit. I'm sure you graduates have already done What was different then? Just about everything. Tuition, for As Dean Holder mentioned, I've been a Trojan ever since. ago, when I first walked onto the USC campus as a freshman. I was 17 years old in September 1957. That was about four centuries And you know what you call a trial balance that doesn't balance? that the debits always equaled the credits. How geeky is that? And every night for years I kept my own personal set of books. I'll start with a confession. I love accounting. I actually enrolled in a and guests who just happened to wander by and sit down to hear 4 USC DEGREES: BS ’61 accounting LLB ’64 law MS ’71 counselor education MFA ’92 professional writing. Fox worked as a tax supervisor for a national CPA firm, established his own law firm and, in 1968, founded a commercial real estate company— ACF Property Management — that now owns and manages more than $1.5 billion of property in 11 states. Fox is the author of 3 best-selling books: People Tools People Tools for Business People Tools for Love and Relationships Fox founded a respected literary magazine in 1994. Rattle publishes established and emerging poets and awards a $10,000 poetry prize annually. Fox created the Frieda C. Fox Family Foundation to provide funding for youth education and get kids involved in philanthropy. Since 1999, it has provided more than $4 million in grant awards. and we still watch television together and root for the USC football team. And Dad, I'm finally going to pay you back for my USC tuition — out of my next social security check. But I must say, especially to your parents, that your USC education, particularly in the Leventhal School of Accounting, has value beyond its cost. It has given you a foundation for a lifetime career and a lifetime of knowing how to solve problems. Many of you will soon start work at one of the Big Four accounting firms. That is when your real-world education will begin in earnest. Before my senior year in what was then the USC School of Commerce, I was hired as a summer intern by Peat Marwick. In June 1960, my first day on the job, I was sent to jail. It's true. I entered prison at the Wayside/North County Correctional Facility, about 40 miles north of where we are sitting today, then known as the Wayside Honor Rancho which held a thousand minimum-security inmates. Fortunately, I was not at the Wayside Honor Rancho as an inmate, only as an auditor, without the benefit of having ever taken a single course in auditing. I arrived at the Honor Rancho in my VW Bug a few minutes late — that's a no-no — and finally found the senior on the job. He looked at me with more than a bit of skepticism. Maybe it was my black shoes with white socks. Or my $3 suit. “Audit the canteen account,” he said. “Sure. Happy to. Uh, exactly how do I audit the canteen account?” The senior sighed, pointed to a thick ledger and boxes of cancelled warrants. That's like cancelled checks, not warrants for my arrest. “Look at every 20th entry in the ledger, be sure there is a matching cancelled warrant, then make a tick mark next to the amount in the ledger.” “Sure. No problem. Uh, exactly what is a 'tick mark'?” I spent three long days at the Wayside Honor Rancho. I had no idea what I was doing. Fortunately, even after that awkward start, I was hired by Peat Marwick to work in their tax department. When I presented my first tax memo to the tax partner, he took a quick look. It took him five seconds to ask me, “Did you find the diasppopwer case?” “Uh, no sir.” “That's the leading case on the subject. Go back and start again, and Alan, please don't wear white socks to the office tomorrow.” I learned to dress for success, and now offer you 10 more lessons I learned out in the real world of accounting. Number One. Be on time. If you aren't, someone else will be. Two. Admit when you don't know how to do something, and that might be often. And never call yourself or anyone else stupid. The problem is usually lack of knowledge, not stupidity. There is a big difference. Three. Remember, you are an accountant — a person who solves a problem people didn't know they had in a way they don't understand, willing to develop compassion. Especially for yourself. Four. Your future is always ahead of you. And that's the problem. It's a carrot that dangles in front of your nose. Plan for the future, but don't forget to take pleasure in your present accomplishments and activities. Enjoy your life as you live it. Cling fiercely to the present, because right now is the only future you are ever certain to have. Five. The most precious thing you have is life, yet it has absolutely no trade-in value. Remind yourself often to find the joy or the value or the lesson in whatever you are doing in the moment, like standing up and giving this speech, or sitting down and listening to it. Six. Snowmen fall from Heaven unassemble. Your career will not be assembled by anyone else. You have to put it together yourself. Seven. Pay attention. If you day dream for 50 minutes in class you get an ‘A’ instead of an ‘A-’. If you day dream for five seconds while you drive to an audit, you may be late. Very, very late. Eight. Crisis is opportunity. Where my wife, Asha, was 27 years old, she tripped while jogging and severely injured her back. Asha was in the hospital for three weeks and at home in bed for three months, in tremendous pain. She thought about the pain, and decided to shift her career to become a medical reporter so she could help others in pain. Not too long after that she won her first Emmy for reporting. Nine. Follow your heart. It’s a lot more fun than carrying around a head crammed with numbers all of the time. Well, maybe just part of the time. Number 10. Respect your elders. And take care of yourself so that you’ll live long enough to have trouble finding one. In conclusion: If you can start the day without caffeine, if you can always be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains, if you can resist complaining and boring people with your troubles, if you can eat the same food every day and be grateful for it, if you can understand when your loved ones are too busy to give you any time, if you can take criticism and blame without resentment, if you can conquer tension without medical help, if you can relax without a glass of water, if you can sleep without the aid of drugs, … Then you are probably … the family dog. My final thought is that it’s okay to be human. You don’t have to be perfect. My final, final thought is: Be Audit you can be. I’ll repeat that for your parents, they haven’t been in school for a while — Be Audit you can be, and as graduates of the Leventhal School of Accounting, Class of 2017, you are off to a great start.
That’s LLP’s differentiator, captured in its mission statement: “We challenge their cultural and institutional expectations; expose them to another world figuratively and literally; and provide them with intangible resources to overcome obstacles they will face throughout their academic and professional journey.”

“That first day is just powerful,” Alba said. “Students find commonality with each other and the speakers. That is powerful. There is crying in class.”

FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE

The Leventhal Leadership Program team includes 10 former LLP students as well as community college professors and counselors. Alba and Arias run a successful program with Moloney because they know what they’re talking about. They were those first-generation students.

Arias found a mentor with Moloney, who helped him buy his first suit for an interview for an internship, and they never lost touch after he left Cerritos for USC. “I would ask him, how can I repay you for all you've done for me? He said, 'All you have to do is pay it forward.' So any student he referred to me, I helped.”

“That was the beginning of LLP — Arias and Moloney, and then Arias’ Leventhal roommate Alba, coming together and paying it forward (in friendship and without remuneration), starting with meetings at restaurants and then moving to the USC campus.”

Alba transferred to Leventhal from Loyola Marymount University where he earned a 3.9 GPA. He was wracked with fear and self-doubt. He asked himself, “Could I survive? Was I good enough to be at a university like USC? Was this the right path for me?”

“Every semester, I had doubts that I would be able to graduate,” Alba said. “I wondered, is this going to be the semester it all is going to come crashing down on me? I didn’t believe it until that last semester when I finished everything.”

Alba worked in public accounting for seven months and at a water company as an internal auditor, but didn’t find the right fit. After thoughts of law school and an interview at a management consulting company, eventually he realized what he really wanted to do. “I wanted to help students, and that was what was comfortable and familiar to me at the time,” he said. “I wanted to come back to USC and help students.”

In his role with the undergraduate advising office, Alba has earned the praise and appreciation of countless Leventhal students, receiving the Golden Compass award in 2015 and 2017 and being named University Outstanding Advisor in 2018.

As a result of their backgrounds, these students experience extreme self-doubt, fear of success, or feelings that they don’t belong.

Arias got over his discomfort about networking while at Leventhal. “I understood that was necessary. It’s part of what you pay for, an opportunity beyond your classes.” He landed a job at Ernst & Young and worked there for 10 years, making it to senior manager. Rather than stay on the partner track, he moved to Griffin Capital, where he is now director of financial reporting — and an example for LLP students of the success it is possible to achieve in accounting with a Leventhal degree.

A NEW FAMILY

Seven accounting majors are currently at Leventhal thanks to the Leventhal Leadership Program.

Nebal Jebarah ’19 is doing extremely well, commuting from her home in Downey. She is participating in a summer program with Ernst & Young and Grant Thornton, planning to become a CPA and considering a possible future as a professor. And already, she is thinking about paying it forward. “I hope to be able to give back to Leventhal.”

As a community college student, Jebarah had doubts that LLP helped her conquer. “Every situation in life is going to be hard but it depends on how you look at those barriers and, most importantly, you can’t cross that barrier without someone,” she said. “The LLP really helped me cross that barrier in terms of mentoring and having a support system, and that is important to overcome anything in life.”

Lorena Garcia ’19, from South Central Los Angeles, is another LLP success story. “If it wasn’t for the USIC Leadership Program, I would not be here at USC,” she said. “When I was in community college, my goal was to go to a state college and graduate as soon as possible. Now, my short-term goals are to be on the Dean’s List every semester, do a great job during my internship with Deloitte and to continue to help those students that are a part of the Leventhal Leadership Program get to USC.”

Both Garcia and Jebarah are finding that USC was the right school for them.

One student in particular stood out, a man in his 30s with three young daughters. “He talked about how his daughters like to study with their dad,” Alba said. “He showed a picture of all holding signs that said ‘We’re future Trojans.’”

“Prior to this program, he never would have encouraged his daughters to go to school or do well academically. So it’s impacting generations of students.”
HOW TO BE AN ARCHITECT
Prof. Julie Suh’s Excel labs teach students to think creatively in a technology demanded by accounting firms

Standing onstage before 600 Marshall and Leventhal undergraduates in Bovard Auditorium, Assistant Professor Julie Suh looks like she’s giving a TED talk. Her Excel labs for BUAD 380 and 381 certainly have the energy and ambition of such a lecture. Suh says her intention is to inspire creative problem solving as students engage in critical thinking. Excel, she emphasizes, is about much more than robotically plugging formulas and numbers into a spreadsheet.

“This is not a vocational workshop. I am less focused on formulas or functions, but more on the big picture: how do you go about making efficient models?” said Suh, who has a heavy background in Excel coming from investment banking.

“There’s an analogy: I use to explain my teaching philosophy around Excel,” she added. “There are Excel workshops where you’re just learning a bunch of tools, like VLOOKUP or IF functions, in isolation. That’s more like carpentry, where you learn to saw, hammer and paint. Students already often know some of those functions from their previous classes or internships.

“What students struggle with when they go into the corporate world is not how do you saw, hammer and paint; the real question is how do you build a house?” Suh said. “That’s the challenge of the labs: I’m not teaching them Excel. I’m really teaching them how to think critically and creatively, how to be an architect.”

WHY THE EXCEL LABS?
These labs are not an intellectual exercise; firms are demanding technological proficiency at an ever-increasing pace.

“I noticed even seven years ago that students were graduating or going to internships without solid Excel skills, and Excel is used in any job you take in business, in particular in accounting and finance,” Suh said.

Suh developed the Excel labs for business and accounting majors through her work on Leventhal’s Technology Committee, which aims to overhaul the curriculum with technology components that ensure graduates are effectively prepared for their careers.

Before the rollout of the labs in 2016, Suh had informally been holding two-hour Sunday workshops with students at USC and at Berkeley before that, where she taught for three years after earning her Ph.D. at Stanford. As a result of the labs, Leventhal students are making a big impression on recruiters.

“At our recent on-campus interviews, many of our professionals noted the new Excel lab,” said a Deloitte Los Angeles professional. “They mentioned that the candidates seemed more technically prepared and knowledgeable about what a career in accounting looks like. They were extremely impressed by how USC has been incorporating technology into the classroom and how the school has been successfully developing new strategies in the classroom. As a recruiter, I’m involved with a number of campuses in the L.A. area, and many of them have been looking to USC as an example for the future of accounting curricula.”

FROM INTIMIDATION TO ENTHUSIASM
In one lecture, Suh guided the students through an exercise, building a dating app in Excel. For their home assignments in Excel modeling, she brings in concepts from accounting that students typically struggle with. “So as they’re doing it, they’re getting better at accounting as well as Excel,” Suh said. “It shows them a different side of accounting. It’s not memorizing; it has a critical thinking and creative component.”

After the first few labs, Suh sees the light bulbs going on. And by the time students get to BUAD 381, Suh sees dramatic improvements. Their intimidation with Excel turns to enthusiasm. “Excel labs are not only informative, but actually a lot of fun!” said Tyler Kim ’19. “Although Excel may be intimidating, Professor Suh’s Excel labs make the whole learning process much easier and more enjoyable.”

Students eagerly compete over the weekend to answer the “bonus challenge,” a significantly more advanced assignment that Suh offers for no grade or extra credit. Some are also inspired to learn beyond the classroom because they understand the practical value of the knowledge for their future careers.

As a result of the labs, Leventhal students are making a big impression on recruiters.

“After our last lab, I immediately went to the bookstore and bought [Professor Suh’s book,] Model Like a Boss, because I see how beneficial knowing how to use Excel will be in any job I have,” said Corbin Weinerman ’18. “I was constantly using Excel at my internship last summer, and knowing the stuff I learned in these Excel labs would have saved me an unbelievable amount of time!”

The bottom line is that these skills set Marshall and Leventhal students apart in a highly competitive market.

“The Excel labs have provided an amazing opportunity to become more proficient in a program that has real-world applications,” said Christopher Bettore ’18. “I now feel more confident and I’m proficient in Excel as well as knowing I now have a skill set that can distinguish me from my competition.”

From there, the tears started. As Porter took the podium, he saw a teacher in the audience crying. Gomez and Brookie were crying. He was almost too choked up to talk, a reaction that took him by surprise.

“When you go through something like that, it’s traumatic, and without family and a supportive community, it’s hard to do,” he told the audience. “The doctors and staff at USC Norris were instrumental in helping me through it. I am eternally grateful to Dr. O’Connell and her team.”

After composing himself, Gomez also thanked USC Norris. “They treated me like family,” he said, “and they helped my family get through it.”

Porter’s check to USC Norris is the latest of his contributions to his alma mater. Porter has been giving back to USC since 1994, through his membership in the USC Associates, the Leventhal Accounting Circle Board, the USC Alumni Association’s Board of Governors, Marshall Partners, Cardinal and Gold Committee. In 2010, he received the Leventhal Distinguished Service Award, and this year he is the outgoing chair of Marshall Partners of 9750 Valley Region.

After the presentation, Porter talked about what touched him most about Brookie’s gift. He thought back on how much his daughter wanted to see him in the hospital when he was recovering from surgery and during his chemotherapy treatments, but kids weren’t allowed to visit. Then at home, she saw him exhausted and in pain, giving himself Neupogen injections to prevent infection.

“Brookie is a few years older than Carson and she had a better understanding of what was happening. I knew it was hard on her. We talked about it.” He said he was two years into treatment before everything started. For her at this point to think about that and want to give back to USC Norris, I knew it had a significant impact.”
THE LANGUAGE OF BUSINESS

Lorien Stice-Lawrence brings meaning to numbers through linguistics

Lorien Stice-Lawrence joins the faculty as assistant professor of accounting this fall, bringing an innovative approach to accounting research that utilizes linguistic techniques. Her work on disclosure has already drawn the media’s attention; she has been quoted in such outlets as The Wall Street Journal and CFO Magazine. Stice-Lawrence studied economics at Brigham Young University with minors in business, French and Arabic, and she just earned her Ph.D. from the Kenan-Flagler Business School at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

WHAT INTERESTED YOU MOST ABOUT COMING TO LEVENTHAL?

One of the most exciting and greatest strengths of Leventhal is the diversity of the faculty research interests. It’s fun to talk to people that study the same things I do, but I don’t learn as much that way. So I was really excited about the opportunity to talk to people who have expertise in other areas. In a department where not everyone thinks exactly the same way, you come up with better solutions. And, of course, everyone is super nice at Leventhal!

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS ONCE YOU GET HERE?

As an academic, you’re constantly learning, so one of my goals is to keep improving myself as a researcher and a teacher. I want to take advantage of the excellent faculty at Leventhal — either start working on research projects with them or just improve my research.

CAN YOU TALK ABOUT YOUR RESEARCH INTERESTS AND SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS?

My research falls under two areas broadly. First, I do a lot of research that involves textual analysis, sort of linguistics-based research. Accounting is about information, and I focus on the written side of that, communication and information in written documents and disclosures — both what is being communicated and ways companies are communicating that. I’ve done some research internationally looking at annual reports showing how regulation can affect disclosure by firms. Outside the U.S., I’ve shown that after the adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards, there were huge changes in disclosure and it’s a lot of unstructured textual data that was just too computationally intensive to analyze that we’re now just starting to tap into.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT YOUR RESEARCH?

I’ve always been very interested in languages and it’s a lot of fun delving into these linguistic techniques. Doing some of this research makes me feel a little bit like a magician in that I take millions of unstructured words and am able to give structure and meaning to them.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION IN ACCOUNTING?

In many of my projects where we look at how regulation and changes in the U.S. changes disclosure over the last two decades, we were able to apply a technique called LDA (Latent Dirichlet Allocation) to cut up the annual reports into small digestible pieces — for example, s percentile is about research and development and 99 percent is about sales. And it was really amazing to see some of the trends that popped up. We were able to find across changes in what firms are doing in response to these regulations. If you’re just reading the report or trying to analyze it on your own, it’s an overwhelming task for a human, but it’s amazing when you are able to use these techniques to help you get a handle on insurmountable problems.

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE ABOUT YOUR FUTURE?

One of my projects where we look at how regulation and changes disclosur over the last two decades, we were able to apply a technique called LDA (Latent Dirichlet Allocation) to cut up the annual reports into small digestible pieces — for example, s percentile is about research and development and 99 percent is about sales. And it was really amazing to see some of the trends that popped up. We were able to find across changes in what firms are doing in response to these regulations. If you’re just reading the report or trying to analyze it on your own, it’s an overwhelming task for a human, but it’s amazing when you are able to use these techniques to help you get a handle on insurmountable problems.

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE ABOUT YOUR FUTURE?

One of my projects where we look at how regulation and changes disclosure over the last two decades, we were able to apply a technique called LDA (Latent Dirichlet Allocation) to cut up the annual reports into small digestible pieces — for example, s percentile is about research and development and 99 percent is about sales. And it was really amazing to see some of the trends that popped up. We were able to find across changes in what firms are doing in response to these regulations. If you’re just reading the report or trying to analyze it on your own, it’s an overwhelming task for a human, but it’s amazing when you are able to use these techniques to help you get a handle on insurmountable problems.

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE ABOUT YOUR FUTURE?

One of my projects where we look at how regulation and changes disclosure over the last two decades, we were able to apply a technique called LDA (Latent Dirichlet Allocation) to cut up the annual reports into small digestible pieces — for example, s percentile is about research and development and 99 percent is about sales. And it was really amazing to see some of the trends that popped up. We were able to find across changes in what firms are doing in response to these regulations. If you’re just reading the report or trying to analyze it on your own, it’s an overwhelming task for a human, but it’s amazing when you are able to use these techniques to help you get a handle on insurmountable problems.

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE ABOUT YOUR FUTURE?

One of my projects where we look at how regulation and changes disclosure over the last two decades, we were able to apply a technique called LDA (Latent Dirichlet Allocation) to cut up the annual reports into small digestible pieces — for example, s percentile is about research and development and 99 percent is about sales. And it was really amazing to see some of the trends that popped up. We were able to find across changes in what firms are doing in response to these regulations. If you’re just reading the report or trying to analyze it on your own, it’s an overwhelming task for a human, but it’s amazing when you are able to use these techniques to help you get a handle on insurmountable problems.

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE ABOUT YOUR FUTURE?

One of my projects where we look at how regulation and changes disclosure over the last two decades, we were able to apply a technique called LDA (Latent Dirichlet Allocation) to cut up the annual reports into small digestible pieces — for example, s percentile is about research and development and 99 percent is about sales. And it was really amazing to see some of the trends that popped up. We were able to find across changes in what firms are doing in response to these regulations. If you’re just reading the report or trying to analyze it on your own, it’s an overwhelming task for a human, but it’s amazing when you are able to use these techniques to help you get a handle on insurmountable problems.

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE ABOUT YOUR FUTURE?

One of my projects where we look at how regulation and changes disclosure over the last two decades, we were able to apply a technique called LDA (Latent Dirichlet Allocation) to cut up the annual reports into small digestible pieces — for example, s percentile is about research and development and 99 percent is about sales. And it was really amazing to see some of the trends that popped up. We were able to find across changes in what firms are doing in response to these regulations. If you’re just reading the report or trying to analyze it on your own, it’s an overwhelming task for a human, but it’s amazing when you are able to use these techniques to help you get a handle on insurmountable problems.

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE ABOUT YOUR FUTURE?

One of my projects where we look at how regulation and changes disclosure over the last two decades, we were able to apply a technique called LDA (Latent Dirichlet Allocation) to cut up the annual reports into small digestible pieces — for example, s percentile is about research and development and 99 percent is about sales. And it was really amazing to see some of the trends that popped up. We were able to find across changes in what firms are doing in response to these regulations. If you’re just reading the report or trying to analyze it on your own, it’s an overwhelming task for a human, but it’s amazing when you are able to use these techniques to help you get a handle on insurmountable problems.
Leventhal’s FanTAXtic Team

LEIGHTON LI-MIN KO ‘17
Degree programs: Double major in accounting and business administration, minor in enterprise information systems
Competition highlight: Good simulation of real-world client engagement situations. Gained practical experience on how to apply and utilize what we learn in class.
Future goals: Risk advisory/consulting

MIKE SHELTON BS/MBT ‘17
Degree programs: Double major in accounting and business taxation
Competition highlight: The best part of the competition (other than the social elements) was definitely working on our PowerPoint presentation. My team worked really well together.
What do you love about accounting?
What I love about accounting, and tax in particular, is that you’re given a statutory set of rules (the tax code), but still given leeway to move around within the tax code and be strategic about transactions in order to maximize the benefit to your business.
Future goals: I’d like to go to law school in the future, but will be working with PwC in New York starting in June in their international tax department. If I really enjoy that, I can see myself forgoing law school to stay in public accounting.

INGRID WAUNG ‘19
Degree programs: Accounting, minor in German
Competition highlight: It was truly a life-changing experience for me, for it confirmed my passion for tax and for working in an accounting firm. I am very fortunate that this summer I am invited again to Deloitte University to attend the National Leadership Conference. In fact, this FanTAXtic experience played an important role during my recruiting process, not only because I demonstrated my technical capability, but more importantly, I demonstrated maturity about my career choice.
What do you love about accounting?
I love accounting because it is such a powerful structure in society that affects everybody. Working for people who depend on this profession is rewarding, and I want to be among the ones who make a positive impact in the world by strengthening or challenging this structure. Throughout my study at USC, accounting has not only taught me techniques, but also it has fundamentally shaped my ways of working diligently and ethically toward a responsible decision under complicated circumstances in work and in life.
Future goals: To become a tax professional and work with industries I am passionate about.

Tiffany Ka ‘18
Degree programs: Accounting
Competition highlight: The highlight of the competition was getting to know the team and our mentors.
What do you love about accounting?
I love that accounting is a combination of business and law. The work is concrete, but allows for creativity and critical thinking at the same time.
Future goals: I hope to get my MBT next year and eventually work in tax at EY!

MENG SHEN ‘19
Degree programs: Accounting, minor in German
Competition highlight: It was truly a life-changing experience for me, for it confirmed my passion for tax and for working in an accounting firm. I am very fortunate that this summer I am invited again to Deloitte University to attend the National Leadership Conference. In fact, this FanTAXtic experience played an important role during my recruiting process, not only because I demonstrated my technical capability, but more importantly, I demonstrated maturity about my career choice.
What do you love about accounting?
I love accounting because it is such a powerful structure in society that affects everybody. Working for people who depend on this profession is rewarding, and I want to be among the ones who make a positive impact in the world by strengthening or challenging this structure. Throughout my study at USC, accounting has not only taught me techniques, but also it has fundamentally shaped my ways of working diligently and ethically toward a responsible decision under complicated circumstances in work and in life.
Future goals: To become a tax professional and work with industries I am passionate about.

Tiffany Ka ‘18
Degree programs: Accounting
Competition highlight: The highlight of the competition was getting to know the team and our mentors.
What do you love about accounting?
I love that accounting is a combination of business and law. The work is concrete, but allows for creativity and critical thinking at the same time.
Future goals: I hope to get my MBT next year and eventually work in tax at EY!

MENG SHEN ‘19
Degree programs: Accounting, minor in German
Competition highlight: It was truly a life-changing experience for me, for it confirmed my passion for tax and for working in an accounting firm. I am very fortunate that this summer I am invited again to Deloitte University to attend the National Leadership Conference. In fact, this FanTAXtic experience played an important role during my recruiting process, not only because I demonstrated my technical capability, but more importantly, I demonstrated maturity about my career choice.
What do you love about accounting?
I love accounting because it is such a powerful structure in society that affects everybody. Working for people who depend on this profession is rewarding, and I want to be among the ones who make a positive impact in the world by strengthening or challenging this structure. Throughout my study at USC, accounting has not only taught me techniques, but also it has fundamentally shaped my ways of working diligently and ethically toward a responsible decision under complicated circumstances in work and in life.
Future goals: To become a tax professional and work with industries I am passionate about.

Tiffany Ka ‘18
Degree programs: Accounting
Competition highlight: The highlight of the competition was getting to know the team and our mentors.
What do you love about accounting?
I love that accounting is a combination of business and law. The work is concrete, but allows for creativity and critical thinking at the same time.
Future goals: I hope to get my MBT next year and eventually work in tax at EY!

MENG SHEN ‘19
Degree programs: Accounting, minor in German
Competition highlight: It was truly a life-changing experience for me, for it confirmed my passion for tax and for working in an accounting firm. I am very fortunate that this summer I am invited again to Deloitte University to attend the National Leadership Conference. In fact, this FanTAXtic experience played an important role during my recruiting process, not only because I demonstrated my technical capability, but more importantly, I demonstrated maturity about my career choice.
What do you love about accounting?
I love accounting because it is such a powerful structure in society that affects everybody. Working for people who depend on this profession is rewarding, and I want to be among the ones who make a positive impact in the world by strengthening or challenging this structure. Throughout my study at USC, accounting has not only taught me techniques, but also it has fundamentally shaped my ways of working diligently and ethically toward a responsible decision under complicated circumstances in work and in life.
Future goals: To become a tax professional and work with industries I am passionate about.

Tiffany Ka ‘18
Degree programs: Accounting
Competition highlight: The highlight of the competition was getting to know the team and our mentors.
What do you love about accounting?
I love that accounting is a combination of business and law. The work is concrete, but allows for creativity and critical thinking at the same time.
Future goals: I hope to get my MBT next year and eventually work in tax at EY!

MENG SHEN ‘19
Degree programs: Accounting, minor in German
Competition highlight: It was truly a life-changing experience for me, for it confirmed my passion for tax and for working in an accounting firm. I am very fortunate that this summer I am invited again to Deloitte University to attend the National Leadership Conference. In fact, this FanTAXtic experience played an important role during my recruiting process, not only because I demonstrated my technical capability, but more importantly, I demonstrated maturity about my career choice.
What do you love about accounting?
I love accounting because it is such a powerful structure in society that affects everybody. Working for people who depend on this profession is rewarding, and I want to be among the ones who make a positive impact in the world by strengthening or challenging this structure. Throughout my study at USC, accounting has not only taught me techniques, but also it has fundamentally shaped my ways of working diligently and ethically toward a responsible decision under complicated circumstances in work and in life.
Future goals: To become a tax professional and work with industries I am passionate about.

Tiffany Ka ‘18
Degree programs: Accounting
Competition highlight: The highlight of the competition was getting to know the team and our mentors.
What do you love about accounting?
I love that accounting is a combination of business and law. The work is concrete, but allows for creativity and critical thinking at the same time.
Future goals: I hope to get my MBT next year and eventually work in tax at EY!

MENG SHEN ‘19
Degree programs: Accounting, minor in German
Competition highlight: It was truly a life-changing experience for me, for it confirmed my passion for tax and for working in an accounting firm. I am very fortunate that this summer I am invited again to Deloitte University to attend the National Leadership Conference. In fact, this FanTAXtic experience played an important role during my recruiting process, not only because I demonstrated my technical capability, but more importantly, I demonstrated maturity about my career choice.
What do you love about accounting?
I love accounting because it is such a powerful structure in society that affects everybody. Working for people who depend on this profession is rewarding, and I want to be among the ones who make a positive impact in the world by strengthening or challenging this structure. Throughout my study at USC, accounting has not only taught me techniques, but also it has fundamentally shaped my ways of working diligently and ethically toward a responsible decision under complicated circumstances in work and in life.
Future goals: To become a tax professional and work with industries I am passionate about.
say I haven’t used them enough! I did a lot of studying when I was an undergrad, but during a Ph.D. program in accounting, there aren’t many opportunities to go galavanting abroad, especially because I have two kids. But I did have a lot of experiences doing studies abroad, and I had a summer job where I used my French.

I think for the most important experiences were my ability to live in other countries for a while and make friends and meet and speak with people who I never would have been able to speak with because they didn’t speak English. When I was studying abroad as an undergrad in Jordan, I talked to a lot of women about their experiences, and that really gave me a perspective I wouldn’t have been able to get if I weren’t able to speak Arabic.

WHAT ARE YOUR INTERESTS OUTSIDE OF ACCOUNTING? My hobbies are my band descriptions as me taking garbage and putting it on our walls! I love to get involved in home projects and work that isn’t with a computer. Things that I can eat and see.

HOW DOES BEING AT LEVENTHAL HELP YOU REACH YOUR GOALS? Leventhal is a vibrant community of research-active faculty with world-class reputations and diverse expertise. This creates opportunities for synergy through co-authored work, as well as allows faculty to benefit from insightful feedback, both informally and at brownbag workshops. Leventhal also has a top-notch doctoral program with highly motivated and well-trained students, which provides the infusion of fresh perspectives. I have always enjoyed working with Ph.D. students and I know that many of them share my enthusiasm for the statistical learning methods.

WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT AT USC SO FAR? In one of my current projects, we use one of these methods — lasso — to forecast stock returns based on a large set of accounting characteristics. I plan to invest more time and effort to gain expertise in other statistical learning methods to further advance my research interests.

ACCREDITED FOR PUBLICATION

David Ekerns and Mark Young

Dan O’Leary
Dan O’Leary’s paper, “Crowd Performance in Prediction of the World Cup 2014,” was accepted for publication and is forthcoming in the European Journal of Operational Research. O’Leary’s paper, “Emerging White-Collar Robotic: The Case of Watson Analytics,” was accepted for publication and is forthcoming in IEEE Intelligent Systems.

Mark Soliman
Mark Soliman’s paper, “The Sharpest Tool in the Shed: IPO Financial Statement Management of STEM vs. Non-STEM Firms,” was accepted for publication and is forthcoming in the Review of Accounting Studies.

Mark Young
Mark Young’s paper (with N. T. Dai, F. Du and G. Tang), “Seeking Legitimacy Through CSR Reporting: Evidence From China,” was accepted for publication and is forthcoming in the Journal of Management Accounting Research.

Mark Young and David Ekerns

APPOINTMENTS

Ken Merchant
Ken Merchant has been named to the editorial board of Advances in Accounting.

New Chair Holders Dinner: Dean William W. Holder (middle) and Mark DeFond (far left), associate dean of faculty affairs and A. N. Mosich Chair of Accounting, celebrated the new named faculty chairs at a dinner on Jan. 21, 2017. (left to right): Regina Wittgenberg-Moerman, Arthur Andersen and Company Alumni Associate Professor of Accounting; Clive Lennox, USC Accounting; Associates Professor of Accounting; and T.J. Wong, Joseph A. DeBell Professor of Business Administration.

NEW ACADEMIC HONOR OUTSTANDING FACULTY— With the advent of the inaugural Leventhal MACC/MFT Diamond Teaching Awards, MACC and MFT faculty, currently not eligible for the Golden Apple awards because they do not teach in Marshall undergraduate or graduate programs, can be recognized by their students. Winners of the inaugural 2016/17 Leventhal MACC/MFT Diamond Teaching Awards were announced at Commencement on May 12.

Jack Barcal
MBT Diamond Teaching Award Core: Tax Theory and Ethics

Clive Lennox
MACC Diamond Teaching Award Core: Advanced Financial Statement Auditing

Patti Mills
MBT Diamond Teaching Award Core: Advanced Partnership Taxation

T.J. Wong
MACC Diamond Teaching Award Core: Accounting in the Global Business Environment

STAFF HONORS — Arthur Alba ’06 received a Golden Compass award, given by the students to the staff member who had the greatest impact on their lives.

STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS — Yingfei (Fiona) Wang BS ’15, MAC ’17, Ph.D. ’20 received the 2017 Rockwell Dennis Hurt Scholastic Award (see story on p. 19).
August
7     AAA Conference (San Diego)  
      Leventhal Reception
8     Leventhal Summer Intensive Celebration
17    Fall 2017 Convocation
18    Leventhal Welcome Back BBQ
21    First Day of Classes

September
19    Leventhal Meet the Firms

October
10    Mid-Semester Event
12-15 Trojan Family Weekend
20    Micro Seminar

November
3     Board of Advisors Meeting
17    MAcc/MBT Thanksgiving Dinner

December
1     MAcc/MBT Holiday Party
13    Last Day of Classes

Leventhal’s Lunar New Year Celebration