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Mariners Executive featured at the Albers School of Business and Economics

Matt Price and Isabella Purnadi

The Albers School of Business and Economics hosted their Executive Speaker series for the first time in person since the pandemic. This year's speaker was Catie Griggs, the President of Business Operations for the Seattle Mariners. The series offers opportunities for students and community members to engage with professionals in fields they aspire to join.

The event took place April 27 in the Pigott Auditorium and was free to the public. Griggs' talk was themed The New Return on Experience (ROE): Redefining the Fan Experience. She spoke about her new developments that would give baseball fans a great experience at home games this year.

Griggs, who is new to Seattle, approached her job by trying to create the best experience for fans at Mariners games. She started the process during the off-season; her employees surveyed fans based on their experiences at games of previous years. For example, she rolled out Value Games, which offers fans an opportunity to attend games for as little as \$10 along with introducing a value menu where fans can get a hotdog for \$3. They are also now offering College Nights for local university students in the Seattle area.

Mckenzie Mitchell, an On BASE (Baseball and Softball Everywhere) Programs and Communications Coordinator for the Mariners, elaborated on College Nights.

"We actually have a partnership with the Seattle U MBA Program and help bring diverse people into our organizations to help them get exposure to careers and the Mariners as well as the UW Foster School of Business where we offer five scholarships for local minorities in their program," Mitchell said.

The event featured three panelists that represented the Albers School of Business and Economics. This year's participating panelists included Jalen Ward, an MBA sport and entertainment management candidate, Matt Boissoneault, a fourth-year majoring in Finance and Claire Penhale, an HR resource manager for the Seattle Seahawks.

The panelists were asked to come up with a series of questions they wanted to ask Griggs during the Q&A session. Audience members were also asked to send questions for Griggs in advance.

Boissoneault asked Griggs if there are any trends that excite her in the near future.



Adeline Ong

Catie Griggs in Pigott Auditorium

“There is a lot of uncertainty right now. There is an opportunity for us to try new things and choose our own path. In reality, I took this job because I believe in the Mariners and the city of Seattle. People have recognized that there is a desire to come together and share experiences,” Griggs said.

Ward asked Griggs about what makes her confident in her leadership role.

“I really believe when you take chances and do something new, identifying a challenge, coming up with an approach, making them comfortable and taking actions, you can be successful,” Griggs said.

Several students stayed after the event to chat with Griggs and gather advice from a leader in the athletics field. Nhi Nguyen, a third-year finance student, used the event to network with panelists.

“We joked about the stereotype that consultants are professional PowerPoint makers but we both agreed that it’s important and essential in business to engage in storytelling and effective PowerPoint to help clients visualize complex data,” Nguyen said.

Griggs offered some advice for students who are considering a career in the sports industry.

“Sports is a broad industry and it is about learning as much as you can. There are so many different roles and agencies who work at a sports base and different ways on how you can get involved. There are tons of opportunities out there and you just need to know where to look,” Griggs said.

Joe Phillips, the dean of the Albers School of Business and Economics, saw Griggs’ speech as essential for students looking to start their career in sports management.

“She’s an inspiration to anyone who wishes to carve out a career in sports leadership. Her vision in redefining the fan experience is a great marketing case study in how to reinvigorate a well-loved brand,” Phillips said in an email.

As the Mariners look to make the playoffs for the first time in 20 years, Griggs is focused on getting the Seattle community engaged with the best fan experience possible.