

Isenberg Doctoral Program

Class of 2020

Deniz Besik

Ye Chen

Muntakim Choudhury

Asli Ayse Eksi Linderkamp

Zheyuan Florence Hu

Sean Youngsun Kim

Mayank Sewak

Kyle Stubbs

Erfan Rezvani



George R. Milne

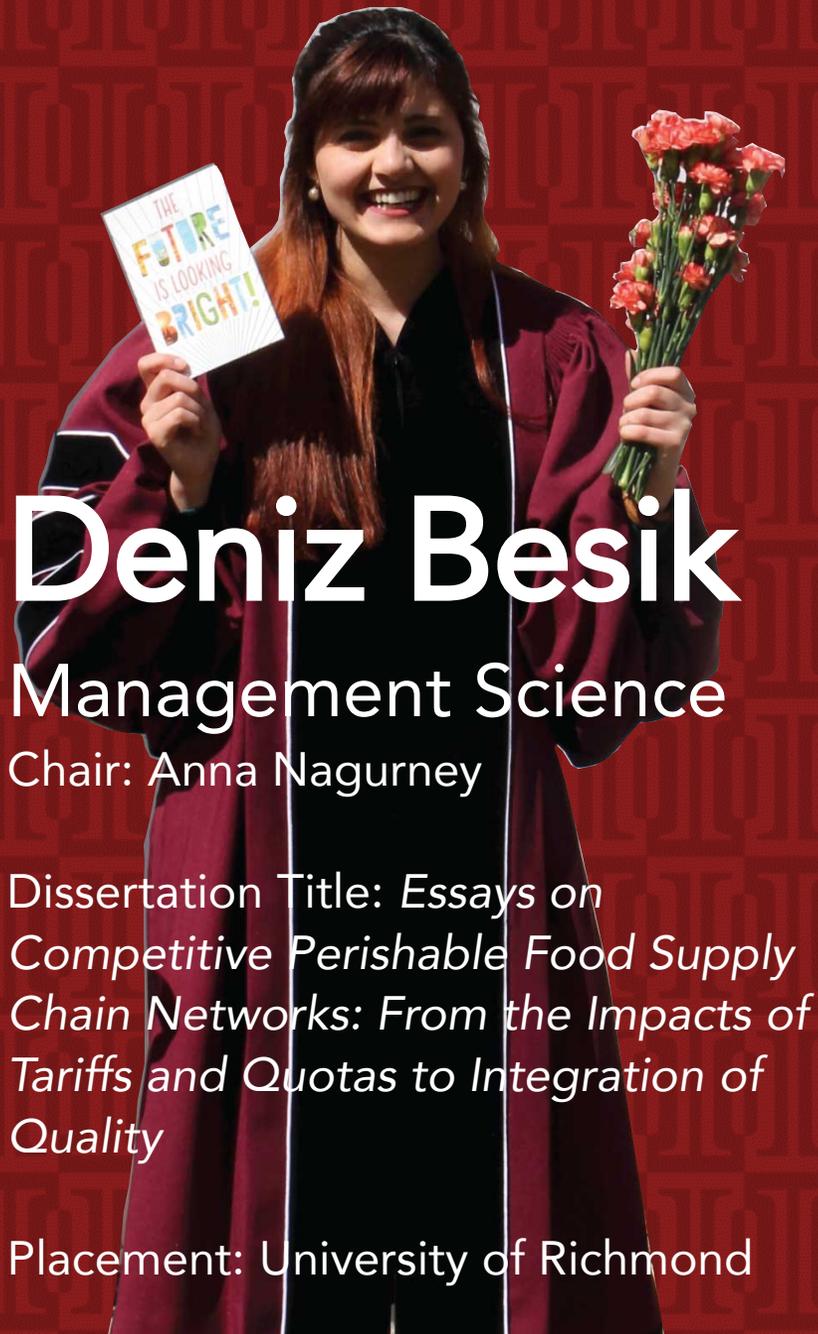
**Associate Dean of Research
Carney Family Endowed Professor
Graduate Program Director**

Message from the Director:

Congratulations to our 2020 graduates. This year we will be celebrating the accomplishments of nine of our PhD students.

Each page of this brochure will highlight a PhD student. Through the comments from the faculty members, we will get a glimpse into this special relationship between advisor and student. Indeed, dissertation advisors and PhD students have a special bond that will last throughout the graduate's career. Each student has been gifted a robe from the Isenberg PhD Program. This robe will be something the graduate can wear over the years at their next academic job, when academic regalia is required. We hope our graduates will wear it in pride of their accomplishments and remembrance of their time at Isenberg.





Deniz Besik

Management Science

Chair: Anna Nagurney

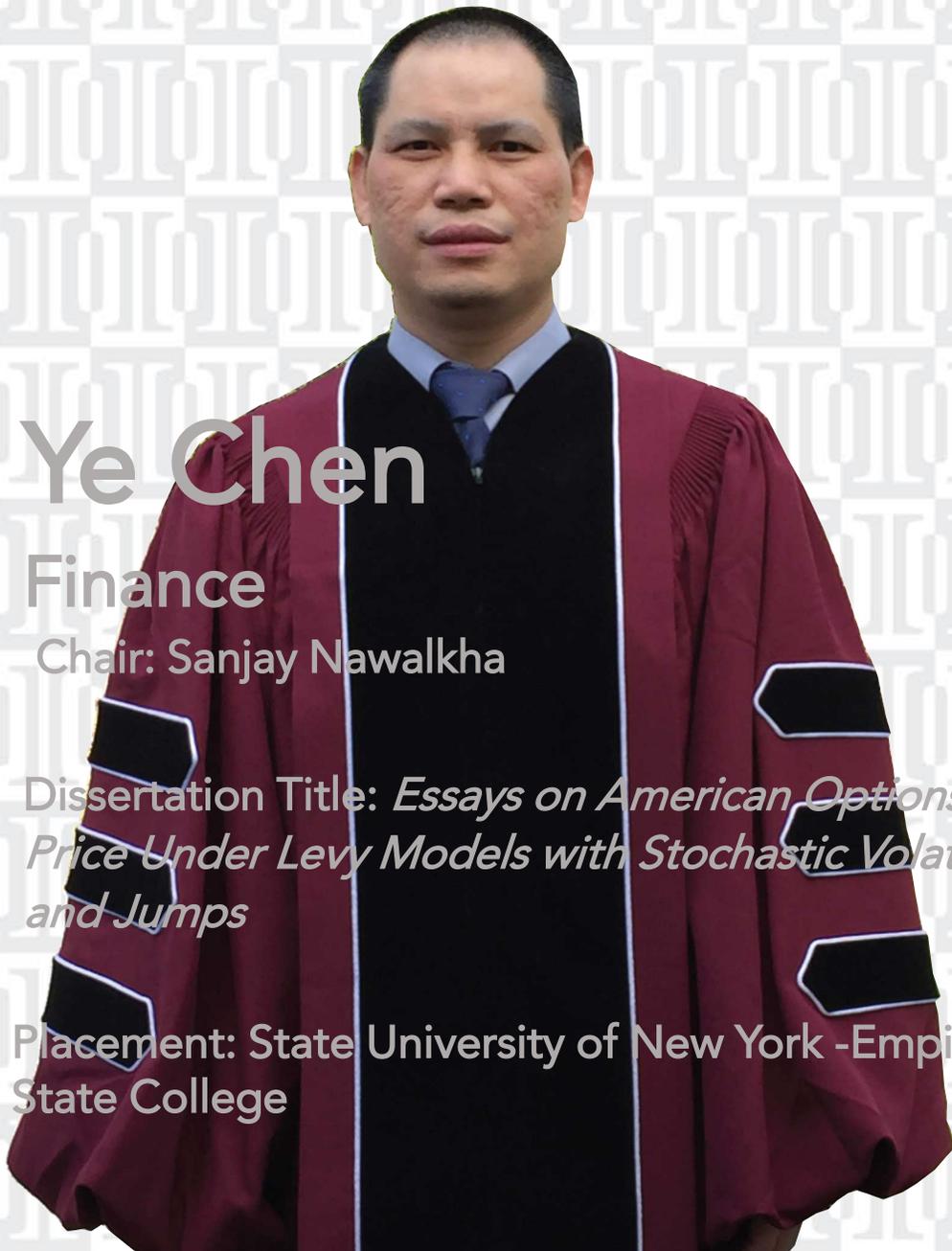
Dissertation Title: *Essays on Competitive Perishable Food Supply Chain Networks: From the Impacts of Tariffs and Quotas to Integration of Quality*

Placement: University of Richmond

Message from the Chair:

“Deniz Besik entered our PhD program with an enthusiasm and positive energy that delighted everyone around her. She was born in Turkey and had worked in Germany and came to Isenberg with a global perspective and love of community. She is a true academic and, already as a PhD student, excelled in all areas of research, teaching, and service. Her dissertation advanced our knowledge on food quality and perishability from local food supply chains, such as farmers' markets, to global ones. Intrigued by trade wars, which dominated the news for many months, she rigorously formulated and analyzed the impacts of tariffs and quotas and who wins and who loses. Her intellectual curiosity had her delving deeply and her case studies from the dairy industry (including cheese from France) to avocados from Mexico and local peaches and apples will be classics. She published an incredible number of 6 journal articles as a PhD student, and one of these (on farmer's markets) continues to be among the mostly highly cited in the journal for the past several years. Deniz, so deservedly, was recognized with the 2019 Isenberg Outstanding Doctoral Student Researcher Award and induction into the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society in 2020. And her love of teaching and support of her students, having taught the Introduction to Business Analytics course, both in face to face and online formats, for multiple semesters, are apparent. Deniz made learning what may be a challenging subject fun and rewarding. Deniz also is a leader, in her very diligent and elegant way. She served as the President of the UMass Amherst INFORMS Student Chapter and helped to host numerous speakers as well as events. She built bridges with others across campus and made lasting friendships. At her PhD defense on March 6, there were over 50 in attendance, including an Isenberg PhD alumna who traveled from NYC for the occasion. I was honored to be the chair of Deniz's PhD committee and we bonded over our love of good food and travel to conferences as well as the importance of great colleagues, research, and our dedication to the academic enterprise.

The Robins School of Business at the University of Richmond in Virginia is lucky to have Dr. Deniz Besik joining their faculty in the Fall.”



Ye Chen

Finance

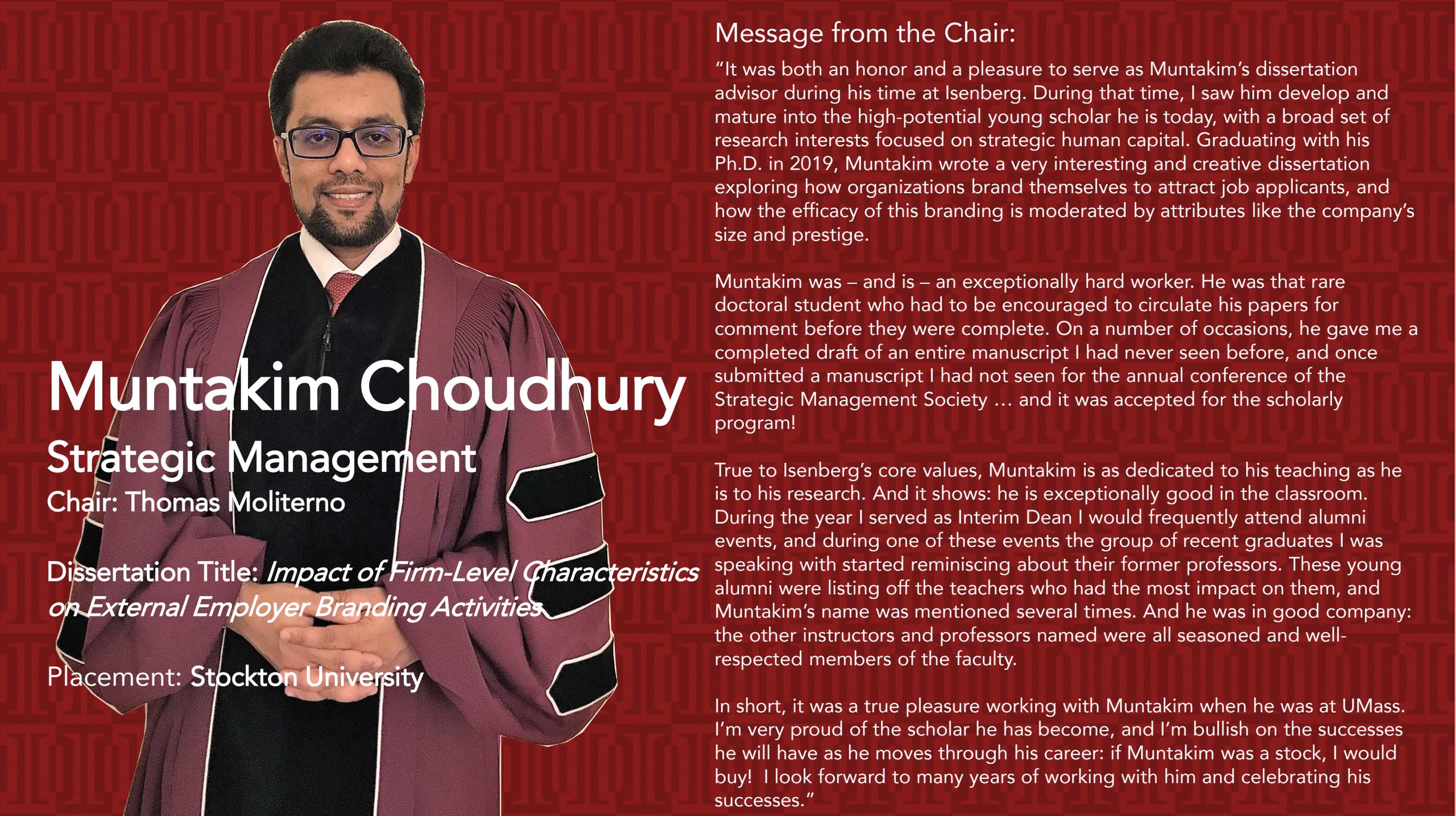
Chair: Sanjay Nawalkha

Dissertation Title: *Essays on American Options Price Under Levy Models with Stochastic Volatility and Jumps*

Placement: State University of New York - Empire State College

Message from the Chair:

"Some interesting facts about Ye Chen. With his finance PhD degree, Ye Chen now has two doctorates, one in math and the other in finance. His dissertation is the most "mathematical" dissertation written by a PhD student in the finance department over the past 20 years. Ye is a very caring teacher spending hours and hours of his time with students. He integrates real time financial news and data in his courses to give students hands-on experience, such as Refinitiv Eikon and Stock Trading Challenge. One of my fond memories about him is from many years ago when he helped a very dear friend of mine prepare for his GMAT exam for four months. That friend who was really hoping to get admission in the Isenberg MBA program also got admission at the U. of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Overall, I remember Ye as a very caring individual, a very good teacher, a great stock investor (multiplied his stock portfolio a few times over in a span of 3 years), a doting father of two lovely daughters, and a great human being. My heartfelt congratulations to Ye who now works as an assistant professor of finance at SUNY Empire."



Muntakim Choudhury

Strategic Management

Chair: Thomas Moliterno

Dissertation Title: *Impact of Firm-Level Characteristics on External Employer Branding Activities*

Placement: Stockton University

Message from the Chair:

"It was both an honor and a pleasure to serve as Muntakim's dissertation advisor during his time at Isenberg. During that time, I saw him develop and mature into the high-potential young scholar he is today, with a broad set of research interests focused on strategic human capital. Graduating with his Ph.D. in 2019, Muntakim wrote a very interesting and creative dissertation exploring how organizations brand themselves to attract job applicants, and how the efficacy of this branding is moderated by attributes like the company's size and prestige.

Muntakim was – and is – an exceptionally hard worker. He was that rare doctoral student who had to be encouraged to circulate his papers for comment before they were complete. On a number of occasions, he gave me a completed draft of an entire manuscript I had never seen before, and once submitted a manuscript I had not seen for the annual conference of the Strategic Management Society ... and it was accepted for the scholarly program!

True to Isenberg's core values, Muntakim is as dedicated to his teaching as he is to his research. And it shows: he is exceptionally good in the classroom. During the year I served as Interim Dean I would frequently attend alumni events, and during one of these events the group of recent graduates I was speaking with started reminiscing about their former professors. These young alumni were listing off the teachers who had the most impact on them, and Muntakim's name was mentioned several times. And he was in good company: the other instructors and professors named were all seasoned and well-respected members of the faculty.

In short, it was a true pleasure working with Muntakim when he was at UMass. I'm very proud of the scholar he has become, and I'm bullish on the successes he will have as he moves through his career: if Muntakim was a stock, I would buy! I look forward to many years of working with him and celebrating his successes."



Asli Ayse Eksi Linderkamp

Finance

Co-Chairs: Nikunj Kapadia & Nikolaos Artavanis

Dissertation Title: *Essays on Investor Preferences Revealed by Mutual Fund Flows*

Placement: Salisbury University

Message from the Co-Chairs:

“Asli joined the doctoral program in 2015 after previously working as a Quantitative Analyst at Deutsche Bank in Berlin. She came exceptionally well prepared for the program with dual degrees in Economics and Mathematics. Not surprisingly, she quickly settled into doing research in the area of investment management. In her dissertation, she showed how one can use funds flow in mutual funds to calibrate investor preferences, a topic of both theoretical and practical importance. Her research has been well received in the community of scholars with two of her papers being invited for presentation in numerous conferences and workshops across the world. Having successfully defended her dissertation in 2020, she will be joining Salisbury University as Assistant Professor in the Perdue School of Business.”



Zheyuan Florence Hu

Finance

Chair: Bing Liang

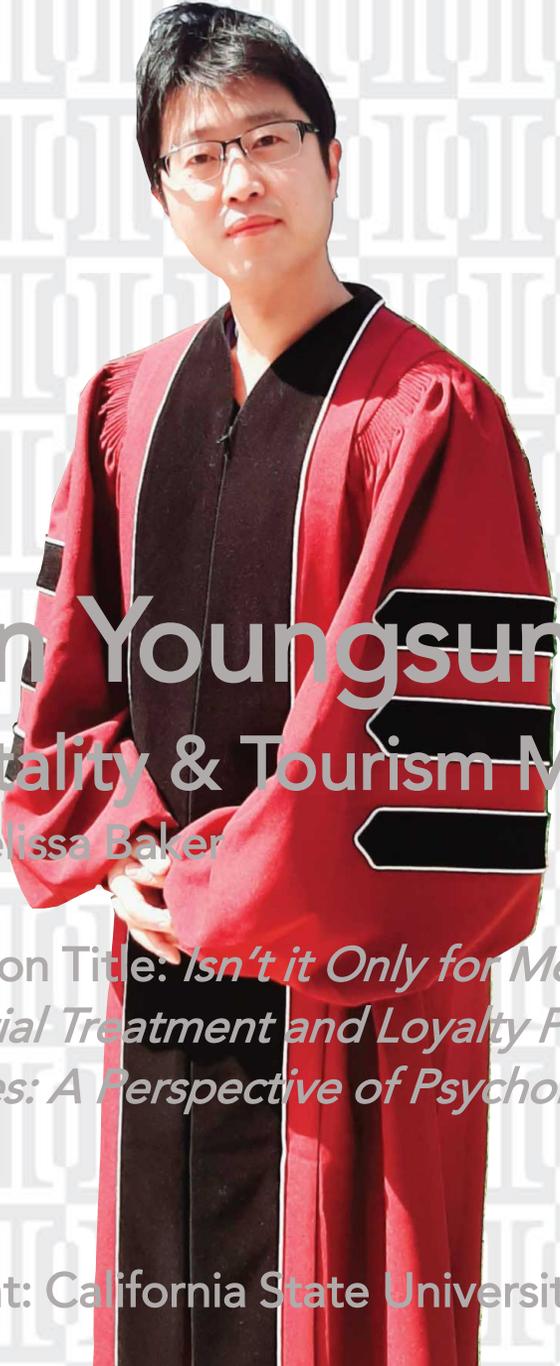
Dissertation Title: *Three Essays on Hedge Funds Governance, Operational Risk and Exchange Traded Funds Investment Activities*

Placement: PwC

Message from the Chair:

“Dear Zheyuan, congratulations on completing your doctoral degree! I have really enjoyed working with you and I am proud of your growth in the past five years.

Let’s keep that Chi-score high and wishing you the best in your career aspirations and life journey.”



Sean Youngsun Kim

Hospitality & Tourism Management

Chair: Melissa Baker

Dissertation Title: *Isn't it Only for Me? Unearned Preferential Treatment and Loyalty Program Customer Responses: A Perspective of Psychological Contract Violation*

Placement: California State University - San Bernardino

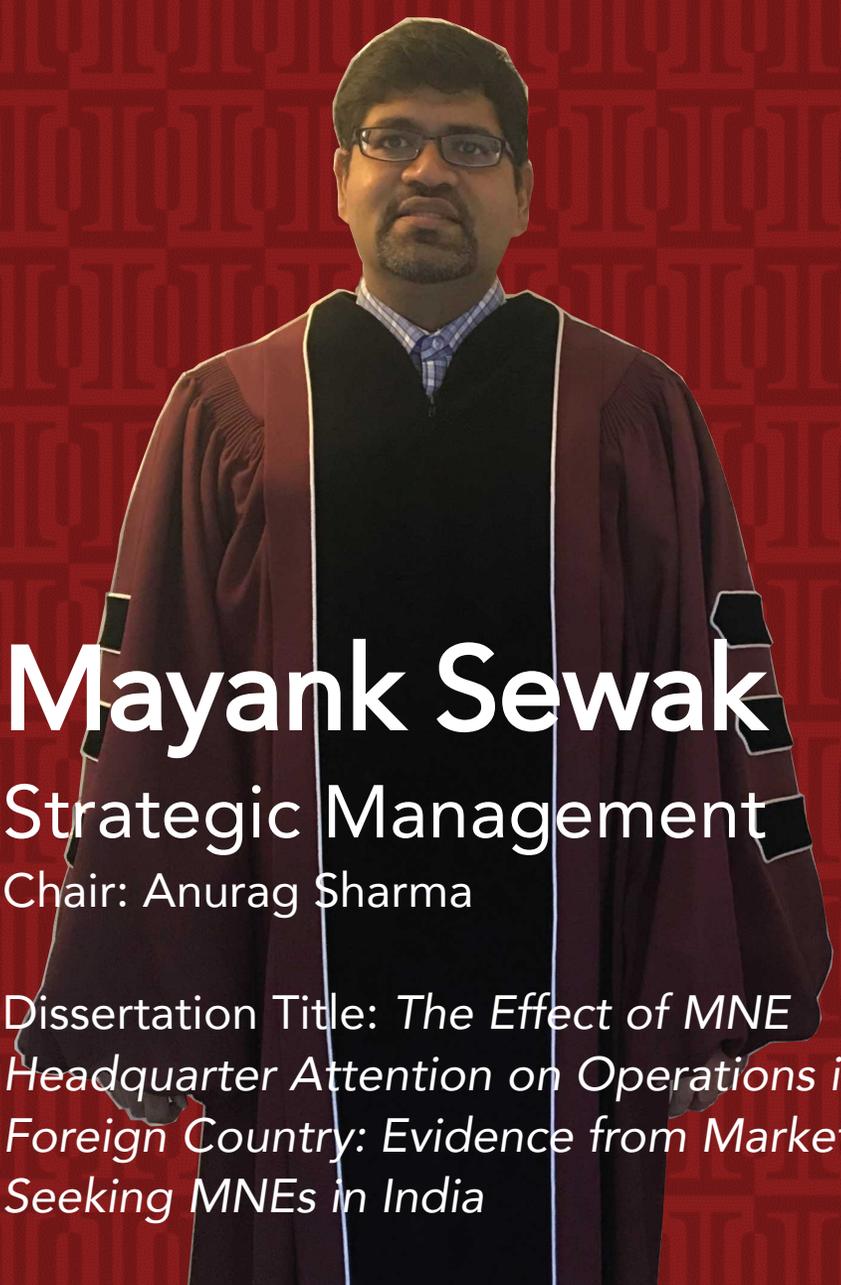
Message from the Chair:

"As a first semester Ph.D. student, Sean served as a teaching assistant for one of our required courses. During the final class, students reflect on the overall experience, synthesizing what they learned, and how they will use their knowledge to improve service experience management. Sean was the last to speak. He spoke passionately to the students about how meaningful their future work is, how important they are to the industry, and how proud he was of the work they accomplished as future hospitality leaders. The students erupted into applause.

That rare occurrence of such vociferous approval speaks to Sean's outstanding commitment to teaching and research excellence. In teaching his own class, students have commented, "Sean acted not only as a teacher, but as a mentor and supporter" and "Sean is very passionate about what he teaches and comes up with innovative and creative ways to teach the course topics".

For research, Sean has two A level and one A- level publication as well as several other projects in process. His research focuses on services marketing and frontline employee and consumer social influences and interactions. Sean served as the first Isenberg Ph.D. student to defend their dissertation remotely (on Zoom). He will be joining California State University, San Bernardino as an Assistant Professor in Hospitality Management in the Department of Marketing.

Just as the students did in his first class, we now virtually and enthusiastically applaud Sean for all of his outstanding contributions to the Hospitality and Tourism Management field. We look forward to applauding his future teaching, research, and leadership contributions throughout his career, especially in person. Congratulations from the entire Isenberg family."

A man with glasses and a goatee, wearing a dark blue graduation gown with a white stole, stands against a red background with a repeating geometric pattern. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Mayank Sewak

Strategic Management

Chair: Anurag Sharma

Dissertation Title: *The Effect of MNE
Headquarter Attention on Operations in a
Foreign Country: Evidence from Market
Seeking MNEs in India*

Message from the Chair:

“Mayank’s accomplishments to date flow naturally from excellent work ethic, sharp focus, grit and persistence through challenges. He has developed a strong research program at the intersection of strategy and international business, with specific focus on foreign subsidiaries of multinational enterprises (MNEs). Both his research focus and expanding proprietary datasets have so far resulted in one publication in the *Journal of International Management*, a revise and resubmit at *Research Policy*, several papers in the works, and more than a dozen presentations in top conferences. Mayank is also an engaged teacher, well suited, with experience, to the current environment of online teaching. Having directly worked with Mayank since he joined our program, I can say that he is also a wonderful human being. Not only is he willing to drive the agenda, he is also easy to work with and respectful toward those around him. He has a bright future ahead of him!”



Kyle Stubbs

Accounting

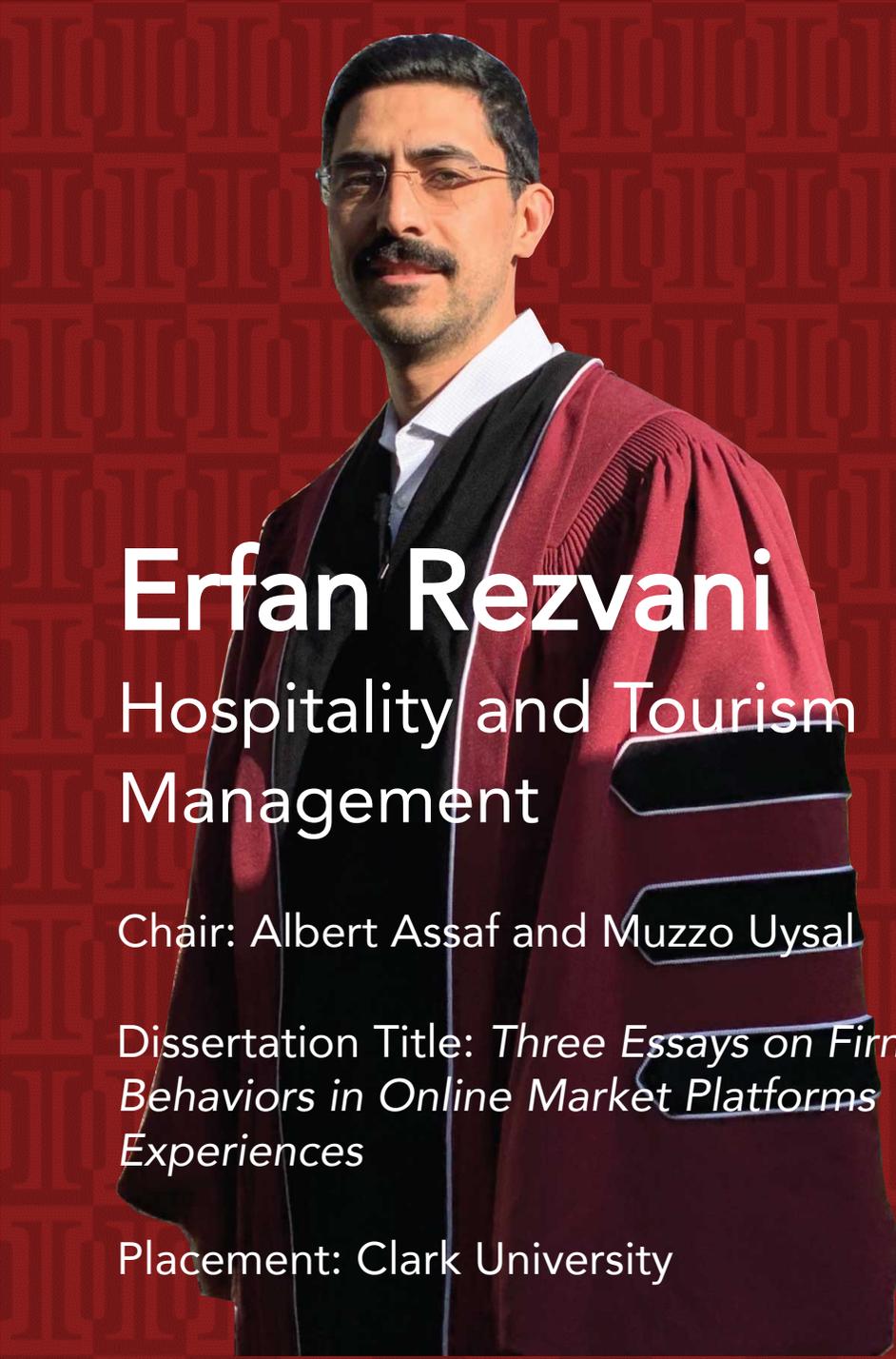
Co-Chairs: M. David Piercey &
Jeremiah W. Bentley

Dissertation Title: *Narratives in Subjective
Performance Evaluations: Do Ratings
Change the Narrative?*

Placement: Utah Valley University

Message from the Co-Chairs:

"Kyle has been an exemplar PhD student. From day one he was an outstanding research assistant and instructor, providing valuable help with course development, reviews, and research. Over the last five years he's taken that same enthusiasm, natural curiosity, and keen eye for detail and turned into an exceptional researcher. Kyle has several working papers, including four that have been presented at workshops and conferences and one that has a "Revise and Resubmit" status at a premier journal. Kyle's research focuses primarily on managerial reporting. His dissertation looks at how quantifying performance changes people's biases in their written feedback. His other papers examine how managers structure their narrative reports in press releases, how measure aggregation affects evaluation biases, and how different reward types affect employee effort and supervisor expectations. It's also worth noting some of Kyle's non-academic endeavors. Kyle is an active member of his church where he regularly volunteers his time. He is married and is the father of two adorable children. In his free time Kyle plays basketball (he has an impressive three-point shot and ability to steal), plays the guitar, and sings. Kyle earned his BS and MAcc degrees from Brigham Young University. He will return to Utah in Fall 2020 where he will be an assistant professor (tenure-track) at Utah Valley University."



Erfan Rezvani

Hospitality and Tourism Management

Chair: Albert Assaf and Muzzo Uysal

Dissertation Title: *Three Essays on Firm Behaviors in Online Market Platforms Experiences*

Placement: Clark University

Message from the Co-Chairs:

"It was a great honor for both of us to serve as co-supervisors for Erfan Rezvani., Erfan was extremely personable, and an exceptional team player. He was always supporting other students and has excellent social skills. Erfan was great in the classroom and demonstrated a broad range of teaching experience. For research, Erfan managed to be the lead author on a recent paper published in the International Journal of Hospitality Management (IJHM), an A journal in the field, and a very highly regarded outlet for cutting edge research. Being co-authors on the paper, we were really impressed with Erfan's command of quantitative methods and his skills in writing statistical programs. His paper falls under the "Big Data" category and required exceptional programming and coding skills. We are honored to say that Erfan was only one of the very few students in the program who had a paper published in IJHM. It is really impressive that Erfan has gotten to such a good start before graduation.

Erfan has also co-authored a paper on pricing dynamics with a faculty member from resource economics. The paper was published in a top tier economic journal and focused on spatial price competition in the Manhattan hotel market. It is important to state that his papers are conceptually linked to investigate types of firm behavior in relation to customer reviews, indicating a focused and integrated research agenda that generates new knowledge at the intersection of resource uses and consumption behavior. We believe that such productivity is really exceptional and deserve to be recognized.

Currently, a Faculty at Clark University, Erfan will be a valuable member for any research institution, at both an intellectual and a personal level. He has an extremely active and creative mind, which manifests itself in a constant flow of research ideas."