



THE CATALYST

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HARVARD EXTENSION SCHOOL
MANAGEMENT & FINANCE STUDENT CLUB

December 2023

Vol. 4



Photo by Iuliu Ilies

The Harvard Extension School Management & Finance Student Club (HESMFSC) is a dynamic community committed to expanding the boundaries of learning and leadership. Our mission is to cultivate a network of current and future professionals, scholars, and leaders in management and finance. Through a rich tapestry of in-person and virtual events, we offer networking, career development, and advisory support tailored to a variety of interests—from global economics to societal impact. Whether you're an aspiring entrepreneur, a researcher, or a changemaker in the political arena, HESMFSC is your platform for success. We pledge to provide invaluable resources and a supportive community to help our members achieve their highest potential.

CONTENT

Notes from the Board - 2

Articles and Thoughts - 3

Scrapbook - 4

Guest Speakers - 5, 6

Upcoming Webinars
and Other Resources - 7

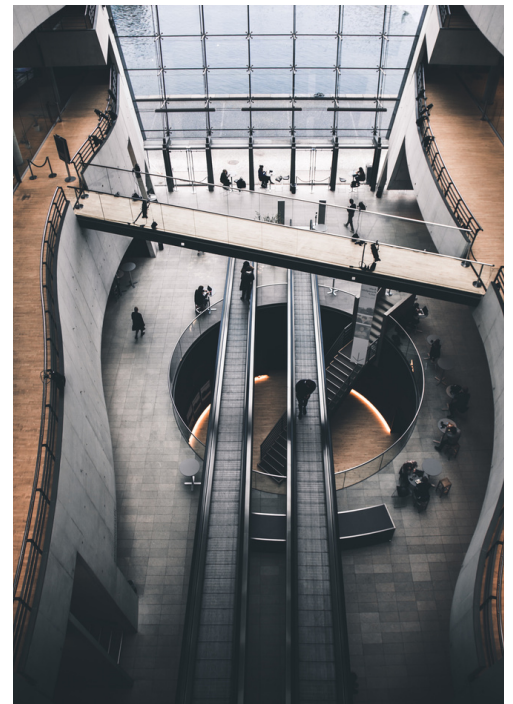


Photo by Kasper Rasmussen

President's Corner

by **Alex Ponce**

As the crisp air of December ushers in the holiday season, it's a time for celebration, reflection, and a sense of unity. This month, synonymous with peace, family, and friendship, invites us to pause and appreciate the warmth and connection these values bring into our lives. As we step into this festive season, I extend my sincerest wishes for joy and harmony to each member of our club and the broader Harvard community.

The conclusion of the Fall term on December 21st marks not only the end of a rigorous academic period but also a moment to cherish our achievements and the strides we've made. These final weeks, bustling with the submission of assignments, projects, and preparation for exams, are a testament to our collective dedication and perseverance. I encourage everyone to take a moment amidst this busy time to reflect on your journey – academically, professionally, and personally.

Remember, whether you're poring over textbooks, strategizing for your next professional move, or navigating personal growth, you're not alone. Our club, our university, is a mosaic of individuals from all corners of the globe – from the towering heights of Mount Everest to the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean, and everywhere in between. Our strength lies in our diversity and the shared experience of being part of something greater – we are One Harvard.

This holiday season, let's embrace the spirit of togetherness and the joy of our global family. Whether you're celebrating with loved ones at home or connecting virtually from afar, know that you're part of a community that values and supports you. The bonds we've nurtured here extend beyond the confines of our campus and into the world, fostering a network of friendship and support that spans continents and cultures.

As we bid farewell to the year and welcome the promises of a new one, let's carry forward the lessons learned and the friendships forged. May this season of peace and joy inspire us to continue our journey with renewed vigor and optimism. Here's to a wonderful holiday season and a prosperous New Year, filled with opportunities for growth and success.

Wishing you all peace, happiness, and the very best this holiday season.



Photo by Yanatan Anugerah



Photo by Aaron Burden

The VP Spot

by **Kasra Tavakoli**

December holds a special place in the hearts of my family. It's a time of cherished traditions and togetherness, marked by gift-giving and the warmth of family gatherings. It's also a season of reflection, a time to look back on personal and collective accomplishments. In this spirit, I want to share my pride in our club's achievements this semester.

We've had the honor of hosting distinguished guests on our show, each bringing a wealth of professional knowledge and insights. These sessions have been incredibly enriching for me, deepening my understanding of the corporate world and management practices. The practical wisdom shared by our guests has not only enhanced our club's activities but also boosted our engagement numbers – a testament to the relevance and value of the content we deliver.

For me personally, the experience of managing and growing our club has been more instructive than any of my previous corporate internships. The direct application of learned strategies and witnessing their impact in real-time has been a unique and rewarding journey. And it's heartening to hear similar feedback from our members, who have found our club's offerings both beneficial and enriching.

As we close the year, I look forward to carrying these lessons forward, continuing to build on our success and exploring new avenues for growth and learning. Thank you for being a part of this journey and for your continued support and participation.

Leadership Renewal

by **Alex Ponce**

The holiday season, often associated with a period of reflection and festivity, offers a unique lens to examine transformational leadership. As we navigate this time of warmth and connection, it's an opportune moment for leaders to renew their commitment to transformative practices that resonate well beyond the festivities.

Embracing Reflection:

Holidays provide a pause, a chance to reflect on the past year's challenges and triumphs. Transformational leaders use this time for introspection, assessing their impact on their team and organization. They ask themselves: Have I inspired and motivated effectively? Have my actions fostered a culture of innovation and resilience? This reflection isn't just a retrospective exercise but a forward-looking strategy to refine their leadership approach.

Strengthening Bonds:

The essence of the holiday season—connection and gratitude—is fundamental to transformational leadership. Leaders can harness this spirit to strengthen bonds with their teams. Simple gestures of appreciation, acknowledging individual and team efforts, and celebrating successes can significantly boost morale and loyalty. It's about creating a culture where each member feels valued and understood, fostering an environment conducive to open communication and collaboration.

Renewing Vision:

As transformational leaders look ahead, the holidays can be a time to renew and communicate their vision. It's a period to revisit and possibly recalibrate organizational goals and strategies, ensuring they align with the evolving business landscape and team capabilities. This renewed vision should be communicated effectively, ensuring that team members are aligned and inspired to embark on the journey ahead.

Cultivating Adaptability:

The holiday season, with its mix of traditions and innovations, reminds us of the importance of adaptability. Transformational leaders recognize the need to be flexible and responsive to change. They champion adaptability in their leadership style and encourage their teams to embrace change, viewing challenges as opportunities for growth and learning.

Inspiring Renewed Commitment:

Finally, as the new year approaches, transformational leaders inspire a renewed commitment to personal and professional growth. They encourage their teams to set new goals, develop new skills, and approach challenges with renewed vigor and a positive mindset.

As we immerse ourselves in the holiday spirit, let's remember that the principles celebrated during this time can profoundly influence transformational leadership. It's a period not just for celebration but for renewal, reflection, and reinvigorating our leadership approach for the year ahead..

Gift of Growth

by **Kasra Tavikoli**

As December unfolds, it brings a moment of profound reflection. This month, we find ourselves contemplating the collective efforts that have carried us to this point in the year. In the workplace, this often means acknowledging our colleagues, the people with whom we spend most of our time. For those working remotely, it might be the support of immediate family members. The essence of the holiday season – often characterized as the season of giving – resonates strongest when we recognize those who contribute significantly to our lives.

At the Management and Finance Club, we pride ourselves on delivering quality content to our members. To everyone who participates in our weekly show, The Pulse, your involvement is instrumental in building the community we cherish. Our team is dedicated to providing firsthand experiences from both corporate and academic perspectives. The positive feedback from our members underscores the value and appreciation for our collective efforts.

This season, I encourage you to consider a different aspect of giving: the gift of self-improvement and personal contribution. The concept of self-actualization, although less discussed during the holidays, is pivotal. This season, let's shift our focus from material gifts to how we can be the most valuable gift to our colleagues and organizations. The opportunities we create for others, our personal commitment to achieving our goals, and our individual contributions are, in themselves, significant gifts to our organizations.

Applying family traditions and values to our professional environment can be transformative. It can transform the workplace experience from mere obligation to something more meaningful and enjoyable. When we bring our authentic selves to work, we create a more homely and supportive environment. This approach not only enhances the holiday season but also infuses our everyday work life with a sense of joy and fulfillment. Ultimately, the spirit of giving becomes an ongoing practice, enriching our professional interactions and fostering a more supportive and engaged workplace culture.

This December, let's embrace the true spirit of the season in our professional lives, creating an atmosphere of generosity, gratitude, and personal growth.

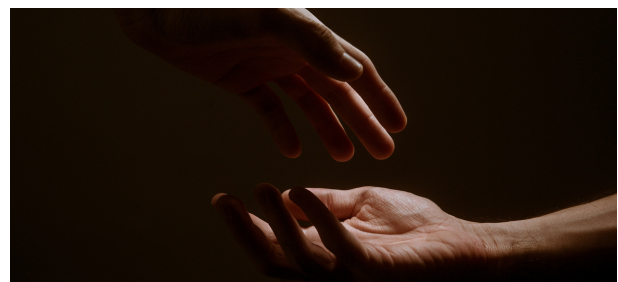
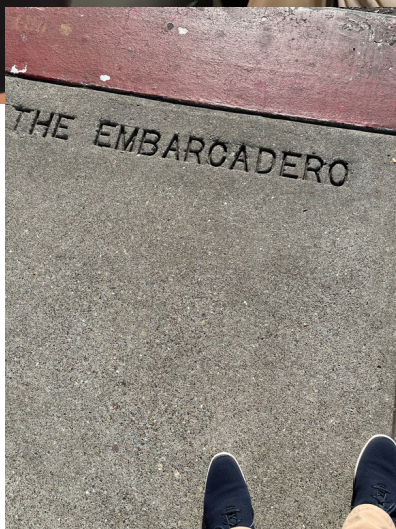
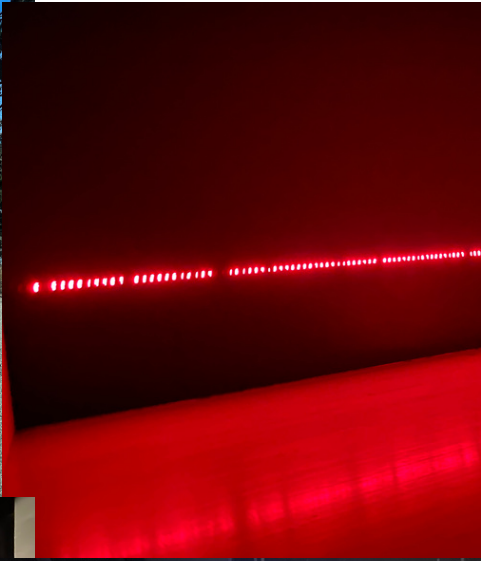


Photo by Jackson David

Scrapbook: We Left Our Hearts in San Francisco!



To Last Month's Guest Speakers... Thank You!



Dr. Ligia Trejo

Dr. Ligia Trejo, an Emmy-awarded trailblazer in sports media, has significantly impacted the traditionally male-dominated industry. Her innovative leadership at Univision Deportes and strategic contributions to global events like the FIFA World Cup highlight her resilience, vision, and groundbreaking achievements in the field.

[LinkedIn Profile - Click Here](#)



Dr. Walter Liu

Dr. Walter Liu, a seasoned expert in category management and marketing research, brings extensive experience from prestigious roles at Del Monte Fresh Produce and Coca-Cola. His academic pursuits at Florida International University complement his professional insights, offering invaluable lessons in marketing strategy and management innovation.

[LinkedIn Profile - Click Here](#)



Dr. Alex George

Dr. Alex George, Director of Talent Strategy & Innovation at Southern Glaziers Wine & Spirits, is an accomplished strategist in organizational development and leadership. With a Doctorate in Business Administration and extensive experience in talent development, he expertly combines academic insights with real-world business acumen.

[LinkedIn Profile - Click Here](#)



Dr. Jaly Chea

Dr. Jaly Chea, Associate Dean of Academics at Universidad Francisco Marroquín's School of Business, excels in academic leadership and innovation. With a focus on enhancing graduate education and faculty development, she skillfully integrates practical business insights into academia, shaping future leaders in the dynamic world of business.

[LinkedIn Profile - Click Here](#)



Dr. Ranjeet Deshmukh

Dr. Ranjeet Deshmukh, a seasoned technology expert, brings 25 years of diverse experience across fintech, biometrics, education, and retail. His work in product management, business analysis, and agile coaching exemplifies his innovative approach to solving complex industry challenges, making significant contributions to technological advancement and business strategy.

[LinkedIn Profile - Click Here](#)

Our Next Guest Speakers



Dr. Scott A. Phillips

Join Us for a Fireside Chat!

Date: **Wednesday, December 6, 2023**

Time: **12:00 PM ET**

The Pulse - the weekly live segment of the HESMFSC - is proud to present Dr. Scott A. Phillips, a renowned figure in healthcare management and leadership, with a distinguished background in military medicine and academia.

Dr. Phillips' extensive career encompasses significant roles in both military and civilian healthcare sectors, marked by his commitment to improving healthcare outcomes and fostering resilience. As an Assistant Professor at the University of New Orleans, he is instrumental in shaping future healthcare leaders, blending academic rigor with real-world expertise.

In his research, Dr. Phillips investigates critical topics such as the impact of workplace stigma on mental health and the role of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in healthcare management. His work is a testament to his dedication to addressing the complex challenges facing healthcare professionals and veterans.

Join us as Dr. Phillips shares insights from his diverse experiences in military medicine, healthcare administration, and academia. His journey offers valuable lessons in leadership, resilience, and the importance of innovation in healthcare.

Set a reminder, grab your coffee or tea, and be part of an engaging conversation with Dr. Scott A. Phillips, where leadership in healthcare meets a commitment to excellence and innovation.

[Click Here to Join Zoom Meeting](#)



Dr. Maribel R. Diz, SVP @ Visa

Join Us for a Fireside Chat!

Date: **Wednesday, December 13, 2023**

Time: **12:00 PM ET**

The Pulse - the weekly live segment of the HESMFSC - is delighted to host Dr. Maribel Diz, a distinguished leader in human resources and strategic leadership at Visa, as our final guest speaker for the fall term.

Dr. Maribel R. Diz, Senior Vice President of the People Team at Visa Inc., Latin America and the Caribbean, brings over 25 years of expertise in crafting people strategies that align with business objectives. Her role extends beyond regional leadership to being a key strategic advisor on global human resources initiatives, underscoring her pivotal position in shaping Visa's corporate culture and leadership principles across diverse geographies.

Dr. Diz's commitment to driving transformational change and building high-performing teams is evident in her focus on diversity, inclusion, and nurturing leadership talent. Her academic accomplishments, including a Master of Science in Human Resources Management and a Doctorate in Business Administration with distinction from Florida International University (Ranked #2, Inf Bus.), complement her corporate achievements, showcasing her dedication to integrating theoretical insights into practical business solutions. Her contributions as a published author and speaker on leadership and gender inclusion highlight her comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of modern human resources management.

In our engaging final session of the season, Dr. Diz will share her journey in balancing her role as a top executive with academic pursuits, her insights on the evolving landscape of human resources, and her strategic approach to fostering inclusive and dynamic workplaces.

Set a reminder, grab your coffee or tea, and join us for a captivating conversation with Dr. Maribel Diz, where strategic leadership in human resources converges with a passion for diversity, inclusion, and talent development.

[Click Here to Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Upcoming Webinars & Other Resources

CARC - <https://carc.extension.harvard.edu/upcoming-webinars/>

iLab - <https://innovationlabs.harvard.edu/events/>



HBR Webinars

<https://hbr.org/webinars>



<https://careerservices.fas.harvard.edu>

Tips? Ideas? Suggestions?

If you have an idea for a newsletter story or guest speaker, or you heard something that needs to be shared or looked into, please drop us a line at hesmfc@hesa.dce.harvard.edu.