

9-1-2022

## Alumni Guide Students

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### Recommended Citation

Armstrong, Melanie (2022) "Alumni Guide Students," *Furman Magazine*: Vol. 65: Iss. 2, Article 21.  
Available at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine/vol65/iss2/21>

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## A NOTE FROM THE OFFICE OF ALUMNI AND PARENT ENGAGEMENT

**A**ustin Arias '24 was considering going to medical school but also wanted to learn about alternative career options in the field of research. As part of Pathways, a unique two-year course required for first-year students and sophomores that is central to The Furman Advantage, Arias was connected with Kenny Nguyen '19, a microbiologist for the CDC Foundation at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Through an informational interview, Arias was able to learn about Nguyen's career path, his experiences at Furman, and what life is like after graduation.

"As someone still trying to figure out what path I'll take after Furman, I found the interview to be very helpful. I learned a lot about a career that I'd like to have," Arias says. "It was reassuring to learn that it's OK if you don't follow your planned path completely, because you may end up doing something even better."

The Pathways course teaches every student how to take full advantage of their Furman experience. It encourages them to reflect on their strengths and experiences, and integrate their academics, their engaged learning experiences, and their career goals. After their



### ALUMNI GUIDE STUDENTS



BY MELANIE ARMSTRONG,  
PATHWAYS MENTORING COORDINATOR

first two years, students continue their pathway at the departmental level by reflecting on what they've learned in and outside of their major classes and how this learning prepares them for life after Furman.

Furman alumni play a critical role in The Furman Advantage by providing students with firsthand knowledge about careers, graduate school and real-world experiences. Alumni may volunteer for a 30-minute informational interview (virtually or in-person) with

a sophomore student who wants to learn more about a career field of interest; provide internships at their workplace for qualified Furman students; share their expertise by speaking on career panels for an academic department; and assist recent graduates in the Alumni Connections program that links graduating seniors with alumni in a career and/or city of interest.

Emma Browder '20, registered for the Alumni Connections program as she was preparing to graduate.

She was connected with Ronnie Jowers '73, vice president for health affairs at Woodruff Health Sciences Center at Emory University, and they stayed in touch throughout Browder's graduate school experience at the University of Florida.

"In a time of uncertainty, talking with Ronnie was very reassuring, since he has so much experience in a career that seemed so daunting and far away from where I was in that moment," says Browder. "This program gave me the opportunity to be honest, and to also receive that same honesty back – hearing the reality and experience of health care administration from Ronnie." ♦

*To get involved with any of these programs, Furman alumni may register by scanning the QR code. The time commitment varies based on the program and how many students you speak with each semester. For more information, contact Melanie Armstrong, Pathways mentoring coordinator, at [melanie.armstrong@furman.edu](mailto:melanie.armstrong@furman.edu).*

