



Class of 2014 HDO Master of Arts Candidates Biographies

Donaldo W. Puller

Donaldo W. Puller has served for 26 years in the United States Air Force and is currently the Superintendent, 802d Force Support Squadron, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

His responsibilities include managing and coordinating the activities of 2,000 clerical and administrative employees with an operating budget of \$40 million. This budget is used to increase unit morale, health and welfare of Joint Base San Antonio's employees. These programs include the sustainment and professional development for 50,000 personnel.

Donaldo serves as a Human Resources advisor for 132 employees allocating necessary manpower needed to meet operational objectives.

Frankie Xu

Frankie Xu, B.A. Management, 2010, Nanjing University (Nanjing, China). After one year's work as a marketing assistant in Giant Interactive Group, Inc. (Shanghai, China), Frankie became a game designer of online electronic games. In 2013 he co-founded Chiying Information & Technology Co., Ltd.

Teri Kelly

Teri Kelly was born and raised in Chicago and received her undergraduate degree in Public Relations from the University of Florida. Teri is a seasoned sales professional and is currently working for Gartner, a leading global IT research and advisory firm.

She is a seeker of knowledge and new experiences and will try just about anything at least once. For leisure, Teri enjoys travel, SCUBA, cooking and live music.

Jamie Bandy

Jamie Bandy has spent the last seven years (and counting) with the McCombs School of Business, where she currently leads program operations and students services teams for three Professional MBA programs (located in Austin, Dallas/Fort Worth and Houston).

What initially attracted Jamie to the HDO program was its cross-disciplinary curriculum and the ability to immediately put into practice ideas explored in the classroom. What sealed the deal was the opportunity to learn from world-renowned faculty as well as from fellow professionals with a diverse set of backgrounds and interests.

When she is not on campus, Jamie enjoys exploring the sights and sounds of Austin with her 3-year old son, Henry.

Amy Hammons

Amy Hammons works for the Texas Historical Commission (THC) as a coordinator for the County Historical Commission Outreach Program. Amy creates preservation training tailored to counties' needs and provides consulting services to preservation partners.

Most recently, she helped facilitate public meetings to update the Statewide Preservation Plan for Texas. Amy began working for the THC in 2002, providing architectural recommendations for federal and state projects ranging from hurricane relief in coastal regions to development impacts on the Mission Trail Historic District in San Antonio.

Prior to the Commission, she worked for architecture firms contributing to institutional, commercial, and residential projects. Amy earned a Bachelor of Environmental Design degree from Texas A&M University. She volunteers with her church, Preservation Texas, the SXSW conferences/festivals, and the Austin Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

Chon Torres

Encarnacion "Chon" Torres is a Texas native. Torres is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, and he served in the Navy Special Operations community. During this time of service he moved around the country and deployed overseas multiple times.

After serving 10 years on active duty, Chon made the decision to join the corporate world, and he is currently working as a Client Manager in the Marketing department at USAA, a Fortune 500 financial services company.

Chon has continued his military career along the way as an officer in the Navy Reserves. He is currently assigned to a unit in Oklahoma City.

John Mathews

John Mathews, B.S. Psychology 2012, Campbell University, Buies Creek, North Carolina.

Mathews retired from the United States Marine Corps in 2009 at the rank of First Sergeant. He served in the Gulf War, 1991 and Iraq War 2003 with subsequent deployments in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. He currently volunteers with the Veteran's Outreach in Austin.

Christine Burdell

Christine Burdell double majored in French and Political Science at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1992.

Following graduation, she moved to Washington, DC and held a series of marketing roles at publisher Atlantic Information Services and National Geographic Television. She moved to The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business in 2005, and is currently the Director of Advancement Services where she oversees marketing and event planning for Development and External Relations.

Christine is passionate about playing and watching tennis and hopes to travel to each grand slam tournament.

Aram Kaplan

Aram Kaplan, B.F.A. 2009, Film and Television Production, Savannah College of Art and Design. Upon graduation, he moved to Los Angeles and worked for two years on various commercial and major motion picture productions.

Kaplan returned to Washington, DC in 2011, and worked as the assistant director of admissions at the Art Institute of Washington, a for profit university. He assisted first generation students through the enrollment and financial aid process. In 2012, he began working for Blackboard Inc. in the Student Services department creating new initiatives in the enrollment process. Aram is currently one of the lead account managers.

Lester Mayfield

Lester Mayfield is the son of a career soldier and a homemaker who lived together until death. Lester attended The University of Texas at Austin over the course of 22 years starting in 1982 and he received two bachelor's degrees in Economics and Urban Studies.

Lester always wanted to own a business and founded The Mayfield Group in Denver, Colorado, March 1989. He has successfully worked with hundreds of clients in fields such as marketing, sales, consulting, entertainment, and information technology. He has bought and sold, goods and services his entire adult life because he loves meeting new people. His business philosophy is to never have a customer complaint; and he is very proud to say that his company has achieved that goal to date.

Lester is an avid tennis player and world traveler and he looks forward to learning a great deal in the HDO Program.

Del Watson

Del Watson, B.A. Economics 1985, The University of Texas at Austin, served six years in the US Air Force, achieving the rank of Captain. Returning to Austin in 1991, she worked for seven years with the Industrial Areas Foundation, a non-profit, community organizing group working in poor and rural neighborhoods in Texas.

In 1996 she earned an MBA from St. Edward's University and in 1999 became the Director of Human Resources for Huston-Tillotson University where, in addition to human resources, she served as an academic advisor and assisted with student registration. She is currently the Director of Human Resources Planning at the McCombs School of Business.

Jesse D. Leslie

Jesse D. Leslie joined the Air Force after high school and served a four year enlistment. He did communications and intelligence work, including a tour in Iraq as a geospatial metadata analyst.

He then studied Sociology and Psychology at the University of North Alabama (UNA), where he graduated as an Honor's Program member and magna cum laude. Jesse was a founding member of the UNA rugby club, founding president of the Military and Veteran Alliance, and completed two research projects; one of which he presented at a national conference.

Jesse currently has a fellowship through The Mission Continues and works at Austin Partners in Education.

Ximena Lucía Báez

Ximena Lucía Báez has been a retail store manager at Starbucks Coffee Company for the past seven years. In that capacity she continues to nurture her passions for developing people and leading teams. She collaborates regularly with other high-potential store managers to solve problems, develop strategies, and plan and implement company programs and innovations.

Ximena was named "Manager of the Quarter" in 2011 and is consistently placed in the top ten stores for speed of service in her area. Prior to Starbucks, she worked in various management positions in the customer service industry.

Ximena lived abroad in Santiago, Chile in 2000 while earning a Diplomado in Strategies for the Reduction of Poverty in Latin America at the University of Chile. She earned her B.A. in Latin American Studies and Spanish at The University of Texas at Austin in 1999. Her hobbies include photography, swimming, cooking and reading.

Chuck Yonikas

Charlynn “Chuck” Yonikas, Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance, 1987, The University of Texas at Arlington. Chuck worked with General Dynamics Corporation from 1987-1991, where she was involved in a classified project. From 1991 through 2007, she was a stay-at-home parent.

In 2007 she joined the Texas Child Study Center, a non-profit Child and Adolescent outpatient mental health facility, where she served in an administrative capacity until 2010.

Chuck is currently the Operations Manager for the Seton Mind Institute (a member of the Seton Family of Hospitals). In this position, Chuck oversees operations and revenue cycle for three outpatient residency teaching psychiatric clinics, professional fees for resident and faculty physicians at Seton Shoal Creek Hospital, consulting and liaison services at Brackenridge and Seton Medical Center Austin, and other psychiatric contractual collaborations with Seton relationships.

She is also involved in the Austin Independent School District’s Partners in Education mentoring program and Communities in School.

Kirby Attwell

Kirby Attwell is a native Texan who has, essentially, had three separate careers. From 1987-1996 Kirby worked in the hospitality industry in Colorado and Central Florida, primarily managing the opening of new restaurants and training staff. Upon returning to Texas in 1996, he became involved in commercial real estate in the Houston area, focusing on the lease and sale retail properties.

In 2006, having completed a bachelor’s degree in business management Kirby took a job trading and dispatching electricity in the ERCOT and CAISO markets. Having been accepted into the HDO program, is moving to Austin and looking for his next opportunities.

Outside of his work, Kirby Attwell has been involved with the Houston Council on Alcohol and Drugs, The Mankind Project and is an avid Cyclist, Runner, Sailor and Fly Fisherman.