

Lessons from the 'Corner Office'

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Adam Bryant gives advice on what company executives are looking for to Tulane students at a Career Wave Spotlight Series event in Goldring/Woldenberg Hall II on the uptown campus Wednesday (Sept. 16). Bryant writes the column “Corner Office” for *The New York Times*. (Photo by Ryan Rivet)

If a weakness is just a strength taken to the extreme, what is yours? What comes so naturally to you that it is as easy as breathing? If there were no humans on the planet, only animals, what kind of animal would you be and why?

Each week brings a new question for Adam Bryant as he interviews chief executives

about leadership, hiring practices and much more for *The New York Times* column "Corner Office."

Bryant has had many roles at *The Times*, from business reporter to senior editor for features. He is a Tulane parent and a former writer for *Newsweek* magazine, where he served as lead editor for a series on the dangers of distracted driving that won a Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting.

He turned his columns into a book, *The Corner Office* (Henry Holt, 2011).

"Over the course of 400 interviews, I've gathered some questions that certainly surprised me," Bryant said, addressing an avid audience at the Tulane [Career Wave](#) Spotlight Series, held in Goldring/Woldenberg Hall II on the Tulane University uptown campus on Wednesday (Sept. 16).

Executives, he explained, have carefully crafted interview questions in search of five qualities. "The first is what I call passionate curiosity," Bryant said, noting that other desirable traits include battle-hardened confidence, team smarts, the ability to simplify complex information and a bias toward action.

"If I wrote this book today, I would add a sixth one," he said. "It's one that people talk about a lot; it's self-awareness." This trait, Bryant argued, is pivotal to success in business and in life.

Satya Nadella, currently CEO of Microsoft Corp., told Bryant, "I fundamentally believe that if you're not self-aware, you're not learning. And if you're not learning, you're not going to do useful things in the future."

Bryant agreed with Nadella: Those who possess the capacity for self-awareness hold the key to unlocking both the corporate ladder and fulfillment beyond the corner office.

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