

Fifteen years ago I was asked to write a testimony for FBLA, much like this one. At the time, I was the outgoing State President and heading into my freshman year at Gonzaga University. The world has witnessed incredible changes since then, but the mission of FBLA has stayed the same: to bring business and education together in a positive working relationship through innovative leadership and career development programs. This mission is the foundation of FBLA and is the pillar of the organization's continued success.

FBLA fosters a community of curiosity, camaraderie, knowledge, and growth. I've witnessed firsthand the transformations of countless students under the mission, including my own. It may start with a local chapter meeting where lifelong bonds are made, or during a community service project that brings hope and spirit to those in the margin. It may be a conference where someone learns more about themselves and commerce through positive dialogue, or advocating their platform to peers, family, business, politicians, and the organization-at-large. FBLA promotes the achievement of everyone, and refuses to accept anything but the best from anyone.

Today, I am a CPA, Gonzaga alumnus, former manager at KPMG LLP, and current PhD student in residence at Virginia Tech. I have also been a student, judge, business advisor, and Board of Directors member of Washington State FBLA. While the world and I have aged and changed since my first meeting at Omak High School in 1993, my passions still surround the foundation of FBLA's vision. What I ask of myself, my current students, and my former staff members embody the core tenants of FBLA. At an early age, Washington FBLA taught me the importance of hard work, professional relationships, perseverance, and dedication. These values continue to be part of my daily professional activities. Undoubtedly, I am who I am, I have seen what I have seen, and I have achieved what I have achieved because of FBLA.

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