Laura Parmer, MBA 1996

Many of us in the evening program were interested in exploring career opportunities. The career services were aimed at the day program students. Thus, I and another student set about to pull together a all day Saturday career development session. We worked with the administration to understand the breadth of programs offered and rolled out a survey to the evening students to determine their interests.

Based upon the feedback we developed a curriculum that was relevant to the targeted students. The session was packed and we received favorable feedback. I understand that it continued to run in subsequent years.

This was an excellent opportunity to take initiative, leadership and group project skills to the task and create a meaningful event for the students.

Nancy McKinney, BS/BA 1982

I was a Spring admit to the undergraduate program, so I didn't have the benefit of the annual orientation process and didn't feel part of a cohort (we didn't have the wonderful Alumni Relations team back then to make us feel welcome on Day 1!). It wasn't until I became involved in Phi Chi Theta, a then women's business fraternity that is now co-ed, that I found my "home" in Barrows Hall. The organization provided leadership development opportunities and was a great way to meet those who were about to graduate and were willing to share their job search experiences. Being involved with a student club also provided a terrific community-building opportunity in that all of the undergraduate club offices were co-located in a very small space at the east end of Barrows Hall. Beta Alpha Psi, AISEC, Phi Chi Theta...we all had desks from which we conducted the business of our respective organizations. It was the place where students sought-out programs, and where the administration of the school sought student involvement in events such as the annual school banquet. The people that I interacted with in that room were my first "colleagues" and they were the people I reached out to last year when we celebrated our 20th reunion.
Wendy Larson, MBA 1993

When I was a student Dean Hasler met with all the Evening program students, I think for the first time, at a town-hall style meeting. He asked the students for questions. I spoke up to point out a deficiency in the program. This was so long ago that I can't remember exactly what point I was bringing up -- it might have been about program communications, so let's pretend that was it for the point of the quote below. :>) More importantly, I do recall quite clearly my tacit assumption that 'somebody' was not doing their job adequately, and that whoever that 'somebody' was had better get to work. Bill listened to me, than smiled and said, "well, I think we have just found the student association's new vice president of communications!" And then he took the next question. His point -- and I immediately took it -- was that if I thought something should be changed, it was my responsibility to take action, as opposed to just talking about what was wrong, and how no one was doing anything. And that was the moment I got involved in student government, which as I think you all know let me to be a student representative with CBA, which is how I came to start the East Bay Chapter... and so on, and so on. So for me, that moment, that response of Bill's is a great example of what it means to be part of Haas – it is up to each of us to participate, to get involved, to connect ourselves with the well-being and growth of the school.

Another story that has stuck with me was the time a fellow classmate had a death in the family -- I think a parent -- and had to travel overseas for a week or two. At the time I was struck by how the other students and faculty all spontaneously pulled together to prevent the absence from the classroom affecting the student's course performance – we photocopied our notes, we tape-recorded lectures, we debriefed him when he came back, his group-project teams pulled his weight without any complaints, and the teachers set up some special assignments and test times so that he would not have to write the whole Quarter off (remember how short Quarters are; a week or two-week absence could make it impossible to finish well, or at all). At the time, I was hearing and reading stories about other B-schools where students would hide books in the library to make it hard for others to do research, or where cut-throat competition in the classroom took on a real "survival of the fittest" (or in today's terms, "Survivor") tone. The idea being that one-upping each other in the lecture hall, or on tests, was somehow the culture of those other schools. And I recall thinking at the time: Haas is more like the real work world. At the time, I worked at Citibank, and I knew success in the real management world demanded team support, empathy, helpfulness -- decency. I felt proud and relieved to be at a school where that was the dynamic, because I knew the other dynamic -- in addition to being not my style at all -- was a losing one in the corporate world.
**David Hansen, MBA 1981**

I walked toward Sproul Plaza a couple hours before my Organizational Behavior intro class was to start. The plaza frequently hatched surprises: One day several fellow MBA students and I had lunched to captivating improvisations forged by a well-known jazz pianist and an equally famous sitar player, and on another I had hurried by to escape the entombing sounds of the punk rock group, “The Dead Kennedys.” However, on this day the plaza was enveloped in the sights and sounds of out-spoken politics, with megaphones and a huge crowd gathered at the steps of Sproul Hall. Iranian students were vehemently shouting slogans against the USA. These students had recently embraced the populist nationalist messages of Ayatollah Khomeini, the yet-to-be-exposed theocratic dictator who still posed publicly pursuing democrat goals. At the rally’s fringes the typically diverse plaza passersby who paused included hippies, frat boys, interview-bound MBAs with suits and ties, nerds, and Berkeley’s half sane, such as the polka dot man and the naked man. I stayed and listened to the Iranians and their emotionally laden “teach in.” Their arguments and sloganeering swirled in my mind, colliding uncomfortably with what I’d absorbed in my first quarter as a MBA student. The program’s academics had already impacted me powerfully. Though I had six years of university behind me, this quarter stood out with its top-notch lecturers, new thoughts, long study hours and inspiring discussions with bright and driven students. Charles O’Reilly, my professor for Intro to Organizational Behavior and a brilliant lecturer, had recently emphasized the potential negative powers that leaders and group think could wield. His words echoed in my mind as I watched these well-meaning, previously progressive Iranian students throw their support behind a force that ultimately would bury cherished values and opportunities. Did they realize they were being manipulated and would end up losing? I feared not. As I walked away for my lecture, I felt appreciative of the stimuli of Berkeley, but above all grateful for the rigor of the Berkeley MBA program. I was receiving tools that would put me a notch above.

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**Denise Ambrose, BS 1997**

A fun project team. Captivating classroom discussions. Supportive career recruiting. Cushy new facilities. And I was sold! After one business class in my third year in Engineering, I decided to wanted to be a part of Haas and started on a Business minor. I enjoyed the sense of community and focus on classroom discussions and collaborative teamwork. I remember in one strategic planning class being assigned to a team with unique, diverse backgrounds, meaning it seemed like we were heading to endless conflicts. Early in the semester, we started our project to help a start-up company with its business plan. We scrambled at first and felt like we did not have enough experience to have much impact. Our professor encouraged us and taught us tools to feel confident that we can influence strategic decisions for this start-up. We began to have fun and feel team unity when we felt our individual talents and experience contributing to the project. The senior level people were listening to our ideas. That value of feeling empowered and having ownership on a project has influenced how I work with teams today. The teams seem to change frequently, each with different agendas and as new members join, I remind myself the benefits of highlighting how individual strengths working together help us achieve team success.
Richard Jones, MBA 1992

My roommate Charles and I were tired of our jobs in engineering and finance respectively, and hence decided to apply to Haas for admission into the class of 1990. Low and behold we both received conditional acceptance. It seems Fran Hill was suspicious of 2 people with the same last name and the same address applying for admission. She thought we were one person trying to improve the odds of acceptance by applying twice. So we both had to come to the school with the appropriate identification to prove we were in fact two people. Charles did matriculate in the fall of 1998. Me on the other hand got the chance of a lifetime to spend a year abroad (Europe) working in defense communications. I applied for a deferral and it was granted. At the end of the year, I was given the option to spend another year this time in Asia upgrading our defense communication system. And I was given a 2nd deferral. When I tried for a 3rd deferral, Fran and David Downes mentioned I would have to let the US fall into enemy hands, but they weren't going to hold my spot any longer. Thus, I came to Haas somewhat reluctantly from Asia. Someone coded me as an international student because my mailing address was Guam. While in I house, I met a "real" international student from Italy, and we decided to get an apartment in Oakland and be roommates. Stefano was a true Italian, that loved his cappuccino. My dad was raised on Instant Maxwell House, so I didn't understand the fuss. However, after tasting my first latte, I was hooked. No more American instant :-((

My first year was rather strenuous, but boring. Given that I was saving the country, I didn't have time to study and place out of any core courses. So I had to take them all over again. One particular course was giving the entire class fits. Our Stats professor was a great person, but she was not very good at conveying probability and statistics. Luckily, Michael Battat, who was also too lazy to place out of Stats, came to our rescue. He created his own practice tests, held office hours and made sure we all passed Stats. I know that would not have happened at Harvard. In fact while sitting in on a class, back when I lived in Boston and was considering matriculating, I remember a student saying "There was no way he was going to share some old exams he got from an upper classman, and improve someone else's chances of passing the course at his expense. Apparently, a certain percentage of the class has to fail. How's that for morale.

I'm happy to say, I'm still in touch with a lot of my classmates, and enjoying serving on the Haas Alumni Council.