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MEET *Melissa Brayman*

CURRENT MAJOR: Certificate in Accounting

By: Janine G. Sorbello

When you meet Melissa Brayman, you are instantly drawn in with her amazing, deep brown eyes and stunning beauty. Born in Costa Rica, she grew up in Newark, Delaware.

From Costa Rica to the U.S., then back to Costa Rica

As a young child, Brayman moved to the U.S. after her mother had been recruited by the University of Delaware as a French professor. But they still vacationed every summer in their native country.

As you would expect, Brayman is bilingual and speaks English and Spanish. Since her mother worked at UD, it's no surprise that she attended and earned her degree – a Bachelor of Science degree in Entomology with a concentration in Wildlife Conservation. She said, "At the time, UD only offered Wildlife Conservation as a concentration, so I chose Entomology as a major which goes back to my interest in Costa Rica and studying wildlife. I love anything that involves being in nature."

Living the corporate life

Following college graduation, Brayman became an insurance agent and spent several years in insurance, banking and financial services.

Following several years in life insurance operations with HSBC, she transferred to HSBC LATAM in 2011 when they announced expansion into the Latin American and Asian markets.

"They put more resources into Latin America, and that was my opportunity to transfer. I became a senior branch manager for HSBC Latin America."

My daughter was entering kindergarten, and we had transitioned to Costa Rica thinking it would be a three-to-five-year

period working for HSBC, Costa Rica.

Unfortunately, HSBC sold to a Colombian bank a year later. “I lost my job and tried to figure out what to do,” Brayman said. “I opened a beach restaurant with seafood and American fare. I did a little bit of everything during those four years that I lived in Costa Rica,” she added.

Interestingly, what Brayman thought would be paradise living in her native country soon came with the realization that she had become very Americanized.

Although she had been visiting Costa Rica her entire life, she realized that working and living there were quite different from simply visiting. It was a difficult transition not to mention the difference in salary and cost of living.

The final return to the U.S.

“Costa Rica kind of chewed me up and spit me back out again,” said Brayman. So she decided to come back to the United States. “I came back with nothing actually – just my clothes and my laptop, and I started over.” Initially, she began working part time at UD then transitioned back to the insurance field.

By 2020, the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce had an open role for an office administrator. This became the opportunity that landed Brayman where she is today. But, just to add some chaos to keep life interesting, Brayman’s first day at the DSCC was March 18, 2020 – the same week as the COVID shutdown.

“One of my strengths is that I’m a fast and curious learner,” said Brayman. “I need to know why something is a certain way. I have to dig a little deeper.”

That experience has built confidence and direction for Brayman. “Being in my current role has made me see what I want to build as a career,” she said. “I want to continue in a financial or operational role, either within the organization or elsewhere. Perhaps move up to a controller role.”

Enrolling at Goldey-Beacom

This determination prompted her to pursue a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Accounting, but why Goldey-Beacom?

Proximity was a factor in Brayman’s decision to enroll in finance and accounting classes. “I’m a busy single Mom who runs back and forth to school as well as my own work schedule and for my daughter’s extracurricular schedule,” she said. “I have a limited amount of time, so being close to the College was definitely a factor in my decision.”

Brayman’s first course introduced her to Dr. Deborah Leitsch for Principles of Accounting. “I’ve enjoyed her classes very much, and the fact that the classes are fast paced, I don’t get bored,” says Brayman. “Dr. Leitsch keeps that pace moving. I make sure that I read the material thoroughly so I can keep up. I’m very happy.”

Brayman was pleasantly surprised by

the feel of a small campus. “I felt like during my undergrad experience at a large university, I didn’t really get to know anyone,” she said. “I didn’t really form any bonds, but I can see how that opportunity would exist at Goldey-Beacom because it’s a small campus.”

In fact, a small campus makes enrollment super-fast and easy. “It’s a no brainer,” she said instantly. “I was able to make a decision to do this, get enrolled and start classes within a quick turnaround time. And it’s affordable. The classes are eight-week modules. I love it because you can knock out a few courses in a short amount of time.”

An alumna in the family

Brayman shared that she is not the first Goldey-Beacom graduate in her family. Her sister, Michelle Brayman, graduated in 2021 with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

Pictured below: Sisters Michelle Brayman ‘21 and Melissa Brayman

