

SUMMER 2024

# THE FRANKLIN GAZETTE

THE MAGAZINE OF FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY SWITZERLAND

## FRANKLIN 2030

A VISION AND COMMITMENT TO SERVE THE  
WORLD TODAY AND TOMORROW



2024 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY  
LAC - LUGANO ARTE CULTURA



# THE FRANKLIN GAZETTE

THE FRANKLIN GAZETTE is a complimentary publication for the Franklin University Switzerland community, including alumni, friends, faculty, staff, and parents of current students.

Franklin University Switzerland  
www.fus.edu

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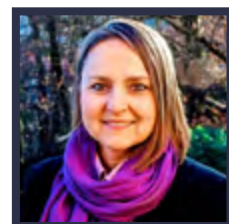
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## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR



Dear Franklin Community,

Welcome to this edition of The Franklin Gazette. Each page highlights the remarkable journey of Franklin University Switzerland, driven by the collective passion and achievements of our community.

In this issue, the spotlight is on Franklin's forward-thinking spirit. President Samuel Martín-Barbero will detail the new strategic plan set to guide Franklin into the future. Additionally, the inaugural Franklin Forum, held last fall in Amman, Jordan, is featured. This event, titled "The Education Mosaic: A World of Perspectives," brought together over 60 alumni, parents, and guests. Through discussions on career readiness, resource mobilization, and academic travel, the forum provided a valuable platform for reconnecting with Franklin's network across the Middle East and advancing its mission as a liberal arts institution.

Another highlight is the recent awarding of the title of Professor Emeritus to Dr. Andrea Terzi. This recognition, celebrated at the commencement ceremony, honors Dr. Terzi's significant contributions and his distinguished 38-year career with Franklin, marking a key milestone in the university's history.

We hope these pages inspire you to stay engaged with Franklin. Consider becoming an Admissions Ambassador, sharing your Franklin story, or finding other ways to support its mission. Your involvement helps Franklin continue to thrive.

Thank you for being a part of Franklin's legacy. Enjoy the issue!

**DIANA TEDOLDI '90**  
Associate Director of Advancement



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# EMBRACING STABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH SEVEN STRATEGIC PILLARS



President Samuel Martín-Barbero

## FRANKLIN 2030

### A vision and commitment to serve the world today and tomorrow

Dear Franklin Community and Readers,

As I reflect on the past academic year, I am reminded of the words of the poet Khalil Gibran: "It is when you give of yourself that you truly give." At Franklin University Switzerland, this has certainly been our recent personal and professional experience.

Our students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, senior leadership team and Board of Trustees have come together with a shared ambition, motivation and generosity of their time, trust and treasure.

Together, we have laid the foundation for a new era of positive transformation, social commitment and academic meaning at Franklin University Switzerland. This collective effort has forged a solid basis that will guide, modernize and preserve Franklin's Liberal Arts essence, diverse and open-minded personality through the next decade.

Over the past year, we have strategically and diligently worked on the Franklin 2030 Vision and Plan, defined by its 7 Pillars, which you will find summarized in this edition of the Gazette. This comprehensive roadmap is the result of extensive competitive and comparative analysis with other likeminded and American-style Liberal Arts institutions abroad. We have refined and adjusted Franklin's value, stability, and viability to align with our institution's virtues and the evolving demands of the sector.

My Cabinet has led this significant effort, supported wholeheartedly by the Board of Trustees. Together, we are fostering a valuable culture of collaborative leadership, co-ownership, co-responsibility, and mutual respect that will benefit Franklin for years to come.

I am particularly proud of the innovative Franklin Forum model, through which we have sought to reengage our alumni in regional hubs in meaningful ways, and have strengthened the bond between them and their alma mater. Furthermore, working closely with the Dean of Academic Affairs, we have laid the groundwork for a robust curriculum and research agenda, teaching pedagogy, mentoring service, quality standards, and U.S. and Swiss accreditation compliance that will enhance Franklin's academic standing as a major player in Liberal

Arts Education. In the Academic Affairs front, we were also honored to host a Fulbright Specialist, who conducted workshops on Career Development and Academic Organization for our faculty.

In Advancement, we have focused on ensuring that our alumni, donors and friends remain active and integral to our institutional success. In Admissions, we have finalized a University Partnership Development Plan, enabling Franklin to build and consolidate partnerships with peer and larger institutions in the U.S.

Sustainability remains a cornerstone of the renewed Franklin. This year, we completed a study of all physical spaces on campus, which will guide our future efforts to create learning, working, and wellbeing areas that reflect our commitment to enhancing the living experience both on Campus and in Sorengo.

We have also made significant progress in Career Readiness, another bedrock of our strategic plan 2030. With the support of many alumni, faculty, staff and trustees, we have developed a comprehensive action plan that will be rolled out in the coming academic year, aimed at better supporting our students as they transition into their professional lives after Franklin.

As we approach the new academic year, I am filled with optimism and confidence in the value of our university, senior administration, and Chair Officers of the Board of Trustees. The world clearly needs Franklin today, given the changing and sometimes turbulent geopolitical environment and misunderstanding across cultures and different realities, and we are ready and open to serve it well.

Thank you for your unique engagement and support. I am deeply grateful to each of you for your dedication and look forward to continuing this journey together. Our glorious past is not only part of our present but also our future. We are building a better Franklin.

With warm regards and sincere thanks,  
Samuel Martín-Barbero, PhD.  
President

We tend to think of a good strategic plan as that which, resulting from an individual's view and personal experience, quickly becomes a guideline for an entire human organization. This assumption, often focused exclusively on one person's trajectory and dreams, may lack empathy and institutional meaning, inhibit the creation of a valuable new culture and work habit, and eventually hinder the engagement and ownership of crucial people in the implementation and execution stages. Franklin's 2030 Vision showcases the renewed university's efforts to fight this trend.

We devoted our full attention to strategizing around impactful, sustainable and long-lasting dimensions such as Global Footprint, Career Readiness, Community Development, Academic Identity, Living and Learning Spaces, Franklin Voice, and Community Wellbeing; these are the pillars of Franklin's sustainable present and brighter future. By collectively and cooperatively building our own strategic framework, we aimed to ensure that each one of our main constituencies (students, faculty, staff, alumni and Board of Trustees) feels represented and proud of our new route and plan of action. This framework allows them all to bond with Franklin's ambitions, in harmony between our legacy and future, in a highly demanding environment and competitive sector.

GLOBAL FOOTPRINT  
EXPANDING HORIZONS

CAREER READINESS  
BUILDING FUTURE LEADERS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY

ACADEMIC IDENTITY  
DEFINING EXCELLENCE

SPACE  
SHAPING AN INCLUSIVE CAMPUS

FRANKLIN VOICE  
AMPLIFYING OUR UNIQUENESS

COMMUNITY WELLBEING  
NURTURING A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

VIABILITY

VISIBILITY

VALUES

SUSTAINABILITY

STABILITY





### EXPANDING HORIZONS

Franklin will expand its global and regional reach, guaranteeing that its unique educational mission remains vital and relevant. By fostering international partnerships, increasing study abroad opportunities, and enhancing global awareness, we ensure our students are well-prepared to thrive in an interconnected world. Our commitment to a global footprint enriches the educational experience and extends Franklin's impact beyond borders.

### BUILDING FUTURE LEADERS

Franklin will ensure that students develop core liberal arts values, intellectual qualities, and professional versatility, graduating fully prepared for further study or their first job, and ultimately prepared for lifelong career management. By integrating practical skills training, career counseling, and real-world experiences into our curriculum, we equip our graduates with the tools they need to succeed in an ever-changing job market and to navigate their professional journeys with confidence and adaptability.



### EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY

Franklin will reinforce its institutional capacity to generate, allocate, and utilize its community network and resources effectively in the fulfillment of its mission and new vision. By enhancing our fundraising efforts, optimizing resource management, and leveraging our extensive alumni and partner networks, we ensure sustainable growth and continuous support for our strategic initiatives. This commitment to development strengthens our foundation, enabling Franklin to innovate and excel in delivering a transformative educational experience.

### DEFINING EXCELLENCE

Franklin will develop a cohesive curricular portfolio and research agenda that is internationally competitive; rooted in Franklin's distinctives; and delivered with inclusive, accessible, and robust pedagogies. By refining our academic programs and fostering a culture of research and innovation, we ensure that our offerings are aligned with global standards and reflect our unique strengths. This pillar emphasizes the creation of a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that supports diverse perspectives and equips students with the knowledge and skills to excel in their fields.



### SHAPING AN INCLUSIVE CAMPUS

Franklin will shape the learning, working, and social spaces of campus to support inclusive and multicultural learning and personal development. By designing and enhancing our facilities to be welcoming and adaptable, we create an environment where all members of our community can thrive. This pillar focuses on fostering a campus atmosphere that promotes diversity, collaboration, and personal growth, ensuring that every space on campus contributes to a holistic and enriching educational experience.

### AMPLIFYING OUR UNIQUENESS

Franklin will articulate messages and communicate an institutional-human voice to convey its uniqueness. By crafting clear, compelling narratives and engaging authentically with our community and the world, we highlight what makes Franklin distinct. This pillar emphasizes the importance of consistent and relatable communication, ensuring that our values, achievements, and vision are effectively shared and celebrated. Through this, we strengthen our identity and foster a deeper connection with our audiences.



### NURTURING A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

Franklin will foster a healthy working, learning, and living environment for students, faculty, and staff. By prioritizing mental, physical, and emotional wellness, we create a supportive and vibrant community. This pillar focuses on implementing programs and resources that promote health, balance, and overall well-being, ensuring that everyone at Franklin can thrive both personally and professionally. Through our commitment to community wellbeing, we build a foundation for sustained success and a positive campus culture.

# NEWS FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## NEW CHAIR: PAUL C. LOWERRE '77



At its spring meeting held on Kaletsch Campus, Sorengo on May 17, 2024, the Franklin University Switzerland Board of Trustees elected Mr. Paul C. Lowerre '77 as its new Chair. Lowerre replaces Kim Hildebrandt '90, who steps down after seven years in service as Chair. Mr. Lowerre has a long history of service to the university. He has been a member of the Board of Trustees since 1995 and formerly served as Chair from 2000-2010. Paul Lowerre is currently the Senior Vice President of Wealth Management at UBS in New York. In 2010 he received his Doctorate of Humane Letters, Honoris Causa, from Franklin.

At the same meeting, Mr. Jay Tucker '77 was elected as Vice-Chair of the Board. Tucker is COO at George Weiss Associates (Weiss Multi-Strategy Advisers LLC). Tucker replaces Mrs. Cabell West '65. Also, Jennifer Helene Berg '76 was elected Treasurer, in a role that was formerly undertaken by Jay Tucker '77. Finally, Denise H. Alfeld '88 was elected Secretary of the Board of Trustees, replacing Laurent Belet.

## NEW MEMBERS: AUSTIN TOMLINSON '06



Austin Tomlinson '06 currently holds the position of Chief Advancement Officer at Singapore American School, where he oversees a team dedicated to fostering strong relationships with the school's expansive community of over 30,000 alumni, parents, educators, and supporters. Through strategic initiatives including events, communications, volunteer opportunities, and philanthropic endeavors, Tomlinson and his team facilitate meaningful engagement with the school and its stakeholders, aligning their efforts with the institution's overarching strategic objectives.

Prior to joining Singapore American School in August 2023, Tomlinson held senior positions at renowned institutions such as INSEAD, where he served as Senior Director of Alumni Relations for nearly a decade, and Franklin University Switzerland, where he held the role of Director of Alumni and Parent relations for six years.

Tomlinson earned his bachelor of arts degree in international communications from Franklin University Switzerland. Fluent in English, Hungarian, Italian, and Spanish, he possesses a global perspective that enriches his interactions within diverse communities.

Originally from Minnesota, USA, Tomlinson has called Singapore home since 2014, where he resides with his wife Winnie and their three children. Outside of his professional endeavors, he enjoys spending quality time with his family, windsurfing and exploring new destinations through travel. Tomlinson joined the Franklin University Switzerland Board of Trustees in 2023.



## CHRISTOPH EBELL

Christoph Ebell is a leader, entrepreneur, science diplomat, technology consultant, and digital transformation strategist. He first studied physics, then humanities, graduating in Bern and Chicago. After a research stay in Cambridge (USA), he worked for the Swiss government's innovation agency CTI, then for the Swiss Interior, Economy, and Foreign Affairs Departments, and was posted as a diplomat to head the Science Section at the Swiss Embassy in Washington, D.C.

In Switzerland, Ebell served as the Executive Director of the Human Brain Project, a multidisciplinary European Union (1 billion Euro) project in computer-based brain research. In 2018, he established a consulting firm for technology projects and venture capital.

Ebell is mandated as Secretary General of a European Association for next-generation High Performance Computing, in addition to his roles in political advisory and international consultancy.

Ebell joined the Franklin University Switzerland Board of Trustees in 2024. A frequent speaker at international events, as well as a founder of a company in regenerative finance and carbon markets, Ebell is based in Geneva, Switzerland.



## JOSEPH SARNO

Joseph Sarno is the Executive Vice-President for International Sales at Fortinet Inc., a leading global cybersecurity firm headquartered in the United States. With over 30 years of expertise in cybersecurity, Sarno is renowned for driving brand growth and ensuring operational excellence on an international scale. At Fortinet, he also spearheads the Operational Technology (OT) practice, delivering advanced cybersecurity solutions to safeguard critical infrastructures and production facilities worldwide.

Before his tenure at Fortinet, Sarno spent 12 years at Siemens, where he held a leadership role focused on ICT networking and security solutions across Europe. Prior to Siemens, he served as a Sales Executive at Econocom, one of Europe's premier technology asset management and financing groups.

Beyond his corporate achievements, Sarno is an ambassador for Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles, advocating for sustainable business practices that balance profit with positive societal impact. He is also a passionate promoter of recognizing dyslexia as a "superpower" for companies of the future, championing neurodiversity as a key driver for innovation and creative problem-solving in the workplace.

In addition to his professional endeavors, Sarno is deeply committed to the academic sector. He serves on the board of a high tech company and joined the Board of Trustees at Franklin University Switzerland in 2024, where he fosters collaboration between the private and public sectors and stays attuned to emerging industry trends. Sarno holds a Bachelor of Science (Honors) degree in Computer Science and Psychology from Manchester Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom.



## EMBRACING DIVERSITY AND THE POWER OF LIBERAL ARTS AT FRANKLIN

By Dr. David Mills, Dean of Academic Affairs

In one of my first weeks at Franklin, I encountered a scene that has stayed with me as an image of what makes Franklin unique. On the countertop in the faculty/staff kitchen, I found a cluster of tools for making coffee in multiple ways. There was a French press, a pour-over filter, moka pots in different sizes, Nespresso capsules, an AeroPress, and even Nescafé instant powder. This scene shows that nearly everyone agrees that coffee is important (although there are tea drinkers and some amazingly uncaffeinated people on campus too), but everyone has a personal approach to making their coffee, influenced by culture, experience, personality, and other factors. Similarly, everyone comes to campus united by Franklin's liberal arts and sciences mission, but we arrive from all over the world, speaking different languages, holding different values, shaped by different experiences, with different aspirations. The community benefits as each of us brings our own unique approach to liberal learning. If we value them correctly, the differences between us can be some of the most important influences on our learning at Franklin.

Critical thinking, creativity, flexibility and resilience, civic engagement, global connectedness, or any of the other significant outcomes of a liberal arts and sciences education – these are not things that develop automatically or by chance. At Franklin, we develop these capacities because in our classrooms, dorm rooms, and travel experiences, we learn with and from colleagues from over 60 different countries and cultures. Debating a human rights issue, reading a novel, analyzing a data set, visiting a museum, or conducting an experiment with people who see the world very differently from you can be a profound learning experience. You can't make assumptions or take your own viewpoints for granted when others in the room voice multiple different perspectives. Instead, we each have to approach our own ideas and attitudes with humility and flexibility, with openness and curiosity. When we do, we learn that together, we can discover and create things that none of us could in isolation.

The philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah encourages us to see our differences as opportunities rather than obstacles to be overcome or erased. He points out that humanity's best ideas can be generated when cultures combine, even if the circumstances that produce those combinations are painful or problematic. Tomatoes and pasta probably arrived in Italy from Ecuador and China, for example, but we can't think of Italy today apart from its many varieties of pasta al pomodoro. And as the Ottoman Turks transported coffee beans from the area of Ethiopia to much of the world, new ways of brewing that beverage sprang up in each new context. Human creativity comes to life when we encounter newness and difference.

Franklin has been creatively mixing cultures for over half a century now, introducing a residential liberal arts and sciences education to Switzerland (already a place where multiple languages and cultures overlap and combine), inviting people from all over the world to work and learn together, and sending students and alumni back out across the globe. I am grateful to have joined this effort, and I look forward to the ways that I will change and grow as part of this fascinatingly diverse community. The next time you are on campus, I hope you will join me for a coffee!





# EXPLORING MARINE CONSERVATION A JOURNEY TO BOA VISTA, CAPE VERDE

Academic Travel with Dr. Patrick Della Croce



Photo by Bella Smith '26

## FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY SWITZERLAND HONORS DR. ANDREA TERZI AS PROFESSOR EMERITUS

During the recent commencement ceremony at Franklin University Switzerland, Dr. Andrea Terzi was honored with the title of Professor Emeritus, marking the culmination of his 38 years of dedicated service since joining the university in 1986, coinciding with its establishment of a permanent campus in Sorengo and accreditation as a four-year college by Middle States.

Throughout his tenure, Terzi has been a pioneer in advancing Franklin's educational initiatives. He played a pivotal role in the creation of new majors in International Economics and International Banking & Finance, designing numerous courses tailored to these programs. His efforts were consistently focused on equipping Franklin students with the knowledge and skills necessary to be prepared to make a difference upon graduation. He also obtained over the years nearly half million francs from sponsors to fund lectures series open to the Lugano community, including the Franklin Seminar in International Political Economy (1993-2009) and the Mecpoc Symposium (2008-2014).

Terzi spearheaded the development of Franklin's first academic department website in the 1990s, establishing an online presence for the Economics and Finance program—a groundbreaking achievement in higher education. Anticipating the future significance of online education, Terzi introduced online teaching at Franklin in 2011 when he was forced home when recovering from illness, well ahead of its widespread adoption.

Terzi's commitment to enriching the student experience was further exemplified by his establishment of the "Franklin Frank" experiential learning program, which integrates practical economics education with community volunteerism in Sorengo and beyond. Additionally, he served on various faculty committees, including standing, ad hoc, and search committees, and held significant leadership roles such as Department Chair and Chair of the Faculty Assembly.

Despite his extensive responsibilities at Franklin, he remained an active researcher, regularly publishing articles and books, participating in local media, presenting at conferences, and authoring reports and working papers. In 2015, he was invited to the prestigious INET forum

in Paris where he spoke with George Soros in the audience, and he was an invited speaker at the Swiss National Bank internal research seminar.

Terzi's research has been instrumental in anticipating the euro crisis and his insights have garnered widespread attention and have shaped discussions in both academic and media circles. Terzi's influential work includes organizing an international workshop at Franklin with Joerg Bibow, resulting in the publication of **Euroland and the World Economy: Global Player or Global Drag?** (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), which offered an early diagnosis of Europe's economic and financial fragility and a set of reform proposals.

Reflecting on his career, Terzi expressed gratitude for the impact he has had on students and alumni alike. "It was gratifying to hear from so many former students—sending their greetings and thanks, including someone who said he felt ahead of the curve when making asset allocation decisions, understanding the consequences of Fed policies better than media were suggesting. It was a privilege having had students who pursued graduate studies at prestigious institutions and made brilliant careers at central banks and international organizations."

Looking ahead, Terzi stated, "My profession continues. I'll be open to occasional teaching, advice, consulting, and I hope to create educational resources based on my teaching experience."

Dean Mills summed up Terzi's legacy, stating, "Having been part of the institution for 70% of its history and for all of its years as an accredited four-year institution, Professor Terzi embodies so much of what makes Franklin what it is. He has been devoted to his students, has been creative and resourceful, and has stuck with Franklin through times of growth and times of challenge. I expect that he will continue to stand by Franklin and invest in our students even in his retirement."

Terzi's dedication and vision will undoubtedly continue to inspire and shape the future of Franklin University Switzerland.

**Boa Vista, Cape Verde** was the destination for the travel component of the 2024 edition of **ENV 232T Marine System Conservation**. This island, located about 500 km off the coast of Senegal, offers unique landscapes combined with a rich and diverse marine habitat. During this travel segment, the focus was on marine mammals, specifically humpback whales, fish diversity and coral reef habitats observed through snorkeling, and marine birds. It was a very engaging and enjoyable travel, a destination that will certainly be considered again in years to come.

## STUDENTS PERSPECTIVES

### Bella Smith '26

The ENV 232T Academic Travel began with whale watching. We were accompanied by tour guides on a catamaran sailboat, along with workers from a local conservation NGO called Bios, which studies humpback whales, sea turtles and marine birds. In the beginning of March, humpback whales return from Iceland and northern feeding grounds to their breeding and calving location in Cape Verde, especially around Boa Vista. We were very lucky to spot juvenile humpback whales despite it being early in the season. During the tour, Bios employees were collecting data through photography to try to identify the humpback whales from the patterns on the caudal fin. It was a fun introduction to Cape Verde marine conservation efforts and, at least for those who didn't get seasick, a very relaxing boat ride!

### Laura Lebmeier '26

Guided by the knowledgeable and passionate Professor Della Croce, our journey in Cape Verde extended beyond bird monitoring to include thrilling adventures like snorkeling in coral reefs, witnessing humpback whales breaching the ocean's surface, and immersing ourselves in marine conservation efforts. Under his guidance, we not only gained invaluable knowledge but also forged lifelong memories and a renewed commitment to preserving our planet's biodiversity. Particularly fascinating was the birds' migratory behavior, with a lifespan study conducted in Cape Verde revealing their capacity to migrate for 2-3 years before returning to their native habitat. This holistic experience defined our academic journey, shaping our understanding of marine conservation and environmental stewardship.

*Academic Travel to Boa Vista, Cape Verde, enhanced students' understanding of marine ecosystems and their preservation. They returned with valuable knowledge and a strong commitment to environmental stewardship, showcasing the transformative power of experiential learning.*

### Silas Williams '26

On our academic travel to Cape Verde for Marine Conservation, we were able to snorkel in the tropical reefs surrounding the island of Boa Vista. We observed immense amounts of marine biodiversity, from pufferfish to sea turtles and different types of coral we had been learning about earlier in the semester. Having had this hands-on experience made me better understand the challenges that coral reefs face from human pollution and changing temperatures, often causing the coral to bleach and having a harmful impact on the established food chains.

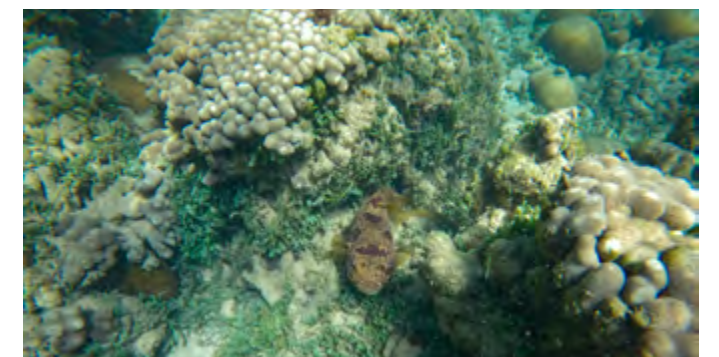


Photo by Silas Williams '26



Photo by Silas Williams '26

# THE EDUCATION MOSAIC A WORLD OF PERSPECTIVES

The Franklin Forum Explores the Future of Education through Collaborative Dialogue



On September 23, 2023, Franklin University Switzerland hosted *The Education Mosaic: A World of Perspectives*, a Franklin Forum in Amman, Jordan. The event attracted over 60 participants, including alumni, parents, friends of the university, and notable guests. It featured three roundtables focused on career readiness, evolving paradigms of resource mobilization, and the lifelong impact of academic travel. This inaugural forum offered a unique opportunity for the institution to reconnect with its extensive network of alumni and their families across the Middle East, while also providing a platform for listening and learning.

Panelists included educators, a former minister, members of the Swiss Jordanian Business Club, entrepreneurs, and regional alumni. Their insights were invaluable in advancing Franklin's mission as a liberal arts institution, where diverse nationalities converge and an interdisciplinary curriculum is enriched by the varied perspectives and expertise of its stakeholders. A key takeaway was the importance of aligning the curriculum with society's needs.

In the first panel on career readiness, Vice President of Admissions and Enrollment Management Lucila Perez Mollo led a discussion on how a liberal arts education provides a deep understanding of various disciplines and their interconnections. This approach equips students to tackle complex challenges such as climate change. Both panelists and the audience emphasized that nurturing the right values and soft skills is crucial for developing students who can effectively interact with, learn from, and support one another to enhance their communities.

The second panel, moderated by Director of Advancement and Alumni Nickolas Neibauer '05, explored longstanding traditions of giving, including Zakat and Waqf, and highlighted the significance of generosity in the region. The discussion also examined how Jordan and its neighboring countries have recognized the immense value of their youth.

Finally, Professor Emeritus Armando Zanicchia led the concluding panel on Academic Travel. During this session, several alumni shared how Franklin's distinctive Academic Travel program was pivotal to their liberal arts education. The discussion underscored the lasting impact of travel and its role as a key form of experiential learning.

President Samuel Martín-Barbero highlighted the forum's significance, stating, "Moving forward, this modality represents a reunion reinvented and a powerful tool to provide alumni and supporters with an avenue to not only come together to celebrate Franklin and memories but learn from each other and support Franklin to grow."

The event concluded with an evening reunion for the MENA region, where alumni, their friends, families, and forum participants gathered for a delightful reception. This gathering provided an opportunity to strengthen connections and celebrate the day's discussions.



## ROUNDTABLES AND PANELISTS

### BALANCING SPECIALIZATION AND GENERALIZATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: NURTURING WELL-ROUNDED GRADUATES FOR ENHANCED EMPLOYABILITY

**Moderator**

Lucila Perez Mollo, Vice President of Admissions and Enrollment Management

### SOCIAL IMPACT IN EDUCATION: TRANSFORMING THE FUNDING PARADIGM

**Moderator**

Nickolas Neibauer '05, Director of Advancement and Alumni

### CULTURAL ENRICHMENT AND ITS PERSONAL VALUE: EMBRACING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION FOR LIFE SUCCESS

**Moderator**

Dr. Armando Zanicchia, Professor Emeritus

# A CELEBRATION OF ACHIEVEMENT FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY SWITZERLAND'S 54TH COMMENCEMENT



The **Fowler Learning Commons** offers quiet study areas, casual reading spaces, group study areas, brainstorming environments, presentation preparation areas, and computers for individual or group projects. It serves as a hub for tutoring, mentoring, group projects, and undergraduate research support, embodying a modern approach to collaborative learning. Thanks to the generous support of **Angela W. Fowler '75**, a member of the Board of Trustees from 1996 to 2017, this innovative space located in the Lowerre Academic Center integrates the Writing and Learning Center and the Fowler Library into a centralized service point for students. Fowler's commitment to active and engaged learning at Franklin was recognized during the official inauguration ceremony held on November 25, 2015, marking a significant milestone in the university's dedication to enhancing student resources and academic excellence.

Franklin University Switzerland celebrated its 54th Commencement Ceremony on Saturday, May 18, 2024 at the LAC Lugano Arte e Cultura. The event honored perseverance, dedication, and the transformative power of education.

President Samuel Martín-Barbero opened the ceremony with an inspiring welcome address, urging graduates to embrace their roles as global citizens. He praised the graduates for their resilience and achievements despite facing global challenges like pandemics, natural disasters, and societal turmoil. Highlighting their academic excellence, intellectual honesty, and creativity, he emphasized the unique interpersonal abilities of Franklin students, which enable them to foster understanding and unity in the world. President Martín-Barbero expressed gratitude to the families and friends who supported the graduates, acknowledging their indispensable role in the success of these students. He also recognized the graduates as a source of inspiration for Franklin's renewed vision for 2030, particularly noting their involvement in seminars, workshops, field trips, and various initiatives that have inspired the institution. "Do not be shy, and persevere by continuing your contributions as builders of understanding across nations, cultures, identities, and traditions," he encouraged, celebrating not just academic achievement, but the spirit of unity, diversity, and the liberal arts education for which Franklin stands.

The ceremony then honored former Board of Trustees members Dr. Fulvio Pelli (Trustee Emeritus) and Paolo Grassi, Esq., with the Franklin 2024 Medal of Honor. This recognition celebrated their unwavering commitment to Franklin and their outstanding career and civic achievements. Additionally, Dr. Andrea Terzi was awarded the title of Professor Emeritus in acknowledgment of his nearly four decades of exceptional contributions to Franklin.

Dr. Julio Frenk, a distinguished public health leader and President of the University of Miami, delivered a compelling commencement address. With a career marked by transformative health reforms in Mexico and leadership at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Frenk spoke on the significance of global citizenship and the transformative power of education. He acknowledged the unique challenges faced by the graduates, particularly the disruptions caused by the pandemic, and praised their resilience. "Your generation has lived through a far-reaching pandemic and the ensuing disruptions that followed. As graduates, you are entering a world that is increasingly polarized and divided. But don't lose hope. You have something that few others possess: a deep understanding of the value of diversity and the ability to see beyond borders and boundaries," he affirmed.

Frenk praised Franklin University Switzerland's commitment to fostering a cross-cultural learning environment, preparing students to engage with the world's complexities. "A liberal arts education is about more than just acquiring knowledge; it is about developing the freedom to think critically and pursue ideas," he noted. Encouraging the graduates to embrace their roles as active, engaged citizens, he expressed confidence in their ability to bridge divides, connect cultures, and make a positive impact in an increasingly interconnected world.

As the ceremony drew to a close, Graduate Program Student Speaker Caterina Scolari '24 and Undergraduate Student Speaker Thomas Lieber '24 shared reflections on their transformative experiences at Franklin. The Ursula Gentile Lowerre Award for Outstanding Service was presented to alumnus Richard Sussman '95.



Gracie Closson '24, Arminta Ruch '26, Lily Matula '25, Hannah Frank '25, and Sonya Strauss '24

## ACADEMIC GROWTH THROUGH PEER SUPPORT TUTORS OF FRANKLIN'S WRITING AND LEARNING CENTER, WITHIN THE FOWLER LEARNING COMMONS

By Victoria Brinton '25

The **Writing and Learning Center (WLC)** located in the **Fowler Learning Commons** is a place where students can seek help in a variety of different disciplines. Trained writing, math, and language tutors are available for one-on-one appointments from Monday through Friday. This space not only fosters student mentorship but also provides an accessible environment for collaboration and academic growth.

### LANGUAGE TUTORS

Language tutors meet weekly with students of all levels in French, German, and Italian. This mentorship is built into the curricula of language courses at Franklin to encourage the review and application of concepts learned in class. Italian language tutor **Ghala Ashoor '25** describes her role as central to students' language learning journeys "providing them with the opportunity to ask questions and practice outside of the traditional classroom setting."

Language tutoring is not only a valuable academic resource for students learning a new language, but also for the tutors, enriching their own knowledge through mentorship. "Being a WLC language tutor has had impactful personal benefits," says Italian tutor **Josephine Gammil '25**. "Understanding the language to the point of being able to explain it allows me to feel confident in my abilities. Also, the moments where I'm unsure or unable to answer questions show me where I need to improve. I consider myself a better Italian speaker because of this experience."

### WRITING TUTORS

Writing tutors meet one-on-one with students to structure and format written projects across disciplines. They are trained in citation styles, outlining methods, and presentation skills. Writing tutor **Lily Matula '25** describes her role in the WLC as "growing the writing abilities of students across disciplines to help them pursue academic success." Since core

writing classes are central requirements for all majors, writing tutors are especially valuable in providing support to ensure a baseline knowledge of academic writing essential to success in future courses.

### MATH TUTORS

Math tutors are available for all levels of mathematics and quantitative reasoning. They have knowledge across disciplines and tutor applied numerical concepts in economics and business as well. Math and economics tutor **Uday Khattar '24** has tutored students of all levels during his time at the WLC and can attest that "the WLC has allowed people to significantly improve their abilities and confidence in math." Math is a common struggle and it can be hard to ask for help. Math tutors contribute to creating a safe space at the WLC, where students consistently come back for non-intimidating practice sessions throughout the year. Math tutor **Camille Lyons '24** said "Becoming a math tutor has been a great experience for me. I get to brush up on topics I haven't studied in years while helping other students. I know math isn't everyone's strong suit, so it's nice to feel like I'm making a difference."

Overall, the WLC is a space where students come together and continue to grow outside of classes. Writing tutor **Gracie Closson '24** says "The WLC is a special place. It is a space that allows people to feel safe and seek out help to be able to grow academically." Not only is the WLC an integral space for cultivating academic success, but also a unique environment for connection and collaboration. "The WLC not only fosters communal learning but also a strong sense of community," says writing tutor **Lily Matula '25**. Franklin is especially unique in the tight-knit intercultural community it fosters, and the WLC is a space that perfectly embodies how this special community can come together and learn from each other.



## MEET THE MANAGER INSIGHTS FROM INDUSTRY LEADERS

On March 26, 2024, as part of Franklin University Switzerland's Meet the Manager series, the university welcomed Giacomo Marconi, a Commercial Football Operations Analyst, and Gianmarco Sozzi, an Academies Project Manager, from AC Milan as guest speakers. AC Milan, renowned for its football prowess and commercial success, stands as a leading European team and the most popular Italian team in the US.

During the event, Marconi and Sozzi discussed AC Milan's global expansion of junior academies and the commercial football operations sector. Sozzi emphasized the club's commitment to developing well-rounded individuals before focusing on their athletic abilities, highlighting values such as hard work, discipline, and integrity. They also covered topics such as player and club sponsorships, key events in the commercial department, and differences in endorsement management for AC Milan players.

**Meet the Manager**, initiated by the Business and Economics Division and supported by students from the Next in Management program, facilitates informal interactions between students and industry managers. These events offer students networking opportunities, career path guidance, and insights into diverse industries, fostering professional exploration and personal growth.

**Next in Management** brings together Franklin's top student leaders to advance their academic community through initiatives such as event creation, market research, digital development, and community outreach.

Article Contributors: Alexandria Fraser and Jesse Fioranelli, Jr.



## EMBODYING THE FRANKLIN DIFFERENCE THE LUGANO DANCE PROJECT

The second edition of the international contemporary dance festival, Lugano Dance Project, held from June 11-16, marked two years of preparation. Complementing this festival were initiatives by Franklin University Switzerland, involving students from all majors in various curricular and co-curricular activities. These experiences introduced the Franklin community to contemporary dance, embodying values such as creativity, diversity, and global harmony.

The festival's main sponsor, the McNeely Family, is a Franklin family that advocates for socially impactful art and supports artists from diverse cultural contexts who expand our horizons through the sharing of stories in multiple languages and media.

This year's collaboration with Lugano Arte e Cultura (LAC) featured artist talks, movement workshops with international choreographers, and new experiences that challenged students both physically and metaphorically.

A highlight of the project was the opportunity for Franklin students to intern with LAC. This internship provided deep insights into the operations of the festival and LAC, enhancing their understanding of the cultural context. Exemplifying experiential learning, a cornerstone of Franklin education, the internship allowed students to apply their liberal arts knowledge professionally. Their broad-based education, which emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, and communication, prepared them for the dynamic festival environment. The students' teamwork, problem-solving, and cultural competency skills were crucial in navigating their roles.

This collaboration highlighted the transformative power of dance and the profound impact of immersive cultural experiences on Franklin students.



## FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

### BUCHER, BERND

Elected the first president of the newly established **Joint Ethics Committee** that Franklin University Switzerland established with HWZ Zurich University of Applied Sciences in Business Administration.

### DIANOVA, VERA G, SCHULTZ, MARIO D, MINIERO, GIULIA, BURKE, CHARLES

"Does the human face of AI increase medical AI acceptance? A patient perspective."

Accepted for presentation at the **40th EGOS (European Group for Organizational Studies Colloquium)**, July 2024 Milan, Italy.

### FASSL, JOHANNA

"Mehr als Scherzi di fantasia: Giambattista Tiepolos graphisches Gedankenlabor im Spiegel der Optik und Philosophie der Radikalen Aufklärung." In **Giambattista Tiepolo: Illusion und Irritation**. Damian Dombrowski, ed. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2024 (in print).

### GEE, GABRIEL

"From Document to Enactment. Transindustrial sequences of maritime industries on film." Chapter in the collective publication **Visual Culture of Post-Industrial Europe**, edited by F. Guerin and M. Szczesniak (Amsterdam University Press 2024).

### HOEY, FINTAN

"How to make friends and alienate people: Japan's relations with the US and the Koreans, 2017-2020," in **Divided America, Divided Korea: The US and Korea During and After the Trump Years**. Edited by Mitchell B. Lerner and David P. Fields. Cambridge Studies in US Foreign Relations. Cambridge University Press, 2024.

Marta Pizzetti, **Giulia Miniero**, Michelle Bonera, Anna Paola Codini, Samantha Elam '24

"I am not unsustainable; I am on holiday!" moral disengagement and the holiday mindset of young travellers during a cruise", (pages 1-19), **Journal of Sustainable Tourism**, 2024

### PICCINELLI, SILVIA

"Xylem traits of peatland Scots pine reveal complex intra-seasonal hydro-climate signals." Research related to SNF PostDoc project **TURBERAS**, in collaboration with Geneva University, Switzerland, and Lund University, Sweden. Conference presentation at **TRACE2024** (3-8 June, 2024 Brasov, Romania. TRACE (Tree Rings in Archaeology, Climatology and Ecology)

### SAVEAU, PATRICK

"Vivre à ta lumière d'Abdellah Taïa: un récit de filiation", Essay **La Littérature Africaine à l'Épreuve des Récits de Filiation: L'autofiction et le récit transpersonnel**. Editions L'Harmattan, 2024

### SCHULTZ, MARIO D, AND PETER SEELE

**Managing Sustainable Luxury and Digitalization: Technology Trends and Ethical Challenges in the Swiss Luxury Watch Business**. 1st ed. London: Routledge, 2024



### STRIJBIS, OLIVER

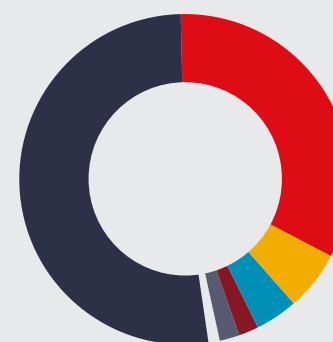
Invited speaker at the **Politics Lecture Series of the Department of Social Sciences at Humbolt University, Berlin**.

### SUGIYAMA, SATOMI, AND BURKE, CHARLES

"Making Sense of Generative AI for Creating Art: An Exploratory Study." Presented at the **15th International Conference on Computational Creativity, Jönköping, Sweden** (peer reviewed) June 2024

### OUR STUDENTS

## FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY SWITZERLAND COUNTRIES REPRESENTED



### UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

- NORTH AMERICA (52%)**
- EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA (33%)**
- MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (6.5%)**
- LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN (3.2%)**
- SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (1.9%)**
- EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC (1.3%)**
- SOUTH ASIA (1.1%)**

N.B. Students with dual nationality are counted twice in the percentage calculation.

# AN ELECTRIC JOURNEY JOHN CLAYTON DOYLE'S PATH FROM FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY SWITZERLAND TO AWARD-WINNING FILMMAKER



John Clayton Doyle '06 shares his inspiring journey from Franklin University Switzerland to becoming the award-winning filmmaker of "I'm An Electric Lampshade" and the founder of the non-profit arts organization Harlem Dance Club.

**Can you share with us the journey from your time at Franklin to producing your own film in 2021? What inspired you to pursue filmmaking, and how did your experience at Franklin shape your approach to filmmaking and the creative process?**

My time at Franklin was incredibly formative. As the producer of many productions and events, I honed my skills in building projects from scratch and working with the available talent and resources to create something new. Franklin students possess a unique fearlessness—a spirit of adventure that leads us to FUS and propels us to places like New York City to pursue the arts.

At Franklin, I started the improv team, Lugano Street Dance, the 3rd Floor Art Gallery, and even wrote and directed an original play and a documentary film about a dance performance called "Sail Away." These experiences were crucial in helping me develop a sense of belonging and solidify my Franklin family and lifelong friends. This need for a sense of belonging is also at the heart of Harlem Dance Club, the 501c3 non-profit I founded in 2013, which celebrates the healing power of community, music, and dance by offering free programming to a diverse audience.

**You mentioned that your film was one of the most formative experiences of your life after Franklin. Could you elaborate on why that is the case?**

The need to see the world will always be alive in me. I pitched the idea of filming abroad to the Executive Producer, which led us to shoot in Manila and Mexico City, collaborating with massive local production teams. Being integrated with the locals and learning to navigate their cultures reminded me of Academic Travel at Franklin. Making this film was like earning a master's in filmmaking—I immersed myself in every department, from sound design to cinematography. "I'm An Electric Lampshade" was my thesis, and this will serve me as I continue my filmmaking journey.

**Alumni played significant roles in your film, both in front of and behind the camera. Could you tell us more about their involvement and how it influenced the project?**

My connection with Franklin alumni was instrumental. Mario Villamor '06 and Bea Villamor '08 provided invaluable insights about filming in Manila, which offered us incredible locations we could never have achieved in New York City. During pre-production in Mexico City, one of our actresses couldn't make it, so I called Ashlie Butler '07, and asked, "how fast can you get to Mexico City?" She arrived two days later. Alumni like Ashlie have been consistent stars in my projects, demonstrating the enduring support and collaboration among Franklin graduates. Wherever I go I gather stars to populate my talent menagerie, often using them in my projects. Ashlie has appeared in all of them, from my productions at Franklin to the present day.

**Can you tell us about "I'm An Electric Lampshade" and its unique approach to filmmaking?**

The film was intended as a documentary short but evolved into a feature film on a massive scale, filmed in three countries. "I'm An Electric Lampshade" is an experimental film that I believe is best suited for fans of genre-bending independent movies. It was presented to film festivals as an inspiring documentary with a message about challenging yourself at any age. The central characters, a real husband and wife with no prior performance experience, acted out events from their real lives. The film blurs the lines between documentary and fantasy, reminding us that truth is indeed stranger than fiction. Reflecting on it, I realize the importance of considering a broader audience and revealing more of the true story behind its creation. As director, I aim to liberate the cast and crew from the constraints of a "right way" of doing things, instead nurturing their innate talents.

**Looking ahead, what are your future plans and aspirations in filmmaking?**

I am currently the recipient of a grant from the city of New York to fund my documentary project about LGBT seniors in Harlem. This documentary delves into themes of identity, focusing on how we see ourselves and the importance of refusing to be invisible or letting others define us. Working with older adults is a passion of mine because they infuse so much meaning into everything they do. However, I'm eager to expand my focus to include Gen Z, exploring how the arts can alleviate the epidemic of loneliness affecting this generation.

Harlem Dance Club just turned eleven. It's thriving, serving a vast multigenerational community and demands a lot of my time. I'm not supposed to announce it yet, but in December I'm producing an immersive performance installation that combines dance, lighting, projection and theater.

I am grateful to have projects I am passionate about lined up through the end of 2024. But as of this moment, 2025 is a mystery with no safety net. This lifestyle is a constant exercise in faith. An artist must take their little torch and wander through the countryside and villages knowing that people may not see it, and yet we must do it because the arts are critical to the health of the human spirit. I hope to connect with other Franklin alumni who see this value or are exploring a similar path.

John Clayton Doyle's journey is a testament to the enduring power of creativity, community, and the fearless pursuit of one's passion. His story is an inspiration for current and future Franklin students and alumni alike.



## COMING HOME TO FRANKLIN A JOURNEY OF GRATITUDE AND GROWTH

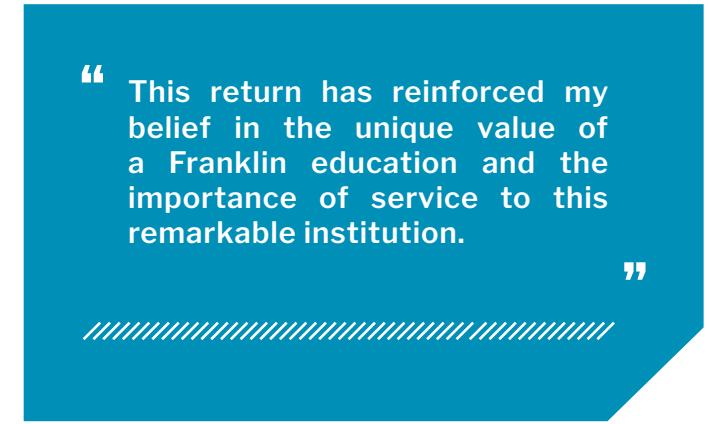


Franklin's Director of Advancement and Alumni, Nickolas Neibauer '05 Reflects on His First Year on the Job

Returning as an alumnus to Franklin University Switzerland to take up my new role has been a moving, enriching and uplifting experience. It has been a delight to rejoin this community where intellectual curiosity continues to drive faculty and students alike. It's more than just revisiting a place; it's reliving a pivotal chapter of my life that profoundly influenced my personal and professional trajectory. Being back at Franklin, I have felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude for the diverse experiences and lifelong relationships that were forged here. This return has reinforced my belief in the unique value of a Franklin education and the importance of service to this remarkable institution. I frequently reflect on the collective vision, labor and generosity that have shepherded Franklin over its 54-year trajectory.

No matter the season of life, or your present GPS coordinates, there are numerous ways to stay engaged with Franklin and contribute to its ongoing development. Mentorship is a powerful way to make a difference. By guiding current students as they navigate their transition from university life to their professional careers, we can provide invaluable insights and support. Additionally, sharing our expertise and experiences through on-campus and remote programs enriches the academic and personal growth of current students. Offering pro bono services in our areas of expertise can also significantly benefit the Franklin community, helping to address specific needs and challenges. Financial contributions, no matter the size, play a crucial role in ensuring that Franklin continues to thrive and grow, providing future generations with the same transformative education we received. Each act of giving, whether it be time, knowledge, or resources, is an act of conscious continuity of the traditions of those that came before. It ensures Franklin's continued excellence on behalf of the students here today and tomorrow.

Looking ahead, Franklin's Strategic Plan for 2030 is an ambitious roadmap designed to elevate the university's global standing and impact. The plan focuses on several key pillars: Global Footprint, Career Readiness, Community Development, Academic Identity, Space, Franklin Voice, and Community Wellbeing. Each pillar represents a critical area of growth and innovation, aimed at enhancing the student experience. Whether it's through fostering new research, developing inclusive learning environments, or forging new academic programs, this strategic plan is poised to usher Franklin into a new era of excellence. If you're interested in learning more about a specific pillar or how you can contribute, feel free to reach out to me at [nneibauer@fus.edu](mailto:nneibauer@fus.edu). Together, we can help shape the future of Franklin University Switzerland, ensuring it continues to inspire and transform lives for generations to come.



**“ This return has reinforced my belief in the unique value of a Franklin education and the importance of service to this remarkable institution. ”**



# FOUNDATIONAL STORIES THE GRACE FAMILY AND FRANKLIN



## A JOURNEY OF PASSION AND DETERMINATION IN INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE

Karina Gerlach '77: From Franklin  
to the United Nations



By Nickolas Neibauer '05, Director of Advancement and Alumni

One of the best parts of working for Franklin has been the opportunity to meet alumni from around the world and from throughout its eras. It is difficult to encapsulate the collective impact Franklin has had on its alumni in one statement. The institution has fostered a great deal of impressive journeys, careers and lives. Those of us fortunate to have studied at Franklin owe a great deal to those who helped create Franklin. I am delighted to learn from them and remain excited to engage more alumni.

This spring, I had the opportunity to visit alumnus John S. Grace '77 and his wife Lola Nashashibi Grace at their home. Over lunch, John shared his experience and recollections from his time on campus, and how 18 other family members have either served the university or passed through its halls as students. It was John's uncle, the late David R. Grace who was the Founding Chairman of the then Franklin College Board of Trustees. Mr. Grace became involved with Franklin as a result of his son Dick's attendance.

As soon as I was back to campus, I phoned Founders Dr. Theo Brenner and Dr. Pat Tone to see what they could tell me about this man who helped get Franklin off its feet. Another best part of coming back to Franklin has been the mentorship of these two founders. Dr. Tone and Dr. Brenner both shared memories of just how helpful the Graces have been to Franklin. Theo went to his archive and supplied me with several photos.

Mr. David R. Grace was a member of the Fleming College Board of Trustees. He energetically supported the efforts of the faculty and administrators who sought to continue the concepts and ideals of international education after the Board of Trustees closed Fleming College at the termination of the 1969-1970 academic year. His leadership and strength were directly responsible for Franklin's success during its initial years of operation and for its position today as an accredited institution in both the United States and Switzerland.

David's brother Oliver R. Grace was another stalwart supporter of Franklin, serving on its Board of Trustees from 1987 until 1992. Oliver Grace, much like his brother David had in the seventies, played a central role in Franklin's growth during the eighties. Alongside other family members, he recognized the need for Franklin to acquire its own campus. He and his family underwrote the entire cost of the David R. Grace Library in honor of his brother David.

Mr. Oliver R. Grace's wife Lorraine also served on Franklin's Board of Trustees. In a 1996 Gazette interview, when asked about her decision to join the board, Mrs. Grace stated "I am delighted to be so closely involved with Franklin College. It has given each member of my family who has attended a greater awareness and appreciation for the world around them. Their horizons have been broadened through the languages they have studied, the travels they have taken and the strong friendships they have made with classmates from around the world."



Founding Chairman David R. Grace



Trustee Oliver R. Grace



Trustee Lorraine Grace

Header picture: Founder Theo Brenner (right), Dick Grace '69 (second right), Founder Pat Tone (center with hat), Founder Jacques Villaret (holding shutter on left), and Founder Wilfried Geens with son Stefan (left), painting shutters at the villa that would soon become the first Franklin campus.

Karina Gerlach's journey from a geography-enthusiast in Caracas to a high-ranking UN official is a testament to her passion and determination. Born in Caracas, Venezuela, to European parents, Karina's early years were marked by a fascination with different cultures, fostered by her love for National Geographic and her multilingual upbringing in Barbados.

In 1974, a pivotal moment occurred when Karina secured a summer job at the UN's Third Conference of the Law of the Sea in Caracas. This experience ignited her desire to become a United Nations International Civil Servant. Determined to pursue this path, Karina chose Franklin College in Lugano for her higher education, drawn by its diverse faculty and academic travel opportunities.

Franklin College, though smaller and less structured at the time, provided Karina with invaluable experiences and cultural exposure. This international environment laid the foundation for her future career. After Franklin, Karina transferred to Georgetown School of Foreign Service, further honing her skills and knowledge in international affairs.

Karina's determination led her to New York City, where she secured an administrative position at the UN General Assembly in 1979. This was a dream come true, allowing her to witness significant global figures and events up close. Realizing the need for a graduate degree to advance further, she attended Columbia School of International and Public Affairs.

Her persistence paid off when she passed the National Competitive Exam for under-represented countries, securing an entry-level professional position in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs at the UN. This marked the beginning of a remarkable 31-year career at the UN Secretariat, where she undertook various assignments across multiple departments.

Karina's journey through the UN was characterized by her ability to leverage her strong organizational and analytical skills, which allowed her to navigate different disciplines. She eventually became Chief of Staff to the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, a prestigious and demanding role. Her career culminated as the Deputy Executive Director of the High-Level Panel for the Post-2015 Agenda, contributing to the formulation of the 2030 Agenda.

Since leaving the UN, Karina has continued to influence global policies as a Senior Advisor at the Center on International Cooperation at New York University. Here, she uses her extensive experience to impact UN-related issues from the outside.

Karina's story is not without challenges. She entered the UN when women were significantly underrepresented in professional and leadership positions. She often faced gender biases, being mistaken for support staff and asked to fetch coffee. Despite these obstacles, Karina persevered, witnessing significant progress in gender equality within the organization.

Her advice to those aspiring to international careers is rooted in her extensive hiring experience: focus on developing intellectual passions and foundational skills rather than perfect resumes. She emphasizes the importance of tailored cover letters and interviews to communicate one's unique strengths and passions. Karina also advocates for gaining diverse experiences to maintain a steep learning curve and stresses the value of excellent writing skills.

Karina Gerlach's journey is a powerful reminder that with passion, determination, and a willingness to embrace diverse experiences, one can achieve remarkable success on the global stage. Karina's legacy continues through her son, Julian Golfarini, who completed his Masters in International Management at Franklin in 2016.



Karina Gerlach '77 and her son, Julian Golfarini, MSIM'16.

“ Rather than only going after the promotions, try as much as possible to look out for new experiences thereby ensuring that your learning curve stays steep. ”

# ALUMNI COUNCIL NEWS

## A YEAR OF GROWTH AND ENGAGEMENT

### Updates from the Vice President of the Alumni Council

This year has been one of growth for the Alumni Council. This May, during the Alumni Council Sponsored Graduates Boat Cruise, we welcomed 57 new graduates into our Alumni Association and the Franklin family.

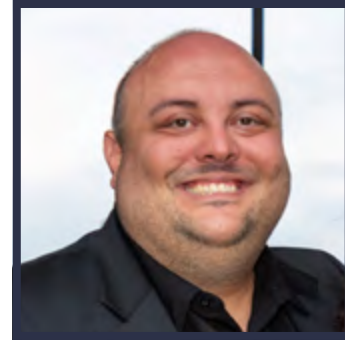
Our Career Services committee has been actively collaborating with the University to leverage our unique alumni knowledge. Members participated in Franklin's "My Future My Design" program, sharing their professional journeys post-Franklin and engaging in discussions with students. They also took part in voting for the university's first-ever LinkedIn Competition.

The AC Fund had its best year since 2018 demonstrating the commitment and dedication of our Council donors. The Fund supports the graduates boat cruise, art competitions, and the Ursula Gentile Lowerre Outstanding Service Award, providing a reliable way for us to give back to our community.

We recently held elections for officers: Emily Boynton was elected to serve one year as AC President, Conner Crawford was elected Vice-President and Nichole Rousseau-McAllister will join them as Secretary. This will be Boynton's final year as President, and we extend our gratitude for her dedication and leadership during the Council's recent transitions.

Keep an eye out for upcoming club events and our annual alumni meeting in NYC on November 16th! As always, we want to hear from you and are looking for more alumni to join and get involved, whether in outreach or working with regional clubs. If you're interested or would like to know more, please contact us at [alumni.council@fus.edu](mailto:alumni.council@fus.edu). Thank you!

*Conner Crawford '12, Alumni Council Vice President*



## HONORING SERVICE RICHARD K. SUSSMAN '95

### Awarded the Ursula Gentile Lowerre Outstanding Service Award

At the recent Commencement ceremony on May 18, 2024, Franklin University Switzerland proudly honored Richard K. Sussman '95 with the prestigious Ursula Gentile Lowerre Outstanding Service Award. This award recognizes outstanding members of our alumni community for exemplary service to Franklin and for their enthusiastic leadership and support of its mission and goals. Sussman's dedication and achievements make him a deserving recipient of this notable recognition.

Sussman served as Alumni Trustee from 2005 to 2008 and as a long-term member of the Alumni Council until 2018, contributing significantly to the growth of advancement, alumni affairs, and capital projects. He co-founded the Franklin College Western Advisory Group, which reengaged alumni in the western United States and paved the way for the current regional clubs.

Sussman's journey from Franklin to a global career in technology and finance serves as an inspiration to all graduates. His dedication to hard work, strategic thinking, and commitment to his alma mater underscores the values that Franklin strives to instill in its students.

As the recipient of the Ursula Gentile Lowerre Outstanding Service Award, Sussman's achievements and contributions are a testament to the enduring spirit of Franklin University Switzerland and the profound impact its alumni continue to make worldwide.

## ALUMNI COUNCIL AWARDS ART COMPETITION PRIZE

During her fourth year at Franklin while majoring in Visual Communication Arts, Lolita Goncharova '24 was honored with the 2024 Alumni Council Sponsored Art Competition Award for her captivating painting titled "Swiss Dream". This award was presented to Goncharova at the Awards Ceremony and Graduating Student Celebration on May 16, 2024 during Commencement week by Emily Boynton '09, Alumni Council President. Goncharova's piece, "Swiss Dream," skillfully captures the essence of Swiss landscapes, distinguishing itself among numerous talented submissions and earning selection by the members of the Alumni Council for inclusion in the Franklin Art Collection, where it will contribute to the rich cultural tapestry of the university.

Goncharova graduated with a BA in Visual Communication Arts on May 18, 2024, earning recognition for her outstanding academic performance in her field of study. Her dedication and talent have been duly acknowledged through both the Alumni Council Art Competition Award and the Visual Communication Arts Academic Award.

We congratulate her on her accomplishments, which reflect the exceptional creativity and dedication nurtured within Franklin's vibrant learning environment. We eagerly anticipate witnessing her future artistic endeavors and successes.

## CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2024 THE ALUMNI COUNCIL'S ANNUAL GRADUATES BOAT CRUISE

On Thursday, May 16, 2024, the Alumni Council proudly sponsored the annual Graduates Boat Cruise, a time-honored tradition designed to celebrate the achievements of the Class of 2024 and warmly welcome them into the Franklin Alumni Association. This special event brought together graduating students, trustees, alumni, faculty, and staff for an evening of celebration and connection on Lake Lugano.

Emily Boynton '09, president of the Alumni Council, set the tone for the evening with her heartfelt welcome address. She commended the graduates on their accomplishments and expressed excitement about their future contributions to the alumni community. Emily's words resonated deeply, highlighting the enduring bond shared by all Franklin graduates and the importance of staying connected.

As the boat embarked on a journey across Lake Lugano, sailing towards the picturesque villages of Gandria and Porlezza, graduating students had the unique opportunity to engage with Franklin Trustees, Alumni Council members, and other alumni. These interactions fostered a sense of camaraderie and provided invaluable networking opportunities, bridging the gap between the past and present members of the Franklin community.

The evening was filled with laughter, shared memories, and the forging of new connections, all set against the backdrop of a beautiful, albeit initially stormy, spring evening. The spirit of togetherness was palpable, reflecting the unique camaraderie and community values that define the Franklin experience.



Lolita Goncharova '24 (left) with classmates at the concluding display of AHT 219 Art of Curating.



Swiss Dream by Lolita Goncharova, 2024



# CONNECTIONS AND RECONNECTIONS AMONG FRANKLIN ALUMNI

Over the past year, Franklin alumni events showcased vibrant engagement and our expanding global footprint, with highlights including major gatherings in Jordan and New York City. These gatherings reflect the enduring spirit and worldwide reach of our alumni network.

## FRANKLIN LEGACY: A VIBRANT REUNION IN THE MENA REGION

Following the Franklin Forum in Amman, Jordan, on September 23, 2023, alumni and friends gathered at the Segreta Restaurant in the St. Regis Hotel, Amman for a heartfelt reunion that celebrated our shared journeys and future adventures. The evening's excitement grew as Professor Emeritus Armando Zanecchia revealed an upcoming Academic Travel trip to Jordan, sparking anticipation and evoking memories of past travels. This nostalgia was further enhanced by a video presentation from recent graduates in Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

President Samuel Martín-Barbero and Chairman Kim Hildebrandt '90 were honored to host former Franklin Trustee Ammar Malhas and His Excellency Mr. Adnan Talhouni, Chairman of the Swiss Jordanian Business Club and former Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to Switzerland. Hildebrandt also extended special thanks to the Dakkak family for their generous support, which contributed to the event's success and underscored the continuous growth and connections fostered through our alma mater.



## A FRANKLIN SOIRÉE IN NEW YORK CITY

On November 17, 2023, Franklin held a much-anticipated reunion in New York City. Hosted by Board of Trustee Member Lucius Fowler at The Links in Manhattan, 75 guests attended, including alumni, parents, Board of Trustee Members, Ambassador Niculin Jäger (Consul General of Switzerland), Chairman Kim Hildebrandt '90, and President Samuel Martín-Barbero. The evening allowed former classmates and alumni from several generations to relive memories of their time as students, share updates about their current lives, and learn more about the happenings on Franklin's campus this academic year. Generations of Franklins reminisced about how far the university has come over the past fifty-plus years and looked forward to new beginnings as the campus grows and global engagement expands.

Nickolas Neibauer '05, Franklin's Director of Advancement and Alumni, shared, "We are incredibly grateful for Trustee Fowler's hospitality in hosting us at his club tonight. This city is an important location for our institution. Not only is New York a city with one of the highest concentrations of our alumni, it's also where Franklin's founder, Pascal Tone, who is with us tonight, recruited the first class of Franklin during the summer of 1970."



## WEST COAST FRANKLIN ALUMNI GATHER FOR AN UNFORGETTABLE FILM EXPERIENCE

On Saturday, March 23, 2024, a vibrant group of Franklin alumni gathered at the Sonoma International Film Festival, thanks to the generous sponsorship of Trustee Kevin McNeely ('73), Director Emeritus of the festival, and Rosemary McNeely. This special event provided Franklins with a day filled with cinematic excellence and community engagement.

The day kicked off with a Brunch Reception, setting a social and lively tone for the event. Alumni then enjoyed two standout film screenings: Mr. Blake at Your Service, featuring John Malkovich and sponsored by The KHR McNeely Family Fund, and Let the Canary Sing, sponsored by Franklin University Switzerland.

The evening concluded with a lively Centerpiece Party at The Lodge at Sonoma, where attendees continued to celebrate and connect. With passes offering access to all screenings, VIP areas, and the night's festivities, the event was a great way for alumni to enjoy films and each other's company.



Photo by Sonoma International Film Festival 2024

## SWISS JORDANIAN ALUMNI NETWORK LAUNCHED IN AMMAN

Amman, March 6, 2024 - The Residence of the Swiss Ambassador in Jordan witnessed the official launch of the Swiss Jordanian Alumni Network, bringing together Jordanian Alumni of Swiss Institutions, including Franklin University Switzerland. Ambassador H.E. Ms. Emilija Georgieva expressed joy in inaugurating the network, acknowledging the diversity within the Swiss-connected community.

Special appreciation was extended to Majeda Dakkak'15, MENA Regional Lead at Franklin University Switzerland, for her vital role in co-organizing the event and setting up the network as a whole. The launch coincides with the 75th anniversary of bilateral relations between Jordan and Switzerland, emphasizing mutual respect and collaboration since 1949.

The Alumni Network aims to foster connections, exchanges, and relations among peers who share a narrative of calling Switzerland a home during their university years.

The Embassy unveiled plans for events, including the Swiss National Day celebrations and language weeks, Swiss film days and exhibitions, encouraging alumni participation. Collaborative efforts with alumni were emphasized for additional initiatives. The launch also marked the announcement of the Swiss Jordanian Alumni Network LinkedIn page, providing a platform for continuous engagement.

In cultivating the vibrant spirit of the Alumni Network, all participants were encouraged to actively contribute to strengthening the shared values and deepening the bond between Switzerland and Jordan. This inclusive invitation extends to the esteemed alumni in Jordan, uniting everyone in a collective journey of connection, collaboration, and shared experiences. Together, we look forward to building lasting connections that transcend borders and celebrate the unique tapestry of our diverse alumni community.



# CLASS NOTES

## 1970

**Walter Arnold**, who has resided in Helsinki for over 50 years, visited Franklin last August to present a copy of his translation of the “Kalevala” into the Airolese dialect to President Martin-Barbero. The “Kalevala” is a renowned Finnish epic poem consisting of a collection of legends central to Finnish identity. Arnold, deeply rooted in his Ticinese heritage, translated it to preserve his dialect and cultural heritage, completing the monumental work over twenty years while also producing an audio version. His enduring connection to Ticino is evident through his frequent visits and commitment to preserving his cultural legacy.



## 1971

**Hope (Busby) Burleigh** visited Franklin with her husband Stephen in May 2023 during their European vacation. Hope is a children’s photographer and Stephen is an independent college counselor.



## 1973

**Victor Bruni** visited Franklin last October on the occasion of his travels to Italy, Greece, and the United Kingdom. Walter Arnold, who has resided in Helsinki for over 50 years, visited Franklin in August 2023 with Dr. Theo E. Brenner. Walter presented President Martin-Barbero with a copy of his translation

of the “Kalevala” into the Airolese dialect. The “Kalevala” is a renowned Finnish epic poem consisting of a collection of legends central to Finnish identity. Arnold, deeply rooted in his Ticinese heritage, translated it to preserve his dialect and cultural heritage, completing the monumental work over twenty years while also producing an audio version. His enduring connection to Ticino is evident through his frequent visits and commitment to preserving his cultural legacy.



## 1983

**Elizabeth Case** visited Franklin last May with her daughters, Melia and Maile. Melia is currently studying at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, while Maile is at Clark University in Massachusetts. They made the trip to Lugano to reconnect with Elizabeth’s host family from her time at Franklin.



## 1985

**Karen A. Helke** is currently involved as a co-surveyor in Phase II of a UK Urban Wetland Pilot with the London Zoological Society (ZSL). If successful their water monitoring methods, will be launched throughout the UK. Additionally, Karen is participating in the development of the Natural History Museum’s Urban Nature Project, aimed at creating a living laboratory in the center of London for wildlife and visitors to thrive in nature.



## 1986

**Mark Holley** and **Philip Hahn ’85** reunited in Lugano in July 2023 for a weekend getaway before heading to Monza to attend the Bruce Springsteen concert. This meet-up was a special anniversary, as they had seen Bruce Springsteen together 37 years earlier at San Siro in Milan while they were students at Franklin. They enjoyed reminiscing about their time at Franklin and fondly recalled their experiences with Professor Floyd Parsons.



## 1988

**Glenn Shafer** writes, “I took a semester abroad my junior year of college in the Fall of 1987 at Franklin College and it was a great experience. I graduated from the University of Colorado. I met great friends at Franklin and the professors were terrific, including Dr. Morris Mottale who was wonderful. I live in West Hartford, Connecticut, the town I grew up in. If any of my friends from Franklin see this, please reach out to me. My mobile is 860.559.0073. I’m an Investment Advisor, my own firm, using LPL Financial as my broker dealer. I’m very happy how things ended up for me professionally. All the best to you all.”



## 1991

**Fabiana Gattinoni** and **Diana Tedoldi ’90** had lunch in Coconut Grove, FL last February.

## 1993

**Theron de Ris** recently founded Sorengo Partners ([www.sorengopartners.com](http://www.sorengopartners.com)), an investment boutique named in honor of Sorengo, where he spent a memorable year at Franklin in 1991-92 and met his wife, Lara Eschler de Ris ’94. Theron writes, “Sorengo Partners specializes in a single-strategy, directional long/short equity approach, focusing on quality companies within cyclical industries.”

## 1994

**Elizabeth Esteve** visited campus with her daughter in June 2023 while touring universities. Elizabeth is an art advisor.



## 1994

President Samuel Martín-Barbero, Tommie Pegues ’94, and Diana Tedoldi ’90 at Kaletsch Campus during Tommie’s visit to Franklin last year.



## 2001

**Robb Hawkins** and **Abigail (Bates) Hawkins ’02** have been living in Singapore for the last two years with their daughter Alia. The family will move to Bogotá, Colombia in 2025.



## 2002

**Brooke (Franke) Gagnon** at Giardino Residence with her family in October 2023.



## 2003

**David Kirk** has recently moved to Madrid, Spain, and would love to connect with any alumni in the area. Feel free to reach out at [dcask1@gmail.com](mailto:dcask1@gmail.com).

## 2006

In September 2023, **Chaitan Mugili** became the General Manager of the AC by Marriott and Element by Westin San Antonio Riverwalk hotels along with 1Watson rooftop bar. He will also serve as the Chairman of the San Antonio Hotel Lodging Association for 2024 and 2025. Throughout these organizations, Chaitan’s teams engage in various charitable activities, including scholarships, fundraising for different organizations, and supporting tourism initiatives in San Antonio. Recently, Chaitan participated in the Pink Tie Guy campaign and raised over \$11,000 for Susan G. Komen’s breast cancer initiative. He encourages any alumni in San Antonio or those needing assistance with booking meetings or rooms with Marriott to reach out, as he is happy to help in any way he can.



## 2008

**Katie Cicerchi** and her husband, Stephen Janssens, welcomed boy-girl twins in May 2023. Babies Aubrey Michael and Georgia Evelyn have kept the family \*very\* busy ever since. Katie sends her love to all!

## 2009

**Carlos S. Adams** is excited to announce his association with Highline Residential Brokerage. Specializing in sales and rentals, Carlos handles prime NYC listings and prestigious estates in New York State. He is dedicated to helping clients make informed decisions in one of the world’s most dynamic real estate markets. Carlos also welcomes any real estate questions at [c.adams@hlresidential.com](mailto:c.adams@hlresidential.com). In addition to his real estate career, Carlos is now an active member of the Arts Students League, where he has produced work alongside artists such as Steven Rudin, Elizabeth Allison, Tim Saternow, and many others.



## 2016

**Morgan Mellinger** is getting married to her partner Noah Dickson next summer. They live in San Francisco with their husky, Juneau, and try to see their Franklin friends often.



## 2022

**Morgan Crowther** along with her partner Nicholas, moved to New Zealand for a year in September 2023. She started a new role as purchasing manager for Hampshire Properties, and will become a coach for the Wānaka Ski Team at Cardrona and Treble Cone ski resorts come winter in the southern hemisphere. She has been traveling the country enjoying full-time van life.

# REPORT OF GIVING

## THE FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY SWITZERLAND VILLA SOCIETY

Franklin's leadership gift society, the **Villa Society**, offers annual membership to alumni, parents and friends who make a gift of \$1,000 or more. The Society was founded to recognize the critical difference leadership gifts make at the University and thank these donors for their special commitment to the University. Annual membership and recognition is based on an individual's personal gifts and corporate matching gifts received in a single fiscal year.

## THE FRANKLIN WORLD CITIZEN CLUB\*

Loyal support from donors who contribute year after year is vital to the University's success. **The Franklin World Citizen Club** recognizes sustained annual giving to Franklin at any gift level. Donors who contribute to Franklin for five successive fiscal years, or every year since graduation for young alumni, become members of the Franklin World Citizen Club. Membership continues with sustained annual giving each fiscal year. This recognition of alumni, parents and friends who show a special commitment to Franklin was created to acknowledge their outstanding, yearly dedication to the school.

Alumni class years follow the alumni donor names.

\*Franklin World Citizen Club members: Donors who have made gifts in each of the past five years or each year since graduation.



## CONTRIBUTORS: ANNUAL REPORT July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

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PAYS THE BEST INTEREST.”**

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LIVES FOR THE BETTER.**

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“ An estate-planned gift to Franklin expresses  
my gratitude for the transformative experience  
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**CONTACT**  
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Director of Advancement  
and Alumni  
nneibauer@fus.edu



**MAY  
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Alumni and friends will gather in Lugano for a variety of events, excursions in Ticino, a cocktail cruise on Lake Lugano, and more.







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