

Fire in their Hearts and Ice in their Blood

Three juniors, all of them UAF hockey players majoring in business administration – Steven Jandric, Max Newton, and Justin Young – went to extreme lengths to ensure they were able to graduate this year. Together, these motivated students set forth to complete their degrees in three years instead of four, compelled by uncertainty in the state budget. They enrolled in up to eight classes a semester, while still maintaining good GPAs and being successful on the ice.

Hockey is a big part of their lives; they sometimes devoted up to seven hours a day to hockey, spending what little free time they had focused on their studies. They noted that one of the most important boundaries for them is to keep hockey and schoolwork separate. Although it was difficult to do and sometimes the workload was a little overwhelming, these students worked closely with their professors to get the work done.

“We’ve turned adversity into a positive,” said Max Newton. “Being so far ahead and finishing this semester, getting to start the MBA in the fall and being able to move on so quickly is not something that everyone gets to do in four years. It’s pretty cool to have been able to do it all.”

What these three have accomplished really shows what School of Management students are made of.

During the initial outbreak of global COVID-19 pandemic this spring, the trio, who were so close to finishing their degrees, encountered many complications caused by the virus outbreak. These determined students still persevered. They experienced new challenges, including changed class structure and adjusting to different time zones once they moved back home. However, the pandemic did have a positive side, offering them more freedom

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UAF Nanooks hockey team claims the 2020 Governor’s Cup.

L to R: Justin Young, Max Newton and Steven Jandric.

Featured Donor: Spirit of Alaska

Established in 1960, Spirit of Alaska Federal Credit Union is the largest locally owned and operated credit union in Fairbanks. In the beginning, it was a small organization located in the Constitution Hall’s Viking Room at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. When it opened, SOA had \$32, stored in a metal cash box. Anthony Rizk, 1997 SOM MBA alum and currently SOA president and CEO, provided some insight into the organization and its connection to UAF.

Anthony reported that SOA has had fantastic experiences with UAF graduates, and over 16% of SOA staff are UAF alumni. UAF faculty and staff have served on SOA’s board of directors over the years. The synergetic and long-term partnership with UAF is a boasting point for SOA.

Spirit of Alaska was well positioned to adapt to the COVID disruption. SOA responded with proactive, preventative measures and offered several options for members to access their accounts from anywhere. SOA was prepared, with no disruption in service offering members options through the drive-up windows and online banking.

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Student Investment Fund students in New York City

Trading Places: SOM Instructors Become Students

Two of our SOM instructors have returned to the classroom, but they are not teaching. Accounting instructor Amy Cooper and business administration instructor Kim McGinnis are both enrolled in doctorate programs, while continuing to teach at SOM. Amy is enrolled in the University of Missouri–St. Louis Doctor of Business Administration program and Kim is in the Executive Doctor of Business Administration program at Pepperdine University.

This is made possible by funding from the Jim Pruitt Endowed Chair gift. It is a great example of growing our own and adding more Ph.D.-qualified instructors to our team, which is essential for AACSB accreditation. Amy and Kim share what it's like to turn the tables and become a student again.

What inspired you to pursue your Ph.D.?

AMY: A colleague of mine encouraged me to look at different programs around the country and I was amazed by the number of programs that allowed you to pursue your DBA while continuing to work full-time. I have always loved being challenged and learning new ideas and perspectives.

KIM: I'm a lifelong student. One of my favorite things about working at UAF is I've been able to take classes in a bunch of different subjects – Gwich'in language, tennis, even a statistics refresher. I opted to pursue my doctorate specifically because I wanted to study business challenges in a really rigorous, systematic way.

What is it like being a student as well as an instructor?

AMY: I had forgotten how overwhelming it can be and how nervous I can get before an exam. I have a whole new perspective and respect for my students who are juggling so many obligations at once and still doing an amazing job in my class, with a smile on their face!

KIM: I have a lot more sympathy for my students. I teach many students who work full time and have families and other responsibilities. Frankly, they are all my superheroes. In the past, I was always a full-time student. Now trying to balance a family, work, and school, I know what my students are going through.

What has been the most challenging part so far?

AMY: With so much going on besides school, I have to stay organized or something will slip. Shifting to fully online has also been a challenge. The requirements have not changed, but now we have classes on Zoom. Classes start at 4:45 a.m. in Alaska, and go all day, so by the end of my weekend, I'm wiped.

KIM: Time management has been the most difficult aspect of the program. It is a 20-hour per week commitment, year-round, which is a lot to take on in addition to my full teaching and administrative workload.

It's intense to teach for SOM, pursue your Ph.D. and maintain a work/life/play balance. How do you find balance?

AMY: There is no way I could do this if Matt, my husband, didn't support me 100%. My kids are also really supportive. My daughter Clara left me a note before one of my early classes that said, "You got this mom, love, Clara." And of course, having the support of everyone at SOM, both from my colleagues and my students, makes it easier. I am also learning to have patience with myself and to give myself grace.

KIM: I would say 100% of the credit goes to Sam Alexander, my husband and super-dad extraordinaire. He cooks, he cleans, he manages toddler temper tantrums and he keeps me sane, all in addition to his day job.

[Read more in the SOM blog](#)



Amy Cooper with her family



Kim McGinnis with her family

Congratulations, Graduates!

Summer 2019, Fall 2019, and Spring 2020 Graduates

On Saturday, May 23, the University of Alaska Fairbanks celebrated its 98th commencement with its first ever virtual ceremony.

Every year, our School of Management graduates achieve their goals through countless hours of hard work attending classes, studying, and completing homework and group projects to earn their diploma. This year's graduates faced unprecedented challenges as the spring semester was upended and all classes were moved to online delivery. As always, we are continually impressed by our students' strength, resilience, and adaptability as they weathered these storms and continued to succeed in their efforts.

We can't wait to see what's next for our SOM graduates and how they will positively impact their communities!

[Read more in the SOM blog](#)



Beta Gamma Sigma Induction Ceremony

On Friday, May 1, SOM honored our Beta Gamma Sigma inductees for 2020 with our first ever all-virtual BGS ceremony!

Beta Gamma Sigma is a national honor society recognizing the highest scholastic honor a student can achieve in business administration at an AACSB accredited institution. To be eligible for membership in this distinguished organization, a student must rank in the top of their class.

- Top 10 percent of the Junior class
- Top 10 percent of the Senior class
- Top 20 percent of MBA students

[Read more in the SOM blog](#)



Students Making a Difference through Service

This story was written by Gerald Montuya, a senior majoring in mechanical engineering with a minor in Spanish. Gerald is the president of the Students Offering Leadership Development student organization.

Over the week of spring break in March 2020, nine UAF students traveled to the small community of Middletown, California to aid in wildfire disaster relief. This trip was organized through the Student Leadership and Involvement office's Alternative Spring Break program and led this year by SOM's SOLD student organization. As a team, we were tasked to help rebuild the home of Bernie and Darcy, which had been lost in the 2015 Valley Fire. We learned that the entirety of Lake County, where Middletown is located, was totally evacuated in the past five years. Because of the ASB program, we were able to help a wonderful community and have an incredible, life-changing experience over the course of our spring break.

[Read more in the SOM blog](#)



Gerald Montuya (left) takes a break from drywall work with ASB team members



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Dreaming of Alaska: From Hungary to Fairbanks

Gyorgyi Miklos is a SOM student pursuing her Bachelor of Business Administration with a concentration in marketing. Originally from Hungary, it was her childhood dream to travel to Alaska. Gyorgyi visited Alaska several times, eventually moving to Fairbanks, and began attending UAF.

After graduating in December of 2020, Gyorgyi hopes to pursue a manager position in the pharma industry, or any similar role that requires leadership and offers opportunities for growth.

Gyorgyi was the second recipient of the Milner Marketing Scholarship, awarded to a recipient with at least a 3.5 GPA with a concentration in marketing. For Gyorgyi, the Milner Scholarship made a huge difference in her education. By reducing financial concerns, she could focus on studying.

Her 4.0 GPA placed Gyorgyi on the Chancellor's List and into the Beta Gamma Sigma Honor Society. Her favorite group project was in her Principles of Marketing class. Her group partnered with Arctic Fire and Safety to help build a website, find the best e-commerce solution, and identify recruiting options.

"I believe projects with measurable outcomes have the greatest potential for helping students. After working on this project, I'm more confident with real-world challenges companies are facing and the experience helped me with problem-solving skills," says Gyorgyi. "SOM is a great community. At SOM, every student matters, every single person has a story worth telling, and we learn from diverse perspectives."



Gyorgyi Miklos

[Read more in the SOM blog](#)



Rather than incurring additional student loan debt, a scholarship could be the ticket to keep a student on the path to graduation. You can make a difference. Make a gift today that will change a student's future.

Fire in their Hearts...

Continued...

and flexibility in completing their classwork since all classes were moved online.

We are happy to report that these outstanding students stayed on track and met their common goal of early graduation. In addition, they are all advancing to obtain their master's degrees.

They started off as strangers and finished this journey together as friends. Through all of the ups and downs they have endured, they finished strong. They claimed they could not have accomplished what they have without the incredible support from UAF, the School of Management, and the coaching staff and other players on the hockey team. Congratulations to all three of them as they continue working toward their dreams!

[Read more in the SOM blog](#)

Spirit of Alaska...

Continued...

Spirit of Alaska is an ardent supporter of SOM over the years, funding:

- [Student Investment Fund](#)
- [Professionally Polished Program](#)
- [UAF Business Leader of the Year](#)
- [SOA FCU scholarships](#)
- Plans for a new interactive learning center

As a member of the SOM Business Advisory Council, and as an MBA graduate of SOM, Anthony has a strong affinity for UAF. "I am certain that I wouldn't be where I am today if I hadn't made the decision to earn my MBA from UAF SOM," says Anthony. "My time in the MBA program was the most beneficial to me from a career growth standpoint and learning perspective."

[Read more in the SOM blog](#)

SOM is one of only about 1.5% of colleges and universities in the world to hold the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation for both the School of Management and its Accounting program. UA is an AA/EO employer and educational institution and prohibits illegal discrimination against any individual: www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination.

PHOTO CREDITS Pg 1: UAF Photo (header); Courtesy of Justin Young (top); Courtesy of SOM (bottom). Pg 2: Courtesy of Amy Cooper (top); Courtesy of Kim McGinnis (bottom). Pg 3: Courtesy of Gerald Montuya (bottom). Pg 4: Courtesy of Gyorgyi Miklos.