

AMIE FLEMMING (MBA '19)

Industry: Conservation Finance & Impact Investing

Where she works: Quantified Ventures

Job Title: Senior Associate



Conservation finance sits at the intersection of finance and impact. At Quantified Ventures, Flemming oversees and consults on capital investment projects that drive land conservation and economic development.

She works with foundations and municipal or state governments to help quantify the outcomes of conservation projects and to develop the business case for investors and public officials to commit their capital. Quantified Ventures also works in the health and social sectors.

Job Functions: Strategy // Finance // Consulting

FLEMMING'S CAREER PATHWAY



“After graduating college I took a role in fundraising for an environmental nonprofit in San Francisco. I was super passionate about the work – and still am! – but I got frustrated with fundraising. I kept thinking about what kind of change we would be capable of making if we could think about our funding differently, beyond the constraints of grant deadlines or a major donor’s pet project. That thought eventually got the better of me, and that’s what brought me to business school.”

Useful classes:

Impact Investing, Social Entrepreneurship (*Melissa Bradley, adjunct professor*);
Sustainable Operations (*Vishal Agrawal, Provost’s Distinguished Lapeyre Family Associate Professor*);
Financial Analysis for Managers and Investors (*Jason Schloetzer, associate professor*)

The National Park Service MBA Business Management Consultant position is a role at the NPS in partnership with Inspiring Capital, a social sector consulting firm based in New York City.

CAREER ADVICE FOR MBAS:

Learn business acumen for its own sake. “As someone who didn’t have a traditional business background, I wanted to take classes in traditional business topics for the sake of exposure. I took private equity for example, and it was totally bewildering at first. But that perspective, of learning what drives decisions in situations that I’d had almost no exposure to, is fundamental to understanding why and how capital drives business. And that private equity exposure can dovetail nicely with, say, classes on impact finance, which is what I actually care about.”

Go past your comfort zone in business school. “I am not the loudest person in the room. There were a lot of times in the business school classroom where I chose not to speak in class or on a team I chose to do more of the ‘behind the scenes work’ because that felt like that was a safer space to pull my weight. Business school was a good place to test what leadership can look like when you’re not the alpha in the room – and in retrospect, I could have done that a lot more, since I still deal with that imposter syndrome. Business school is a critical time to find what it means to be a leader within your personality and persona in a way that’s authentic.”

There are trade-offs to impact work. “I don’t make nearly as much money as I could coming out of business school, and I knew that could happen. Should I have gone for a more traditional finance or consulting job? Maybe. But would that get me out of bed in the morning? Probably not. I work a lot, probably as much as my peers, and for less money, but I care deeply about this work and that really matters to me. At some point your heart knows where it wants to be or what it wants to be doing, and you can’t shy away from that.”

IN HER WORDS:

“A lot of the work I currently do is about using outdoor recreation as a driver for economic development. For example, thinking through the spending habits of an individual biker when he or she travels to a mountain biking trail: What attracts that biker to the region? Where do they spend their money? How much of that money is staying local, and how will it impact the local economy? We want to tell the full story of the economic benefit that conservation will have to a region – from increased sales tax to local commerce – to broaden the conversation about who can benefit from these types of projects.

Day to day, my job can be a lot of interviewing and gathering data, or building the economic case that might bring new payers to a deal. Our goal is to measure anything we can to convey impact. We are not brokers or financial advisors, so we don’t issue debt or broker deals. But we are thought partners for a lot of these cities and organizations to think through financing their projects differently.”

THE IMPACT SPECTRUM: Quantified Ventures

