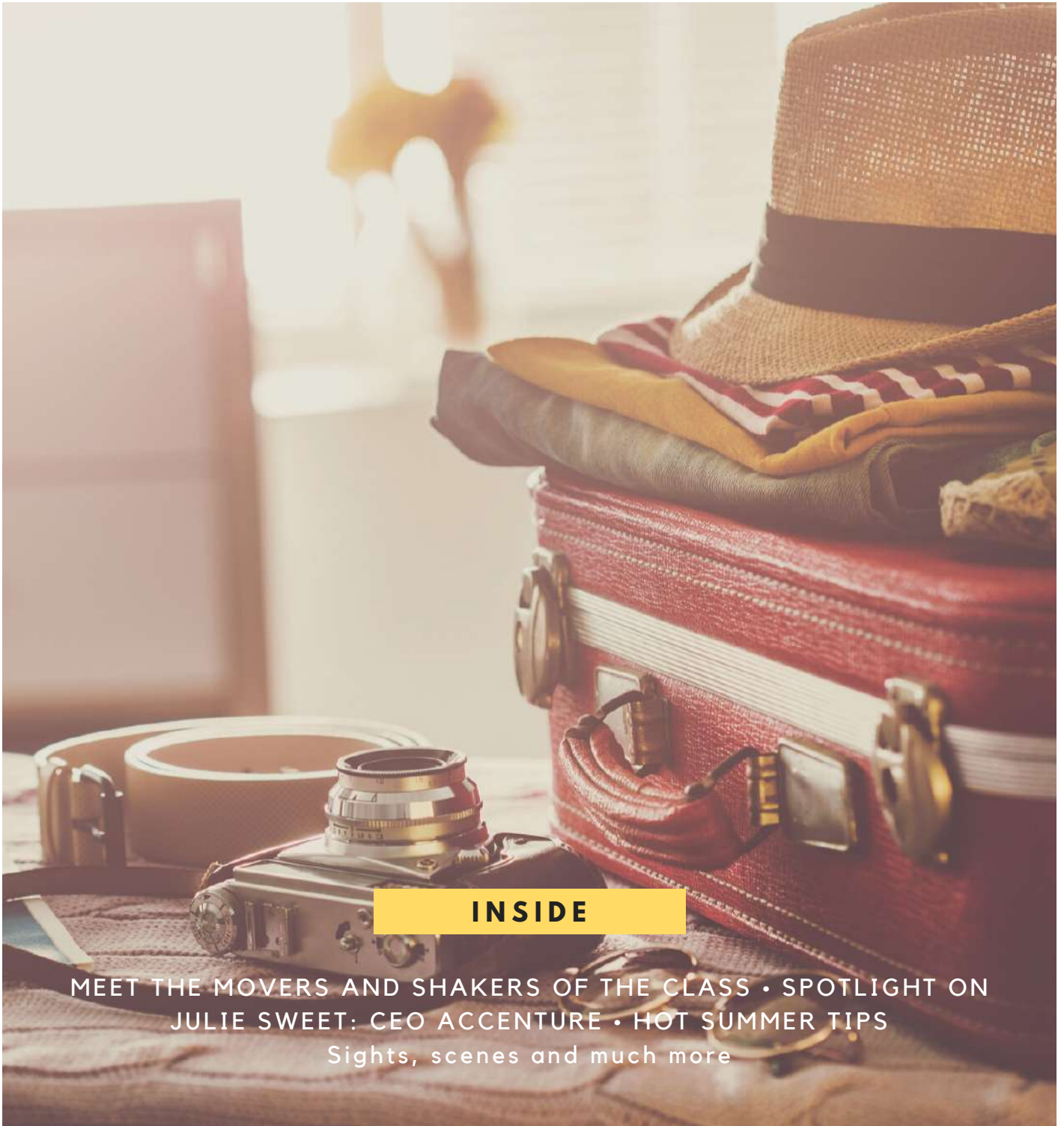


JUNE 2021 | S20 EDITION

# WIL MAGAZINE

MBAS ON THE MOVE



**INSIDE**

MEET THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS OF THE CLASS • SPOTLIGHT ON  
JULIE SWEET: CEO ACCENTURE • HOT SUMMER TIPS

Sights, scenes and much more

# WIL MAGAZINE

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WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

HEC Paris MBA

WIL is an official professional and social club within the HEC Paris MBA.

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# C NTENT



## **4** INTERVIEW: **ANNA POZNIAKOFF**

The MBA Council President, taking it all in her stride (bump and all)

## **6** SPOTLIGHT ON **JULIE SWEET**

The woman at the helm of affairs at Accenture, by Jolin Zhong

## **9** MY MBA JOURNEY AND **HOW IT SHAPED ME**

A heartfelt essay from Guest Writer, Annika Friesen

## **11** INTERVIEW: **SVEN MENGERING**

On learning leadership by taking on the MBAT Challenge

## **13** WIL RECOMMENDS

This summer, the streets are calling your name. Can you hear it? Tips, trips and much more!

# INTERVIEW: ANNA POZNIAKOFF

BY LIZA SAHA & KATRINA LAM



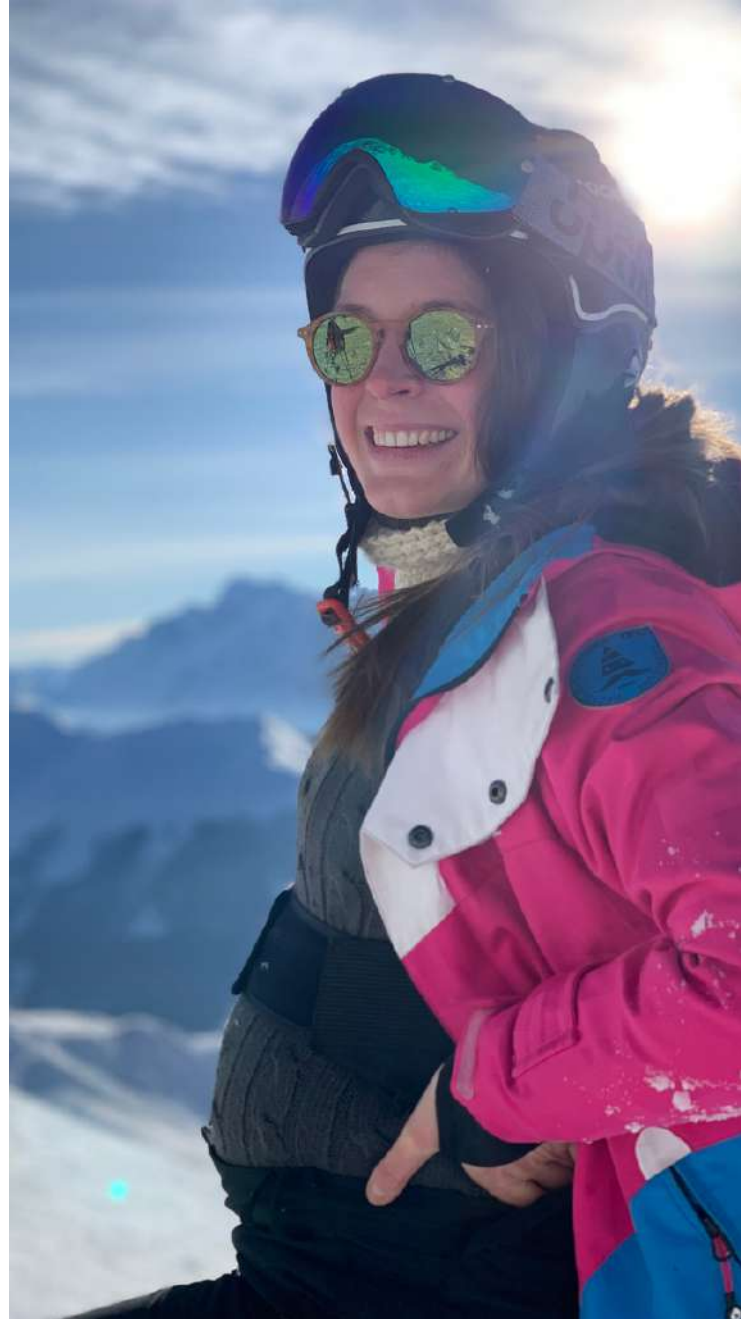
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**You have been one of the most active MBA members in our cohort – first organizing the HEC Talent Show and now MBA Council President. And now you are a stepmom and expectant mom at the same time. How are you managing your time? You must always be busy!**

What an introduction! Let me tell you a secret: the people surrounding me are all amazing human beings, and I wouldn't be able to achieve a third of what I have without them. Firstly, my husband - who is so helping and loving on a daily basis. Secondly, his son - a kind, smart individual who's always ready to help me out at home. And, at HEC, the talent show team was great, and the Council team is simply amazing. They all are excellent in what they do, and even with a tough semester loaded with challenges due to Covid they were ready to achieve so much. They never let me down. I'm so grateful for all these wonderful people surrounding me.

**How has being pregnant during the MBA affected your MBA life? What are some lifestyle changes you made after becoming pregnant?**

Apart from eating my weight in apples every day? Jokes aside, my plan with my husband was always to have a baby during the MBA, so my student life was pretty much what I expected. The biggest challenges I encountered were during the first semester - namely, the talent show organization, the Council's campaign, and exams of Term 1. This encouraged me to set up a tough and



rigorous work schedule, while also making sure I put time aside for rest. This is where great teams around you can make all the difference - I was confident I could trust them to get the work done once the pace quickened. It wouldn't have been possible without all that support.

**The MBA Council's team slogan is "Better Together", could you tell us more about the inspiration behind it?**

Well, a slogan brings people together! This was our vision as a team from the very beginning. We wanted to be the Council which would unite cohorts despite the Covid situation, but we also wanted to imprint the MBA program more deeply into the HEC ecosystem, alongside GE and EMBA's. Better Together was therefore born quite naturally and we now hope that the next Council will continue building on our vision.

**You are one of the very few female MBA Council Presidents that HEC has had. What are your thoughts around this?**

If I were to rewrite history, I would love for this question to not even be asked. Not that I believe that men shouldn't be presidents, but that I believe that we should be able to look at previous teams and have an even distribution of genders. These changes take time and they come from the top, which is why I believe initiatives such as those supported by the WIL Club go a long way. I am also hopeful for the next generation to be even more egalitarian than we are. In the short term, as a mother, I wish to raise my son to believe and act for men and women to have the same rights and duties, and therefore to be empowered to achieve the best they can with no limits.

**Almost 30% of the members in your Council are female. How did you aim to maintain gender parity while building your team?**

Parity was crucial to us when we were building the team, and we always made sure we considered men and women in equal measure for positions. This, to us, was the true meaning of equality, and it allowed us to pick the right person for each position. The women in the Council are not only strong and smart, but are also perfectly fits for their roles. They have all empowered the team in their own way and I feel like they empower me to keep going, too!

**What is the achievement as MBA Council President you are most proud of? How will it influence your future leadership abilities?**

Upon taking our positions in the Council in December we didn't expect the Covid situation to last so long in France. We had to adapt all our plans to this reality, and I am very proud of what we achieved: the J21 student onboarding (organized under 10 days), new relationships forged with EMBA's, pushing for an in-person Leadership Seminar as well as our classes, cultural weeks, and now the in-person events we're organizing. And there's more to come! I am so glad we were able to build so much despite the tough times.

**The next election is coming up soon, any words of advice or encouragement for your successor?**

Keep the campaign fun and friendly! During our elections, Bengi and Matthieu were amazing candidates. We always kept it very friendly among us three, sharing a WhatsApp group to exchange ideas and even planning things together. I believe this is the way to go in order to work for the common wellbeing of the cohorts!

**What are you looking forward to most when the Council's term ends?**

Giving birth!

## RAPID FIRE ROUND

**Car or motorbike?** Come on, CAR!

**Cheese or chocolate?** I'm forbidden from cheese for 1.5 more months, so chocolate!

**Wine or flowers?** ...and forbidden from wine! so flowers, flowers everywhere :)

**Favorite memory as Council President?** Every time we were allowed to host an in-person event! Hoping that the road ahead will be clear from now on!

**Favorite spot on campus?** I feel like the MBA lounge is the extension of my living room now! It's always so nice to hang out there and meet people!

**Weirdest pregnancy craving?** I am not crazy about Coca Cola and Orangina. I could literally have those for breakfast!





# JULIE SWEET, ACCENTURE CEO

BY JOLIN ZHONG



Coming from Tustin, California, Julie Sweet did not grow up in a particularly privileged background. Her father painted cars and her mother was a beautician. Having started empty-handed, Julie's parents decided one of them should go to college if they wanted a better life. When Julie was in 8th grade, her mother went to college, and graduated when Julie was a freshman. Growing up in this environment, Julie was greatly influenced by the work ethic of her family - "If you work hard, you can do anything". She saw from her parents what it really meant to work hard and achieve a better life.

It was transformative for me. To learn to live in that world and to take a risk really changed how I looked for opportunities. It put me on a path to be willing to experiment and look at things differently.

Learning Chinese sounds like a visionary decision, but for Julie back in the 1980s, it was more about taking risks. At a time when learning Japanese was the trend, Julie made a bold move to live in Taipei and Beijing for a year to learn Chinese. Before that, she did not speak the language and knew little about the culture. Nonetheless, Julie was very serious.

## SPOTLIGHT ON

As a freshman in college, she took Chinese classes five days a week at 8AM. Through this experience, she learned how to take risks, deal with challenges, and adapt to new situations – all skills that have undoubtedly helped her to become a successful businesswoman and an inspiring leader at Accenture today.

Julie's experience in learning Chinese is inspirational not only for people who want a boost in their career, but also for leaders and companies that seek growth. A lack of a little pain often means one is not challenging themselves enough or pushing their business as far as it can go. While taking risks can be scary, Julie has been a stellar example of how stepping out of one's comfort zone can reap benefits. After all, overcoming fear is at the core of taking risks.

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**I have to tell you, I won a bet with someone who guessed you would not be the next CEO of Accenture, succeeding Pierre Nanterme. I said, "Well, please don't tell me you think this because she is a woman." He said "No, it's because she is a lawyer. Lawyers do not become CEOs of big companies like this.**

- RICH KARLGAARD FROM FORBES  
AT AN INTERVIEW WITH JULIE  
SWEET

”

Being a law school graduate, Julie had trained herself as a continuous learner, able to process a huge amount of information quickly and navigate through ambiguity - increasingly important qualities given the exponential developments in technology today, and in a post-Covid world.

While being a lawyer is all about serving clients, Julie took this further in the consulting industry – an industry where the one thing you cannot overlook is your clients' needs. This is, today, embedded as a key cultural message at Accenture.



Just like lawyers can become CEOs of big companies, women should not have to live within society's conceptual restrictions. Julie leveraged her capabilities and talents as a lawyer as well as a woman to become CEO at Accenture. As women, we bring our unique traits and abilities to the table. For example, Julie showed great empathy during the pandemic – she struck a fine balance between allowing her employees to work from home and stay safe, and satisfying her clients' needs. This laid a solid future foundation for the firm's values. In addition, having worked her way up in the “boys' club” helped her set the stage for a major shift in the way women are seen in the business world. She is therefore a role model for promoting diversity on a wider scale.

“

**It was at that moment that I said to myself when I was about to be a partner; my commitment that I made at that time was that I'm going to make it so that this is different for women. I've tried to live to that commitment. For me, it's actually been a learning experience to go from just gender and women to, more broadly, diversity.**

- JULIE SWEET

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## SPOTLIGHT ON

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Julie was one of 27 women CEOs in the S&P 500 companies and the 15th female CEO of all Fortune Global 500 companies at the time of her appointment as CEO at Accenture effective September 2019. She is without a doubt a powerful leader and role model for women as a whole, and her story has encouraged other women to navigate through the corporate world. The commitment she made when she was appointed is evidenced by the way she welcomes diversity and inclusion to the company culture at Accenture – today, over 42 percent of Accenture’s staff are female and a more egalitarian work environment is forming.

It is often said that true leaders are carried to the top, and do not climb to it. This rang true for Julie, as well, on her journey. In order to give back to the community around her, Julie has been focusing on how the company can support its staff. For one, she ensures she greets each and every one of her employees by his or her name with a smile. At the end of the day, it is all about having the courage to launch yourself on a different journey, and the ability to convince others to join you on your journey.





# MY MBA JOURNEY AND HOW IT SHAPED ME

BY ANNIKA FRIESEN, MBA



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As my MBA comes to a close it is fascinating to look back on its inception. I realize that I have learned so many lessons which enabled me to lean into my true, authentic self. As a January 2020 intake, the MBA definitely was a surprise in terms of how it developed. As a cohort, we all expected to join a program, network like crazy and spend a lot of face time together in classes, workshops and other social gatherings. We thought that we would be traveling often and interviewing in person. But things obviously didn't happen like we had anticipated. I can't say that I am not disappointed that we didn't get the 'traditional experience', but I am grateful for the deep lessons that I learned in the process.

I am closing this chapter of my journey at HEC Paris with many realizations including that an MBA is just as much a time of personal transformation as it is professional transformation. In leading up to the program, I was highly focused outwardly, stressing about my career progression so far, what my career would look like in the future, setting myself up for a triple jump (changing my geography, role and industry) and stressing whether or not I had what it took to get to where I thought that I wanted to go.



Many moments, experiences and people during the past 16 months inspired me take a long, hard look at my life. There was TEC, The Executive Committee, where I was embraced by a close-knit group of peers who guided me, asked the right questions and propelled me towards my first of many shifts in perspective. Through learning both from peers and guest speakers the idea of entrepreneurship re-entered my spectrum of what could be an option post-MBA. The next of many growth moments happened due to coronavirus and the endless lockdowns that we experienced globally. This forced me to slow down. For my entire adult life, I have been running from one

thing to another, pushing to my own extremes, leaving little time to sit with my own thoughts, digest what was happening in my life or plan properly for where I wanted to go while keeping my true priorities in clear sight. Covid-19 pushed me to take stock of what is important to me and actually do something about it now, instead of putting it on the to-do list for another day. It pushed me to change my mindset from default to being active participant in my own life. Another driver of my lessons and pivots has been the people that I've met at HEC Paris. Both the collective group of my classmates as well as specific individuals have challenged and guided me to realign with my true values, priorities and sense of self. They inspired me to chase my dreams no matter how scary it can be and remember that if I stay true to my purpose, then that is success. I would not be where I am today without them.

"The way you choose happiness is to follow what is right and real and the truth for you. You can never be happy living some else's dream. Live your own. And you will for sure know the meaning of happiness" – Oprah Winfrey



“  
**Both the collective group of my classmates as well as specific individuals have challenged and guided me to realign with my true values, priorities and sense of self.**  
”

- ANNIKA FRIESEN,  
MBA J20

During my time at HEC Paris I have rediscovered myself and my purpose. My dream is to support the growth of others, helping them discover themselves and their calling and guiding them in creating a roadmap towards it. I am venturing into the world of entrepreneurship by starting a coaching business that takes a holistic approach to Career Strategy Coaching and MBA Admissions Consulting this is [The Executive You.](#)

The road to self-discovery, happiness and true personal success is not surface level, it's not fast and it's not simply getting the most senior job possible at the most well-known company. Personal growth requires support, guidance and vulnerability.

I am so grateful for my experience and the lessons that I learned during my MBA. I am motivated and excited to work with others to guide them on their journey, whether that is getting into an MBA program to kick off their own personal discovery journey or to support them in determining what their calling and passions are and help them create the strategy to achieve their own personal success and happiness.

ANNIKA FRIESEN IS AN HEC PARIS MBA 2021 GRADUATE. HER CAREER STRATEGY COACHING AND MBA ADMISSIONS CONSULTING BUSINESS IS THE EXECUTIVE YOU. ANNIKA IS PASSIONATE ABOUT WORKING WITH HER CLIENTS AND GUIDING THEM BY ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS, PROVIDING TOOLS, AND KEEPING THEM ACCOUNTABLE THROUGHOUT THEIR JOURNEY.

# INTERVIEW: SVEN MENGERING

BY LIZA SAHA & KATRINA LAM



**The first online HEC MBAT was officially a roaring success! How do you feel?**

On the one hand I'm relieved that everything went smoothly and that we had a great event, in addition to bringing the trophy home! However, I'm also quite sad that the process is now over and the team can no longer debate and plan among ourselves.

**Tell us how you mentally prepared yourself and your team for the MBAT. We know it must have been very difficult, especially at the beginning when there was much ambiguity about the format.**

The planning process for MBAT 2021 has been a prime example of operating under uncertainty. As the format wasn't clear until the end of January, my approach was that everyone in the team had an equal voice and vote on the format, to ensure that everyone stood firmly behind the decision.

**Compared to previous MBATs, what new aspects did your team introduce (besides online gaming)?**

The main thing we introduced was live streaming. All competitions were accessible remotely via our website.

**Did you encounter any difficulties in ensuring gender parity in your team, given that sports and online gaming are generally seen as more of a "men's thing"?**

I don't think the virtual MBAT had any particular impact on gender parity. The initial



MBAT team was formed based on interest in participating, and for the assignment of roles we voted on each position as a team.

**What is your biggest takeaway from organizing the MBAT?**

As a leader, one needs to be fully prepared to delegate responsibility and accept that you may not know exactly what is going on at an operational level.

**What was your approach to "managing expectations", given that there were high hopes for the MBAT after its cancellation last year?**

We were in constant communication with the HEC administration (shout out to Linda and Julio for their amazing support!) and conducted a go/no-go meeting to decide on the format.

I didn't have a particular approach; but rather, I kind of over-communicated to ensure everyone could receive the appropriate level of information he/she needed.

**How do you think your role as MBAT President has influenced your leadership skills?**

This was truly an amazing experience. When we started the journey, I expected to have a clear pathway laid out by the HEC administration. However, it turned out that the students truly own every step of the process. As such, I had the real opportunity to lead a team of almost 30 students. I learned a lot about myself and my ability to lead, an experience which I will be able to draw on for the rest of my career.

**Now that MBAT is finally over, what are you most looking forward to?**

I just got married and am looking forward to spending some more time with my wife over the summer. With regard to the MBA, I am looking forward to a hopefully Covid-free last term!



## RAPID FIRE ROUND

**Favorite moment/event from MBAT**

Sitting on the floor in the MBA Lounge and holding the script for the closing ceremony as a human teleprompter. F1 race simulator

**Biggest oh snap moment from MBAT?**

Pouring rain during the first day

**Favorite part of MBA journey so far?**

It sounds cheesy, but meeting so many amazing people

**One thing about yourself your classmates would be surprised to know?** I was a licensed lifeguard for 2 years

**Favorite spot on campus?** The lake

“ I learned a lot about myself and my ability to lead, an experience which I will be able to draw on for the rest of my career.

- SVEN MENGERING,  
MBA S20

”



# WIL RECOMMENDS

## WHAT TO DO THIS SUMMER?



### 01.CASSIS

Cassis locates on the Southeast of Marseille - The second largest city in France, with around 8,000 people.

The lovely town is a perfect getaway from the noise and bustle of the city to enjoy the quiet, peaceful scenery and have wonderful relaxing moments by the beautiful beaches.

### 02.GIVERNY



The town was where Claude Monet (founder of impressionist painting) lived for four decades. Not only the famous painter lived here but also his Japanese-inspired garden (and the artist's restored 19th century home) remain must-see attractions for visitors to France.

Located 80km from the west-northwest of Paris, Giverny is a great place for visitors from Paris. It also offers bed-and-breakfast lodging for those travelers who want to spend the night.

### 03.LA RÉUNION

The Hawaii of France



La Réunion is an island in the Indian Ocean that is an overseas department. It is located approximately 550 km (340 mi) east of the island of Madagascar.

This island is considered as the twin of Hawaiian volcanoes because of their similarities in size (2.512km<sup>2</sup>), climate, and volcanic nature. However, in contrast with busy, bustling Hawaii, La Réunion is more peaceful and the locals are super friendly!

# WIL RECOMMENDS

WHAT TO DO THIS SUMMER?

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**La Défense  
Jazz festival**  
June 21 - 27, 2021



**Restaurant  
Apicius**  
20 Rue D'Artois  
75008 Paris



**Rose Bakery**  
Musée de la vie  
romantique, 16 Rue  
Chaptal, 75009  
Paris



**Nocturnes  
Electro**  
Place d'Armes  
78000 Versailles  
September 25, 2021

