



Thunderbird Alumni and Friends Newsletter

Thunderbird News



Thunderbird ranked No. 1 by QS International Trade Rankings

In the first-ever rankings of their kind, Thunderbird School of Global Management at Arizona State University was recently named **No. 1 in the world in international trade** by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), the premier global higher education analyst organization.

Thunderbird ranked ahead of 199 other universities and professional schools including the most prestigious educational institutions around the world such as Cambridge, Harvard, MIT, Stanford, National University of Singapore, INSEAD, and London Business School.

“For more than 75 years since our founding in 1946, Thunderbird has advanced a powerful belief that ‘borders frequented by trade seldom need soldiers,’” said Dr. Sanjeev Khagram, Director General and Dean of Thunderbird. “With this No. 1 ranking, we honor this deep tradition and re-establish our global leadership of international trade education for the next 75 years and beyond.”

[Read more](#)



Celebrating Thunderbird's fall 2022 graduates

On Tuesday, December 13, Thunderbird proudly celebrated its fall 2022 graduates, during its convocation ceremony at Phoenix Convention Center in downtown Phoenix, just blocks from Thunderbird's global headquarters building.

Congratulations graduates, and welcome to the alumni family! View photos of the [graduate awards](#) event, [parade of flags](#), and the [convocation ceremony](#). The full convocation ceremony video can be viewed via the link below.

[Watch video](#)



Silicon Valley innovator Satjiv Chahil delivers keynote at fall 2022 convocation

Satjiv Chahil, a 1976 graduate of Thunderbird and Silicon Valley thought leader, innovator and digital marketing pioneer, served as the fall 2022 [convocation speaker](#).

"Fortune Magazine said it best — 'Fewer executives have had greater influence shaping marketing in Silicon Valley than Satjiv' — and I have to agree," Dean Khagram said. "He embodies the global mindset and entrepreneurial spirit of Thunderbird, and his message will truly inspire our students as they navigate this era of digital transformation and constant disruption to advance equitable and sustainable prosperity and peace worldwide."

Chahil specializes in the digital and technological transformation of global businesses, enabling startups to scale and aligning business goals with social purpose. In a multifaceted career, Chahil helped establish Apple Inc. as the leader in multimedia PCs and digital media and built iconic brands at Sony and Hewlett-Packard. Chahil currently serves as chairman of the Chahil Foundation.

"The magic of Thunderbird is the mindset of Thunderbird, of how we view the world and how we contribute to it to make it better for all," Chahil said. "It's the imagination, ecosystem and passion for new areas of making a difference that we can all participate in. I look forward to seeing the next generation of T-birds innovating across industries and making our world a better place for all."

He is also a Thunderbird New Founder, a group of alumni who provided key, foundational gifts to make the dream of the new Thunderbird Global Headquarters a reality. View his speech [here](#).



[Read more](#)



Thunderbird celebrates new partnership with Kenya to accelerate 100 Million Learners Global Initiative

Last month, Thunderbird at ASU, in partnership with the Konza Technopolis Development Authority (KoTDA), hosted "Innovating, Accelerating and Scaling Silicon Savannah," a convening of high-level representatives from the government of Kenya and ASU to define areas of mutual cooperation.

President William Ruto of Kenya, ASU President Michael Crow, and Thunderbird Director General and Dean Sanjeev Khagram gathered to announce a new partnership and future collaborations at the ASU Barrett and O'Connor Washington Center in Washington, D.C.

With the support and leadership of Ruto, Thunderbird will continue to expand the Francis and Dionne Najafi 100 Million Learners Global Initiative by adding courses in additional African languages, thereby offering an online global, world-class education to a larger audience across the globe.

The program also included remarks from Samba Bathily, founder of Africa Development Solutions, who recently announced a commitment to support 25 million learners in Africa through the 100 Million Learners Global Initiative.

[Read more](#)



Thunderbird Global Headquarters recognized for excellence in accessibility

The F. Francis and Dionne Najafi Thunderbird Global Headquarters building was recently selected as this year's recipient of the Excellence in Architecture Award at the city of Phoenix's [Disability Awards and Recognition Event](#).

Hosted by the Phoenix Mayor's Commission on Disability Issues (MCDI), the event honored exceptional individuals, organizations and businesses for their dedication and service to the disability community and for dedicating their lives to enhancing Phoenix's quality of life for all citizens and communities.

"Thank you to the MCDI, the city of Phoenix and Mayor Gallego for recognizing Thunderbird at this special event. We wanted to give every student, regardless of abilities, the resources to change the world, so we built the most technologically advanced educational headquarters on the planet, right here in downtown Phoenix," said Dean Khagram.

[Read more](#)



'A Pub for the People.' Students and Professors Flock to the Hidden Thunderbird Pub

Excerpt from Phoenix New Times

There's no signage in front of the building or in the lobby, no recommendation to take the elevator to the fifth floor or to turn left once the doors open, and follow the sounds of laughter, music, and lively conversation.

But for those in the know, this path culminates in a contemporary space flaunting vibrant lighting, high tops and long dining tables, shuffleboard, a number of flat-screens showing sports, a horseshoe-shaped bar in the center, and a rooftop lounge that showcases skyline and sunset views.

One of the buzziest weeknight spots in downtown Phoenix is flying under the radar.

The Pub at Thunderbird, the Thunderbird School of Global Management at Arizona State University's full-service bar and restaurant, has become a social hub for students and faculty. It's also open to the public, a fact that's little known beyond campus boundaries.

[Read more](#)

Lifelong Learning



Space Leadership, Business and Policy Executive Certificate

Space Leadership, Business, and Policy Executive Certificate

April 13–15 (Colorado Springs, CO) or April 24–28 (Washington, D.C.)

Space is booming. Learn to lead in the new space economy. An increasing number of commercial startups and emerging entrepreneurs are building their business models around products or services for space markets. From NASA's budget expanding for the first time in decades to the establishment of the United States Space Force, the space sector is boldly making new commitments to the final frontier. This certificate features powerful guest speakers, valuable learning materials and more.

Taught by globally recognized space leaders and distinguished academic faculty, participants will learn from experts and practitioners how to discover growth opportunities in the space industry.

Cost: Colorado Springs, CO \$3,450; Washington, D.C. \$6,500

Save 50% with code: F6TD8

[Learn more](#)



100 Million Learners Global Initiative courses now available in 10 languages

The Francis and Dionne Najafi 100 Million Learners Global Initiative offers online, global education in entrepreneurship and innovation from a world-class accredited institution in different languages across the globe, at absolutely no cost to the learners thanks to an underlying philanthropic gift. We are excited to announce that several courses are now available in additional languages.

In addition to English, languages include: Arabic, Bahasa, Farsi, French, Hindi, Portuguese, Spanish, Swahili, and Turkish.

Learners who take any of the courses can choose to pursue other lifelong learning opportunities at ASU/Thunderbird or use their digital credentials to pursue new professional opportunities. Learn more at the link below and sign up at no cost today!

[Learn more](#)

Donor Spotlight

Karen J. Simon '83 Student Development Center



Thunderbird alumna Karen Simon pays it forward; inspiring others

What led you to give back to Thunderbird?

"I loved my time at Thunderbird! I wanted an international career which is why I was attracted to Thunderbird for my graduate education. Not only was I exposed to many different nationalities and experiences, but I was recruited by several global banks which allowed me to follow my international aspirations. I do not feel I would have received the same exposure at other graduate programs. I want to pay it forward for other women to have similar opportunities in the international arena."

Why do you feel it is important, as an alumna, to philanthropically support Thunderbird?

"Let's be honest....Thunderbird has gone through some hard times financially and come through with a renewed passion and focus. I feel that as an alumna who has been fortunate to benefit from a Thunderbird degree that it is important to support the institution going forward and ensure its continued advancement."

What excites you the most about the future and the next generation of global leaders?

"Global connectivity and cultural understanding is more important than ever and technological innovations will continue to blur international boundaries such that strong global leaders are needed more than ever. I am excited about the vision of our next generation—the vision to make our world better for everyone regardless of race, gender or economic background. I am optimistic that Thunderbird will help shape those leaders!"



Meet Orlando Cazarez '21

With a unique take on eco-friendly artwork, Thunderbird alum Orlando Cazarez's reclaimed creations add charm and local flair to any space.

"License plates are so unique, as far as a medium. The US fortunately has 50 states to choose from and over time the designs evolve and add on to that the variety of vanity plates such as sports teams, military, special interest and I basically end up with a never ending variety of material," said Orlando Cazarez. "I primarily love the fact that the materials I use would have ended up in the landfill if it wasn't for me finding them in a yard sale, swap meet or recycling yard."

The piece of artwork that has brought Cazarez the most joy was the 5-foot Thunderbird he created using the international license plate collection inside The Pub at Thunderbird's new global headquarters in downtown Phoenix.

"It's on display with a plaque that recognizes me as an artist and an alumnus of the school. I felt a great sense of pride and recognition when I first saw it on display," recalled Cazarez.

Cazarez is a 2021 graduate of Thunderbird's Master of Applied Leadership and Management degree program.

[Read more](#)

T-birds gather across the globe

Throughout 2022, T-birds gathered together at chapter events around the world. Our deepest thank you to all our chapter leaders for everything they do to help

our chapters flourish, and all the T-birds who participated in chapter events in 2022. Ready for an incredible new year? Be sure to connect with your chapter and check out upcoming events in [T-bird Connect](#).

Please view the special video through the link below.

[Watch Video](#)



Meet Natalie Robyn

Featured excerpt from FIA.com

Thunderbird alumna Natalie Robyn '04, recently joined the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) as their first female CEO and is a leading international executive with over 15 years of experience in both the automotive and financial sectors. FIA is the governing body administering the rules and regulations for motor sport worldwide.

Prior to joining the FIA, Robyn held a variety of senior management positions at Volvo, Nissan and DaimlerChrysler. She is a 2004 graduate of Thunderbird's Master of International Management degree program.

[Read more](#)



Grad steps out of comfort zone to gain life experience

Sakhi Solanki, '22 MGM

Sakhi Solanki was born and raised in Ahmedabad, India. After researching different master's programs, she chose to attend Thunderbird because she felt it fit perfectly with her professional goals.

"Professionally, I was fascinated by the emphasis given on analytics, big data and artificial intelligence technologies, as they are the need of the hour," Solanki said. "I expected to learn a lot when I started my master's program, but I didn't anticipate how much extra life experience I would gain."

[Read more](#)



Thunderbird grad embraces family history to excel in classroom, beyond

Jesse Avalos, '22 MALM

Raised in the Garfield Historic District of downtown Phoenix, Jesse Avalos was no stranger to Thunderbird when he enrolled in the Master of Applied Leadership and Management program.

In fact, he had just started working as the executive assistant to Thunderbird Director General and Dean Sanjeev Khagram.

“I had decided to attend Thunderbird to grow myself both as a professional and a leader. Through the encouragement of my co-workers and mentors, this felt like the next step for me,” the fall 2022 graduate said.

Many professionals may hesitate to take on a master’s degree while working full time in the dean’s office. Not Avalos. From day one, he embraced the global mindset of a T-bird and learned all he could — both from his colleagues and his peers in the program.

[Read more](#)



Grad honors his roots, dreams of giving back to his community

Esly Diaz, '22 MAGAM-CI

Esly Diaz and his family immigrated from Mexico to the U.S. when he was a child. The move brought to light the challenges immigrants face, including being an undocumented child, learning a new language and understanding a new culture. Now as a husband and father to two teenage boys, Diaz’s dedication and strength are what has kept him pursuing higher education.

After obtaining a bachelor’s degree in design studies from ASU, he later chose to pursue a Master of Arts in global affairs and management with a specialization in creative industries at Thunderbird’s Los Angeles campus.

With a keen interest in leadership and management fundamentals and a digital global mindset, the Thunderbird program suited Diaz well. As a member of the inaugural cohort, he completed the program in 10 short months and finished earlier this year in June.

[Read more](#)

Student News



Dr. June Lau '23

Dr. June Lau '23 from Malaysia is a SHARE fellow and second year student in the Master of Global Management degree program at the Thunderbird School of Global Management

Dr. June Lau '23 already has a successful career practicing medicine in her home country of Malaysia. She's spent the last eight years as a physician, administrator, mentor and educator, having experience working in clinical practice in the heart of an emergency department.

A SHARE fellow and second-year student in the Master of Global Management degree program, she is looking to transition from her clinical practice into the global health and medical technology landscape.

[Read more](#)



Thunderbird students hone global mindset

through Global Challenge Lab

T-birds have the opportunity to work with real clients and learn how to lead worldwide

Thunderbird's Global Challenge Lab is a capstone program that involves team-based, client-facing, project-driven consulting experiences.

"Our Global Challenge Lab connects students with partner organizations to train students with future-ready skill sets, what we now call present-ready," Thunderbird Director General and Dean Sanjeev Khagram said. "By the end of their graduate program, our students have gained the experience needed to succeed in any community across the globe."

[Read more](#)

Stay Connected

Update your contact information

Be sure to update your preferred contact information on T-bird Connect to receive the latest communications from Thunderbird and your local alumni chapter. Need assistance with activating or accessing your T-bird Connect account? Contact the Thunderbird Office of Alumni Engagement by [email](#) or phone at 602-496-7125.

[Update here](#)

Download the T-bird Connect app

Download the T-bird Connect app and access a suite of alumni resources right from your mobile device including the ability to find a fellow T-bird, access the roster of alumni chapters and affinity groups, and participate in signature programs including the Thunderbird Mentorship Program.

[Download for iOS](#)

[Download for Android](#)

Download for Android

Request your Thunderbird alumni email address

All alumni have access to a Thunderbird alumni email account. If you haven't received one or need assistance logging in, please contact the Thunderbird IT department by email below. To log into your Thunderbird alumni email account, visit mail.global.t-bird.edu.

[Request an alumni email account](#)

Estate Planning Resources: available to Thunderbird alumni at no cost

Are you ready to plan your will or trust? We would like to give you a free Estate Planning Guide. This information can help you successfully plan your estate and avoid an accidental disinheritance. Click below to request a copy today.

[Request Guide](#)



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