NACUBO Welcomes the 2018–19 Cohort of Fellows

NACUBO Fellows made its debut at the NACUBO 2018 Annual Meeting in Long Beach, Calif. This year’s group comprises 11 professionals, following 15 who participated in 2017–18 and 15 in 2016–17. The 12-month leadership development program is designed specifically for individuals who are preparing to become chief business officers in their next role.

As the new Fellows begin their yearlong experience, Business Officer caught up with them to hear what attracted them to the program and what they hope to gain from it.

I've been to all seven continents—twice. I hope to work on uncovering that time in the fellowship.

DEDRIC CARTER, vice chancellor for operations and technology transfer, Washington University in St. Louis

My university will experience significant change in the coming year. Our CampusNext program is transforming the physical landscape of the university, and our chancellor is stepping down after 23 years. A recently named successor will impact the emotional and leadership fabric of the campus. I often find transitions and new beginnings as a time of reflection. In the midst of great change, time to reflect and grow is hard to carve out, and I hope to work on uncovering that time in the fellowship.

FUN FACT: I’ve been to all seven continents—twice.

MARY DENEEN, assistant vice president for finance/university controller, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Va.

I started out as an officer in the U.S. Navy, then earned a master’s in accounting and became a CPA while on active duty. I wanted to continue in public service after my military career and higher education was a perfect fit. While I have extensive experience executing an approved university budget, I have not done the work to create a budget plan from beginning to end. I am looking forward to learning more about things like different tuition models, budgeting processes, and the work that goes into creating expenditure plans that support the institution's strategic priorities.

FUN FACT: I love to fly! I routinely bummed rides on search and rescue helicopters when stationed at a naval air station.

NANCY ANTUNES, associate vice president for finance, Bentley University, Waltham, Mass.

I originally took a part-time position in the internal audit function in my alma mater, primarily for the work-life balance opportunities. Now we are currently midway through a three-year ERP implementation to replace our 27-year-old system. I hope to learn about change management techniques and process improvement that will enable us to get the most benefit from this project, and I also hope to develop my leadership and strategic planning skills. With the other Fellows' diverse backgrounds and institutions, I expect I will learn a lot from them.

FUN FACT: I’ve been connected with my institution since I was 17 years old—as an undergraduate, graduate student, employee, and parent of an undergraduate.

DAVID FRANKLIN, deputy chief operating officer, University of the District of Columbia, Washington, D.C.

I am working to modify and develop the FY19 and FY20 annual budgets, which is quite challenging as the university’s projected enrollment remains stagnant while our personnel and nonpersonnel expenditures continue to increase. Meanwhile, because of the national decline in traditional high school graduates, we must consider expanding our potential reach outside the metro area and even go international in our efforts to mitigate the forecasted decline. I hope to hone the ability to effectively communicate financial data from a diverse perspective; not everyone “speaks finance” fluently.

FUN FACT: I participated in an international Taekwondo tournament in Manchester, England, before experiencing the agony of defeat in the finals.

DAVID NAKABAYASHI, treasurer, Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, Calif.

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DIANA HEEREN, assistant vice president for planning, the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio

From the first business class I took in high school, I knew I would pursue a degree in business. Business has been my passion, and I am so grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this leadership program. I am currently leading a small task force to strengthen the policy review and approval process at Trinity. Good policies are the foundation of sound financial planning, and I think that working with other Fellows from much larger institutions. We are moving toward zero-based budgeting, and I think that working with other Fellows from much larger institutions might give me some great insight and tools to assist with that. For most of my undergraduate, graduate student, employee, and public/nonprofit administration, and I've seen firsthand how the system CFO's team. I'm looking forward to the variety of the work is a big part of why I love my job. I am currently leading a small task force to strengthen the policy review and approval process at Trinity. Good policies are the foundation of sound financial planning, and I think that working with other Fellows from much larger institutions might give me some great insight and tools to assist with that. For most of my undergraduate, graduate student, employee, and public/nonprofit administration, and I've seen firsthand how the system CFO's team. I'm looking forward to the variety of the work is a big part of why I love my job.

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BRANDI RENTON, chancellor of Germany; and me—we were all born on the same day. I am a third-generation higher education professional, so you could say that higher education is the “family business.” My father is a professor at Soka University, and my mother is a community college administrator. I have extensive experience in community development, especially in rural towns. Recently, I was appointed as the assistant vice president for budget and financial planning, the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio

GINNY GOMEZ-LEON, deputy chief financial officer, The Citadel, Military College of South Carolina

I have a background in corporate and government finance, as well as higher education administration. I am currently leading a small task force to strengthen the policy review and approval process at Trinity. Good policies are the foundation of sound financial planning, and I think that working with other Fellows from much larger institutions might give me some great insight and tools to assist with that. For most of my undergraduate, graduate student, employee, and public/nonprofit administration, and I've seen firsthand how the system CFO's team. I'm looking forward to the variety of the work is a big part of why I love my job. I am currently leading a small task force to strengthen the policy review and approval process at Trinity. Good policies are the foundation of sound financial planning, and I think that working with other Fellows from much larger institutions might give me some great insight and tools to assist with that. For most of my undergraduate, graduate student, employee, and public/nonprofit administration, and I've seen firsthand how the system CFO's team. I'm looking forward to the variety of the work is a big part of why I love my job.

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TAMMY RUSSELL, director of institutional research, Pepperdine University, Malibu, Calif.

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MARY DENEEN, associate vice president for finance, Trinity University, San Antonio

As a sophomore, I had a summer internship in my college’s business office; until then, I had assumed the only career path for accountants was to join a big public accounting firm. My role has changed since I first became a business officer, but the variety of the work is a big part of why I love my job. I am currently leading a small task force to strengthen the policy review and approval process at Trinity. Good policies are the foundation of successful organizations, and I’m hoping that the Fellows program will provide me with new ways of approaching the project.

FUN FACT: I’m a huge fan of the TV show NCIS—my husband and I never miss an episode!

DIANA HEEREN, associate vice president for finance, Trinity University, San Antonio

KURT KISSINGER, associate vice president for finance and business, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Penn.

My career path has primarily been in economic development and public/nonprofit administration, and I’ve seen firsthand how higher education and health care can catalyze economic and community development, especially in rural towns. Recently, I’ve been appointed to work with a task force studying the affordability of a Penn State degree, and to explore ways to control costs and enhance revenue while maintaining quality. This assignment brings together many aspects of addressing current challenges in higher education, and I hope the Fellows program will give me insights into how best to work collaboratively across the university’s diverse academic and finance/business stakeholder groups when tackling these challenges.

FUN FACT: I’m a student pilot completing my training for a private pilot license.

F. WARD LOGAN, deputy chief financial officer, the Citadel, Military College of South Carolina, Charleston, S.C.

I am a third generation higher education professional, so you might say that higher education is the “family business.” My institution has about 3,600 students so my background is from the small-school perspective, while many of the other Fellows come from much larger institutions. We are moving toward zero-based budgeting, and I think that working with other Fellows might give me some great insight and tools to assist with that. For most of my career I have been an operational thinker; I would like to work on becoming a more strategic thinker.

FUN FACT: I had a blue and gold macaw named Elvis for many years.

DAVID NAKABAYASHI, controller and assistant treasurer, Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, Calif.

Soka University is in the construction phase of a new STEM building and additional residence halls, and we will soon initiate a new life sciences concentration. For a small campus, these are huge and exciting changes and I am hoping the Fellows program will help me navigate this growth. I have found higher education to be one of the most collaborative industry groups, and to be able to spend a year working with this cohort of business officers is very exciting.

FUN FACT: There is a common thread linking Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of Iran; Angela Merkel, chancellor of Germany; and me—we were all born on July 17.

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BRANDI RENTON, associate vice president for administrative services, University of North Texas, Denton

I worked in the auto industry in environmental health and safety, then the satisfaction of supporting people drew me into an HR role in the health care industry. I first took an HR role in higher education, then saw opportunities outside of HR to continue to serve students, faculty, and staff. I’ve been named interim human capital officer for our university system and want to put a strong framework in place to ensure that the HR team is supported and working effectively with system partners, including the system CFO’s team. I’m looking forward to the networking experience in the Fellows program.

FUN FACT: My first job at age 14 at a Dairy Queen was the best job ever. I can still make a mean soft-serve ice cream curlicue.

CAROLINE WILHELM, university treasurer, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles

Experiencing how others think, plan, and act will be eye-opening, since I’ve only ever been at LMU. I came here after many years in the for-profit banking and investment industries, and once at LMU I established a brand-new treasury office and helped grow the university’s assets. We are undertaking the largest public debt issuance in our history this fall to support construction of new undergraduate housing, since nearby housing costs have gone up, pushing more students back onto campus. I’d like to learn more about long-term strategic financial planning—the best way to carry out a president’s strategic vision while maintaining a strong financial position.

FUN FACT: I’ve been a Girl Scout leader for 10 years and took my troop of 12 girls to London during the summer of 2017.