

## Business graduate took pandemic as ‘opportunity to grow’ in her field

May 19, 2021 5:00 PM Mary Ann Travis  
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Laurel Anne Kessler, graduating with a degree from the A. B. Freeman School of Business, and a team of three other business students won first place in the inaugural Business School Case Competition. Kessler earned the prize for best speaker. (Photo by Rusty Costanza)

Laurel Anne Kessler takes opportunities where she finds them. She is graduating from the A. B. Freeman School of Business with a Bachelor of Science in Management with a minor in social innovation and social entrepreneurship.

When she came to Tulane four years ago from her hometown of Irvine, California, she didn't know she'd be a business major. She started out in liberal arts but began working on a minor in management and found the business classes "super interesting. I really loved them."

By choosing business as her major along with pursuing coursework in social innovation/entrepreneurship, Kessler said that she has "incorporated business ideas and practices to create something unique."

Kessler and a team of three other business students won first place in the inaugural Business School Case Competition sponsored by the student government. Their presentation about a fictional beverage company looking to expand its product line was deemed "most creative." Kessler garnered the prize for best speaker.

Learning throughout the pandemic has been "an opportunity to grow," she said. In her business classes, "we related our learning in the classroom to the pandemic and how it affects the world of business. I think it kind of set me up for future success, knowing how to deal with something as large and as global as a pandemic."

The innovative use of technology adapted by necessity in remote classes by her professors and fellow students was interesting. "It was eye-opening to experience the virtual learning option put in place," said Kessler. "I see the virtual setting as something that can be used and celebrated more through time."

Her goal now is to look for work in the nonprofit realm, a sector of the economy that before she came to Tulane, "I never knew I was interested in."

But before she settles into a job, she's taking the next few months to finish writing a novel that she started years ago.

She's kept up her literary interests while studying at Tulane, starting the Potter Alliance Club for students who love the Harry Potter books. "We read the books and talked about them. It was social and fun," Kessler said. Among her other activities were involvement with Housing and Residence Life and other clubs.

“I’ve loved my experience at Tulane,” said Kessler. “I am so glad that I was able to come here. It was a great opportunity and blessing for me. I’m looking forward to hopefully giving back to this community in the future. I love this city. And I am thankful for everyone who’s been part of my experience in college.”